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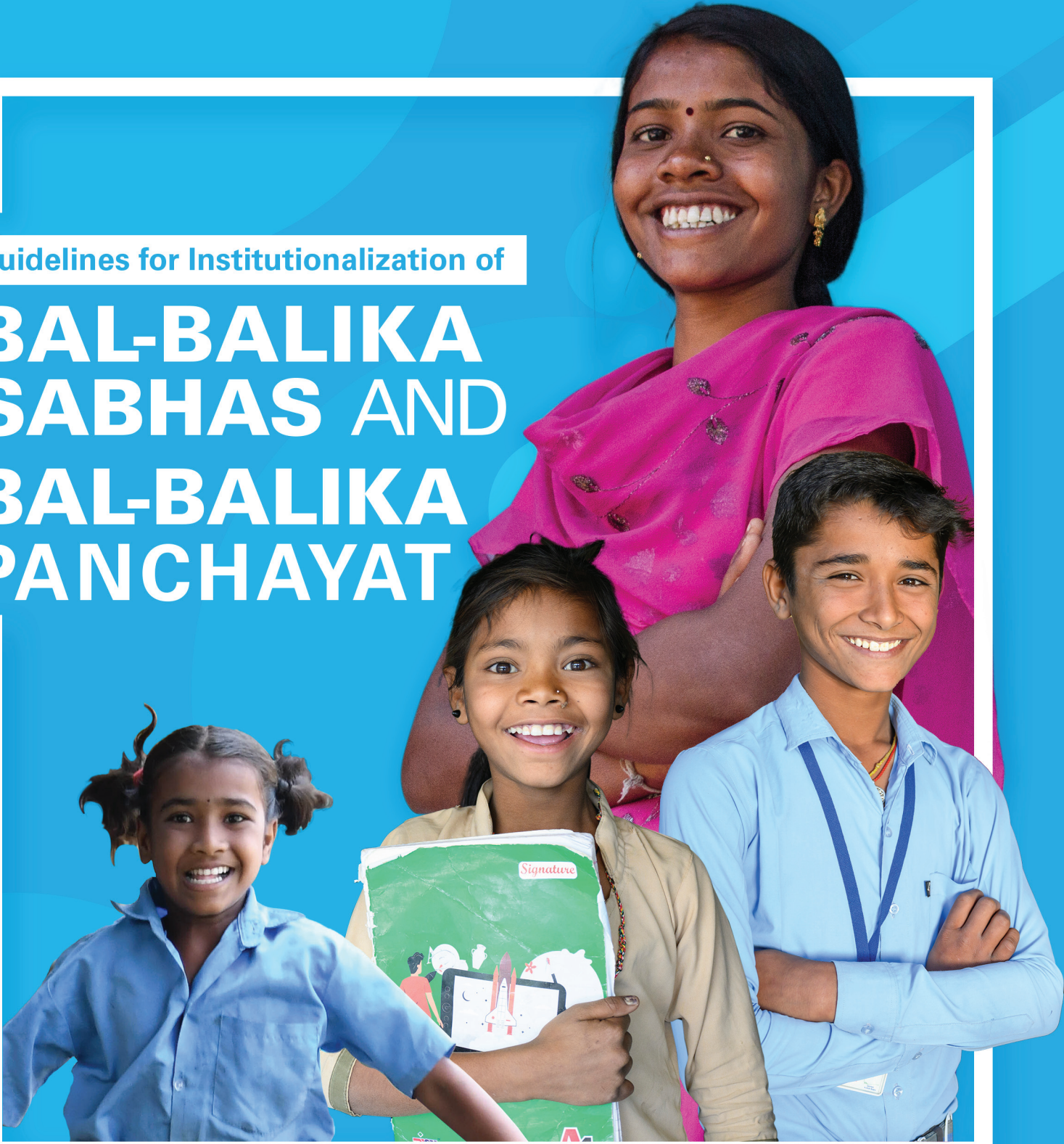
ससक पंचायत सवन् विकास

MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

unicef 
for every child

Guidelines for Institutionalization of

BAL-BALIKA SABHAS AND BAL-BALIKA PANCHAYAT



Ministry of Panchayati Raj
Government of India
February 2023

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Guidelines for Institutionalization of

BAL-BALIKA SABHAS AND BAL-BALIKA PANCHAYAT

Ministry of Panchayati Raj
Government of India
February 2023

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Sunil Kumar

MESSAGE

**SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ**

India is striving to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through committed, planned action and monitoring at the National, State and local levels. Vital to this agenda is the work of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to localize action on the SDGs through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

The Flagship Scheme of the Ministry – Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) – has been revamped to build the capacities of PRIs for good governance through participatory local planning at the Gram Panchayat level, with a focus on the attainment of the SDGs. This will help Gram Panchayats to initiate, mainstream and institutionalize children's voices and youth empowerment, especially of adolescent girls, in village-level decision-making.

The Expert Group, constituted by the Ministry for Localizing SDGs, focussed on the actionable agenda for 2030 under nine themes for PRIs. Theme 3 is vital for child participation and child rights and aims to create "Child-friendly Gram Panchayats for promoting equality in child service delivery in villages." This lays emphasis on empowering children, adolescents and youth – especially girls – as a prerequisite to achieving all the SDGs.

It is a welcome initiative of UNICEF to collaborate with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to develop these Advisory and Guidelines for conducting Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayats as a prelude to the Gram Sabhas, to help facilitate capacity building at the local level and ensure voices of children are integrated into Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs). My best compliments to the UNICEF Team led by Ms. Cynthia McCaffrey, Representative, UNICEF India Country Office, for providing strategic advice to the team of experts for developing these guidelines.

I am sure this will act as a step-by-step manual for all the Gram Panchayats when they organize the Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayats, and will enable the goal of decentralized and participatory planning at the village level where the voices of children, adolescents and youth are heard.

Sunil Kumar

MESSAGE



Cynthia McCaffrey

MESSAGE

**REPRESENTATIVE,
UNICEF INDIA COUNTRY OFFICE**

UNICEF is committed to the causes of children in India, and reiterates its support to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, in its commitment to achieve the SDGs by localizing action on them through Gram Panchayats.

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989 establishes the right of every child to freely express their views, in all issues affecting them. This is to ensure that policies, schemes and programmes are inclusive and relevant to the needs and aspirations of children and adolescents.

