

Sampoorna Bal Vikas OR Children's Paradise

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There are a number of schemes/programmes operating in the country, all directed at the mental and physical well-being of the future citizens, the children. We have among others:

- i) The Integrated Children Development Scheme
- ii) Mother and Child Welfare Centres
- iii) Immunization programme
- iv) Creches
- v) Balwadis, Kindergartens and nurseries
- vi) Primary and elementary schools
- vii) Noon meal programme
- viii) Free textbook and uniform schemes, etc.

These are aimed at pregnant mothers, new born babies and children up to the age of 12. They are administered by a number of line departments more often than not in isolation. All these programmes come under the purview of the panchayats according to the 73rd amendment of the Constitution. None of these do really require any planning beyond the panchayat. It is proposed to try out a few pilot programmes where in all these schemes are welded together into one total child and mother care programme to be planned, executed and administered fully at the panchayat level. It aims at developing a model for ensuring the total development - physical, intellectual and cultural development - of the child from the womb up to the age of 12. It will be a comprehensive area programme planned in conjunction with such other programmes like safe drinking water, sanitation, environmental cleanliness, non-formal education, adult education, operation blackboard, IRDP, DWCRA, etc. The concept is that the society is taking full responsibility for the physical and cultural health and progress of **all children**. It will demand elimination of abject poverty, real social justice, access to means of livelihood for everybody... in fact all the good things we have been dreaming of. True, all these will not be achieved in one stroke. The picking end of the rope is the general concern of every human being towards the well being of children, whosoever it may be. This sense of justice and affection that lurks in the heart of every mother and father, every woman and man can be made the starting point. The overall objective is to make one's own panchayat a "paradise" on this earth for children. Such a slogan has got a psychological strength which should be fully made use of. In this paradise,

- The infant mortality rate will be brought to single digit in the long run and to less than half of what it is within five years.
- The under five mortality rate will be, similarly, brought down to half of what it is today within five years and to less than 10 in the long run.
- Maternal mortality rate will be brought down to less than 5 within five years and to less than 2 in the long run.
- Biological, intellectual and cultural status of all children and especially under the age of five will be improved continuously and maintained at a high level.

It is a dream which should excite even the most self-centred cynics, it is a dream worth to spend one's entire life to achieve for, it is a dream which soothes and cools one's heart in these unsettled days. It's realization will depend on the cooperation and coalescence of the activities of several departments, institutions and programmes such as:

1. Education
2. Health
3. Water authority/PHED
4. Rural Development
5. Women & Child Welfare
6. Electricity Department
7. Panchayats
8. Balawadis/daycare centres
9. Lower and Upper Primary nurseries Schools
10. PHCs, dispensaries
11. Mother & Child Care
12. Mahila Mandals Centres
13. Parent Teacher
14. Youth Clubs
15. PSM units and so on Associations

To realize the above mentioned dreams, certain concrete actions are to be planned. It will not be possible to think of every activity required at the very beginning itself. Many problems will arise in the course of execution and appropriate action will have to be taken at that time. Some indicative programmes are given below. They can be classified broadly into (1) Individual household centres (2) School/Institution centred (3) General Community centred.

Household Centred

1. Safe drinking water
2. Sanitary latrines
3. Safe solid waste and waste water management
4. Smokeless chulas
5. Immunization
6. Visit by health workers
7. A mini library
8. Living space fit for human beings.

School/Institution Centred

1. Drinking water in every school
2. Sanitary urinals and latrines in every school- separate for boys and girls.
3. Enough class rooms
4. Recreation room- creativity room
5. Environmental park/garden
6. Vegetable gardens

7. Community chulah for noon meal cooking
8. Cleanliness squads
9. Mother-teacher associations.

Community Centred

1. Children oriented poultry
2. Children oriented dairy
3. Children oriented agricultural farms
4. People oriented health workers
5. Creches for all needy children and mothers
6. Kindergartens/nursery schools for all children
7. Training facility for K.G. teachers/ayahs
8. Retraining for primary teachers
9. Formation of panchayat school complexes
10. Safe drinking water supply.

Course of Action

1. Sharing the dream with peers
2. Sharing the dream with the people
3. Formation of crack core group
4. Base data collection and analysis
5. Preparation of macro plan
6. Dialogue with line departments and modification of macro plans
7. Presentation of detailed (microfied) macro plan before the community – internalization of the same by them.
8. Formation of Tola/street/ mohalla/ ward/ panchayat level implementation and monitoring committees
9. Formation of school level committees
10. Preparation of detailed school/ ward level action programmes
11. Assessment of financial requirements and sources of finance for the above.
12. Preparation of appropriate scale poultry/dairy/agro project proposals.

