

Third Edition of

# Leadership Dialogues

**Empower. Strengthen. Innovate.**

*Towards a Safer Future for Our Children*

**Frequently Asked and Most  
Important Questions**

## **Child marriages are common in rural areas. How can we empower Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) to take action?**

Child marriage is influenced by multiple factors such as gender power dynamics, poverty, and lack of knowledge. PRIs, community-based organizations (CBOs), Village-Level Child Welfare and Protection Committees (VLCW&PCs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), etc., play a critical role in preventing child marriage. Below are preventive steps they can take or facilitate:

1. Sensitize PRI members by integrating the issue of child marriage into the training modules of the Panchayati Raj Department.
2. Share actionable points with PRI members that they can pursue in villages.
3. Develop guidelines for establishing Model Child Marriage-Free Gram Panchayats.
4. Conduct special Gram Sabha meetings on the issue of child marriage across the state.
5. Select and appoint a State Brand Ambassador for a child marriage-free state.
6. Institutionalize rewards and recognition for child-marriage-free gram panchayats.
7. Issue guidelines to support child marriage-free gram panchayats.

Once the PRIs become active, they will be able to take action. The purpose is to strengthen the involvement of Panchayati Raj functionaries (local governance officials) in addressing child marriage and using Gram Sabha as a platform to influence the community's mindset.

Kindly refer to- <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/documents/653/SSAP-Child-Marriage.pdf>  
<https://leher.org/campaigns/large-campaigns/stories-from-the-field/reports/together-children-communitys-journey/>

## **We have seen that VLCW&PCs aren't taking action on cases of child rights violations. What can local NGOs do?**

The focus is not only on capacity building but also on shifting the mindset of VLCW&PCs and other agencies. Involving parents in this process is crucial. Across the country, there are numerous promising practices and examples of dynamic VLCW&PCs actively ensuring a protective environment for children. Providing opportunities for adolescents and youth to voice their concerns for themselves and their peers is vital. For instance, Sumitra Devi from Madhubani demonstrates proactive engagement in combating child marriage alongside other VLCW&PC members.

## **What is the difference between CPC and VLCW&PC?**

The Child Protection Committee at the village level is called the Village-Level Child Welfare & Protection Committee. At the ward level, it is called the Ward-Level Child Welfare & Protection Committee.

## **How can we prepare for and mitigate the new child protection risks arising from the increasing digitization of society?**

Raising awareness among children and parents is paramount for community sensitization and spreading crucial information. Collaborating with schools to implement special classes on digital safety can significantly contribute to this effort. Numerous organizations are dedicated to promoting digital safety awareness among children, youth, parents, and agencies. One notable example is the Cyber Peace Foundation, which actively works to educate and safeguard the community against digital threats.

The Indian Government has published the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act 2023, which focuses on the processing of personal data within and outside India, as well as activities related to offering goods and services to Data Principals within India. It emphasizes that consent from Parents/Guardians is required for children below 18 years of age regarding their data. Behavioral monitoring and targeted advertising are prohibited.

<https://www.meity.gov.in/writereaddata/files/Digital%20Personal%20Data%20Protection%20Act%202023.pdf>  
<https://www.cyberpeace.org/>

## **What can be done to ensure PRIs implement child-friendly villages?**

A community demand for child-friendly villages will engage the interest of PRIs in implementing child-friendly villages. In many cases, PRIs may require guidance and support to better understand their roles. We can collaboratively work with PRIs to achieve this. As mandated by Mission Vatsalya, every PRI will have a standing Child Welfare and Protection Committee (CWPC).

Please refer to this circular:

<https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s316026d60ff9b54410b3435b403afd226/uploads/2023/02/2023021779.pdf>

## **Can you please highlight examples of States where VLCW&PCs are dynamic? Also, what about BLCW&PC? Are they existing on the ground? If yes, can you please highlight examples of States where they are dynamic?**

There are many examples of active VLCW&PC. Sumitra, a PRI member from Madhubani and a speaker in this webinar, is a great example of this. However, active Block-Level Child Welfare and Protection Committees (BLCW&PC) are few in number. To activate these committees, there is a need to develop collaboration between PRIs, CBOs, and local government. NGOs play a critical role in this effort, along with the respective government stakeholders.

