

CIVIC ACTION TOWARDS ADDRESSING THE CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES IN THE EVE OF STATE REORGANIZATION – ANDHRA PRADESH



Consultation organized By

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BACK GROUND:

The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh state received the President's assent on 01 March 2014. The "appointed day" for the new States' formation is 02 June 2014. The Act requires the State of Andhra Pradesh to initiate activities related to creation of successor states including the apportionment of assets, liabilities, employees, contracts etc. between the two successor states. However the Social Activists, intellectuals and political representations of Andhra Pradesh have opposed state bifurcation keeping forth coming complicated issues related to water, employment opportunities for youth and power sharing as well as the status of Hyderabad, which would arise during the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh, where all these issues connected to the people and their emotion factors for future.

One of the fact that never thought of issues of the children in both the states, especially A broad array of child protection (CP) stakeholders at community, district and state levels have never discussed for a more holistic system for improved responses to violence, abuse, and exploitation of children and strengthening access to justice in new Andhra Pradesh in the context of bifurcation and re-organization. This is an alarming situation in the present context of new administration and management that no forum/collective voiced out issues concerning the child protection during the Separate State Movement. As usual children received no support from any of the parties hence justice seems to be denied.

The priorities of the State Government will be shifted to other developmental issues related to developing capital, further due to announcements of tax free etc which attracts much more companies, this is sure for development of new state and also issues directly related to children and their protection are envisaged.

In continuation to that NATSAP along with the networks working on child protection issues proposed to discuss, deliberate and understand various areas concerning child protection. One of the major concerns is since there is no administration system in the proposed state capital and which would be operated from Hyderabad may not have that much impact on the administration at districts because still there are issues of allocation of employees.

In continuation to new state situation, The Networks, independent organization and international organizations have been participated in the workshop and brainstormed on the child protection issues which are envisaged in forthcoming period.

The purpose of consultation is to deliberate and consolidate what we are learning about child protection vis-a-vis vulnerability, systems and challenges in new Andhra Pradesh state and to suggest a way forward. The consultation is intended to focus on concrete actions in working for the child protection within the state of Andhra Pradesh.

It was expressed That The Government is going to establish new state capital in between Guntur and Vijayawada and also this has to be completed within 5 years period. This allows thousands of structures will be constructed. For this, thousands of labour is needed and lots of families from Srikakulam to Anantapur will migrate to proposed capital area for labour. Simultaneously, there will a need for more number of domestic labours of girl children to work in the houses of Govt officials and policy makers/planners. In the eve of bifurcation of the state, the central government has given tax free for establishment of new industries, business and company's establishment and it is envisaged that there will be boom in

employment opportunities especially with reference to labour force. So, there is extensive possibility of increased child labour in the new state and also trafficking of children in the name of employment opportunities. Of the 13 districts of present Andhra Pradesh, it is analysed that 8 districts are known for supply of Girl children and another 4 pockets are known for transit points especially the districts like Krishna and Guntur are known for this. As there might be many issues that are cropping up, there is a need for cautioning new government based on thematic experiences of the Expertization on addressing the issues of children especially in terms of protection of their rights by Non Government organizations/social workers and activists.

Further child line India based on their collaborative efforts with Government following issues has been highlighted.

- ⊙ Enrolment in Primary Schools: Andhra Pradesh: 52% and Telangana: 48.
- ⊙ 27% of children are in labour force.
- ⊙ 80% dropout rate among 6th to 10th class.
- ⊙ No. of Hospitals: Andhra Pradesh 1325 and Telangana:850
- ⊙ Birth Rate: 17.5; Death Rate: 7.5; IMR: 43 (Sample Registration System 2012)
- ⊙ Child Sex Ratio: 992 (2012-13).
- ⊙ GDP: 5.29; Per capita Income: 77277 (2012-13).
- ⊙ School Dropout Rate: 15.60 (2011-12). (Source: Back Ground Note for GoM regarding creation of Telangana from existing AP; Min. of Home Affairs)

Here is the key Child Protection at a glance in united AP:

