

Neighbourhood Parliaments Of Children

A Handbook for Animators

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INTRODUCTION

What should we do to effect social changes?

“Start small groups” was the answer that emerged in 1960s.

To effect radical changes at massive scales at wider levels?

“Start thousands of small groups and employ the mass media to feed these groups with information and ideas” – the next answer.

But small groups by themselves do not reach all. Is there any approach to ensure that all are reached and nobody is left out, that is to achieve ideal inclusion?

The answer came up in terms of neighbourhood-based basic communities of Latin America. Here the families in the neighbourhood came together, learned together, discussed together, decided together and acted together. Hundreds of thousands such communities came up all over the continent.

These basic communities had certain special characteristics.

They were small in size. And since they were small-sized forums even the small voices of the “small” people could get listened to and be taken seriously.

People who normally get lost in bigger forums and go voiceless and faceless found a voice and a face here. Here even the last person, the least person, could get counted, get individual attention, recognition and a scope for participation.

These inclusive, territory-based communities offered also scope for federation at various levels.

The Latin American basic community experience won worldwide attention.

In India a village, Kodimunai, in Kanyakumari, India’s southernmost district, echoed the basic community experiment in the late 1970s.

Later in the same district, and still later in the neighbouring state of Kerala, it took the form of neighbourhood groups of women in poverty risk, neighbourhood health communities and neighbourhood forums (neighbourhood *sabhas*).

Eventually the organisers took courage to call them neighbourhood parliaments to underscore the dimension of political participation.

Shouldn’t the children too have the same opportunities as offered for the grown-ups through such neighbourhood parliaments?

So came about Neighbourhood Parliament of Children.

The neighbourhood-based units of children had their first district-level rally in Kanyakumari district on 1 February 1998.

The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children get federated through elections at the levels of the village, panchayat (inter-village), block and the district.

The first election of the District Parliament of Children took place on 26 January 1999 in Nagercoil, Kanyakumari district.

Recently the neighbouring state of Kerala, India, organised some 35,000 Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. Their first State Parliament took place in an Assembly Hall of Kerala State.

In 2009, the State Parliament of Children of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry won an UN award for the best child-led organisation to promote child rights action.

Today the concept of Children's Parliament finds enthusiastic acceptance everywhere.

Hence increasingly the need is felt for a practical handbook offering the know-how to organise and animate these Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

This book is to fill this need.

CHILD PARLIAMENTARIANS SPEAK

To the Rescue of Child Labourers

We discovered 20 children who were employed as workers in the wayside Tiffin and tea stalls.

They were enrolled as beneficiaries of *Sarva Siksha Abhian* (SSA) Scheme.

Some of them were not willing to attend the regular classes.

So we have made a suggestion to the government to devise a syllabus for such children.

*Muthu Selva Ganesh
Theni District
State Home Minister*

*** *** ***

Saved from suicide attempt

We found a 6th standard girl missing when we gathered under the banyan tree where we have our children's parliament meeting. We sent our prime minister to look for her. She had headed towards the sea for committing suicide.

She had been chased out of her house by her mother in a fit of rage. The reason given: she was saying a lot of lies and using bad words.

We rushed to meet her. We all joined in consoling the girl, gave her meals and took her back to her mother.

The mother was still angry and adamant.

We told the mother that we would take responsibility that she would not commit such mistakes any more and that they should not abandon her. We even told her that they could be arrested for cruelty to child if we report the matter to phone number 1098.

We made peace this way. Now the child very happily attends school and actively participates in children's parliament.

*M. Nisha
Home Minister, Children's Parliament
Pillaihope, Kanyakumari District*

*** *** ***

Saving a child victim of accident

On 5th August, an auto dashed against a boy. The driver tried to escape from the scene thinking that nobody was around.

I stopped the auto driver and urged him to take the boy to his relative's house and then to a hospital. I too accompanied. I threatened him that if he doesn't come with us this way I would phone to number 1098.

The boy was studying in sixth standard. He had come to a relative's house for holidays when the accident occurred. The relatives also joined us in the auto when we went to the hospital for treatment.

Things would have gone bad had I not been at the spot. The training and the courage given by Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children helped me to save the child.

*S. Nivedha
Prime Minister
26th Neighbourhood Children's Parliament, Pillaihope
Kanyakumari District*

*** **

Respecting our right to play

Our village didn't have a playground for children. At the initiative of the Sports Minister in our village federation of neighbourhood parliaments of children, we decided to send a memorandum to the panchayat president in this regard.

The memorandum was given on 21-4-2007. The panchayat president responded positively by clearing up a thorny bush area and transforming it into a playground for us.

*Joywin
Prime Minister
Children's Parliament
Arokyapuram, Kanyakumari District*

*** **

Education Awareness Rally

A large number of children of Easackpatti in Thanjavur district do not attend school. Besides the children's disinterest in learning, the parents of the children feared that their education would cost them dear.

The Children's Parliament of the District discussed the issue. It decided that it was a case for creating awareness among the people. So they organized a children's rally.

Thereafter the teachers of the schools began visiting the homes of children in order to pick them up.

As a result the children have begun to attend school regularly.

*Damodaran
Thanjavur District
State Education Minister*

*** **

Garbage Dump Gives Way to Children's Playground

We have a street named "Compost Stream Street" (Compost Oodaitheru). In fact it is where garbage is dumped. The rotten waste emitted stench. It also was cause for many diseases in the area.

Our District Children's Parliament took up the issue and passed a resolution. It submitted an application to the Municipality. The officials have promised to bury the garbage.

Soon the garbage site will become a play ground for children.

*Muthu Selva Ganesh
Theni District
State Home Minister*

*** **

Bringing light to our steps

Streetlights were not burning for quite some time in our area. This affected both the children and grownups. Children couldn't go out for study or for play.

We children ministers gave a petition to our ward member and kept on reminding him. Now the problem is set aright.

The elders of the village and the village administration are all praise for us.

*M. Jyoti Bhasu
Prime Minister
Children's Parliament
Siluvai Nagar, Kanyakumari*

*** **

Bringing dropout to school

"SR," a boy from our neighbourhood parliament of children, completed seventh standard and dropped out for a year.

We discussed about it in our parliament and sent a memorandum to panchayat president, headmaster, and village president.

We made him rejoin the school this June. Now he is studying 8th standard. Thus children's parliament helps us to respond to problems faced by children and make their lives happy.

*A. Anusha
Education Minister
Neighbourhood Parliament of Children 22
Enayam, Kanyakumari District*

*** **

Another dropout to school

"MM," stopped going to school in the middle of his second standard to join his parents in begging. We talked about the problem in our children's parliament.

Accordingly the education minister talked to the Child Protection Committee and to the panchayat president. With their help, we talked to the parents. We approached the headmaster and got for "MM" notebooks and textbooks. Now "MM" is going to school.

*R. Aishwarya
Education Minister
Children's Parliament
Vadakkoor, Rajavoor, Kanyakumari District*

*** **

Ensuring rights to house

60 houses in Anna Nagar, Bhimneri, did not have *patta* for their houses. And this led to various difficulties. We discussed about it in our neighbourhood parliament of children.

Our child prime minister, N. Radha, along with other representatives gave a memorandum to the president of panchayat on May 16 this year. The panchayat president gave a memorandum to the district collector in turn. The *pattas* were given on July 16.

*S. Prabha
Vice-Prime Minister
Neighbourhood Parliament of Children
Anna Nagar*

*** *** ***

Patta for our houses

No house in Alagarsamy Colony, Theni, had *patta*.

Ministers of our children's parliaments met Mr. M.K. Stalin, the T.N. Minister for Local Administration, while he was in Theni District for a political campaign and presented a memorandum.

The Minister assured us that he would help to solve the problem.

*Selva Muthu Ganesh
Home Minister
State level Parliament of Children
Tamilnadu*

*** *** ***

Reaching out to the mentally challenged

Someone in our street was mentally affected. Children would throw stones at him. He wouldn't even wipe out the saliva that flows from his mouth. He would throw stones and balls and what not from upstairs. . He would untie the rope and let loose the cows leading to various types of losses to various people. Hence the elders would beat him

We in our children's parliament decided to do something about it. We got him seated in our parliament meeting place and we all saluted him. We taught him to sit properly. We taught him to go to toilet room all by himself. Earlier he would not brush his teeth and take bath. Now as soon as his mother calls him, he goes to take bath and brushes his teeth. We have trained him that much.

*R. Aishwarya
Prime Minister
Children's Parliament
Vadakkoor, Rajavoor, Kanyakumari District*

*** *** ***

Bus Stop Created

Manayeripatti is a village in Thanjavur District of Tamilnadu. The transport buses passing that way would not stop by it in order to pick up passengers.

The District Children's Parliament discussed the issue and submitted an application to the Chairman of the Municipality. He however, did not follow up the petition.

The Children's Parliament then decided to send an application to the District Collector, the MLA and even to the Minister of Transport of the Government of Tamilnadu.

Within a month the village got a bus stop. Now even the Fast Passenger Buses stop.

*Damodaran
Thanjavur District
State Education Minister*

*** *** ***

Electric Crematorium

At Jawahar Nagar, Theni cremation group lies close to the village. The cremated bodies emitted a stench which was unbearable for the villagers. Besides, some of them got sick.

Our District Children's Parliament took up the issue for discussion. It passed a resolution to apply to the Municipality.

The officials have promised to erect an electric crematorium. It is expected to take a year and a half before the new crematorium becomes operational.

*Muthu Selva Ganesh
Theni District*

State Home Minister

*** *** ***

House for an Elder

There was an uncared for elderly woman in Minnurpatti in Thanjavur district of Tamilnadu. She was poor and could not afford to build a shelter for herself.

The district Children's Parliament discussed the matter and decided to report the plight of the elder to the Ward Representative and other village leaders.

These elders got together and built a hut for her. The children on their part used the fund of the Parliament for the cause.

*Damodaran
Thanjavur District
State Education Minister*

THE PARLIAMENT PLAY

Children enjoy playing.

They not only like to play but also need to play.

Playing makes them healthy, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

Playing helps them to celebrate their existence,
the reality of being themselves.

Playing helps them to put to use
exercise
stretch their capabilities
their potentials

Playing is thus growth-giving.

Often the plays of children are in terms of “replaying” what they see grown-ups doing.

Thus adults cook. Children play cooking.
Adults travel. Children play travelling.
Adults treat patients. Children play doctors.

And how thrilled they are
when adults too can taste the benefits of their cooking!
when they could cook
not merely sands and stones
imagined as rice and vegetables,
but real rice and vegetables
and get the adults to taste them!!

Children also have hobbies.
Nobody pays them for the hobbies.
No servile work.
Not a child labour.
But joyful,
rewarding occupation.

Some hobbies require use of physical muscles as in gardening.
Some games require intense concentration and hard, strenuous and
exhausting involvement .
But they are all part of the
celebration of life,
celebration of childhood.

Pity, grown-ups are often conditioned to make life
a game of self-centred competition
of win and lose
of war and fight
of destruction
of making others unimportant,

non-persons.

Pity, children too are conditioned thus to make their plays
games of self-centred aggression and
negation of others.

of

“We v/s. They”

Can we have games of “Win-Win”?
of Peace?
of Constructive involvement?

We introduce a new game for children:

The game
of governance,
of taking care,
of taking charge.

This too is
a matter of enjoyment
a health need
a growth factor
helping them to grow as integral persons
as effective communicators
as leaders
as team mates
as proactive citizens.

The name of the game is:

Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children and their federations.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PARLIAMENTS OF CHILDREN: A NEW STRATEGY FOR ENSURING CHILD RIGHTS

Who would be more interested in the rights of children than children themselves?

A summit meeting of the United Nations came out with a declaration on the rights of the child.

The various rights that they listed, giving priority and focus to children, could be grouped under four categories:

1. Right to live
2. Right to protection
3. Right to development
4. Right to participation

As the summing up of the whole lot of such concerns expressed on behalf of children, they evolved of slogan: A world fit for children!

Now who could be depended upon to ensure that the above rights are really respected? That the ideals they contain become reality?

The above declaration enjoined on governments of the nations to implement the same. But the governments are governments of the grown-ups.

Why not we enlist the child-power too? Why not we engage them also in governance? Why not we enlist their contribution too to make this “a world fit for children”?

Children have shown a lot of enthusiasm when given this challenge of protecting the rights of children.

The more so, when they were given viable forums in the form of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. Children gather in these Neighbourhood Parliaments of about 30 families. They discuss their situations, their rights, the way they could protect the rights, etc. And they make decisions and jump into action.

They have a lot of success stories to tell us in this regard.

Such experiences convince us that these neighbourhood parliaments of children could very well be counted upon to be children’s own forums for children’s action for children’s rights.

These parliaments include all children as they are territorially organized. As such they ensure an inclusive coverage of all the children whose rights need to be protected. No child could go unnoticed in such small-sized forums. Every child gets attention, care, support and scope for participation.

When such neighbourhood parliament of children are federated inclusively at wider levels, the children themselves could have their own monitoring and tracking system, their own safety net to guard against all sorts of abuses and trafficking.

When children take steps this way to care for children, inevitably they end up caring also for the grown-ups. For human rights in general.

You will read more about the possibilities or the benefits these children’s parliaments offer, in the pages to follow in this book.

For the time- being we conclude this with the slogan: “Children of the world unite”. Unite through these neighbourhood parliaments and their multi-tier federations, you have a whole world to conquer. A world fit for children.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What is the difference between the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children and Children's Parliaments conducted in schools?

Neighbourhood Children's parliaments function at the neighbourhood level. Around thirty families living in a given neighbourhood together form a Neighbourhood Parliament. The children of these families form the Neighbourhood Parliament of Children.

All the children of these families would automatically be the members and no child can be denied membership. The membership of a school parliament, on the other hand, is decided by the school authorities. The children of the school can come also from various neighbourhoods.

The Neighbourhood Parliament of Children has governance power. Their power comes from the fact the neighbourhood belongs to them. The School Parliament derives its power and existence from the school authorities.

Are they not Mock Parliaments? Can they be Real Parliaments?

They are not mock parliaments. A mock parliament ends with the end of the session. It is meant for a particular show. After the show the parliament is wound up. There may not be a proper follow up of the discussions.

In the case of a Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children decisions are followed up. The parliament itself continues to exist to monitor the progress of the implementation of its decisions. This way it governs.

Who can be members of the Children's Parliaments?

All the children from the age of 6 to 18 belonging to the given neighbourhood of thirty or thereabout families each automatically become members.

Is there a differentiation according to age?

According to the United Nations' Guidelines those below the age of 18 are considered children. Still, there can be Junior and Senior Parliaments of Children.

Who could be the members of Junior Parliament?

Children from 6 to 11 years old could belong to Junior Parliament of Children.

What could be the age bracket of Senior Children's Parliament?

12 to 18.

Can we club both Junior and Senior Children's Parliament in case there are not enough children to form two parliaments?

Yes.

In the event both age groups are clubbed together and still there is not enough number of children to form a parliament, what should be done?