Since the adoption of the CRC, and specifically Article 12 pertaining to children's and youth's participation, research reveals that children's and youths' voices often remain invisible in development programmes, and family and society welfare services. To address this gap, governments across the globe are taking various initiatives to ensure that decision-makers actively listen to and collectively work towards enacting the inputs provided by children and youth on these priority areas.

I am pleased to note the strong partnership developed by the UNICEF India Country Office and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. UNICEF is committed to creating the space for children's voices to be heard through grassroots-level interventions, and are mainstreamed as a part of the village-level planning.

Cynthia McCaffrey

MESSAGE

डॉ. चन्द्र शेखर कुमार, आई.ए.एस.
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Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar

MESSAGE

It is noteworthy that the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, under its Flagship Scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), has embarked upon its campaign for Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

The theme of Child-friendly Villages for making all development efforts child-sensitive and adolescent-inclusive and targeted towards equal rights for youth is fundamental, and must be universally integrated for optimal and timely achievement of the children-related SDGs.

I am happy to note UNICEF India's contribution in developing these Advisory and Guidelines for conducting Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayats as a prelude to the Gram Sabhas to help facilitate capacity building at the local level where voices of children are integrated into village planning. This draws on a judicious mix of different aspects for conducting Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayats including good governance and representation, and administrative, institutional and financial functions in the Panchayats, for attaining all the objectives of child-friendly villages as a part of Theme 3 in a child-sensitive governance work culture.

I hope that these guidelines will be optimally adopted and adapted to the various state contexts and adequately utilized for the purposes of capacity building in the Gram Panchayats. This will integrate and mainstream children's issues in village-level planning and programme implementation, and help attain child sensitivity in rural areas as a ripple effect, and prove a catalyst to the campaign of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj on localization of the SDGs.

Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar

MESSAGE



Yasumasa Kimura

MESSAGE

DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVE, PROGRAMMES, UNICEF INDIA COUNTRY OFFICE

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has taken significant steps to improve the implementation of Gram Sabhas across India, making these platforms participatory, equitable, representative and accountable for all residents across communities. I am pleased to note that UNICEF has been an integral part of the initiative undertaken by MoPR towards mainstreaming the voices of children in village-level planning.

The role of Bal-Balika Sabha is to raise children's issues and concerns on nutrition, health, education, civic engagement and protection of children and adolescents, which will then input into village-level development plans. The need of Bal Sabhas is recognized in Volume 2 of the Report of the Expert Group on Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report underlines the need for child-friendly Panchayats, covering SDGs 1 through 5 on No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, and Gender Equality.

I compliment the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for prioritizing children and the issues affecting them at the local level through a participatory process, which included strengthening of Gram Sabhas. A recent MoPR advisory highlighted key actions for states for "Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant"; and holding Mahila and Bal Sabhas are critical aspects to this process. These Sabhas can be held prior to Gram Sabhas and inform the Gram Sabhas on key priorities of children and women. I am happy to note that UNICEF has collaborated with the Ministry in developing these guidelines on the conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas and formation of Bal-Balika Panchayats.

I thank MoPR for giving UNICEF the opportunity to work with the Ministry and the State Departments of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj towards institutionalizing the Bal-Balika Sabhas and providing all support in rolling them out across all the Gram Panchayats across India.

India's 460 million children are India's future and they are the world's future. Let us resolve to see them not just as recipients, but as partners in development.



Yasumasa Kimura

MESSAGE



Alok Prem Nagar

MESSAGE

Dated: 13th February, 2023

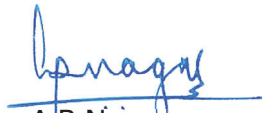
JOINT SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

It gives me immense pleasure to present the Advisory and Guidelines for Institutionalization of Bal-Balika Sabha and Bal-Balika Panchayat since they will provide a detailed guide for Gram Panchayats to institutionalize the cause of promoting child sensitivity and youth empowerment, especially for adolescent girls in village-level decision-making.

This agenda of Child-friendly Villages and Youth-responsive Governance is well exemplified by the impressive strides made by the Panchayats as learnt from various work done by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj in partnership with UNICEF India. The mainstreaming of Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayats will also establish that Theme 3 for localizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), being championed by the Ministry, becomes an achievable agenda for action under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana (RGSA) – our Flagship Scheme. Child-friendly Villages is a common platform to help attain the SDGs through local action by the Gram Panchayats – the institution of local self-governance.

I am pleased to acknowledge that UNICEF India has been instrumental in helping us develop these guidelines and advisory for mainstreaming the voices of children and adolescents to achieve the objectives enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child through a decentralized and participatory approach.

May this endeavour of making villages child- and youth-friendly gather momentum and strength to empower all children, adolescents and youth in rural India!



A.P. Nagar

MESSAGE



Hyun Hee Ban

MESSAGE

MESSAGE

CHIEF SOCIAL POLICY & SOCIAL PROTECTION, UNICEF INDIA COUNTRY OFFICE

Childhood is a precious and beautiful phase of life, but is too easily compromised when the needs and voices of children are not incorporated into the local decisions that affect them on a daily basis. This is why the initiative of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to scale and institutionalize a mechanism where children's voices are adequately heard in local development planning through Bal Sabhas is so noteworthy and commendable. In this way, children's priorities are identified and integrated into village-level planning and decision-making. I thank the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for this and also for involving UNICEF in this journey.

It is universally recognized that children have rights that are inalienable and indivisible. The United Nations, through its Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) adopted in 1989, affirmed an expansive set of rights for children. It is this human rights treaty, ratified by 192 nations, that explicitly recognizes children as rights-holders. India too is a signatory to the CRC and upholds child rights through various State and national legislations.

Children are full of creativity, ideas and enthusiasm, with a passion for equality and justice, and addressing issues of our time such as climate change. I am sure that these Guidelines for Institutionalization of Bal-Balika Sabha and Bal-Balika Panchayat developed jointly by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and UNICEF will ensure children and adolescents' engagement in planning, and promote their participation and leadership. They will further support adequate resource allocation for these priorities, and assess whether the schemes and programmes are effectively and efficiently delivered to achieve the SDGs through a monitoring mechanism led by children and adolescents.

