

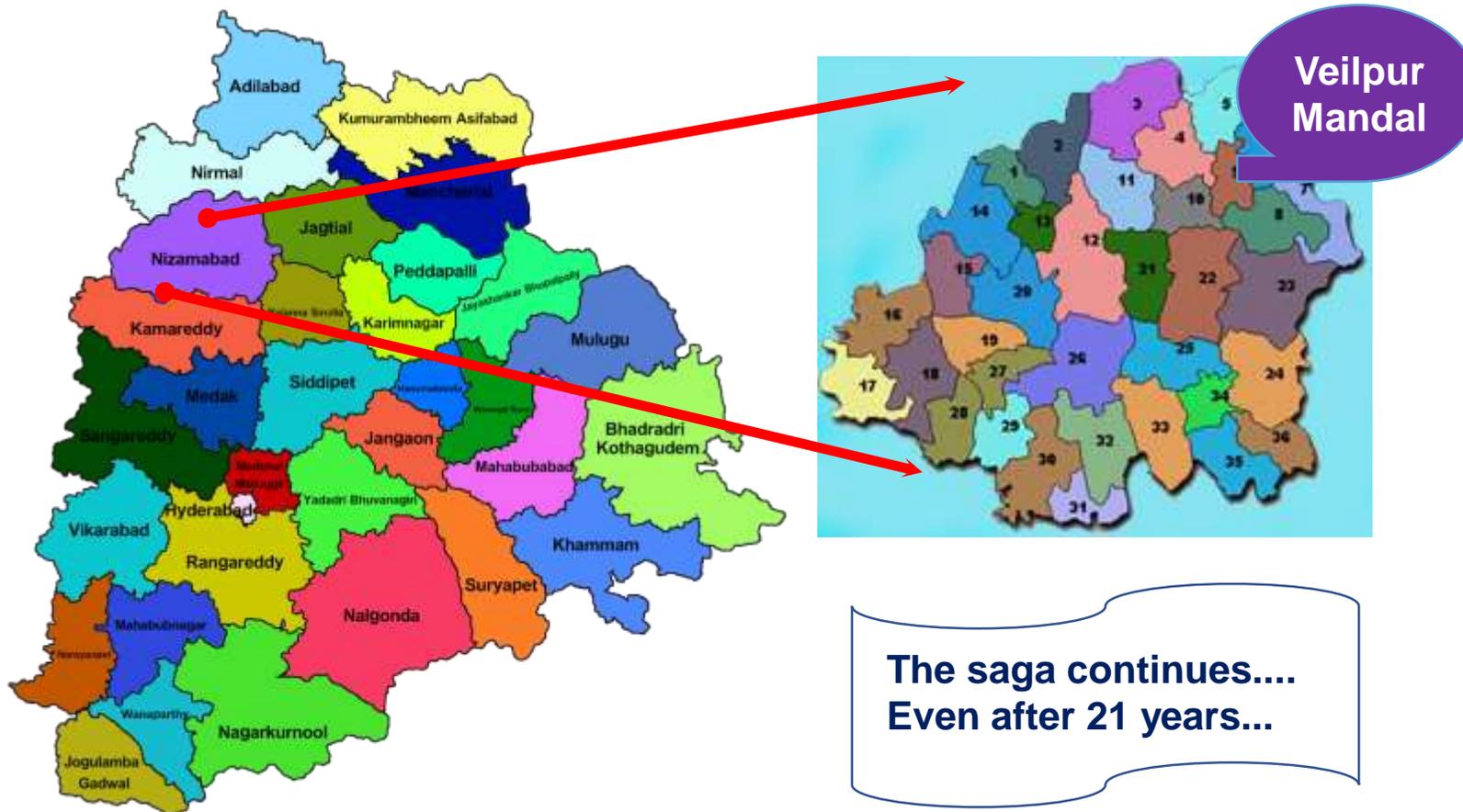
**Hon'ble Members of the Parliamentary Standing
Committee on Labor, Textiles and Skill Development
24th November 2022**

Unveiling Veilpur: Towards a Child Labor Free Society

G. Asok Kumar
Former Collector, Nizamabad
Director General, National Mission for Clean Ganga
<http://asokji.in/>

Veilpur: A Child Labour Free Mandal

- Veilpur Mandal in Nizamabad District achieved the unique distinction of being the first mandal in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state to achieve 100% Enrolment under Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) program
- On **2nd October 2001** Veilpur Mandal was declared as **CHILD LABOUR FREE MANDAL**



Name of The Mandal		Veilpur
Area of the Mandal		120.3 sq km
No. of Gram Panchayat		15
No. of Habitations		20
Male	Female	Total Population
20972	22156	43128
Total No. of 5-14 age children		8057
Enrolled in Schools		7518
Out of School Children (as per survey)		539
Enrolled during drive		800+
Special Children		9

Honouring the Heros

Ex-Sarpanchs, team members & beneficiaries of the campaign honoured as part of **Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav** to commemorate **20 years of Child Labour free status of Veilpur - 8 October 2021**, Nizamabad

The function was attended by Sri Dharmapuri Arvind, Hon'ble MP, Nizamabad; Sri B. Govardhan, MLA, Nizamabad Rural; Mr K. Srinivas IAS, Director, LBSNAA, Mussoorie; Smt Rani Kumudini IAS, ACS, Labor, Telangana; Mr Srinivas, Director, VVGNI, Noida; Mr Narayan Reddy, District collector, Nizamabad; Mr Mahavir Jain, Amicus Curiae of Supreme Court on Child Labor, all ex-Sarpanchs of Veipur mandal etc.

Many students who benefited from the drive and are now graduates/engineers attended the function to express gratitude



Press Clippings – Revisiting Success of Veilpur as part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav organized by VV Giri National Labor Institute, MoL&E, on 8th October 2021

HANS INDIA
WARANGAL SATURDAY 9 OCTOBER 2021

CITY/REGIO

Velpur mandal became role model 20 years ago in child labour eradication

Jal Shakti Ministry's Additional Secretary G Ashok Kumar, who served as Collector, said it was made possible with the cooperation and dedication of public representative, officials

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NIZAMABAD

JAL Shakti Ministry's Additional Secretary G Ashok Kumar, who earlier served as Nizamabad District Collector, recalled that Velpur mandal was declared as the first mandal to completely eradicate child labor in the country in 2001. This was possible only with the government encouragement, commitment of the authorities, VDCs and the cooperation of people's representatives, he added.

A programme was organised at Pragati Bhavan Conference Hall here on Friday as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the government's initiative to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of progressive India and its glorious history, people, culture and achievements. Ashok Kumar felicitated local body representatives and officials of the district administration, who served in Velpur mandal. Ashok Kumar said that 539 child laborers from Velpur mandal were admitted to schools at



Jal Shakti Ministry's Additional Secretary G Ashok Kumar speaking at a programme at Pragati Bhavan in Nizamabad on Friday

that time. Stating that children below 15 years should be enrolled in school and not to put to work, he said the country's development depends on the future of the children and children are important to the country. Stating that Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Reddy is also focusing on education, he said opening of residential schools across the State on the same day was a testament to KC's commitment. It's a good

development that BC, Minority, SC and ST welfare education institutions are being started, he lauded.

Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind said the mandal became an ideal to the country due to the hard work of the authorities. District Collector Narayana Reddy said the people of the district still remember Ashok Kumar sir as Eadapally mandal Ashok, who developed Sagar. It

was he, who explained about the importance of personal toilets, he added. As many as 40 lakh toilets were constructed during the period and lot of work was done on water conservation.

The Collector informed that recognition was given on July 9, 2001 and the declaration as child labor free mandal was on October 2, 2001. Later, giving vote of thanks, the Collector asked the people's representatives to continue their support to the people of Nizamabad district as compared to other districts.

Director General Dr M Srinivas, National Labor Institute, senior fellow VV Giri, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration Director K Srinivas and Special CS at State Labor Department Rani Kundini also spoke. The then CMO Subbarao shared his experiences from America. Rural MLA Bajireddy Govardhan, Dr Helen R Shekhar, Additional Collector Chitra Mishra, Trainer Ashok Kumar, Collector Makarand, the then CPO Sheikh Meera, officials and others were present on the occasion.