Implementing Agency

The entire responsibility of running this “BALSWARGA” (Children’s Paradise) programme can be vested with the Samithy specially created for this purpose at the panchayat level. It will have the full support of the elected panchayat, but for the sake of operational convenience it will be a separate autonomous body. For the formation of this body the following procedure may be thought of:

The villages in the panchayat will be divided into a number of “neighborhoods” each consisting of 20-25 contiguous households. All adult (18+) women in these households together form the neighborhood council. They can elect from among themselves one woman to represent them in the panchayat “Balswarg” samithi. A panchayat of 800-1000 households will have about 40 members. They can co-opt up to 25% of their membership, persons representing the elected panchayat, line department officials and experts. This combined body will elect its office bearers like president, secretary,

treasurer, etc. Each neighborhood council can recall its representative and send a new person any time if more than fifty per cent of the members so decide. This “Panchayat Balaswarga Samithi” can be registered as a society. In panchayats which have already registered Panchayat Development Societies, the Balaswarga Samithi can be one of its sub-committees.

NUMBERS INVOLVED

Average population of the panchayat	:	5000
Number of households	:	800-1000
Number of child births per year	:	150-160
Infant + child (under 5) mortality per year	:	12-18
Number of infants under 3 at any time requiring creche accommodation 60-70%	:	250-300
Number of creches required (one or two per village):	:	6-7
Number of children between 3-5	:	300-350
Number of seats required for pre-primary	:	300-350
Number of pre-primary centres required	:	6-7
Primary education class 1-5	:	
Number of seats required	:	700-800
Number of primary schools required	:	4-5
Number of children requiring EE	:	400-500
Number of elementary schools required	:	1-2
Total number of class rooms required (from age 3-13) in the panchayat	:	50
Total number of other rooms required	:	30-35
Total number of ayahs required	:	12-14
Total number of preprimary teachers	:	10-12
Total number of primary teachers	:	20-25
Total number of elementary teachers	:	12-15
Grand total of teachers and ayahs	:	54-66
Grand total of children:		
(i) Under 3	:	400-450
(ii) From 3 to 13	:	1200-1300

NUTRITION

Daily requirement: per capita, under 3 =	=	½ egg, 150 gm. fruit, 100 ml milk, 50 gm of cereals
Daily requirement: 3-13	=	½ egg, 100 ml milk, 100 gm. cereals, 30 gm pulses, 20 gm. oil, 100 gm vegetables.
Total Daily requirement	=	800 eggs + 160 litres milk + 120 kg cereals + 120 kg vegetables + 60kg fruits + 35 kg pulses + 25 kg oil
Annual requirement	=	Eggs 3 lakhs

Milk	50,000 litres
Cereals	40,000 kg
Vegetables	40,000 kg
Fruits	20,000 kg
Pulses	12,000 kg
Oil	9,000 Kg.

Land required to grow cereals @ 400 Te/year/Ha	10 Ha
Land required to grow vegetables @ 10 Te/year/Ha	4 Ha
Land required to grow Fruits @ 5 Te/year/Ha	4 Ha
Land required to grow pulses @ 1 Te/Year/Ha	12 Ha
Land required to grow oil seeds @ 2 Te/year/Ha	2 Ha
Land required to grow grass for cattle	10 Ha
Total	45 Ha

This will be distributed in four or five villages. Average land to be given by each village 7-10 Ha.

Total labour input per year (about): 7,000 person days.

Labour contribution from each household : 7-8 person day per year. Each child above age of 9 will give 50 hours equivalent of labour as part of pedagogic exercise. This is equivalent to 10 person days.

Total contribution from children = 5,000 person days
 Balance contribution from parents = 2,000 person days

Cash inputs required @ Rs 1,500/Ha = Rs. 50,000

Dairy: 40 cows distributed in 5 villages.

Each dairy – 8 cows.

This will be near the primary school. An associated biogas unit can be thought of.
 Poultry 8-10 units of 100-200 birds each.

Employment in dairy + poultry = 10+ 20 = 30

Total employment for Balswarga = 80- 100 per panchayat.

Given above is an indication of how the planning can be thought of. In reality a substantial portion of the land and other assets will be owned by a few landlords. They should be persuaded through organized pressure to lease out the land on nominal rent for community purpose.