Hyun Hee Ban

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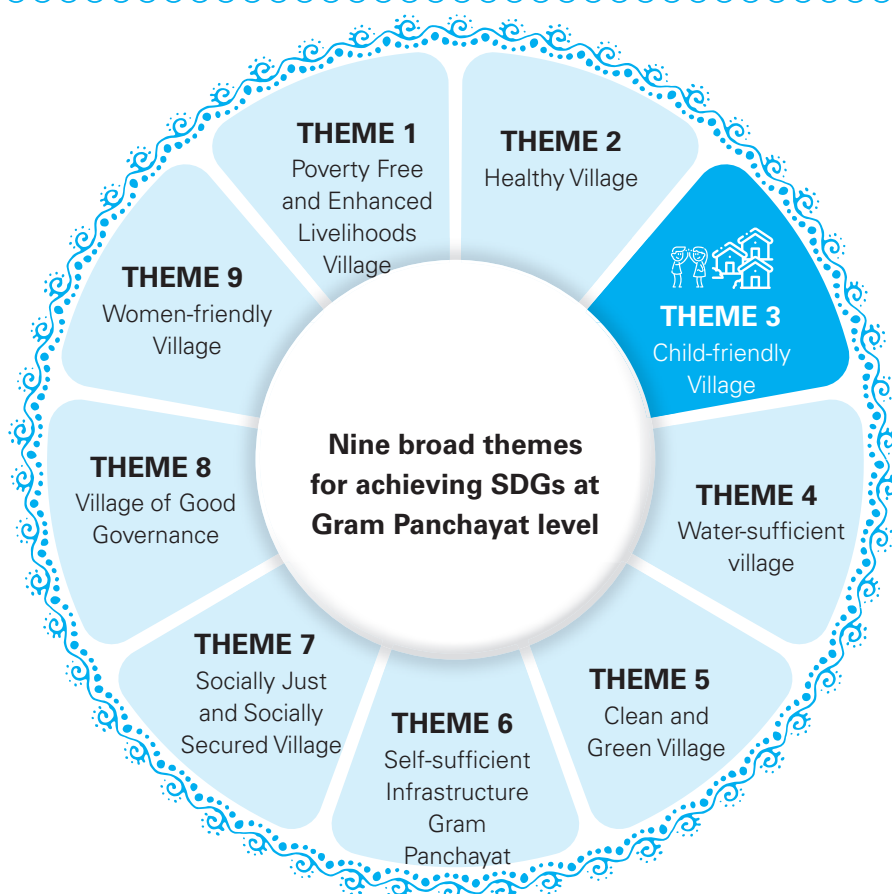
01 Introduction



The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) are pleased to present these Guidelines for Institutionalization of Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayat.

MoPR has adopted a thematic approach to Localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to make them relevant to Gram Panchayats as they seek to obtain the Goals and their targets.

The 17 SDGs have been combined into nine broad themes to initiate local action and attainment of these goals through Panchayats.



These guidelines support local action under Theme 3: Child-friendly village. It is expected that these guidelines will be adapted by the States as per local context and will help Gram Panchayats to ensure that marginalized and underrepresented groups like children including adolescents are included in the decision-making process, and that their specific needs and perspectives are taken into account to make development programmes more inclusive and sustainable.

02

Guidelines for Institutionalization of Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayat



India is a signatory to United Nations 2030 Agenda for achieving sustainable development through 17 goals identified and developed based on the principles of “Leaving no one behind” and “Reach the furthest behind, first”. It is often being said that children are the future of any country. Demographically, India is a young country and children constitute 39 per cent of India’s population. Global evidence shows that investment on children has intergenerational benefits. When we care for and invest on children, health outcomes improve, incomes rise, economies grow, societies become more cohesive and the entire country prospers.

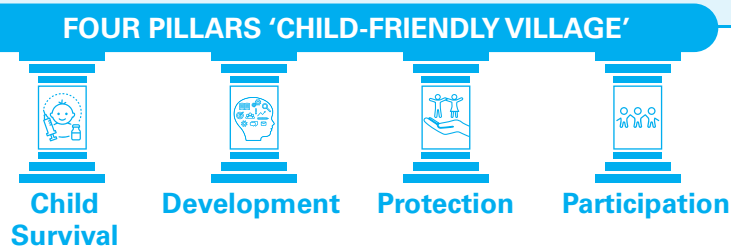
The Constitution of India and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) guarantee certain rights for all children. These ‘child rights’ have been specially included for children to create a healthy and non-discriminatory environment for them and to ensure that children are treated with care, respect and dignity, and remain protected against all forms of discriminations, violence, sexual abuses and exploitations. India, as a signatory to the CRC, has committed to ensure that all children enjoy their rights to survival, development, protection and participation.

National Policy for Children, 2013, recognizes every person below the age of 18 years as a child. Panchayats as local governments have a crucial role to play for creating an enabling environment for children to survive, remain protected, develop as human beings, and participate in local development processes. A ‘Child-friendly Panchayat’ can truly support children to grow and realize their full potentials as human beings. The Eleventh Schedule of the 73rd amendment of the Constitution of India outlines clearly that women and child development are among the 29 subjects transferred to Panchayats. In case of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), out of 248 SDG indicators, 44 indicators (18 percent) spread across 17 SDGs are directly linked to children.

The SDGs are cross-cutting in nature and can be linked to more than one Ministry/Department, and therefore can be addressed through multiple Government schemes. Keeping this aspect in view, and as recommended in the report submitted by the Expert Committee in November 2021, MoPR has adopted thematic approach of relevance for Panchayats through combining 17 SDGs into nine broad themes to initiate local actions and attainment of these goals through Panchayats.

