

PROTOCOL OF THE MAKKALA PANCHAYATS



IN KARNATAKA

Protocol of the Makkala Panchayats in Karnataka

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Email: cwc@pobox.com
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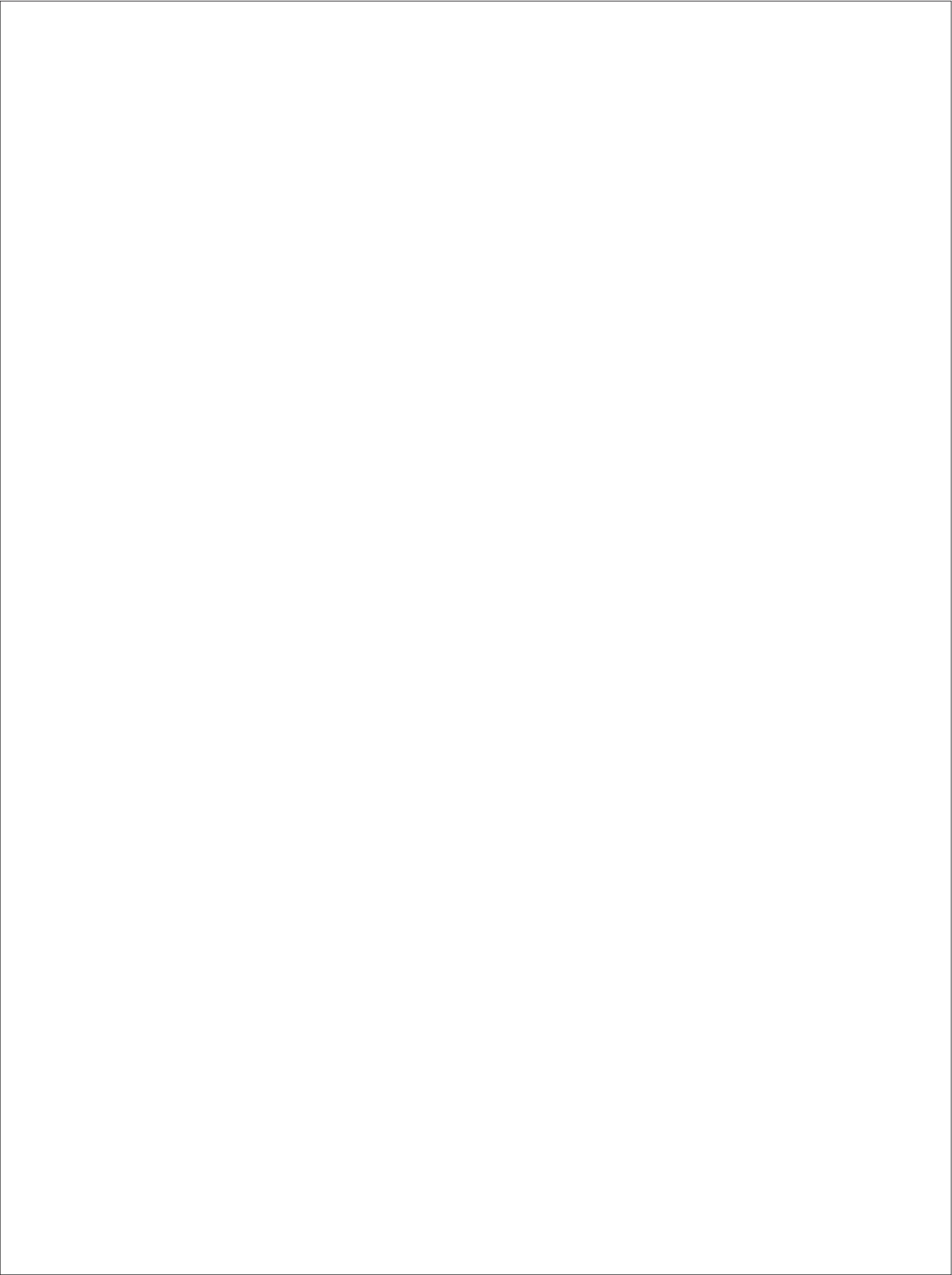
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Price: Rs.100
Authors: Bhima Sangha and Makkala Panchayats of Alur, Belve, Balkur, Uppunda, Keradi, Hologundi, Mathihalli and Bairumbe, Karnataka
Facilitated by: Damodar Acharya and Venkatesh Mudkeri
Compiled by: Miriam Kramer
Illustrations: GUJJARTOONS
Diagrams: Mallikarjuna Konduri
Layout: Shaji Bhaskar
Editorial: Kavita Ratna, Ganapathi MM and Pooja Hiranandani
Special
Guidance: Nandana Reddy
Production
Co-ordination: Pooja Hiranandani
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Preface

From August 31 to September 11, 2004, I was given the opportunity to talk to children and adults involved with the Makkala Panchayats in Kundapur and Bellary. I am grateful for their willingness to take time to discuss the Makkala Panchayats with me. Kavita Ratna and Ganapathy M.M have coordinated and guided the process by which this document has been prepared.

All the children interviewed made a strong case for their right to distinct time and space for them to address their own needs. A number of them said that as active members of Makkala Panchayats they had gained the confidence to challenge and negotiate with adults on issues that were important to them. Many had gained knowledge and information that enabled them to deal with these issues.

Despite the level of formality needed to create the framework for the Makkala Panchayats the children have retained an energising and enthusiastic spirit - through games, play, songs and performances and other activities.

Adults pointed out that by interacting with the Makkala Panchayats they had become more aware of the various problems children in the community face. Every single adult I talked to was convinced that children are not only able to identify problems but come up with constructive ways for solving those problems. They also

expressed how children, in contrast to most adults, paid attention to issues that concerned the community as a whole. I sensed that many of the adults felt that the Makkala Panchayats had introduced a level of non-partisan honesty and commitment that is often lacking in governance.

Miriam Poulsson Kramer

Intern at CWC

August 23 to September 17, 2004

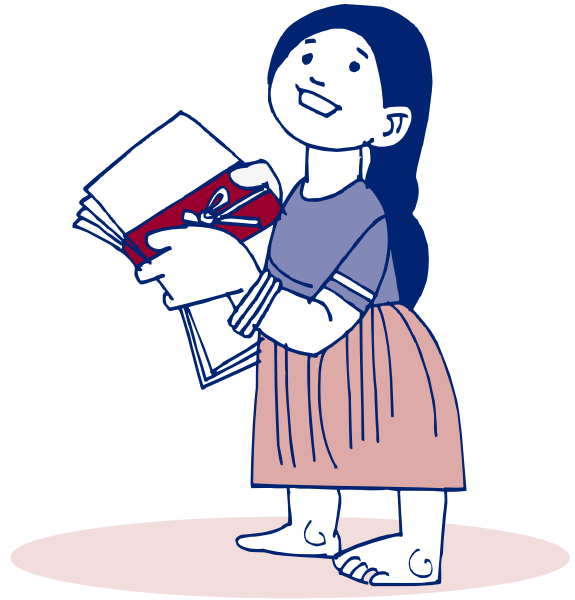
Introduction to the Protocol

Makkala Panchayats: An Introduction

In 1995, Bhima Sangha¹ and The Concerned for Working Children (CWC)², in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka, initiated the formation of Makkala Panchayats (children's councils) in five Gram Panchayats³ in Karnataka. The Makkala Panchayats were created as parallel government bodies to the Gram Panchayats.

The reasoning behind the establishment of the Makkala Panchayats was that despite interaction with local administrative and government bodies, Bhima Sangha felt that sustained results were lacking and that a permanent structure enabling close interaction between children and decision-making bodies was required. This would serve to inform and influence local governance in a sustained manner to ensure that children have the space and opportunities to take part in decision-making processes within their Panchayats. During the process of creating the Makkala Panchayats, children who were involved realised that not only organised working children, but also all children needed a space to communicate their needs and to advocate on their own behalf. The Makkala Panchayats were thus set up not only for working children but also for school children and children with disabilities.

Throughout the development of the Makkala Panchayats, great effort was put into creating an appropriate protocol to define the mandate and structure of the Makkala Panchayats and to determine the criteria for both, the candidature and the electorate. As a product of intensive discussions it was concluded that children from the ages of 6 -18 were considered eligible to vote for candidates aged between 12-16.



In order to link the Makkala Panchayats to the Gram Panchayats, a tripartite Task Force was set up consisting of Makkala Panchayat representatives; government official, elected representatives and community based organisations. The Task Force also exists at sub-district, or Taluk³, level to ensure that issues raised in the Makkala Panchayats are presented at higher levels. The fact that the President of the Gram Panchayat is President at the Panchayat Level Task Force and the District Minister is the

¹ A union of, by and for working children in Karnataka facilitated by the Concerned for Working Children, with a membership of over 13,000, striving for the realisation of child rights

² The Concerned for Working Children (CWC) is a secular and democratic development agency committed to the empowerment of children, especially working and other marginalised children and their communities through their participation in decision making and governance on all matters that concern them. CWC has been actively involved in this cause since 1980. Presently CWC has field programmes in 5 districts of Karnataka, India.

