VISIT TO VISHAKHAPATNAM/ VIJAYWADA TO DISCUSS THE CONCEPT OF CHILD FRIENDLY VILLAGES & MELAS

(4th to 6th August’16)

Report by:

Rupa Kapoor, Member
Report of Vishakhapatnam/ Vijayawada Visit (4th to 6th August’16)

Background:

Ms. Rupa Kapoor made an invigorating visit on an official stretch to Visakhapatnam making a simulating impact on the functionaries and child protection mechanism while augmenting support structures response for initiating the “Child friendly Village” perception as part of NCPCR initiated flagship program of revamping the Panchayat level transformation and again to make it coincidental to AP’s “Smart village and smart ward” spectacle wherein the commission has formulated the thematic model of child friendly villages. The concept stresses the indispensable requisite to leverage the strength of civil society for positive action to reckon with the dissimilarity of child neglect through national campaigns. Despite the fact that the present sorties are projected for the above concept, she has laid accent on concerned child rights protection agencies that are endowed with task of streamlining the institutions protecting the child rights and warranting an obligatory duty for all concerned.

The contingent of DCPU and Dept. of women and child has extended protocol of reception and other itineraries and on this 4th the team accompanied by the DCPU teams, department and SCPCR, Member & I/C Chairperson Mr. S.Balaraju and functionaries have made a dint of visit to Anganwadi centres

The context of visiting institutions was for undertaking monitoring on the supporting structures measures for smooth functioning of institutions, Anganwadi, supportive mechanism - assess the roles deliberations of different departments and coordination efforts within the districts and respective state as also among different stakeholder departments. It was also to have a glance through on the awareness generation on child rights and entitlements under laws and assess the situational appraisal and in this process literally to engage in deliberations with stakeholders to facilitate observance of Child Rights for dissemination of information pertaining to Child Rights and Child Protection issues, schemes and polices related to children.

Objectives of the visit

1. Examining and reviewing the safeguards provided for the protection of child rights and recommend measures
2. Looking into the matters relating to the children in need of special care and protection and conflict with law
3. Scrutinizing the existing policies, programmes and other activities on child rights
4. To Share the Child Friendly Village concept with respective Stakeholders
5. To Share the Child Friendly Mela concept and determine whether Krishna Pushkaram could be India’s first Child Friendly Mela at Vijaywada
Visit to ICDS-Anganwadi centers at Visakhapatnam

Ms. Kapoor undertook has visits to 3 Anganwadi centers, a girl’s home/observation home/special home within the city of Visakhapatnam.

The first of this portfolio has been a visit to AWC at Rajaka Colony located in Isukathota of urban 2, ward 10 falling within Maddilapalem 4 for which the ICDS supervisor is Ms. Rajkumari and the teacher is Ms. Madhavi.

The area has 321 houses and 23 children attended the ICDS. The AWC was well equipped with pre-school amenities and technicalities of staff were well matching to the learning ambiance apart from the supervisory eminence. The Hon’ble member interacted with children and staff and got to know of the persisting good practices in the areas of supplementary nutrition, immunization, health tests, consultations, pre-school education and nutrition & health education.

Next in the move forward was a slum settlement- Rajiv Nagar of urban 2 where the teacher is Ms. Usharani. This AWC was supported by World Vision India as part of their nutrition program in the urban slums. Here the noticeable factor has been its good management despite the fact that the centre is run in the private shelter having its IEC and pre-school learning material.

Observation: In most areas parents were mostly labourers. The AWWs were extremely talented and motivated and they showed how children were able to recite poems, numbers and alphabets. They had a very strong rapport with the children. The ICDS was decorated with lots of posters and toys some of which were donated by the Govt. and some by the Rotary club. The children were provided with boiled eggs as snacks. They received rice, dal and veggies for lunch. A banana or any fruit was given in evening snacks. The food was prepared by the helper in a very hygienic manner. The building had a kitchen and a toilet facility. It was adjoining a community hall in the area. The ICDS and the functionaries were very efficient. The AWW had also received awards for her performance. In AP most of the AWCs were open from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm and also functioned as a crèche for children. This was helpful for parents who were both working and unavailable until evening. The AWW also distributed dry ration to pregnant mothers and organised mothers’ meets as was evident in their records. The only constraint that the AWW faced was in getting the grocery without any help. They requested the team to make the delivery of goods simpler and easier for AWWs to function.
Promotion of Breast Feeding Week

The third visit was at Shivajinagar which is in Visakhapatnam 40 of 1st ward which is again in the stream of World Vision India and on this day coincidentally the breast feeding week was being observed and the member had partaken in the activity along with local leadership and World Vision officials.