The revised guidelines on Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) issued by MoPR in 2018 clearly pointed out the importance of organizing Bal-Balika Sabha for providing a space for children to raise their voices and incorporate issues affecting children into GPDP (Section 5.9). In the advisory issued to all the States on ‘Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant’ (D.O. No. M-11015/98/2021-FD; dated 16 August 2021), MoPR again highlighted the importance of conducting Mahila Sabha and Bal Sabha on a regular basis. Reiterating the Government of India’s commitment in this regard, a joint letter from seven Ministries of Government of India was also issued to all the States calling

Theme-3: 'Child-Friendly Village' envisions a Gram Panchayat (GP) that resolves to transform itself into a Child-Friendly Village/Panchayat by working on four pillars



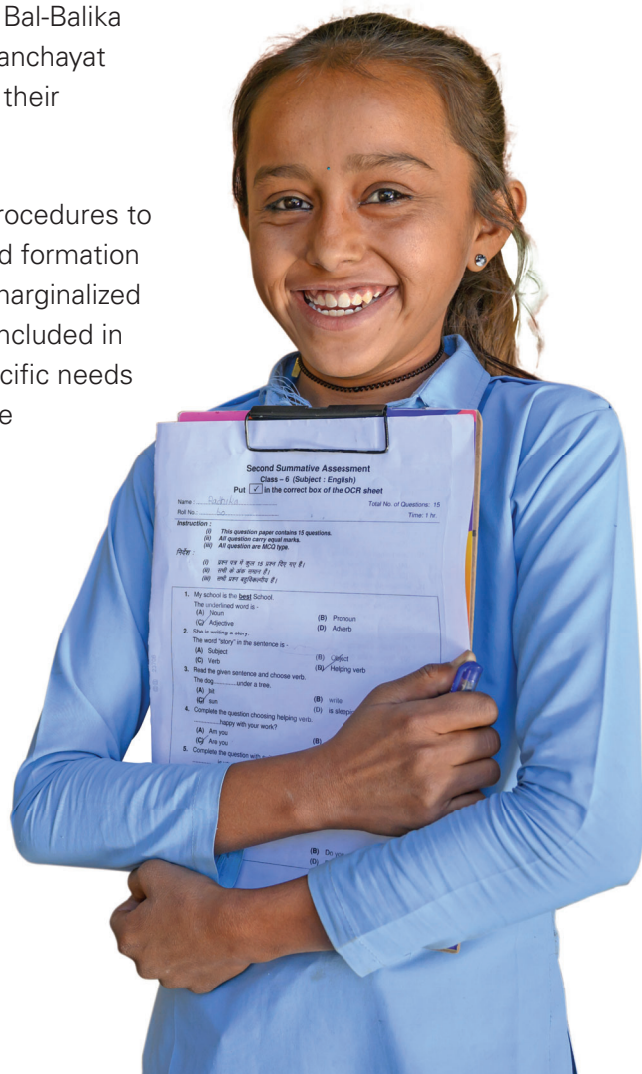
for convergent action at various levels for realizing the Theme 3: 'Child-Friendly GP'. (D.O. No. M-11015/124/2021-CB; dated 31 March 2022). Recently, MoPR issued another advisory focusing on the importance of regular conduct of special Mahila Sabha and Bal-Balika Sabha (D.O. No. M-11015/205/2022-CB; dated 1 September 2022).

All of the above clearly spell out that to become a 'Child-Friendly Village', it would be crucial for GPs to ensure participation of children in grassroots governance, GPDP and decision-making process. Therefore, transforming Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayats into a reality become paramount for GPs in order to ensure child-friendly villages through effective participation of children, prioritization of issues related to children, and allocation of appropriate budget for children in GP development plans and overall panchayat development process.

To make GPs child-friendly and to ensure child participation in grassroots governance, it is advised to conduct Bal-Balika Sabhas on a regular basis and form Bal-Balika Panchayat to enable children of the GP to optimally realize their potentials.

The following guidelines provide an outline of procedures to be followed for conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas and formation of Bal-Balika Panchayat at the GP level so that marginalized and underrepresented groups like children are included in the decision-making process, and that their specific needs and perspectives are taken into account to make development programmes more inclusive and sustainable.

The Annexures include a roll-out plan for Bal-Balika Sabhas (see Annexure 1) and various aspects of a Child-Friendly GP (see Annexure 2).



1. Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayat

1.1 Bal-Balika Sabha is envisaged to be a platform/forum or 'Children's Gram Sabha' for all the children of the GP (preferably 10–18 years of age) including adolescents. All children of the GP may meet during Bal-Balika Sabhas organized by GP prior to formal Gram Sabhas (2–3 times in a year or as decided by the States) to discuss their problems, priorities and potentials. Bal-Balika Sabhas may be organized at the GP level or at the ward level based on the local context as the size of the GPs varies across the country.

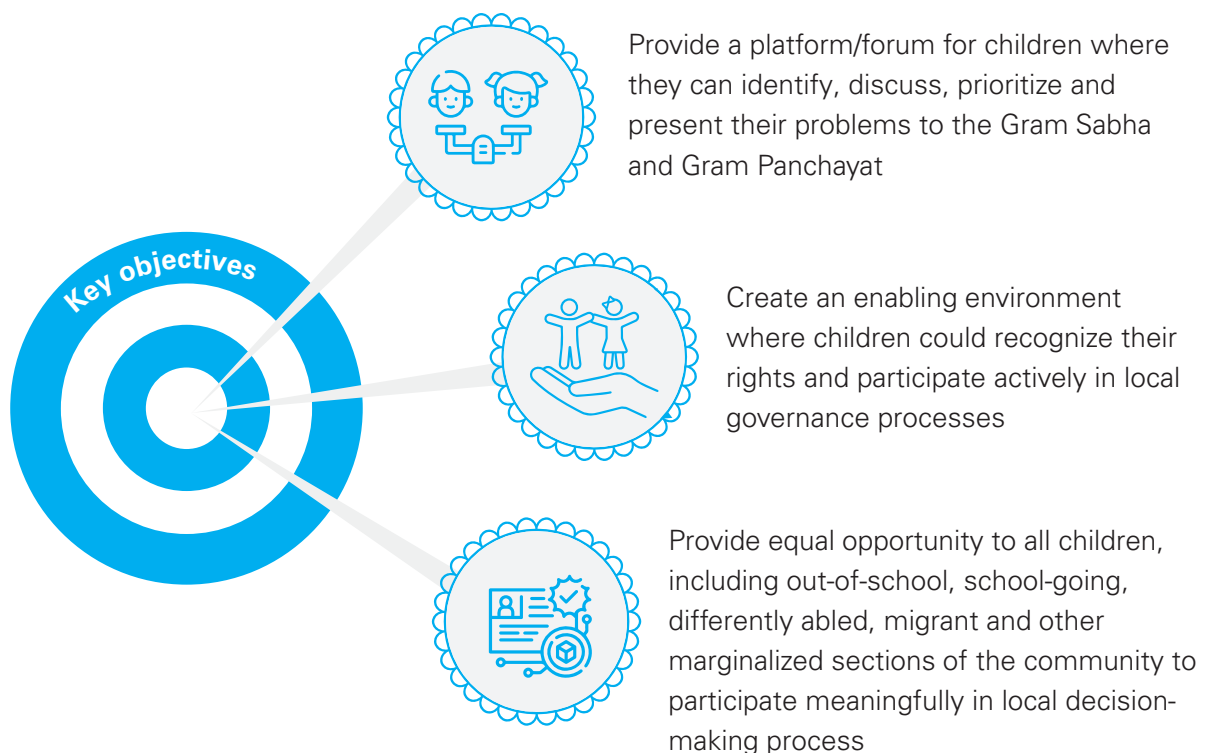


The resolutions taken in the Bal-Balika Sabhas shall subsequently be discussed in the GP meetings and Gram Sabhas so that actions could be taken up by the GPs in coordination with various line departments and local service delivery institutions like school, Anganwadi, health centre/sub-centre, etc. to ensure quality services, healthy living conditions and protection of children from all forms of violence/abuses.