³ The Gram Panchayat is the lowest level of administration in the system of local government. The term Panchayat refers to both the geographical and administrative units, as well as the elected body, which acts as the local council. A Panchayat is composed of a cluster of villages and several Panchayats constitute a Taluk.

President of the Taluk Level Task Force provides official status to the meetings and the issues discussed there. In addition, the regular involvement of high profile government officials increases the level of bureaucratic commitment. The close interaction between children and local government bodies creates a new form of political legitimacy for children on issues regarding their own welfare.

CWC has played an instrumental role in capacity building for both adults and children. This has resulted in children involved with the Makkala Panchayats becoming increasingly equipped with the means to deal with local government structures.

The Makkala Panchayats exist as platforms for children to come together, share problems and systematically work towards solving those problems. At their meetings, issues that need to be addressed are identified through a process of discussion and priority-ranking. As a part of identifying problems and proposing solutions, children collect information and conduct surveys.

A significant amount of the legitimacy that the



Makkala Panchayats enjoy while interacting with government bodies is derived from their ability to substantiate their claims and demands based on the information derived from such research processes. It is harder for adults to ignore children who possess valuable information. Furthermore, children are more than able to identify problems that not only concern themselves, but the whole community.



Each Makkala Panchayat selects a Makkala Mitra or Children's Friend, an adult whom they feel they can trust and whom they can depend on for support within the Task Force and in the community. The Makkala Mitra's role is to take immediate action in cases where children request help individually or collectively. Children have, with the help of the Makkala Mitra, been able to address and solve problems independently of the Task Force.

Moreover, Makkala Panchayats have addressed practices detrimental to children's health and well-being. They have opposed the practice of child marriage and highlighted the health hazards of getting married at a young age. In some instances, they have directly interfered and prevented a child marriage from taking place.



For instance, through the information they collected, children have been able to identify some of the reasons why many children do not attend school. In some areas inadequate and inappropriate infrastructure prevents children from reaching the nearest school. For example, young children may be unable to cross streams or rivers alone. Working children are unable to attend school during the day and a large number of children have to look after younger siblings in the household while their parents work. In addressing these constraints, a number of Makkala Panchayats have been responsible for the creation of footbridges, extension schools² and Anganwadis (day care centres) for younger children.

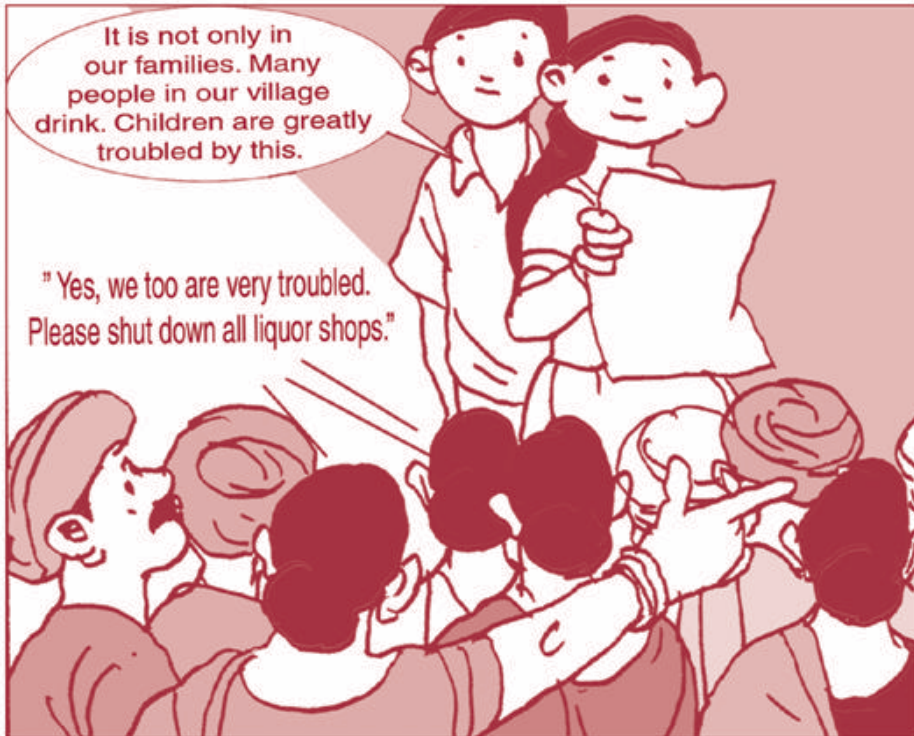
Many children experience alcoholism at home and through surveys the Makkala Panchayats have highlighted the negative effects of alcohol abuse by providing data not only about the social costs but also economic costs of increased alcohol consumption in their villages. (For a detailed case-

study, please look up CWC's website: www.workingchild.org)

Makkala Panchayats are primarily modelled on the Gram Panchayats, but some rules and procedures differ considerably. Even though local government structures are meant to be avenues for increased political participation, constraints within the system and in the society prevent their full utilisation. This is partly due to the lack of participatory processes by which they have been created. Most of the time such structures are handed down to people rather than developed by those who are meant to use them. Furthermore, there may be provisions for the increased participation of certain marginalised groups without any real effort to ensure substantial empowerment of those very groups.

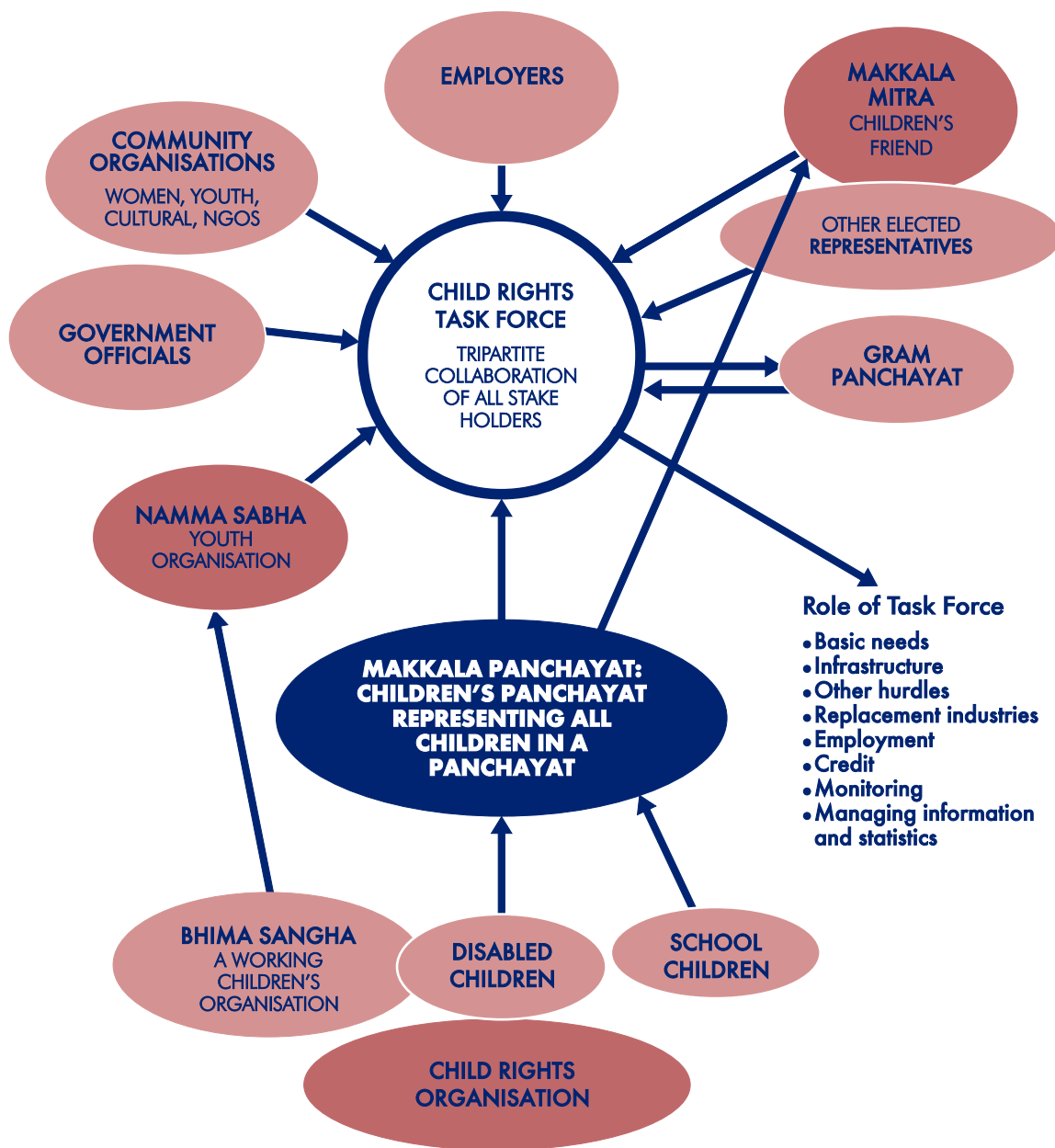
¹ An Extension School is an extension of the formal school, where all the children are registered at with the formal system, but are able to study at their convenience with regard to timings, location and scholastic needs.