RAIN-MAN BEHIND THE CHILDREN OF VEILPUR AND THEIR AZADI KA AMRUTH MAHOTSAV!



Thanks to G. Asok Kumar, the young Collector of Nizamabad district of Telangana 20 years back, whose efforts brought the diverse community together in their fight against child labor, many 5-14 year old children who were working as child labor are now enjoying Azadi from the shackles of the bonded child labor.

The surprising fact is that Velpur mandal, which was a highly child labor prone mandal, retains its child labor free status even 20 years after it was declared as Child-labor free on 2nd October 2001! To honour the community leaders who took upon themselves to ensure it, V V Giri National Labor Institute, Noida organised a program on 8 October, 2021 at Nizamabad district, Telangana as part of the Azadi Ka Amruth Mahotsav program of Ministry of Labor and Employment. (After all, in the last 20 years, the session Velpur model was a popular and must-have session in all of the trainings run by the institute.) Smiles on the faces of some of those children who attended the program radiated confidence when they narrated the transformation education has brought to their lives, spoke volumes about the role of community in making sustainable transformations on social issues. Many said 'but for the Collector, we would still have been filling air in cycles in cycle shops or working as bonded labours in beedi factories. See now we are educated, many of us have passed intermediate or engineering, a few of us have gone to USA! The movement started by the Collector to enrol and retain all children in schools, was taken over and driven by the community for the last 20 years. They in-fact put up boards in all villages, proclaiming that 'there are NO Child Labor in the village'. They collectively wrote off almost Rs 35 lakh due as loan and interest from the parents who kept their children as guarantee for the loan repayment. The well attended hybrid function, with Arvind Dharmapuri, the local MP +, Baji Reddy

Govardhan, MLA and chairman TITC and Srinivas K., Director, IBSNAA joining virtually through video link, was a testimony to the axiom that social evils are best addressed by community engagement. Inspired by the success of Velpur model, Prof Mahavir Jain, Sr faculty at VVGIL, who also served as Amicus Curiae for Supreme Court in many child labour cases, published a book 'Elimination of Child Labour – A Possibility' in March 2006. The film 'Maa Orsalo Blakarmikalu Lenu,' based on the Velpur model, won the Golden Nandi Award 2002 for the Best TV documentary of Andhra Pradesh.

This community participation has been the hall mark of all major initiatives taken up by G. Asok Kumar, the 1991 batch IAS officer from Telangana cadre. He also succeeded in making 1.40 lakh pucca Individual Sanitary Latrines built in Nizamabad in a short time as a peoples' movement in 2002, much before the start of similar drives elsewhere under Swatch Bharat Mission in 2014. Since they were built with the participation of people and not contractor driven, the usage of these toilets were found to be as high as 87% by some survey later on! After the program of honouring

the community elders for their role in making and retaining the "Child labor free status" of Veilpur was over, in trooped 50 of Jogins and Potharajus, who were given dignity and fresh lease of life by an out of box solution by the Collector 20 years back. All of them had brought flowers and shawls to thank him for the Azadi they got from a very shameful and barbaric life they were forced to live then. Some of them presented their kids who were studying for nursing or graduation and looked really empowered. It was a memorable home-coming for the Collector, after 17 years! No wonder that Nizamabad has a 200 acre lake named 'Asok Sagar', named after the then Collector. Today, an attractive and imposing 18ft statue of Goddess Saraswati stands majestically in the centre of the lake and on its banks is a restaurant, making it a local tourist attraction.

Presently working as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Asok Kumar is in charge of yet another movement based on peoples' participation launched on 22nd March 2023 by PM Modi himself by addressing virtually 2 lakhs of Sarpanchs – the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan- Catch the Rain' (JSA/CTR) campaign. The campaign to nudge the stake holders to create appropriate Rain Water Harvesting Structures(RWHIS), suitable to the soil and climatic conditions, with active participation of the people, is to make Jal Andolan a Jan Andolan. Despite the loss of focus some time due to Covid second wave mitigation and intensive vaccination drives, since the launch on 22 March 2021, till 24.10.2021, both urban and rural areas put together, a total of 35,41,361 water related works completed/on-going (20,67,147 works completed and 14,74,214 works are in progress); in addition to 35 Cr+ afforestation activities done. The expenditure under MNRGS alone is Rs 51664 crores. He is trying to live upto the moniker of "Rain man" given to him by none other than Rajendra Singh, the "Water man" of India in one of the 200+ webinars organised on the campaign.



Path-breaking intervention against child labour

The Hindu, 8 October 2021

Success story showcased at every available forum

RAVI REDDY
HYDERABAD

It started off as yet another initiative launched by a new Collector but none would have realised that in 90-days a record breaking effort brought laurels to the agriculture-rich Nizamabad district.

The successful intervention against child labour in Velpur mandal of the district by then Collector G. Asok Kumar has been showcased at every available forum including international platforms on how concerted efforts can bring the smiles back on the young children.

Earlier this week, the path-breaking effort completed 20-years and still Velpur,



Velpur, a progressive agriculture village in Arnoor sub-division, stands out for making the mandal child labour-free.

pur, a progressive agriculture village in Arnoor sub-division stands out for making the mandal child labour-free. To commemorate the occasion, VV Giri National Labour Institute, under the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment is organising a workshop on Friday in Nizamabad.

Dream come true
Mr. Asok Kumar, presently

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti, who was the Collector in 2001 said: "the successful drive against child-labour practices in Nizamabad were the outcome of a dream translated into action."

The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) of the Union Government had identified this district as a child labour-prone district and had started 34 NCLP

2001, was taken up in the mandal under the leadership of the then Collector. On October 2, 2001 Velpur was declared as a child labour free mandal. All the 8057 children in the mandal were in schools.

The village community played a key role. All gram panchayats passed formal resolutions banning child labour in all forms and undertook to send all children to schools. They decided to ostracize anybody who employs a child for work.

800 back in schools
This included the 800 plus children brought back to schools and the nine mentally retarded children identified during the drive and admitted to an institution catering to them. The villagers not only wrote off almost

due from their parents, but also provided books and dresses for these children to join the schools. About 1400 girls were studying in the 34 non-residential bridge schools of the project in the district in 2001.

Mr. Asok Kumar said the close monitoring and daily feedback by the team in the field helped in making course corrections and changing strategies suited to various situations arising in the field on a day-to-day basis.

These efforts culminated in making Velpur a child labor free mandal—having ALL 5-15 year old children in schools, and with a sense of satisfaction.

Even after 20 years, the mandal is child-labour free and there is 100 per cent retention in schools.

Recognition and Testimonials of Sustenance

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

Rashtrapati Bhavan
New Delhi - 110004

16 June 2006

Dear Shri Asok Kumar,

I have gone through your papers relating to the drive against child labour and the success story of 100% enrolment of children with people's participation. It is a good work indeed and my greetings to you and your team.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

(A P J Abdul Kalam)

Minister's case, the Supreme Court had pointed out the scope of bonded labour and its existence in any form has widely been defined. Even non-payment of minimum wages amounts to bonded labour. The burden lies on the employer to prove that there does not exist any bonded labour in his employment. The local Panchayats should be involved in this process. Gram Panchayat Act and Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishads Act should be amended in such a way as to fix the accountability on the Gram Panchayat for reporting to the District Village Committee or the Divisional Vigilance Committee to that appropriate action could be taken. The District Collector had planned to conduct a survey in the light of the discussion.