During her participation she has deliberated on the issues pertaining to colostrums which promotes health, exclusive breast feeding as it enhances the emotional bonding with babies, supplementary nutrition to take care of SAM and MAM, regular growth monitoring, accessing the ICDS services, child marriages, ANC&PNC care and measures needed along with suggestions to utilize all the services available of representations to NCPCR & SCPCR upon any child rights violations and utilization of institutional care services of referrals to NRC, hospitals etc. In this gathering she asserted that working in rural areas and gathering for such movements proved complex since she has working exposure at West Bengal bordering to Bangladesh and mentioned that regulations cannot be overcome by law alone itself and hence women alone can stop the cultural barriers and subjugations towards child marriages or any maladies for women or children and the good models adopted in AP are very well suited for being replicated elsewhere in other states.

Visit to Observation Home for girls and Special Home of Dept. Of Juvenile Welfare and correctional services:

On the same day the assortment has embarked on a visit to the Observation home, girls’ home and special home which are all in the same complex situated in the outskirts of the city closer to food craft institute and a close knit complex with an encircling security wall and all the amenities.

Here very interesting observations are pertaining to the functioning of institution, amenities, perception of inmates, staff, case histories/records, ambiance along with the administrative aspects.

Ms Kapoor enquired on the amenities and encouraged children to express the perceptions and state of existing affairs in the institution exclusive of any inhibitions.

The existing children groups elaborated on the committees on health, sports, education, welfare and entertainment with 5 members each and represented by its one of the nominee to head the committee then she interweaved another suggestion of mooting the sanitation, WASH and dispute resolution committees to still galvanize the pattern.
To one of the grievances of leaking roofed rooms during rainy seasons, she sought relief from the house authorities as to the manner of making alternative, the authorities have reminiscent of the sanctioning of INR 20, 00, 000 for attending to repairs, but to the further enquiry as to the immediate alternative during repairs the officials shared that during the repairing process children will be shifted to a new building.

She was contended with the fulfillment regarding the supply of entitlements, provisions and nutrition supplies.

The inmates are speaking to parents through the home officials’ permission but opined that wherever feasible repatriation is a good idea than stacking at that very institution. It looks the problem is that the parents are not willing to carry the children to homes and prefer the wards to be confined there

For the questions on corporal punishments the girls shared that there were no such occasions in their home. On questions related to availability of sanitary napkins, they shared that usually one stack with 8 pieces were supplied and more would be supplied if needed.

She cautioned and informed the children on the POCSO Act and gave them information on all acts of touch, tease or comments that they wouldn’t like and what measures to take in such cases. She asked them to bring to the notice of concerned authorities and not to tolerate such occurrences. Ms. Kapoor also elaborated on the consequences of early marriages, child bearing and health hazards and advised the girls to educate themselves properly and prefer late marriages so that they are prepared to be self sustained rather than be a dependent on their spouse.

Ms. Kapoor asked them to enjoy recreational facilities and cajoled them to celebrate the friendship day and make the bondage much stronger among them.

Ms. Kapoor was displeased at the facilities for children as there was an absence of proper beds, mats or cots and the authorities were asked to arrange them. The issue was discussed in the afternoon gathering with District Magistrate to appeal for proper provision of them soon. There was also an absence of a professional Counsellor. A number of girls from Orissa were also in this home for a very long time.

Ms. Kapoor scrutinized the case files and analyzed the cases of inmates of observation homes in which Ms. Anzadi booked for theft of saris on the enticement of money, another one on the transport of poppy on the lure of money and another one on falsification charges of theft and enquired their situation and tutored to follow the guidelines of JJ Amendment 2015 Act and counseled them to reform if at all culprits.

So went on the visit culminating in the law obedience and conformity towards child protection, rehabilitation and conflict with law and needed care and protection and stimulating the structures to be more responsive in engagement with institutions and settings
Proceedings of the One Day Consultation on Child Friendly Villages as enumerated by NCPCR

The interface on CFV Issues and Challenges was a 1-day event held on Aug 4th 2016 organized at Visakhapatnam organized under the aegis of SCPCR –AP and conducted by NCPCR a central commission, its Hon’ble member Ms. Rupa Kapoor and was held at conference hall of Governors Bungalow Visakhapatnam.