- Population density 308 per square KM.
- Sex ratio number of females 992 per 1000.
- According to NFHS data (2005-06) over a third of all children in AP are stunted (34%) and underweight (37%). Only 46 percent children of 12 to 23 months have received all recommended vaccines (NFHS III, 2005-06).
- AP rank ninth in the country in terms of children's (6-13 years) school attendance. Only 76.2% girls and 82.4 % boys from the total children population in that age group attend school Of every 100 children who are enrolled 25 do not reach secondary level (DSC 2009-10) There are about 9 lakh child laborers in the state (Report of the State Advisory Board on Child Labour, 2011).
- Child Mortality Rate (probability of dying between 1 to 6 years of age is expressed per 1,000 live births) is at 15.9 (SRS India, 2002).
- 27% children are in labour force.
- 30% dropouts from 6th class especially the girl children and 60% during high school.
- Disasters are one of the reasons for children shouldering the family responsibilities.
- Inter district & Intra district Migration is recognized by Government, with reference to the study conducted by AID et ---Action. It highlighted the issues of Migration and its Impact on the children.
- 39% demand for young girls. Hence issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children is high.
- Several international and national surveys and studies show that Andhra Pradesh ranked 1st in trafficking of women and children for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation and labour, and majority of the coastal areas are identified as source/supply areas and proposed capital is known for transit, demand and supply zone for several reasons.

FORESEEN CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES WITH REFERENCE TO STATE REORGANIZATION - ANDHRA PRADESH

The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) data in the year 199-2000 there were 11.07 lakh people who have migrated into Andhra Pradesh and also 11.59 lakh people migrated out of Andhra Pradesh. Most of the migrant families moving into Andhra Pradesh are to the districts like Hyderabad, Rangareddy, Nalgonda, Medak and Visakhapatnam while those who are moving out of Andhra Pradesh are from districts of Mahaboobnagar, Nellore, Kurnool, Ananthpur, Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram, etc. Similarly the migration into Andhra Pradesh is from the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh while the migration from Andhra Pradesh is to Pane, Mumbai, Chennai, Sholapur, Delhi, Nagpur and so on. In 2011, a detailed survey was undertaken in AP by the government in association with NGO's. The survey captured more 59,000 migrant children both intrastate and inter-state, 34997 intra-state and 21070 interstate migrant children have been provided education 2011-2012.

Outcomes of the deliberations:

Consultation workshop has been organized at Vijayawada where 42 Chief Functionaries of 42 Civil Society Organizations participated from as many as from 13 districts such as Chittoor, Cuddppa, Anantapur, Kurnool, Prakasam, Guntur, Nellore, Vishakhapatnam, Krishna, Srikakulam, East Godavari, West Godavari, and Vizianagaram. (The list of participants may be seen in Annexure - 1.)

The consultations are very much focused on child centred community development that aims to promote child rights and improve the quality of life of vulnerable children....has been working directly or indirectly with approximately 21054280. In order to give a direction to the reorganised state with the optimal use of resources to advance child rights in Andhra Pradesh which has seven most crucial yet inter connected themes / issues in its long term program framework as its response to the realization of children's rights to survival, development, protection and participation which are aligned to the international and national strategies.

The thematic areas and corresponding Child protection Objectives outlined were based on the assumptions that government policies and program will not be contradictory to state Policies and schemes.

Child Protection:

Children in India grow up and develop in unsafe and enabling environment that ensures that their right to protection is respected and realised and that they can grow and develop free from abuse, discrimination and exclusion.

Quality Education:

Children in India, including girls, realise their right to quality education that enables them to make informed choices.

Optimal Health:

Children, families and communities in India, including vulnerable groups, can exercise their right to attain and maintain optimal health status, based on appropriate knowledge and services.

Healthy Environment:

Children, families and communities in India realize their right to a healthy environment, where they have geographical and economic access to quality integrated water and sanitation services that are free from social exclusion and gender discrimination.

Household Economic Security:

Children and families in India have household economic and social security where individual can participate in decision making, at home and in the wider community, to the best of their ability.

