

## UNVEILING VEILPUR

### THE SUCCESS STORY OF ACHIEVEMENT OF 100% ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN IN THE AGE GROUP OF 5 TO 14 YEARS IN A MANDAL WITH PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION

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Government of Andhra Pradesh is committed to provide education to all children. Under DPEP, four mandals, viz., Renjal, Yedpalli, Nandipet and Veilpur in Nizamabad district of Andhra Pradesh were identified to be taken up to achieve 100% enrolment of children of the age group 5-14 Yrs under the Universalisation of Elementary Education(UEE) scheme.

As per the instructions of G. Asok Kumar IAS, District Collector & Chairman DPEP, Nizamabad, Veilpur mandal was taken on a pilot basis to achieve 100% enrolment of 5-14 age group children and for total eradication of child labor. The order of the Government of Andhra Pradesh redefining “ Child labor” as “*all those children between the age group of 5 to 14 years who are not attending a school*” came at the right time as a boon for the program. This expanded the scope of the application of the Prevention of the Child labor Act, from the restricted spectrum of children engaged in hazardous occupation to all children who are not attending a school. A massive, highly intensive and very carefully planned effort was launched to achieve 100% enrolment of 5-14 years old children in Veilpur mandal. With the sustained effort and concentrated and closely monitored dynamic strategies, Valipur Mandal in Nizamabad district achieved the unique distinction of becoming the first Mandal in the A.P. State to achieve 100% enrolment of 5-14 years old children and was declared a child labor free Mandal as October 2, 2001.

Chronologically speaking:

- On 09.12.2000 – DPEP officials conducted a meeting with Mandal level officers and Teacher Association members on the concept of UEE. DPEP had identified four mandals to be taken up for UEE. On 01.02.2001 a District Level meeting was conducted at Pragathi Bhavan.
- From 04.02.2001 to 05.02.2001 Mandal Education Officers and Mandal Resource Persons attended M.V. Foundation Bridge Camps in RR District.
- On 10.02.2001 action plan prepared by the four Mandal teams.
- From 05.03.2001 to 23.04.2001 conducted “*Avagahana Sadhasulu*” at Habitation level to gear up public support.
- In a meeting with DPEP officials on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2001, the Collector decided to take up Veilpur mandal on pilot basis instead of taking it in all the 4 mandals.
- On 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2001 as a part of the “*Chadukunnam*” program “*Chaduvu Panduga*” week was organized to focus on enrolment.
- On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2001 a meeting of Head Masters and villagers of Veilpur mandal was conducted to motivate parents of unenrolled, never enrolled and dropped out children and assess the enrolment process.
- Preliminary survey identified 398 children out of school or as child labors.

- Intensive drive was launched on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2001 in Vailpoor Mandal to ensure 100% enrolment. A detailed action plan was prepared and strategies worked out under the guidance of G.Asok Kumar, District Collector and under the leadership of Sri B.R. Jagadishwar Goud, Addl. Project Coordinator, DPEP. A team consisting of Sri P.Sudhakar Rao, Community Mobilization Officer, DPEP, Smt. G.Nirmala Kumari, Girl Child Development Officer, DPEP, Sri Prakash, Laxman, Srinivas Reddy, Mandal Resource Persons of Vailpoor was dispatched to the Mandal for intensive campaign. The team stayed in the Mandal, visited each hamlet in the Mandal a number of times, made personal contacts with each household, each caste/religious groups and each Village Development Committees to inspire and involve them to ensure 100% enrolment of school age children.
- On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2001 Dist. Collector addressed all Head Masters, School Education Committee members and Mandal Core Team Members of Veilpur. Collector honored the employers who had voluntarily released the children working as child labor in their business as a part of the drive.
- Posters threatening criminal action on employers refusing to relieve child labor were pasted all over the mandal. Local Sub Inspector of police made rounds along with team members to send a message to “stubborn” employers.
- From 19<sup>th</sup> July to 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2001 mobilization drive was taken up at Habitation level.
- Based on the varied experience gained, strategies were reworked and a reoriented drive was started on 27<sup>th</sup> July, 2001. By this time, initial resistance and indifference of villagers had turned into a curiosity and co-operation. Elected representatives of the Panchayati Raj (PR) institutions like Sarpanchs and Mandal President, Mandal parishad members, Zilla Parishad member and caste elders started taking active part.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> August, 2001 Bridge camp for Boys at Veilpur was opened by the District Collector. 25 children who were never enrolled/ dropped out were enrolled that day.
- On 8<sup>th</sup> August 2001 a meeting of the Village Development Committee, Vailpoor was conducted. District Collector participated in the meeting to drive in the message.
- On 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2001 a Girls Residential Bridge course camp at Mahila Pranganam, Perkit was opened by the Collector. 76 Girl Children were enrolled on that day.
- Kalajathas were organized by professionals to motivate the parents and children of different social and economic sectors.
- “Balakala Brindams” were constituted tapping the talents of children enrolled in the bridge schools in presenting cultural programs on enrolment. They staged street plays to inspire the left over children to come to school.
- Very Effectively used child-to-child motivational technique in roping—in the children engaged in child labor in farms, hotels, cattle grazing, cycle shops etc.
- All Village Development Committees(VDCs) were motivated to condemn child labor in all forms and resolutions were taken from all VDCs, Gram panchayats assuring that they would not let any child labor in their area.