With regard to the child labour, extensive report has been given as to how Velpur Samiti consisting of 15 Gram panchayats could be able to achieve 100 per cent child labour free zone and claim that all the children have been admitted in their residential schools. In Velpur Mandal, a special intensive drive was launched between July 25, 2001 and October 2, 2001. The Civil Society involved was represented by Sarpanches, Village Development Committees, youth and DWALRA members, who undertook door-to-door campaign. They have identified 520 non-school going children of the age group of 5 to 14 years and released the child labourers comprising 105 boys and 79 girls. They have been kept in Bridge Courses in 30 schools run under the directions of the District Collector. The officer personally took interest in the campaign, had converted a female child labourer whose parents had been advised to have her educated. They opposed on the ground that after educating her it would be difficult to get her married. The officer adopted that girl child and promised that he would celebrate her marriage as his 'Boster daughter'. The girl is studying very well and she claims to be the 'first daughter' of the officer. The children retrieved from child labour, are organizing their campaign by street plays, songs and traditional 'Burrakatha' (the expression of their views in the local language by way of songs). One male child was brought before me. He had shown tremendous response to education within a short period and expressed his future plan to become a doctor. The drop out children are also being watched and taken care of well. While congratulating the District Collector, the officers and the members of Civil Society for the good work done by them, I requested them not to be complacent for their success in one Mandal, but that it should be extended to all the Mandals. The entire district of Nizamabad should be declared, within one year, free from child labour and all the children be educated, especially the girl children.

The District Collector also had brought out various programmes undertaken for release and rehabilitation of the 'jogins'. He had indicated celebration of the marriage of 'jogins'. The root of the problem is that Pottusogas, the mendicants, are being persuaded to have their hair cut and return to normal disposition. They are the persons who initiate young girl children as 'jogins' (marriage to the village deity and remain unmarried). He estimated 200 potusogas to be taken forward to voluntarily remove tufts. He had also arranged marriage of eight jogins. The Government of the State had attended the marriage function. In addition, the District Collector.

does not exist in their district, what needs to be done is constant review. As a part of the programme of the District Collector so that the persons retrieved from the 'jogin' system do not relapse and continue to be engaged in general employment, he should monitor the situation from time to time. I suggested to shift them into the DWALRA schemes. The District Collector promised to devote his attention to the rehabilitation of the people against the evil practices, depriving women of their dignity of person, equal status and respect for womanhood, which are the basic human rights. The N.I.H.C. actively associated itself with all these rehabilitation and humane programmes of action undertaken by the District Collector and I commended him for taking such laudable measures for their emancipation. I also interacted with the children studying in Bridge Courses. The A.P. Mahila Samiti also has been doing the same work in children of different age-groups. The on-going project of imparting education to the children, is devoted to the children retrieved from child labour. To make them useful citizens of the society, it is but the duty of the civil society, the officers and all concerned to actively participate, encourage the parents to allow the children to continue their studies. The list of 1082 bonded labourers and the various rehabilitation schemes launched and implemented for them, were highlighted. I had suggested that the Collector should make it a part of his programme to visit all the places regularly so that their human rights could be safeguarded.

The review was followed by inspection and spot verification of working status.

(Dr. Justice K. Ramaswamy)
Member

Hon'ble Chairman

Copy to the Commissioner (Social Welfare), Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, Secretariat, Hyderabad, for information and necessary action.

Letter from NHRC member Dr Justice K Ramaswamy

14. Training Programme on Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour (27th September 2015).
15. Training Programme on Towards Effective Implementation of National Child Labour Project (28th September 2015).
16. Training Programme on Research Methods in Labour Economics (17-28 September 2015)
17. Orientation Programme on Social Dimension of Child Labour with Focus on Select Industries and their Supply Chains (15th October 2015)
18. Training Programme on Gender Issues in Labour (21-25 January 2019)
19. Workshop on Designing of Training Module for the Officials of Labour Department, Chhannigarh in Chhannigarh
20. Training Workshop on Convergence of Efforts and Services for Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour in Jammu & Kashmir in Jammu
21. Two-day Workshop on Curriculum Development of Short-term course on Child Labour organised by MGLI, Govt. of Gujarat in partnership with Unicef, Gujarat
22. Training of Trainers on Convergent Planning at District Level in Patna, Bihar
23. Conference on Convergent Planning at District Level: Preventing and Responding to Child Labour in Patna, Bihar
24. Training Programme on Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour in India in Collaboration with SLI, Odisha
25. Orientation Programme on Labour Statistics with Special Focus on Trends in Child Labour Statistics for In-service Group 'A' Officers of Office of Registrar General, India (ORGI) on 10th October 2018.
26. Training Programme on Educational Rehabilitation of children rescued from different forms of Labour Exploitation (29th April to 1st May 2019)

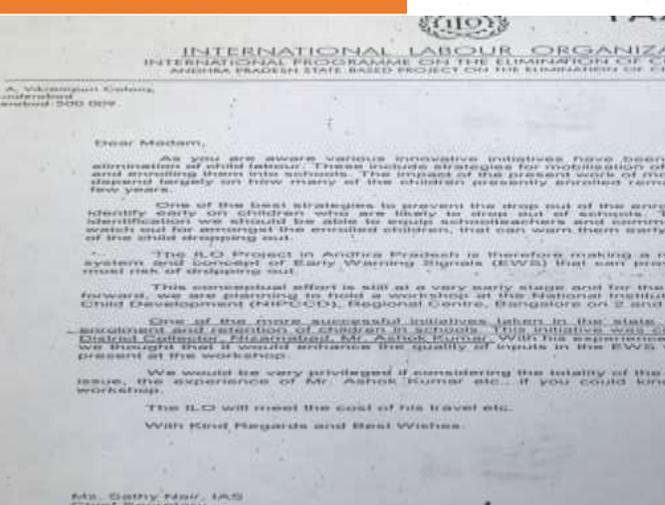
In All Training programs on Child Labor at VGNLI even in 2022 since then

Programme in VVGNLI National Labor Institute, Noida over the recent years in which I had chaired Velpur. Experience led by Shri G. Asok Kumar, IAS (ex Prevention and Ending Child Labour) as discussed and deliberated (Some of the Programmes)

National-level Programmes: (list from 2017 onwards upto 2019 June)

1. Induction Training Programme for Labour Service Officers (27th March – 5th May 2017)
2. Leadership Development Programme for Rural Trade Union Leaders (17-21 April 2017)
3. Training Programme on Empowering Rural Women Organizers (30-14 July 2017)
4. Sensitization and Awareness Generation Training cum Workshop on Child Labour at Tripura University (28th March – 2nd April 2017)
5. State of Child Workers in India - Mapping Trends: A Study Dissemination Workshop with Special reference to Bihar at Patna, Bihar (11-12 April 2017)
6. Special Lecture Series Programme at Karnataka, Bangalore (24-25 April 2017)
7. Awareness Generation Training Programme for Elimination of Child Labour (22-24 August 2017)
8. Training Programme on Effective Implementation of National Child Labour Project (6-7 September 2017)
9. Training Programme on Towards Effective Enforcement of Child and Adolescent Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (20-22 September 2017)
10. Training Programme on Ensuring Enrolment and Retention in Education for Addressing Child Labour (25-27 October 2017)
11. Orientation Programme on Child Labour (7-9 February 2015)
12. Sensitization Programme for addressing Trafficking of Children for Labour Exploitation (20 – 22 March 2015)
13. Orientation Programme on "Sharing the Experience of Rehabilitation through NCLP" (7 to 10 August 2015).

Letter from the Hon'ble President Abdul Kalam



Letter from ILO India

In 2001, it all started with a dream and the meetings...