Children's Participation in Governance:

Children, families and communities in India can exercise their right to participate actively in value based community governance and take on the responsibilities that come with this.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Response.

Children, families in the state, especially vulnerable groups, live in communities that can protect themselves from the effects of natural disasters.

Region Wise Out comes

Region	MAJOR ISSUES	CHILD DEV. ISSUES
ROYALSEEMA REGION	Displacement due to SEZ, Lack of Health care, Recurrent Drought High rate of Migration Displacement	HIV/AIDS infected and affected children GIRL CHILDREN- Trafficking, Traditional prostitution Child abuse, Child labour Quality Education, Drop out Disable Children Tribal Children (Yanadi Tribe) Displacement due to SEZ Un safe Migration due to draught Child abuse, Sexual exploitation of adolescent girls
COASTAL AP REGION	Livelihoods, Un safe Migration, High Dropout, No health care facility, no maternal care and delivery facility, lack of water for agriculture and drinking, lack of support during disasters Displacement Children affected by Disaster	No school facilities beyond 7 th class, Sexual abuse of adolescent girls, Child labour, Child Trafficking Children infected and affected with HIV/ADIS Traditional prostitution (Dommara / bogum communities) Jogini / Mathamma systems Domestic child labor Orphan and Vulnerable Children Girl child – abuse,

Cyclone and Flood Quality of education Gender Disparity Domestic Violence SEZ – Industrialization Health, Personnel Hygiene, Sanitation and drinking water Tribal Under Development.	Child marriages, Malnutrition Street children Displacement Fisher folk community Tibal children in Yanadhi Children in Disasters Disability Health and Hygiene, Access to sanitation and safe drinking water
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CHILD PROTECTION ISSUES

ISSUE: CHILDREN INFECTED AND AFFECTED BY HIV / AIDS

After North East India, Andhra Pradesh tops the list of states for the spread of HIV / AIDS in the Country. Data derived from the screening of women attending antenatal clinics (ANC) in Andhra Pradesh shows 2% prevalence rate in both 2004 and 2005, which is higher than any other state. The latest figure for the Districts wise Non ANC clients tested and found positive from April to October 2008 , provided by Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Society states that highest percentage of positive clients were found in the district, 20.25 West Godavari, 19.7% in East Godavari followed by 17.9 in Guntur, 16.8% in Hyderabad, 16.5 in Krishna, 12.45 in Prakasam, 11.7% in Visakhapatnam, 10.6% in Nalgonda and 10 .4in Nellore. Other districts however showed positive cases between 9.4 % to 4,2%. Data for a period of six months shows that overall in the state almost 12 % cases tested were found positive. (See Annexure - 2)

As the disease is spreading from urban to rural areas it has posed greater danger for affecting the child population in the state. As per National AIDS Control Organisation estimated in India there are 0.55 lakhs HIV infected children under 14 years age. In addition majority (87.7%) of HIV/AIDS infected people in India are in the age group 15-44 years. Amongst the children under 14 years age, the most common cause of infection is the Mother-to-Child transmission (MTCT), whereas amongst the older age group the virus is transmitted through sexual contact, drug use and blood transfusion. According to the estimation of National AIDS Control Programme there were 5.21 million Indians living with HIV at the end of 2005 (compared to 4.58 million in 2002), of whom 39% were female.

Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Society provides alarming figures about the status of PLHIVs and CLHIVS in the state as fresh as March 2009. According to the report, the state has 175810 numbers of infected children and 48100 are taking ART treatment. Guntur district leads in higher number (22109) HIV infected children, followed by Hyderabad having 18509 children already infected. In other districts the number are comparatively smaller, but the spread of the disease is continuing very fast. Children are also affected in various ways because of HIV/AIDS of their father or mother and their well-being is seriously threatened. Even when the children are not directly infected they have to suffer loss of childhood due to early death of their caregivers and continue facing social stigma and discrimination.

Geographical area for Action:

From the above noted figures, it becomes almost clear that the HIV / AIDS has been prevalent in a pandemic form in the entire state. However, most prominent districts are West Godavari, East Godavari, Krishna, Prakasam, Vishakhapatnam, and Nellore. Since the spread of the disease is in the entire state, action needed in all the districts for the prevention and control, and also care and support.