They can join the adjacent Neighbourhood Parliament of Children and conduct their meetings.

However, there should be separate cabinets of ministers for both the neighbourhoods.

Why do we call them “parliaments”?

“Parliament” comes from the Latin word “*parlare*” which means to speak. Therefore “parliament” in our case means a forum or platform to speak.

In democracy the voice of the people ought to be respected and so the people should be provided with a platform to express their concerns, problems, aspirations, etc.

Here, in order to heed the voice of the children, speaking forums are provided to them in the form of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

What are the objectives of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children?

- The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children provide opportunity to children to participate in the governance.
- The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children provide platforms to the children to speak and to be heard.
- The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children provide the children with an opportunity to create a movement of their own to fight for their rights.
- The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children make children in the neighbourhood active and responsible citizens motivated as regards their rights and the need for security.
- The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children enable the children to participate in governance.
- The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children provide an arena for children to involve in action responses.

What are the benefits of children’s Parliaments?

- From the time of recorded history, children in all societies and tribes were taken for granted, treated as persons in potency and therefore they have been mere objects of teaching and training. In Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children, they assume their proper roles in society and take responsibilities including that of governance.
- The children, customarily considered dependent on adults, will now be enabled to assume the role of care takers of their neighbourhood.
- The children will take responsibility for their actions, life, growth and development.

- The children who generally resent advices begin to learn from life by themselves and advice one another. They themselves begin to find solutions to their problems.
- The children become self disciplined and self motivated on account of the influence of Neighbourhood Parliament of Children.
- The children begin to gain self confidence conquering psychological complexes. Having handled opportunities to lead, they develop their personalities and enhance their leadership qualities.
- The children find scope for life-oriented education, development of their talents, growth as regards maturity of emotions and mind.
- The children have here citizenship training in practice.
- The children get scope to interact with civil, social and religious structures and thus gain confidence to participate in governance at ever wider realms.
- The mental horizon of children gets wider and wider as, starting from their neighbourhood and village, their involvements extend to panchayat, block and district and the state, and thereafter to national and international levels. This equips them to be harbingers of a new world order tomorrow.

Where do we find Children's Parliaments functioning?

Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children were first initiated in Kanyakumari district of Tamilnadu. There are 35,000 neighbourhood children's parliaments in Kerala. They are federated at village, panchayat, block, district and state levels.

In Kerala the State Children's Parliament was conducted in 2006 in the Old Assembly Hall in Trivandrum. The State Assembly speaker himself co-chaired it along with the children's speaker.

In Tamilnadu an NGO alliance is being led by Neighbourhood Community Network (NCN) in order to promote children's parliaments in the state. The NGO alliance has a membership of around 400 NGOs.

A formation session of children's state parliament lasting four days was organized at Manaiyerippatty, Thanjavur District. Another session was held in Puducherry for two days and another at Kovalam Kanyakumari district for two days.

The first swearing-in ceremony of the ministers of the State level Parliament of Children, i.e., the state federation of the neighbourhood parliaments of children, of Tamilnadu State, India, took place in Chennai on 27-28 September 2008. A sitting Judge of the High Court of Madras was there to administer the oath of office.

You talked of Kerala and Tamilnadu. Do the other states in India have Children's Parliaments?

The efforts of NCN have begun to bear fruit. A gradual and steady progress is seen in twenty five other states to organize Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. Promoting structures and formation programmes are being organized.

In some states, the government itself gives the lead. For instance, Children's Parliament was inaugurated in West Bengal by the Governor on February 14, 2002.¹ Also in Karnataka State, a children's parliament was held on March 22, 2007. It was represented by 120 children from 12 districts. Again, Children's Parliaments at panchayat level called Children's *Gram Sabha* are made mandatory for all the *panchayats* in Karnataka state.² Likewise, in Uttar Pradesh the first Children's Parliament was held in the State Assembly on November 20, 2008, in which 200 children took part.³ In Bihar too the Education Department of the State is giving a push to the concept of Children's Parliaments.

Our wish is that that they too begin at the base from the territorially organised neighbourhood parliament of children and get federated at various levels so as to give children an ongoing participation in governance.

Has the idea of Neighbourhood Parliament Children travelled to other countries?

Malawi, an East African country, sent an official delegation to NCN National Office to get trained in the concept and movement of children's Parliaments. Beginnings are made in Tanzania too.

Edwin M. John the Director of NCN and Dr. Mercy Palatty, a professor in a college in Nagercoil were invited to speak to United Nations Organization about the concept and movement of Neighbourhood Parliament Children. The delegates took keen interest.

Various multinational Funding Agencies show much interest in promoting the concept of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

Children's Parliament is a fast spreading concept today with initiatives in many countries. But we warn they are not all neighbourhood based, territorially organised children's parliaments which alone can give an ongoing governance voice to children and which alone when federated can bring the world into the hands of children.

¹ Cf. <http://www.lamp-ngo-india.org/ChildrenAtRisk/ChildrenParliament.htm>, accessed on 26.01.2009.

² Cf. http://www.unicef.org/india/media_2857.htm, accessed on 26.01.2009. Cf. also <http://www.merineews.com/catFull.jsp?articleID=146731>, accessed on 26.01.2009.

³ Cf. <http://www.indiaenews.com/politics/20081119/159251.htm>, accessed on 23.01.2009.

THE DREAM AND BASIC PRINCIPLES OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PARLIAMENTS

Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children are linked to a grand dream of a new world order.

The children's parliaments of today must evolve themselves into neighbourhood parliaments of all.

Based on the concept of Neighbourhood Parliaments, **new democratic governing structures must be formed for the world of tomorrow.**

A dream-statement regarding this is being discussed at intellectual circles throughout the world.

It is essential that children of neighbourhood parliaments and their animators be aware of this dream-statement. We must resolutely move towards the new world order. We must interiorize the principles of the new democratic governance.

We present below the Vision Statement.



Join with us in dreaming big: dream of a new world.

We invite you to dream of a world where no direct elections to the National parliaments take place. Nor direct elections to state assemblies. Not even to Panchayat Councils.

Dream instead of a world where parliaments come to the streets. The whole world gets organized into neighbourhood parliaments of about 30 neighbouring families. Each neighbourhood of 30 families becomes a kind of mini-world or a mini-nation.

Each neighbourhood parliament has a neighbourhood cabinet, with a neighbourhood chief minister and ministers for various concerns like health, hygiene, environment, income generation, children's welfare, adolescence guidance – and what not – that are relevant at its level.

Each neighbourhood parliament chooses its delegates to represent them at the village parliament. It too has its cabinet with a Chief-Minister and village-ministers for concerns that pertain at village level.

Next is the third level of parliaments i.e. panchayat parliaments and their cabinets.

Thus come about respectively block parliaments, district parliaments, state parliaments, national parliaments, international regional parliaments and finally the world parliament (mind you not United Nations but a world parliament) – each with its cabinet.

The whole process is guided by certain principles:

Principle One: Principle of Numerical Uniformity.

Once you have certain number of neighbourhood parliaments you can automatically have a “village” – parliament; and once you have a certain number of “village parliaments, you can have a “panchayat” parliament; and so on.

Hence no big “villages” and small “villages” and big “districts” and small “districts” so on.

Actually the present territorial designations like that of block, district, state, nation and world are not in vogue any more. What we would have rather are various “tiers” or “levels” of parliaments. Like first level parliament (meaning neighbourhood parliament), second level parliament, and the like.

Principle Two: Principle of Smallness of Size

No more are parliaments with 500 and more members. It is a small, discerning community at every level.

What should be the ideal membership? Mr. M.P. Parameswaran a well-known scientist of Kerala suggested that the neighbourhood parliaments ought to contain not more than 85. Guru Rishi Prabhakar observed: “Eighty five would be too much. It would still give a lot of scope for majority-minority confrontations. Why not the scout number, that is, 36?” The neighbourhood parliaments alone, in that case, can have a bigger number i.e. 30 families and not 30 individuals.

The advantage here: Everyone knows everyone face to face. And everyone knows the strengths and weaknesses of everyone else. One cannot go on fooling, as Gandhiji observed, a face to face community for long.

Principle Three: Principle of Recall

You don't need to wait for five years to call back a candidate whom you “elected” from one level of the parliament to the next. As you are a small community at each level of the parliament, you can convene your parliament any time you want and decide together to send someone else who would explain and represent your concerns better.

Principle Four: Principle of Subsidiarity

Subsidiary units get the focus here. Vitality, dynamism and power are concentrated more at the lowest levels possible. No business that could be handled at a lower level is taken up to

any level above it. Higher levels deal only with those matters that the lower levels cannot handle.

Principle Five: Principle of Convergence

This means once you have such a network everything converges at this network. Everything is done through it. This reinforces the structures further and further. Thus whether children's programmes, adolescents programmes, self-help groups or what not, everything is referred to neighbourhoods and their representative networks.

Well, what would be the world like if this dream were to be realized? Could you detail it out and tell us? What all would be there and what all would not be there?

WHY DO WE NEED CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENTS?

People inspired to envision a new world order must be well equipped to answer the questions the village heads, parents, teachers and the like ask them. They must also be equipped to face those who doubt the efficacy and practicality of the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. They must be thorough with the concept behind the movement.

Once the rationale and the benefits of the children's parliaments are presented clearly to the elders, they will themselves ask for the formation of children's parliament. The concept and the success stories must be so interestingly and convincingly presented that they feel challenged by the concept.

The following points will help in introducing the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

1. Children's Parliament will help children to succeed in life.

Mr. Rathna Natarajan, Secretary, Department of Non-Formal Education, Tamilnadu, while addressing a meeting said:

This is the finding of serious social research that the students who concentrate only on scoring high grades in examinations fail in real life. At the same time, those average students who also took part in extra curricular activities have done better in life.

The students who are busy only with text books, tuitions and examinations find ill-equipped to face the challenges and pressures of modern day complex realities of life. They lack the confidence and ability to live life to the fullest. They easily become discouraged and at times get depressed.

Children's Parliaments open up horizons of the minds of the children by introducing a broader society and a world beyond their immediate circumstances. The parliaments help children to succeed in life and to grow individually as true persons.

2. Their involvement in Children's Parliaments can go a long way in bringing about self-discipline and self correction in children.

As mentioned above, children and adolescents do not like advices. When adults give guidance to children their spontaneous response is that the elders are old fashioned and that they do not have the grasp of the present generation.

But when challenged to make decisions on their own, children and adolescents do so with resolve. Along the process they get formed and grow as better persons. In executing the resolutions they take, they manifest steadfastness and firmness.

Children's Parliaments provide them forums which make it possible for them to properly discuss and decide together.

Recently a session of the Tamil Nadu State Children's Parliament took place at Kovalam in Kanyakumari district. During the meeting the children made an in depth analysis of various issues. The analysis included an evaluation of their rights and duties and their value systems. So much so, the Coordinator of the Tamil Nadu Alliance for Children's Parliaments, Raphael Isaac observed: "*We don't any more to give them guidance. They will discuss among themselves, guide themselves and correct themselves.*"

As far as children are concerned it is known that they accept peer suggestions better than the corrections by the adults.

3. Children's Parliaments help them study systematically.

Mr. Joseph Rathnam, editor of "*Kulandaikal Paralumanram*" narrates his story of visiting a village. The members of the Children's Parliament happened to share their experiences with him.

The Education Minister of the Children's Parliament of the village had moved a resolution during one of its sessions, that **all** the members of the Children's Parliament must pass the examinations.

True to their resolution, **all** of them did pass in the examination.

As the next examination season came around, the Education Minister again moved the parliament. This time the resolution said that **all** of them must pass with higher grades. That too was achieved.

The visitor asked the children: "*When elders ask you to study, you offer numerous protests. How come you study and score well when there is a resolution in the Children's Parliament?*" Their astonishing reply: "*That is because it is **your** advice! Here it is **our** resolution.*"

In certain villages the members of the Children's Parliament prepare a "Schedule of Studies" for themselves allotting suitable time for various subjects, depending upon the subject's level of difficulty. They get these schedules approved by their parents before they post them in a visible place at home and make sure that they observe them strictly.

Study and daily schedule are also considered by children as part of a contract between them their parents. Therefore, the parents too are bound **strictly** by the schedule.

Children's parliaments may arrange tuition for the weaker students, besides instructing the cleverer children to help their friends who are weak in certain subjects.

4. Children's Parliaments help towards character formation and development of skills.

As a general rule, the sessions of the Children's Parliaments last for an hour or thereabout.

But in Vidhura in Kerala, children used to meet for three hours every week.

In order to make their children compete among themselves and score high marks, the parents in Vidhura vie with each other to get their children the best after class tuitions. Therefore, the parents were reluctant to send their children to the Parliament Sessions which according to them robbed the children of precious study time.

After witnessing character formation, development of personal skills, growth of a sense of responsibility and an increased interest in learning which the children who attended the parliament exhibited, the parents had a change of heart. They began pleading that their children too be included in the parliament.

The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children organize training programmes and cultural programmes in order to develop the children's talents and skills.

Besides, discussions on various topics during the sessions help the children acquire a fund of general knowledge. Since almost everyone is entrusted with one responsibility or another, each makes sure that one's role is carried out with care. Such sense of responsibility results in the growth of a confident personality in them.

5. Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children help creating leadership qualities and self-confidence in Children.

Self-confidence and leadership are essential for life, especially when hunting for a job. One's rise and progress in social life is directly proportionate to one's self-confidence and leadership qualities. These do not come about miraculously overnight. Nor are they achieved by academic qualifications alone.

In order to acquire the qualities of self-confidence and leadership, one needs to interact with the larger society. An additional fund of general knowledge would go a long way in forming oneself into a self-confident and inspiring leader. Our children of today unfortunately lack adequate forums for developing personal qualities.

The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children provide children with forums they could use to acquire self-development. They discuss problems and issues when they gather together. While doing so, they get their notions clarified. They take decisions which they execute meticulously. They get to interact with elders and people of importance. They get opportunities to take part in training and formation programmes. They get to visit places and learn. These experiences are formative in nature.

The visitors from other parts of India and abroad are often taken up at the confident leadership exhibited by members of the Children's Parliament.

6. The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children are seen to empower the members to articulate and express their ideas in public.

Those who possess ideas and dreams are not always good at articulating them. They search for words; they often lack coherence. Their public presentation may lack attractive formulations and logic. The traditional stage-fright haunts most people. As a result they are unable to face a crowd and sometimes, even a small group of peers. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for each to learn the art of public speaking and the use of techniques of communication.

The children in Neighbourhood Parliaments are put in a situation where they get to develop with ease their talents in communication, in writing, singing and acting.

7. Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children help the children to work in cooperation with one another.

Recently an industrialist stated:

When we employ people in our industries, we do not look merely at their mark sheet or academic degrees. A candidate might well have scored high marks and may possess talents and skills. But if the person does not have the ability to work in a team, it will affect the enterprise adversely.

Therefore, while selecting candidates, we also pay attention to aspects like ability to work in and as a team, personality traits, leadership capabilities, etc.