- The new Collector's dream to "improve the quality of life of people and to do something unique"
- To motivate, plan and execute, several meetings were conducted by the District Collector with:
 - ❖ DPEP sectoral officials, Teachers Associations, Unions, NGOs
 - ❖ District Officers - mainly education, women and child welfare, police and labour department officers, DRDA, Mandal Level Officers, specifically on the special drive
 - District Officers, after the "**Dial Your Collector**" program every Mondays, since **6 Aug 2001**
 - ❖ Members of the District Level Core Committee, Mandal Core Committee constituted
 - ❖ Self Help Groups i.e., SECs, DWCRA, CMEY
 - ❖ Sarpanchs, MPTCs, Ward members, VDCs and VAOs in Veilpur Mandal
 - ❖ Press club members, parents, caste elders, minorities at mosque, Beedi Kharkana Tekedars, stone cutters, washermen, kurma sangem, Tapi mestris, employers, Vidya Volunteers

Timeline

•Meetings at the district level in June 2001

•Drive for enrollment of school children in the district started on 12th June, 2001

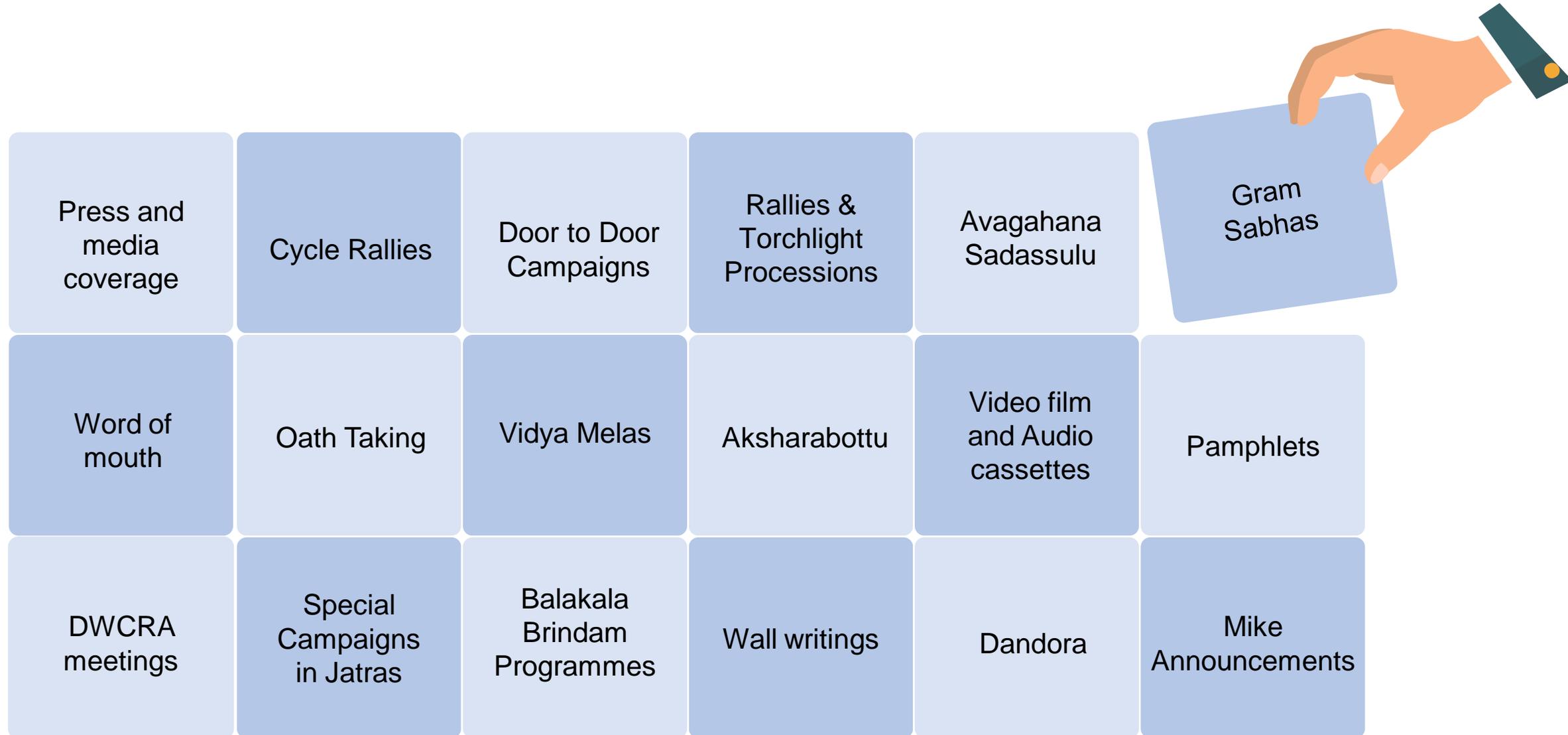
•Intensive drive focusing on Veilpur launched on July 25th, 2001

•Drive, feedback, discussions, mid course corrections, new strategy, drive....

•World literacy day District level function meeting at Veilpur on 8th September

•Veilpur declared Child Labor Free on October 2nd, 2001

Awareness Campaign



Problems Galore Faced

1

Inconsistencies in survey data, Migration of labor- seasonal inflow and out flow

2

Initial reluctance /out right hostility of people- team members were accused of being part of organ harvesting gang!

3

Agricultural season, local body elections

4

Initially Teachers not involved whole heartedly- cited more burden, not our duty etc

5

Employers demanded return of the amount paid as loan/ advance for releasing children

6

Reluctance to pay back advance taken from employers & take the child kept as mortgage.

7

Negative Attitude among parents about education/ system/ schools/ teachers/ paucity of jobs for the educated

8

Parents not willing to send children to school, citing -Sibling care, cattle care, old age care, economic scare, loss of income

9

Out of school children with “schoolphobia” dodging the team and hiding from the team

Strategies that worked (1/3)

- Team stayed in the mandal for 69 days out of 90 days period
- Teams visited villages early in the mornings and late in the nights to meet parents
- Counseled the child, parent and employer
- Individual Child wise action plan prepared
- Village Development Committees passed Resolutions
- Oath taken by caste elders
- Out-of-school children adopted by Village Development Committee/Caste elders
- Read names of out-of-school children in Gram Sabhas to “name and shame”
- Door to Door Campaign by community elders/ Public Representatives/ MLA
- Performances by “Balakala Brindam”

Strategies that worked (2/3)

- Public Felicitation of employers who relieved child from work voluntarily- (by Collector, MLA, the team)
- Employers employing children were warned by the community
- Warned Beedi Thekedars to relieve girls from work.
- Notices served on employers.
- Raided work spots
- Community pressure on employers not to demand for advances already paid
- Oath taken on crops in agriculture fields, machinery in rice mills

Strategies that worked (3/3)

- Motivations: Child to Child, Parent to Parent, Mother to Mother
- Childrens' network to catch other children who are working
- Community & Caste elders counselled and convinced the parents
- Atma-Gaurav of people to become the 1st Child labor free mandal
- Many visitors to their mandal, kept their motivation high
- People's wish to wipe out the stigma of large number of NCLP schools
- Government officials started and gave momentum to the movement
- The villagers, community and public representatives were inspired to **take over the movement and sustain it with PRIDE**

Unique Intervention

- Signing of MoU between the Sarpanch of each Gram Panchayat and District Collector under the AP Compulsory Education Act, 1985
 - Villagers ensured to have 100% enrolment and retention of the children, guaranteed no child labor in their villages
 - Government agreed to provide all necessary infrastructure: buildings, teachers and facilities like toilets, compound walls etc.
 - This is the first time such an MoU was signed