Suggested Strategies:

Strategies for intervention need to be evolved around three broad areas Such as;

1: Prevention of Parent to Child HIV transmission, 2: Prevention of HIV/AIDS amongst young people and 3. : Provide care and support to infected and affected children

ISSUE: Child trafficking, abuse, sexual exploitation and Child marriage.

Trafficking in women and children is one of the most corrosive forms of violation of human rights. In India the State of Andhra Pradesh has emerged as one of the primary centres of origin of individuals being trafficked. A survey conducted by National Commission for Women in 1997 estimates that Andhra Pradesh represents 40% of those trafficked domestically for sexual exploitation. The girls from Andhra Pradesh are trafficked to various metropolitan cities (Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, Mumbai and Goa). Trafficking has increased because of globalization, free market economy, poverty, lack of education and livelihood options, exacerbated by other socio-economic variables such as gender discrimination, ethnicity, caste and cultural sanctions.

Various studies on prostitution in India indicate that almost 24 - 26% women among commercial sex workers are from Andhra Pradesh. Again the Draft Action Plan for Children in Andhra Pradesh states that "Trafficking is prevalent at various levels local, inter-district, and inter-state and cross border. Commercial exploitation of women and girl children takes place in various forms including brothel-based prostitution, sex tourism entertainment industry and pornography in print and electronic media. The percentage of victims of trafficking is highest in Andhra Pradesh according to various reports. According to some precise estimate nearly 50% of the victims belong to scheduled caste and up to 30% belong to the other backward classes. Kadapa, Chittoor and Anantapur, all border districts, are the main affected areas".

Trafficking is a very complex and has multi-dimensional causes. Economical, social and cultural issues coupled with human ingenuity such as promise of jobs better career prospects and marriage etc. Some are forcibly trafficked through abduction. Poverty and deprivation, secondary status accorded to women in society, prejudice against the girl child, changing public attitudes towards sex and morality, the caste structure, urbanization and migration are some main factors which are responsible for commercial sexual exploitation of women and children. The consequences of trafficking are enormous as it hits the very basis of human dignity, and breaks the physical, psychological and moral fabric of the victims for life long. The fall out of trafficking is also seen in the form of catching sexually transmitted diseases and more dreadful HIV/AIDS.

Looking at the enormity of the child trafficking in the state, it is imperative therefore, to engage in serious intervention programs by any actor or agency.

Geographical Area for Action:

Kadappa, Chittoor, Ananthpur, Srikulam, West & East Godavari, Guntur, Krishna, Prakasam, and all border districts.

ISSUE : Child Labour and Street Children

Andhra Pradesh has the highest number of child labourers in the country as per the Economic Survey report 2002-03. Young Lives reports that the workforce participation rate in rural Andhra Pradesh was 2.7 and 0.7 in urban areas in 1999-2000. Globalization policies that result in poverty are directly impacting children in terms of growing numbers of child workers labour in different sectors, including agriculture. The Campaign Against Child Labour - CACL estimates that there are over 45 lakh children working as child labour in AP. This figure has been arrived at on the basis of the number of children out of school and families living in destitution. On October 10, 2006, the Government of India issued an official gazette notification expanding the list of hazardous occupations under the Child Labour Prohibition Act, banning employment of children less than 14 years as domestic workers or in restaurants and the entertainment industry. While there have to be greater efforts to implement the new order, the main issue is to challenge the notion of "hazardous" and ensure that every child is in school and therefore automatically not working. Despite the existence of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act 1986 and implementation of programmes aimed at reducing child labourers, the child work force participation in the state has sharply increased to 25% in rural areas in the age group 10-14 years and to 7.1 in urban areas. The reasons behind this are multifarious. Poverty is one of the key reasons. Regional analyses undertaken within the state shows drought prone areas tend to have higher incidences of child labour and so also in the case of areas affected by cyclone/flood and Tsunami.