Our educational institutions do not impart sufficient training in team work. But Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children give the members practical training in team work.

8. Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children provide opportunities for participation.

The *Convention on the Rights of the Child* has the following: “Children have the right to participate in decision-making processes that may be relevant in their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard -- within the family, the school or the community” (*Article 12*).

Similarly it is also said that children should play their part in governance. But participation by children and governance by children cannot be a reality unless the children have adequate and viable forums where they could exercise participation and governance. Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children provide these forums.

These days, interested individuals all over the world are discussing in depth the concept of *formation through action*. The concept cannot deliver results in a vacuum. It too needs suitable forums, which The Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children provide. Since Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children include all the children, these opportunities do find a way to reach them all.

Since the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children take place in their own neighbourhoods it is easy for every child to participate in them. From a small geographical area of a neighbourhood of 30 families, they get to reach out to ever widening levels like that of the Village, Panchayat, Block, District, etc. As children’s ability to participate grows, they can act in gradually expanding wider and wider levels of the parliaments.

9. Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children teach children to protect their rights as well as themselves from all kinds of abuses and violations.

Children are vulnerable because they do not have sufficient physical strength. They can be easily deceived and misled by criminals and anti-social elements. They can easily fall prey to various kinds of abuses, violence and other evils like trafficking, separation, and so on.

Children’s Parliaments help to protect children from the above dangers in two ways: First, they conscientise children regarding these dangers and empower them with sufficient knowledge about such dangers and about the ways and means to protect themselves from such dangers. Secondly, together with the Village Child Protection Committee (comprised of the animators of NCPs), Children’s Parliaments ensure that no child in the village finds himself or herself in such precarious situation. They identify children in the above risk situations and arrange to give them protection.

10. Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children serve to create a safety net for monitoring children in difficult situations such as runaway children, missing children, trafficked children, etc.

Neighbourhood parliaments, as we said, are territorially organised. The entire world could be organised territorially as Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. This could be done easily

as the entire world is just a stretch of neighbourhoods and one need not take bus to go and organise one's neighbourhood.

We also live in a world where with just a click of the button of the cell phone we could talk to someone at the other end of the world. A world of easy communicability and organisability.

Each such neighbourhood parliament is to be inclusive too, i.e., organised in such a way that no child is left out and every child is automatically a member whether active or not.

And these Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children are also small in size that no child could go unnoticed.

Every Neighbourhood Parliament of Children is also to have a child "Defence Minister" who is to defend the rights of the child.

With such arrangements in place, no child could go unobserved. An effective child safety network by children themselves could automatically be ensured.

Every Neighbourhood Parliament of Children could keep track of children in danger of being trafficked.

Each Neighbourhood Parliament of Children can also keep an eye on children entering newly in any neighbourhood, to ensure no child is brought to its territory for any exploitative purpose.

Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, India, is going for such "Child Safety Net" under the leadership of the district Collector and with the involvement of non-governmental organisations, panchayat raj institutions and the concerned government departments.

As these Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children are to be federated at various levels beginning from that of the village and reach up to that of the entire world, we could have even a global safety network for children and by children.

HOW TO START CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENTS

Suppose you are entering a village and want to start Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children (NPC). How will you go about?

There are various approaches. One is to organise an entire village or a panchayat together as Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. Another approach is to choose one particular neighbourhood first and concentrate your attention there and then gradually to start one by one other Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

The First Approach: Organising the Entire Village/Panchayat as NPCs

1. Meet the Panchayat President and explain the concept of the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children and seek his/her opinion and advice.
2. With the assistance of the Panchayat President meet other members of the Panchayat Committee.
3. Similarly meet other important personalities and leaders such as members of NGOs, social workers, social service institutions, religious heads, school headmasters/headmistresses and the like.
4. Convene a meeting of all such persons. The invitation could be in the name of the Panchayat President.
5. The Panchayat President or a VIP could preside over the meeting.
6. Narrate your experiences regarding the following.
 - What the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children achieved in other villages;
 - How the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children helped children to develop their sense of responsibility and leadership qualities;
 - How Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children helped the children make improvement in their studies; and so on.
7. If possible make use of Power Point Presentations or slide/video shows on Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.
8. Explain how the meetings of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children are conducted.
9. Ask for a team of volunteers to oversee the preparations for starting Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. It is better that the team has office bearers like President, Secretary and so on.
10. Draw up a map of the village with the help of the team. Demarcate the neighbourhoods on this map.
11. Please keep the following criteria while demarcating the neighbourhoods.
 - No family may be left out.
 - Only the families within the boundaries of the neighbourhood should be included.

- Each neighbourhood should contain around 30 families. Try as much as possible that the number of families in a neighbourhood does not go below 15 and above 45.
- If there is a Self Help Group (SHG) working in the area, it is better that the whole SHG be included in the same neighbourhood.
- If there are two adjacent SHGs contain 20 families each they can be organized as one single neighbourhood of 40 families.

12. While making the map and demarcation, the team would do well to take a walk through the village.

13. Each panchayat is to have a Village Watchdog Committee (VWC) or a similar structure meant for the protection of children. So too each school may have a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). The members of these structures could be included in the volunteers' team.

14. The next step is to meet the people directly. Visit the families of the village. While visiting, explain the concept and invite them for a meeting in the neighbourhood. Take special care to ensure that parents and youth are particularly invited.

You can repeat the success stories of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children during the meeting.

Ask them to suggest one or two persons to serve as animators of the Children's Parliament in the neighbourhood.

15. The animators elected/chosen can be given training in a common place in the village/panchayat on how to conduct the sessions of the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

16. Together with the animators the first meeting of Children's Parliament can be planned and a programme may be drawn up accordingly.

17. Get the members of the Neighbourhood Parliament of Children to elect systematically the neighbourhood child ministers for different concerns. Follow sociocratic method of election as given in page (page ...). Not all the ministers need to be elected on the same day. It could be a gradual process.

18. After electing the required number of ministers, a swearing in ceremony may be organized. Special guests can be invited for the swearing-in-ceremony.

20. As a general rule the sessions of the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children take place in the neighbourhood itself, i.e., in the courtyard of a house, under a tree, veranda of a house or a common building.

21. Please note that none of the above given guidelines can be followed exactly in all circumstances. Neither should one become rigid in dealing with human persons and their situations. What is important is prudence. A desire to learn from one's own experience and the experience of others will help in avoiding embarrassing situations. The above guidelines are drawn from the experiences of successes and failures of innumerable social workers and social scientists in the field of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children in Tamil Nadu.

Second Approach: Forming Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children One by One

In some places it may not be possible to form all the neighbourhood children's parliaments in a village/panchayat in one go.

In such circumstances, Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children can be formed one after the other.

Here again each neighbourhood has to be demarcated on a map as explained above.

It will be helpful here too, to visit the families and enlist their help.

As mentioned earlier, each neighbourhood contains not less than 15 and not more than 45 families. Other precautions like including all the families of SHG in one unit or neighbourhood and making VWC members as partners in your venture, etc, have to be followed.

When a Neighbourhood Parliament of Children starts functioning and its effects are talked about, its members themselves will approach the other neighbourhoods and help them start the Children's Parliaments. Or things can happen the other way round. Witnessing the success of their friends, the children of other neighbourhoods might come to seek their help.

Even if we start the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children one by one, the selection of animators, sociocratic elections and swearing-in-ceremonies, etc, are needed.

Forming Village Level Children's Parliaments

After the election of ministers of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children in a given village, the Village Parliament of Children can be formed.

A minimum of two representatives of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children will become members of the Village Parliament of Children (VPC). If the number of the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children is less than the number of representatives from each Neighbourhood Parliament of Children could be more.

In any case the total number may not exceed 30, so that it is conducive for everyone to participate actively.

In VPCs too, sociocratic method of election is to be used for choosing ministers for various concerns.

Swearing-in-ceremony will take place in VPCs also. Special guests can be invited to administer the oath of office.

The sessions of the VPCs can be held in a school campus or the premises of say, a worshipping place or some other common place.

Village Parliaments of Children will meet once a month.

Team of Animators at Village Level

MODEL INTRODUCTORY MEETINGS

Some introductory sessions can help children to introduce themselves and familiarize themselves with the concept and process of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. The animators can use the following model sessions or they can prepare their own order and content of meetings.

The sessions given below may last 45 minutes or so. If any session takes too much time, it can be divided into two sessions.

On holidays, as children have more time, they can have more such sessions at a single meeting so as to make a half day or one day seminar.

Session I: Your Parliament

Scope of this session: To help children enjoy introducing themselves to one another and relating to one another

1. Start the meeting with a prayer song.

When children belong to different faith traditions, choose a common prayer song. For the English users we give a few songs in the appendix. Have a collection of such common prayer songs in local languages.

2. Follow it with an introductory group game.

Please find a few in the appendix. Have also your own collection of games which will serve the purpose, and keep a “game book” of your own.

Here we give one such game. In order to participate in this game every child should know the names of all other children. If the children are not much familiar to one another, ask them pin their names on their dress in a visible way.

Seat the children in a circle. Leave one seat empty.

The child seated on the left side of the empty seat will now say:

*The seat at my right is free;
I want ... (name) by me.*

The child named will now occupy the empty seat. Thus a new empty seat is created. The game continues when the child seated on the left side of the new empty seat will say:

*The seat at my right is free
I want ... (name) by me.*

The game must continue till all the children get an opportunity to be called. The animator can make sure by intervening to ask: “Now children, was the name of all of you called out?” If some children’s names are not yet called out, the animator should sensitively make the children understand the need to call every one.

It is an opportunity for the animators to observe and learn about the dynamism that works within the group. For one thing, it is easy to spot the most popular children among them. They will be the first few who are spontaneously called. One may notice that they will certainly be called over and over again. The second and less popular group will be those who are reluctantly called or prompted by others to be called. The less popular may be the shy ones who might need more attention.

This game has the advantage of mixing the children. The tendency among children naturally is to stick to their "good friends". An opportunity like this might change all that and they might discover that there are more "good friends" for them to love.

This game helps to learn one another's names. Animators will do well to teach children the importance of one's name. One's name is a precious thing. Calling names (i.e. derogatory names) can be nipped in the bud if children begin to respect the names of other children.

For a child the physicality is an important matter. He or she generally would avoid those whom they don't like to be near them. Being a friend also means being close to someone. Being close to someone also means being physically near.

3. Introduce Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

The animator can explain to the children what Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children are, why they are needed, what their benefits are and how they function. This handbook will help you for this.

4. Teach the anthem of the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

5. Get a child to record the proceedings.

6. Decide upon a regular time and day for their meetings.

7. Record the attendance.

8. Record any money transaction in an account book.

9. Conclude with national anthem or anthem of the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children.

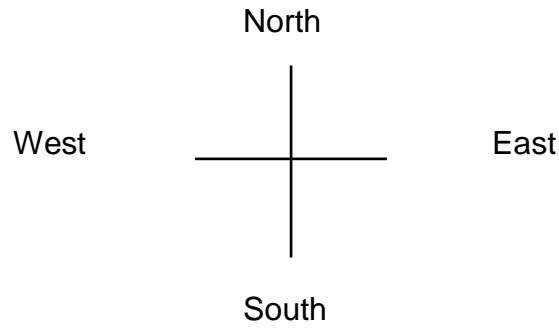
Session II: Your Neighbourhood, Your Village

- Prayer song
- Initial formalities (Attendance, election of the speaker, welcome address etc.)
- A game (Select one from Appendix)

1. Collecting data regarding the neighbourhood and the village

Begin getting the children draw a map of the village. They can draw the map on a blackboard or a large sized chart paper and they mark on it such items as streets, houses, institutions, etc. The procedure could be as follows:

Get the children draw two lines intersecting each other to indicate the four directions.



Then get them draw lines in different colours to indicate the roads, streets and paths. Get them mark the important places along the lines. Get them mark also the streams, ponds, canals and rivers if any. They can use icons like the following:



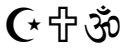
Ponds



Schools

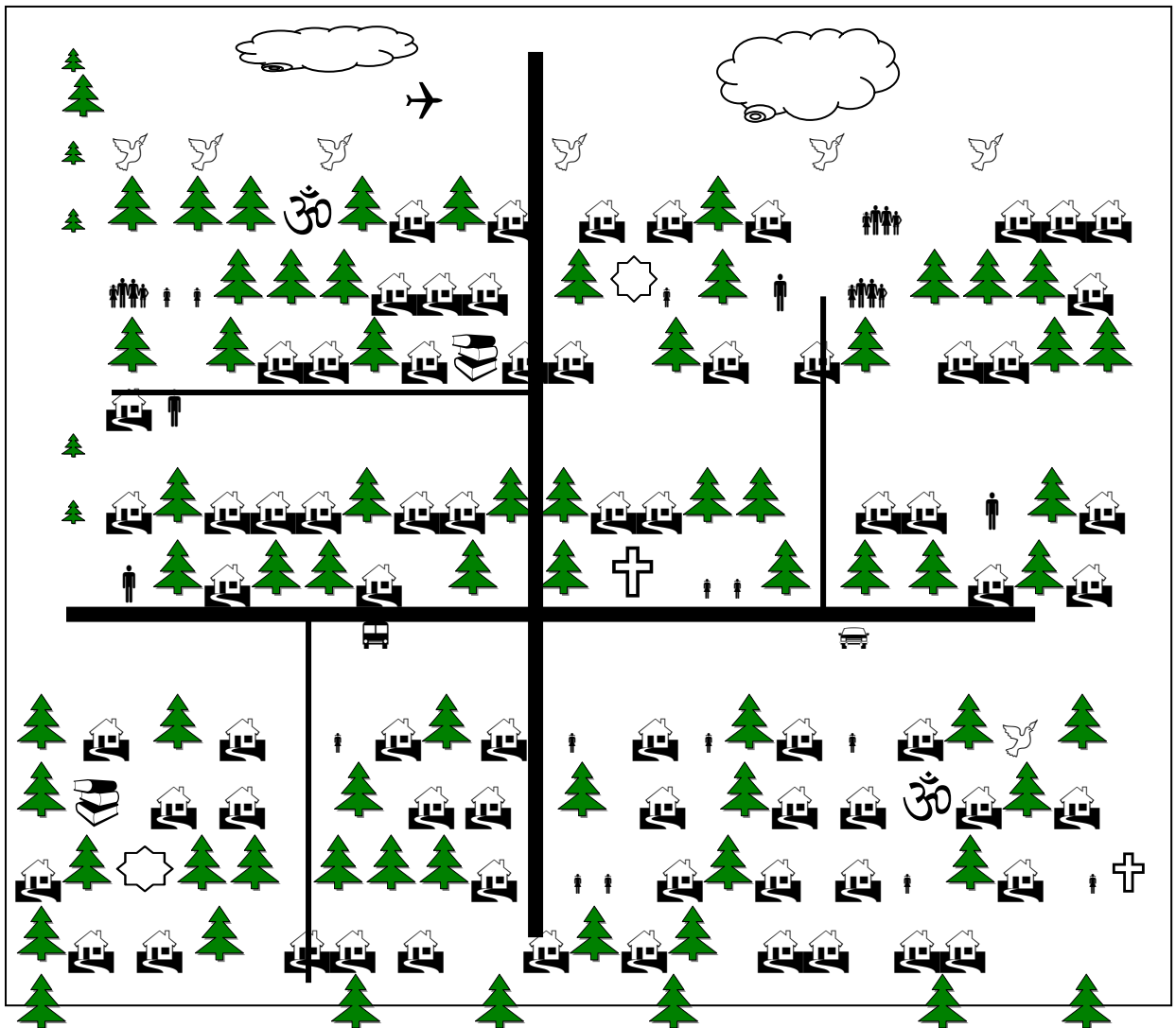


Houses



Places of Worship

Model Map



Make them take care to mark especially facilities meant for common use.

