

# 1

## *I*ntroduction

*“Education for all the Children is our Responsibility”*

**N. Chandrababu Naidu**  
Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh

It was through the efforts made by the state, civil society and trade unions in the 90s that the problem of child labour came to light and since then it has become an agenda for developing countries like India. Child education, child labour, child health and child rights have become priority areas for all the developing countries and efforts have been made by the UN agencies, the government and the civil society to tackle this problem. It has been realized that child labour is an anathema to human dignity and civilized society. Its eradication has been recognized as one of the most important and urgent task before the humanity today. However, the complexity of the phenomenon does respond rarely to simple strategies. Since, it is an economic, social, cultural and educational dimension; enormity of the problems calls for sincere efforts not only from the state but also from the society. Hence, for an effective education and action for the elimination of the child labour, competent persons dedicated to the philosophy of not employing any child labour are urgently needed at each level, who not only know all about the problems but are sensitive enough to be able to pursue all those concerns with the problem. This entails the need for an understanding family and grassroots level strategy, an effective educational system, and competent and dedicated persons. The most

important factor is that there should be a vision to enroll all the children in the school.

To enroll 211 million economically backward and working children in the school is a gigantic task at the world level. In India, the task is equally enormous comprising of 79.7 million children, who are neither in school nor at work with 11.3 million full time and marginal child labour according to 1991 census of India. The figure does not include dropout children from 112 million full time school going children, which comes to more than 50 millions. It shows that approximately 141 million children are directly or indirectly not in the school system in India. It indicates the magnitude of the problem and the required efforts needed by all the partners of the society to put all these children in the school system.

In India, education is the state matter. Many states have come with their own action plans for the education of the children. The states along with their own funds are also getting support from the World Bank as far as education to the children is concerned. The District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) and *Sarva Shiksha Aabhiyan* are the key projects in the direction of education of children.

As far as the total child labour in India is concerned, the state level percentage of working children in the year 1991 was as follows:

1. Andhra Pradesh (14.5)
2. Uttar Pradesh (12.5)
3. Madhya Pradesh (12.0)
4. Maharashtra (9.5)
5. Karnataka (8.7)
6. Bihar (8.3)

7. Rajasthan (6.9)
8. West Bengal (6.3)
9. Tamil Nadu (5.1)
10. Gujarat (4.6)
11. Orissa (4.0)

It is clear from the figures mentioned above that in India, State of Andhra Pradesh has the largest percentage of child labour and presently it has been making concerted efforts in enrolling all the children below 14 years of age into education system.

Andhra Pradesh is one of the first States to make commitment to combat child labour and to send all drop out children to school. Government has redefined child labour as all those children between the age group of 5-14 years who are not attending the school. The uniqueness of this definition is that it is the first State, which has widened the scope of child labour and commitment of the government to enroll all the children who are out of school.

To meet these challenges, Andhra Pradesh government has initiated a number of strategies and actions at all levels of the State. At the highest level, a resolution was passed by Andhra Pradesh State Legislative Assembly which said, **“that this House unanimously condemns the practice of engaging child labour and calls upon all the citizens of the State to totally avoid engaging children in any form of work. This House further unanimously resolves that all necessary steps shall be taken to eradicate child labour in the State before the year 2004”**.

The inaugural address of the Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Dr. C. Rangarajan, to the A.P. Legislative Assembly on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2002 said, **“Our vision of**

**Andhra Pradesh is a State where poverty is totally eradicated; where every man, woman and child has access, to not just the basic minimum needs, but to all the opportunities to lead a happy and fulfilling life; a knowledge and learning society built on the value of hard work, honesty, discipline and collective sense of purpose. Education is the key to achieve this. My Government is committed to universalize elementary education and adult literacy by 2005. In view of the importance attached to this goal, it is intended to bring a legislation making school education compulsory till class 10<sup>th</sup>. To meet the above task, government is launching a programme to set up educational institutions on a scale unprecedented in the history of the State. The programme will ensure a primary school within three kilometers and a high school within five kilometers. A girl-child protection scheme has been launched with a view to protect the girl-child and to encourage girls to attend school and get educated”.**

To implement the vision of the Andhra Pradesh Government, Secretary of the Department of Education and State Project Director of District Primary Education Programme conducted meetings with all the Project Directors of National Child Labour Projects and prepared an action plan for the eradication of child labour and enrollment of all the children in the school.

Action plans were prepared at the district level and mandals were selected by coordinated efforts of both the departments i.e. National Child Labour Projects and DPEP functionaries. The criteria for the selection of the mandals were:

- a) Density of the child labour
- b) ST concentrated mandals
- c) Proximity for implementation
- d) Co-operation of the mandal staff

The following strategies were adopted to implement the programme for achieving 100 percent enrollment and mainstreaming of children of the age group of 5 to 14 years:

- Strengthening of the District Level Committee by introducing more institutions and persons who are interested in rendering their services voluntarily.
- Formation of Core committee at habitation and mandal level: At the mandal level, each officer and service unit was motivated to adopt one habitation to identify, motivate and enroll child labour into the school. The unit officers involved interacted with all developmental departments, Non-Governmental Organizations, Mother Committees, Youth Organizations, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Self Help Groups.
- Identification of mobilisers in the mandal: Two or three mobilisers had to be identified depending upon the child labour status and out of school children of the mandal. The mobilizer must be having Senior Secondary Certificate as minimum qualification and should be well versed with mobilization skill and cultural talents.
- Sensitization campaign at mandal, village and habitation level by conducting *Kala jathas*, habitation meetings, door-to-door motivation campaigns, rallies and *padyatras*, etc.
- Marking on the doors of houses, which have child labour. The mark should be as a symbol of social stigma.
- Conducting habitation wise meetings with officers of the labour department and police department to make the parents of child labour aware about the legislative provisions and to take action against parents not sending their children to schools.

- Organizing *Bal melas* to motivate children for education and created an atmosphere of learning and joyful experience.
- Conducting of *Kala jathas* involving old students of Bridge Course on the themes of impact of bonded labour; life and growth of child; importance of girl education, effect of illiteracy in society, family and on the individual; early marriages and their effect on women's life.

All the districts were activated to translate the vision of the Andhra Pradesh Government into reality and make 100 percent enrollment of children as an agenda of their districts. To make the mandals child labour free, the Nizamabad District Collector took initiative and held meeting with mandal level officials along with the District Primary Education Programme officials and members of Teachers Association on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2000. In the meeting, the District Collector emphasized the importance of eradication of child labour and enrollment of out of school children in the school. All the officials offered to work on the directions given by the District Collector.

To convert the goal into reality, four mandals were identified on the basis of the direction given by the State for focused and concentrated efforts. These mandals were Ranjal, Yedpalli, Nandipet and Veilpoor. Veilpoor was selected out of these four mandals for the pilot study and 100 percent enrollment of children in the school. Veilpoor Mandal of Nizamabad district was declared child labour free on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2001 and all the children of the Mandal in the age group of 5-14 years were in school. An attempt was made to document the strategies adopted by the mandal. The next chapter reveals the methodology adopted by the researchers to document the Veilpoor experiment.

# 2

## *Objectives and Methodology*

### Objectives

#### **Development Objective of the Project**

To contribute to the process of making child labour free State.

#### **Immediate Objectives of the Project**

At the end of the action programme, a document on the processes of making child labour free Mandal, a case of the Veilpoor Mandal of Andhra Pradesh will be ready for use in training programmes and research in the field of child labour in Andhra Pradesh and also for use in applying the best methods adopted in the Veilpoor Mandal for replication in the process of prevention and elimination of child labour.

The main thrust of this study is to understand and document the strategies and replicate them to other Mandals and Districts in making 100 per cent enrolment of children in the age group of 5 to 14 years in the school and free from engagement of child labour in any occupations and processes in Veilpoor Mandal of Nizamabad district of Andhra Pradesh.

# Methodology

Following methods were used to study the impact, strategy and replicability aspects of the Veilpoor child labour free Mandal:

## **a) Literature Survey**

The project was started with the study of the literature available on child labour especially in Andhra Pradesh and Nizamabad District of the State. In the literature, government documents were widely studied to understand the existing support system and legal protection available in the State as far as the child labour is concerned. The orders of the Andhra Pradesh government which has given responsibilities to different government departments to deal with the child labour problem helped us to understand the network and commitment of the government for the eradication of the child labour.

Documents at the level of Veilpoor Mandal were read before leaving for the field. The Veilpoor Mandal had received wide media coverage. Media reports reflect the opinion of different stakeholders of the society. Newspaper clippings of different news groups were studied to get some idea about the perception of the project in the mind of the people. The study helped us in the identification of the key issues for the structured and unstructured interview, identification of the respondents and institutions for the interview, which were important for the present study to get complete picture of the interventions made for making child labour free Mandal.

## **b) Interview: Structured, Unstructured and In-depth**

A structured interview schedule was prepared to access the opinions of:

- Government officials: District Magistrate, staff members of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Police Officials and Law Enforcing agencies and Teachers



- Local Institutions: Members of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, Village Development Committees and Village Pradhans
- Community and Religious leaders: Religious leaders of different communities.
- Employers: Various sections of the ex-employers who had employed children in their concerns.
- Children: Children who were not attending school/dropped out and working as a child labour before the implementation of the project
- Parents: Parents of the ex child labour
- Street Theatre group: Members of street theatre groups who participated in the awareness campaign during child labour free efforts
- Voluntary organisations: NGOs, workers' associations such as hotel associations, association of taxi drivers, associations of dhobis and business groups.
- Members of the civil society: Individuals who have contributed for the eradication of the child labour from the Mandal.

Along with the structured interview, unstructured interviews were conducted and statements of the respondents were recorded. Some of the interviews were recorded in the voice of the respondents where response was either in Hindi or English. However in the case of Telugu, the help of the translators was taken. This was done mainly to target maximum number of respondents in the scheduled limited time as recorded statements give clarity while writing the report. During the interview, care was taken to provide maximum scope to the respondents to express his/her opinion. Generally, it is seen in the interview that in the case of the children and women response comes from the elderly male members of the society and it negates the very objective of the

sampling. Therefore, when any one tried to speak on behalf of the child labour, their parents etc, they were requested to allow the respondents to express his/her view.

### **c) Focused Group Discussion**

A focused group discussion was organized to assess the opinion of the Village Development Committees. The objective of the focused group discussion was to understand the opinions and efforts of the community members of the Veilpoor Mandal on the issue of child labour. It was possible to establish the commonality through conducting interviews of the individuals and reach on the conclusion. However, focused group discussion is a tool that helped us to understand the opinions, action taken and attitudes of the community as a whole in which various interest groups operate and sometimes their mutual interest becomes contradictory. Members of the Village Development Committees, Panchayat members, Caste leaders and individual representatives of some villages participated in the focused group discussion. During the discussion, all the members were unanimous on the elimination of child labour. Their villages were the first to announce 100 percent enrolment of child labour in schools. But some members complained that the government is not appointing adequate number of teachers in these schools. It was almost clear from the tone of some members that if appropriate steps are not taken by the government to improve the infrastructure of the schools, the Village Development Committees may not be able to bear the cost for a longer period.

### **d) Meetings**

During the study, the officials of the District Primary Education Programme had called a meeting of Mandal Resource Persons, Sarpanchs and MLAs of the district to review the progress of the enrolment drive in various Mandals and discuss the strategy and further plan of action. The meeting was attended by the study team to understand the status of sustainability and replicability of the project in other Mandals of the District. Apart from this, a separate meeting was organised with the Project

Director, Assistant Project Director and District Core Committee members. It gave complete picture of the retention drive being organised by the officials to check the dropout of the children from the school.

### **e) Observations**

The observation method was used to understand how the people were talking about the prevention and elimination of child labour. Research team observed individual and group processes. With knowledge of the processes used, we could observe facilitating factors to eliminate child labour from Veilpoor Mandal. Through observations, we got information on decision making processes, initiatives taken, behaviour of the government officials and the villagers, emotional issues, conflict management and the role played by different actors. We observed:

- The schools and the students of the Residential Bridge Camps
- Teachers of the schools
- Government officials at the village, Mandal and District level
- All individuals who had taken oath for the release of child labour

It was found that students of the residential schools were very happy and they were enjoying the school. The moment we reached in one school, some students ran towards us and they hugged Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao, Community Mobilization Officer, Nizamabad. The happiness on their face was clearly indicating the trust developed by the project staff among the children. Children were addressing Mr. Rao as *daddy* (father), which reflected their attachment and psychological closeness with him.

The teachers of the schools were acting as local guardians and monitoring the movement of the children and their parents. Students were very open with them. In one school we reached in the morning when the students along with their teachers were having their breakfast. The breakfast was nutritious. It was also visible from the

good health of the students. It was also found that students were openly sharing their personal matters with the teachers, as no one was fearful while discussing with them.

The staff members of the District Primary Education Programme and all other individuals were found to be very committed. During the study period, we had to leave for the field in the morning at 7 a.m. and sometimes we used to come back at 8 p.m. It was observed that some of the staff members were totally devoted for the cause. They used to come in the morning at 8 a.m. while official timing was 10 a.m. and they used to go back at 9 p.m. They were found totally committed for the cause. The whole climate had become children friendly.

#### **f) Comparative Information**

Some villages near the Mandal headquarters and also outside the Veilpoor Mandal were visited to establish a difference between child labour free villages and non child labour free villages. Members of the Village Development Committees and Mandal level officials were contacted to assess the impact of the Veilpoor project in the Mandal. It was done to understand the replicability component to the other Mandals of the district.

#### **g) Selection of Veilpoor Mandal Villages**

A detailed study of all the villages was conducted under the project. The random stratified sampling method was used in which the following points were taken into consideration:

- Villages with more number of child labour
- Villages where majority of the people are from SC/ST and poor sections of the society

- Villages which are far away from the Mandal headquarters were selected to assess the impact of the project and to study the method of replication of the project for larger impact.

## **h) Sampling**

The purposive samples of 50 children, who were mainstreamed and presently in schools, were selected. During the study, five village committee members from the villages of Veilpoor, Lakkora, Pochampalli, Anksapur, and one from outside the Veilpoor Mandal, ten community leaders, ten teachers and ten employers were interviewed to have a wider and comprehensive understanding of various strategies adopted by Government and non-governmental organisations. In the process of selection of the sample, the investigators were aware of the details of number of children mainstreamed by the Mandal officials. The responses of respondents helped in making observations about the strategies adopted in making child labour free Veilpoor Mandal. The next part of the report bring out the quality observations made during the fieldwork.

# 3

## *Every Child in School*

### The Veilpoor Experience: Background and Context

*“In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what Andhra Pradesh does today India will do tomorrow.”*

**N. Chandrababu Naidu**  
Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh

With a view to achieve 100 per cent literacy by the year 2005, Government of Andhra Pradesh has adopted various strategies. Four Mandals of Nizamabad District i.e. Ranjal, Yedpalli, Nandipet and Veilpoor were selected to achieve 100 percent enrollment of children of the age group of 5-14 under the Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) scheme.

In the Veilpoor Mandal, there are 16 revenue villages, 15-Gram Panchayats and 20 habitations. According to the 2001 Census, the total population of the Mandal is 43128 (male 20972 and female 22156). According to the 2001 Census, about 21 per cent population belonged to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The total literacy rate of Veilpoor Mandal is 45.11 per cent as compared to 33.27 per cent in the year 1991. The spread over of the Mandal is 1203 sq. k.m. and density is 3003 sq. k.m. It is 40 k.m. away from the district headquarters towards the east direction. Morthad and Bheemgal Mandals are in the east, Armour Mandal is in

the West, Balkonda Mandal in North and Jakranpaly Mandal in the south surrounding the Veilpoor Mandal.

The main occupation and economic activity of the people of the Mandal is agriculture. Nearly 17811 hectares of land is cultivated. Paddawagu river flows through the Mandal from South to North and average rainfall of the Mandal is 974 mm. The irrigation is mainly done through tube wells and tanks. Land cultivated under irrigation is more productive. Telugu and Urdu are the languages mainly spoken by the people. There are 18 primary schools, 14 upper primary schools and 6 secondary schools in the Mandal. Some private schools are also run in the Mandal. The total strength of children in school was 9173. 4777 were boys and 4396 were girls. The details of education facilities under the Mandal are given below:

### **Educational Institutions for Children Available in the Mandal**

<b>Types of Educational Schools/Centres</b>	<b>Managed by</b>	<b>No. of Educational Schools/Centres</b>
Primary Schools	Mandal Parishad	15
Primary School	District Primary Education Programme	1
Primary Schools	Recognized Private Unaided	2
Upper Primary Schools	Mandal Parishad	10
Upper Primary School	Recognised private aided	1
Upper Primary Schools	Recognised Private unaided	3
Secondary Schools	Zilla Parishad	6
Alternative School	DPEP	1
ECE Centres	DPEP	2
Anganwadi Centres	ICDS	30
Child Labour Schools	NCLP	1
Continuing Education Centres	ZAS	15
Non Formal Education Centres	Government	15

The population of children between the age group of 5 to 14 years was 8057 out of which 7518 were enrolled in different educational institutions. At the time of implementation of 100 per cent enrolment drive, the total number of out of school children was 539. These out of school children were enrolled in boys residential bridge camp (86); girls residential bridge camp (67); government schools (336); non-residential bridge centers (41); mentally retarded home (9).