Child labour is a term that covers a range and variety of circumstances in which children work. Child labour is conventionally defined to include all 'economically active' children in the age group 5-14 years. A person is treated as economically active or gainfully employed if she/he does work on a regular basis and receives remuneration for it. The ILO defines 'child labour' as "work that deprives children of their childhood and their dignity, which hampers their access to education and the acquisition of skills, and which is performed under deplorable conditions harmful to their health and their development." However, the government of Andhra Pradesh was the first state Government in India to adopt a different kind of definition of child labour as "all children out of school". This definition is popular among the development actors working on child labour. The data shows that by adopting such a definition, there has been a spurt in school enrolment and thus claims have been made that child labour has been actually reduced. But that is not the case as retention and drop out of children is significantly high beyond primary school as discussed in chapter one.

Again it is also argued that, until 1991 Andhra Pradesh was notorious for its poor literacy rates and high child labour rates, both main and marginal workers, as compared to the all-India averages in every age group. In fact, in 1961 and up to 1991, Andhra Pradesh was in the same league as India's most educationally backward states, with very large percentages of children working as main and marginal workers. However, Andhra Pradesh's transition in a shorter time-frame of about 10 years from a low

literacy, high child labour state to a near universal elementary education and low child labour/child work participation is as impressive as that of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra. Andhra Pradesh shows a dramatic decrease in the incidence of child labour (main and marginal) in the 5-14 age group from 10 percent in 1991 to 7.7 percent in 2001 which is a 23 percent decrease.

Notwithstanding the impressive educational enrolment scenario, large number of children is still engaged in various forms of economic activities such as children engaged in occupations that are legally prohibited, agriculture and allied sectors and in domestic sector / other unorganized sectors. Maximum number of child labour in AP is in cotton-seed production with over 150,000 children engaged in the production of hybrid cotton seeds. A large number of children in the age group of 5 – 14 (13.6 lakh) in AP are working amounting to 7.7 percent of India's total child labour force. About 40,000 children work as domestic labour in Andhra Pradesh and 25,000 among them are in Hyderabad and Secunderabad alone. Estimated 45,000 Street Children are found in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad alone. A number of children (9730) of these age groups are engaged in one of the most hazardous work-mining and stone quarrying which is highest among all states. A significant number of these children are working in the mines of neighbouring state of Karnataka.

On the one hand when claims are being made that child labour has really decreased considerably, on the other hand there is hardly any data available on the actual number of child labour in the age group of 14 to 18 years. In the absence of such data it is difficult to accept that child labour has been reduced considerably. More over about 6000 primary schools have been closed down in the state due to the reasons best known to government. However, the most recent data (2007 by Sarva Siksha Aviyan, AP State indicate the total child labour force in the state are 264013. Considering that child labourers are not a homogeneous group due to varied nature of activities in which they are involved, in order to supplement the Government effort following strategies could be adopted.

Geographical Area for Action: All the Districts of the State

ISSUE: Girl Children – Sexual exploitation in the form Traditional practices - (Dommara, Matha and Basivini) and in temple / tourist places.

Andhra Pradesh is a peculiar state so far as the status of girl children are concerned. On the one hand the state's economy is growing at an impressive rate of 7 to 8%. State has also very high school enrolment figures. In agriculture, Industry and power sector the growth is comparatively higher than other states of the country. It is widely believed that with the growth and urbanization along with high literacy conditions the position of girl children and women in the society would be better than the places of underdevelopment. On the other hand in Andhra Pradesh we find endless cases of sexual abuse, trafficking, and high dropout of girl children. In addition the indicators of development, such as sex ratio, particularly in the 0-6 age group, health status, literacy levels, attitudes and cultural practices towards girls give ample understanding about low status of girl and women in the state.

According to UNICEF, there are gender differentials in infant mortality, which is the death of children under the age of one. After birth, son-preference continues to persist leading to neglect of girls and their lack of access to nutrition, health and maternal care

in these critical years. The statistics on literacy also reveal that a large number of girls going to school drop out by the time they are 12-14 years old. The lower status of girl child is further reflected by the prevalence of early child marriage in the state. In Andhra Pradesh the average age of marriage of girl child is 17.5 years and most women have their first child at the age of 18.8 years. It is the fourth largest states in terms of marriage of women below 18 years of age (54.7%) against India's figure (44.5%). The state is the only southern State that is comparable with the northern States in terms of incidence of child marriage, with one in 40 persons married below the legal age.