After completing, show the map to all the children and ask them to share their observations.

2. Group Assignments

Tell the children: “We need statistics about the neighbourhood and the village. We can divide ourselves into various groups and collect information regarding the following and bring it when we come for the next meeting.”

- Number of government offices
- Number of hospitals and clinics
- Number of people with education above SSLC
- Number of industries
- Information regarding occupation of people
- Population details
- Number of institutions
- Number of government servants
- Any other relevant data

Session III: Your Neighbourhood Map

- Prayer song
- Initial formalities (Attendance, election of the speaker, welcome address etc.)
- A game (Select one from Appendix)

Reports from the groups: Children present data they have collected as entrusted to them at the previous meeting.

Continuing with the map preparation: Add the newly brought information to the map using icons to indicate them.

Filing the information: File the information collected.

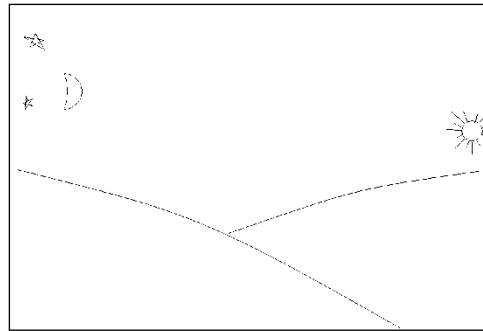
Session IV: Your Dream Village

- Prayer song
- Initial formalities (Attendance, election of the speaker, welcome address etc.)
- Game given below

The following game will help to create social awareness among children and also help the animator to discover the interests and aptitudes of the children.

Things required: (1) A blackboard or a large chart paper (2) Colour chalk pieces or crayons or sketch pens.

Draw the following on the blackboard. If there is no blackboard, use a large chart paper. Fix the chart on a wall.



Animator explains the game to the children in the following words:

You have a picture of a landscape here. It is not complete. You are going to make a village within. Make sure you draw the facilities necessary. You can draw anything on it using your imagination. Guidelines:

1. One child may draw only one item. A second chance may be given at the end if there is time enough.
2. Observe strict silence till the end of the game. No one is allowed to give suggestions to others. Let every one work freely. If anyone breaks the silence, the game will be terminated immediately. If any one needs a clarification, he/she may ask the animator.
3. More than one person can draw at the same time. However they must take care not to crowd the area. Touching another's hand at work will spoil the drawing.
4. Do not erase or correct the work of another.
5. If no one comes forward to draw, the animator will wait for one minute before the game is terminated.
6. The animator must use his/her judgment as regards the process and on when to terminate the game.

The Process of the Game

Raise the following questions and get the children's response.

- What are the things that have come up in the village? Who all have contributed to the drawing? Let us give a hand to the contributors.
- What are still lacking in this village of your creation? Who among you did not contribute? Those who were inactive during the game must realize that since they did not contribute, the village is imperfect.

Animator must now give an opportunity to those who contributed to the drawing of the map to indicate what they drew and why they drew it?

The Animator must observe closely the process of drawing with a view to assess the children's interests and aptitudes. The animator must gently remind all of them of their need to involve themselves in all the group activities. The game can train the children in self discipline.

Session V: Chappathis and Priorities

- Prayer song
- Initial formalities (Attendance, election of the speaker, welcome address, etc)
- A game: “Chapatti Diagram” (Chapatti is a North Indian round shaped bread)

Ask the children to enumerate the problems and issues faced by the village. As the children mention the problems one by one, get them listed on the blackboard, chart or in a notebook.

Get the children to cut out round-shaped paper pieces of various sizes. These pieces are called *chapattis*. Children can choose paper chapattis of various sizes to connote various problems listed by them. Each problem then can be written on a chapatti each.

The larger the issue according to the children, the larger will be the chapatti. The smaller the issue, the smaller will be the shape of the chapatti. For example, if children found drunkenness as the most important issue in a village they can choose the largest sized chapatti to represent that problem. Similarly all the problems are given a chapatti each, its size representing the comparative importance of the problem.

These chappatti's can be spread on the floor one near the other and on each of them children could either write the name of the problem or put on it a symbolic object that stands for the problem. For example, if drunkenness is the problem they can place a small bottle on it.

The problems that are connected to one another can be placed near each other.

Now the children will find it easy to rank the problems faced by the village in the order of priority.

This process in social analysis is also called “Venn-diagram Analysis”.

The children thus can decide which problems to address first. The size of the problem is visible and thus choice is made obvious.

Session VI: Your Leaders

- Prayer song
- Initial formalities (Attendance, election of the speaker, welcome address, etc)
- A game. (Please take one from the Appendix)

In this session election to the following offices will take place.

Prime Minister (President)

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs (Secretary)

Finance Minister (Treasurer)

Follow the sociocratic method of election (see page.#) while electing these office bearers.

The duties of these ministers are prescribed on page # (

The animator should ask the children themselves to brainstorm on what the duties of each of these ministers could be. Once they have described the duties, the animator could read out the

missing points from the list on page () and could ask the children if those points too are applicable. Elections should take place only after the appraisal of the duties.

After the election the children could be encouraged to felicitate those elected. The animator could then encourage the children to find out what all would need to be provided to enable the ministers to function effectively. All the children could together discuss and list the material needed for the running of these ministries. They could accordingly take the necessary decisions.

The animator could then announce that gradually more such elections will take place to choose ministers for various departments. Finally the Animator can tell the children about the ministries for which elections will be held during the next meeting.

Session VII: Your Neighbourhood

- Prayer song
- Initial formalities (Attendance, election of the speaker, welcome address, etc)
- A game (Select one from Appendix)

At this session we get the children to prepare a map of the neighbourhood. For us a neighbourhood consists of 30 families that make a neighbourhood parliament.

The children must be clear which houses come in the area of their neighbourhood parliament. They should know the neighbourhood's strengths and weaknesses. They should have clear understanding of what resources they possess and what they lack in their neighbourhood. A map of the neighbourhood will graphically depict all these.

As a first step towards creating a map of the neighbourhood, take a chart and mark the four directions (North, East, West and South) with two intersecting lines.

Where a floor is available for drawing the map, colour chalks and powders may be used.

Get the children demarcate important resources like roads, streets and paths, wells and ponds. Get them mark institutions like school, *anganwadis*, nurseries, hospital (if any), dispensary, market, neighbourhood shops, etc. Get them mark also landmarks like trees, garden, electric poles and telephone junctions.

Let them mark the houses with a house icon each.

Get them identify the household members in each house as men, women, children (below 18 years) with icons suitable for each person.



Men



Women



Children

Basing on this map, children are to make a report about the members of the neighbourhood. This report should include the gender and age group details.

Example :

Men (above 18 years)
Women (above 18 years)
Children (between 13-18) total
Girls (between 13-18)
Boys (between 13-18)
Children (between 6-12) (total)
Girls (between 6-12)
Boys (between 6-12)

Take care to preserve a copy of all the data and the map in a file. The secretary (here Minister for Parliament Affairs) is the keeper of the records.

Session VIII: Your Education Manifesto

- Prayer song
- Initial formalities (Attendance, election of the speaker, welcome address etc.)
- A game (Select one from Appendix)

Making of a diagram of education status of the neighbourhood

This exercise builds on the diagram of the previous map of the neighbourhood prepared at the last session.

We have already marked the people according to their age and gender. Here we classify them according to their education. The following icons can be used.

<i>Icon</i>	<i>Description</i>
①	Illiterate (only those above 5 years)
⑤	Drop-out after primary education
⑧	Completed Middle School
⑩	SSLC completed
★	Higher Secondary completed
★	Graduates (Bachelor's)
✱	Post Graduates
✂	Those with Technical Training
⊕	Those with special education
✕	Dropouts (Specify at which class)

The issues related to education

Chapatti diagram can be made to prioritize the issues concerning education. Or each child could describe the problems concerning education within the neighbourhood.

Planning for development of education

Each child can propose what can be done in order to improve the standard of education within the neighbourhood. All the accepted proposals must be recorded. Then get the children go to the education manifesto given on page # and see if more proposals need to be included. Accordingly get the children prepare your own manifesto for the Department of Education.

Session IX: Your Education Minister

- Prayer song
- Initial formalities (Attendance, election of the speaker, welcome address etc.)
- A game (Select one from Appendix)

Today we are going to elect the Minister for Education. We will use the sociocratic method of election.

We begin getting from each member answers to the following question:

- What are the responsibilities of the Education Minister?

Next we get answers from each member for the following question:

- What should be abilities and aptitudes expected in an Education Minister?

Continue to follow the other steps of the sociocratic election method as given in page #

* * *

Similarly all the elections to various departments will be conducted according to the sociocratic method after framing the manifesto of each ministry in subsequent meetings.

If needed a Deputy Prime Minister and a Deputy Minister for Parliamentary affairs may also be elected.

SESSION ON PROTECTION FROM CHILD TRAFFICKING

(This session could extend to many sessions depending on the availability of time for the students and the details that might emerge calling for more discussion)

The animator introduces the problem of Child Trafficking narrating a case or two of child trafficking like the following:

Case One

Arun is a nine year old little boy. He is the only son of the parents. For his parents he was the apple of their eyes. He received much love and affection and attention.

Arun was studying in the IV Standard.

One day, he did not return home from school. The anxious parents went in search of him to the school. Their hearts were a flutter as they approach the gates of the school and found them locked and the premises empty. There was an eerie silence everywhere. They inquired his friends about him. All that the boys could tell the now frightened parents was that he left the school as usual like everyone else.

The parents now realized that their worst nightmare has started. Arun is perhaps kidnapped.

Case Two

Yamu, 17*, was from a village near Varanasi, in India. Her father died. Her mother, unable to shoulder the responsibility of bringing up the children, tried to poison the whole family. Yamu and her siblings survived the poisoning. But the mother succumbed to it. Yamu was married off to a forty-one year old man. In fact she was sold for 10,000 rupees. Her land was being taken away by some villagers. So she approached the police. But the police man sexually abused her. He gave her Rs. 1000 and told her he would help her. He sent her to child trafficking racket. She was asked to work as a child prostitute in various places. One night while she was waiting at a bus stand on return from one of the errands CRF found her. She gave them the SIM card which contained the numbers of those in the racket. CRF referred the problem to Childline for the necessary follow-up action.

**names fictional*

The animator poses the following question:

- Have you heard of similar events?
- Do you know that there are frequent events of boys and girls being kidnapped?
- Do you know of any girl or boy who was kidnapped?
- Can you describe the tension, fear and sense of insecurity the victims of kidnapping would experience?
- What could be the type of sufferings the kidnapped children undergo?

The animator gets the children share the answers in small groups. At the end of the group discussion, children present the findings in the form of a report, enactment or dialogue. Finally the following points may emerge.

- Kidnapped children miss their parents and home.

- They miss affection and love.
- They will be forced to do difficult works.
- They cannot attend school.
- They cannot play.
- They will be physically harmed.
- They will endure starvation.
- They could be blinded or mutilated or deformed.
- They could made beggars.
- They may be used as bait for ransom.
- They could even be murdered.
- They could be sexually exploited.

The animator asks: Do you know why children are kidnapped?

The following are some of the possible reasons:

- To use them as farm labourers tending cattle, sheep, etc.
- To make them into domestic help.
- To make them work in plantations.
- To use them as beggars. (Organized begging is a money spinning racket.)
- To involve them in child prostitution
- To trade their organs like kidneys, eyes, etc.

The animator adds more data:

According to an estimate some 1.2 million people have been trafficked worldwide annually and the child trafficking accounts for half of it.

The animator continues with further questions:

Can we allow such things to happen to you?

Can we allow such things to happen to any child?

How can we ensure that no child in our neighbourhood and village is ever kidnapped?

Children give their responses. Then the animator asks the children to find answers to the following questions in groups.

- In our neighbourhood/village, is there any child who was victim of kidnapping or such crimes?
- Can you name them?
- When did his or her kidnapping take place?
- For what reasons were they kidnapped?
- What were the consequences?
- Are they rescued?
- How?

The above questions are about the neighbourhood. Continue with similar questions regarding situation in the villages.

Venn diagram

Discuss who are all in danger of being kidnapped and why so.

Shall we prioritize the cases according to the gravity of the risk involved using Venn (*chappati*) diagram?

Give the largest *chappati* (round shaped paper) to the greatest risk factor; and next large to the next risk, etc.

Chappatis can be also grouped according to the type of the risk factor. Risk factors that are interconnected can be placed nearer to each other, the distance depending on how closely they are interconnected.

After arranging as directed above, initiate the next discussion.

- What precautions and measures can we take to protect children from being kidnapped?
- Shall we conduct an awareness programme regarding this in our neighbourhoods?
- How can we equip our children with sufficient knowledge and use of tact and wit in times of crisis or danger of being kidnapped to protect themselves?

The following resolutions may be made.

- Conducting awareness programmes for parents as well as children.
- Equipping children with knowledge of the techniques kidnappers use.
- Making petitions to the panchayat and to other government officials to provide protection to children.
- Strengthen the village child protection committee

Get the children keep recording the resolutions of this session as well as their achievements in this regard.

Child Trafficking Acts

Do you know according to (Indian) law

- If any one lives on the earnings of the prostitution of a child he is punishable with imprisonment?
- The imprisonment is to be not less than ten years and not more than ten years?
- The punishment applies even if a person lives only partly on the income from the prostitution of the child?

Do you know that according to (Indian) law

- If someone involves in trafficking or in procuring a child for prostitution he is also liable for similar punishments?
- The punishment applies even if one only attempts to traffic a child for a child for such a purpose?

- The punishment for such trafficking is seven to ten years of imprisonment if the child is a minor, i.e., of 16 to 18 years of age? And if the child is less than sixteen years the trafficker can end up with a life term imprisonment?

Well. The above provisions are according to Indian law. Each country or state may have its own modifications.

Get the children to invite a lawyer to get to know more about so that they could help improve the effect of such provisions in the law.

Discuss how such provisions could be put to better use to ensure safety for children in risk of being trafficked.

INTERACTING WITH GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES

Children's Parliaments are to influence governing processes at various levels. They are to propose areas for policy changes. They are also to help in implementation of policies. They are to help ensure that the benefits reach those whom they are meant to reach.