## **Reasons of Child Labour in the Mandal**

### **Migration from the Neighboring Districts**

People from neighboring districts migrate to the Veilpoor Mandal to work on the farms. They generally migrate with the family. These people were poor and their priority was food and shelter, not education. MLA of Veilpoor Mandal, Mr. Goverdhan said that surrounding districts like Medak, Mabhboob Nagar and Hyderabad were relatively poor and less fertile. Therefore, poor people from these districts migrate to our district with their family. As these migrated people were poor, they can't afford education to their children and prefer to send them to work to earn some money to help the family. They take advance from the employers and send their children to work either on the fields of the landlords or graze their animals.

### **Illiteracy**

There were some other opinions about the causes of child labour and non-enrollment of the children in the schools. Children of those sections of society, who were themselves illiterate, were not attending schools. They thought that even the educated people were not getting employment then what was the use of



imparting education to their children. Their main concern was the financial support to the family rather than future of the child.

### **Attitude of the Parents**

In the Mandal, in some cases, even where family position was not very bad, they were not enrolling their children in the school. The attitude of the parents/guardians was not in favor of the education. They were not doing any work and depended upon the earnings of the children. U. Umalatha, now a student of the Pirkit Mahila Prangan, said that her parents were not doing any work and they were asking her to beg and arrange food for them.

### **Lack of Knowledge**

Mr. R.B. Subramanyam, Deputy Project Manager of DPEP says that the main cause for not enrolling the children in the school and sending them for work was lack of knowledge. Poor people think if children were working it would improve their financial position. They were not aware that if children were educated they would be in a position to earn much more. In Jankapet village, there were two children engaged in sheep rearing. All officials at the district level and the Mandal level had approached the parents but they refused to allow the children to attend school. Actually, he was a moneylender and even then his children were engaged in the sheep rearing instead of going to school.

During the study, it was found that there were different reasons for the non-enrollment as well as child labour for both boys and girls. Boys were sent to work in the agriculture fields or graze the animals, but the position of girl child was more critical. Even if the girl child was not doing any wage work, many a time she had to look after the siblings and do the household chores scarifying her study. In

the case of the girl child, it was not the financial problem but attitude of the parents which was a major hindrance for their education.

## **Initiatives at District Level**

### **First Hundred Percent Enrollment Initiatives**

The officials of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) held a meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2000 with the Mandal level officials and teacher's association on the concept of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) and decided to start 100 per cent enrollment of all the children in the age group of 5-14 years in four Mandals of the district. These Mandals were Ranjal, Yedpalli, Nandipet and Veilpoor. The concept of the project was made clear to the officials in different district level meetings. On 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2001 in a meeting of the DPEP officials with the District Collector, it was decided to select Veilpoor as a pilot Mandal for the implementation of the programme.

### **The Action Plan**

On 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2001, Mandal Education Committee prepared an action plan for the implementation of the 100 percent enrollment of the children in the age group of 5-14 years in the schools. The action plan placed emphasis on the following activities:

- To arrange/organize transitional classes to take care of repeaters in classes I and also take care of never enrolled children in the age group of 6-8 years
- To arrange residential camps to take care of out of school children (dropout and never enrolled) in the age group of 9-14 years

- To appoint Vidya volunteers in the school where the teacher - pupil ratio is at least 1:50 in primary schools and 1:55 in the upper primary schools and secondary schools
- To appoint community instructors for organizing transitional and residential camps
- To appoint community mobilizers in the habitation where the attendance of the children is less with a view to improve the attendance
- To organize training classes for the community instructors and community mobilizers
- To upgrade the Primary schools to Upper Primary schools to avoid the dropout rate in such areas. For examples: Primary School, Ameenapor to Upper Primary School
- To upgrade the Upper Primary Schools to the Secondary schools in such areas to avoid the dropout rate e.g. Upper Primary School (Girls), Veilpoor to Secondary School and Upper Primary School, Kukunoor to Secondary School
- To conduct training for the School Education Committees.

### **Experience Based Learning from M.V. Foundation**

The first hand experience to implement the project was acquired by the project officials from the experiences of M .V. Foundation, Ranga Reddy District of the State of Andhra Pradesh, which has earlier implemented various projects like this. This organization is well-known in the area of elimination and prevention of child

labour not only in Andhra Pradesh but in the country. The organization has been acknowledged by various international and national agencies working in the field of child labour. Just two days after the preparation of the action plan (February 4-5, 2001), all the 39 Mandal Education Officers and Mandal Resource Persons visited the M.V. Foundation. They saw the residential bridge camps, community motivation centres, youth clubs and schools supported by M.V. Foundation. The team also saw the child labour free villages of Ranga Reddy district of Andhra Pradesh. They held discussions with school teachers, parents, members of mandal parishad, children, etc. The total environment of the village was experienced by the team, which reflected happiness, health and positive attitudes towards children and their education. The team after observing all these activities got the required conviction and belief that child labour can be abolished and all the children can be sent to school. It was also discovered that parents are interested to send their children to school. Children themselves have great interest and fun for studying in the bridge camps. The perspective and ideology to work on the issue of children became an agenda for all the officers who visited the M.V. Foundation. They shared their experiences with other officers and took oath to make the mandal child labour free.

## **Selection of the Mandal**

Veilpoor Mandal was selected on a pilot basis under the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) programme to achieve 100 percent enrollment in the age group of 5-14 years in the year 2001. On 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2000, four Mandals i.e. Renjal, Yedpalli, Nandipet and Veilpoor had been selected under the UEE programme to ensure 100 percent enrollment of children in schools. However, on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2001, the District Magistrate of Nizamabad held a meeting with the DPEP officials and a decision was taken to select Veilpoor Mandal on a pilot basis. There were various reasons for the selection of Mandal as a pilot project. In

the opinion of Mr. R.B. Subramanyam, Deputy Project Manager, the reason behind selection of Veilpoor was mainly some specific characteristic of the Mandal.

### **Child Labour Survey**

On 16th June, 2001, a meeting of headmasters and the villagers of Veilpoor was held to motivate teachers and parents. A survey was conducted with the help of teachers, government officials and the civil society, and identified 398 out of school children as child labourers.

### **Intensive Drive**

Intensive drive to ensure 100 per cent enrolment was launched on 25th June, 2001 in Veilpoor Mandal. A detailed action plan was prepared and strategies worked out under the guidance of Mr. G. Asok Kumar, District Collector and under the leadership of Sri B.R. Jagadishwar Goud, Additional 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 Veilpoor was sent to the Mandal for intensive campaign. The team stayed in the Mandal, visited every hamlet in the Mandal a number of times, made personal contacts with every household, every caste/religious groups and every Village Development Committee to inspire and involve them to ensure 100 per cent enrolment of school age children.

## **Initiative of the Officials**

During the interview, it clearly came out that after the Akshar Sankranti Project the officials of the DPEP were looking for 100 percent enrollment of the children of their Mandal in the age group of 5-14 years. The Deputy Director of the project told that during the implementation of the project, an insight came to our mind to work with children who were already working in various occupations and processes. This insight was shared with higher officials. We got encouragement to work for rehabilitation of child labour, street children, child beggars and mentally retarded children. A need was felt to concentrate on the education of the children. Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao, Community Mobilization Officer of Nizamabad DPEP, told that the issue of education to the children was discussed on various occasions before the District Magistrate and we had shown our interest to work for the enrollment of the children. Therefore, when the initiative was taken to enroll all the children of age group of 5-14 years in the school in four Mandals, it was decided to select Veilpoor for the pilot project.

## **Less Number of Child Labour**

In Veilpoor, the number of the child labour was less (mainly migrant labourers) and one should always start with the minimum one to achieve the maximum. In his opinion, there were chances of failure if the Mandal with more number of child labour had been selected in the initial phase. The beginning of the project required success in an essential manner as one success leads to the other.

## **Previous Record of Mandal in Implementing Child Labour Project**

The Mandal had successfully implemented Akshar Sankranti (education for the old age people) programme. Mr. Subramanayam, a government official told that

all government functionaries were involved in the programme and it was a big success in the Mandal. Encouraged by the success, the officials themselves approached the District Collector to initiate 100 percent enrollment programme in Veilpoor Mandal.

### **Other Reasons for Selection of the Mandal**

The Veilpoor Mandal had a strong presence of Village Development Committees, which had a great influence over the villagers. The Mandal was known for its progressive farmers. Youth clubs were also active in the Mandal. Young Officers like Mandal Revenue Officers, Mandal Development Officers, Mandal Education Officers and the Nodal Officers were the key officers who were young, committed and sincere towards the cause. Newly elected members of the Panchayats were also keen to make a mark. This influenced the district authorities to select this mandal as a pilot project.

## **Initial Resistance in the Implementation of the Project**

In the beginning of the project, the core team members faced a lot of problems and they found it difficult to implement the project in a smooth manner. Many people were skeptical about the project as this type of drive has never been taken up earlier. Prominent persons of the area who were identified to help the core team members would found to be the main employers of the children. The initial survey of out of school children conducted by the core team members brought out many startling facts like indebtedness, complex relations between parents, moneylenders and contractors of the child labour. During the survey, the actual number of children engaged as child labour almost doubled compared to the initial

survey data. Rumors about the core team members were spread that they were part of the nationwide racket, which kidnap children for taking out kidneys and eyes for sale. Some hotels refused to serve tea and food as they said that the children who were serving these items have now joined the schools. The team members were asked whether they are being paid extra amount for taking this drive. They were offered to pay that amount if they left the Mandal. Some villagers even refused to give the team members drinking water. The employers of the children were red with anger when they saw the team members. Despite all these problems, the district administration put its entire weight with the team.

Migrant labourers posed another big problem. It was very difficult to track them down, as they did not have a permanent house to stay at one place. Special teams followed them wherever they went.

Teachers were another reluctant entrants. Initially, the teachers in the Mandal thought that the District Primary Education Programme has taken up this drive to enroll children in the school and that they were not concerned with this exercise. The direct involvement of the District Collector and the Mandal Education Officer forced them to the joint the programme for enrollment of children in the school.



# 4

## *Veilpoor Mandal: Towards Child Labour Free Villages*

The various activities undertaken to achieve the target of prevention and elimination of child labour from Veilpoor Mandal and 100 per cent enrollment of children in the age group of 5 to 14 years in the schools are given in this part of the report in a chronological sequence. The main aim of these activities was to make the people aware about the evils of child labour and importance of education in their lives. This was done mainly through door-to-door campaigns, rallies and holding meetings with various government officials and social partners.

A mandal level meeting was held on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2001 at Mandal Resource Centre, Veilpoor. The District Collector, Community Mobilization Officer (CMO) and Additional Project Coordinator (APC), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) attended the meeting. It was also attended by Girl Child Development Officer (GCDO), Headmasters (HMs) & School Education Committee (SEC) members, Mandal Core Team Members (MCTM), Teachers' Organisations/Representatives, Mandal Development Officer (MDO), Mandal Resource Officer (MRO) and Mandal Resource Persons (MRP). A total of 53 officials attended the meeting. The District Collector addressed all the officials who attended the meeting. A decision was taken to make the Mandal child labour

free. The officials and other representatives took responsibilities and offered their services in this regard. A felicitation programme for employers, who had volunteered to release children from work, was also organized on the same day. A decision was also taken to develop posters to bring out the sorry plight of the working children.

During 9<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2001 Mandal level officials developed posters on child labour with the help of Communication Mobilization Officer and Additional Project Coordinator. Posters were pasted on the walls all over the mandal to make the public aware about education and intimidate employers with criminal action against those who refuse to release child labour. Local police officials also accompanied the team members during the visit to the Mandal. A mobilization drive at habitation level was also launched to identify child labour families. The opportunity was also used to make the public aware on the issue of child labour. Messages on the issue were conveyed to the people in the villages through writings on the walls and posters bringing out various facets of child labour. All these activities continued till July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001.

A village level meeting at Akloor was held on July 22<sup>nd</sup> in which the Community Mobilization Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, Village Development Committee President and Gram Sabha members participated. In all 15 persons attended the meeting. A resolution was passed to make 100 per cent enrollment of out of school children. Child Labourers, Narsa Reddy and Golla Chinna Mallaiah, were released by the employers voluntarily. Door to door campaign at Akloor was also undertaken on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. The Village Development Committee members adopted resolution on 100 per cent enrollment of out of school children. Village elders and DWACRA group members also took oath to participate in the campaign against child labour and enrollment of children in the school.

An auto rally with active participation of auto owners was organized on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001 to make them aware and public at large about the issue of child labour. Community Mobilization Officer, Mandal level Officers and employers i.e. auto owners, cycle shop owners, beedi commission agents, hotel owners and shopkeepers of the area participated in the rally. Elected representatives of the mandal also took part in the rally.

A gram sabha meeting of Mothe village was held in the evening on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer and officials at the mandal level also attended the meeting. Names of drop out children of Mothe village were publically announced. Village development committee members and sarpanch of the village took responsibility to enroll out of school children in the school.

A cycle rally along with village development committee members and youth members was also organized at Mothe village. Villagers took oath not to send children for work and send them to school. Mr. Ramchandhar, a cycle shop owner was felicitated on this occasion.

Bala Karmika Vimochana Vedika teachers Forum also held a meeting on the same day at upper primary girls school at Veilpoor. Wipro officials, Community Mobilization Officer, Additional Project Coordinator and government officials at mandal level and also the elected representatives of the area participated in the meeting. Teachers distributed notebooks to the child labourers released from work. Associations of the teachers passed resolutions to involve teachers with a commitment in the movement to enroll children in the school.

Shri P. Sudhakar Rao, Community Mobilization Officer took '*Akshara Diksha*' on the same day for eradication of child labour in Veilpoor mandal. He took oath to stay in the villages and not to go to his own home until 100 per cent enrollment of

out of school children in the mandal was achieved. He organized village wise special drives at the mandal level to enroll children in the school and achieve the target of 100 per cent child labour free mandal.

A community level meeting was held at PS Lakhora on the same day. Community Mobilization Officer, mandal level officials, sarpanch and DWACRA group members took part in the meeting. After interaction between the community members, an action plan was prepared for individual out of school child.

On 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2001, the District Collector and the Project Director, District Rural Development Agency held a mandal level meeting with DWACRA group members and anganwari workers. Officials at the mandal level, Village Development Committee members, ZPTC, sarpanches, MPTCs and village secretaries also attended the meeting. The names of village wise out of school children were announced and responsibility of their enrollment was fixed among the DWACRA and ICDS workers. All the people present in the meeting took oath to enroll out of school children.

On the same day, a core group meeting was held at the Mandal Resource Center, Veilpoor. Additional Project Director, Community Mobilization Officer and officials at the mandal level attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to review the progress made to enroll children in the school. Village wise strategies were planned for 100 per cent enrollment and retention of children in the school. Advance programmes were chalked out for every day. Red Rose Youth also used the opportunity to write slogans and paste posters on the walls of the villages.

Community Mobilization Officer took a meeting at Lakhora village on July 27, 2001 in which the Mandal Resource Persons, Mandal Development Officer, Girl

Child Development Officer and DWACRA group members participated. A mobilization drive to activate and empower the elected representatives was also undertaken on the same day. Elected representatives of panchayats, Mandal President, Mandal & Zila Parishad Members and caste elders were involved in the drive. DWACRA group members took responsibility to write slogans and paste posters on the walls of the habitations. The occasion was used to inculcate curiosity and efficacy among the elected representatives.

Gram sabha meeting was held at village Lakhora on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Additional Project Coordinator, Community Mobilization Officer and officials at the mandal level attended the meeting. Village development committee members, sarpanch and youth groups also participated in the meeting. It was decided that no child labour will be employed and drop out children of the village would be sent to school. A rally was organized in which children, youths and village development committee members also participated.

A meeting of Padgal gram sabha was also held on July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer, officials at the mandal level and members of community attended the meeting. Village Development Committee members and headmasters of schools adopted the child labour working in hazardous industries and passed resolutions to make the village 100 per cent child labour free. Slates were also distributed to the children released from work and the drop out children.

On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001, door-to-door campaign was conducted at padgal village. Community Mobilization Officer and officials at the mandal level participated in the campaign. A rally along with school going children was organized to motivate other out of school children and their parents. This resulted in admission of 26 drop out children from the village back to schools. Village Development

Committee member donated slates and notebooks to the children released from work.

Village Development Committee members also met on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2001 at Oddera colony in padgal village. Community Mobilization Officer & other officials and community members at mandal and village level attended the meeting. Caste elders from the colony were also invited for the meeting. Door to door campaign was organized. A resolution was passed and oath was administered to the members to participate actively in the campaign against child labour and to help in 100 per cent of enrollment of children back to school.