1.2 Bal-Balika Panchayat in essence is a 'Children's Assembly' consisting of selected child representatives from all the wards of the GP in line with the structure of the GP with different committees aligned with various priority areas concerning children. The Bal-Balika Panchayat may meet periodically for identification of priorities, provide support for conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas and coordinate with the GP on various requirements of the children on a sustainable basis.



2. Objectives of Bal-Balika Sabhas and Panchayat



3. Modalities of Conducting Bal-Balika Sabhas

3.1 Awareness generation and entry point activities to ensure participation in Bal-Balika

Sabha: Information on the date, time and purpose of conduct of Bal Sabha shall be well publicized/circulated in all the villages of the GP through miking, distribution of leaflets, wall writing, drumming, rally through local clubs, schools, community-based organizations (CBOs), adolescent groups, etc. Entry point activities like sports and cultural events may be organized by the GP to mobilize children and facilitate their interest and participation in Bal-Balika Sabhas.

Local schools may be informed well in advance so that teachers/headmaster could encourage/advise the students to participate in the Bal-Balika Sabha. All the Elected Representatives of the GP may be asked to encourage children from their respective constituencies/wards to actively participate in the Bal-Balika Sabhas.

3.2 Inclusive participation:

Special emphasis may be given to ensure participation of differently abled children, girls, children from Scheduled Castes (SCs)/Scheduled Tribes (STs), minority, migrant families, etc. in the Bal-Balika Sabhas.

3.3 Coordination between the GP, Gram Sabha and Bal-Balika Sabha; selection of Bal Mitra:

The GP may select/nominate a suitable person, preferably a proactive woman (Chairman of the Standing Committee responsible for women and child development/member of the Village-Level Child Protection Committee (VLPC) /schoolteacher/member of women Self-Help Group (SHG)/member of the local NGO/civil society organization as the Bal Mitra. The Bal Mitra shall facilitate coordination between the GP, Gram Sabha, Bal-Balika Sabha, Bal-Balika Panchayat and local service delivery institutions.

3.4 Bal-Balika Sabhas: Notice, venue, facilitation, agenda and participation

3.4.1 Venue: The GP shall organize the Bal-Balika Sabhas in any suitable venue like the GP office premises, community centre/hall, local school premises, Anganwadi Centre or any other suitable venue that is easily accessible to children and where they would feel safe and able to discuss their issues freely without hesitation and fear. Proper seating arrangement (no discrimination, same facilities and seating arrangements for all as far as possible), availability of safe drinking water and toilet should also be ensured by the GP.

3.4.2 Notice: Information about the date of Bal-Balika Sabhas should be well publicized/circulated/notified/announced at least 15 days prior to the stipulated date by the GP. The GP should intimate and request the concerned line department officials well in advance to remain present during the Bal-Balika Sabhas.

3.4.3 Participants



All children of the GP (especially 10–18 years old children), Bal Mitra, GP Members and GP Secretary,



Other invitees – schoolteachers, members of the Village Level Child Protection Committee (VLCPC), School Management Committee, Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) representative, Anganwadi workers, Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), Auxiliary Nurse Midwifery (ANM), police personnel, local NGO/civil society organization member, parents etc.

3.4.4 Facilitation

The Bal-Balika Sabhas may be presided over by the Bal-Balika Panchayat President with support from the GP President or Bal Mitra. In absence of the Bal-Balika Panchayat, the Bal-Balika Sabhas may be presided over by a child representative (preferably a girl child) nominated by the GP with support from the Bal Mitra, the Standing Committee on Women and Child Development (preferably a woman) and VLCPC.

Proper sitting arrangements and an enabling environment for open discussion during Bal-Balika Sabhas should be ensured. As it is a forum exclusively for children, they should be able to express their opinions freely and the meeting should not be dominated/taken over by the GP members, line department officials, parents or anybody else. Parents should not be allowed to indulge in the proceedings of meeting. Special care should be taken by the GP and other Committees so that children should not be victimized afterwards at the school, in the village or in their respective families for raising problems and gaps in service delivery or discrimination against children.

3.4.5 Agenda:



The agenda of the Bal-Balika Sabhas may be prepared well in advance by the GP with support from Bal-Balika Panchayat/children representatives, Bal Mitra and VLCPC.

Agenda Points

- Welcome address by the GP President
- Introduction of Bal-Balika Panchayat members
- Issues concerning children (health, education, nutrition, sports and recreation, safety and security, issues related to differently abled and vulnerable children, skill development opportunities, other local issues, etc.)
- Response/resolve by the line department officials and the GP
- Discussion on the upcoming GPDP: Major works (for addressing issues raised by children) that need to be included in the GPDP – including budget allocation – no-cost and low-cost activities
- Closing remarks by the GP President