Through all such processes children are to have an effective citizenship training that would enable them to effective leaders tomorrow.

A particular approach that could help in all these is to have regular arranged interactions with various

- Government officials
- Elected representatives

Such interactions could be arranged at various levels, especially at the level of the panchayat and the district.

Such meetings could be with:

(1) The Police Department

Levels: Especially at the levels of the district and police zones.

Invitees:

- Concerned police officers at the respective levels (i.e., Superintendent of Police of the district, Sub-Inspectors at police zone level) and police staff.
- Children representatives at the respective levels.
- Elected representatives at the respective levels.
- Community representatives (from Village Watchdog Committee, Child Protection Committee and the like)

(2) Health Department at respective levels

(3) Education Department at each education district

(4) Integral Child Development Services

(5) Forest Department

(6) Agriculture Department

(7) Transport Department

(8) Social Welfare Department

(9) Public Relations Officer

The procedure could be as follows:

(1) Invocation

(2) Welcome speech

(3) Self-introduction

(4) Introducing the Children's Parliaments

(5) Sharing by the concerned departments on what they are offering to people, to children

(6) Sharing by children

(7) Steps to be taken

(8) Vote of thanks

(9) Concluding song

The process could be one of identifying

(1) What is promised

- (2) What is reality
- (3) What corrective measures to be taken

Visits to Government and other Institutions

The above interaction could also be arranged in the form of exposure visits to various departments, institutions and offices.

Such visits could be to:

- Collector's Office
- Police Station
- Banks
- Post Office
- District Nutrition Office
- Office of the Chief Educational Officer, etc

Such visits should be planned sufficiently in advance and the required appointments should be secured.

The agenda of the visits also should be fixed beforehand.

THE ANIMATORS OF CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENTS

Animator in Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children has a very important role as children need constant guidance and support.

Animator takes steps to establish Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children according to the guidelines set down in this handbook and effectively guides their functioning, especially during the initial stage. Even after the ministers have assumed their responsibilities, the animators need to continue to be with them and support them. They are to do this as if from the backstage encouraging the children to be in the forefront.

Who can be an animator?

Any one who has concern for children and the larger society can function as an animator. However, the animator has to be an adult, i.e., over 18 years of age.

What are the qualities expected in an Animator?

- Concern and involvement in society's activities
- Love for children
- Ability to understand children (their psychology and developmental problems)
- Leadership
- Ability to organize and coordinate events
- Creativity
- Openness
- Ability to observe
- Ability to communicate the concept to children in simple words and with clarity
- Readiness and ability to conduct games, tell stories and to lead community singing
- Willingness to spare time and participate in training programmes.

What are the functions of the animator?

- As far as possible, the animator must avoid air of superiority, but must be able to come down to the children's level and identify themselves with them.
- Must avoid acting like a teacher, but must be in the true sense an animator enabling children in their activities.
- Must participate in their discussions and activities without imposing his or her notions and opinions, but with a sense of friendship and solidarity with them.
- Must avoid advising and proposing. Rather the animator must raise questions which would make the children think, reflect and discover.
- The animators can provide information which the children do not have access to. In those rare events when children transgress their limits, the animator must call a halt, or redirect them.
- The most important thing to avoid is to introducing competitions among them and thereby making them competitive. Competitions have an inherent quality of setting one against another. Competitions also foster egocentric attitudes. There shall not be

at any time, any competition between Children's Neighbourhood Parliaments. What has to be fostered among children is cooperation and collaboration.

- The mission of the animator is likened to the trainer who helps you ride a bicycle. The trainer does not ride. Rather the trainee is made to sit, to pedal and balance. The trainer can teach the techniques. Once the balance and confidence is gained, the trainer lets go of the bicycle.

MINISTERS IN NEIGHBOURHOOD PARLIAMENTS OF CHILDREN

The term “minister” originally meant servant. Ministers are those who serve the people; therefore the people are the masters.

It is in this sense that our Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children have ministers. They are not the masters; neither can they act autocratically. They are entrusted with certain responsibilities. They work for the welfare of the people.

Each identified concern in the neighbourhood is entrusted to someone responsible to carry out the necessary actions. The minister for each concern will gather information regarding the particular concern, reflect on the issues, and identify the problems related. The minister will also get other members of the parliament to gather likewise more information and propose action and jointly implement the proposals.

Functioning as a minister in the Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children is itself a citizenship training.

How many ministers are needed in a neighbourhood parliament?

Certain social worker in Theni District introduced the custom of making all the members ministers. Half are to be ministers and the other half, deputy ministers.

The reason given is that all must have some responsibility or other. Being left out could be discriminatory to the child. Discrimination is an antithesis to the very concept of Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children. Being called a minister itself has helped instil in children a sense of responsibility and self-confidence.

However, it is not necessary to follow this particular custom. The number of Ministers can be determined by the number of concerns that the neighbourhood parliament has identified.

Neighbourhood Parliaments of Children elect their ministers through sociocratic method.

Examples of Ministers

The following are some of the examples gathered from various districts of Tamil Nadu.

Kanyakumari District:

- Prime Minister
- Parliamentary Affairs (Secretary)
- Public Works
- Education
- Finance Minister
- Art
- Sports and Games
- Welfare
- Defence
- Human Resources Development
- Spirituality

Theni District

- Prime Minister
- Parliamentary Affairs (“Home”)
- Education
- Finance
- Transport
- Art and Culture
- Law
- Environment
- Children’s Safety
- Public Works
- Police

During a brain-storming at a workshop in Hyderabad a rather long list of possibilities for ministries in Children’s Parliaments was mentioned. The list:

- Chief Minister
- Education
- Health
- Finance
- Hygiene
- Social Communication
- Safety
- Sports
- Home Affairs
- Environment
- Welfare of Women and Children
- Transport
- Welfare of Labourers
- Agriculture
- Culture
- Human Resources
- Family Welfare
- Anti-dowry
- Civil Supply
- Welfare of the Youth
- Law and Justice
- Domestic Violence
- Food
- Human Rights
- Welfare of the Backward Classes
- Social Welfare
- Welfare of the Tribals
- Dalit Welfare
- Public Works
- Forest
- Anti-Trafficking

- External Affairs
- Irrigation
- Fisheries
- Protection of Livestock
- Minorities Welfare
- Electricity
- Transport
- Peace
- Panchayat Raj
- Railways
- Revenue
- Housing
- Police
- Postal Department
- Refugees' Welfare
- Spirituality

Definitely all these ministers need not be appointed in all the parliaments. Necessity and relevance are the criteria.

During a seminar of Children's Neighbourhood Parliament in New Delhi in which people from Delhi's various types of colonies and Haryana's villages participated, it was found that while the resettlement colonies and the unauthorised colonies of Delhi insisted on Minister for Electricity, Water, ration, etc, those from Haryana's villages suggested Ministries for environment, nature, agriculture, etc.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Ministers

Whatever be the ministries, it is important to define that the roles and responsibilities of the ministers are clearly defined.

A group of foreigners visited a village in Kanyakumari District. A boy from that village introduced himself as Minister for Defence. The visitors did not understand what he meant by Minister for Defence in a fishing village. They enquired what the responsibility of the Minister for Defence was. The boy replied he was meant to defend the rights of the children.

We shall see in the subsequent chapters what could be the roles of some such ministers and how each ministry could bring out its own manifesto.

MANIFESTO OF MINISTRIES

When the elections approach, political parties could be seen presenting their manifestos.

Similarly our ministries too should each come out with its own manifesto.

But these are not our election manifestos, but rather the presentation of what children are going to do and what they are committed to. The manifestos are pointers towards their mission. Each ministry should present its manifesto every year. Each ministry should lead the members in a process of search and consultation to arrive at a set of priorities.

The process of preparing the manifestos begins at the neighbourhood parliament level. Each neighbourhood comes out with its own manifesto with regard to each ministry.

Then all the neighbourhood ministers will gather together at village level parliament to bring out village level manifestos and present them to the village preferably in the form of a booklet.

Similarly manifestos must be formulated at Panchayat, Block and District levels.

Given below are some of the examples of manifestos.

Please note that each sentence begins with “We shall do” (*First Person plural in the future tense*).

Ministry of Public Works

- We the children shall try to envisage and put into action the concept of green schools.
- We the children shall build up a library with the assistance of the Panchayat.
- We the children shall ensure that the street lamps keep burning at the required areas.
- We the children shall ensure that the local MLA's⁴ development funds are made available for building waiting sheds at bus stops.
- We the children shall ensure that bus drivers stop properly at bus stops to pick up the passengers.
- We the children shall try and persuade the governments or the people concerned to ensure specialty hospitals for children in our village.
- We the children shall ensure the area has sufficient *anganwadis* for children.
- We the children shall demand for a stage for cultural performances from the area development fund of the local MLA.
- We the children shall ensure that the village has markets and they function from the appropriate areas.
- We the children shall try to ensure that the streets and the drainage systems are maintained regularly.

Ministry of Education

- We the children shall ensure that all of us have noble ideals for our lives.

⁴ MLA: Member of Legislative Assembly.

⁵ The model oath is taken from the book *Kulandaikal Paralumanran* published in Tamil by Mr. Joseph Ratinam,

- We the children shall learn our lessons with a sense of purpose and with clarity as regards life-goals.
- We the children shall attend school regularly.
- We the children shall prepare a time table for ourselves to study better.
- We the children shall take part in the coaching classes conducted in the evenings.
- We the children shall help one another to learn our lessons well.
- We the children shall ensure that there are no more dropouts from classes.
- We the children shall encourage personal talents of children.
- We the children shall prevent child labour.
- We the children shall help the economically under privileged children.
- We the children shall keep our school campus clean
- We the children shall create a garden in our school premises.
- We the children shall ensure that we have a play ground in the school premises or elsewhere in the vicinity.
- We the children shall ensure that we have toilet facilities in the school premises.
- We the children shall wear clean dress.
- We the children shall respect our parents and teachers.
- We the children shall read the newspapers and enhance our general knowledge and follow the developments in the world.
- We the children shall try to establish a students' information centre.
- We the children shall enlist ourselves in organizations like Boys/Girls Scouts and National Service Scheme.
- We the children shall ensure that we have a community hall built for children to conduct our meetings.

Ministry of Sports and Games

- We the children shall ensure that the children get sufficient materials to play.
- We the children shall ensure proper play grounds for us through the good offices of the Panchayat civil administration.
- We the children shall ensure a children's park through the Panchayat administration.
- We the children shall make all the children take part in games.
- We the children shall allot time for games in our timetable.
- We the children shall obtain required first aid boxes from the office of the Panchayat.
- We the children shall ensure toilet facilities close to the playground.
- We the children shall through the good offices of the Panchayat get a suitable facility for safekeeping our games equipments
- We the children shall ensure proper coaching is arranged as regards games.
- We the children shall see that no one discriminates against any other child during games.
- We the children shall try and develop self confidence and positive attitudes through games.
- We the children shall ensure that drinking water facilities are available close to the playground.

Ministry for Welfare and Environment

- We the children shall ensure clean drinking water for ourselves and others.
- We the children shall maintain wells and water pipes clean.
- We the children shall ensure nutritious and healthy diet.

- We the children shall make arrangement to conduct periodic medical camps with the assistance of panchayat administration and/or voluntary associations.
- We the children shall try to ensure that toilet facilities are available.
- We the children shall with the help of the Village Health Nurse ensure that adequate preventive measures are taken for the health of the people.
- We the children shall always wear footwear.
- We the children shall plant trees with the help of the Panchayat.
- We the children shall avoid use of plastic/polythene articles in order to prevent environmental pollution.
- We the children shall prevent stagnation of drainage near public habitations and public utility areas.
- We the children shall use toilets at home/school.
- We the children shall take preventive action against the use of open places such as drainage, pathways and seashore for toileting.
- We the children shall wear clean clothes.
- We the children shall organise awareness programmes like street plays, puppet shows, folk song and the like media regarding cleanliness, health and communicable diseases like AIDS.
- We the children shall promote domestic and road-side gardens.
- We the children shall prevent destruction of village natural resources.
- We the children shall make efforts to get help for addicted elders through de-addiction centres.
- We the children shall organize awareness programmes regarding the evil effect alcohol consumption through street plays and folk songs.

Ministry for the Welfare of Children

- We the children shall ensure physical exercises for ourselves everyday.
- We the children shall get the regular and prescribed vaccinations in order to prevent diseases and epidemics.
- We the children shall take bath in the morning and evening.
- We the children shall ensure personal hygiene.
- We the children shall avoid spitting in public places.
- We the children shall pair nails and keep finger nails clean.
- We the children shall plant herbs in our courtyards.
- We the children shall encourage the use of natural medicines.
- We the children shall cultivate in ourselves the habit of eating green vegetables.
- We the children shall ensure our rights as children.
- We the children shall ensure for ourselves protection against violence.
- We the children shall ensure that the society takes steps to protect children's rights.
- We the children shall ensure that child trafficking doesn't occur.
- We the children shall ensure that children are not deceived or led aside falsely.
- We the children shall ensure that child marriages do not take place.
- We the children shall socialize with all children without discrimination.
- We the children shall watch only good programmes on television.
- We the children shall avoid wayside eatables.

Ministry for Persons with Disabilities

- We the children will try to understand the problems and needs of persons with

disabilities.

- We the children will try to solve the problems of persons with disabilities.
- We listen and will ensure that the persons with disabilities have their required facilities.
- We this season will avoid addressing persons with disabilities in words that hurt them.
- We the children will ensure that people treat persons with disabilities with respect.
- We the children will celebrate every year, the International Day of persons with disabilities.
- We the children will use songs, poems, speeches, writings and art forms to advocate for the welfare of persons with disabilities.
- We the children will give a listening ear to the feelings of persons with disabilities and their parents.
- We the children will ensure that children with disabilities get opportunities to play.
- We this November will ensure that there are special kind variances and facilities in public places for the benefit of persons with disabilities.
- We the children will ensure that people with disabilities have Braille language opportunities.
- We the children will ensure that the benefits meant for persons with disabilities really reach them.
- We the children will take steps to ensure that persons with disabilities get the government identity cards that make them eligible for special privileges.
- We the children will offer help to the persons with disabilities to cross roads.
- We the children will identify the special talents of persons with disabilities and encourage them.
- We the children will take steps to ensure that persons with disabilities participate in public affairs, to whatever extent possible for them.
- We the children will make persons with disabilities participate joyfully in parliaments.
- We the children will visit institutions meant for persons with disabilities and the aged and entertain them
- We the children will take a list of the needs of persons with disabilities in the village and in make plans for their welfare, and act accordingly.
- We the children will help encourage persons with disabilities to stand on their legs and that he is with or with conflict self-confidence.
- We the children will relate to persons with disabilities with love and smile.

Ministry for Art and Culture

- We the children shall conduct conferences of all child ministers of art and culture at various levels.
- We the children shall organize events to discover and develop children's artistic and cultural talents.
- We the children shall organize art related training programmes by competent experts.
- We the children shall organise cultural associations to promote arts and develop talents.
- We the children shall perform at festivals in the village through the cultural associations/groups.
- We the children shall give importance to folk arts.
- We the children shall organize art exhibitions.
- We the children shall organize an annual art festival.