Signing of MOU between Collector and Sarpanchs



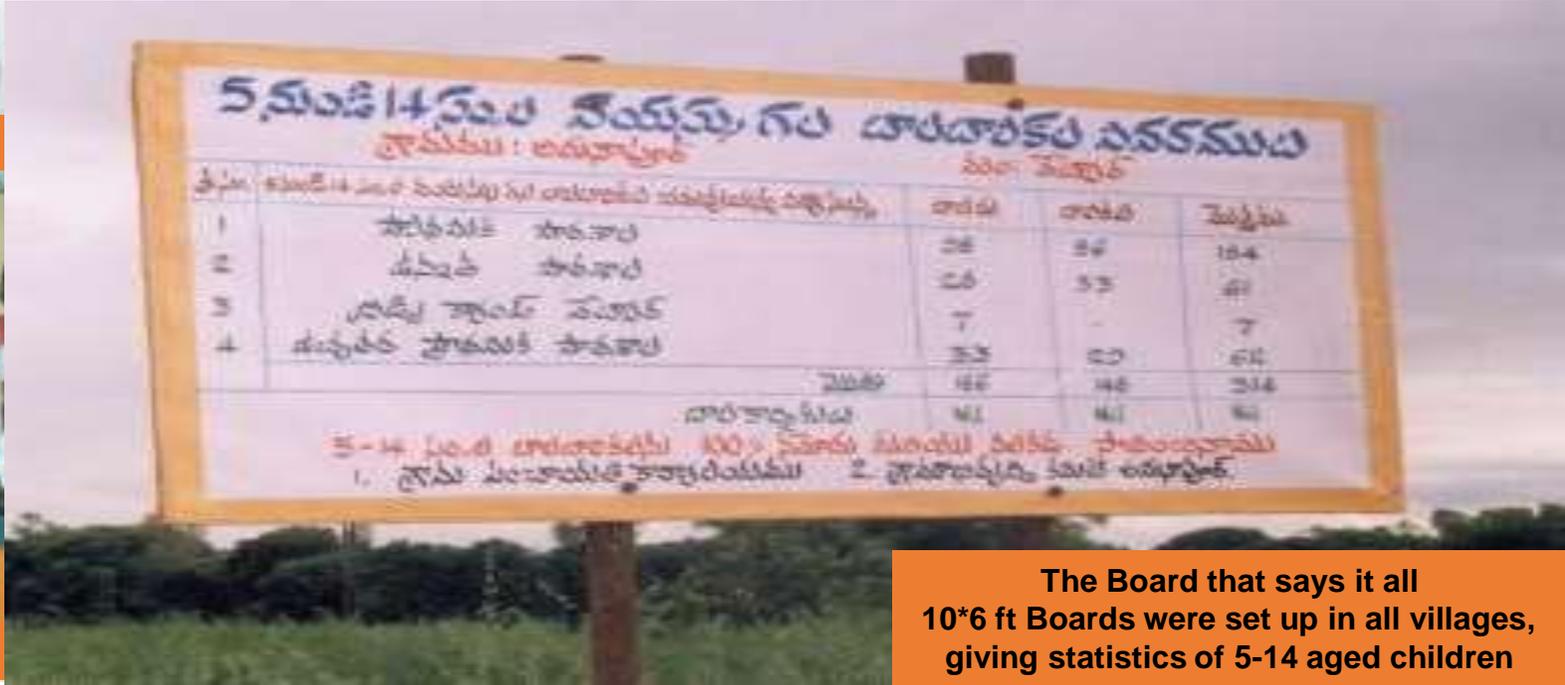
Veilpur Sarpanch signing the MOU



Aklor Sarpanch signing the MOU



Released child worker given learning materials



The Board that says it all 10*6 ft Boards were set up in all villages, giving statistics of 5-14 aged children

Cracking the hard nuts

- Warning the employers for imprisonment about 2 years who failed to release child labour
- Taking the photos of the child working in establishments to warn the employer
- Sitting in front of the door of Drop out boy/ girl trying to convince the parents to send their children to school
- Raiding construction sites & getting the child labour enrolled in the Bridge camp
- Giving Assurance to the parents regarding the care of the child
- Warning the parents by the community to release the Children from work or leave the village
- threatening such parents with actions like withdrawal of facilities such as power, water & Ration.

The Troop

Led By: Mr. G. Asok Kumar, Collector

- Conducted Daily telephonic reviews & monitored closely
- Visited the mandal more than 10 times during the 90 days drive
- Encouraged and motivated the team throughout
- Felicitated Employers released the child labors
- Warned Employers who refused to release them
- Needy and necessary support to the parents through welfare Schemes
- Involved all departments and public representatives



The Troop

In Picture: Asok Kumar, Collector; Jagdeeshwar Goud, APC, DPEP; Sudhakar Rao, CMO; Nirmala Kumari, GCDO; Prakash, Laxman, Srinivas Reddy, MRPs; MPP President, ZPTC, Sarpanchs, VDCs, Nodal Officer, MRO, MPDO, MEO, DPO

Involvement of Teachers

- Teachers & their Associations took part in enrolment, shedding their initial reluctance
- Survey reports were updated
- Adopted dropout & never enrolled children
- Organized teacher convention- SEC chairmen & Sarpanchs were also invited.
- Teachers involved students by making them as bench heads for monitoring regularity of attendance
- Formed motivation Teams
- Officials worked with Volunteer spirit
- Involved the community to a large extent

Community Contribution

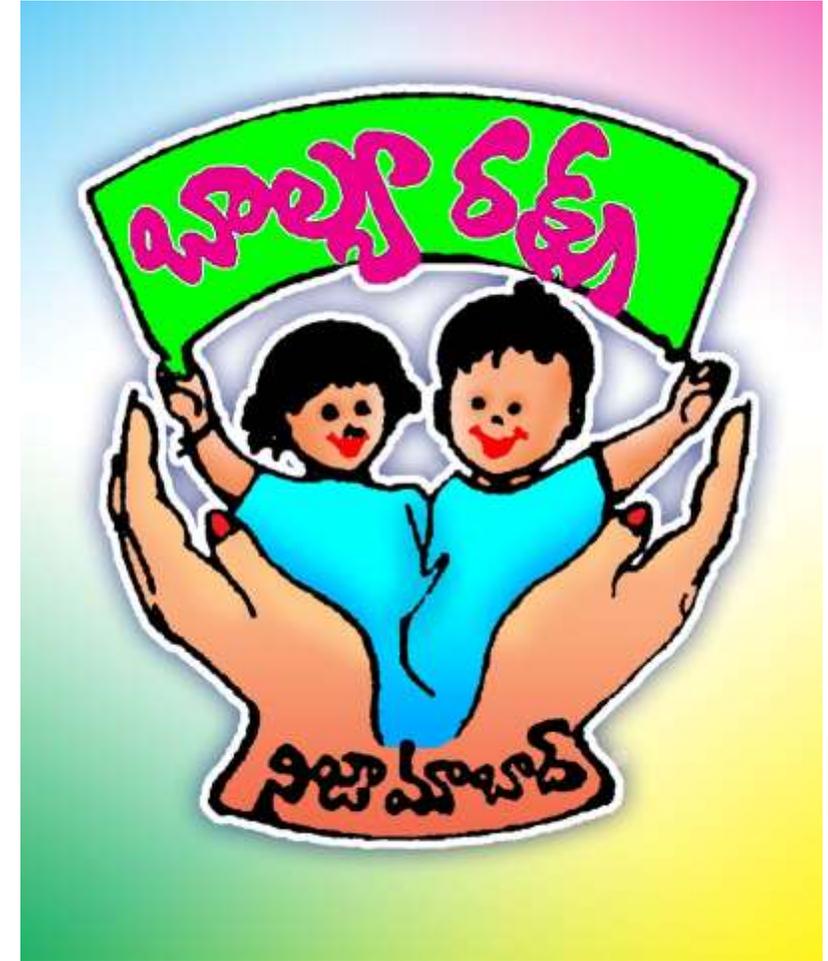
- Village Development Committee donated trunk boxes for the residential Camp
- Shoes by Sri. G. Ganga Reddy, MP, Nizamabad
- Sri B.Goverdhan MLA, Armoor donated 100 bed sheets, participated in many rallies
- Savera Gas Agency provided Free LPG Gas connection
- Sri Jagadeeshwar Goud, APC donated one B&W TV
- Monthly health checkups free of cost by Dr. Shivaraj, Pediatrician, Armoor
- Free medicines provided by Indian Medical Association
- Daily free health checkup by RMP Sri Dharmachary
- Journalist Association of AP and Press Club of Veilpoor donated detergent and bath soaps
- Tooth paste & brushes by State Bank of Hyderabad
- Free tap connection by Grama Panchayat
- Slogans writing by Red Rose Youth club members

Community's Commitment to the Cause

- The villagers wrote off approx. **Rs 37 lakhs (in 2001)**, which was the cumulative amount of the principal, its interest and penal interest on amount lent to the parents of the children as loans
- These loans were given keeping children as guarantee. Usually, the children were forced to work under the lender till the loans were cleared.
- The village community not only wrote off the loans, they released the children from bondage and enrolled them in schools
- They also provided books and uniforms to these children
- They passed resolutions in the Village Development Committees (VDC), Caste Committees and Gram Sabhas to support the cause and not to engage any labor (including migrant labors) whose children are not attending any schools
- They also set up huge 6 ft by 4 ft TIN hoardings in the village announcing “**children not going to school from the village – ZERO**”