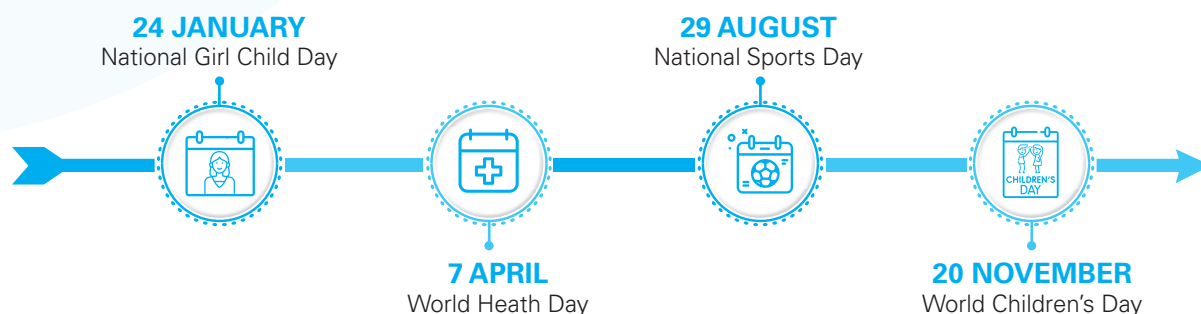


3.4.6 Quorum of the meeting: Rules for maintaining quorum in Gram Sabha may also be adopted for Bal-Balika Sabhas.

3.4.7 Proceedings of the Bal-Balika Sabha: The GP Secretary should ensure that the proceedings of the Bal Sabha are recorded properly, and placed in the GP meeting and Gram Sabha subsequently so that child-centric activities may be discussed and included in the GPDP. Standard Gram Sabha Attendance Register may be used for recording the attendance and proceedings of the Bal-Balika Sabha.

3.4.8 Frequency of Bal-Balika Sabhas (meetings): The frequency of organizing Bal-Balika Sabhas (meetings) may be decided by the States based on local conditions. However, it is desirable that Bal-Balika Sabhas (meetings) are organized 2–3 times and prior to Gram Sabha meetings for alignment with GPDP cycle so that the decisions of Bal Sabha could be placed in Gram Sabha and incorporated further into GPDP. Following dates are suggested for conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas.

Suggested special dates for conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas



4. Provision of Funds for Children

State Governments may advise GPs to make provision for funds out of the untied component of the Central Finance Commission Grant, State Finance Commission Grant and dovetailing of various schematic funds to finance more child-centric activities under GPDP. GP's own fund, administrative expenses under 15th Finance Commission or any other available funds may be utilized for conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas and subsequent meetings of Bal-Balika Panchayat. Recently, an advisory has been issued by MoPR vide DO letter dated 7th February, 2023 that resource persons may be invited in the Bal-Balika and Mahila Sabhas to provide orientation on various aspects of women and children. Accordingly, suitable provision may be made by the States/UTs in their Annual Action Plans of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) under any other training component of CB&T.

5. Bal-Balika Panchayat

As described above in section 1.2, Bal-Balika Panchayat is envisaged as a forum of child representatives or Children's Assembly representing all the wards of GP and in line with the structure of a GP. The Bal-Balika Panchayat would support the larger Bal-Balika Sabhas in identifying the priorities of children in various thematic areas and coordinate with GP on a regular basis to address the requirements of children.

5.1 Formation of Bal-Balika Panchayat:

- 5.1.1 GP will nominate two children (equal representation from boys and girls) within the age group of 10–18 years from each ward of GP as members of the Bal-Balika Panchayat.
- 5.1.2 Bal-Balika Panchayat President and the Vice-president will be elected by all the nominated members and at least one of the said two posts would be reserved for girls. Bal-Balika Panchayat will consist of Bal-Balika Panchayat President, Bal-Balika Panchayat Vice-President and Bal-Balika Panchayat Members.
- 5.1.3 At least 50 per cent of the Bal-Balika Panchayat members shall be girls. Appropriate representation of SC, ST and other vulnerable groups shall be maintained. At least one differently abled child shall be nominated as Bal-Balika Panchayat Member.

5.1.4 Bal-Balika Panchayat will be formed under the guidance of the GP. The GP President and GP Elected Members may nominate members of Bal-Balika Panchayat from each ward of GP in consultation with the Bal Mitra, Chairman of the Women and Child Development Standing Committee, members of the VLCPC, school teachers/headmaster, other eminent persons of GP, Youth Club/Group member, ASHA, Anganwadi worker, SHG/Village-level Federation member/representative, nongovernmental organization (NGO) representative, etc.

5.1.5 The Bal Mitra would support the Bal-Balika Panchayat in their proper functioning.

5.1.6 Bal-Balika Panchayat shall have seven thematic portfolios, jointly headed by two Bal-Balika Panchayat Members or Bal Karyakarta each as follows.

Seven thematic portfolios to be headed by two Bal-Balika Panchayat or Bal Karyakarta



Education
Karyakartas



Child
Protection
and Safety
Karyakartas



Sports and
Culture
Karyakartas



Health and
Sanitation
Karyakartas



Food and
Nutrition
Karyakartas



Planning
(GPDP),
Gender and
Social Justice
Karyakartas



Communication/
Community
Mobilization
Karyakartas



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5.1.7 The selection of Bal-Balika Panchayat President, Vice-President and thematic portfolio holders or Bal Karyakartas shall be done in the first meeting of the Bal-Balika Panchayat under the guidance of GP President, Bal Mitra and GP members.

5.1.8 The President, Vice President and 50 per cent of the members of the Bal-Balika Panchayat should be invited to the Gram Sabha meetings.

5.1.9 The formation of Bal-Balika Panchayat should be completed prior to conduct of the first Bal-Balika Sabha meeting.

5.2 **Term of Bal-Balika Panchayat:** 1 year from the date of formation.

5.3 Eligibility for selection as member of Bal-Balika Panchayat



Resident of the GP



Aged between 10 and 18 years

5.4 Functions of Bal-Balika Panchayat



5.5 Functions of the President of Bal-Balika Panchayat

President of Bal-Balika Panchayat



- 01 To convene Bal-Balika Panchayat meetings
- 02 To preside over Bal-Balika Panchayat meetings
- 03 To bring the resolution passed by the Bal-Balika Sabha to the notice of the GP to support in its implementation and monitoring
- 04 To motivate Bal Karyakartas and other Bal-Balika Panchayat members to discharge their responsibilities
- 05 To visit Anganwadi, school, health centre, etc., if required, along with any GP members nominated by the GP President

5.6 Functions of Respective Thematic Bal Karyakartas



Various thematic area Karyakartas would support the Bal-Balika Panchayat in identifying issues/problems faced by children in the concerned areas, bring them to the notice of the Bal-Balika Panchayats and the GP

5.7 Meetings of the Bal-Balika Panchayat

5.7.1 Meetings of the Bal-Balika Panchayat shall be held on a bi-monthly basis (once in two months). The President of Bal-Balika Panchayat will issue the notice for the meeting seven days in advance to all the members and the GP. The GP will provide necessary support for conduct of the meeting by allocating meeting space and other arrangements.