- We the children shall organise cultural nights meant to create awareness on social issues.
- We the children shall ensure that village administration provides required materials for cultural performances.
- We the children shall ensure from the panchayat administration proper venues for our training.
- We the children shall try to get our MP to utilize his development fund to construct an auditorium for children to perform in.
- We the children shall publish an art magazine.

Ministry of Labour (Employment/Livelihood)

- We the children shall approach the Village Administration to arrange for us marine and other job-related training.
- We the children shall make arrangement for training of alternative occupations (other than the one handed down to us by parents).
- We the children shall prevent the habit of dumping waste into water bodies.
- We the children shall prevent drainage from going to water bodies.
- We the children shall ensure creation of seaside mangroves to prevent sea erosion.
- We the children shall ensure that we obtain modern communication facilities in our village.
- We the children shall prevail upon our fathers to use modern technology in fishing, farming, horticulture etc.
- We the children shall ensure that the panchayat authorities provide our parents with proper places for marketing the products of their work.
- We the children shall approach authorities for establishment of small scale industries.
- We the children shall try and persuade our parents to learn alternate marketing systems and thus save the money the multinationals and big business houses make of us in selling their branded goods.
- We the children shall ensure that the public works authorities build facilities for our working parents.
- We the children shall approach NGOs and Governmental organisation for protection of babies of the working mothers.
- We the children shall ensure that the panchayat authorities provide depots for the safekeeping of work equipments.
- We the children shall ensure first aid and primary health care for workers with the assistance of the panchayat.

Ministry for Spiritual Life

- We the children shall have retreat camps arranged for us.
- We the children shall pray and spend some time in silent prayer everyday.
- We the children shall take part in common prayer services.
- We the children shall permit ourselves to be inspired and educated by all religions in matters of social justice, equality, fraternity and human dignity.
- We the children shall visit the sick and be a source of consolation to them.
- We the children shall visit the elderly and befriend them in their need.
- We the children shall take part in spiritual orientation programmes.
- We the children shall listen to scripture recitations of all religions.
- We the children shall arrange for and participate in community meal celebrations.

- We the children shall learn to identify and appreciate the positive elements found in the various religions.
- We the children shall take part in inter-religious prayer gatherings.
- We the children shall not permit discrimination on the basis of religious affiliation.

DUTIES OF THE MINISTERS

The following are general guidelines. The actual application will change according to circumstances. Some of the guidelines are meant for neighbourhood parliaments and others may be also applicable to higher levels of parliaments.

It is not necessary to follow everything given in these guidelines.

The ultimate task of assigning duties lies with the parliament which appoints the ministers.

When we define something as the responsibility of a particular minister, we do not mean that he/she has to shoulder everything single-handedly. He is rather to initiate processes to get everybody collectively respond to challenges.

Prime Minister

- Prime Minister is the president of the parliament. He/she is responsible for leading the parliament and ensuring its proper functioning.
- All the activities of the parliament are to be ultimately under the leadership of the Prime Minister.
- The Prime Minister signs all the resolutions, petitions, letters and documents.
- The Prime Minister ensures maximum attendance at the parliaments. He/She encourages the frequent absentees to attend the parliament, without fail.
- The Prime Minister heads delegations on visit to authorities and leaders.
- The Prime Minister takes responsibility to ensure successful functioning of the parliament.
- He/She proposes the name of the speaker for each session.

Deputy Prime Minister

- Deputy Prime Minister assists the Prime Minister in fulfilling his/her duties as Prime Minister.
- In the absence of the Prime Minister, the deputy prime minister assumes all the duties of the Prime Minister.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs

- He/She is the secretary of the parliament. Hence he/she assumes all the responsibilities and duties of the secretary.
- Minister for Parliamentary Affairs convenes meetings of the parliament.
- He/She prepares the minutes and presents it during the following meeting.
- He/She handles the correspondence on behalf of the parliament.
- He maintains the files, reports, copies of the resolutions, etc.

Deputy Minister for Parliamentary Affairs

- Deputy Minister for Parliamentary Affairs assists the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs.
- When the Minister is absent, he or she assumes all the duties of the Minister.

- Deputy Minister for Parliamentary Affairs is responsible for taking attendance at meetings.

Finance Minister

- Finance Minister takes responsibility for the financial dealings of the parliament.
- Finance Minister initiates discussion on the rate of subscription to be collected from members, gets the members make decision on it (One Rupee per person?) and encourages the members pay accordingly.
- In the event of receiving donations, Finance Minister accounts for it in the cash book.
- Finance Minister discusses with other ministers about various expenditures related to various departments, gets the required resolutions passed and allots accordingly.
- When there happens a special programme, Finance Minister initiates discussion on the budget required, gets the relevant resolutions passed and leads the fund raising process.
- Finance Minister is responsible for keeping the cash reserve and remitting it for uses prescribed by the parliament.
- Finance Minister keeps an accurate account of money dealings.
- When the parliament decides to open an account the Finance Minister is entrusted with the responsibility.
- Signatories other than Finance Minister and Prime Minister of the joint account will be decided by the parliament.
- In most cases the Finance Minister will sign cheques along with the Prime Minister.
- Finance Minister is responsible for presenting the accounts during the meetings of the parliament and to get them passed.
- Finance Minister should keep the parliament informed on the budgetary provisions of the central and state governments.
- Finance Minister will maintain things belonging to his office such as
 - Income and expenditure account
 - Receipt Books
 - Voucher folder
 - Ledger
 - Daily Cash Book
 - Subscription account book.
 - Bank passbooks
 - Bank cheque book
 - Stationery
- Finance Minister has the responsibility to get the accounts of the parliament audited every year.

Education Minister

- The Education Minister has the duty to make sure that all the children within the area under his care attend school regularly and study well.
- He or she will prepare statistics in which the following categories will be part: (1) children attending school (2) children who do not attend school (3) children employed as child labourers.
- He or she must keep a data of drop outs. It is his duty to persuade such children to re-admit themselves in the school.
- He or she will check up if sufficient number of teachers are employed in the schools, if quality education is imparted, if the school has adequate facilities provided for

students, and if enough measures are taken towards the safety of the children. He or she must take steps to rectify the insufficiency.

- He or she will encourage the children to attend school regularly and study well.
- He or she will encourage parents to admit their children in *anganwadis*.
- He or she will organize programmes to bring home the importance of education.
- He or she will try, with the help of the teachers and parents, to create an atmosphere conducive to study in the school as well in the homes.
- He or she will help children to prepare a timetable for them and to follow it faithfully.
- He or she will encourage the children to visit common libraries and read books in order to enhance their knowledge.
- He or she will check up if the teachers are attending school regularly.
- In case some children do not follow class and are hesitant to seek help from the teachers, the Education Minister may encourage them to do so.
- He or she will pay special attention to students who are weak in studies and arrange for special tuitions or evening study programmes for them.
- He or she will present regular report in the parliament about the status of local school education.
- He or she will check out the mid-day meal programme and see if the preparation and distribution of food is carried out in hygienic conditions.
- He or she will approach local authorities and get help for improvement in the education system.
- He or she may take active role in propagating the need for a library for children.

Minister for Sports and Games

- He or she may make efforts to create a children's park with the help of the Panchayat administration.
- He or she will gather, from sources like journals and books, various educative and skill developing games and introduce them to the children.
- He or she will try and get a playground allotted to the children and supervise its maintenance.
- He or she will intervene in obtaining games articles.
- He or she will take steps to get the children trained in concentration, self-defence, swimming, cycling, physical exercises and various games.
- He or she will make efforts to create a science park for infotainment.
- He or she will ensure that all the children will take part in one or another game or sports.
- He or she will see to it that the children undergo a physical check up to make sure that they remain fit to engage in sports and games.
- He or she will encourage rural sports so that they are preserved.
- He or she will encourage the children to engage themselves in games and sports in the spirit of true sportsmanship.
- He or she will help in discovering children of extraordinary capabilities to encourage participation in district and state level sport and games competition.
- He or she will be concerned about the participation of the differently-abled children in sports and games.

Law Minister

- He or she will raise voice against Human Rights Violation as well as violation of children's rights and will take measures to rectify such violations through the intervention of the child parliament.

- He or she will try and conscientize the people on the following laws and charters
 - Charter of children's rights
 - Children's Safety and Protection 2000
 - Prevention of Child Labour
 - Eradication of Bonded Labour
 - Human Rights Proclamation
 - RTI (Right to Information Law)
 - Prevention of Domestic Violence
 - Various Acts and Laws for the protection of the rights of the Backward Classes and ST and SC.
 - *Panchayat Raj Law*
- He or she has to maintain a file on various laws related to the above mentioned.
- He or she will take steps to conscientize the people with regard to the role of the Police and the extent of its power and authority, jurisdiction etc.
- He or she will ensure that the children learn how to use the Police Assistance number i.e. 100, child helpline 1098 and the like.
- He or she will take steps to explain the salient points of the constitution of India.
- He or she try and train all the members of the parliament how to write out petitions, applications etc.
- He or she will make sure that representatives of children's parliament take part in the *grama sabha* meetings.
- He or she will encourage the members of the parliament to formulate laws and regulations for themselves in accordance with the guidelines of the children's parliament.

Minister for Communication & Information

- He or she will take charge of the Bulletin Board of the Parliament. He or she will be responsible for displaying news clippings from journals for the benefit of the public.
- He or she will keep the parliament informed of world news, national news and state news besides news regarding other villages and also initiate discussion on day to day happenings.
- He or she will maintain a file containing useful news items.
- He or she will prepare for a permanent exhibition of photos, news clippings, rare articles, children's creations appearing in the press, awareness building posters etc. He or she will take care to update the items periodically.
- He or she will encourage the members of parliament to read newspapers, journals and books in order to enhance their knowledge
- He or she will discuss in the parliament the contents of the articles, news items and television programmes which could harm the development of children and endanger their rights. He or she will take steps to avoid re-occurrence.
- He or she will conscientize the members on the modern means of communication like computer, and their usefulness and benefits.
- He or she will see to it that the Parliament publish a handwritten journal in order to develop children's writing talents
- He or she will encourage the children to write articles, poems and stories, paint pictures and arrange to have them published in newspapers, Children's journals and reviews.
- He or she will bring to the notice of the press and other media those events of violation of children's rights and take necessary steps to call for collective voice-raising against such deeds.

- He or she will facilitate discussions on the violation of children's rights in his or her village and take steps to make plans to rectify them.
- He or she will send without delay the news about the children's parliament's activities to newspapers and to other media.

Health Minister

- He or she will make a statistics regarding the basic health needs of the neighbourhood or village.
- He or she will bring to the notice of the parliament regarding the health hazards like rotting garbage, blocked drainage etc. in his or her village.
- He or she will initiate discussion in the parliament and take charge of efforts to set the things right.
- He or she will conscientize both children and adults on personal cleanliness and environment cleanliness and encourage them to maintain cleanliness.
- He or she will conscientize people on matters regarding epidemics through cultural programmes, handbills and help people to protect themselves from contagion.
- He or she will make families aware of the Government scheme for toilet for every home and help them take advantage of the scheme to have a toilet built in their homes. Besides, he or she will also take steps to encourage the use of home toilets.
- He or she will see to it that all the children in his or her parliament area have a healthy life style.
- He or she will study the condition of primary health centres and hospitals and take steps to make them adequately functional with required equipments and articles of health care.
- He or she will examine whether there are sufficient medicines available in the health care facilities and he or she will find out if there are medical personnel in their village medical centre.
- He or she will take all steps to keep the village clean.
- He or she will encourage the children to keep the school playground, toilets and classrooms clean.
- He or she will encourage children attend school dressed in clean uniform and to wear footwear.
- He or she will see to it that water does not stagnate in public places.

Minister for Environment

- He or she will take steps to protect trees and plants in the village and take care of them.
- He or she will take steps to create herbal gardens and encourage people to use herbs.
- He or she will encourage people to reuse the waste water from kitchens for home vegetable gardens.
- He or she will conscientize people on the harmfulness of the use of plastic and polythene and take steps to prevent the use of these hazardous materials.
- He or she will conscientize the people not to pollute the life sources like earth, air and water. He also conscientize the people about the depletion of ozone layer and the impending disaster that might befall.
- He or she will get sufficient information regarding government schemes for protection of environment and he or she will hand over the information to the people. He or she will also try to implement the government schemes in the village.

- He or she will make the people aware of the two types of wastes i.e. biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste. He or she will see that the people are educated on the necessity for separating these before disposal.
- He or she will conscientize the people regarding birds and animals on which human life depends and take steps that the people protect them.
- He or she will make the people aware of the need to protect all life forms.
- He or she will make the parliament aware of the factors that pollute the environment and our role in doing so.
- He or she will suggest ways and means to keep the environment clean.

Minister for Public Works

- He or she will check up whether the village has facilities such as transport electricity, drinking water etc. and will find out remedies to rectify shortcomings and defects through the help of the parliament.
- He or she will see to it that street lights are installed and functional in the village.
- He will check up if the goods supplied through the public distribution system in the village i.e. Ration Shops are in good condition and the goods conform to the norms of quality and quantity.
- He or she will check up whether the public transport buses stop at the assigned stops to pick up passengers.
- He or she will take steps to procure clean drinking water.
- He or she will check up whether roads are maintained and speed breakers are put in place in the villages.
- He or she will check up whether the governmental and non governmental facilities like post office, bank and police station are available in the village.
- He or she will, above all matters, speak in the Children's Parliament and take steps to rectify shortcomings.

Defence Minister

- He or she will assume the responsibility to protect the rights of children.
- He or she will conscientize the children regarding child helpline 1098.
- He or she will conscientize the children regarding the police helpline 100.
- He or she will make the public aware of the rights of children.
- He or she will conscientize the public about child trafficking. He or she will maintain a database of children in peril of being trafficked. The data will contain details regarding children who were already victims of trafficking.
- He or she will take step to conscientize people in order to prevent foeticide.
- He or she will arrange for awareness programme for children to protect themselves from being sexually exploited.
- He or she will take steps to have the children instructed in self-defence methods
- He or she will take steps to prevent child marriages.
- He or she will make people aware of traffic rules.
- He or she will demand to organize child protection committee.
- He or she will make sure that the Village Watchdog Committee functions effectively.
- He or she will take steps to prevent violation of children's rights and any other type of violence against children.