Community Mobilization Officer along with Village Development Committee members, Mandal Resource Persons, Gracy Organization and headmaster of the school attended a gram sabha meeting at Ankasapoor on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001 and also at Anksapoor oddera colony on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001. Resolutions were passed and door-to-door campaign conducted to make the community aware about the evil issue of child labour and participate in enrollment of drop out children in the school after their release from work. Employers, who were employing children at work, were warned with criminal action and asked to release them. The efforts resulted in admission of 25 boys in the Residential Bridge Camp (RBC). Mr. C. Prakash, Mandal Resource Person was made incharge of RBC at Veilpoor. Gram pradhan provided a free drinking water connection to the RBC. Caste elders of oddera colony also adopted a resolution to send all children from their village to school. A video film “*chaduvukundam*” was shown to the people in the colony. Door to door campaign was also organized at Anksapoor on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials and community leaders participated in the campaign. A rally was organized in which children also participated.

A gram sabha meeting was held at Kothapally K. on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer along with Mandal Resource Persons and Village Development Committee members also attended the meeting. It was resolved not to send children below 14 years of age for work and decided to send them to school. Village community asked the employers not to employ any child below 14 years of age.

A meeting was also held at Komanpally on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in which Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the mandal level participated. Village Development Committee members resolved to get children released from work and send them to school.

On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001, a special drive was launched to get the working children released from shops and hotels at Veilpoor. Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at mandal level, gracy organization, teachers' union representatives, red rose & mudhiraj youth members, shop owners and hotel owners participated in the drive. Red Rose & Mudhiraj Youth members got released working children from shops and hotels. Village Development Committee members of Veilpoor donated 40 trunk boxes to the children who were got released from work and admitted to the RBC.

Additional Project Director, Community Mobilization Officer and other officials at the mandal level, Village Development Committee members, CMEY group and DWACRA leaders attended a meeting of Gram Sabha at Pachal Nadukuda on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Village Development Committee members resolved to work for the eradication of child labour from the village and send the children to school. A rally along with CMEY members was organized against child labour. Employers were also warned against employment of children.

On August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001, the District Collector, Additional Project Director and Community Mobilization Officer along with officials at the mandal level felicitated those employers who have released children from work. Parents and employers were counseled to cooperate in making the mandal 100 per cent child labour free and send the children below 14 years of age to the school. A padayatra along with all the people present there was also organized and the District Collector addressed the public on the issue of child labour and 100 per cent enrollment.

Community Mobilization Officer along with Mandal Education Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, Mandal Development Officer, Girl Child Development Officer, Village Development Committee members and sarpanch attended a Gram Sabha meeting at Kothpally (N). Village Development Committee members took oath to actively participate in the campaign against child labour. A programme called '*Bala Kala Brundam*' was organized. Special drives were undertaken at different work places where child labour were working. Door to door campaign to motivate the parents of the children was also organized on the same day at Akloor. Children's film '*chaduvukundam*' was also shown. Some children were enrolled in the RBCs through Village Development Committee members.

A torch light procession at Veilpoor was organized on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in which the Community Mobilization Officer, other officials and members of the village community participated. A cultural programme was also organized to attract the attention of the public as well as the out of school children.

Community Mobilization Officer along with Mandal Education Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, Girl Child Development Officer, Village Development Committee members and others organized a door-to-door campaign on August 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at Padgal village. They tried to reach every family through door-



to-door campaign. The villagers were also involved in this campaign. The District Collector, Nizamabad, opened Residential Bridge Camp for girls at Mahila Pranganam Perkit and 76 girls were enrolled in the camp. The village community threatened the employers with boycott. A group of people visited and raided work spots i.e. forest, grazing fields, construction sites, cycle shops, hotels, etc. for release of children from work. Professionals were called to organize *kalajathas* to motivate parents and children of different social and economic strata.

On August 13, 2001, Additional Project Director, Community Mobilization Officer attended the meeting of Village Development Committee members at Mothe village. Other officials at the mandal level and community members from the village also participated in the meeting. Public address system was donated to the Village Development Committee members. Community members threatened the employers with social boycott in case they employed children at work.

A follow up meeting of the Mandal Core Group was held at Veilpoor on August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Additional Project Director, Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at mandal level attended the meeting. Pamphlets on the issue of child labour and importance of education were distributed amongst the public in the mandal. State Bank of Hyderabad donated toothpaste & brushes and socks to the children of the Residential Bridge Camp. Village wise review of left out children was held and it was decided to take up follow up activities seriously. Additional Project Director, District Primary Education Programme provided one black and white television to the Residential Bridge Camp.

Panchayati Raj Minister and the District Collector awarded the district administration officials for their dedication on Independence Day i.e. August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Special awards were also given to the team members at the mandal level. The function was held at the Police Parade Grounds, Nizamabad. Field

functionaries honored by the District Collector were : Community Mobilization Officer (Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao), Mandal Resource Person (Mr. C. Prakash), Girl Child Development Officer (Ms. M. Nirmala Kumari, Mr. T. Laxman & Mr. K. Srinivas Reddy) and Gracy Organization Convener (Ms. R. Shobha Rani).

Door to door campaigns at Venkatapur, Mothe & Akloor villages were organized on August 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001 respectively. Additional Project Director, Community Mobilization Officer and other officials and community members participated in the campaign. Some children were got released from work. Agricultural fields, where children are generally employed, were also covered in the campaign. Housing loans were sanctioned to two families for meeting their crucial needs after the release of their children from work.

Additional Project Director and Community Mobilization Officer attended a meeting of headmasters at Veilpoor on August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Villages wise review of drop out children was held and special strategies for their admission in the schools were planned. AP Journalists Association donated detergent powder packets and bath soaps to Residential Bridge Camp children. Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials also held a meeting at Jankapet and Padgal villages on the same day. Door to door campaign was organized and children were got released from work. Community members warned the employers against employing children at work.

Door to door campaign and cycle rally at Mothe village was also organized on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer along with Mandal Resource Persons, Village Development Committee, ZPTC and MPTC members also took part in the campaign. Some children were got released from employers. Community members of the village asked the parents to send their children to the school.

Community Mobilization Officer along with Mandal Resource Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, Girl Child Development Officer, Village Development Committee members, DWACRA group leaders, youths of the villages and sarpanch attended the meetings of Gram Sabha at Wadi & Kukunoor on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and at Pachampally and Pachainadkuda on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001. Resolutions were passed to make the employers to free children from work voluntarily.

Community Mobilization Officer (Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao) adopted Gangalaxmi a beggar girl child who was an orphan, and she was admitted in the girls residential bridge camp. Village Development Committee members of Ankasapur village held a meeting on August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer and other officials of the mandal, Telugu Bala Mahila Programme Manager and the Sarpanch attended it. Village Development Committee members and Mandal Resource Officer asked the employers to release children from work. Raids were conducted at working sites and some children were got released from the employers.

Community Mobilization Officer, Girl Child Development Officer, Mandal Resource Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, ZPTC & Village Development Committee members and Sarpanches conducted door to door campaigns of the villages Ameenapur, Ankasapur and Komanpally on August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001 and Kukunoor & Kanchanpally on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Special drive against employment of child labour and enrollment of children in the school was also conducted at Jathara, Santhamallanna and Gutta villages. Village Development Committee members asked the beedi commission agents to free children from work. Villagers were administered oath to send their children to school.

Resolutions were passed against employment of children. Villagers were made aware of the evils of child labour and motivated to send their children to school.

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Girl Child Development Officer, Mandal Resource Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, Village Development Committee members and Sarpanch, Headmaster and teachers motivated the children of Padgal village to go to school and told them about the importance of education in their lives. A rally along with released children was organized to make the public aware. Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials also held a meeting with sarpanch and MPTC members at Veilpoor on the same day. Village wise list of out of school children was prepared. Child and village wise action plan was also prepared. Strategies were planned to enroll left out children of the villages in the school. Hon'ble MP of the area visited the Residential Bridge Camp and donated 100 pair of shoes to the children.

Community Mobilization Officer held a meeting with villagers at Jankampet and Sahebpet on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Other officials from the mandal also attended the meeting. Parents of the children were made aware about the issue of child labour and importance of education for their children. They were motivated to send their children to school. A programme called '*Akshara Bottu*' was organized. School Education Committee chairman distributed pamphlets about the programme of 100 per cent enrollment of children in schools.

Door to door campaign was undertaken at Jankampet and Pachainadkuda on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer and other officials at the mandal level along with Village Development Committee members and sarpanches also participated. Mothers were persuaded to send the children to school. Girl children working under hazardous conditions were got released from work and sent to the Residential Bridge Camps.

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Additional Project Director & Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the mandal level, sarpanches and community members got released children working under hazardous conditions at Ammenapur, Padgal and OC Lakora villages. A meeting with Oddera caste leaders was held on the issue of child labour and education. It was resolved to make the employers to free the girl child labour employed in the work of stone cutting. Additional Project Director donated a black & white television to Residential Bridge Camp. Door to door campaign organized and some girl children were got released working as labourers.

Community Mobilization Officer and other officials at the mandal level and Village Development Committee members undertook a door-to-door campaign at Veilpoor, Mothe and Lakhora on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001. The purpose of the campaign was to tackle the problem of left out children from these villages and put them in the school. Village Lakora was declared child labour free. A board to this effect was displayed on the entrance of the village. Village Wadi was also declared child labour free on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001. Shri Rajendhar, Sarpanch of the village announced a reward of Rs.1,116/- for any one who finds a child working from his village.

On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001, Sarpanches from the Veilpoor Mandal held a meeting. Nodal Officer, MPDO, Mandal Resource Officer, Mandal Education Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, MPP and MPTC also attended the meeting. Detailed feedback from the villages was reviewed and new strategies were planned to complete the task of 100 per cent enrollment in the mandal and to make it child labour free. Village wise action plan was prepared to tackle this problem. Different activities were planned for every day. Shri Rajendhar Reddy, Youth President donated 30 trunk boxes to the children of Residential Bridge Camp. Dr.

Dharma Chary volunteered his services for daily free health check ups in the Residential Bridge Camps.

Community Mobilization Officer, Village Development Committee members and Sarpanch of the village Pochampally undertook a door-to-door campaign on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2001. The employers, who had engaged children at work, were served notices to free them. During the door-to-door campaign, people in the village were made aware of the issue of child labour and the need to eradicate this problem. Some children were also got released from employers.

Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the mandal level visited the Veilpoor Mandal on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Special drives were conducted at work places. Dr. Shivraj offered to arrange for free monthly health check ups in the Residential Bridge Camps. Indian Medical Association also distributed medicines free of charge.

Village development committee met at Venkatapur village on September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer also attended the meeting. Work places were raided to free the children working there. Hon'ble Minister of Panchayati Raj awarded the Community Mobilization Officer, Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao for his outstanding and dedicated services for his sincere efforts towards 100 per cent enrollment of children in the school at the Mandal level.

On September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001, door-to-door campaign was conducted at Ameenapur and Pachampally villages. Community Mobilization Officer, Village Development Committee members and sarpanch took part in the campaign. Child shepherds grazing animals in the fields were enrolled in the Residential Bridge Camps. After the door-to-door visits, both the villages were declared child labour free.

A meeting in the mosque at Veilpoor was held on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the mandal level, representatives of the teachers organizations, mosque committee members, minority community elders and villagers participated in the meeting. The community members pledged by 'God' to enroll all drop outs of the area in the school.

September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2001 was celebrated as “**International Literacy Day**”. District Collector and Mr. Bazi Reddy, MLA of the area also participated in the celebrations. Employers, teachers, sarpanches and other community members were felicitated for their support to the child labour free movement and 100 per enrollment of children in the school. All officials and sarpanches, DWACRA group leaders and youth associations at the mandal level pledged to get the children freed from bonded labour. MLA donated 100 bed sheets to children in the Residential Bridge Camps.

Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the mandal level undertook an intensive drive on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at Jankampet, Sahebpeta and Kothapally; on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at Kukunoor, Komanpally and Venkatapur; on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at Wadi and Pachalnadkuda. Employers were directed to free children working as labourers. Parents were also urged to send their children to school. They were warned that if they do not send their children to school, they would have to leave the villages. Some children from the villages were sent to the Residential bridge Camps.

District Collector and Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the mandal level, youth members of the villages and sarpanches organized a Gram Sabha meeting of Mothe and Akloor villages on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Raids were conducted on work places. Stubborn children from these villages were

motivated to go to the school. Parents of the irregular children were told to send them to school regularly.

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2001 Community Mobilization Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, Red Rose & Mudhiraj youths conducted a door-to-door campaign at Veilpoor and Lakhora villages. Some children, who were still out of school, were sent to the school. A cycle rally was also organized on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at Mothe village to sensitize the village community. Additional Project Director & Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the mandal level, Village Development Committee members and Youth Associations participated in the rally.

Mr. Baji Reddy Goverdhan, MLA along with Community Mobilization Officer and other officials at the mandal level, DWACRA leaders, sarpanches and youth members undertook a padyatra at Veilpoor mandal on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Some parents, who were not willing to send their children to school, were counseled and motivated. Some children were also freed from employers. Community Mobilization Officer also held a meeting at Kothapally (N) with Mandal Education Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, Village Development Committee members and Sarpanch on the same day. A cultural programme against employment of child labour was organized by the youths to make the public aware and motivate them to send children to schools. Village community got some children freed from employers.

Community Mobilization Officer, officials at the mandal level, Anksapur Telugu Yuvatha President, Sarpanch and Village Development Committee members served notices to beedi commission agents at Anksapur Padgal on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2001. They were asked to free children from work. Parents were motivated to



send their children to Residential Bridge Camps. Girl child labourers working in beedi making factories were got freed from *thekedars* of the factories.

Community Mobilization Officer along with officials at the mandal level and DWACRA leaders participated in a meeting held at Kukunoor and Komanpally villages on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2001. A cultural programme called “*Bala Kala Brundam*” was organized. Construction sites were raided to free the working children. Stubborn children were enrolled in Residential Bridge Camps and villages were declared child labour free.

On September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2001, caste elders held a meeting and door to door campaign was conducted at Veilpoor BC colony. Community Mobilization Officer and officials at the mandal level, Red Rose Youth, Village Development Committee members and Press Club Members participated in the campaign. Children were motivated to go to school. Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the mandal level and Village Development Committee members in a meeting declared village Ameenapur child labour free on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Parents were motivated to send the left out children to school.

Sarpanch of village Lakhora in a meeting on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2001 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with employers in the presence of Community Mobilization Officer and other officials at the mandal level on the release of working children from work places. Village community leaders put pressure on the employers not to ask for return of advances paid to the families. Sarpanch, ward members and oddera caste leaders of Akloor oddera colony held a meeting on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2001 and got released children working as agricultural labourers in the presence of Community Mobilization Officer and other officials at the mandal level.

Community Mobilization Officer and other officials at the mandal level, CMEY youth group, DWACRA & Village Development Committee members attended a meeting at Pachalnadkuda & Akloor on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001. A public announcement was made to send the left out children from these villages to school. Raids were conducted on work places like hotels and agricultural fields to free children from these places. Notices were also served on some employers to free the working children.

Meetings on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2001, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2001 were held at Padgal & Ankasapur; Mothe & Pachalnadkuda and Jankapet villages respectively in which the Community Mobilization Officer along with officials at the mandal level, sarpanches and DWACRA members participated. Parents were assured regarding the safety and care of their children in the Residential Bridge Camps. Village Development Committee members intimidated some parents with actions like discontinuation of basic amenities i.e. power, water and supply of ration through public distribution system. Dharnas were also organized in front of the homes of drop out children until their parents send them again to the school/RBC. Girl children working under hazardous conditions in beedi making factories were freed from work places. Raids were also conducted at other work places and construction sites to get the release of working children. Some out of school stubborn children were sent to Residential bridge Camps after persuasion and motivation.

On September 26, 2001, a special drive for cross checking of child labourers was conducted at Veilpoor, Mothe and Akloor villages. Community Mobilization Officer, Mandal Education Officer and Mandal Resource Persons participated in the drive. Help of employers and parents was also taken. They were counseled to release children from work and send them to school. Raids were conducted at work places like agricultural fields and cattle grazing land to free the children.

Community Mobilization Officer, Mandal Education Officer and Mandal Resource Persons again participated in a special drive for cross checking of working children in the villages of Pachalnadkuda, Wadi and Kothepally (N) on September 27, 2001. The villages were thus declared child labour free. Some children were got released from employers. Special drive was also undertaken in villages of Jankampet, Sahebpur, Ameenapur and Lakhora on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001 to cross check the working children in these villages. Some children from these villages were got freed from employers. The villages were declared child labour free. The same officials also undertook similar drive on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2001 at Padgal, Anksapur, Pochampally, Kukunoor and Komanpally. Some out of school children in these villages were identified with the help of village community. They were sent to Residential Bridge Camps. These villages were also declared child labour free after verification.

A meeting of all the Gram Panchayats of Veilpoor Mandal was held on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Sarpanches, Village Development Committee members, Ward Members, DWACRA youths, School Education Committee members, MPTC and Caste elders participated in the meeting. It was resolved to keep all the villages child labour free and all the panchayats extended their whole-hearted support for 100 per cent enrollment of children. They resolved to ensure that their villages do not have any child labour in future. They also promised enrollment and retention of the children in the schools. Protection committees were formed in every village and village community took responsibility for maintaining 100 per cent enrollment and retention.