Andhra Pradesh is the largest source of women and children for sexual exploitation. About 40 percent among the victims trafficked for sexual exploitation is from Andhra Pradesh and over 93% of the trafficking is inter-district and inter-state. Growing incidences of trafficking of girl child, increasing number of girl child labour, incidences of sexual abuse, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS are some of the other indicators of the situation of the young and adolescent girl child.

Andhra Pradesh also provides another horrible tale of exploitation of girl children notoriously famous in the line of Devadasi tradition practiced in other southern parts of the country. This traditional practices has numerous forms such as Yogini, Mathamma, Yallamma, Basavi and Venkatasani. One can see pathetic plight of young girls from scheduled castes who are brutally exploited. In this traditional practice young girls from weaker section of the society are condemned in their infancy to lead a life of a shame and insecurity in the name of religion. They are forced to serve the community physically and socially and are sexually abused by many men in the community. They live a life of utter negligence and are subjected to stigma and discrimination. In 1998 , 17,000 cases were tracked through a study, but according to rough estimate today the number of such cases are more than 40,000 and is increasing day by day Above description gives a definite understanding about the need for engagement in the issue of girl children, more than any other cause.

Geographical Area for Action: All the districts of the state.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Out of gamut of child development issues four area our attention was drawn on three prominent issues. They are related Tribal Children, Orphan Children and effect of domestic violence and issue of differently able children.

ISSUE: Tribal Children

There are number of tribes in the State of Andhra Pradesh. Of all the tribes the condition of two types of tribes and the plight of their children were brought into focus. One tribe is known as Domara and other one as Yenadihi. Traditionally Domaras are considered to be wanderers who engage themselves as athletic performers as a custom as well as a means of livelihood. They are called as Dommara, Dombari and Domber in various places as the form of Dom, treated as a outcaste community in the Northern India. Traditionally, they are engaged in hunting fish, mat making, donkey and pig rearing. Their food habits include eating cats, pigs etc. They marry one person, but keep concubines for pleasure, which finally resulted in hereditary prostitution.

Yanadis are another primitive tribal communities living in the forest region spread across the Eastern Ghats - in the districts of Chittoor, Kadapa, Nellore, Prakassam, Guntur and Krishna districts. They are the third numerically largest scheduled tribe 9.2 of the total tribal population in Andhra Pradesh. Yanadhis are gatherers, hunters and fisherman. They are treated inferior in social hierarchy. The family bondage is very weak both male and female having detached attitudes towards family life resulting in negligence of children. The girl child is worst affected in this condition as their childhood are spent in cattle care, sibling care and getting married before 12th year.

There is a severe lack of infrastructure facilities in the tribal inhabitants As they are located away from the main habitations, the villages do not have proper approach roads, safe drinking water, electricity and mode of transportation facilities etc. Due to remoteness they do not have full access to PDS services. As per 2001 census the infant mortality rate among yanadis is 120 per 1000 population. The sanitary conditions in their habitations are very unhygienic, which causes different communicable disorders. 90% of the children are suffering with malnourishment disorders such as Kwashiorkor, marasmus, Anemia, bitat spots etc. discolored hair and pale skin. Children are not enrolled in schools at right ages and school dropout rate is 60% after 5th class. Majority of the children are involved in different labour works. Bonded agriculture labour is the most common form of child labour found among Yenadi children. More than 90% of girls marry soon after attaining puberty.

A study conducted by RISE a leading NGO in Tirupati report that out of total 1325 yanadi children in one revenue block, 564 children were identified as vulnerable in the study area as they are engaged in many hazardous activities. Out of 878 children in the age group of 6-15 years, 375 were school drop outs followed by 146 never attended any school. It is a fact that the tribal communities are continued to be neglected by the government apathy and non action by the development agencies working on development issues. The reasons for the indifference are difficult to understand but going by the deplorable condition of the tribal communities and the overall status of children in these communities call for immediate action.