Duties of the Minister for Persons with Disabilities

- He/ she will motivate the children's parliaments to take detailed statistics regarding the persons with disabilities in the area.
- He/ she will make use of "chapaathy diagram" or venn diagram to list and priorities the problems faced by persons with disabilities
- He/ she will create awareness regarding the problems faced by persons with disabilities.
- He/ she will encourage the children's parliaments to make plans for the welfare of persons with disabilities.
- He/ she will take steps to alert the local governance structures and related administrative organs regarding the needs of persons with disabilities and motivate other children through advocacy with the government to ensure that lessons related to persons with disabilities are included in school syllabus.
- He/ she will encourage the children's parliaments to plead to the government to our dear priority to persons with disabilities and in job appointments.
- He/ she will encourage the children's parliaments to take special care to ensure that person with disability gets opportunities and required training to participate in sports and cultural activities.
- He/ she will help the children's parliaments to identify their demands that are to be made with the government for the welfare of persons with disabilities and to make demands accordingly.
- He/ she will encourage the children's Parliament to create awareness in the neighbourhood and the people around regarding the needs of persons with disabilities.
- He/ she will give guidance to the children's parliaments on the proper way to talk to persons with disabilities
- He/ she will make children understand and learn proper disability etiquette in which they are out to follow in dealing with persons with disabilities.
- He/ she will take steps through the children's parliaments to create adequate conveniences for the disabled children to play and to walk about.
- He/ she will take steps to ensure that adequate facilities are created in institutions for public use for the disabled person to climb up and get back will arrange for events that would help children with disabilities to get appreciation and encouragement for their talents.

Minister for Human Resources Development & Arts

- He or she will ensure that all children receive standard education.
- He or she will take steps to create libraries and encourage children to use them in order to develop general knowledge.
- He or she will introduce yoga and methods of meditation for children.
- He or she will encourage the children to take part in the *gramasabha* meetings.
- He or she will organize cultural programmes on special days and ensure that all the children get to take part in them.
- He or she will organize the following training programmes:
 - Leadership training
 - Life skill education
 - Personality development
 - Training for cultural activities
 - Disaster management training

Minister for Women's Welfare

- She will conscientize the people regarding the rights of women.
- She will bring to the notice of the public the present situation in society where women are denied of their right to be equal.
- She will insist on inclusive and respectful language in communications such as speaking to and writing.
- She will ensure that the members of the parliament always use inclusive and respectful language.

ELECTIONS IN CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT

The elections that take place in the Neighbourhood children's Parliament are different from the elections people are accustomed to.

In the system of election we follow, no one wins, no one loses. No competition takes place; no poster war is waged. No secrecy, no expenditure. Nobody stands as a candidate.

This system is called *sociocratic* election method. This is a pleasing type of election.

The first principle of sociocratic election is that election is not to be person-centred, but task-centred.

One may wonder then, how sociocratic type of election takes place. Here is how:

Methodology of Election

1. Circle Formation

The children sit in a circle. This way all are equal and the children can see every other child face to face.

2. Introducing the Ministry/Concern

The one conducting the election (Facilitator) announces the concern for which the minister is to be elected.

For example: Suppose you are going to elect the Prime Minister. The Facilitator will say "Now we are about to elect the Prime Minister".

3. Discussion on the responsibility of the Minister

The facilitator asks the following questions.

- i) What is meant by the post of the Prime Minister?
- ii) What are the responsibilities the Prime Minister will handle? And what are the challenges he or she will have to face?

The facilitator makes sure that all children take part in the discussion.

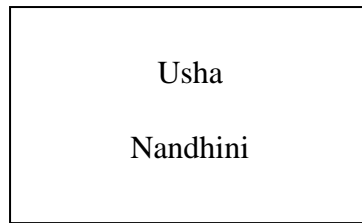
4. Discussion on Capabilities and Attitudes required for the person to be elected as Prime Minister

The facilitator asks another question: "What are the capabilities and talents the person to be elected should possess?" The members one by one express their views.

5. First Round of Ballots:

Each member is given a small piece of paper. Each one is asked to write first his or her name on the top of the paper. Then below that she or he should write the name of the person whom he or she suggests for the post of Prime Minister.

For example, Usha suggests the name of Nandhini for the post of Prime Minister:



A member can vote for himself in sociocratic form of elections. In that case the voter writes his or her name twice on the ballot paper. However, no one can propose his or any name publicly.

6. Statement of Reason for the Suggestion

The ballots are collected and heaps are made according to names suggested. For example if Pramod received 6 votes a heap of his six votes will be placed, and if Pradeep received 12 votes, another heap of his 12 votes will be placed and if Nandhini received 13 votes, a third heap of her 13 votes will be heaped together in one place. The names of the three persons who received the votes will be written on the floor for all to see.

The facilitator takes each ballot paper in hand and addresses the person who had suggested the name and asks him or her to state the reason for suggestion. Each one gives the reason.

For example we shall take Usha who suggested Nandhini.

The facilitator says: “Usha, you have suggested the name of Nandhini for the post. Please tell us the reason why you did so.”

Usha answers: “I suggested Nandhini, because she is a leader.”
(Please note: Some one might say for example “I like her”, or “I just wrote a name”. These are not reasons for electing a person to a responsible position). By this exercise, the electors are taking responsibility for their choice.

7. Chance to reconsider the suggestions

Having heard every body’s suggestion the voters now have chance to consider the reasons and make a fresh choice. Therefore, the facilitator says “Now you heard also other proposals and the reasons for the proposals. Now you have an opportunity to reconsider your suggestion. Those who want to change their choices may take their ballot paper back and put on the heap of another’s name. Those who change will be asked to state their reason for their fresh choice.”

Let us suppose Usha took her ballot from Nandhini’s heap and placed it on the heap of Pradeep. She says “After listening to the reasons given, especially that of Chandra who said Pradeep had been a class leader, I now change my choice”.

In this manner they go on round after round to come to a stage when the facilitator decides that the general sense of the Parliament is understood.

8. Consent Round

Suppose after a few rounds of changes Pradeep has 26 votes, Nandhini has 3 and Pramod has 2 votes. The facilitator now states the situation in the following or similar words “Friends, after all the rounds, Pradeep has 26 votes, Nandhini has 3 and Pramod has 2 votes. We are going to the final stage. That is Consent round”.

The facilitator now takes the votes in the heaps of Nandhini and Pramod and calls those who had voted for them and says for example:

“Herman, you voted for Nandhini, you do not want to change. However, considering that most of the members have preferred Pradeep, let me ask you if you have any serious objection to Pradeep being the Prime Minister”.

In all probability Herman will say, “I have no objection”.

The facilitator continues to ask others the same question and obtain “I have no serious objection” which is consent.

The serious objection would be something like the following. “Pradeep is going abroad after six months”.

The facilitator has the freedom now either to start the process all over again, or start from another person who had obtained a large number of votes at an earlier stage, or to say “we shall accept Pradeep as Prime Minister now and later, if he goes abroad we will have another round of election”.

Facilitator is plays an important role in the election and must not be questioned. He or she could towards end chose a democratic method of declaring the result. He has to say something in the following lines “Since we have gone on for some time, and it looks like Nandhini has a large number of votes, we shall decide up Nandhini as the Prime Minister.”

Another possibility is that Pradeep does not want to be the Prime Minister. Then Pradeep has the obligation to state his reason. His statement will start with “I do not want be Prime Minister **because**

” The statement of Pradeep must be reasonable.

After getting the consent of all those who voted for another, the facilitator makes the announcement of the result thus “You have chosen Pradeep as your Prime Minister, let us give ourselves a round of applause”.

The process is followed in election of all the ministers.

Please Note:

1. A frequently raised objection to the process is that it would take a long time to complete. Some may even argue that it would be rather boring. It is noted that the process of learning takes time. However, once the children learn the process they would prefer this process. Besides, the second time when they gather for election, it will be easier and faster. In fact as all children are actively engaged and curious to know the result, it can hardly be said to be boring. It is for them an interesting novelty.

2. When changes are made and reasons for change or suggestion is made would they not hurt them whose votes are taken away? The answer is that the process presupposes certain formation in sociocratic process and non-violent communication. In particular when a fresh choice is made the reason should never be comparison e.g. Usha does not say "... I prefer Pradeep because he is a better leader than Nandhini" This would hurt because it is a comparison. Bearing in mind that she is electing a person for leadership of the group she must say e.g. "I have heard especially from Chandra that Pradeep had been a class leader" The emphasis is on leadership not on Pradeep or Nandhini.
3. Would not the people who "lost" like Nandhini and Pramod be hurt? In fact during the process the chances are that those who received less number of votes might have also received numerous positive strokes. Such a process initially throws up names of potential leaders. For example, during the subsequent elections say to Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Minister of Finance etc. Nandhini and Pramod are likely to be elected. The aim of the election is not the honour of individuals but the common good of the parliament which needs a person to look after a concern. Please note when the Facilitator announced a round of applause he or she said "let us give OURSELVES a round of applause" The members are congratulated not the one elected. The victory belongs to all.

OATH-TAKING FUNCTION

Once a year especially at the initial stages it would be helpful to have an oath-taking function before the ministers assume responsibilities.

It would first make the children feel they are going to take up a responsible mission.

Secondly, it will serve as a sign for the elders to know that their children are engaged in a matter of social importance and accordingly extend their support.

At this function the ministers will assume responsibility and promise to fulfil their mission responsibly using their talents and abilities to the maximum.

The following formula may be used as a model.⁵

I, (nn) have been elected as Minister of (state the office: Prime Minister/Deputy Prime Minister) in the Neighbourhood (or village/panchayat, etc) Parliament of Children of (nn name the village/panchayat, etc).

I promise that during the period of my service as (state the office), I shall understand my responsibility and duties clearly and fulfil them to the best of my ability. I promise to dedicate myself for the welfare of each child in the neighbourhood (or village/panchayat, etc) and help solve the problems of children. I also promise that I shall respect the dignity of each child, treat each one equally without discrimination and I shall set myself as an example for the better functioning of the parliament as a loving and united family.

1. Some person of importance in the village/panchayat may be invited to administer the oath. Other guests also may be invited. The children may request the invited guest to give a short address of felicitation.
2. The function can be celebrated as a public meeting in a spirit of festivity.

⁵ The model oath is taken from the book *Kulandaikal Paralumanran* published in Tamil by Mr. Joseph Ratinam, page 24.

PROCEDURES FOR MEETINGS

Neighbourhood Level

1. Invocation

Neighbourhood Children's Parliament would reflect the neighbourhood. A neighbourhood is bound to have people who follow various religious and faith traditions. Being sensitive to the situation, all prayers should be of common nature. Prayers songs selected for use during the meetings too must be common ones which will have no attributes of a particular religion.

2. Nomination of the President or Speaker

A presiding officer is nominated by the Prime Minister for every session. This will give him or her an opportunity to exercise the leadership in conducting a meeting. He or she will function as a speaker in the assembly of the state or the parliament of the nation.

3. Welcome Address

Welcome address must be short not longer than 2 or 3 minutes. A custom may be created whereby the opportunity may be given to each member by turns.

4. Roll Call

Roll call is taken by the Deputy Prime Minister or Deputy Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

5. Presenting the Report

The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs (Secretary) will read out the previous meeting's minutes.

6. Passing of the Report

The Speaker should ask the house if there is any thing to be added or corrected in the report. The members now have a chance to respond. After corrections, deletions and additions are made, the speaker proposes the passing of the report. The members will second the suggestion and the speaker can rule the report as passed and adopted. Speaker will attach his signature to the report.

7. Follow-up of the Report

The speaker takes up item by item the decisions taken in the previous meeting as reported by the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and asks if they are implemented. To which each minister concerned and the members respond.

8. Finance Minister's Report

The Finance Minister presents the accounts.

9. Passing of the Finance Report

The speaker now asks the house to pass the Finance Report as described above in the case of the Report of the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs.

10. Input session or formation session.

Some theme or issue will be taken up for discussion every week. The theme can be taken from this handbook or from any other source material.

Such sessions can be conducted either by one of the children who has done the preparation for it, or by another competent guide in the field of neighbourhood parliaments, who would be informed of it well in advance.

11. Group Song

12. Discussion on the theme

13. Report of the Ministers

Ministers of various concerns can present reports that may include the status and needs of their respective concerns. It is not necessary that all ministers should talk at every meeting.

14. Jokes, riddles, singing, dance, etc

These items can take place between the reports of the ministers. That would give a bit of respite from the monotony of reports and speeches. All entertainments should not be ex-tempore. The participants can volunteer during the previous meeting and must come prepared.

15. General Knowledge Session

This session may be conducted as a quiz programme without competition.

16. Useful Information

The children could come prepared to share useful information gathered from various sources like, newspaper, books, children's periodicals and reviews, television, radio etc.

17. Collection of Subscription

18. Group Games

19. Compiling of decisions, writing of petitions if any.

20. Vote of Thanks.

21. Anthem

(It is not necessary that all the above should be followed in the order given nor is it necessary to complete all the above items in one meeting. According to the needs and

circumstance, a few of the items can be omitted and new items if called for can be included.)

The Structure of the Sessions

A circular form of sitting must be followed. When seated in a circle, every member can see everyone else face to face. Such a seating arrangement will ensure that all members have equal chance for interaction and participation.

If chairs are given, all should have a chair each to sit or else all must sit together in a circle on the floor. This is meant to ensure equality. No special sitting arrangement is provided for the speaker, the Prime Minister or any other Minister.

If grown-ups i.e. those who are above 18 years take part in the meeting, as visitors or guests they also should sit along with the members in the same equal order. In case someone is unable to sit the way the children are seated, they may be given a chair.

CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENTS AT VARIOUS LEVELS

The Children's Parliaments function at the following levels.

- Neighbourhood Parliament of Children
- Village (area) Parliament of Children
- Panchayat Parliament of Children
- Block Parliament of Children
- District Parliament of Children
- State Parliament of Children
- National Parliament of Children
- International Zonal Parliament of Children
- World Parliament of Children

Neighbourhood Parliament of Children

Neighbourhood Parliament of Children is the basic unit of the chain of children's parliaments. All the children without exception are members of this level of parliament. As mentioned earlier, this level parliament comprises of 30 families or thereabout.

Every neighbourhood parliament has ministers for various concerns.

As soon as a neighbourhood children's parliament is formed, it should be brought to the notice of the Village (or area) Parliament of Children and get registered as a federated part of the village or local parliament.

Sufficient members of Neighbourhood Parliament of Children must be elected and sent to the village or local parliament. It is the duty and obligation of the elected representatives to attend the higher level parliament.

Village or Area Parliament

Village or area parliament is the level II parliament of children. It is formed with the representatives of all the neighbourhood children's parliaments within the village or local designated area.

If the village is too large for a single small-sized Village Parliament of Children, then the village is divided into two or more areas. Each area may consist of about ten neighbourhood parliaments. However, if there are more than 15 neighbourhood parliaments in a village, it is better to form two area parliaments. In the same manner, some villages may form six or seven area children's parliaments.

Each Neighbourhood Parliament of Children may send five of their representatives to the area or village parliament. If the village or area has a large number of NPCs the number of representatives can be reduced to two or three.

As in the NPCs, each area or village parliament will also have a Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Finance Minister and ministers for various concerns.

The area parliament should meet at least once a month. The meetings can be conducted in a public place such as school, campus of worshipping places or in the premises of a government office.