Community Mobilization Officer, Mandal Education Officer and Mandal Resource Persons participated in a special drive to cross check out of school children in the villages of Veilpoor and Venkatapur on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2001. Employers were persuaded to free children from work and parents were motivated

to send the children to school. Venkatapur village was declared child labour free after verification.

On October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001, Community Mobilization Officer along with officials at the mandal level, ZPTC, MPTC, Village Development Committee members and Sarpanch declared the Veilpoor Mandal child labour free. Some left out children were sent to the Residential Bridge Camps. All villages of Veilpoor Mandal achieved 100 per cent enrollment. Display boards quoting “no child labour in our village” were put up at the entrance of the villages.

Teachers of schools in Lakhora village organized a convention on October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001. District Education Officer, Additional Project Director, District Primary Education Programme and Community Mobilization Officer along with other officials at the Mandal level, Sarpanches, Village Development Committee members and Teachers’ organizations also participated in the convention. Different strategies were planned for maintaining 100 per cent retention of children in the school at the Mandal level.

## **Summary of the Activities**

To sum up the entire activities carried out in the Veilpoor Mandal from July 9<sup>th</sup> to October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2001, it was observed that:

➤ Regular follow ups led to create a positive and conducive environment towards child labour free society:

1. Village level meetings
2. Awareness campaign
3. Door to door visits
4. Group discussions
5. Meeting with district and mandal level government officials

- Involvement of Community Mobilization Officer continuously in the entire activities generated trust and positive attitude among teachers, representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Mandal Core Committee members, Youth Clubs, Village Development Committees, political leaders, religious leaders, village & caste elders, employers, contractors, parents of child labour, children and villagers, etc.
- Collective efforts of Community Mobilization Officer, Additional Project Coordinator, Girl Child Development Officer, Mandal Resource Persons, Mandal Revenue Officer, Mandal Education Officer, Mandal Development Officer, Nodal Officer and Teachers' Associations played a crucial role in translating plans into action. Thus, the team work made the difficult task easy and developed synergy in their approach and understanding on the issue of prevention and elimination of child labour.
- District Collector provided continuous and sustained guidance and advice to team members at Mandal level every day between 10 and 11 p.m.
- The support and cooperation from non-governmental and political groups encouraged government officers, local institutions and villagers to come forward to meet the challenges of making the Mandal child labour free.
- Donations, contributions and investment by local people and various other organizations showed their active participation and involvement to meet the challenges.
- Mandal officials including the Community Mobilization Officer led the activities from the front, which became an example of role model, dedication, devotion and commitment for others.
- Positive attitude of district officials to open residential bridge camps encouraged the Mandal level officials.
- Opening new primary, upper primary and secondary schools facilitated rehabilitation of dropped out children of the Mandal.
- Teachers training and commitment from Bala Karmika Vimochana Vedika, a teacher's organization, made the teaching community enthusiastic and energized them to work towards the achievement of the goal

- Participation of local villagers, children, mothers' group, employers and parents helped in achieving the goal of child labour free Mandal.
- Self help groups, youth clubs, employers' clubs made a difference in achieving the target.
- Adoption of a beggar girl child named Gangalaxmi by the Community Mobilization Officer raised trust and respect among the mobilizers to achieve the desired results.
- Openness to tackle every child labour family was unique feature of the intensive efforts at the Mandal.
- Women to women approach empowered mothers of child labour to send their children to regular schools
- Children also came forward and made their presence felt by going to child labour families to invite children to join the schools.
- Teachers and officials made schools to reach the children instead of children coming to schools and also receiving feedback from villagers. In these efforts the distance between schools and villages was broken. Villagers took more interest in the activities and functioning of the schools.
- Continuity in holding parents and teachers meetings played a crucial role.
- Displayed status of children of each village on hoardings showed willingness and cooperation of village panchayats.
- Cycle rallies, torch rallies, auto rally, children's demonstration, street theatres, exhibitions, special festivals and other special occasions helped to maintain the tempo of activities.
- Religious institutions of the mandal were active partners in the campaign against child labour.
- Awareness campaign through Avagahana Sadasssulu, Akshara Bottu, video films, wall writings, dhandora, mike announcements, oath taking, vidya melas, kala brindam, words of mouth and audio cassettes mobilized the community to support the movement.

- Media especially doordarshan and newspapers brought special news bulletins and news writings which helped in changing the minds of the community towards the desired direction. Almost all the local and the state level newspapers published the Mandal's activities, which brought pride and respect to workers who worked for children.
- Recognition of employers, officers, non-governmental organizations, children and local institutions by district authorities and political leaders energized and activated all of them towards children's cause.

In brief, it can be said that the district authorities contributed in a major way in the entire campaign by motivating the government officials, elected representatives and especially the community leaders and members. Continuity was maintained in the activities and initiatives taken to make the Mandal child labour free. The presence of core team members in the villages and their relentless campaign day and night moved the people. The pressure put by media, posters, visits by the Collector, public meetings and persistence of team members even in the face of severe resistance in the beginning and *akshara deeksha* brought about a desired attitudinal change among all concerned. Thus, the goal of prevention and elimination of child labour and 100 per cent enrollment of children was achieved in a short span of time.

# 5

## *Making Mandal Child Labour Free*

### **Role of Different Agencies, Institutions & Individuals**

For any societal interventions, it is very difficult to identify the roles played by various partners and governments at local, district, state, national and international levels. Therefore, whatever selected documents were available on prevention and elimination of child labour in India are quoted here.

### **Role of International Labour Organization**

ILO has been providing technical assistance to its member countries. Since 1992, this technical cooperation has taken the form of a global mandate against child labour called IPEC, an acronym for the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour. IPEC has rehabilitated over one lac children directly and indirectly. It has mobilized governments and its agencies like NGOs, trade unions and employer's groups. It has built capacities of organizations and institutions to take action against child labour. IPEC produces and expends successful projects in order to integrate child labour issues successfully into social and economic development policy.



The Andhra Pradesh State Based Project (APSBP) emerged in 1999 is one of them. The project aims to enrich government policies, programmes and its other efforts to attain the State's Vision of ending child labour by the year 2004. This project helped the State in formulating a child labour law. It also helped in bringing six major trade unions of the State to work together on the issue of child labour and to initiate projects. Twenty-two employer's associations joined together to form a consortium of employer's associations for the elimination of child labour and took several projects from APSBP.

About 248 trainers were trained by V.V. Giri National Labour Institute based at NOIDA in Uttar Pradesh with financial support from APSBP. A comprehensive core training manual on child labour with handbooks for various target groups were developed by the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute for Andhra Pradesh to train 4000 trainers in the State. All these major interventions generated State level debates, talks, discussions, meetings, workshops, seminars, newspaper reports, doordarshan telecasts, video and audio films. These activities helped in bringing government, trade unions, NGOs and other social partners to work together on the issue of child labour in the State.

## **Role of Government of India**

The Government of India has formulated several policies related to welfare and education of children. Indian Constitution protects children from hazardous employment and provides for free and compulsory education to children below the age of 14 years. The Government of India has legislated laws to protect children from hazardous occupations and processes. The government, to rehabilitate about two lac children from 11 States, has initiated a project based plan of action in the form of National Child Labour Projects. Andhra Pradesh has 22 NCLP projects

covering 51820 children in 1021 schools. The presence of NCLPs in 22 districts of the State has created a State level impact.

The Government of India has set up a National Resource Centre on Child Labour at the V.V. Giri National Labour Institute at NOIDA in U.P. with assistance from UNICEF to provide in the policy formulation and programme support. The center has been working towards developing capabilities of various target groups towards progressive elimination of child labour. This is the first center in the country, which has been conducting 'Training of Trainers' programmes to create a large pool of trainers in order to extend the geographical coverage of child labour related training programmes. Special emphasis is laid on making the trainers aware about the problem of child labour so as to induce attitudinal change in them and enabling them to play the role of catalysts and change agents. Some of the government officials, representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions, trade union leaders and representatives of non-governmental organizations have been trained by the Institute.

## **Role of Andhra Pradesh Government**

The Government of Andhra Pradesh sees the elimination of child labour as a natural outcome of the full enrollment and retention of all children up to 14 years in schools. The thrust of the government policy towards ending child labour, therefore, is to Universalize Elementary Education (UEE) till the age of 14 years and to ensure that all children get admitted and retained in schools. The government has taken a decision to end all forms of child labour in the State by the year 2004. The government's decision was further strengthened by a unanimous

resolution passed to that effect in March 2001 in the legislative assembly of the State.

The government of Andhra Pradesh has broadened the definition of child labour. From the limited scope of children engaged in hazardous occupations and processes, the new definition identifies all children who do not attend schools as child labour. This definition has made the drive against child labour easy, as anybody who is not sending a child to school could be booked under the Child Labour Act of the State. In Veilpoor, instead of booking anyone under this Act, its penal provisions were publicized. The core team members solved many hard-core cases under the fear of this law. They threatened the employers and parents with a fine of Rs.20,000 for keeping a child out of school. They took photographs of working children and used these photographs as evidence. The employers were relieved after sending the children to school. In one hotel after taking tea served by a child waiter, the team members paid the bill and pasted his photograph by the side of the cash counter declaring Rs.20,000 fine for engaging child labour. The next day the hotel owner came along with all the young child waiters in his hotel and enrolled them in the bridge schools.

Other strategies adopted by the Andhra Pradesh government for combating the problem of child labour in the State were: focusing on pre-school education, opening anganwari centers, enrolment of children in the age group of 5 to 6 years directly in the primary school, admission to children at any period of annual year in primary schools, strengthening of primary schools in terms of additional schools, more teachers, better equipments, strengthening village education committees to bridge the gap between the community and the schools, providing training to school teachers, anganwari workers and others on the issue of child labour, 630 additional centers by DPEP to cater to the needs of drop out children. Awareness generation programmes were organized on the ill effects of child

labour and positive effects of schooling. Various international agencies like UNICEF, UNDP, ILO, Action Aid, etc. were involved in child labour programmes.

## **Role of the District Administration**

The district administration of Nizamabad district was responsible for transforming the National and State level vision into reality. Implementation of schemes and programmes related to children were the responsibility of the district and mandal level authorities. Role of the District Collector was very crucial in setting up district level action committee comprising Ministers from the District, Member of Parliament, Zila Parishad Chairman, Member of Legislative Assembly, Chairmen of Municipal Corporations, Superintendent of Police, Project Officers (DRDA, VELUGU, NCLP & ITDA), Chief Executive Officers of Zila Parishads, District Education Officer, Deputy Director of Social Welfare Department, BC Welfare Officer, ST Women and Child Welfare Department, members of voluntary organizations, Deputy Director of Adult Education, Principal (DIET), District Labour Officer, Assistant Director (Disabled Welfare Department) and Additional Project Coordinator (DPEP). The district level committee was activated by the then District Collector, Shri G. Asok Kumar. He took keen interest in holding district level meetings regularly once in a month. He made all the officers at the district level responsible for preparation of action plans of their own departments and to present the achievements and the limitations of their department regularly in the monthly meetings. He also took proactive action to have convergence with other departments/organizations of the district, which yielded fruitful results. Assistant Project Coordinator of DPEP was made responsible to organize these meetings. All the departments at the district level including the police started

meeting regularly. These meetings became the source of action plans, strategy evaluation, feedback system, problem solving, helping each other in meeting the objectives of action plans drawn. Thus the various departments were interconnected and approach to each and every department became easy. It resulted in making officers responsible public servants. One of the outcomes of these district level strategies was the identification of the Veilpoor Mandal as a pilot Mandal to undertake 100 per cent enrollment of children in the schools.

### **Showing the Way to Achieve the Goal**

District Magistrate played a major role for the motivation of the government officials, elected representatives and the public. During the study each and every section of society appreciated the efforts of the District Magistrate. He was himself a good leader and motivator. He visited all the project villages and ensured all kind of support to the public and functionaries responsible for the implementation of the project. Mr. Prakash, Mandal Resource Person from the Veilpoor Mandal said “he had done a lot of work in different education projects. But high officials never gave credit for his work. In this project, District Magistrate used to address different meetings and used to give credit to us for the work we had done. Several times, I received phone calls from people enquiring about my work as the District Magistrate had given my reference to them”. The motivation and support by the District Magistrate helped and created an enthusiasm among the government officials to complete the enrollment process in the Mandal not as government functionaries but as volunteers. Kodi Manohar, MPTC Veilpoor said that after getting elected as MPTC he attended a meeting in the office of the District Magistrate. The District Magistrate suggested him to work for the eradication of the child labour from his area. It inspired him and he started visiting every colony in the Veilpoor Mandal to enroll all children in the school. Mr. Regula Ramandan, MPTC member of Veilpoor, says, the drive to

eradicate child labour was launched in 2001. We were just elected as the MPTC in Veilpoor.

### **69 Days : Akshar Diksha**

Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao, Community Mobilization Officer, District Primary Education Programme, District Nizamabad, told that when Veilpoor Mandal was selected for 100 percent enrollment, this was a big challenge for the officials. All the district level officials used to visit the Mandal. They had several rounds of discussions with the Village Development Committees, teachers of the school and panchayat members. In the meetings, the village level functionaries and teachers were giving them assurances but things never changed. Then, he himself started visiting the villages but by the time he would reach there, the children and their parents had already left for the work. This was not serving the purpose. Therefore, he took the decision to stay back in the village so that he could meet the parents and convince the villagers about the importance of the education of the children. He stayed in the village for 69 days continuously and visited the houses of the parents of the child labour. During the initial days of his stay, villagers were skeptical about his motive and some people (mainly employers) branded him as a notorious beard man. However, when people saw that he was totally committed for the cause they came forward to support him for the enrollment of children in the school.

The Veilpoor project received response and support from all sections of the society. In the initial phase of the project, people were hesitant and inactive. It was a new experience for them in which public representatives and the people were being requested by the government officials to render their support for the success of the project. The strategy adopted by the officials and their volunteer approach towards the completion of this project helped a lot in generating public response in favor of the project.

## Role of the Mandal Level Officials

The same process of district level was adopted at the Mandal level where the following members were part of the action committee: Mandal Parishad President, Zila Parishad Teacher Committee, Mandal Parishad Teacher Committee, Panchayat Presidents, Education Committee Chairpersons, Headmasters of the schools, Representatives of the Teacher's Associations, Labour Officer, Members of Mandal Education Committees, Mandal Revenue Officer, Mandal Development Officer, Mandal Education Officer, Sub-Inspector of Police, Representatives of Voluntary Organizations, Anganwari Supervisors, Mandal Resource Persons and MLOs. This committee prepared an action plan for implementation at the Mandal level. A Monitoring Committee was also set up to provide required assistance to Panchayat Action Committees and Habitation Committees. They took the responsibility for achieving the target of 100 per cent enrolment in the Veilpoor Mandal. The members reached in groups in identified habitations and catchments early in the morning and late in the evening to meet the parents of child labour and also getting released child labour from these habitations.

Members of the Mandal Action Committee along with Community Mobilization Officer, Shri P. Sudhakar Rao held meetings with caste elders, public representatives, village heads, youth clubs and self-help group members. They organized public meetings at gram sabha level and visited parents of child labour who were not sending their children to school. These members were responsible for explaining to the village community about the ill effects of child labour. The villagers were made aware about various government schemes, impact of releasing children from work, explaining child labour laws and opening of bridge course camps. These officials were also responsible in arriving at unanimous decisions

on releasing child labour and sending children to school. They also organized gram sabha meetings and read out names of out of school children from the villages. They were also responsible in administering oaths to various groups of people in the mandal and to enroll children in schools (336 children in primary schools and 203 in different bridge courses). These officers were also responsible in forming habitation action committees, village development committees and school education committees.

After completing all the above activities, the different committees were entrusted with more responsibility for monitoring the enrollment of all the children in the schools and get feedback regularly to maintain 100 per cent enrolment of children in future too.

Similarly, Mr. Sudhakar Reddy, a social worker from the Veilpoor Mandal said that social atmosphere had changed in the country very rapidly. He was a social worker and the changed atmosphere gave him opportunity to work for the eradication of child labour. When he saw Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao, Community Mobilization Officer and Mr. Prakash, Mandal Resource Person of Veilpoor sincerely working for this issue, he got motivated and decided to work for the issue. These people were really devoted to the cause. Their work and commitment motivated us to work for the children.

### **Child Labour: An Evil that Requires Immediate Solution**

Mandal Resource person (MRP), Mandal Education Officer and other officer's team were present in one of the programmes. As it was an important programme, we (sarpanch, Mandal president and other members of the society) decided to postpone all the other programmes to make it successful. Mr. Ramanna Gaud, Ex-Mandal President, Ranjal, told that once Sudhakar Sahab approached him regarding implementation of the programme in Ranjal Mandal. He told him that



educating the children was government responsibility and he did not show any interest. But when he visited Veilpoor Residential Bridge Camp and met the children who were earlier child laborer, it motivated him and he decided to work for them.