Ms. Kapoor gave the presidential address laying the focus on the current state of affairs and its trends, especially in rights, protection, entitlements, cohesion and responsibility among the parents, community and institutional structures. The issues included but not restricted to nutrition, resettlement and rehabilitation, health and health care problems, infrastructure and basic amenities, socio-cultural and institutional & non-institutional determinants of protection etc. With a stakeholder presence of activists, academicians, NGO representatives, media and journalism, stakeholder leaders and community representatives which amounted to approximately 100-odd representatives from various institutions, organizations across north coastal AP.

This august gathering gave a platform headed by Hon’Ble member NCPCR Ms. Rupa Kapoor to more than 50 representatives to bring out their observations in the field of child rights and implications on structures governance and demand generation from the community and CSO’s essentially focusing on Survival, Health & Nutrition, Education & Development, Protection, and Participation. Not only did it highlight the various problems and challenges, but also brought out a list of recommendations and hopeful solutions to help better the condition in child rights segments. This proceeding is a synopsis of the workshop that might help institutions, CSO from diverse backgrounds, stakeholders, researchers, policy makers, and other professionals who have interest in children rights.

So set the tone and tenor for this consultation that the approach deliberations made it clear that it is an attempt to put the values and principles in community based rights protection as evidence based learning to establish trusting relationships in the form of village Panchayath centered multiplication suiting best interests of children, ensuring family centered child participation, community based comprehensive inclusion in reducing the neglect and augmenting the quality of institutional and community centered services. The child friendly village is where the children will be the rights holders and will have access to their rights from duty bearers and stakeholders at selected Panchayath levels and ensure a smooth transition towards education, freedom of expression and develop as responsible citizenship and to influence the power structures to provide amenities and conductive atmosphere for growth and advancement. It is basically an environment where a child is recognized as an individual and is respected with dignity, freedom, protection and well being with holistic development with strategic components of programme intervention activates, quality of services & effectiveness, Impact knowledge attitude and practices, stakeholder convergence, designing redress mechanism and facilitative governance is all about this.

Present on the dais were Hon’ble Collector and District Magistrate Mr. Praveen Kumar IAS, Ms. Rupa Kapoor Member – NCPCR, Ms. Kameswaramma RJD, Mr. Varadarajulu AdCP Visakhapatnam, Ms. Krishna Kumari DPO, Mr. S.Balaraju, Member and L/C Chairperson AP and Ms. Chinmayadevi PD and the attended dignitaries are as vast as drawn from CSO’s, revenue, police, institutional homes, SSA etc departments, PRI, care and protection homes, functionaries of DCPU’s of 3 districts, contingent of media and child rights activists etc.
Ms. Chinmaya Devi PD ICDS while welcoming the dignitaries onto the dais observed that the program like this will see structural changes in the child rights setting thereby steer forward the coordination mechanism and handed over the further proceedings to Mr. S. Balaraju.

Mr. Balaraju in his welcome address of the eminent and modest gathering cutting across all the functionalities has mentioned that the national flagship programs are mitigating the vulnerabilities and coinciding are the state promoted child friendly programs and this child friendly village concept is sought to be anointed in select 500 prior surveyed and identified villages across 13 districts added to the smart concepts of AP and invited the key note speaker Ms. Rupa to give her key note address.

Ms. Rupa Kapoor drew attention of the gathering on the inundated child protection and rights ensuring forms that India is witnessing over progressive phases and supposed that the NCPCR is the highest agency in the child protection and went on describing the functioning of NCPCR and the functional areas. She quoted the E-Bal-nidaan as the portal designed for this aspect. She reminded that the NCPCR embodies within its ambit the children of 0-18 years for protection, promotion and developing a code for functional departments as to the coordination, collaboration and mutual trust, entitlements, quality reforms, suo-moto cognizance of offences on child rights, state commissions and rights protection applying the bottom up approach and conjunction with different functional and statutory structures. She continued with the issues of child labor, identified juveniles, begging, huge migrations and urban settlements and trafficking etc.

While lamenting on the migration scenario she mentioned that migrations are owing to collapse of child rights and recapped that the “Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao” programs were developed for promotion of child rights. She has prompted of the large scale missing date in tea plantations, migration camps, and railway track sides and here where the idea of CFV is to pilot test on child rights enablement in their own villages and protected in native environs that facilitate deviant circumvention of childhood and rights protection through enforcement and promotion agencies. She has drawn that all the components are interconnected and an integrated approach is to be established in this mission. She elucidated that the CFV will target the programs of all the NGO’s, target PRI’s in terms of putting checks on enrolments, entitlements, impaired functionalities of system and opined that the NGO’s will have to have a unique functional avocation than replicating the same of the government designs.