A true life incident as documented by field workers during the five year planning process in 2004 in which children developed their own plans for inclusion in the official five year plan of their Panchayat

The Structure of the Makkala Panchayat and the Child Rights Task Force





Drafters of the Protocol

In contrast, children have developed the 'Makkala Panchayat Protocol of Regulations and Procedures'. This has been regularly revisited, modified and revised as the circumstances in the Panchayats have changed over the years. In the beginning of 2004, a new protocol was devised due to significant developments in the Panchayats.

In large measure due to the Toofan Panchayat Programme¹ implemented by CWC since 1995 and increased government involvement in the improvement of primary schools, the number of working children has reduced considerably in a number of Panchayats in the Kundapur Taluk. In response to this, children took a decision to revise their protocol. The revision process consisted of three sessions that took place on 31st January, 15th February and 31st August, 2004. The sessions were conducted in Namma Bhoomi² and facilitated by Damodar Acharya³ and Venkatesh Mudkeri⁴ of CWC. 49 representatives of working children, school children and children with disabilities, from four Panchayats in Kundapur (coastal region), initiated the process. At the last session, 29 children

participated in which there were additional representatives from Panchayats in Bellary and Malnad, the plainy and hilly regions respectively, where CWC has its Toofan Programme. These children came together to finalise the protocol.

During the periods between three sessions, participants discussed the drafts with the other children in their respective Panchayats to receive suggestions from them. Representatives of working children, school children and children with disabilities received inputs from their respective constituencies. In Panchayats where the creation of the Makkala Panchayats are in the initial stages, suggestions and ideas appropriate to each specific area were taken into account.

Throughout the process, experiences were shared between children from various Panchayats. Together, children from different villages and regions identified the challenges and pleasures of working in the Makkala Panchayats.

¹ Sub-district level administrative body consisting of a cluster of Panchayats

² CWC's Regional Resource Training Centre situated in Kundapur, where about 100 children equip themselves with livelihood skills and education every year.

³ Damodar Acharya, Executive Director, CWC

⁴ Venkatesh Mudkeri, Senior Field Programme Coordinator, CWC

The Need for such a Protocol

The members of the Makkala Panchayat are responsible to an electorate and so the protocol is not only to be used by them but is as much a document to hold these very members accountable. All children in a Panchayat are part of the Makkala Panchayat and the protocol provides a framework for children to monitor their elected members, their Makkala Mitra and their Gram Panchayat.



The Contents of the Protocol

The document contains procedures for holding meetings at both Ward-level and village-level and procedures for conducting Grama Sabhas¹. It contains guidelines regarding election processes, reservation policies, the selection of the President and the duration of the term of the Makkala Panchayat. The facilitation of election procedures is provided by the Gram Panchayats and so a set of responsibilities is listed in relation to the supervision of the campaigning and election processes.

The document outlines the responsibilities and duties of the members, the President and Makkala Mitra and the procedures for the right to recall any of the above.

The protocol takes into account that there are substantial differences between regions. Therefore a high level of flexibility is allowed for certain procedures such as location and timing of meetings as the various regions face different logistical challenges. In Keradi, a Panchayat located in a remote hilly area, settlements are scattered and it is hard for all children to come to all Ward² meetings. It was therefore decided that in this kind of setting, meetings should be held at hamlets³, in order to make sure that those who are not able to attend all Ward meetings still have the chance to participate. There

¹ A meeting of all the children of the Panchayat to discuss issues of their concern and negotiate with concerned officials and elected bodies

² A Ward is the lowest administrative division in India. Several Wards make up a Panchayat.

³ A collection of houses that are geographically close. A group of hamlets in a particular area make up a Ward.



The right to recall has been exercised on a few occasions. In one such case, the children of a Makkala Panchayat noticed that an elected member had been unable to attend meetings and so the person in question was contacted and asked to provide an explanation for why she had not attended meetings. When the explanation was not considered valid, she was requested to resign from the post. Bye-elections were held in order to replace the former member. The exercise of such procedures fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability towards the electorate and sustains high expectations of elected members.

may be instances where sickness, workload at home or logistical difficulties hamper the ability of a member to attend meetings. In such cases, someone else can be sent as a substitute. All these measures ensure maximum participation at meetings.

Efforts to ensure increased participation of children are not confined to the holding and proceedings of meetings.

In stark contrast to Gram Panchayat election procedures, a candidate cannot win a seat by acclamation. If there is only one contestant for a post, elections will still be held. The rationale for this decision is that the process of voting is of importance and so it cannot be ignored. Furthermore, voting provides a chance for the children to express their approval or disapproval of the candidate.

Each Panchayat will specify the existence and

number of marginalised castes and reserved seats for these castes are allocated accordingly. These reservations apply for all the other reserved groups as well. This means that within the reserved seats allocated to, for example, girls, there will be a certain number of seats reserved for marginalised castes. (Refer to the diagrams on Pages 15 - 19)

There may be instances where children hesitate to bring up certain issues at Ward or Grama Sabhas. Sometimes children may not be able to attend meetings to present issues they consider important or at times children may not be able to communicate worries directly to the Makkala Mitra. The protocol provides for the creation, use and maintenance of a Children's Post Box (Makkala Anche Pettige) in each Ward within the constituency of a Makkala Panchayat. This facility is provided to make sure that important issues



The Makkala Panchayats have devised their own system of reservations that is sensitive to the specific context of each Panchayat and

open for revision. The majority of seats are reserved for working children, as long as there are working children in the Panchayat. The remaining seats go to school children and disabled children. Within this category, every Panchayat should decide upon reservations for girls and marginalised castes according to the specific population and distribution of these groups.

Panchayats in Kundapur have decided on a 65% reservation for girls as there are more girls in the area and as it has been acknowledged that girls predominantly face more problems than boys. In Holagundi Panchayat in Bellary, the representation of girls and boys is fifty-fifty.

are raised while ensuring confidentiality and well-being of the children concerned.

Decisions on important points within the protocol were reached following much discussion and consequent compromise. One such point was that of the criteria for the post of the President. Until 2004, one of the criterions for the post of the Makkala Panchayat President was that the person had to be a working child. School children involved in the process felt that as the number of working children had decreased now, this post should be opened for school children as well. Working children argued that despite the decline and even absence of working children¹ in many Panchayats, they are still a highly marginalised group deserving special reservation. It was finally decided that in Panchayats with the presence of working children the President should be chosen from this group.

The tenure of the post of President was also discussed at length. Some suggested a one-year tenure, but others argued that the President would need more time to get familiarised with the post. Eventually it was decided that the duration of the presidency is to coincide with the three-year duration of the Makkala Panchayat.

The processes by which the Makkala Panchayats have emerged and continue to evolve illustrate how the Makkala Panchayats have maintained a separate

identity, gained recognition and played an important role in governance.

For the children involved in the Makkala Panchayats, the ability to play an active role in the improvement of their communities is not something that has been benevolently handed down to them. Many of them have overcome family and social constraints in order to meet other children, share grievances and work collectively to bring about a positive change.

The Makkala Panchayats have demonstrated, through the tangible results of their work, that by interacting with existing local government structures, changes and improvements can be brought about. In some instances, members of Makkala Panchayats have been instrumental in the bringing about the increased participation of not only adult Panchayat members but the wider community. In the case of Makkala Panchayats, the children themselves have political participation.

¹ Balkur Panchayat, a Toofan Panchayat in Kundapur Taluk has been declared child labour free. The criteria for declaring Panchayats and areas child labour free are:

- No children have to do work that is detrimental to their normal growth and development
- No children migrate from the Panchayat for employment
- All children in the Panchayat get an education that is appropriate to them and compatible to the formal system

Reservations for Seats

The children in each Panchayat shall, through discussions, meticulously arrive at the number of seats they wish to 'reserve' for various groups of children in their Makkala Panchayat. The basic principle that guides their decision is that 'the most marginalised children' get the maximum space and opportunities'.