### **Government Official: A Volunteer**

The attitude of the government officials towards the implementation of the project with the help of the general public gave a positive support to the project. In the village committee meeting, Lakhora, a member of the Village Development Committee told that two years back District Magistrate came to our village and told us that he wanted to make this area free from child labour. He assured all help to Village Development Committee. The committee members said that officials were very committed for the education of children hence they took decision to come forward to help the officials. The members of the Village Development Committee, keeping them above the party line, called a meeting and condemned child labour, and passed a resolution to help the officials in eradication of child labour.

Ms. Nirmala, DPEP staff at Nizamabad said that it was not possible to achieve the objective but we could achieve it due to the team spirit, support and commitment of people. As government employees, we were working as volunteers.

Mr. Prakash, Mandal Resource Person, Veilpoor Mandal was also of the opinion that they never worked as a government staff. If they had worked as a government staff (time bound), the work would not have completed. He said, “in the morning we used to go to the village for meeting the villagers. Our presence and direct meeting with the villagers left a positive impact on them. However, people even fought with us in the villages. Some sections of the society were of the view that we were there to trouble them. They used to say, “Is your service new and you

want to impress your officers?” We always used to go to the villages in a group because group leaves impact on the individuals.

### **It is not Limited Hours of Work**

The response of the government officials was remarkable for the implementation of the project. Whole team, at the district and mandal level, took it as their commitment not as a government duty. Mr. B. Shankar, Mandal Education Officer said that it would not have been possible to achieve cent percent enrollment if officials had worked as government employees i.e. for limited hours of work. We took it up as a social responsibility and our moral duty to work for enrollment of all the children in the school and eradicate child labour from the area.

## **Role of the Village Level Committees**

The other committees constituted at the village level were habitation action committees and panchayat action committee. The members of school education committee, ward members, village heads, school headmasters, teachers, DWACRA group leaders, self-help groups, mother’s committee members, representatives of voluntary organizations, village secretary, anganwari instructor and health workers were involved in the habitation action committees. The members of the panchayat level committee were Panchayat Sarpanch, Ward Members, Chairpersons of School Committees, Nodal Prerak, Panchayat Education Committee, local public representatives, village secretary, representatives of voluntary organizations, members of *Bala Mitar Mandali* and health workers. These members were responsible for torch light processions,

writing on walls, cycle rally, educational *melas*, special publicity in *jatras*, door-to-door campaign and gram sabha level rallies. They were also responsible for mobilizing the people with the help of Mandal and District level officers. They formed the team with District and Mandal level officers for door-to-door campaign and were responsible for convincing the village people about the issue of child labour and education of children. They used to move in a team to have a greater impact on the people in the villagers against employment of child labour and sending children to schools. They were also responsible for educating employers on child labour laws, extending help in strengthening local schools by appointing extra teachers and arranging voluntary contribution for development of infrastructure. They were responsible in distributing pamphlets, posters in the village and ensuring aggressive publicity campaigns against employment of children. They ensured full cooperation by employers in releasing child labour from bidi industry, washer men, construction & agriculture workers and from grazing cattles, etc.

### **Mass Awareness**

Under the Universalization of Elementary Education programme, the effort for enrollment of children in the school received response from every stakeholder of the society. The notable part of the project was that a district level government official took initiative to start it. The efforts of the official motivated the others too and it generated a wave of sensitization among the stakeholders. For the government staff, implementation of the project was not the matter of service but a genuine passion to enroll all the children in the school. For the Village Panchayat and Village Committee Members, the project created such a type of awareness that it became a matter of insult for them if any child was found to be out of school.

# Role of Elected Representatives

## **Inactive to Active**

Mr. Goverdhan, MLA of Veilpoor Mandal, says that when the project started and he saw the government officials genuinely working for the enrollment of the children, it motivated him to think for the welfare of the children. In his opinion when people were competing in various fields such as IAS and IPS, the child laborers do not have any future. They lack facilities like education, proper cloths, books, etc. It motivated him to do something for those children.

He said that being an MLA he had always wanted to do something for the working children. When government started the work he extended his support to eradicate child labour and enroll all the children in the school. He personally donated steel boxes to the children and encouraged others to come forward and render their support. When the project was started in Yadpalli Mandal of Bodhan Constituency, he went there and in the meeting asked the people to donate generously for the success of the project. It influenced and motivated the local MLA, who was from the congress party. He announced to donate 150 boxes to the children. It motivated the Village Development Committee members and other people too. In his opinion, the project received around 1.5 lakh public contribution in that area.

## **TDP Leader: It is not the Sole Responsibility of the Government**

During the study, it was found that there were many people in the society who were aware of the hazards of the child labour and were concerned about the education of the children but in the absence of right atmosphere and right opportunity, no one was taking initiative. The project gave chance to all those

people to contribute for the cause. However, in the initial phase there were causes and suspicions about the success of the project. Mr. R. Rajendra Reddy, TDP President, Nizamabad, who actively took part in the enrollment drive, says that when Mr. Sudhakar came to me and requested for the eradication of child labour from this area I did not notice his request. I thought that the person was from the government office and it was his duty. But when he visited my place two or three times regularly and requested me for my support for the eradication of child labour, I thought that if he was a government official why he was taking interest. It means this programme was very important and decided to support him.

There were some references where response came after observing change in the lives of the children. Mr. B. Baskar, Mandal President, Yellapadi Mandal said that Community Mobilization Officer of District Primary Education Programme, Mr. Sudhakar met him once and requested to start enrollment drive in the Mandal but he did not take interest in this programme. However, once he decided to visit Veilpoor Mandal and interacted with the children in the Veilpoor Residential Bridge Camp (RBC), it inspired him and he decided to start work even in his Mandal. He took *Diksha* (Balya Diksha) and stayed 20 days in the villages motivating children and parents to send their children to school. He did not visit his house for 20 days and totally devoted his time and energy for the enrollment of the children. He had his food provided by the villagers and slept in the village, and also met with the different Village Committees such as Panchayat Members, Village Development Committees, DWACRA, Youth Members, Anganwari workers and teachers. Sometimes, they had hot discussion with the employers and parents on the issue of enrollment of the children. Sometimes, children used to run away after seeing him. Under the circumstances, he had to run behind the child to catch him and send him to the school.

## **Role of Media**

The Veilpoor experiences have been reported in various newspapers of Andhra Pradesh since September 2001. Some of the newspapers that reported the experiences were: The Hindu (September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2001, December 31<sup>st</sup> 2001, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>, 2002, December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002 & January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2003), Deccan Chronicle (12<sup>th</sup> December, 2001), EENADU District Edition (14<sup>th</sup> December, 2001), The New Indian Express (September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2002) and The Times of India. Apart from the English Newspapers, local newspapers have also published a number of reports and special features about the Mandal. Positive reporting in the newspapers enthused all the role holders and the village community members were feeling proud of the active persons of their Mandal.

Mr. K Ganeshwar, reporter of Hyderabad based Newspaper, Varta, said that he had strong feelings towards children and old age people from his childhood. Money can't provide satisfaction but serving the poor people and ensuring positive change in the lives of the children can attain true satisfaction. The effort for the enrollment of children in the school provided him a chance to serve the society.

## **Role of Employers Representatives**

The response to the project came from all sections of the society. In this particular project, employers also came forward in the support of the project. However, some difficulties were there but majority of employers and parents supported the enrollment process after some initial inhibitions. Mr. K. Srinivas Gaud, Vice president of Auto Union, Veilpoor, said that when officers and big people came to us for our contribution in the education of the poor children, we thought that education was must for all. We had seen many auto drivers and owners who could

not read and write. They faced problem in their day do day life. In such a situation, we should help these children if government was providing opportunity to them. Mr. K.L. Kundiya was employing children at his work but when the drive was started he decided to render his support for enrollment of children in the school. In his opinion when opportunity of education was being provided to the poor, children should be sent to school. There was a committee of masons in the Veilpoor Mandal. They were meeting every month and if any child was found working they helped the officials to send the child to the school.

It is difficult to report about the roles played by various stakeholders and officers at the level of Mandal, District, State and other partners. Only significant roles played by the organizations and individuals are reported above. District Collector, Community Mobilization Officer, Additional Project Coordinator (DPEP), Mandal Resource Persons, teachers and Sarpanch of the different villages played crucial roles in making the mandal child labour free and 100 per cent enrollment of children in the school. They played the important roles as initiators, collecting and sharing of information, summarizing the activities & approaches and assessment of the activities while making the Mandal child labour free. They played a crucial role in the convergence of activities with different departments and the people through giving encouragement, harmonizing various issues emerged at the beginning of the activities, sacrificing and compromising their own personal goals and interests by leaving their own houses, working for long hours in the field continuously, having food given by others and living with other's needs and expectations to achieve the dream and vision of the project. They also monitored the efficacy of the interventions and continuity of the interventions playing the active role of supervisors for achieving the result.

# 6

## *Strategies Adopted*

District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) of the Government of India set the goals, objectives and activities, which were further transformed into documents for communication with all the States. Government of Andhra Pradesh also prepared a document to enroll every child in the school. The document incorporates community mobilization activities, implementation of child labour legislation, convergence with departments and organizations, mainstreaming of out of school children by sending them to the schools, starting of residential and non-residential courses, their financial aspects and follow up system. During the first phase of the project, 100 Mandals from 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh have been identified for Universalisation of Elementary Education. Out of these, the Government of Andhra Pradesh identified four Mandals, namely Veilpoor, Ranjal, Yedapalli and Nandipet in district Nizamabad. Out of these four, Veilpoor Mandal was identified for a pilot project and following strategies were adopted for making the Mandal child labour free and 100 per cent enrollment of children in the school:

### **1. Empowering Through Meetings**

The State Government assigned the responsibility for implementing the DPEP project to the District Collector of Nizamabad. The District Collector called a meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2001 and discussed the project with all the district and Mandal



level officials including headmasters, school education committee members and Mandal core team members. They were told that the State Government has decided to take up Veilpoor Mandal for ensuring 100 per cent enrollment of children in the age group of 5-14 years in the school. He also made them responsible for taking up all the activities at the Mandal level. Mandal level officers made village level education committees and villagers responsible to ensure 100 per cent enrollment in the schools. Villagers, teachers, village education committee members, teacher's associations, youth clubs, non-governmental organizations came forward to share the responsibilities. In this process, meetings at various levels were organized and date and time were fixed to hold further meetings to discuss action plans, identify out of school children, awareness campaign, mainstream children, appoint additional teachers, open new schools, enforcement of legislation, strengthening of formal education system and giving training to various stakeholders. As a result of these meetings all were made responsible to perform their own duties and thus created a platform to get feedback from all concerned. These meetings were also responsible for continuity of activities related to enrollment of children in schools. These meetings became a source of innovations and new ideas, sharing responsibilities and creating an environment of learning while doing. The details about such meetings have been given in the Annexure-I and also discussed in the part four of the report.

## **2. Creation of Data on Out of School Children**

After the first meeting at the district level, an action plan was prepared to get information about out of school children through Sarva Siksha Abhiyan. Teachers and panchayat members were involved in creation of data about out of school children. Data were collected at village level to facilitate village and family level

strategies, which included details about out of school children in particular villages like Veilpoor and Lakhora. These data were shared with the village education committees, village development committees, school education committees and Mandal level committees. The data collected at village level showed 539 children out of school and thus the goal to send these children to school was fixed. In this process, the Panchayati Raj Institutions institutionalized the skills to document family level information related to education, age, occupation and land.

### **3. Aggressive Campaign against Employment of Children and Out of School Children**

After collecting information related to out of school children, the first step was to develop posters against employment of child labour and importance of sending children to school. The next step was to hold meetings, auto & cycle rallies, organize padyatras, dhandora, making mike announcements, Avagahana Sadassulu, Akshra Bottu, video film shows, developing pamphlets, wall writings, oath takings, organize vidya melas, jatras Bala, Kala Brindam and taking out torch light processions. These initiatives helped in creating a child friendly environment, putting pressure on employers employing children in their establishments, motivating parents of child labour, activating government employees and motivating children studying in schools. These were indirect strategies leading to conducive psychological environment against out of school children and generated fear and tensions in the minds of employers and parents of children.

## **4. Training to Officers and Public Representatives**

District authorities took initiative to send district and mandal level officials to M.V. Foundation to observe the interventions made by them to make villages child labour free and the efforts put by villagers, teachers, village education committees, school education committees and facilitation provided by M.V. Foundation in Ranga Reddy District of Andhra Pradesh. These officials were also sent to other places to receive training and orientation on children's issues and its impact on employment, poverty, education, family income, health, trade, etc. The training made the Veilpoor mandal officials aware of the fact that poverty was not the only reason for employment of children. They became confident that they can work for elimination of child labour from villages and send all the children below 14 years to school. Under the DPEP project, State and district level conferences, seminars, workshops and training programmes on child labour issues were organized to sharpen the understanding of the officials on child labour issues. They were sent for training to national level institutes like V.V. Giri National Labour Institute. These training programmes helped them in developing confidence in them as well as on the issue of child labour.

## **5. Enrollment and Rehabilitation of Children in Schools**

There were 8057 children in the age group of 5 to 14 years in the Mandal out of which 7818 children were already enrolled in the school at the time of the survey. There were 539 out of school children and some of them were working at their homes in agriculture and at various other establishments. Out of 539 children, 336 were enrolled in regular government schools. Providing adequate staff and infrastructure strengthened these schools. Sixty-nine girl children were enrolled in

newly opened residential bridge camps. Eighty-six children were enrolled in boy's bridge camps. 41 children were enrolled in non-residential bridge centers. Rest 9 mentally retarded children were enrolled in mentally retarded home. Thus, all the out of school children in the age group of 5 to 14 years were enrolled in different educational institutions. Enrolling 336 children in regular schools reflects that parents are interested to send their children to school without any monetary and other incentives. It shows that the poor parents can bear their children's cost of education and disprove the theory of poverty for not sending the children to school. Some stubborn child labourers were rehabilitated in residential bridge camps under special care and guidance. The most difficult children were mentally retarded. They were put in safest mentally retarded homes. All these efforts took 69 days.

## **6. Convergence of Services of Government and Non-Government Organizations**

DPEP project was implemented in the Veilpoor Mandal in such a way that departments like Labour, NCLP, Minority Welfare, Social Welfare, Women and Child Welfare, Backward Classes Welfare, Velugu, Tribal Welfare, Disabled Welfare, Health, Public Works, Highways, Information, Public Relations, Voluntary Organizations, Religious Organizations, Caste Organizations and Panchayati Raj Institutions worked with the same objectives, goals and mission. They participated in most of the meetings called by the education department and provided wholehearted support to children's families so that they could send their children to schools. Police department also played its own role to create fear among the employers through legal provisions. In most of the meetings their active participation helped the Mandal officials in reaching the mission to send every child to the school.

## **7. Active Community Participation**

Meetings at district, mandal & habitation levels, active role of teachers and panchayati raj institutions, public representatives, youth groups, DWACRA group members, employer's representatives created a congenial atmosphere to work together for the cause. It also created an atmosphere of sharing information about the working children and hiding or not reporting in the school. Information was flowing very fast from person to person, organization to organization and department to department. It created belief and trust in the programme which became everyone's responsibility. It reduced dysfunctional departments, groups and individuals and all the agencies were geared up towards achieving the mission of the Mandal. Village community people participated and interacted actively in the padyatras, door-to-door campaigns, cycle and torch rallies, wall writings, street theatres and meetings. Religious communities were also not far behind; they also led from the front. Donations given by the public representatives also helped in achieving the goals. These donations came from all the sections of the society. Sharing the responsibility of salary of extra teachers was seen as a positive initiative of the villagers through Panchayati Raj Institutions. To conclude, DPEP project became a movement through the active participation of the village community of the Mandal.

## **8. Feedback and Monitoring**

For achieving 100 per cent enrollment, feedback from all the partners was flowing openly in all the villages. It was noticed that the action plans were reviewed everyday at village level and once in a week at Mandal level. District authorities

were briefed everyday on the progress of the work. This process of initiating, information sharing and discussing brought togetherness and collectivism in the implementation of the project. It also helped in creating healthy environment for achieving the goal. The participation in these meetings revealed that members put behind their self-interest and to achieve the project's goal became the first priority. They took problems as challenges and developed a cohesive team. Information related to child labour was shared openly and displayed on hoardings, which created community pressure. These feedbacks also helped in sharing roles and responsibilities amongst governmental and non-governmental organizations, and individuals. It led to accomplish the dream of making the Mandal child labour free.

## **Efficiency in Implementation of the Strategies**

The Veilpoor project was found most efficient project to enroll the children in the school. It could be assessed through various factors like time, expenses, quality of education, retention of children in the school and sustainability of the project.