Geographical Area for Action: Tribal districts of Andhra Pradesh

ISSUE: ORPHAN CHILDREN

Orphan children in India are one of the vastly neglected sections among the child population. A child can be orphaned due to a variety of reasons such as Parent's death by accidents and natural calamities (Earth quake, Cyclone, Tsunami, Floods) and due to murder for many reasons. Death due to Caste and Communal clash, terrorist attack and conflicts. Death of parents due to war and violence and due to health reasons, Father abandoning the child after mother's death. As the support for orphan child's development is scarce, their environment and scope for development and progress in life are full of challenges. In recent times there is talk more on the children who are orphaned due to the death of parents by HIV/ AIDS. But the number of children orphaned for reasons other than the HIV/AIDS is significantly more than the dreaded disease. It is almost an agreed fact that children irrespective of causes are vulnerable for all types of abuses and exploitation. But in India, except some sort of institutional support to the children who have been orphaned due to the parent's death, no

appropriate system has been evolved in the country to address the growing needs of orphaned children due to HIV/AIDS or for that matter of any other causes..

Andhra Pradesh is no exception to the plight of Orphan children. Orphan children are mostly physically abused and sexually exploited (especially girl children), threatened by police, land up as street children, work as child labour, and are vulnerable for trafficking etc. Girls are pushed into sex trade and subjected to lead a life humiliation, stigma and discrimination. It is therefore imperative to work for this category of children as no support is expected either from government or sources like non government organizations.

Geographical Area for Action: Srikulam, East Godavari , Vishakhapatnam and other districts of the State.

ISSUE: DIFFERENTLY ABLED CHILDREN

The problem of differently able children is enormous. No rights of children are as found to be as neglected as that of the rights of disabled children in the country. Although unofficially around 40,000 children are estimated to be affected by one of the several disabilities in the state, only a small section of them are supposed to be enrolled in the schools. It is primarily because of the inaccessibility of schools and poverty of the parents of the disabled children Most of the disabled children belong to poor parents. The civil society and the schools as well as authorities have to be sensitized to address the issue of prevention of disabilities. A lot is to be done in the areas of protection and promotion of developmental as well as participatory rights of the disabled children.

Geographical Area for Action: All the districts of the State.

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

Impact of Disasters and Natural Calamities in the lives of Children.

The country has been witnessing small as well as large scale natural disasters in almost unflinching regularity. As reported in the plan INDIA Country Program Framework, “ India has many regions that are exposed to current natural phenomena that may cause disasters, like earthquake (*i.e Latur – Maharashtra and Kutch – Gujrat*), Floods and cyclones (*Begal, Bihar , Orissa, Assam, Andhra, Tamilnadu, Pondicherry. etc*) and drought (*MP, Rajsthan, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.*) In combination with social forces, such as population growth, urbanization, and migration, they create unsafe conditions for children. The impact of disasters are greater for those who live in increasingly fragile physical environment, dangerous locations, unprotected buildings, and infrastructure.”

Andhra Pradesh witnesses recurring flood and cyclone in many parts of the states. Tsunami in 2004 had terrible effect on the lives of hundreds of thousands of families and children, The impact was so ever, even now people are afraid of recalling the situation. There are lot of experiences about the situation of children during and after disasters. These experiences are important for discussion as they provide necessary knowledge for future action. The threats and risks that children face are directly linked to their vulnerability who are already in the trap of poverty and deprivation. Children get separated from their families and very often no effort is made to register or locate these missing children. Institutionalization is often seen as the only alternative for children who are separated or orphaned. Sometimes families too, want to

institutionalize their children because they think it is the best option. Sale of children is common during emergencies. It is also a form of abandonment when parents and communities cannot take the responsibility for their children. Relief workers and outsiders are often found to abuse children. Children are also abducted or kidnapped. Disappearances of children are common particularly from hospitals, and relief camps. Children are forced to work, beg and migrate to cities or other places in search of employment in conditions of disaster.