Please refer to the 15th edition newsletter of IACN where you will find an article by Leher on Caring Communities: [How Nuamunda VCPC's supported Kinship Care in migration season.](#)

## How can we empower children to become active citizens and participate effectively?

Collectivization of children through Bal Sabha and Bal Panchayat is a well-recognized method to achieve this goal. It aims to be "By the Children, Of the Children, and For the Children." However, it is essential that these initiatives be community-led rather than NGO-led. Miracle Foundation India has active Bal Panchayats in Maharashtra's Ram Nagar and Gujarat's Chhota Udepur under a joint partnership program with UNICEF-India and the state governments

You may like to read an article on Bal Panchayat (Children's Parliament): [The Journey of Child Participation in the Community-Level Prevention Project in Gujarat in IACN 12th edition newsletter.](#)

**In states like Jharkhand, the VLCW&PC structure is currently defunct, with no detailed guidelines issued by the state to reactivate the VLCW&PC or Panchayat-Level Child Welfare and Protection Committees. Mission Vatsalya emphasizes an increased role of PRIs in the Child Protection Committee (CPC), but PRIs often lack awareness of their responsibilities. There is minimal ownership among state and district administrations in activating these platforms through issuing guidelines and collaborating with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). What approach can be taken to bring about change in this current situation?**

The problem is substantial, but if the community decides that child protection is their responsibility, everything will fall into place. We firmly believe that the real work needs to happen at the community level. In addition, we must engage with the political and administrative systems at both the district and state levels to drive policy change and ensure effective policy implementation.

The Mission Vatsalya guidelines underscore the importance of activating the CWPC as a standing committee within PRIs, which needs strengthening. However, this does not diminish the significance of CPCs. The district child protection workforce and local NGOs can play a pivotal role in activating CPCs, but this initiative should be led by the District Child Protection Unit (DCPU) team rather than NGOs. Awareness about Mission Vatsalya should be prioritized at the district, block, and panchayat levels.

CPCs are not the only community structures; Youth Groups, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Bal Panchayats, etc., should also be activated. India has several promising practices in active and functional community-based groups. One exemplary initiative is the Bal Mitra program in Jalna by UNICEF, the Department of WCD, and Swaraj Gram Sansthan. These issues should be addressed in the District Child Welfare and Protection Committee (DCWPC) meetings, chaired by the District Magistrate, adhering to the Convergence Matrix of Mission Vatsalya. Additionally, Mission Vatsalya provides ample opportunities for volunteerism, which is crucial for sustaining these efforts.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMzoo0v-wQQ>

**The standing committee related to Women and Children is also defunct, and there are no clear guidelines for the spending or use of the 5% untied funds under the Mission Vatsalya scheme for CPCs.**

As mentioned previously, activating the standing committee and ensuring its functionality is crucial. Regarding the 5% untied fund, it is essential to utilize the District Child Welfare & Protection Committee platform to issue guidelines related to its utilization, as this committee is led by the District Magistrate.

### **Are daycare centers available for children of single working women?**

The creche is now an integral part of the government program under the National Creche Scheme. Simultaneously, local NGOs and organizations working in the area of family-based alternative care can initiate creche or daycare centers. These centers would undoubtedly assist children of single parents in staying within their families. Child Care Institutions (CCIs), in their evolving roles, can also consider establishing such creche facilities to support children who have been transitioned back to their families. This initiative would provide a safe and nurturing environment for children during the day, allowing their parents to work and support their households without worry.

For detailed guidance and structure, please refer to the draft note on the National Creche Scheme, which outlines the essential components and benefits of these centers.

[https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/National%20Creche%20Scheme%20For%20The%20Children%20of%20Working%20Mothers\\_0.pdf](https://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/National%20Creche%20Scheme%20For%20The%20Children%20of%20Working%20Mothers_0.pdf)

### **Please share links to the previous 2 Leadership Dialogues.**

Webinar recordings are available on our YouTube channel. Here are the direct links-

1st Webinar- <https://youtu.be/6lUmhfAs4Y8?si=BcQ-GCVmQjKttICh>

2nd Webinar- [https://youtu.be/WY5iyWDcgWU?si=p0FQLcJr5Az0cjFq\\_](https://youtu.be/WY5iyWDcgWU?si=p0FQLcJr5Az0cjFq_)

3rd Webinar - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qy-lUkiRlrc>

### **In states like Bihar, children make up 50% of the population. What can be the strategy to map vulnerable children to ensure effective gatekeeping?**

There are various tools available for vulnerable family assessment in the public domain. The Thrive Scale tool by Miracle Foundation assesses family vulnerability, although it is not yet publicly accessible. Vulnerability assessment is a dynamic process, and community-level documentation of vulnerabilities is crucial. You may have heard from Nirmala of Sarvo Prayas Sansthan during the leadership dialogue about how they identify vulnerable children. Mission Vatsalya also emphasizes vulnerability mapping as a key responsibility of the DCPU. Additionally, Madhya Pradesh Women and Child Development has developed a tool for this purpose.