### **Time Management**

In a meeting with the District Primary Education Programme officials on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2001, the Collector of the Nizamabad District decided to take up Veilpoor mandal on a pilot basis to enroll all the children of the district (aged 5-14) in the school. The drive was initiated with the help of the district and Mandal level officials in which peoples' participation was solicited. On 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2001 the Mandal was declared 100 percent free from child labour. The villagers proudly displayed boards at the entrance of the Mandal, declaring their Mandal free from child labour. In such a short period, the entire Mandal became free from child labour. It was a remarkable achievement for the implementing agency of the project. When the project was started, there were 539 out of school children and all got

enrolled in the schools within four months of the project period. The status of the children in the schools/Residential Bridge Camps is given in the following table:

Categories	Number	Boys	Girls	Total
Children in the age group of 5-14	-	4229	3828	8057
Children in the school	-	3977	3541	7518
Children out of school	-	252	287	539
ILO bridge camp at Telgu Bala Mahila Pranganam, Perkit (Armoor Mandal)	1	-	67	67
Non residential Bridge Centres	3	15	26	41
Residential bridge camp	1	86	-	86
Children enrolled through mobilization		144	192	336

### **Expenses on Enrolling the Children in the Schools/Residential Bridge Camps**

Under the project, large network was created for the effective implementation of the project. The entire government departments at the district and mandal level were cooperating with each other. Even at the grass root level, cooperation was being received from the Gram Panchayat and Village Development Committees, Mandal Parishad President and general public. In this situation, the project needed less human resources required for the motivation and awareness purpose. On the other hand, once the project started it received monetary and other help from all sections of the society. A list of the entire donation made during the implementation of the project has been given in the sustainability part of this report. This project was most economic when it is compared with NGOs efforts in the process of making child labour free villages. The activities were performed within the project budget and the community generated additional resources.

In the project, teachers (Vidya Volunteers) were appointed for the education of the children. The monthly honorarium of these teachers was Rs. 1000 and they had to stay with the students if the school was residential. Thus, the project teachers were

teaching the students by getting only Rs. 1000 whereas regular teacher's salary was more than Rs. 10,000/-. They were not working for the monetary benefit but for the social cause.

### **Quality Education**

Efficiency of the project also depended upon the quality of education. In this project both residential and non-residential schools were opened for the students. The concept was to impart one-year education to the children before sending them to the formal schools. Teachers had the responsibility to prepare the child in one year so that he/she could directly join class sixth in the formal school. During the study it was found that many students had cleared their fifth class from the residential school in a year and now they were in the regular school. When their educational standard was enquired, the teacher of the Veilpoor High School, K Luxmikachari said" it took maximum six-months for the students of the bridge course to adjust in the school. After this period, their performance was just like a normal student. During the meeting with the students in the residential school, it was found that school had created a lot of interest amongst the students towards the study. Ashok, who was in the Ditchpalli residential school for the last three months, was now in a position to read alphabets and count numbers. Monika, who had cleared her class fifth from the Veilpoor Residential School, was now in class seventh in the A.P. Social Welfare residential school. Therefore, the project was quite effective in educating the children so that they could be successfully enrolled and continued their study in the formal schools.



## Strategic Innovation

The objective of the project was to achieve 100 percent enrollment of children of 5-14 age group in the Veilpoor Mandal, provide them learning and replicate the project in other parts of the district and the State. During the field visit, it was reported that 9 Mandals of the Nizamabad district were completely child labour free and the rest were in the process of 100 per cent enrollment of children. The strategy adopted for the implementation of the project and attitude of the staff and other stakeholders of the society made the Veilpoor Mandal project more innovative. Some of the innovative strategies adopted in implementation of the project were as follows:

### **Child-Centered Strategy**

The project adopted child-centered strategy for its success. The goal was set to enroll all children of age group of 5-14 years in the school. The children were also motivated to take an active part in the realization of the goal. Amongst the children of the Residential Bridge Camp, some children were chosen to perform cultural programmes (called *Balakala Brindams*) in different villages. The teachers of the Bridge course gave them training in song, dance and drama to motivate out of school children of the villages. These children used to perform programmes in different villages in the form of popular songs. Each song delivered a message related to importance of education for the children and their exploitation at work place. Performance of the *Balkala Brindhams* was leaving a great impact on the villages.

Ashok, a student of RBC camp who performed in different villages said, “People in the villages encouraged me for my performance”. In many villages, children

themselves showed their willingness to join school after the performance. He remembered that after the performance in a village five children came to him and they showed their willingness to join school. Now those children had joined Ranjal mandal Bridge Camp to pursue their study. In many cases children of the bridge camp motivated the other children to join school.

Ashok after joining the camp himself motivated two children, K. Mahesh and Prakash, to join school. Mahesh was working in Transport Company and Prakash was engaged in grazing the cattle. Now both the children were in the same Bridge Camps. Similarly Raju who was earlier working in the cycle shop before joining RBC said that he motivated two children and one of them was his friend, M.D. Gaus who was working as a child labour.

### **Child As a Motivator**

For the success of the programme, children of the RBC camp were also motivated to make aware the parents and employers. After joining the school they used to visit different villages to convince the parents of the children about the importance of education and facilities being provided by the officials. It was important because employers of the child labour were spreading rumors against enrollment of the children in the school. In some cases they tried to threaten the parents by saying that sending the child to the school may result into the loss of organs of the child. They branded this action as a big nexus of the organ transplantation mafia. Questions were raised even on the quality of the education. Under these circumstances when they interacted with the students of the RBC, they were found to be quite happy, healthy and knowledgeable. It helped to remove all the doubts of the parents and they became supporters of the programme.

## **Child As An Informer**

Under the project, school children themselves acted as informers to mobilize the children for enrollment in the schools. In every village, children were contacted to get information about the out of school children in their villages. Mr. K Luxmikachari, Head Master of the Veiploor High School said that he used to motivate children of his school to inform him about those children who were either irregular or not attending school. A child could be a good informer and motivator for the other child. On the basis of the information, teachers used to consult the parents to ensure regularity of the child in the school. In his school, he started a practice of honoring all those children who had helped teachers in ensuring 100 percent enrollments in the area. All those children are even now honored on 14<sup>th</sup> November every year on the occasion of children's day.

## **Trust and Confidence**

The important aspect of the project was that it generated confidence among the various stakeholders of the society towards enrollment of children in the schools. The belief resulted into cooperation of the members of the society. The government officials started the project but very soon it became people's movement. Government officials realized that its success was not possible without the cooperation and participation of the general public including the panchayat members and village development committees. Mr. R.B. Subramanyam (Deputy Project Manager), District Primary Education Programme informed that at the initial stage of the project, Village Development Committee members and panchayat members were newly elected. Majority of the members were young and enthusiastic. The members of Village Development Committees and Panchayats were motivated to help in the enrollment of children in the school. The officials gave assurance to help them in the allocation of the development resources for the development of their villages.

Mr. Subramanyam was of the opinion that support of the elected representatives and Village Development Committee members was most important for the successful implementation of the project because without participation of the people's representatives, no programme could succeed. Any common man would first believe their public representatives not officers whether it was Collector or Chief Secretary. Firstly, they would trust their Sarpanch, the CM and the PM because whatever the problem, first it will go to the Sarpanch. Hence, action was taken to influence the village development committee members. District Collector gave special priority and importance to this programme.

Officials started visiting different hamlets to convince the parents to send their children to school. This had a positive impact on the villagers. Kodi Manohar, MPTC Veilpoor told during the study that the Collector took special interest in this project. He paid regular visits to the Veilpoor Mandal. For some period, he visited the Mandal 3 to 4 times. It was very important for the project because normally a District Collector visits a village once in two years. He always monitored the project. Due to the interest of the collector many other people started taking interest in the project. From time to time, MLA and MP of the area also visited the project area. It attracted media attention.

Once media started writing about the contribution of the people it motivated them a lot. When the people saw their names in the newspapers, it gave them tremendous satisfaction and they started contributing more for the project. In this programme they worked for the name of their Mandal.

### **Support Received in the Implementation of the Project**

The project succeeded in securing the support of all the political parties. In the Village Development Committee, which represents all political parties and caste elders who jointly take decisions related to the development of the village, members told that party line differences did not affect the process of enrollment of

the children in the school. Mr. Gangadhar, a Village Development Committee member from the Lakhora village said that the attitude of the officials motivated them to work for the enrollment of the children in the school. All the village development committee members supported the cause. Discussing about the support, he told that a teacher was not available in the village school. We, the VDC members, discussed the matter and had appointed teacher on our own cost.

### **Empathy That Resulted into AKSHAR DIKSHA**

One of the most innovative methods for the completion of the assignment applied by the project team was *Diksha*. Community Mobilization Officer, Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao, took the first Diksha to ensure 100 enrollments in the area. He told that when decision was taken to complete 100 percent enrollment in the Veilpoor Mandal and he was given the responsibility, he decided to visit the Mandal every day at 10 o'clock in the morning. He used to visit the Mandal and held several rounds of meetings with the Mandal level officials, teachers, village development committees, sarpanches but these meetings could not bring any fruitful result. He was very worried about the progress. One day he decided to leave the district headquarters and stay in the village. He took *Akshar Diksha* (oath for enrollment of all children of the Mandal in the school). He started living with the villagers, eat with them in their houses and discuss with them on different issues. During his stay in the villages he saw village life closely. In his own words, "we used to organize meetings with the sarpanch, V.D.C. members and youths in the village. We used to convince the parents and clear their doubts related to the child labour. When I found a lot of doubts in the minds of the parents, for a moment even I was in doubt whether the work would be possible or not. But gradually I became confident after visiting many habitations. In the initial period people used to laugh at me. They used to think that he is a government official and he is working for his salary. This attitude of villagers did not disappoint me and I decided to win the heart of the people through my mission. In order to garner the support of villagers,

it is important to work as a volunteer than an official. I visited each and every house and cleared the doubts of the parents. During this course, I felt that parents had different problems and that's why different strategies were needed to enroll their children in the school. That's why I made a different action plan for each child. *Akshar Diksha* was a matter of surprise for the people. They had heard about the *Ayappa Diksha*, *Hanuman Diksha* but not about the *Akshar Diksha*. It gave a message to the people that whatever I was doing; I was doing from my heart and not because of the government order. Therefore, people started supporting me and it resulted into the 100 percent enrollment of children of the Mandal." This strategy was so successful that even in the other Mandals, people followed it. Mr. B. Bhaskar, Mandal President of Yella paddi Mandal and Mr. Ramanna Gaud, ex-Mandal President of Ranjal Mandal took *Diksha* for the enrollment of children in their respective Mandals. Speaking about the relevance of *Diksha* Mr. Ravinder, Mandal Resource Person of Armour Mandal who took *Diksha* and successfully enrolled 945 children in the school said that when a person takes *Diksha* and sees his face in the mirror his beard reminds him about his duty. Even in the community, people link him with some purpose. The press and people always reminded and challenged him to complete the task within the *Diksha* period. Therefore, *Diksha* helps and provides inner strength to the person in the fulfillment of any commitment.

During the drive for the enrollment of the children in the Residential Bridge Camp, the importance of education was realized. It was an innovative strategy to ensure sustainability and retention of children in the school. It had become very difficult to retain a child in the formal school. Child, who had been accustomed to the free environment, found the formal school system a big hurdle to his freedom and in such a situation whenever he got an opportunity, he ran away from the school. Keeping in view this fact, Residential Bridge Camps were established and its study curriculum was prepared in such a manner that it could generate interest

in the students towards the studies and they could be enrolled in the formal education system after the completion of their study in the bridge Camp.

Mr. O. Anjnelu, teacher of Veilpoor said that children in the hostel behave in a disciplined way. They take care of their cleanliness. There was no disturbance from relatives and parents and, therefore, they concentrate on their study. If we directly enroll them into the formal school then there was a chance that they would drop out from the school. Children start working when their parents were in trouble or they were on vacation. That was why Residential Bridge Course was very important component for the continuation of the study of the poor children. Monika, a student of Residential Bridge Camp (RBC) said that without the help of Residential Bridge Camps it would not have been possible to continue her study. Ashok, a student of RBC Ditchpalli, said that it would not have been possible to continue his study in the absence of RBC and he would have been working somewhere once again. Therefore, it was an innovative idea to provide institutional support in the form of RBC for the continuation and sustainability of the enrollment of the children in the school.

### **Curriculum at Residential Bridge Camps**

In the RBC, an innovative study curriculum was adopted to prepare the children for the formal school. Teachers were selected from the local community at a payment of Rs.1000 per month as honorarium. The study curriculum was adopted to prepare the child up to the level of 5<sup>th</sup> class in a year.

Mr. K. Venkataswamulu, a teacher of Veilpor Project, said that RBCs are very important for these children. The atmosphere in the formal school was very different. These children were not accustomed to that atmosphere and they can't continue in those schools where the emphasis was always on the studies. Bridge course was a bridge between the child and the formal school. Here children were

divided into five different sections. First was Sneham, second Chaitenayam, third Vikasam, fourth Pragati and the fifth was Pratibha. In the Sneham, we taught alphabets through the songs. In Chaitenayam, we taught them simple counting and after that the children shifted to the Vikasam stage in which we taught them addition. In pragati, which we considered equivalent to the fifth standard, the child started reading and writing. The last section was Pratibha in which the child was treated as a regular student by taking formal classes. We taught the child Telgu, Math and Hindi. After that the child joined the formal school.

Honoring of the employers was an innovative strategy for the enrollment of the children in the school. This was an impact of the positive thinking for the success of the project. Normally coercive measures are taken against the employers of the child labour. Sometimes, it leads to the hostile attitude of the society towards the project and in the long run it affects the project badly. In the Veilpoor project, it was decided to honor all those employers who voluntarily allowed the child to attend the school. District magistrate himself honored all the employers in a public meeting. It motivated the other employers to join the movement that resulted into release of many children.



# 7

## *Sustainability and Impact*

During the study it was found that the project for 100 percent enrollment of the children in the age group of 5-14 was not only successful but it was now being implemented by all the stakeholders of the society. The awareness level of the people of the Veilpoor was quite high as far as the education of the children was concerned.

### **Community Owned the Vision**

In a meeting of village development committee members at village Lakhora, it came out that despite the programme being implemented from the last one year, no official, including Mr. Sudhakar Sahab, was coming to the village for imparting education to the children. They told that village committee members had decided to enroll every child of the age group of 5-14 in the school. The land in the village was very fertile and people were educated. Almost all villagers were sending their children to the school. However, from time-to-time, people from other districts migrate to this Mandal to work as agricultural workers. They send their children to graze cattles of the landlords after taking advance from them. Now we have taken a decision that if any one wants to work in this village he/she will have to send his/her child to the school.

During the study, the village development committee members told that they were incurring the expenditure on the salary of the teacher in a school. The members informed that the government had told them to help in the enrollment of the children in the school but the teachers were not being recruited in proportion to the number of students in the school. Under these circumstances, the VDC members had to appoint teachers in the school on their own cost.

### **Continuous Efforts**

When villages achieved 100 percent enrollments, every village displayed boards announcing that their village had 100 percent enrollment and no child was working as a laborer in their village. This was a great motivation factor for the sustainability of the project. Now the responsibility to enroll the children was on the villagers and not on the government officials. The project, which was started by the District Primary Education Programme officials, had been well adopted by the villagers. Mr. Sudhakar Reddy, a social worker for the Veilpoor Mandal, said that our area is well educated. We have good schools and teachers in every village. Despite of all these things, if we have some children not going to school, why should we keep quiet? Let us try and help them. It shows the enthusiasm, which was developed among the public during the implementation of the project, was still there and people were working with the same motivation for the sustainability of the project. Mr. B. Bhaskar, Mandal President, Yellapadi Mandal disclosed that once he was going to the other Mandal and saw a child working in the field. Immediately, he decided to meet the parents of the child and convince them to send the child to the school. When he approached them they turned down his advice and doubted his credentials. Therefore, he requested the District Collector to issue him an identity card so that he could work for the eradication of child labour in the future. He agreed to my request and understood my intention for continuing the work even after the Veilpoor project was over.

## Community Contribution

There were many cases where parents were poor and not in a position to impart education to their children. Even then they had approached officials for the enrollment of the child in the RBCs. Community had taken initiatives to help all those families and children who were poor and could not afford education. The project had received donation from the society.

### Details of Donation/Contribution received from the public

Particulars	Numbers	Donated by
Trunk boxes	40	Village Development Committee (VDC) Vailpur
Dresses	100	Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society
Blankets	100	Sri Baji Reddi Goverdhan (MLA)
Dresses	50	Cheutha Swachanda Samastha Armoor ( Dr. Ashok, J. Ramesh)
Trunk Boxes	30	Sri P. Rajendher Reddy, Ankasapur
Shoes	100	Mahipal Ankasapur Chairman and K. Narsaiah Sarpanch
Gas Cylinder Connection	1	Vamshi Gas Agency, Armoor
Carrom Boards	2	K. Dayasagar
Games Materials		R. Ramuloo, MPTC, Veilpur
Free Tap Connection		K. Kousalya, Sarpanch Vailpur
Soaps		Press club Vailpur
Tooth Brush and Pastes		SBH Vailpur
Watches	3	Ramchander, a cycle shop owner
Note Books		Village Development Committee, Vailpur
Coconut Oil		Naresh Reddy
Soaps		Dr. Dharmachary
10 <sup>th</sup> Class exams fees	Rs 600	S. Mahipal Vailpur
10 <sup>th</sup> Class exams fees	Rs 600	Vishwanath Subramaniam, MPDO
10 <sup>th</sup> Class exams fees	Rs 600	Raja Raddy, Pochampally Sarpanch
10 <sup>th</sup> Class exams fees	Rs 600	N. Bhagya, Vice President MP Veilpoor
10 <sup>th</sup> Class exams fees	Rs 600	Mahesh Sarpanch, Mothe Village
10 <sup>th</sup> Class exams fees	Rs 600	M. Mahipal, Ankasapur
7 <sup>th</sup> Class RBC Students Examination fees@Rs60	Rs. 480	Dr. M. Ashok
Pamphlets	Rs. 1000	Nagesh Sarpanch
Pamphlets	Rs. 1000	Cheyantta society

## **Free Child Labour Mandal Responsibility of Every Individual**

The level of awareness could be assessed from the fact that once a child (U. Umalatha), who was working as a maidservant, was found sleeping on the Nizamabad bus stand by a journalist. He informed the Community Mobilization Officer of DPEP project. The officials went there and they talked to the child. Realizing that no body was there to take care of the child, they enrolled the child in the Pirkit Mahila Prangan. During the study, we met her and found her quite happy in the school. She could now write her name and count Hindi letters and numbers.