- They promised to boycott and impose fines on those who engaged child labor or refused to send their children to school.
- “Oath” also taken by caste elders not to use the labor of children in their village for any occasion. Friday meetings were conducted with Muslim leaders to motivate them to send their children to school.
- Resolutions were taken in the month of September 2001 from Gram Panchyats stating that they supported 100% enrollment of children of the age group 5-14 years and that they would ensure no child labor in the village.
- The team caught hold of children engaged in labor at their work spots—from fields, forests, grazing grounds, cycle shops, hotels etc and admitted them in bridge schools.
- On 8<sup>th</sup> September 2001, the district level program on the “International Literacy day” was conducted at Veilpur. The local MLA, other elected representatives, VDCs and District Collector participated in the program.
- Co-operation in the form of men and material from the villagers poured in. On 12.10.2001, VDC Vailpoor donated 40 steel boxes to the Bridge Camp children.
- State Bank of Hyderabad, Vailpoor branch and Vailpoor press club donated toothpastes, brushes and soaps to children. Addl. Project Coordinator (DPEP), provided one Black & White television. Local Doctors offered to visit the camps without any charges. Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies sponsored uniforms.
- Mr. Baji Reddy Govardhan, local MLA sponsored 100 Blankets for the children.
- Mr. Ganga Reddy, local MP sponsored 100 shoes for the children.
- A Teachers’ convention was conducted on 27.10.2001 to ensure 100% retention of the children so painstakingly enrolled.
- Retention protection committees were organized at habitation and Mandal level. These committees were given responsibility of retention of the children.
- In course of time it became a self-sustaining and villagers driven program.
- Villagers proudly erected display boards in each village declaring that **“children in the village who are not attending the schools as ‘0’ (ZERO).**
- **On 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2001 Veilpur was declared as Child labor free mandal**
- **By then 539 never-enrolled/dropped-out children were brought back to the school. All 8057 children in the mandal were in schools!**
- Under the Andhra Pradesh Compulsory Primary Education Act 1982, all Grampanchayats passed resolution committing to ensure 100% enrollment and retention of school age children. According to the provisions of the act, On 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2001 a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed by the Sarpanches and District Education Officer. District Collector signed on behalf of the Government. This is to the effect that the Grampanchayat would ensure 100% enrolment of children in their panchyats and the Government would ensure necessary support in the form of schools and teachers.

This is the first time in the State that such a MOU has been entered.

- On 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2001, Dr. Justice K.Ramaswamy, Member, National Human Rights Commission, visited Nizamabad. In his report to the Chairman, NHRC he has appreciated the efforts of the Collector and his team on the work done at Veilpur. Verbatim, his comments are, “Child Labor children have been kept in Bridge Courses in schools run under the directions of the District Collector. The officer personally took interest in the campaign. ***“While congratulating G.Asok Kumar, the District Collector, the officers and the members of Civil Society for the good work done by them, I requested them not to be complacent for their success in one Mandal, but that it should be extended to all the Mandals.*”**
- On 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2001 Joint Review Mission of DPEP consisting of Mr. Keith Hinchliffe of the World Bank, and Mrs. Felicity Town send, Senior Education Advisor of DFID held detailed discussions with Collector on the process, strategies adopted at Veilpur. They visited the mandal on the next day.
- On 18<sup>th</sup> January, 2002 Mr.Sumit Bose, IAS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of HRD, Government of India and Sri Nagarjuna, SPD, DPEP, Andhra Pradesh visited the mandal and interacted with the villagers on their achievement.
- In the two day workshop of State Project Directors of DPEP held at Kolkatta in January 2002, 2½ hours were allotted for discussion on the strategies adopted in Veilpur mandal for the successful enrolment of children.  
It was proposed to develop “Veilpur model” as a nation wide strategy for enrolment of school age-children.
- In February 2002 a team of officers from the DPEP districts of Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Addl Project Director, DPEP, Uttar Pradesh visited Veilpur. Many organizations working on child labor/ primary education from all over the country started visiting Veilpur to gain from the experience.
- On 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2002 a team of 20 members from Karimnagar district visited Veilpur.
- On 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2002 a team of education department officials from Assam led by MV Foundation, Hyderabad visited Veilpur.
- From 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2002 Asok Kumar, District Collector, Sudhakar Rao, CMO and Mandal Presidents of Yedpalli, Renjal and ZPTC Nandipet were invited to VV Giri National Labor Institute, NOIDA, to attend a workshop on child labor.
- On 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2002 a team of eighteen officials of Education department and Zilla Parishad, Dravanagari district of Karnataka came along with UNICEF officials.
- On 27<sup>th</sup> September 2002 a team of thirty officials of Labor, Education and Police department from Gulbarga district, Karnataka and UNICEF officials visited Veilpur.
- Teams from MV foundation, Hyderabad; Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore; UNICEF and Mr. M.V. Joseph IAS, Project Manager, International Program on Elimination of Child Labor, ILO, Hyderabad have visited the mandal and appreciated the efforts taken for the elimination of child labor and the results achieved.