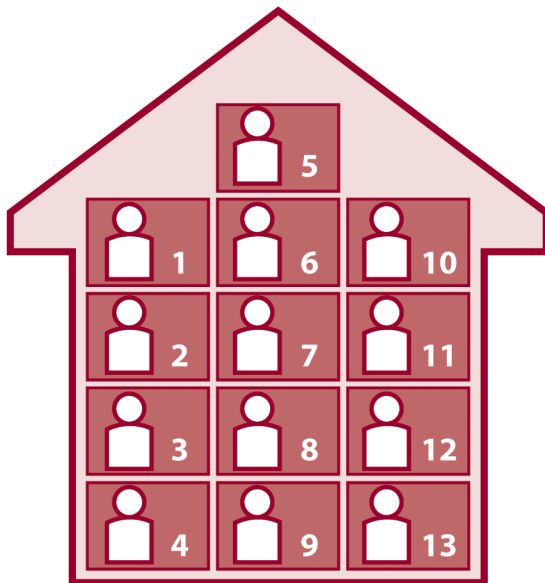
In order to arrive at the number of the reserved seats – and to decide which electoral area they have to be allocated to – many steps have to be followed.

I. Deciding the total number of seats for the Makkala Panchayat

This may be done taking into account the number of adult seats that are allocated for the adult Panchayats. This is a useful reference as the numbers of adult seats are determined by the overall population and their distribution. In many cases, the children may decide to have the same number of seats as the adult representatives in their Panchayat do. In case they decide to change that number, the rationale for the change should be made explicit.

By the end of this step, children will have a clear idea about the total number of seats for children in their Makkala Panchayat.

For example: In a Panchayat called Chikka Halli¹, the total number of seats in the adult Panchayat is 13. So children of Chikka Halli also decided to have 13 seats in their Makkala Panchayat.



Chikka Halli Makkala Panchayat

Total No. of Seats: 13

¹ This is a hypothetical example

II. Reservations are based on 3 sets of determinants namely:

1. Nature of the marginalisation of children and their numbers
2. Gender
3. Caste and social status

1. Deciding the number of seats reserved for different groups of children

a. In order to decide how many seats should be allocated for different groups of children within each Panchayat, the first step is to prepare a complete list of children in that Panchayat. The voters' list of children in each Panchayat is a useful reference for this.

b. Next, a categorised list of children that groups them under their respective base groups should be prepared.

For example in Chikka Halli – there are 4 groups of children

- Working Children
- School children
- Disabled children
- Migrant children

The children of Chikka Halli, if required, may modify this list. (For example: a new group 'Children who combine work and school' may be added to it if a significant number of such children are noticed in Chikka Halli in the future)

c. The percentage of children of each group in the Panchayat has to be noted.

d. The severity of the difficulties they face should also be recorded.

For example, in Chikka halli,

Group	Percentage of children of this group in the Panchayat	Degree of marginalisation (Based on the difficulties they face in the Panchayat)
Working Children	20%	Difficult situation
School children	70 %	Less difficult situation
Disabled children	5%	Difficult situation
Migrant children	5%	Extremely difficult situation

Both the percentage of children of each group and the degree of marginalisation they face should be taken into consideration while allocating their seats.

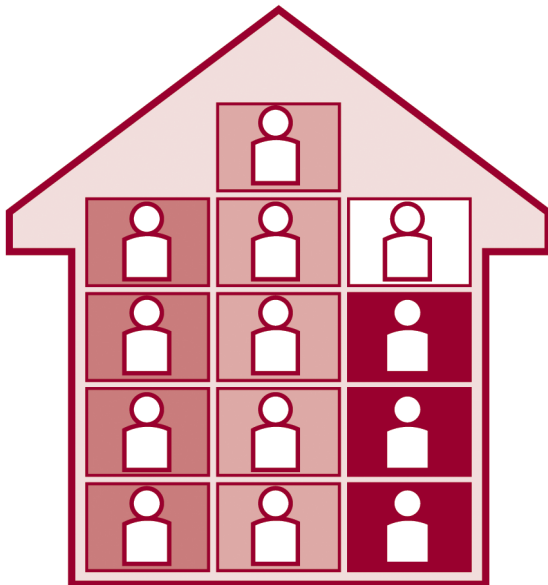
For example, if any group of children are in an extremely difficult situation – and they are the largest in terms of percentage, they get maximum number of seats in the Makkala Panchayat. In some cases, where two groups may have equal numbers, but one group faces more difficulties, this group will get more seats than the other because its degree of marginalisation is greater than the other.

Often some groups of children may be fewer in the Panchayat, but face more severe difficulties than the other groups. They are provided more seats because they need to have a larger representation.

This is a comparative assessment. Children arrive at these decisions based on a good understanding of the situation of children in each Panchayat. As the situation of children and their distribution in each Panchayat is unique, the reservation of seats in each Panchayat varies.

For example: in Chikka Halli:

Group	Number of seats	Percentage of overall seats
Working Children	5	38%
School children	4	31%
Disabled children	1	8%
Migrant children	3	23%



Chikka Halli Makkala Panchayat

GROUPS AND SEATS

- 5 **Working Children**
- 4 **School Children**
- 3 **Migrant Children**
- 1 **Disabled Children**

2. Deciding the number of seats reserved for girls and boys

After deciding the number of seats for different groups of children, the next step is to decide how many of them should be girls and how many boys. This again is based both on the situation of girls and boys in the given areas – and their absolute numbers.

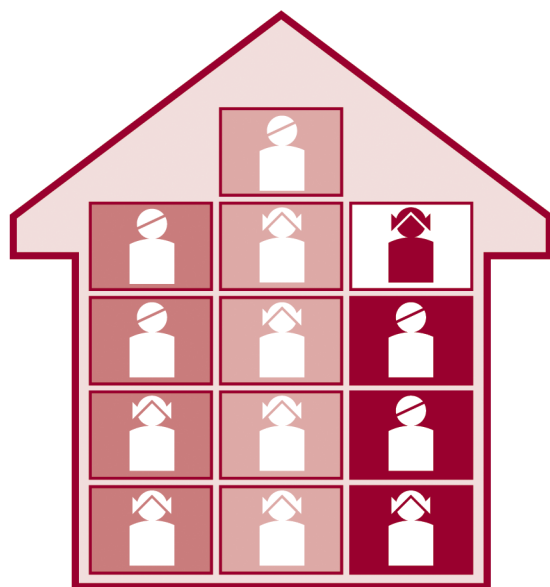
For example in Chikka Halli, there are equal number of boys and girls. But the girls face more difficulties than the boys. Hence it has been decided that of the 13 seats, girls get (62%) or 8 seats and boys get (38%) or 5 Seats. At this point, the children would work out, through discussions, how many of the 8 seats meant for girls should come under each of the 4 categories of children of the first determinant and similarly for the boys as well.

For example: The reservation table of Chikka Halli might look like this now:

I \ II	Working Children	School Children	Disabled	Migrant	Total
Male	1	2	0	2	5
Female	4	2	1	1	8
Total	5	4	1	3	13

I - implies the first layer of reservation, Nature of Marginalisation of Children

II - implies the second layer of reservation, Gender



Chikka Halli Makkala Panchayat

SEATS FOR BOYS & GIRLS

5	Working Children Boys: 1 Girls: 4
4	School Children Boys: 2 Girls: 2
3	Migrant Children Boys: 2 Girls: 1
1	Disabled Children Boys: 0 Girls: 1

3. Deciding the number of seats reserved for different caste/social groups

In many parts of the country, children belonging to specific castes/social groups face different levels of marginalisation. Children who belong to certain caste groups that are particularly disadvantaged need reservations. In order to decide how this reservation should be worked out – the first step is to list all the different caste/social groups in the Panchayat – and then to club those groups who have similar levels of marginalisation. In Chikka Halli, for example, there are 8 different castes – but they are finally grouped under three major heads – Backward caste, SC/ST and others.

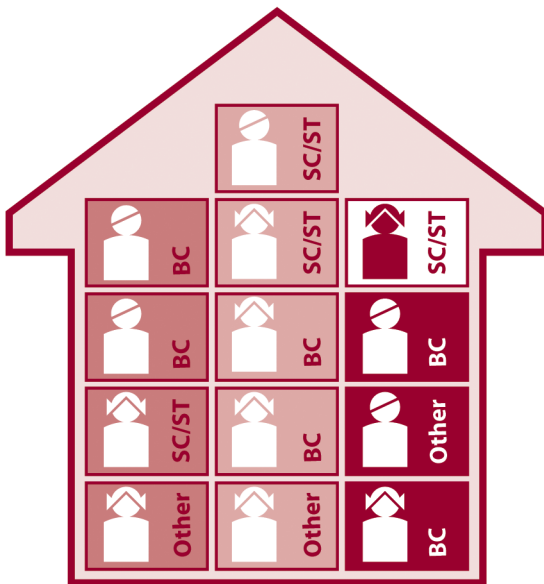
Once again, based on the degree of marginalisation and the absolute number of the children in each of these major groups, the reservations are worked out.