Impact

- Veilpur declared as child labor free Mandal on 2nd October, 2001 after achieving 100% enrollment of the children in the age group of 5-14 Years
- **800+ children relieved from child labor**
- Enrolment drive was taken up in other 8 Mandals, and achieved 100% enrollment
- A special program named as “Balya Raksha” was started during January 2002 in the towns of Nizamabad, Kamareddy & Bodhan to eradicate child labor.
- All NCLP project schools given a proactive name- “Balya Raksha Schools”
- In the spirit of Veilpur, Yedpalli, Renjal, Nandipet Morthad and Jakranpalli mandals enrollment drives are in progress in another 10 mandals



Balya Raksha

Retention and Follow Up

- Enrolment and Retention protection committees formed
- Community made responsible for retention
- One Mobilizer for each G.P. & fortnightly Review
- Adoption of villages by mandal level officers
- Monthly reviews by the District Collector
- Fortnightly review by the DPEP Sectoral officers
- Adoption of hard core children by teachers

Government's response to Veilpur

- All schools in Veilpur provided with compound walls, toilets, borewells
- (led to making of toilets in 1000 schools in the district by the end of 2002)
- Teachers' posts filled up
- Subsurface dams, check dams and many CC roads completed



Recognition from the President, Sri APJ Abdul Kalam

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam

Rashtrapati Bhavan
New Delhi - 110004

16 June 2006

Dear Shri Asok Kumar,

I have gone through your papers relating to the drive against child labour and the success story of 100% enrolment of children with people's participation. It is a good work indeed and my greetings to you and your team.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



(A P J Abdul Kalam)

Shri G Asok Kumar
Project Director
Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society
Directorate of Medical & Health Services
Sultan Bazar, Koti
Hyderabad

Press Clippings – 2001

Veilpur first mandal with 100 pc child literacy and no child labour

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

Nizamabad, Sept 19: Veilpur in Nizamabad district has emerged as the first mandal in the State to achieve 100 percent enrolment of children in the age group of 5 to 14 in schools as well as the first to be free from child labour.

Veilpur, along with three other mandals in Nizamabad district – Renjal, Yedapalli and Nandipet – was selected to achieve 100 per cent enrolment under the Universal Elementary Education scheme (UEE) taken up with DPEP funds.

The achievement was the result of a massive, highly intensive and carefully crafted effort for which the lead was taken by district Collector G Asok Kumar.

HOW IT TOOK SHAPE: It all

their wards to schools.

Besides Ashok Kumar, DPEP additional project coordinator Jagadiswar Goud and a team consisting of community mobilisation officer P Sudhakar Rao, girl-child development officer G Nirmala Kumari and resource

All village development committees were motivated to rope in child labour on farms, in hotels and cycle shops. The village elders not only vowed to banish child labour, but also resolved to 'boycott' and impose fines on those who violated the decision.

some change in the attitude. Those who initially opposed the programmes slowly started showing interest.

On Aug 1, 2001 a bridge camp for boys was conducted and 25 children turned up. Within a week, another camp for girls was organised with an intake of 76. Kalajathas and Balaka Brindams too joined hands with the teams, giving a fillip to the programme.

All village development committees were motivated to rope in child labour on farms, in hotels and cycle shops, and cattle-grazing. The village elders not only vowed to banish child labour, but also resolved to "boycott" and impose fines on those who violate the decision.

LITERACY GOAL: All Gram Sabhas passed resolutions endorsing the 100 percent literacy goal

Veilpur mandal declared child labour free Concerted DPEP campaign leads to increased enrolment in schools

FROM M SUNIL KUMAR

Nizamabad, Dec. 13: Veilpur mandal in Nizamabad district achieved 100 per cent enrolment of child labour into schools with all the villages in the mandal having been notified as 'no child labour'.

Based on the slogan of 'child-labour is child's right. It needs to be protected', the District Primary

Nandipet, Yedapally and Renjal mandals for implementing a pilot project.

According to the census, there were more than 50,000 child labourers in the district working in beedi kharanas, cattle grazing, agriculture fields, dhobi ghats, construction sites, roadside dhabbas, small hotels in the villages, mechanics shops and wine shops.

They were conducted on "relief from child labour" at each habitation. The teams contacted elders, sarpanches, parents and members of village development committees and arranged meetings to impress on them the need to eradicate child labour.

The groups moved from village to village organising "vayagham

clothing and education.

"Red Rose" youth of Veilpur wrote slogans on the walls in all villages such as 'hala karmika vimuktiki nadon kadutham'.

Auto owners associations, cycle taxi associations, and contractors of beedi factories were strictly warned not to employ children between the age group of 5 to 14

including MPTC members and ZPTC members adopted resolutions to withhold ration cards and power supply to those who were employing child labour.

Gradually, child labour relief took the shape of a movement. Villagers come forward voluntarily to display board at central places of the villages stating that no child labour

Renjal becomes child-labour free

FROM M SUNIL KUMAR

Nizamabad, Aug. 24: The district administration is all set to declare Renjal mandal as child-labour free. It may be recalled that the authorities have succeeded in enrolling all child labourers in the Veilpur and Yedapally mandals in bridge schools.

The District Primary Education Programme unit had organised a programme called *Akshara Yagnam* in all 17 villages in the Renjal mandal to identify child labourers. Special drives were also conducted in the beedi kharanas, cattle rearing areas, dhobi ghats, road-side dhabbas, kirana and general stores, toddy huts, wine shops and petty tea shops in villages. The Dpep offi-

cial also formed teams with village heads, members of Dwera groups and anganwadi centres, village secretaries and youth clubs to identify child labourers.

A ten-member troop named *Bala Kala Brundam* was also formed to attract the child labourers to bridge centres through art forms.

The teams are visiting every village and admitting child labourers in the bridge camp at Thanakalan of Yedapally mandal.

Dpep community mobilisation officer K Sudhakar told *Deccan Chronicle* that according to a survey, 70 per cent of child labourers are working as cowherds and the remaining were working in various industries. In some villages, the people are voluntarily coming forward to admit the

child labourers in the bridge camp, he added. Sudhakar said that 22 children in the age group of nine to 14 working in flower gardens in the Neela camp were admitted in the bridge camp.

The parents of child labourers like Verannagutta, Kishan thanda and Maulali thanda had taken oath in front of their village deities that they would never send their wards to work. The Police department had adopted Kandakurthi to eradicate the child labour system and admitted child labourers in the bridge camp. A school atmosphere was witnessed at the bridge camp at Thanakalan where 200 child labourers were admitted. The children wearing uniform listening the lessons with concentra-

tion. Twelve-year-old Jagan, who worked as cook in the house of former Bodhan MLA Kotta Ramakant, said that the Dpep staff and Renjal mandal parishad president Ramana Goud admitted him in the bridge camp. He said that his ambition was to become a doctor. Ramesh, 13, of Moulali thanda, who worked as cattle herd with a salary of Rs 4,000 per annum, wants to become a teacher. Vankad Ramesh, a member of *Bala Kala Brundam*, said that the atmosphere in the bridge camp was good. District Collector Ashok Kumar said that steps would also be taken to enroll all child labourers in Nandipet and Jaktanpally mandals to make the district a child labour-free district by 2005.

Press Clippings – 2001

Breaking the shackles



TOP: Little girls learning the alphabet. BELOW: Sudhakar Rao and his adopted daughter Monica

It is a success story of how the government and the people forged a partnership to end child labour. The effort involved not only "releasing" the children but also making sure they don't return to the drudgery

labourers in school is completed. The next "targets" are Nandipet and Renjal mandals. The people's response to the success story has been tremendous. The Collector regularly gets calls during the weekly "Dial-your-Collector" programme from people urging him to begin the programme in their village. Local politicians too have "invited" the administration to their constituencies. Egged on by such response and confident of repeating the success on a larger scale, the district administration has come out with a programme called "Balva Raksha" to elimi-

be successful unless the people participate actively...the government can only get the children to school by using all kinds of methods. But retaining them in school can be done only by the community," he said.