[https://mpwcdmis.gov.in/Downloads/Consolidated%20Vulnerability%20Mapping%20Tools\\_Revised%2024-03-2021.pdf](https://mpwcdmis.gov.in/Downloads/Consolidated%20Vulnerability%20Mapping%20Tools_Revised%2024-03-2021.pdf).

You can read about one vulnerability assessment report done by Udayan Care in 3 Blocks of Ujjain, MP.

<https://iacn.in/images/resources/ffb6a8e1ab2ce038d6bc959a98c18706.pdf>

## How do you ensure prevention at the community level?

- Focusing the Attention of the District Child Protection Workforce: Emphasizing prevention efforts rather than solely concentrating on CCI is crucial. Redirecting efforts towards proactive prevention can help identify and address issues before they escalate.
- Activating Standing Committees: Strengthening and mobilizing standing committees, such as the CWPC within PRIs, ensures a consistent and organized approach to child protection at the grassroots level.
- Creating Active Youth and Children's Groups: Establishing and empowering youth and children's groups within communities fosters a sense of responsibility and advocacy among young people. These groups can act as watchdogs and support systems, promoting a culture of protection and care.

By integrating these strategies, we can build a robust and responsive child protection framework that extends beyond institutional care to encompass the entire community.

## How can the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) play a role in family strengthening and preventing unnecessary separation of the children? Provide some examples

The CWC can play a crucial role in family strengthening and preventing unnecessary separation of children through effective gatekeeping mechanisms. This involves conducting in-depth assessments of children and their families to enable the CWC to make well-informed decisions that prioritize the best interests of both the child and the family. Local NGOs and CCIs can play a pivotal role in facilitating these assessments. Following assessments, family visits should be organized with support from the DCPU, para-legal volunteers, ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, and CPCs. CWC members themselves can also conduct visits to gain a deeper understanding of family dynamics. Following these assessments and visits, a comprehensive intervention plan should be developed. This plan should leverage the expertise and support of relevant professionals and stakeholders to address the identified needs and challenges.

For more insights into promising practices, you can connect with organizations like Miracle Foundation India (<https://miraclefoundationindia.in>) and Prerana (<https://preranaantitrafficking.org/>), which have extensive experience and successful track records in family-strengthening and child protection.

## **How can we more actively strengthen family-based rehabilitation?**

Child-centered case management is crucial for initiating the reintegration process. By focusing on activating the five well-being domains—Family & Social Relationships, Education, Household Economy, Living Conditions, and Health & Mental Health—effective family strengthening can be achieved. It is essential to recognize that every family has inherent strengths. Leveraging these strengths rather than concentrating on weaknesses will create a more sustainable model for family support and development.

The role of the community is equally important, as highlighted previously. Engaging the community in child protection mechanisms, ensuring their active participation in family-strengthening initiatives, and fostering a supportive environment are vital components for the success of these efforts.

## **How can organizations balance the integration of advanced technologies in prevention and gatekeeping with privacy and ethical standards?**

Technology plays an important role in data-driven decision-making in the areas of prevention and gatekeeping. The Mission Vatsalya portal will provide a unified Digital Platform for various MIS related to children in difficult circumstances which include missing, orphaned, abandoned, and surrendered children. These vulnerable children need to be mapped with the govt. institutions/services so that their care and development can be ensured.

The four different portals under the Child Protection Services and Juvenile Justice Act –TrackChild - for Missing/Found children; CARINGS, for the adoption of children; ICPS portal, for monitoring the scheme and Khoya-Paya, a citizen citizen-centric application for Missing and Sighted children shall be integrated by the National Informatics Centre under one single portal.

Some of the major benefits of the Mission Vatsalya portal will be the following:

- i) Better monitoring through various MIS Dashboards
- ii) Avoid duplication of work at the grassroots level
- iii) Single platform for all the stakeholders
- iv) Better decision and policy making
- v) Optimum use of resources
- vi) Availability of Child Protection Resource Directory
- vii) Better citizen participation
- viii) Availability of analytical reports
- ix) Evidence-based program, planning and implementation.

Miracle Foundation also introduces the Thrive Well App (formerly Thrive Scale), which is utilized for prevention and gatekeeping and is aligned with the DPDP Act. As mentioned earlier, adherence to the DPDP Act 2023 is mandatory when using any technology. This ensures the privacy and informed consent of families, as well as clear responsibilities for the data principal, data fiduciary, and data processor. For processing data outside India, the Government will notify countries to which transfer is not permissible, unlike the whitelisting approach under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Consent from parents/guardians is required for children under 18 years of age, and behavioral monitoring and targeted advertising are prohibited.