Here the crux is designing a child friendly space and the aspect of monitoring is the mandate of NCPCR and SCPCR’s, who will owe allegiance to this element. All the components and sectors are essential to be looked into while dealing with child segment and for this the NGO’s have a better optometry lens of data, facilitators and management practices and mechanism that will optimally enable to take up the CFV glance and better gloved to perform the green pastures in CFV arena. This pilot program is for three years and progress will be recorded monthly. In this child participation is an invincible essential of CFA and Bal Panchayaths are about raising the voices of children.

She mentioned about the concept of a child friendly Police Station and Child friendly spaces for Recreation in villages- where the children are to be considered as their assets rather than an obligation. These centers encompass quality of services and effectiveness of service delivery and impact knowledge, attitudes and practices etc.
Bringing all the stakeholders to a single platform, she said that, the key element is generating a conductive environment in the villages where all will enjoy equity and equanimity and led towards a holistic education complying to legislative enactments and the CFV is sought to combine the developed and developing villages to bring in a definite change through various interventions in the first phase before January’17.

A cultured monitoring process, bringing entitlements and schemes nearer to children and owning the programs with an aim to bring about constructive changes in the grass root levels so that recreational spaces would emerge, community ownership will emanate and juvenile crime involvement will get zeroed on.

The chief guest Hon’ble District Collector magistrate Mr. Pravin Kumar IAS was realistic in saying that the demand and supply levels are not matching to catch up to the child rights and autonomy choices are concerned, however, he was assertive when he said that all praise is required for all stakeholders though he is bit resolute that the commitment, motivation and principles are prerequisites to manuscript and glorify these sort of programs. The children needed to be converged with National mainstream programs, though the SSA is assuring basic education, yet the pioneering aspect would be to inculcate discipline among children, parents, establishments and institutions and hoped that the current CFV would concretize this needed cross cutting aspect. He theorized that the impact parameters in the way of children emotive intersection with mainstream has been the socio-economic profiles of parents, underdevelopment of village and said that the basic education is beginning with village hence is the requisite notation of CFV. Mainstreaming of society is different from upraising the socio-economic status of families and here where the dichotomy ambiguity persists and to bring about structural changes all the stakeholders, departments, civil society and village level structures to be drawn to a single platform is the best suited options and for this capacity building is the lone option to imbue balance of socio-economic perspective on the one hand and children upbringing on the other ensuring child supportive village development perspective. He maintains that people and children or community should be made aware of the CFA otherwise the child friendly indicators cannot be accomplished and proper selection criterion should be applied to demonstrate the notion for larger replication and in this context no singular endeavor can impact and larger convergence at all levels is a sure way to go ahead. In this regard the statutory bodies and SCPCR’s should devise operative monitoring apparatus and generate a needed framework and the DCPU’s have a critical challenging roles to engage with administration in assuring clarity and identification of gaps at grass root levels and ensured his thorough presence in these ventures and wished the program arrives to a logical conclusion.

At this juncture Mr. Balaraju shared that there needs to be a shift in the attitudes and mode of transformation pattern among ITDA’s, fisher folk and slums while giving enough occasion for CSO’s to raise voices for further consolidation.

At this juncture Ms. Kapoor shared her field exposure and said that though the ICDS is under a constant radar screen yet they can bring immense change when they get community support. For children staying at Homes, she voiced that it is important to repatriate children to their home states and advised parents and homes not to sign on the papers to keep the children till the age of 18 years and further reiterated the need to improvise the infrastructure
or entitlements or rehabilitation plans. Ms. Kapoor also shared NCPCR’s plan to rehabilitate children living in street situations through an SOP for Street Children.

The AD CP Mr. Varadrajuulu shared that an integrated mechanism is required and hoped that this CFV should make an innovative stance and stand alone ubiquitous one to harness a receiving society through awareness generation among beneficiaries, stakeholders, functionaries and he has garnished the idea that prior to CFV operation, devising means to appropriate the child friendly homes and child friendly families will have got to be the front line move. He elaborated that child friendly police station should be one in which all the screened components are integrated, made functional and made more academic for children accountabilities and the prosecutions will have certain limitations and liabilities. Ms. Kapoor stressed that for this separate juvenile officers would be made exclusively both for boys and girls.

Narava Prakasa Rao (Nannagaru) has been more academic while mentioning of the child rights which are to be thought along side of the human rights and said that the Visakhapatnam is more child friendly with friendly officers but urged to strengthen the DCPU and efforts to synchronize and coordinate with all the departments for a prospective child friendly village concept to come to limelight on par to the NCPCR motto.