There was tremendous resistance from the community to giving up their earning children in the case of parents, and labourers whose wages had already been paid in advance, in the case of employers. The project team members held marathon sessions, faced abuse, staged dharnas in front of houses of unwilling parents, "adopted" children to reassure the parents and held awareness sessions in Masjids after the Friday prayers. Child-to-child motivation was used; jatara and weddings came in handy to spread the message of the evil of child labour. One of the effective methods was to use the tradition of women applying "bottu" to a child



cially in the construction sector, ganged up to beat up the officials as they had caused them "loss". Official estimates put the overall "loss" to employers in one mandal alone at Rs. 35 lakh.

whom were convinced efforts as a "punya kary" good deed. "The hero instance is really the com said Sudhakar. In one vi came across an orphaned girl who was forced by he and sister-in-law to beg. angry sister-in-law d Sudhakar if "he would responsible" of Gangulaxmi married s would be living away fro he said yes, and gave th taking in writing witness community Gangulaxi prefers to be called Moni avoid unpleasant mem abuse of her earlier life, become a doctor and S says he will bear all ex see she achieves he Sudhakar has similarly three other children all go to his home during

While 135 girls are in t cum training centre fo run by the AP Women Co Finance Corporation i town, 7 km from Velpur, loved in a building in T



Tribal children dare to dream

There are about 100 Lambada kids in the Dichpally Bridge School started by the government last year as part of its campaign to eliminate child labour. The district has the distinction of eliminating child labour from an entire mandal, that is Velpur, writes R AKHILESHWARI from HYDERABAD

TRIBAL children of Nizamabad district in Andhra Pradesh are now able to dream of making it in life, thanks to the efforts of the district administration to remove them from their workplaces and enrol them in schools. The illiterate and starkly poor parents are also beginning to hope, although the hope is tinged with doubt and fear.

Ten-year old Suresh of Mittapalli Tanda who is studying in the bridge school started in Dichpally town about 90 km from Hyderabad, was earlier working with a Lambada landlord grazing sheep. "We are happy here... I want to become a bus conductor... the conductor says Ticket, Ticket, Ticket, Ticket!" he says with an impish smile.

Jagan is an extremely anxious 11-year-old. He cannot smile easily. With

Rs 4500. He was attending school but two accidents put the family's domestic economy in a tizzy. "My father was bitten by a snake and we spent 10,000 rupees on his treatment. Then my mother had to be operated

children in the Dichpally Bridge School started by the government last year as part of its campaign to eliminate child labour from the district. The district has the distinction of eliminating child labour from an

Sevala Maharaj, to a bare food for 40 days. When I bowed to the parents who were refusing to send their children that they must help me fulfil the Guru Sevatal Maharaj Deeksha' and that they must do this for the sake of

the Lambada dominated hamlets of Dichpally mandal.

The strategy followed from the one followed in Velpur which involved highly publicised awareness campaigns, involvement of other department officials, elected representatives, caste and community leaders and so on. Since the area was identified as "hard-core" in terms of the Lambada's mindset towards change, the strategy included threats, forcible "release" of child labourers and use of emotional pressure.

Employers were threatened with a fine of Rs 20,000 and two year jail while children of recalcitrant parents were taken forcibly to the Dichpally residential school. Rena of Mindaspelli tanda admitted that she sent her son with the officials because she was scared of being sent to jail. "Prem is happy here," she told Deccan Herald on the school campus. "He is clean, speaks better and is not smoking beedis now," she said describing the changes in her son.

The tribals can do with gre wages. I agreed with their children's hope that they with them. month by a want an as would really are slowly a new roadmen's future. Said Rena, "all, it is their message som on with our igation and new schemes their children been soon would she I

"After stud became Coll other Lamba half-embarr the Rena remain should be

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B R Jagt Project Coo of the main they are ad run hostels since return was likely work. At pr are being r girls are ho that have Bank aided

However, trouble from their child the return of to the parent who had tak two sons La being hurt Lambada la have even t Annas made the landfor 600 from Da poverty was clothes. Bot assured Dar cors would sort to desi or face leg Labour Act.

The triba agreed with gre wages. I agreed with their children's hope that they with them. month by a want an as would really are slowly a new roadmen's future. Said Rena, "all, it is their message som on with our igation and new schemes their children been soon would she I

Press Clippings – 2017

THE HINDU, SEPTEMBER 25, 2017

TELANGANA

Velpur continues to be child labour-free



P. Ram Mohan

VELPUR (TELANGANA) DIST., SEPTEMBER 25, 2017 09:17 IST



India's model village Children engaged in any kind of work in Velpur mandal of Nizamabad district are brought back to school. | Photo Credit: Mohd Asif

Social evil could be eradicated with entire community's involvement: Ashok Kumar

Velpur which hogged the limelight for being the first child labour-free mandal in the State on October 2, 2001 continues to maintain the status even after one-and-a-half decades, all thanks to the relentless and sustained efforts put in by the then Collector G. Ashok Kumar.

The struggle in carrying out the campaign against child labour and enthusiasm among the officials, people and parents ensured that children are going to schools even today. The teams are ever vigilant and report back to authorities concerned if they find any child, most likely belonging to migrant families, is out of schools in the mandal.

"We could sustain the tempo since 2001 and the mandal is 100% child labour-free. Recently a boy who is said to be an orphan and was traced to a hotel, was put back to school as soon as the news came to the light," says Naresk Bhagya, village Sarpanch at present and the then MPP president. Narrating the efforts of teams which worked day and night to eliminate the stigma of child labour Mr. Ashok Kumar, who is now the state Principal Secretary BC Welfare said that they scoured work spots such as hotels, tea stalls, cycle shops, car service stations, hand factories, fields, forest areas, brick kilns to check if children were engaged in any form of labour and prevent it.

Teachers, in fact, were reluctant criminals. The mandal teachers initially thought that it was a project of TRIP and that they were not concerned. But, with the direct involvement of District Collector and MEO they were forced to join in, he said.

"I held meetings with the teachers' unions and sought their support. I also held meetings with headmasters and teachers. It was impressed upon them very clearly that the drive was directly related to education and that they should be personally responsible for retention of children. They were told to take special care of children coming from bridge schools and those who had the fear of schools. They were asked not to beat or use very harsh words."

Finally, on October 2, 2001 Velpur was declared a child labour-free mandal. All the 8,057 children in the mandal were in the schools. This includes nearly 800 children who were brought back to school. The biggest success of the programme is that there is 100% retention and there are no child labourers in the mandal now.

It underlines the fact that only when the community gets involved can major social evils like child labour etc., be tackled with effectively.

The film 'Man Olo Baidarudhalu' based on this drive in Velpur, won the Golden Nandi award for the Best TV documentary in Andhra Pradesh for the year 2002.

Velpur mandal became role model 20 years ago in child labour eradication

Jal Shakti Ministry's Additional Secretary G Ashok Kumar, who served as Collector, said it was made possible with the cooperation and dedication of public representatives, officials

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NIZAMABAD

JAL Shakti Ministry's Additional Secretary G Ashok Kumar, who earlier served as Nizamabad District Collector, recalled that Vellore mandal was declared as the first mandal to completely eradicate child labor in the country in 2001. This was possible only with the government encouragement, commitment of the authorities, VDCs and the cooperation of people's representatives, he added.

A programme was organised at Pragati Bhavan Conference Hall here on Friday as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the government's initiative to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of progressive India and its glorious history, people, culture and achievements. Ashok Kumar felicitated local body representatives and officials of the district administration, who served in Velpur zone in 2001.

Ashok Kumar said that 539 child laborers from Velpur mandal were admitted to schools at



Jal Shakti Ministry's Additional Secretary G Ashok Kumar speaking at a programme at Pragati Bhavan in Nizamabad on Friday

that time. Stating that children below 15 years should be enrolled in school and not to put to work, he said the country's development depends on the future of the children and children are important to the country. Stating that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao is also focusing on education, he said opening of residential schools across the State on the same day was a testament to KCR's commitment. It's a good

development that BC, Minority, SC and ST welfare education institutions are being started, he lauded.

Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind said the mandal became an ideal to the country due to the hard work of the authorities.

District Collector Narayana Reddy said the people of the district still remember Ashok Kumar sir as Eadapally mandal Ashok, who developed Sagar. It

was he, who explained about the importance of personal toilets, he added. As many as 40 lakh toilets were constructed during the period and lot of work was done on water conservation.