- Backward caste: 45 %
- SC/ST: 35 %
- Others: 20 %

So on the basis of the 3 sets of determinants, the reservation table in Chikka Halli might look something like this:

I+II III	Male Working Child	Female Working Child	Male School Child	Female School Child	Female Disabled Child	Male Migrant Child	Female Migrant Child	Total
Backward Caste (BC)	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	6
SC/ST	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	4
Others	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3
Total	1	4	2	2	1	2	1	13

III - implies the third layer of reservation, Caste



Chikka Halli Makkala Panchayat

SEATS FOR SOCIAL GROUPS

Working Children

5

Boys: 1 (SC/ST:1)

Girls: 4 (BC:2, SC/ST:1, Other:1)

School Children

4

Boys: 2 (BC:2)

Girls: 2 (SC/ST:1, Other:1)

Migrant Children

3

Boys: 2 (BC:1, Other:1)

Girls: 1 (BC:1)

Disabled Children

1

Boys: 0

Girls: 1 (SC/ST:1)

III. Deciding the electoral jurisdiction

Usually each adult Panchayat has 2-3 electoral areas, which means, the Panchayat is divided into two or three areas that form its electoral areas. Children find it convenient to follow the same electoral jurisdiction as that of the adult Panchayats as this enables them to interact with the adult Panchayat in an effective manner. In case there is an exception, this should be recorded

IV. Deciding how the allocated reservations will be distributed among the electoral areas.

After the 'seat reservations' for different categories are worked out, the next step is to determine the number of seats up for elections in the different categories in each 'electoral jurisdiction or area' based on the presence of that group of children in that electoral jurisdiction. For example, an electoral jurisdiction that has a high predominance of working children will have more seats allocated for working children.

At the end of this process, reservations for each electoral jurisdiction will have been worked out.

For example, electoral area 1 of Chikka Halli has:

1 Seat: Working child, girl, SC

1 Seat: Migrant child, boy, Backward caste

1 Seat: School child, girl, SC

V. Nominations

For each seat (For example: Migrant child, boy, from backward caste), there may be many candidates who fit the criteria. It must be noted that the children contesting to represent each group (Working child, school child, disabled child, migrant child) should be nominated by their respective constituencies – for example, all 'working child' candidates should be nominated by a working child. Another working child of the Panchayat should second that nomination. In case of severely disabled children, another child – who is their caretaker and who has a close relationship with them – may be permitted to act on their behalf.

VI. Elections

Normally, in the elections, only those children who belong to a particular electoral jurisdiction cast their vote for the seats allocated to their area.

For example, if the electoral area 1 of Chikka Halli has 3 seats allocated to it

1. Working child, girl, SC

2. Migrant child, boy, Backward caste

3. School child, girl, SC

All children of area 1 can cast one vote each for each category – that means each child can cast 3 votes.

In effect, each winning candidate will represent 'all the children' of the Panchayat, in addition to the category they represent – be it working children, school children, disabled children or migrant children.

VII Exceptions:

Sometimes in case of minority groups (for example in a Panchayat that is almost child labour free, working children may be the minority group), there may not be seats for all categories in all the electoral areas – in such cases, for those categories, the entire Panchayat becomes the voting jurisdiction – instead of a specific area.

For example, there are no disabled children in Electoral Area 1 of Chikka Halli, but children with disabilities are in other Electoral areas of the same Panchayat. In order to elect the 1 candidate who represents children who are disabled, all the children of Chikka Halli have to cast their vote.

Protocol of The Makkala Panchayat

Makkala Panchayat protocols have been in existence since 1996. In the early days, while some of the protocols were in written form, the others came into through practice. Since then, they have been revised several times based on good practices and working experience in order to ensure the most effective participation of an optimum number of children. For example, the early versions of the protocol had stated that the meeting of the Makkala Panchayats should take place in one location. In practice, it was seen that some areas were very remote and it was not possible for children in those areas to attend meetings at far-off locations. So the protocol was modified to include

decentralised meetings wherever they are required.

The recent process of revising the existing protocol document started in November 2003. Based on discussions with representatives of Makkala Panchayats, the first revised draft was prepared on 31st January, 2004. It was then discussed extensively in the different Makkala Panchayats and based on the inputs, it was modified again and the second draft was prepared on 15th February, 2004. After a final round of discussions, this document was finalised on 31st August 2004.

Children's consultative process was facilitated by Damodar Acharya, Executive Director CWC and Venkatesh Mudkeri, Senior Field Programme Coordinator, CWC.

What is a Makkala Panchayat?

A Makkala Panchayat is a platform for all children to solve the problems they face in their area, with a special focus on the problems of marginalised children, disabled children and girl children through organised participation. It is a platform to help children to take part in decision-making processes based on democratic principles and solve problems at the local government. The Makkala Panchayat is an elected body.

Objectives of the Makkala Panchayat

- To be a platform to help children solve their problems in the Panchayat
- To be managed by children, for children
- To be an integral part of the local government in the future
- To help children recognise their own rights and to realise them
- To enable children to gain opportunities to solve their own problems through the local government
- To provide children appropriate experience to participate actively in local governance processes in the future
- To provide opportunities for all children, including working children, school children and disabled children to take part in the Panchayat
- To prevent children from economic exploitation by solving the problems of school children
- To encourage equality among all children
- To enable children to participate and gain respect in society

Makkala Ward Sabha

(Children's Ward Level Meeting)

A Ward Sabha is a meeting in which all the children of a Ward come together. The meeting will take place under the leadership of the elected Ward member of the Makkala Panchayat or President of the Makkala Panchayat

The members of a Ward Sabha

Elected members from each Ward and all children of that Ward including working children and disabled children participate in the Ward Sabha.

The elected members of the Makkala Panchayat and the President of the Makkala Panchayat should announce and conduct a Ward Sabha

Whenever children of a Ward feel that they need to hold a meeting they can request their respective elected Makkala Panchayat members or the President of the Makkala Panchayat to organise a meeting. Children of that Ward must be informed about the Ward Sabha meeting at least 15 days prior to the meeting. A Ward Sabha should be held at least once in 3 months.

Location of the Ward Sabha

The location of a Ward Sabha should be convenient to all children of the Ward (The convenience of girls and disabled children must be kept in mind).

Examples of locations: schools, Anganwadis, playgrounds, Gram Panchayat Office, community halls etc.

The geographical and social circumstances of each Ward should be taken into consideration before deciding the location and timing of the

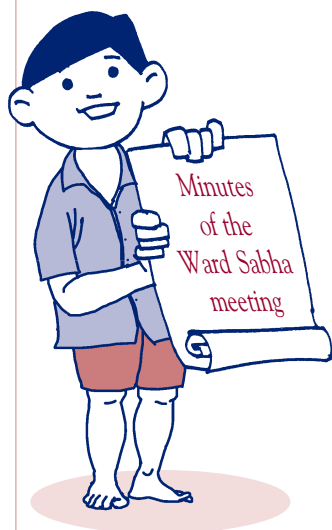
Ward Sabha. If children feel it necessary, they can hold meetings in different hamlets of the Ward. In this case, the elected Makkala Panchayat members of the Ward should attend those meetings. This decision should be left to the respective Makkala Panchayat.

The children of the Ward shall collect appropriate information regarding their problems and discuss them in the Ward Sabha and shall propose solutions. The decisions of the Ward Sabha shall be presented to the Makkala Grama Sabha and to the Makkala Panchayat.

In the Ward Sabha cultural activities, discussion about various issues and entertainment programmes may also be planned.

Agenda of the Ward Sabha

The agenda should be prepared in the presence of the children and the elected members of the respective Ward. Notice of the Ward Sabha meeting can include a 'proposed' agenda. (The members of the Makkala Panchayat or any other children in the Ward can suggest topics for the agenda)



Elected members of the Makkala Panchayat of the Ward should write the minutes of the meeting. If they find it difficult to write they can receive help from other children. The minutes of the meeting should be read out at the next meeting.

Decisions

All decisions taken at the Ward Sabha should be recorded. They should be read out to all the children present before the meeting concludes.

Collection of information



Elected members of the Makkala Panchayat and all the children of the Ward should collect necessary information from houses, schools, health centres, Anganwadis etc.

Children can form their own small groups and share the responsibilities for collecting the information among these groups. Each group can work on different issues, for example, education, health care, basic facilities etc.