5.7.2 Agenda: The agenda of the Bal-Balika Panchayat shall include the following.

Agenda of the Bal-Balika Panchayat



Welcome address by the President of Bal-Balika Panchayat



Vice-President to read each agenda (seven thematic sector-wise) one-by-one



Thematic Karyakartas to initiate discussions on the concerned thematic issues



The house to suggest next course of action and issues to be put up to the Bal Sabha and the GP

- 5.7.3 Decisions in the meeting will be taken by consensus or majority. The proceedings of the meeting will be recorded by the Communications Karyakartas.
- 5.7.4 **Quorum of the meeting:** The quorum of the Bal-Balika Panchayat meeting will be two-third, that is, if there are 15 members including the President and the Vice-President, then the quorum will be completed in the presence of at least 10 members.



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Annexure 1

Roll-out Plan for Conduct of Bal-Balika Sabha and Formation of Bal-Balika Panchayat



STATE LEVEL

1. **Issuance of Government order/circular** for conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas and constitution of Bal-Balika Panchayat in synchronization with Gram Sabha and the GPDP cycle
2. **Legal provision** to be made for required legal framework and amendment in the State Panchayati Raj Act for institutionalization of key participatory platforms and accountability forums like Mahila Sabha and Bal-Balika Sabhas
3. **Coordination:** State Panchayati Raj Department to coordinate with other key departments concerned like Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, Education, Rural Development, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Social Welfare and Social Justice, etc. for creating an enabling environment for institutionalization of Bal-Balika Sabhas and participation of line department officials in Bal-Balika Sabhas through joint circulars/Government orders, special drive taken for conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas across the State, etc.
4. **Issuance of supplementary GPDP guidelines** to instruct and encourage GPs to incorporate issues discussed in Bal-Balika Sabhas into GPDP and to make suitable budget provision for child centric activities under GPDP
5. **Orientation and capacity building:**
 - ✓ Inclusion of the Theme 3: 'Child-Friendly village' as an integral part of the State PRI Capacity Building Plan by the State Institute of Panchayati Raj and Rural Department (SIPRD)
 - ✓ Preparation of training and Information Education Communication (IEC) materials on Child-friendly Panchayats, Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayats.
 - ✓ Training of Panchayats Elected Representatives and functionaries on:
 - Child-friendly Panchayat, conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas and formation of Bal-Balika Panchayat
 - Key legal provisions and various Government schemes on children
 - Importance of no-cost and low-cost activities
6. **Overall guidance and monitoring** with the district authorities and GPs to ensure Bal-Balika Sabhas continue to take place on a regular basis and mainstreamed within an acceptable timeframe
7. **Sharing of evidence/learnings/good cases/beacons** for demonstration to other Panchayats within and outside the State



DISTRICT LEVEL

1. **District-level Orientation Programme** with line department officials concerned and GPs on Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayat
2. **Overall guidance and support** to GPs for conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas and formation of Bal-Balika Panchayats
3. **Monitoring and periodic review** of progress



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GRAM PANCHAYAT LEVEL

1. **Taking pledge (Sankalp) in Gram Sabha and GP meetings** at the earliest to prioritize Theme 3: 'Child-friendly Village' as a key priority area of intervention
2. **GP-Level Mobilization Programme** on Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayat with all the GP members, concerned Standing Committees, VLCPC, Women SHGs/ village SHG cluster, adolescent groups/clubs, frontline workers (teachers, ASHA, Anganwadi workers, ANM, etc.), SHG facilitator/RP, NGOs and other CBOs
3. **Announcement/information to the Gram Sabha** about the first Bal-Balika Sabha to be conducted and formation of Bal-Balika Panchayat
4. **Selection of Bal Mitra:** The GP may select/nominate a suitable person, preferably a proactive woman (Chairman of the Standing Committee responsible for women and child development, or any other elected members, or a member of VLCPC, or schoolteacher, or a social worker or member of women SHG/Village-level Federation) as the Bal Mitra; the Bal Mitra may function as the link/coordinator among GP, Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayat
5. **Conduct of 'entry-point activities'** like cultural and sports events for mobilizing children and adolescent groups and explain to the children the concept of Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayat; school teachers/headmasters may be requested to explain the concept to the students in schools
6. **Involvement of schoolteachers/headmasters of local schools, adolescent groups, youth clubs and NGOs** for mobilization of in-school and out-of-school children for participation in Bal-Balika Sabhas and formation of Active Bal Panchayats
7. **Mobilization of women SHGs/Village-level Federations** to ensure that their children and other children of their localities also participate in Bal-Balika Sabhas
8. **Formation of Bal-Balika Panchayat** with the help of the Advisory Group consisting of the Bal Mitra, Chairman of the Women and Child Development, Standing Committee, schoolteachers/headmaster, etc. as described in the guidelines
9. **Intensive campaign** (such as miking, pamphlet distribution, house visits, etc.) in the GP area well in advance on date, venue, agenda, etc. for Bal-Balika Sabhas to ensure inclusive participation during the meetings; informing the line departments and requesting them to remain present during the meetings
10. **Conduct of Bal-Balika Sabhas** as per guidelines including support for facilitation of Bal-Balika Sabhas and documentation of the proceedings/decisions taken
11. **Discussion of the decisions taken in Bal-Balika Sabhas** in GP meeting and Gram Sabha; incorporation of prioritized child-centric activities in the GPDP and allocation of suitable budget for the same
12. **Progress updates of district and block authorities** on implementation, and requests for addressing bottlenecks, if any.
13. **Extension of support to Bal-Balika Panchayat** to conduct their bimonthly meetings with space and other facilitation support; coordination to create awareness between children and parents on various issues concerning children

Annexure 2

Key Features and Activities of a Child-Friendly GP



1. Key Features of a Child-Friendly GP

- The GP has taken the pledge (Sankalp) in Gram Sabha and GP meetings for becoming 'Child-Friendly Village' (Theme 3).
- Children have easy access to the GP office. They are aware of elected members of the GP.
- Elected members and functionaries of the GP are aware of problems faced by children in the GP and make sincere efforts to solve those problems.
- The GP coordinates with local institutions like school, Anganwadi, health centres, etc. on a regular basis to address service delivery problems, and incorporates relevant activities in the GPDPs to address those problems.
- The GP makes effort to address problems like malnourishment, incomplete immunization, school dropout, discrimination against girl child, etc. in coordination with the line department officials.
- The GP promotes and builds child-friendly infrastructure in the villages, such as schools and Anganwadi centres with child-friendly facilities, playgrounds, parks, child-friendly low-toilets with handwashing facilities, easily accessible drinking water facilities, etc.
- The GP conducts Bal-Balika Sabhas as per guidelines, has constituted Bal-Balika Panchayat and has ensured active participation of children in GPDP preparation and village-level decision-making process.
- Proper grievance redressal system is in place in the GP with respect to matters related to children.
- Midday meals/supplementary nutrition facilities are served as per standard in schools and Anganwadi centres.
- The GP is child labour-free. Child marriages, incidences of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking of children do not take place in the GP.
- The GP has a functional Village-level Child Protection Committee with appropriate representation of children.