The DPO Ms. Krishna Kumari while expressing a pressing need to bring into operation all the means for CFV expressed the need to sensitize and educate the Panchayats and functionaries on the need to spread the message of CFV. She lamented that in spite of there being so much mechanism in prevalence the incidents of child marriage, child labor, trafficking are surfacing and to counter this the priority area is Panchayat and this CFV is sparingly on this job and extended thorough collaboration with all in this novel mission.

After few of press meets and inter-departmental quarries Mr. Balarju declared closing of the event with a resolution to remap the villages for CFV and get to the work laid down for the CSO’s towards collaboration and reshuffling synchronization
Meet on Child Friendly Village

Meet with District Collector and Stakeholders on Child Friendly Village
Visit at Shishu Griha, Special School Adoption Agency, Vizag District

Member Ms. Rupa Kapoor visited the Shishu Griha or Adoption Agency at Vizag District on 5th Aug’16. Total 6 children were present in the center where two children had been placed for adoption. There was one Manager Ms. Manju Patnaik, Ms Padmavti, Social Worker and Early Childhood Educator. There was one Paediatrician part time.

Children were kept well and were cared for. All rules and regulations were being followed.
Meeting on Child Friendly Mela at Vijayvada

1. Sharing at CM’s meet: Chief Minister Shri Chandrababu Naidu had organised a large gathering of all relevant officials on the Krishna Pushkaram Mela. He gave Member Rupa Kapoor an opportunity to share the protocols determined by NCPCR to declare Krishna Pushkaram as a Child Friendly Mela. He agreed to all the protocols and directed all relevant officials to include the recommendations. A website was set up on Krishna Pushkaram and the Member requested the DM Krishna Mr. Babu to include a separate chapter on the activities being done on child friendly guidelines for Krishna Pushkaram in that website.

2. Meet with State Govt representatives and Civil Societies: Member Rupa Kapoor also participated in a meet organised by the Joint Director WCD with Civil Societies on Child Friendly Villages. There were 25 members from different civil societies. Member shared the concept of child friendly villages to the representatives. Civil Societies shared that they work very closely with the Govt. at Andhra Pradesh. They said that Government had been very supportive and AP has very negligible child beggars. They were ready to implement the child friendly village model along with Govt functionaries. Many of them had already started some aspects of the concept in their ongoing work already. Some of them had introduced child listing processes in villages to track children. They agreed to share them with Member Health. They also supported the concept of child friendly Melas and were excited about the idea of volunteers wearing colourful jackets who could identify missing children, trafficked children or any other vulnerable child.

Chief Minister Shri Chandrababu Naidu declared Krishna Pushkaram as India’s first Child Friendly Mela
Visit to Govt Hospital, Vijaywada

Taking suo moto cognizance of a case where a child died due to ant bite at Vijaywada Govt Hospital, Ms. Kapoor visited the said hospital during her visit. She met the Doctors and the ICU wards and Paediatric centers. In a detailed investigation report it was mentioned that the child died due to certain complications and not due to ant bite. The hospital was extremely crowded but ICU facilities for children were adequate. Ms. Kapoor asked the authorities to send in a report of the case and also mention the issues faced by the hospital.

Visit to Boys Home (Observation and Special Home) Visakhapatnam 6th Aug’16

Member Rupa Kapoor visited two boys home at Visakhapatnam. In the Observation home there were 5 JJ children.

Observations:

- Children were kept in inadequate spaces
- No recreation, yoga etc facilities were provided
- Some children had been badly beaten by police yet no actions were taken.
- No ambulance facility was present.

In the special home, there was ample space and 112 children were kept. However what was observed was that most children were not repatriated. There were many children from Orissa but they were not repatriated on time.
Key Recommendations from the Visit to Visakhapatnam:

- Govt. Run Special Home cum Children’s Home and Observation Home (for Girls) :
  In this home there are certain factors that need to be addressed immediately
  - Beds for all children
  - Proper mattresses
  - Repairing the leakages in the roofs
  - Proper classroom settings
  - Immediate appointment of a counsellor
  - Proper maintenance of records
  - Repatriation of girls who have families
  - Repatriation of all those who have migrated from Odisha

- Observation and Special Home for Boys: In this home the factors that need to be addressed immediately are:
  - Juveniles need to be placed as per age
  - Living spaces need to be increased
  - Recreation facilities need to be provided
  - Background study of each child needs to be done for better case management
  - In the special home children need to be repatriated to their respective states immediately.