How a Ward Sabha should be conducted

- At least 2/3 of the children of a Ward should be present in the meeting (i.e. if there is a total of 30 children in a Ward, at least 20 children should attend). If less than 2/3 children attend, then the

meeting must be postponed and the date for the next meeting should be fixed.

- The meeting should start, at the scheduled time and date after all children assemble
- The elected members of the Makkala Panchayat of the Ward should start the meeting (Through songs, games, and other activities they can assemble children and start the meeting)
- The elected Ward members of the Makkala Panchayat should preside over the meeting
- In the beginning of the meeting, the name of the child who will write the minutes should be announced. That child should write the minutes under the guidance of the member who presides over the meeting.

- The agenda should be recorded and read out aloud. It should be finalised in consultation with the children present. If any child wishes to add any issue to the agenda it should be done.
- All decisions should be read out aloud.
- All other activities like cultural activities, games, sharing of information etc. should be carried out only after the consent of the members of the Ward Sabha
- The Ward Sabha should decide on the issues that should be brought to the notice of the Makkala Grama Sabha and Makkala Panchayat meetings. Such issues should be written up and handed to the Ward representatives of the Makkala Panchayat.

Some examples of issues that may be discussed in the Ward Sabha

- Basic facilities
- Issues related to Education such as:
 - Shortage of teachers
 - Problems of school children
 - Lack of or problems concerning basic facilities in schools
- Issues related to working children
- Problem of drinking water in the area
- Problems regarding street lights, fuel
- Issues related to the Anganwadis
- Makkala Mitra¹ (Children's friend)

- Makkala Sahaya Vani (MSV)²
- Makkala Anche Pettige (Children's Post Box)
- Footbridges
- Subsidised ration cards and other schemes for the benefit of poor people such as Anthyodaya, Yellow card, Green Card etc.
- Any issue which the Ward Sabha feels is important to children

¹ A children's friend or ombudsman, an adult chosen by children to provide support and assistance to children in crisis or difficulties

² MSV is a help line for children in crisis and difficult circumstances. This intervention is facilitated by various participants including police, NGOs, community, local government, Makkala Mitra. CWC is a founder member of MSV Bangalore, MSV Kundapur and MSV Udipi.



Makkala Grama Sabha

(Children's Village Level Meeting)

A Makkala Grama Sabha is a meeting in which all children including Bhima Sangha members, school children and elected members of the Makkala Panchayat from all Wards participate.

The President of Makkala Panchayat shall preside over the meeting.

The Secretary of Makkala Panchayat shall call the meeting as per the suggestion of the President of the Makkala Panchayat. There may be other invitees to this meeting such as resource persons, representatives of NGOs, members of Namma Gumpus¹, members of the Gram Panchayat, government officials, members of the Press etc.

Specific issues, problems and information collected in different Wards shall be presented and discussed at the meeting. At the Makkala Grama Sabha, games, cultural activities and such other programmes may be conducted.

Pamphlets, handwritten posters, vocal announcements alongwith drum beats etc. may be used to announce the Makkala Grama Sabha.

¹ Civil society organisations

Location of Makkala Grama Sabha meeting

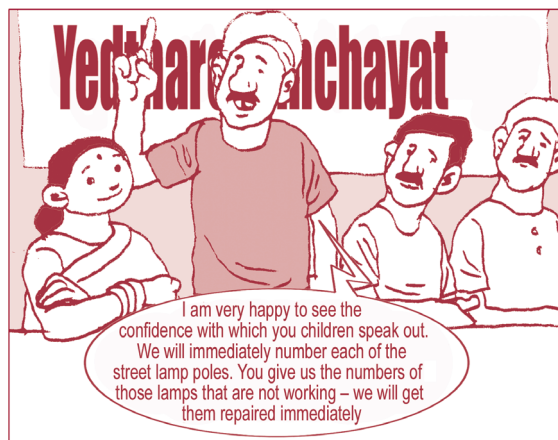
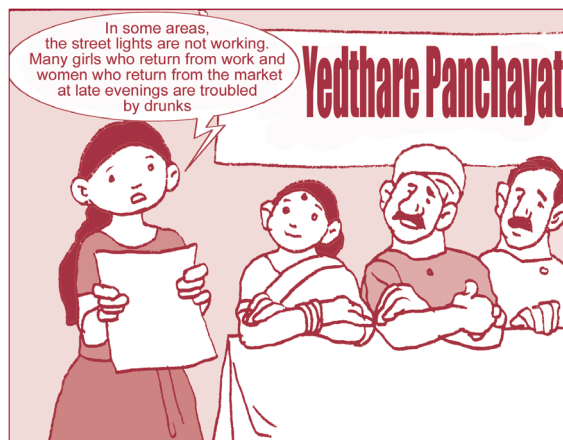
The location of a Grama Sabha should be convenient to all children of the Panchayat (convenience of girls and disabled children must be kept in mind). For example, schools, Anganwadis, playgrounds, Gram Panchayat Office, community halls etc may be used to conduct the meetings.

The geographical and social circumstances of each Ward should be taken into consideration before deciding on the location and timing of the Grama Sabha.

If children feel that they have to change the location of the Grama Sabha, they can do so. The decision regarding the location of the Grama Sabha should be left to the respective Makkala Panchayat.

The children of all the Wards shall collect appropriate information regarding their problems and discuss them in Grama Sabha and shall also propose solutions.

At the Makkala Grama Sabha, cultural activities, discussion about various issues and entertainment programmes may be conducted. The decisions taken at the Makkala Grama Sabha shall be presented at the Makkala Panchayat meetings.



Agenda for the Makkala Grama Sabha

The agenda should include the issues from the different Wards. The agenda should be read out before the meeting starts. If there are any suggestions for additional issues to be discussed, they may be included in the agenda if they are found appropriate.

Minutes of the Makkala Grama Sabha meeting

The secretary of the Makkala Panchayat shall document the minutes of the Makkala Grama Sabha.

Decisions

After the members from each Ward present their issues and discussions are concluded, the decisions of the Grama Sabha shall be documented.

Decisions regarding solving the problems raised shall also be documented.

Information collection

Elected members of the Makkala Panchayat from different Wards shall collect necessary information from their respective Wards and consolidate them at Ward level. They shall also share that information with the President \ Secretary of the Makkala Panchayat.

How Makkala Grama Sabha should be conducted

All children of that Panchayat should participate.

The members of the Makkala Panchayat may invite others such as resource persons, representatives of NGOs, members of Namma Gumpus, members of the Gram Panchayat, government officials, members of the Press etc. to this meeting.

Issues raised and decisions taken at all Ward Sabha meetings shall be presented and discussed in the meeting

In the Grama Sabha, cultural activities, competitions, sports activities, entertainment programmes may also be planned and organised. The Grama Sabha may honour Makkala Mitras who have helped children to solve problems or any adults who have responded to children's needs.

Special achievements of children of the Panchayat shall be recognised and honoured.

Exhibitions, workshops and input sessions may be conducted at the time of Makkala Grama Sabha.



Some examples of the issues that may be discussed at the Grama Sabha

- Basic facilities
- Issues related to Education such as
 - Shortage of teachers
 - Problems of school children
 - Lack of or problems concerning basic facilities in schools
- Issues related to working children
- Problem of drinking water in the area
- Problems regarding street lights, fuel
- Issues related to the Anganwadis
- Makkala Mitra (Children's friend)
- Makkala Sahaya Vani
- Makkala Anche Pettige (Children's Post Box)
- Footbridges
- Subsidised ration cards and other schemes for the benefit of poor people such as Anthyodaya, Yellow card, Green Card etc.
- Any issue which the Gram Sabha feels is important to children

Makkala Panchayat Election Process

- Elections should be conducted only through a secret ballot.
 - The adult Gram Panchayat has the responsibility of conducting the election.
 - The adult Panchayat President and Secretary are the joint Election Commissioners (EC) of the Election.
 - The ECs should set up an Election Committee (This committee should consist of school teachers, Anganwadi workers, Namma Sabha members and any interested individuals in the Panchayat).
- up this responsibility in different areas.)
- Announcing the election. The entire election process, ending with the announcement of the winners, should be over within a month of the declaration of the election.
 - Fixing the date for the election.