## **Change in Officials**

Efforts were being made for the sustainability of the project at the official level and also with cooperation from the public. Mandal Education Officer, Mr. B. Shankar said that they had made efforts in this direction. Earlier teachers used to think that their responsibility was to educate the children for five hours. Now we have also made them aware about the reasons if children were not coming to the school. We have to create a satisfactory and conducive atmosphere for the children where they could read and play. Once the children were provided with facilities of playing along with the study they will come to the school willfully.

Now teachers understand their responsibility. If any child was not attending the school, the teacher called his/her parents personally or told other students to inform the parents. Hence, 100 percent enrollment and all teachers were working hard every day for the retention of the children. Mr. B. Shankar admitted that till today they have achieved 100 percent retention. Even those children, who were mentally retarded and could not attend formal schools, were being sent to *Snehalya* or disabled schools. The number of these children was 9.

Mr. Prakash, Mandal Resource Person, Veilpoor, said that from the last two years they were concentrating on the retention of the children in the school with the help of Mandal Education Officer. We go to the village every Sunday to meet with the community and make announcement on the mike requesting the parents to send their children to the school regularly. We feel it was a continuous process and continuous efforts were needed for the retention of the children in the school. All officials were making efforts for the sustainability of the project.

*Mr. Prakash, Resource Person of Veilpoor Mandal, described how he was working for the retention of the students. A boy Datadri was working in a hotel in a village called Jankped. We went to the hotel and got him released from the employer. After being released he joined Veilpoor Residential School. He stayed in the Bridge camp for a year and then joined a regular school in veilpoor. His father and mother were working in the Jankped village. During the summer holidays, his father returned to his own village along with Datadri. When school restarted after the summer vacation and he did not turn up, I decided to go to his village as he was a very good student and I wanted him not to be dropped out. When I reached his village, I met the Mandal Resource Person to get the address of the child. Mandal Resource Person helped me and he called the father of the child. I enquired from the father whether the child was going to the school and came to know that he had stopped his study and father was willing to send him for work. I suggested him not to send the child for work because he was good in his study, and the work will destroy his life and future. The child could be enrolled in the same Mandal but the father did not agree to my suggestion. Then I told him that if you do not enroll the child in the school I would take him back to veilpoor Mandal and the child will continue to study there. Father got angry and questioned, are you taking responsibility of my child? I told him - yes. Then the mother of the child told her husband to allow the child to attend the school at Veilpoor. Suddenly, the attitude of the father changed and he offered me some cold drink and I came back with the child to Veilpoor.*

*Now the child was in class 6<sup>th</sup> and he was staying in the hostel. On the occasion of Durga Puja he went to meet his parents and joined the school again after the vacation.*

Coordination of all government departments and support of the local leaders both at the district level and at the grassroots level has contributed for the sustainability of the project. During the study it was found that project has developed good coordination among various departments of the government and that is leading towards the sustainability of the project. In DPEP, police department, revenue department all worked together.

### **Institutionalisation of Information**

It was observed during our visit to 5 schools that all the schools took attendance of children in the morning. A teacher takes the responsibility to visit the homes of absent children to know about the reasons for their absence. During our visit to one of the school, three children were found to be absent. Applications of all the three children citing various reasons for leave were available in the records. It reflects the responsibility of children themselves as well as their parents. The complete information about all the children was available. We were informed that the school headmaster has to inform the President of Panchayat Parishad about the absent children. We also found that one child had migrated from Veilpoor Mandal to Karimnagar District. Mandal resource person had taken the address from the migrant family and gave to the Karimnagar district authorities for ensuring admission of the migrated child from Veilpoor in the school. In this case, Mandal resource person had also visited the Karimnagar district to check whether the child is in the school or not and to ensure continuous information about the child. During these efforts, the research team has not come across any person annoyed with extra responsibility. They were happily performing their responsibilities. It was a great satisfaction to observe that officials of the Veilpoor Mandal has record of the activities and movement of every child in the age group of 5-14 years. One more significant observation was that the schools displayed the attendance in the premises of the school everyday, which can be seen by anyone. They can also ask

about the details of the absent children. The villagers themselves visit the houses of absent children to know about the reasons for not attending the schools. The school teacher or the member of the village development committee took those children to health center for check up who were not coming to the school because of their ill health. This process also helped the children during their illness. The whole activities resulted in education of children and 100 per cent enrollment of children of the Mandal in the schools.

## Impact

Veilpoor experiment was started as a pilot project. It had two long-term objectives. First was the enrollment of all the children of age group of 5-14 in the school and second to test the strategy for the replication of project in other Mandals of Nizamabad district to achieve 100 percent enrollment. The project was successful in both these aspects and it has achieved its objective.

### **Child Labour Free Society**

The biggest impact of the project is that it has generated an atmosphere where people now think that society could be free from child labour. In the opinion of Mr. Sudhakar, CMO of Nizamabad, there was a belief amongst the community earlier that a poor child should not attend school, as the school system cannot provide livelihood. When the project was started many government officials, who were in the implementation team, started thinking that child labour cannot be eradicated. For government officials as well as many members of the society child labor was not an issue. Therefore, initially, they were apathetic towards it. It was because of the sheer commitment of some officials that the things started changing. The honest and self-less work with utmost commitment of the officials

helped in the creation of a conducive environment for the eradication of the child labor and it eroded all the confusions attached to the child labor.

### **Child Labour: Not an Issue of Poverty Only**

When the project was started, there was some opposition from the parents and the employers and the issue was linked with the poverty. Many people including the government officials struggled with the parents to motivate them to send their children to the school. For some parents child was the only source of earning. In case of the girl child, she had to look after the siblings and help the parents to earn bread for survival. Boy children were working in the agricultural sector and grazing cattle's against the advance payments made to the parents by the employers. However, today when child was in the school and parents were happy with the performance of the child, it could be said that the project has removed the misconception from the minds of the people that the poverty was the main cause of the child labour.

### **Generated Social Awareness**

As far as the enrollment of children in the school was concerned, within a year all children were in the school. The strategy adopted by the DPEP officials raised the awareness level of the people and it generated large-scale support for the project. Within a year the project became people's movement. This was the greatest impact on the people as well as achievement of the project. Mr. R. Rajendra Reddy, TDP President of Nizamabad district said that he started conducting meetings with the parents and village development committees in each village to make the programme a success. On every 15 days, we used to make announcements by beating the drums in the village. I, myself, visited every house and convinced the parents. Sometimes, I ran behind the children to catch them and send them to the school. I would like to tell that I had not any idea about my own



agriculture fields before this project as it was taken care of by the child labourers. While working for the eradication of child labor from the Mandal, I also got an opportunity to see my own agricultural fields.

Similarly, the project had left a great impact on the Village Development Committees, youth groups, DWACRA, employers, doctors, Press and the media. After the awareness drive by the officials, employers released the child labourers from work. Some of them did it under the pressure of child labour laws. However, many of them voluntarily supported the drive. Mr. K. Srinivas Gaud, Vice president of auto union said that when the project started, officials came and told us not to employ any child below 14 years of age. They also told that if anyone was still employing children, he would be fined and sent to the jail. We organized a meeting and informed them that education was must for all of us. We have seen that there were so many auto drivers and owners who could not read and write. They were not even able to do simple counting. They faced problems in their day-to-day life. Under these circumstances, if government was providing opportunity to these children, we should help them. After the meeting we were handed over 20 children for enrollment in the school. In addition to this, the auto union organized an auto rally in the town claiming that there was no child labor with their autos. Mr. K.L. Kundiya, who works as a mason in the Veilpoor Mandal, said that we organized meetings every month and if any child was found working in our area we send him to the school.

### **Employers More Supportive**

The programme left deep impact on the employers. There were cases where the employers send the children to the school. Ashok and Raju, who were earlier working as a child labor, agreed that their employers readily agreed to send them

to the residential school when they heard about the facility being provided by the government.

However, some employers created trouble and refused to allow the children to join school. The resistance was because of the practice that the parents of the children had taken advance payments from the employers for sending the children to work for them. When officials insisted on the release of the children, the employers demanded their money back from the parents. It was not possible for the poor parents to return the money and even they opposed the enrollment drive launched by the DPEP officials. In such a situation, the officials took action with the support of the village development committee members and threatened the employers of the children with the police action as employing a child below the age of 14 years comes under the criminal act. It was announced that whosoever is releasing the children without any condition; the District Magistrate would honor him. The matter was reported in the local newspaper. According to the MLA of the Veilpoor Mandal, many employers came forward and without demanding the advance money, they released the children to join school. In the opinion of MLA of the area, “the estimated amount that the employers did not demand from the parents would come to around Rs.35 lakhs”.

### **31<sup>st</sup> January, 2004: No Child Labor in the Mandal**

The impact of the project was clearly visible after the completion of the project for more than three years. The Veilpoor mandal was free from child labour. All the children were in the schools and educational centers, and 11 mentally retarded children from Pachalanadukuda (3), Anksapoor (3) and Veilpoor (5) were also sent to Snehalaya mentally retarded home.

## **Replicability of the Project**

The replication of the project depends largely upon the sustainability of the project. The Veilpoor experiment was started with the initiative of officials but very soon community took the ownership of the project. Large number of people joined the movement for enrollment of children in the school and eradication of child labour from the area. The village development committee passed a resolution declaring their village free from child labour and 100 percent enrollment. They signed memorandum of understanding with the district officials to ensure enrollment of all children in the school. During the project period people from various sections were associated with the project. Some of them were government officials, political leaders and eminent persons of the society. They all contributed for the success of the project but after the completion and achievement of the goal in the veilpoor Mandal, many of them started working to achieve 100 percent enrollment in other Mandals of the district. MLA of the Veilpoor Mandal, Mr. Goverdhan said that on the basis of the Veilpoor experiment he wanted to attain enrollment of the children in Yadpalli and Bodhan constituencies. He motivated the Village Development Committee and Panchayat members, as VDC was very powerful committee in his area. He had donated 150 boxes to the children and motivated the other MLAs from his party to help the children and render his support for enrollment of children in other Mandals. He suggested that in our country there were a lot of rich people who have earned a lot and now they wanted to earn name. He suggested motivating philanthropists Mandal wise so that they could come forward for help. There should be a provision that if some one is donating his/her building; the name should be written on the building. It would motivate them. If some one donates cloths, the donor's name should be mentioned on the clothes.

We should motivate young volunteers to work for the project by providing them honorarium. He rejected pressure strategy for the enrollment of the children. In

his opinion, the public should be aware of the project. He said that they have given Indira Awas to the laborers who were very poor and do not have their own house. Under the Anpurna Yojna, food grains were given to the poor people who were dependent on the earning of their children. Even Mr. R.B. Subramanyam, Deputy Project Manager, DPEP agreed to the need of public support and public representation. The project would not succeed until their say in the project was there whether it was child labour project or any other welfare project.

The replicability of any project depends upon the highly committed and sensitized personnels. These persons can become change agents for social transformation. When this project was launched and many people joined it in the course of its implementation, it generated a pool of resource persons, which played an important role for the replication of the project in the other Mandals of the Nizamabad District. Mr. B. Baskar, Mandal President of Yellapadi Mandal, Mr. Ravinder, Mandal Resource Person of Armur Mandal, Mr. Ramanna Gaud, Ex-Mandal President of Ranjal took Diksha for the implementation of project in their respective Mandals. The strategy adopted by them had great impact on the villagers. It created a positive environment for replication of the project in different villages. Mr. Ramanna Gaud said that they worked for a month but result was not satisfactory. Then I decided to take *Akshar Diksha* with Sudhakar Jee and stay in the village until the whole village becomes 100 percent enrolled. He used to stay 4-5 days in a village and only after its enrollment we were moving to the other village. In his Mandal, there were 18 villages and it took 28 days to complete the task.

Mr. Sudhakar Reddy, a social worker of the Veilpoor Mandal, also agreed to the importance of sensitized persons for the replication of the education project. He said that the project should be introduced and replicated in every part of the country. The only thing was to select such committed people for that purpose. You

must chose very good social workers of the area. I don't say they should be representatives of the government but I would prefer those social workers that were committed for the cause. For a big area you should select 10 people and for the small area, such as Veilpoor, 5 people were enough. Then you must include all public representatives, Sarpanch, Mandal Presendent and even the MLA in this group. Then the project would be a successful one.

Veilpoor experience shows that a project like this can lead to a movement. The child labour issue and problem was transformed into opportunity for innovations and education of children. To draw a bright picture of the future of the society before the community, officers and political representatives as to what we want to achieve in the future, we should create a right atmosphere. This model also provided a lesson to others that Mr. P. Sudhakar Rao, Community Mobilization Officer has never worked for himself but for the entire Veilpoor Mandal. Mr. Rao in action, words or deed had not put his glory or his probable martyrdom before that of the Veilpoor Mandal. On occasions, when he has been challenged and he knows he is right, Mr. Rao answers his critiques with courage, facts, logic and certainty. It was through his mastermind that he could win the support of his critics. He never spoke against any individual. If that is the situation at work and many a times you just give up, remember these fighters. Officers played a role of social workers and volunteers and led the team from the front. The implementation of the project became their goal. This made the task possible to achieve. This is what happened in Veilpoor Mandal. Today, there are 10 more Mandals, which have become child labour free in Nizamabad district. The most heartening feature of the project is that the success came not by non-governmental organization and civic society but government officials of the Mandal and District did it. It is possible to replicate the experiences to all the Mandals and districts of the States because of low cost and supreme objective of the project.

# 8

## *Lessons Learnt*

### **Adoption of Vision**

The U.E.E. project of Veilpoor Mandal looked like any other Government projects. But, in reality, it was quite different from other Mandals. One of the differences which was clearly observed by the project team was that every Government Officer of the Mandal, Revenue Officials, Anganwadi Supervisors and Workers, Health and Medical Officials, Police Officials, Mandal Education Officials, Govt. Teachers, Panchayat Officials, etc., who were interviewed, had focused discussions which revealed that sending all the children below 14 years of age to school system had become the motto of each of them. It was also observed through individual interviews that everyone was keeping an eye on the out of school children and their family members. The officials visited parents of out of school children in the late evenings at their homes. It was also discovered that children, who were carrying out various activities e.g grazing cows, engaged in construction work, agriculture, paddy work, etc. at different places, were brought to schools. All the officials said in one voice that we wanted every child of Veilpoor Mandal to be in school by 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2001. Interestingly this vision of putting every child in school was also adopted by non-governmental organizations, political leaders, caste leaders, children, parents of children,

teachers' associations, Mandal Parishad Presidents, etc. Adoption of vision to put every out of school child in the school became part and parcel of each and everyone. It was possible only because of sensitive district leadership and their foresightedness.

### **Visionary Leadership**

Veilpoor District Collector, Shri G. Asok Kumar was a different leader. He led his own team and representatives from civic society in a different way. He took keen interest in conducting district level committee meetings and made the project personal commitment of the officials who were working for the success of the project. He also played an active role in attending the meetings at district, Mandal and Village level. He visited all the villages of the Mandal and had one to one meeting with Panchayat Parishad members, Mandal and Village Education committee members and created a positive, open and informal environment at all the levels. It was mentioned by many villagers that the District Collector became part of the village and their family members. The appreciation rewards given by the Collector were still vividly remembered by many of the respondents. Many of them were missing him. He had created volunteers from Government officials through his able guidance who took oaths for making the Veilpoor Mandal child labour free and sending all the children below 14 years to schools. Officials and non-officials; religious and political leaders; and employers still sustain the vision created by the district officials with motivation, keen involvement and interest of the Collector. He led their dreams into reality.

### **Unique Convergence**

During field observations it was realized that the officials of labour department, minority welfare department, social welfare department, women and child welfare department, backward classes welfare department, national child labour

rehabilitation project, disabled welfare department, tribal welfare department, voluntary organizations, and mainly the education department had worked as a core team to spread awareness about Government schemes available for children and their family and against employment of children.

Many experiences about the cooperation of various sections of society and help received by labour and education department to send children to the schools were shared with the project team. They also took help from police, revenue and other departments. During surprise visits and raids not less than five officials went together which reflected their sense of working together. The issue of sending the children to school had become everyone's task on priority basis.