The Collector informed that recognition was given on July 9, 2001 and the declaration as child labor free mandal was on October 2, 2001. Later, giving vote of thanks, the Collector asked the people's representatives to continue their support to the people of Nizamabad district as compared to other districts.

Director General Dr M Srinivas, National Labor Institute senior Fellow VV Giri, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration Director K Srinivas and Special CS at State Labor Department Rani Kumudini also spoke. The then CMO Sudhakar Rao shared his experiences from America. Rural MLA Bajireddy Govardhan, Dr Helen R Shekhar, Additional Collector Chitra Mishra, Trainee Assistant Collector Makarand, the then CPO Sheikh Meera, officials and others were present on the occasion.

Complete Abolition of CHILD LABOUR A Possibility



Mahaveer Jain

Eight | Lessons Learnt

Adoption of Vision

The Universalisation of Elementary Education (U.E.E.) project of Veilpoor mandal looked like any other Government project. However, in reality, it was quite different from the 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, government teachers, panchayat officials, etc., who were interviewed, had focused discussions which revealed that sending all the children below 14 years of age to the school had become the motto of each one 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 2nd October, 2001. Interestingly this vision of putting every child in the school was also adopted by the non-governmental organizations, political leaders, caste leaders, children, parents of children, teachers' associations, mandal parishad presidents, etc. Adoption of the vision to put every out-of-school child in the school became the part and parcel of each and every person. It was possible only because of sensitive district, mandal and village leadership and their foresightedness.

Visionary Leadership

Veilpoor District Collector, G. Asok Kumar was a different type of leader. He led his own team and representatives from the civic society in a different way. He took keen interest in conducting district level committee meetings and made the project the 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 the district, mandal, and village level. He visited all the villages of the mandal and had one-to-one meetings with panchayat parishad members, mandal and village education committee members and created a positive, open, and informal environment at all levels. It was mentioned by many villagers that the District Collector became a part of the village and one among their families. The rewards given in appreciation by the Collector were still vividly remembered by many of the respondents. Many of them were missing him. He had created volunteers from

Uniqueness of “Veilpur model”

- Even after 21 years, there is 100% retention
- Involvement of community, caste elders, PRIs, informal committees
- Signing of Memo of Understanding
- Government staff working with the NGO spirit
- NGOs jumping into fray after the success of the Government staff
- Villagers and community
- Writing off the loans taken by keeping children as mortgage
- Created ripples throughout the district, state
- Inspired many teams that had visited Veilpur

The saga continues.....

The Ripple Effect (1/2)

- Inspired by Veilpur, Sri Bhaskar Raju, Mandal Parishad President Yedpalli took up the challenge to make Yedpalli child labor free.
- Intensive drive started along with MPDO, CMO and village elders on November 16th, 2001
- Triggered by the drive in Yedpalli, Sri Ramana Goud, MPP Renjal also initiated the drive in Renjal mandal
- Involvement of community elders, sarpanchs, local leaders, Mandal Resource Persons and women groups
- Achieved 100% enrolment
- Followed by Nandipet, Jakranpalli, Morthad mandals
- Dichpalli, Darpalli, Navipet.....
- In 2003: 482 “Balya Raksha” schools (448 NRBCs and 34 NCLP schools) started in Nizamabad
- Seven Residential Bridge Camps under DPEP and four under Velugu were functioning in the district
- District Child Rights forum formed on Nov 13th, 2002

The ambience have changed.....

The Ripple Effect (2/2)

- Massive rally organized for child rights on Nov 14,2002- attended by all SEC chairmen, MEOs, Presidents of Mandal Parishads, Beedi Associations
- Child rights day celebrated on Nov 20,2002
- Organized workshop on Nov 28, 2002 with all Industrialists in association with FAPCCI, ILO, CEASE-CL
- **415 GPs out of 719 GPs achieved 100% enrolment (791/1429 villages), as on 1 Nov 2002**
- Only 13,853 children out of 4,70,553 children in the 5–14-year age group were not attending the school in the district ie. about 2.9% children were out of school
- Figure approved in the 18th Janma Bhumi gram sabhas in Jan 2003
- List of names of “out of school children” signed by Sarpanchs, Mandal Education Officer and Chairman, School Education Committee
- Figure down from over 1 lakh “out of school children” in 2001

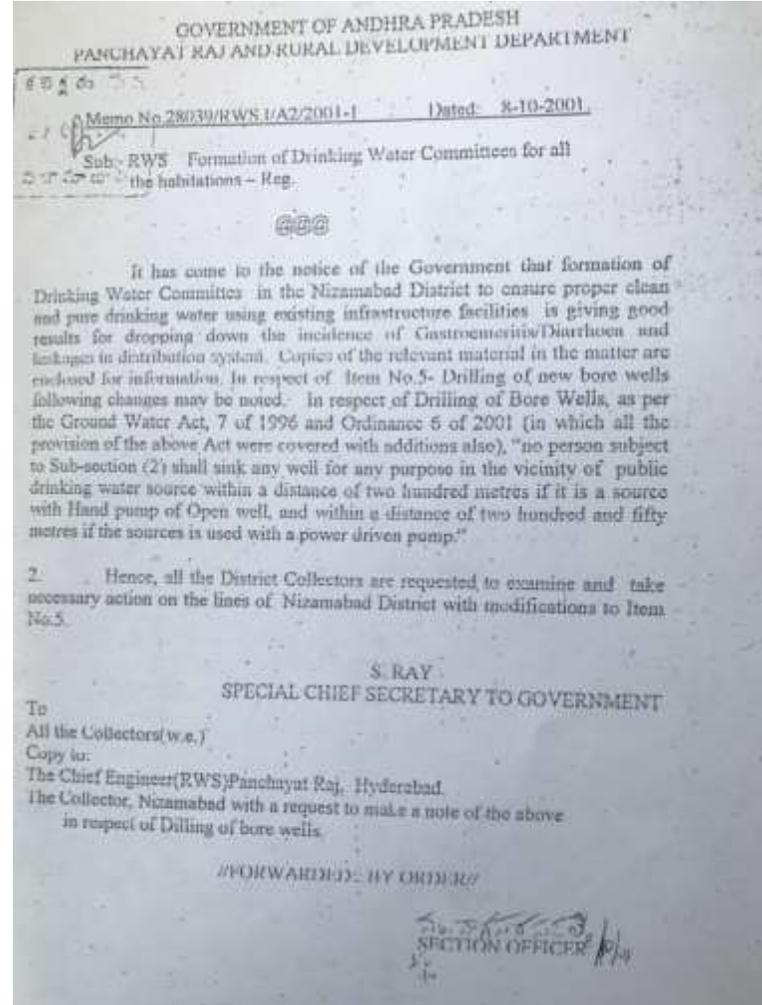
Happy children in various residential bridge camps



Impact in other sectors



1.40 Lakh Pucca Individual Sanitary Latrines constructed in Nizamabad in 2002, with people's participation



1168 Drinking Water Habitation committees formed in the districts in 2001- reduction of GE from 5000 to 157 cases



Reformation of 700 year old Jogini and Pothuraju traditions in Nizamabad district

Remnants of a Legacy



As a mark of their appreciation for successfully implementing various community led projects in the district, the people of Nizamabad district renamed a 200 acre historical lake near Nizamabad city as “Asok Sagar” after the then Collector – Mr. Asok Kumar

Key Takeaways

- Though the year 2021 was declared by UNGA as the “International Year for Elimination of Child Labor”, to achieve the SDG target 8.7 (*to end child labor in all its forms by 2025*) is still a long way off.

Success of Veilpur initiative shows that it is possible to achieve if community is actively involved

- **Carrying community along is critical in successful implementation of socially relevant programs.**
- Involvement of all stakeholders and their ownership of the cause is key for sustainability of any government program
- Community participation was instrumental in the success of the Catch the Rain Campaign, with the slogan Catch the Rain: Where it Falls, When it Falls. The campaign led to the creation/maintenance of over 4.7 million decentralized rainwater harvesting structures with total people participation.
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan for making toilets and Namami Gange mission for rejuvenating River Ganga have been taken up with people’s participation for sustainability.

Say No To
Child Labor

Thank You