Responsibilities of the Election Commissioners (ECs)

The overall responsibility of conducting the election lies with the Election Commissioners. This includes the following:

- Dissemination of the rules and regulations of the Makkala Panchayat election to all children in the Panchayat. (In order to do this, the Election Committee may constitute different groups - consisting of children and adults who may take



- Updation of the voter's list. (If there are any new children or children who have returned after being away they should be added to the voter's list. This can be done on the basis of suggestions given by 3-4 children of the particular Ward)
- Preparation of nomination papers
- Ensuring that nomination papers reach all the interested candidates
- Scrutiny of the duly filled nomination in the stipulated time
- Announcement of candidates. Distribution of symbols for all candidates.
- Preparation of ballot boxes.
- Finalisation of the locations for the elections to be held.
- Supply of mark ink for the voters.
- Constitution of the Election Committee.
- Counting of the ballot papers and announcement of the winning candidates.
- Distribution of Certificates to the winners (Annexure 5)

Role of Election Committee

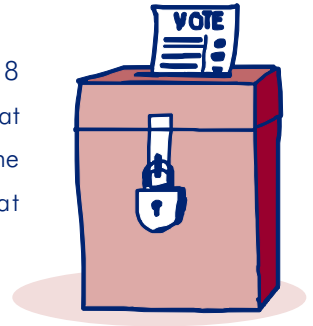
- The ECs should call a meeting with all the school headmasters, teachers and Anganwadi workers of the Panchayat in order to brief them on their duties and divide the responsibilities of carrying out the elections.
- In this meeting, a Presiding Officer for each Polling Station should be elected from amongst the headmasters.
- Each Presiding Officer should then constitute a team for his/her Polling station consisting of

around 5 members who could be teachers, Anganwadi workers, youth, and any other interested individuals in the Panchayat.

- The ECs should provide the stationary, Ballot boxes and papers to the Presiding Officers.

The voters

All children between 6-18 in the Gram Panchayat can cast their vote in the Makkala Panchayat election.



The voters list

- All the names of children between 6-18 in the Panchayat, should be in the voters list.

Preparation of voters list

- The voters list should be ready a month before the elections are conducted.
- The voters list of the respective Ward is prepared by the children's organisations and Makkala Panchayat of the respective Gram Panchayat.
- A few children from the children's organisations volunteer to compile the list.
- A format for information collection is given to them. (Annexure)
- The volunteers residing in a particular area fill up the format for that area.
- After all the areas in the Panchayat have been covered, the lists are compiled ward wise.
- The list is scrutinised by the ECs and the master copy remains with them.
- Based on the voters list, the reservation quotas are defined.

Age limit for the candidates

- Candidates should be between 12 -16 years old.
- In some cases a person aged between 16 to18 can be considered. The final decision regarding this lies with the respective Makkala Panchayats.

The Nomination Procedure

- The Nomination should be filed at the Panchayat office with the ECs.
- It should be filed as per the Nomination form (Annexure 3)
- The ECs will scrutinise the forms and will select/ reject the nominations based on a pre-determined criteria.

Thereafter, the ECs will announce the nominations throughout the Panchayat.

Number of members in the Makkala Panchayat

Total number of elected members in each Makkala Panchayat is decided on the basis of the number of voters in the respective Gram Panchayat.

Tenure of the Makkala Panchayat

- Duration of each Makkala Panchayat is 3 years.

Elections for the Makkala Panchayat should be held once in 3 years.

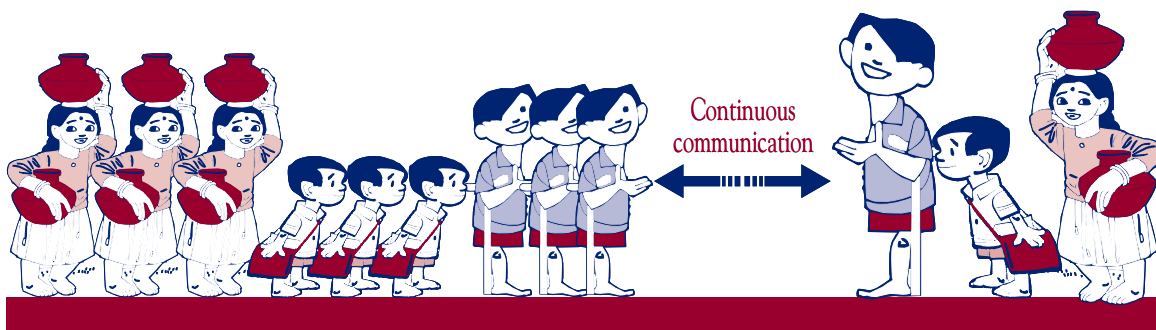
- The term of office for the President and Vice-President is the full term of the Makkala Panchayat.

Retirement and bye-elections

- If any elected member exceeds 18 years, she/he will automatically retire from the Makkala Panchayat. The children of the respective ward will elect a new member.
- If any member does not attend three consecutive meetings due to migration, bye-elections should be conducted for that post.
- Bye-elections should take place within 3 months after the resignation of the member.
- The bye-election must take place before the term of the departing member is completed.

Right to recall the elected members

- If any member does not attend three consecutive meetings without providing information the member shall be recalled
- If the post of the President is vacant, the Vice-President shall take on the role of President until a new President is elected



The Balance of Representation

- If the members of the Ward Sabha feel that their representative is not fulfilling his/her role, they have the right to recall that member
 - If any member acts against the interests of children that member may be recalled
- Work to be done after the election**
- Elected members of Makkala Panchayat shall elect one among them as President and one as Vice-President, according to criteria and reservations
 - At the time of this process, the Secretary of the Gram Panchayat must be present in the meeting and document the entire process by which office bearers are elected
 - The elected members of the Makkala Panchayat shall meet every month
 - The Secretary of the Gram Panchayat shall document the proceedings of the Makkala Panchayat meetings
 - The meeting notice shall be issued to all members 7 days before the date of the meeting. The President and Secretary of the Makkala Panchayat shall prepare the notice together and make arrangements to distribute them to members
 - If any member is not able to attend the meeting for any reasons he/she shall inform the Makkala Panchayat before the meeting and the absent member shall send one of the Ward Sabha members to the Makkala Panchayat meeting on his/her behalf.

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the President



- To inform all members about all meetings regarding date, place and time of the meetings
- To start meetings on time
- To take appropriate decisions after looking into the matter carefully
- To serve notice about the meeting one week in advance to all members
- To co-ordinate between the Gram Panchayat and the Makkala Panchayat
- To communicate the opinions of all members
- To treat all children equally
- To take decisions without partiality
- To be present on time for meetings
- To identify the problems of the children in all Wards and plan for immediate solutions

- To advocate the situation of children to others
- To have continued relationship with Ward members
- Should have self respect and respect all children
- To act with patience
- To work impartially
- To co-operate with all the members and to help them to fulfil their roles
- To monitor the work of other members
- To act without any gender, caste, or class discrimination
- To get to know about Makkala Panchayat
- To acquire skills regarding addressing and answering questions raised by children
- To participate in Ward and Grama Sabhas
- To visit all the Wards in the Panchayat
- To visit all the schools and Anganwadis and monitor the work

In addition to the regular periodic meetings, the President may conduct emergency meetings if the situation so demands.

Responsibilities of the elected members

- To identify problems (in homes, schools, society, etc)



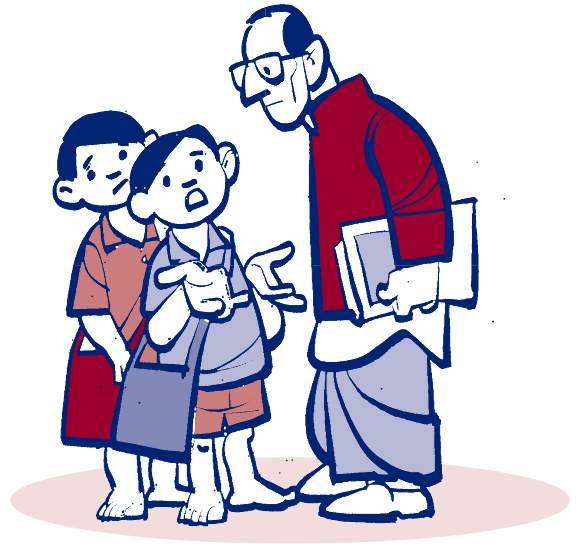
- To attend all the meetings (Ward Sabha, Gram Sabha, Makkala Panchayat meetings)
- To ensure the implementation of work in their Ward
- To ensure that an appropriate, committed and hard-working member is elected as the President. To keep in mind the skills and qualities required of the President prior to the election.
- To ensure that the President is working well. To co-operate with the President in identifying problems
- To maintain good communication with children and encourage the participation of all children
- To ensure that other children do not acquire any bad habits
- To inform Makkala Panchayat if a member is not attending a meeting and make arrangements to identify another appropriate person to attend the meeting on her/his behalf

Roles of the elected members

- Members shall visit schools, Anganwadis, health centres and such other basic service centres and make enquiries regarding the facilities every month
- To meet the voters at least once a month
- To collect issues raised by children and get adequate information regarding those issues
- To collect required information – either directly or through children’s committees that may be constituted for this purpose

The members shall

- Identify children’s problems
- Learn about the problems children face in learning environments
- Monitor availability of learning materials in schools



- Monitor use of learning materials by children
- Monitor how teachers conduct classes so as to find out if teachers punish children
- Record the needs of the school
- Visit all the basic service centres – in order to do this, members may take help of other children in the Ward
- After the visit the members should identify, review and discuss the issues that shall be taken up at the Ward Sabha, Grama Sabha and Makkala Panchayat meetings
- In the case of matters requiring urgent attention, the President of the Makkala Panchayat should be informed

Role of the Makkala Panchayat in the Adult’s Gram Sabha

When invited to the adult’s Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat meetings, the members of the Makkala Panchayat should present the issues raised in the Children’s Gram Sabha and document the solutions proposed by the adult’s Gram Sabha on those issues.