The community waived off loans to an extent of Rs 35 lakhs –principal and interest together- taken as loan by villagers keeping children as bonded labor in the house of loaners/ moneylenders. All these children were brought back to schools.

The district administration have constructed toilets and compound walls to all the 35 schools in the mandal and filled up all vacancy of teachers as a goodwill gesture to the efforts put in by the community.

### The uniqueness of the “Veilpur Model” are:

- Total involvement of the community in the program. The community ensured the success and sustenance of the program.
- Whole hearted involvement of the elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions (Sarpanchs, Mandal Parishad and Zilla Parishad members), MLA, Caste elders, Village Development Committee, women groups, professionals like doctors and advocates, business and trading community, youth clubs, agriculture societies, press, media & other sections of people in the program.
- This program was started, developed and sustained by the motivation given by Governmental organizations. Seeing the success, NGOs got tagged on later.
- The sustenance of the movement was taken over by the community totally.
- In the next year (2002) all 5 year old children were enrolled by the community
- Though veiled threats had to be used initially to force shopkeepers and moneylenders to release their child labors, no criminal cases were booked against them. Pressure of the community forced them to release the children.
- All shopkeepers have put up boards displaying that they do not have any child labor in their establishment.
- A Formal MOU was signed between villagers and Government for the first time in the history of Andhra Pradesh for 100% enrolment and retention of the children. According to this, local communities guarantee to send all children of the age group 5-14 years to schools, 100 % retention of all enrolled children and total absence of child labor in their area. Government, in turn, ensure teaching and learning materials, infrastructure facilities and teachers.
- Villagers, showing their total commitment and willingness for a long-term association with the program, have put up display boards in each village.
- There is a sense of pride in the villagers that all their children are in schools.
- **Even after ONE and half YEARS, there is 100% retention.**
- This success has inspired people of the neighboring mandals to achieve 100% enrollment. Yedpally, Renjal, Nandipet, Morthad, Jakranpalli mandals have achieved 100% the enrolment.
- Inspired by the success of the program, the district administration came out with a program called “**BALYA RAKSHA**” to eliminate child labor from the district. This was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2002.
- All 34 child labor schools run under the National Child Labor Program were renamed as “Balya Raksha” Schools.
- Encouraged by the success another Ten Balya Raksha Residential Bridge Course centers and four hundred and forty eight Balya Raksha Non Residential Bridge Course Centers have been started in the district.
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- **EVEN AFTER 19 YEARS, IN 2019 IT WAS FOUND THAT ALL CHILDREN IN THE MANDAL ARE GOING TO SCHOOL AND NOT A SINGLE CHILD LABOR EXIST IN THE MANDAL**

A Veilpur like success does any district administration proud..

### VITAL STATISTICS:

	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total No. of children in the age group of 05-14 years as on today. :	4229	3828	8057
Total No. of children in-schools :	3977	3541	7518
Total No. of children out of schools :	252	287	539
No. of I.L.O. Bridge camp at Telugu Bala Mahila Pranganam, Perkit (Armoor Mandal) : 01			
No. of children at Perkit in TBMP, Perkit :	-	67	67
No. of Residential Bridge Centres : 01			
No. of Non-Residential Bridge Centres : 03			
No. of children at present in Residential Bridge Camps :	86	-	86
No. of children in Non-Residential Bridge Centres :	15	26	41
No. of children mainstreamed so far through Residential Bridge Centres :	-	-	-
No. of Children enrolled through mobilization :	144	192	336
No. of children mainstreamed so far through Non-Residential Bridge Centres :	-	-	-
Remaining No. of out of school children in the Mandal. :	-	-	-
Mental Retarded Children :	7	2	9