Geographical Area for Action: Coastal Districts of the State in Particular and other districts in general.

ISSUE : Migration / Impact of Special Economic Zone /New Developments

The recent government policy for setting up Special Economic Zones has already started having its impact on the lives of families and children almost all over the country. Poor are gradually being pushed out from even existing universal basic services such as health and education programs. The government argues that privatization is inevitable because it has no funds to spend on public social infrastructure. On the other hand, the rich are kept out of the tax net by a variety of measures. Given its reluctance to raise taxes, the last three budgets have seen a decline in real terms in the public expenditures on agriculture, rural development and the social sector. The *en masse* approval given by the Government of India to 401 proposals to set up Special Economic Zones in the last 18 months has raised a spate of issues. The move to remove state governments from the land acquisition process is highly dangerous, and will put small landowners at the mercy of land sharks backed by the muscle power of criminal elements. There has been an attempt to dilute labour laws by encouraging state governments to exempt SEZs in the name of "Public Utility Services." These concerns are reflected in the huge mobilisations and struggles that have opposed the present pattern of SEZs.

Recent changes in the Coastal AP situation that affects children and their education. Coastal corridor and SEZ are the major issues in the state, in which the Government of AP had decided to allocate 5 lakh acres of land to industries along the coastal line. From SKLM to East Godawari., nearly 2lakh acres of land is being allocated to petrochemical industries, in Guntur and Prakasam 1.2 lakh acres for VANPICK for chemical industries, 2000 acres for port operations and 5000 acres land for power plants and 1000 acres land for airports. Resulting, millions turn land less and they are forcibly migrated to other areas/occupation, where survival of children is challenged.

Because of large scale acquisition of land, families are forced to look for alternative source of income and employment elsewhere in and outside their village. This phenomena is adding to number of families migrating to cities and towns and also increasing inter- state migration. Migration of parents affects the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in the state. This has also impacted on the gross violation of child rights and protection. The task of defending children's rights in such a circumstance looks to be very urgent. Children's survival, development, protection and participation can be realized only through a healthier rural economy, better health delivery system and quality education. Capacity building, critical awareness, legal assistance and enhancement of the community resource base are also very important steps for action.

Geographical Area for Action: In all the regions of the State.

The broad interventions needed to be addressed the aforementioned issues are:

- Strengthening of village level Child Protection Committees established under ICPS.
- Formation and Strengthening of existing village Children, Parliament/ Bala Sanghas
- Sensitise and build capacities of CBOs in establishment of Child Friendly villages
- Strengthening social watch groups in villages for prevention of child trafficking and other abuses
- DCPU to be strengthened and to ensure quarterly convergence meeting under the aegis of Dist Collector and the Chairperson of CWC
- Capacity building of CWCs and JJBs under the aegis of with knowledge and skills for dealing with cases and to provide appropriate action for care and protection of needy children
- Convergence of Civil society organisations with Government Child Protection mechanism at district and state level
- Coordination with State Government for providing children utmost priority in their planning and implementation of policies and programs
- Mapping of vulnerable children in proposed capital and industrial region on Andhra Pradesh
- Lobby with Government for establishment of Child care Institutions for both girls and boys at each district level
- Lobby with Government for establishment of system for tracking of all type of children in vulnerable situation
- Lobby with Government for establishment of AHTUs at all the districts.
- Lobby with Government for separate state law to the various legislations by the central Government such as JJ Act, POCSO Act, 2012, CLPR Act and ITP Act, 1956.

These are some of the broad interventions which needed to be implemented to address the issues in the state related to child safety, security and dignity. However these need to be further elaborated with micro interventions at each of the level suggested in the above interventions.

Conclusion:

This report is the outcome of a participatory process. The participants NGOs working in different regions, Net works of NGOs and INGOs working in different sectors in Andhra Pradesh Efforts were made to objectively collect analyze and reflect the views of the participants and clues taken from the available source of published and unpublished information / data. Consultant believed that the information incorporated in this report is reliable and valid as they have been collected from authentic sources and appropriately referred.

Consultation at a Glance Few Photographs



Name of the participants

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