Makkala Anche Pettige

(Children's Post Box)

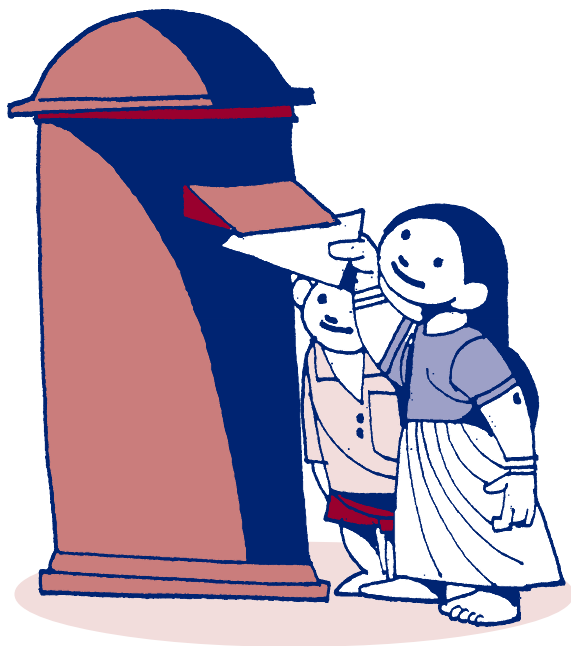
Makkala Anche Pettige is a facility for children to write about problems they face physically, mentally, educationally that they cannot express with the Makkala Mitra directly. Children can also write about their experiences to other children. They can even use this facility to share their skills with others. The Makkala Panchayat shall place this post box in each Ward.

Why Makkala Anche Pettige?

- To find solutions to personal problems that cannot be shared in public
- To write about issues and put them in the box
- To write stories, poems and put in the box
- To solve problems like eve-teasing
- To find solutions to educational and other problems faced by children

Where should Post Box be placed?

- It should be placed in each Ward where it can be accessed by all children
- Children should decide on the actual location of the Post Box



- The elected members of the respective Ward are responsible for the operation of the Post Box
- It should be opened every week

Who will open the Post Box?

- Makkala Mitra should open the Post Box
- Makkala Mitra should keep the names in the letters confidential
- Children can also give a letter directly to the Makkala Mitra

Makkala Mitra

(Children's Friend)

Qualities of the Makkala Mitra

- Should be able to respect children
- Helpful to children
- Listen to children's issues
- Show affection to children
- Should have functional literacy
- Capability of solving children's problems
- Should not have any bad habits
- Should be able to build good relationships with representatives of the adult Panchayat and the Makkala Panchayat
- Should be able to build good relationships with school teachers
- Should be able to give information to children
- Should be able to understand children
- Should be able to spend time with children
- Should not practise any discrimination
- Should not put pressure on children
- Should not talk to children in rough language
- Should not get angry with children
- Should have feelings of equality
- Should have a attitude of helping children in difficult situations
- Should be honest
- Should be patient
- Should be cheerful

Responsibilities of Makkala Mitra

- To rescue children in dangerous situations without any delay and solve their problems
- To solve the problems of children who have

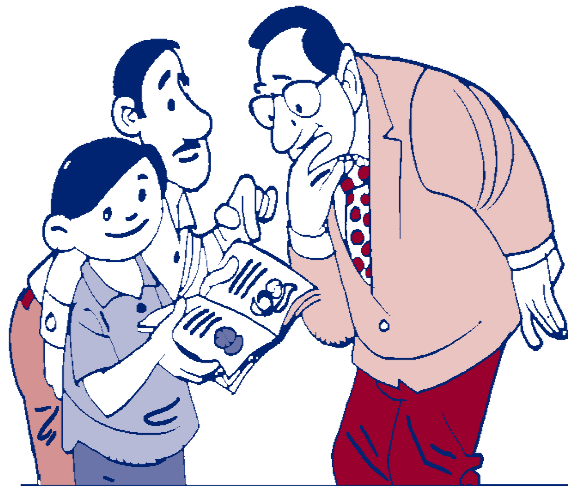


dropped out of schools and help them to get an education

- To listen carefully to children's problems. When the problem solving process gets started, the children concerned should be involved.
- The best interests of the child should be the most important consideration while solving their problems
- To participate in children's programmes
- To keep the names of the children in the letters got through Post Box confidential, in the best interests of the child
- To pay attention to children's problems and address them with seriousness
- To keep records of the complaints made by children
- To get appropriate training to equip herself/himself to deal with the issues of children
- To have deep knowledge about Bhima Sangha and Makkala Panchayat
- To treat all children like her/his own children
- To help children identify their mistakes and correct them

Protocol of the Makkala Panchayats

- To help children get opportunities to speak at different meetings and platforms
- To encourage children to participate
- To give information about different organisations to children
- To provide protection to children who are in difficult situations
- To help children gain opportunities to take part in various cultural programmes
- To pay equal attention to all children
- To look into matters such as teachers cheating children by collecting more money from them etc.
- To pay special attention to girls
- To help children participate in all forums where discussions on children's issues take place



- To have a good rapport with the parents of Makkala Panchayat members
- To visit schools and Anganwadis frequently and understand children's problems and issues

Annexure 1

Makkala Panchayat Election Children's Voter's List

Name of Enumerator: _____

Name of Sangha: _____

Name of Panchayat: _____

Name of Village: _____

Ward No. _____

Sl. No.	Age	Gender	Standard	School Name	Caste	Father's Name	Remarks

Annexure 2

President/ Chief Election Officer

_____ Panchayat

Notification

The duration of the Makkala Panchayat of _____ Panchayat is coming to an end. So elections for the Makkala Panchayat for the year _____ will be conducted. The schedule relating to the Makkala Panchayat Elections is as follows:

1. Date for Nomination
2. Date for Withdrawal
3. Date for scrutiny
4. Time for Campaigning: From _____ (date) to _____ (date)
5. Date of Election: _____ Time _____ till _____
6. Counting of ballots: _____ Time _____ till _____
7. Announcement of winning candidates: _____ Time _____ till _____
8. For the purpose of elections _____ Panchayat is divided into _____ number of wards/ election booths

Details are as below:

Election Constituency	Booth/ Ward No.	Booth /Ward name and address	Details of reservation

Date: _____

Seal of the Panchayat: _____

(Sign of Chief Election Officer)

Notice: Nomination papers can be obtained from the Panchayat office from _____ date to _____ date

Annexure 3

Makkala Panchayat Election 200__ Proforma for Nomination

I _____ want to contest in the Makkala Panchayat elections in _____ ward.

My name is in _____ booth/ward's voter's list. My father's name is _____. My mother's name is _____. My age is above 12 and below 18.

I would like to contest from _____ section of the reservation.

_____ is nominating my candidature. His/her name is in _____ booth/ward's voter's list.

I request you to accept my nomination.

(Sign of Candidate)

(Sign of Nominee)

To,
Chief Election Officer
_____ Election Constituency

Receipt of Nomination

Makkala Panchayat Election

You _____ are contesting from _____ booth/ward for the Makkala Panchayat Election. I have received your nomination on _____ date _____ time. I inform you to attend the meeting of the scrutiny of the nominations and distribution of symbols on _____ date _____ time.

Date: _____
Seal of Panchayat

1. _____
2. _____
Sign of Election Officers

Annexure 4

Makkala Panchayat Election 200_ Ballot Paper

Name of Panchayat: _____

Constituency No.: _____

Sl. No.: _____

Sign of Voter: _____

Sl. No.	Name	Symbol

Election date and day: _____

Time: _____

Annexure 5

Proforma for Member's Certificate

I hereby certify that Kumar/ Kumari _____ has been elected from _____ reservation group from _____ constituency _____ booth/ward in the Makkala Panchayat election held on _____ date.

Date: _____

Seal of Panchayat

Sign of Election Officer



THE CONCERNED FOR
Working Children

303/2, L.B. Shastri Nagar

Vimanapura Post, Bangalore - 560 017, India

Tel: +91-80-2523 4270/2523 4611 Fax: +91-80-2523 5034

Emai: cwc@pobox.com Web: www.workingchild.org