Closeness of villages to school was visible when teams visited the schools. All villagers gathered within no time and shared their positive experiences of putting their children in these schools. In one of the schools, one girl, Monica, refused to recognize her parents. She said, "You are not my parents because you have not fulfilled your responsibility to send me to school. Now the teachers, who are teaching me, are my parents". After this experience, her parents had left the place with heavy heart. They recollected this episode and realized that the behavior of their daughter had taught them a lot. After two weeks, the parents brought the cloths, comb, hair oil and sweets to her. Finally, their daughter relented and hugged them. Parents were now the regular visitors of the school and they had become volunteers to send all the children from their own village to residential bridge school.

### **Impact of Meetings**

Meetings had become empowering processes in making Veilpoor Mandal Child Labour free. These meetings had become a tool to create awareness and sensitivity towards the campaign against employment of children in various activities. This



had become a vehicle to resolve personal, interpersonal, caste, economic, and community issues and problems. In all 60 rallies, 80 meetings were held to make the Veilpoor Mandal child labour free where oath was taken and resolutions were passed not to keep child labour and to send children to school. Eight torch processions were taken out to tackle hard-core elements and 6 meetings were exclusively organized in mosques to involve Muslim community in making the Mandal child labour free. These meetings were extended to self help groups and nearly 40 such meetings were held for adoption of out of school children. Local Government institutions like Panchayati Raj took keen interest in conducting 60 meetings during the campaign. Child to child strategies were planned and action plan for each child was drawn in such meetings. After going through all the records of the meetings, it was observed that these meetings were attended by a large number of people. Sometimes, anti-social elements also attended these meetings. The picture reflected that a positive climate of sending children to school was created and achieved through meetings in which every member of the society played a very important and crucial role.

### **Child-to-Child Strategy**

Government of India has National Policies and programmes for eradication of child labour from the country. These National Child Labour Programmes are running in more than 100 districts of the country. There are 22 NCLP districts in Andhra Pradesh. These programmes do not have any strategy to tackle the issue of elimination of child labour. The Veilpoor Mandal experience has shown that a single uniform strategy was not feasible. Different strategies were adopted to send the children to the schools. It was very difficult to record more than 500 strategies that were adopted. It needed an year to sit with all the children and their family to listen and record their experiences. It would be worth recording these experiences. Some of the common strategies were: every child was approached personally; he was listened first whether interested to go to school or not. It was found that all

the children showed their interest to attend the school. It was possible to win their hearts through behaving like a child. Shri Sudhakar Rao played this role very well and others imbibed it. He helped in understanding children's psychology, experiences, desires, etc. Mr. Sudhakar Rao faced an extreme case where the family members said that you have to adopt the child if you are really interested in the development of children. Mr. Sudhakar Rao adopted the child and it had become a role model for others. This episode had spread like a forest fire. After this, the parents had no alternative but to send their children to school. This generated trust with officials and a movement was created at various levels.

### **Creating Role Models**

From District Collector to Villager, seriousness and commitment was visible among all the officials but the person who has become a role model in the district and outside the district was Shri Sudhakar Rao. It was because of his sincere efforts and commitment not to go home until and unless the Veilpoor Mandal becomes child labour free that the other Mandals of the Nizamabad District also took the initiative to become child labour free. He has taken *Akshar Diksha* and grown beard to make the district child labour free. Recently, during our visit, it was discovered that he has not been taking any food. He would take food only when Nizamabad District becomes child labour free. He has not taken daily allowances in his life. He was working from morning to late evening. Many a times, we had tried to get in touch with him on telephone from Delhi for getting some information but we had always found him in the fields. He had definitely become a role model on the issues of children for the generations to come. He had been acknowledged, rewarded and awarded by the Chief Minister of the Andhra Pradesh State and various voluntary organizations. He was in demand to visit all the Mandals of the District and other Districts of the State. During his work, he was able to create many Sudhakars like him.

## **Local Monitoring Systems**

Country has National Monitoring Systems under NCLP projects. UN agencies have spent a substantial amount of money on developing Monitoring Systems and still they are continuing the process. Veilpoor Mandal has shown example to many such systems that every village should have its own monitoring systems. It was discovered in some villages that village education committees were monitoring the children's status in the school every day. They have put the statistics of all the children of the village at one place where everyone can see. These statistics change every day. These committees know how many children were there in schools and how many children had migrated with their families. They still keep the track of their movement and inform the other district authorities. These committees also keep the record of ill children. They also ensure that the children get medical aid. In one case, member of school management committee visited children's family to enquire about absence of their children. It was also found that some parents of children made a point to write to school authorities about their children's absence. It was revealed that every child was having a record with Panchayat, village education committee and also in the school. Such responsiveness could create self-driven forces to make Mandals, Districts and the country child labour free.

## **Challenges Thrown by Local Bodies**

Veilpoor Mandal became child labour free and all the children below 14 years were put in the school by 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2001. Village Panchayat Parishad had challenged anyone to report about any child found out of school till today, he would be rewarded with Rs. 500. Therefore, the people were alert and keeping a vigil. This process has created a self-checking system. Thus, the question of sustainability of children in the school has been resolved.

## **Strengthened Education System**

The drive to put all the children below 14 years into school system created pressure on infrastructure, strength of children and teachers, and curriculum. The village education committee took the challenge and dealt with most of the issues. Some of the issues were still creating doubts in villagers' minds e.g. issue of payment of wages to teachers, their training, etc.

# 9

## *Conclusion and Recommendations*

The Veilpoor project was designed for 100 percent enrollment of all the children in the age group of 5-14 years in the school as well as eradication of child labour from the Mandal. One of the objectives of the project was to generate learning for the replication of 100% enrollment in the school and eradication of child labour from Nizamabad district of Andhra Pradesh. The implementation of the project was a challenge to the officials of the District Primary Education Programme [DPEP] of which the District Magistrate was the Chairman.

The study of the implementation of the project showed that before initiating the project at Veilpoor Mandal level, a base line survey was undertaken to understand the grassroots realities. It covered the number of out of school children, the number of child labour in the Mandal and the existing support at the local level that could help in the enrollment of children as well as eradication of child labour from the area.

The officials of the DPEP undertook the task of enrollment of all the children. Three core groups, one at the district level, second at the Mandal level and the third at the village level were formed. At the district level, the decision was taken to initiate the project at the Veilpoor Mandal on a pilot basis. The selection of the Veilpoor Mandal was based on the following criteria.

- a) Size of the Mandal.
- b) Population of the Mandal
- c) Number of child labour and out of school children in the Mandal
- d) Institutional and support system in the Mandal
- e) Previous record of the Mandal in the implementation of education project

In the opinion of the DPEP officials, the above criteria should be taken into consideration for the implementation of the pilot project. The Deputy Project Manager of DPEP agreed that in the case of small geographical area and small target of population, the success of the project becomes relatively easy and one success leads to another. Therefore, in the initial stage of the pilot study, proper care should be taken to select the project area.

The Veilpoor Mandal is one of the smallest Mandals in the Nizamabad District both in terms of size and population. During the base line surveys, it was found that the numbers of child laborers and out of school children were relatively less in the Mandal. In fact, while conducting interviews, respondents accepted that maximum working children and out of school children were originally from the migrants family. Veilpoor is a prosperous Mandal as far as the agriculture and other economic activities are concerned. People from other districts migrate to the Veilpoor Mandal in search of livelihood. They work as a laborer and send their children to work on the land of the farmers after taking an advance from the employer. Therefore, child labour phenomenon in the Veilpoor Mandal was mainly due to the migration from other Mandals and hence, in terms of numbers it was less.

Under the DPEP Project it had been observed that officials of this Mandal were quite active in the implementation of the education projects. Due to all the above-

mentioned reasons, Veilpoor Mandal was selected on a pilot basis for enrollment of all the children in the age group of 5-14 years in the schools.

After the selection of the Mandal, the biggest challenge for the personnels involved in the implementation of the project was to spread mass awareness for the enrollment of children and eradication of child labour from the area. It was important to make it a vision of the officials and the mission of the common man of the society. Under the leadership of the officials, it was realised that it would be difficult to make the project a success without the support of all sections of the society. Panchayat elections had been held recently in the Mandal and majority of the members were young. Therefore, it was decided to take the help of Panchayat members, Village Development Committees, Mandal Presidents, MLAs and the MP.

The important aspect of the project was that all the members mentioned above joined the movement for eradication of child labour on a volunteer basis. At the initial stage, they saw the efforts being made by the DPEP officials. The whole-hearted involvement of the officials in the project and their empathetic attitude towards the children and parents of the child labour forced other members of the society to join the movement. It awakened their inner consciousness to support the movement and render their help for eradication of child labour from the Mandal.

The impact of the project in awakening the consciousness of the people was effective enough to generate conducive environment to work for the enrollment of the children in the school. In some cases, it was seen that the Mandal President, Mandal Resource Persons and the TDP leader of the area took oath to enroll all the

children in the school. They left their houses and stayed in the villages till the enrollment of all children of the age group of 5 to 14 years of that particular area.

The type of oath and commitment for the social cause is unique in the contemporary society. In the ancient India, Lord Budha left his royal palace in search of knowledge. In modern India, Gandhi left his house and observed *Satyagraha* for the freedom of the Country from the British rule. Veilpoor is the first Mandal where people took oath and the village committee signed memorandum of understanding to eradicate child labour from their villages.

It is important to note here that the project generated immense awareness among the officials involved or responsible for the implementation of the project. Their selfless service and behavior towards the society helped in generating trust among the people towards the implementing agency. This trust resulted into united efforts towards eradication of child labour from the area.

The Veilpoor project was a child centric project, which was designed to eradicate child labour with the help of the children. Since inception of the project, children were involved in the base line survey. It was thought that a child could be an independent, unbiased and hence reliable source of information as far as the daily schedule of its colleagues are concerned. The other traditional sources have their own limitations, interests and biases. After the base line survey, children were given the task of motivator. The *kala jathas* were formed to perform in different villages to motivate parents and children. In many cases the progress of the children at the Bridge Course led to the enrollment of children from other nearby villages.

It is important to note here that in the Veilpoor project the initiatives taken by the people not only resulted into enrollment of all the children in the school but it had a continuous and sustainable impact. During the study, the impact of the project



was visible in terms of sustainability and its replicability in other Mandals of the district. The project received support from all sections of the society. This support was in terms of cash and kind. In the Mandal, people came forward and donated clothes, shoes, books, pencils, boxes and other materials needed for the study of out of school children. Some children were very poor and unable to continue their study in the formal school. People from the Mandal came forward and paid the fees of the children enabling them to continue their study. A Doctor of the Mandal rendered his service free of cost to all those children who were enrolled in the Bridge Camp.

The project, which was started by the DPEP officials, very soon became people's movement. The Panchayat members decided to adopt eradication of child labour as agenda of their own Panchayat. They signed a Memorandum of understanding with the District Administration in which they had shown their full commitment for the eradication of the child labour and enrollment of all the children in the school.

The project received important place in the media. The activity of the project and success was reported and it also motivated others to join the project. In some cases, media report created a type of competition among the villagers and individuals as far as working towards enrollment of children and eradication of child labour is concerned. The Youth group, DWACRA members and Village Caste elders joined the project and helped for the enrollment of all the children in the project area.

The effort has a successful impact even today. During the study, it was found that there was no child labour in the Mandal and all the children in the age group of 5 to 14 years were attending school. In addition the enthusiasm and devotion of the individuals, who were involved in the project, is still high. In other words, it would

be appropriate to say that the success of the project has raised their motivation and confidence. They have now acquired rich experience, have a sound morale and trust in their capacity. During the study, they agreed that they were satisfied from the Veilpoor experience but now their efforts are towards achieving 100 percent enrollment at the District level. Mr. Sudhakar Rao, C.M.O. of DPEP, Nizamabad has taken another oath [diksha] not to take any kind of cereals until the enrollment of all children of the district of age group of 5 to 14 years in the school. He is continuously working to replicate Veilpoor experience in all the other Mandals of the District. People in the District recognize him as a priest but this priest is one who has taken oath for eradication of illiteracy and freedom of all the children from the work place.

The experiment, which was started with one Mandal in the year 2001, has almost been completed in four Mandals such as Ranjal, Yedpalli, Nandipet and Veilpoor. Continuous efforts were being made to achieve 100 percent enrollment at the district level. The vision of District Magistrate for the eradication of child labour has become the mission of all the stakeholders of the society.

To sum up the Veilpoor experience, the strategy adopted was simple and possible to achieve. There was no common strategy at Mandal level. Different strategies were adopted at different villages and also changed from family to family. Only the common strategies were visible. It was possible to make the Veilpoor Mandal child labour free through the commitment, dedication and seriousness of government officials and later on joined by various social partners of Veilpoor Mandal. The continuous flow of activities related to meetings, awareness campaign, availability of residential bridge camps and positive attitude of teachers also played a great role in making child labour free Mandal. The role of Panchayati Raj Institution, Village Education Committees, Caste Role Holders and

Employers was very crucial and significant. Lastly, children of the Mandal played a significant role in creating positive climate and inculcating desirable attitude to influence parents, teachers and political leaders.

All these actions showed the way to eliminate child labour from the Mandals, Districts and the States. The experiment sowed the seeds on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001 for elimination of child labour. At present, all districts of Andhra Pradesh are showing trends in the process of making child labour free mandals. In Nizamabad district, more than 8 mandals have been made child labour free and the children below 14 years were put in education system. It is a very powerful and positive trend towards making a very significant agenda of the States. Tamil Nadu government has prepared an agenda to make their State child labour free. Other States are also following the same trend.

The study recommends that –

- Before taking up this kind of project in other districts of the State, the internalization of goals and the vision have to be made clear to all the stakeholders of the districts and the Mandals, which were the prime factors to make child labour free Veilpoor Mandal.
- Convergence of services in various departments i.e. DPEP, UEE, Adult Education, ICDS, PRI, etc. and active support from Caste Leaders, Political Leaders and moreover the parents of children at the district and Mandal level has to be ensured. Besides, the Child Labour Project Society has also to be involved with all the activities related to child labour.
- Fragmentation approach of all the projects in the district as well as in the Mandal have to change towards systematic and holistic approach which will create coherent atmosphere in the Mandal as well as in the districts.

- In such type of campaigns, importance should be given to medium driven messages instead of message driven mediums.
- Emphasis should be placed on the achievement of the goal of the project instead of departmental and individual goals. This was the idealism that paid off in the Veilpoor Mandal. It was only possible because the delivery was based on principle values not on individual departments and persons.
- The experiment at Veilpoor Mandal showed that there was no competition between culture and development rather it shows culture and development went together and multiplied the impact. This experiment should be replicated to other Mandals.
- The actions taken under this project were not enough but motivation was very clearly visible. Motivation with action is desirable for replication of such projects to other parts of the State and country.
- The strategies show the complete involvement of key functionaries. We have rarely seen that they were telling, directing and transferring their responsibilities to others. To carry out this type of project in other mandals involvement of all the key officials is must for success of the project. They should lead from the front and should be a role model for others to follow.
- It is suggested to have knowledge based technology to built scientific and human capabilities of various partners so that all the partners become autonomous groups/individuals towards building self-motivated community to make child labour free mandals and 100 enrollment of children in the school.

- Selfless leadership and visionary approaches helped in achieving the goals. Such leaderships are needed for making child labour free societies.
  
- Child labour issue has been transferred from government to departments; departments to local government bodies; local government bodies to every citizen of the Mandal. A focused target would help in achieving the goal and the vision of the State of Andhra Pradesh.
  
- Officials of the education department should be notified under Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 for enforcement of the provisions under this Act in addition to Labour and Factory Inspectors of the labour department.

## References

We have consulted many documents and reports of the Government of India and the State Government of Andhra Pradesh as well as the documents, which were made available to us during our study. Some of them are given below:-

1. Vision 2020 – The Agenda for Education of Andhra Pradesh, Training Kit for Trainers trained under ILO-IPEC – APSB Project, 2003
2. A note for Planning for Universalisation of Elementary Education by DPEP, Government of Andhra Pradesh, 1999
3. Every Child in School, Department of School Education, Andhra Pradesh, 2003
4. Universalisation of Elementary Education, An action plan of Veilpoor Mandal, DPEP, Nizamabad District, Andhra Pradesh, 2001
5. Demographic Profile of Nizamabad District, 2002
6. My Experiences with the Drive Against Child Labour of Veilpoor Mandal by G. Asok Kumar, Former Collector and District Magistrate, Nizamabad, Andhra Pradesh
7. Jha J and Dhingra D, Elementary Education for the Poorest and Other Disadvantaged Groups: The Real Challenges of Universalisation, Centre for Policy Research, Delhi, 2002
8. Various Newspaper Cuttings from different papers which have reported the activities of the Veilpoor Mandal in the year 2001 to 2004
9. Unveiling Veilpoor: The Success Story of Achievement of 100 per cent Enrollment of Children by G. Asok Kumar, Former Collector and DM, Nizamabad district, Andhra Pradesh
10. Report on the Visit of Dr. Justice K. Ramaswamy, Member, National Human Rights Commission, 2001