Continued

Continued



1. Key Features of a Child-Friendly GP

- Children of the GP as a whole feel happy, healthy and secured.
- Children are aware of the schemes related to them.
- Various cultural events are organized by the GP involving children.
- Information/contact numbers of VLCPC, District Child Welfare Committee, District Child Protection Unit, Special Juvenile Police Unit, Child line (1098), etc. are properly displayed in the GP area.
- The GP employees are sensitive, responsible and accountable towards the interests of the children.



2. Key Activities for GPs to Become a Child-Friendly GP

Panchayats should prioritize issues related to children while preparing GPDP and regularly monitor the progress of implementation of those plans and activities. Child-centric issues already identified or coming out of Bal-Balika Sabhas should be discussed with importance in GP meetings and subsequently acted upon. Panchayat should identify the households with poor and vulnerable children and link them with various ongoing Government schemes. The Standing Committee of GP looking after women and child development issues should take proactive role in identifying and raising issues related to child development in the GP with support from Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayat. Following is a list of actions that can be taken up by GPs to address issues related to children.

Suggestive list of actions that can be taken up by GPs to become child-friendly



2.1 Child Survival

- Promote and ensure early registration of all pregnancies, antenatal and post-natal check-up, and nutritional care for pregnant women.
- Promote and ensure 100 per cent institutional delivery.
- Promote 100 per cent birth registration and ensure timely issuance of birth certificate (wherever applicable).
- Track children in coordination with ANM, Anganwadi workers and ASHA to facilitate 100 per cent immunization of mothers and their children, nutrition, health care and related services.
- Facilitate establishment of Anganwadi, health centres, schools in places easily accessible to children and pregnant women.
- Ensure services related to safe drinking water and sanitation in local institutions like Anganwadi centres, school, etc.
- Increase awareness among local people on public health, nutrition, social evils like child marriage, early pregnancy, etc. and related government schemes.
- Facilitate regular meetings of Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC) and observing Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND) or 'Arogya Divas', Poshan Abhiyan etc.



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2.2 Child Protection

- Campaign intensively in villages to prevent social evils like child labour, child marriage, child sexual abuse, violence, eve-teasing, corporal punishment, harmful practices, or customs against children, etc.
- Take resolution in GP meeting/Gram Sabha/Ward Sabha for becoming 'Child-Friendly GP', 'Prevent female feticide', 'Child labour, trafficking and child marriage free GP', etc.
- Track at-risk children by collecting information about dropouts/differently abled children/children of migrants/manual scavengers/orphans/women- and child-headed households from schools and other institutions to prevent child trafficking, child labour and missing children.
- Facilitate formation and proper functioning of VLCPC under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS).
- Form Village-level Vigilance Committee/groups, especially involving youth to prevent/report child marriage, child labour, trafficking, violence against women and children, etc.
- Report any case of violence, sexual abuses, etc. against children to the police.
- Disseminate/display information and contact numbers of Village-level Child Protection Committee (VLCPC), District Child Welfare Committee, District Child Protection Unit, Special Juvenile Police Unit, Child line (1098), etc.
- Engage with local schools to prevent corporal punishment of children in school.



2.3 Child Development

- Ensure that all eligible children are enrolled and attend Anganwadi centres for supplementary nutrition, immunization, growth monitoring, healthcare and pre-school education.
- Organize awareness camps on the importance of early childhood care and education with guardians, Anganwadi workers for bringing children to ICDS centres.
- Conduct special drives to support local schools for bringing dropout children back to school and to prevent dropouts.
- Periodic interaction and monitoring with school and Anganwadi centres to ensure quality of midday meal and other services.
- Promote the philosophy of 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao'.
- Organize meetings/workshops with teachers, Village Education Committees/School Management Committee, parents and others to prevent dropouts, ensure 100 per cent enrolment, and address bottlenecks in providing quality education and other issues related to children with special needs.
- Facilitate tree plantation/kitchen garden in schools, erection of fencing, cleanliness, and functionality of separate toilets for boys and girls.
- Develop accessible children's parks and playgrounds for children.
- Organize various cultural events and celebrate Children's Day, 'Day of the Girl Child', etc.
- Create book banks (new, old, donated, etc.)/library for textbooks/reference books etc., especially for poor students.
- Announce special prizes for girls and boys, especially from poor and vulnerable families who are doing well in studies.
- Provide support to poor students with books and stationery from own source revenue or community contribution.



2.4 Child Participation

- Conduct Bal-Balika Sabhas and constitute Bal-Balika Panchayat to create an enabling environment for children to discuss and prioritize their problems for submission in Gram Sabha and GP.
- Involve children in observation of important events/days like Independence Day, Republic Day, Children's Day, etc. to facilitate child participation.
- Ensure an environment free of discrimination (based on caste, religion, gender or any other issues) for children.
- Facilitate creation of various kinds of clubs like Sports Club, Science Club and Cultural Club to promote cultural and recreational activities among children.
- Ensure participation of children/adolescents in preparation, implementation and monitoring of GPDP.
- Invite representatives of Bal-Balika Panchayat/adolescent groups as invitees in Panchayat meetings to observe the proceedings and raise voices regarding their issues and opinions.
- Ensure discussion on children centric issues raised by Bal-Balika Sabhas and Bal-Balika Panchayats in Gram Sabha meetings.
- Ensure child representation in Village-level Child Protection Committee (VLCPC).
- Ensure child-friendly environment and inclusive infrastructure (low toilets, tube wells, children's park that can be used by children easily, etc.).
- Conduct advocacy with local schools to educate children on the potential of local government, importance of locally available natural resources and their conservation for local development.



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