Panchayat Children's Parliament

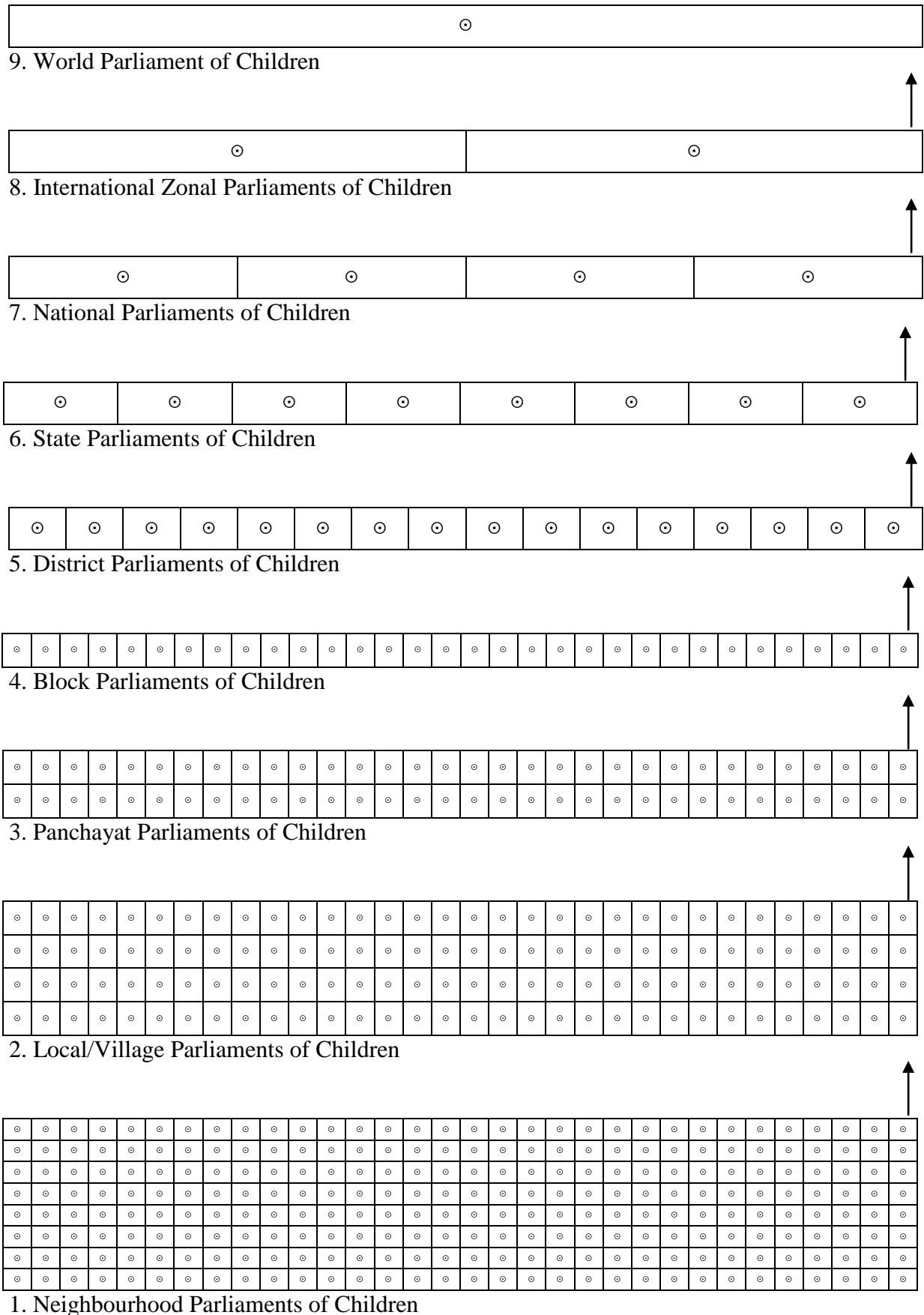
Just as village parliament is formed with the representatives of the NPCs, Panchayat Parliament of Children is formed with the representatives of village or area parliaments.

Panchayat Parliaments of Children will also meet once every month.

At Other Levels

As the formation of higher levels of children's parliaments takes place, the process is repeated at every level: the representatives of the lower levels will form the higher level of parliament; ministers will be elected for various concerns; meetings will be convened at the stipulated intervals; etc.

Diagram of Various Levels



REQUIREMENTS OF THE NCP AND EVENTS/PROGRAMMES RELATED TO THEM

Each NPC should possess certain articles. Similarly some events are integral parts of the NPC.

Requirements

1. Attendance register
2. Minutes book
3. Account books
4. Letterheads
5. Stamps and inkpads
6. Files for plans
7. Files containing important documents
8. Children's parliament journals
9. Visitors' book: It is a journal for special guests and invitees to register their appreciation, opinions and suggestions besides their name, address and contact telephone numbers.
10. Photo album of the neighbourhood (to be built up gradually as time passes).
11. Notice board (Information, notices, sayings, quotes, news clippings, etc. can be displayed here. A sense of art is required to arrange and maintain a notice board.)
12. Books pertaining to children's parliament and periodicals.
13. Games equipments such as carom boards, skipping ropes, balls, nets, bats etc.

All these expenditures will require funds. Then the question arises: "Where will the funds come from?"

Each NCP has subscriptions and savings. The members can request their parents and other grown-ups to sponsor them. Panchayat ward members can be approached to use their good offices to get funds released from the Panchayat.

Programmes and Events

The following events and programmes take place in each NPC every year.

- Arts day for children
- Talent hunting day
- Participatory planning by children using Participatory Learning Action (PLA) techniques
- Park Maintenance
- Exhibition (of information, pictures and paintings, handicrafts, etc, collected by children. The exhibition can be evolved into a permanent exhibition as the years go by. The exhibition will be about children's issues and common concerns)
- Birthday celebrations
- Cultural and religious festivals
- International days
- Publication of annuals

**REQUIREMENTS OF THE PARLIAMENTS AT OTHER LEVELS
AND
EVENTS/PROGRAMMES RELATED TO THEM**

Meetings

At Area Level

- Invocation
- Nomination of the Speaker
- Welcome address (by Prime Minister)
- Roll call (by Deputy Prime Minister)
- Presenting the report (by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Discussion and passing of the report (by Speaker)
- Presenting the reports of the NPCs (by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Discussion on the report of the NPCs
- Local level ministers' reports
- Discussion on the above reports
- Ministrywise compilation of resolutions (By Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Group games/Training session
 - Disaster management
 - Importance of *gramasabhas*
 - Panchayat awareness
 - Responsibilities of school authorities
- Writing petitions if any such decision is taken
- Vote of thanks
- Anthem

At Panchayat Level

- Invocation
- Nomination of the Speaker
- Welcome address (by Prime Minister)
- Roll call (by Deputy Prime Minister)
- Panchayat parliament report (by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Discussion on the report
- Presenting the finance report (by Finance Minister)
- Discussion on the report
- Reports of the area parliaments (by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Discussion on the above report
- Group song
- Report of the ministries concerned
- Discussion on the above report.
- Compiling the decisions
- Group game
- Collection of headline news
- Training session
 - Violation of children's rights
 - Welfare schemes of the government
 - Child helpline
 - Responsibilities and duties of the ministers

- RTI, Right to Information Law
- Law on children's rights
- Participation and involvement
- Gender discrimination
- Writing petitions
- Vote of thanks
- Anthem

At Block Level

- Invocation
- Nomination of the Speaker
- Welcome address (by Prime Minister)
- Roll call (by Deputy Prime Minister)
- Block parliament report (by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Discussion on the report
- Presenting the finance report (by Finance Minister)
- Discussion on the report
- Group song
- Reports of the panchayat parliaments (by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Discussion on the above report
- Reports of the ministries concerned
- Discussion on the above reports.
- Compiling the decisions
- Group game
- Training session
 - Neighbourhood communities
 - People's participation
 - Child helpline
 - Violation of children's rights
 - RTI, Right to Information Law
 - Law on children's rights
 - Duties and responsibilities of ministers
 - Government welfare schemes at block level
- Writing petitions
- Collection of headline news
- Information from district parliament
- Vote of thanks
- Anthem

At District Level

- Invocation
- Nomination of the Speaker
- Welcome address (by Prime Minister)
- Roll call (by Deputy Prime Minister)
- District parliament report (by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Discussion on the report
- Reports of the block parliaments (by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs)
- Discussion on the above report

- Group song
- Reports of different ministries concerned
- Discussion on the above reports.
- Information from the state parliament
- Group game
- Training session
 - Duties of children
 - Rights of children
 - Sociocratic election method
 - Planning of students participation and personality development
 - RTI, Right to Information Law
 - Disaster management
 - New dream for world governance
 - Child helpline
 - Violence against children
 - Attitudes of children
 - Herbal medicines
- Vote of thanks
- Anthem

Festivals and Celebrations

At Local Level

- Oath-taking
- Children's day
- Children's parliament day
- Children's parliament cultural day
 - Village level music festival
 - Village level dance festival
 - Village level art festival

At Panchayat Level

- Oath-taking
- Children's parliament day
- Independence day
- Gramasabha
- State festival (*like Onam in Kerala, Pongal in Tamilnadu, Holi in UP, Haryana, Punjab, etc*)
- New year day
- Felicitation to child achievers

At Block Level

- Oath-taking
- Children's parliament day

At District Level

- Oath-taking
- Arts day
- Religious harmony festival
- *Bala mela*
- Picnic, outing, etc

Required Articles

At Local Level

- Sports equipments
- Notice board
- Office for the parliament
- Space for the parliament sessions
- Journals on children's parliament
- Letterheads
- Stamp and inkpad
- Identity card
- Minutes book
- Attendance register
- File of decisions
- File of important documents

At Panchayat Level

- Minutes book
- Attendance register
- Letterheads
- Stamp and inkpad
- Files

At Block Level

- Minutes book
- Attendance register
- Identity card
- Letterhead
- Stamp and inkpad
- Files

Things to Do

At Local Level

- Sending news items to the regional journal of children's parliament (by Minister for Communication)
- Drawing up of plans for disaster management
- Fund Raising for children's parliament
- Permanent exhibitions

- Awareness related to disaster management
- Children's rights
- Children's responsibilities
- Anti-alcoholism
- HIV/AIDS
- Environment protection
- Safety and security of children

At Panchayat Level

- Exhibitions
- Conference of ministers
- Rallies and human chains, etc
 - Awareness related to disaster management
 - Children's rights
 - Children's responsibilities
 - Anti-alcoholism
 - HIV/AIDS
 - Environment protection
 - Safety and security of children

At Block Level

- Training on protection of environment
- Camps on alcoholism
- Exhibition for awareness on HIV/AIDS
- Conference of ministers

At District Level

- Congress of children
- Rally
 - Anti-alcoholism
 - Awareness on HIV/AIDS
 - Protection of environment
- Felicitation to child achievers
- Exhibition handicrafts and works by children
- Conference of ministers

Preparing for Meeting at Various Levels

It is important to prepare for the meetings at various levels.

Preparation for a meeting is learning to be professional about what one does. Chances do not create orderly behaviour nor produce quality.

While preparing for an event it is necessary that some time is spent in planning. Write down all the requirement and assign duties. Good planners will envisage all the possible things that could happen and all the persons needed and all the needs that will arise at the meeting etc. (even the smallest requirement like paper, pen etc)

Besides, we should understand that a well run meeting is never noticed but a meeting that went wrong will be remembered and criticised. Therefore, it is better to imagine the things that could go wrong and be prepared for all eventualities.

Even writing a report is organising ideas, events and things in an order. Let us take for an example: The Minister of Education is preparing a report. This report will not only be read at the level in which it was reported, but it will be the same report that would go up to the next level. Salient points will be culled and become part of a higher level report. It is possible that the national level report will reflect or will carry the important elements in the neighbourhood level.

SUGGESTIONS TO GENERATE ENTHUSIASM

We give below a few suggestions in order to make children more interested in taking part in the parliament. You may choose these or any other according to your talent or the need of the time.

- Organize entertaining events like *Bal Mela* every month.
- Narrate success stories of children of other parliaments.
- Include entertainments in the agenda of every parliament session.
- Conduct programmes or sessions that would motivate children.
- Analyse with children things, events, etc, to create an analytic mind in them.
- Take out children for training and exposure programmes.
- Use learning games.
- Conduct training programmes during holidays
- Conduct talent shows and quiz programmes.
- Organize leadership training and motivation-building programmes.
- Take children out for picnics and study tours.
- Conduct games or sports during festive holidays.
- Provide them useful books and journals.
- Conduct classes to instil self-confidence.
- Celebrate various festivals.
- Train the children to conscientize people regarding social evils through entertaining programmes like street plays, puppetry, folk songs, etc.
- Think of creative parliament sessions and discuss with children on possibilities for innovations.
- Use interesting teaching methods.
- Organize public service programmes for children to take part in. Services like cleaning the streets, clearing playgrounds or the worship places.
- Screen instructive and educative movies and documentaries from time to time.
- Acknowledge leadership qualities in children and give opportunities for them to take initiatives or exercise leadership.
- Organize interactive learning session with religious, social and political leaders.
- Organize cultural days.
- Initiate small saving programmes among the children.
- Organize contact programmes with children of other neighbourhoods and peers of other villages.
- Organize meeting of children ministers engaged in the same concern. Example a congress of education ministers of the district, panchayat etc.
- Organize meetings with parents three or four times a year.
- Engage the children in conducting census/statistics centred around social and economic themes of the neighbourhood.
- Organize an occasional sharing of success stories.
- Acknowledge and appreciate achievements and initiatives of children.
- Celebrate birthdays of children (preferably on a particular day of the week when they have the meeting).

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations are occasions to rejoice over one's being, life, individuality and unique character. It is also an opportunity to rejoice in the relationship the group has with the individual.

Birthday is an occasion when one feels good and grateful about himself or herself in the thought that others are happy about him or her.

Birthday celebrations may be held in the neighbourhood parliament in the following manner.

Each child may write on a paper one good quality of the child celebrating birthday. Then each child reads out what is written. This will make the birthday child happy and confident. This is the best gift we can present him or her with. Finally the group may sing a birthday song.

The children can do the same in various other ways.

For example: the children can make a garland out of the slips of paper where they have written the good qualities of the birthday celebrant, and put it around his/her neck.

Each child may present the birthday child a flower; while presenting, he or she can say one good quality of the birthday child aloud.

You may add also cultural item at each birthday celebration.

FORMATION PROGRAMMES ON VALUES AND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

The following formation programmes will be useful to the children.

- Training in goal setting
- Training for leadership and personality development
- Formation to parents and formation from parents.
- Value education training
- Formation of Association for Children's Rights
- Social Awareness Training Programmes
- Moral education classes through interesting programmes
- Introducing Spheres/Areas of Activities for children
- Talent hunting
- Sex Education in groups according to age
- Training in Group Dynamics
- Training in Street plays
- Life Guidance Education
- Training in Children's Duties and Responsibilities
- Training in General Etiquette
- Training in Social Communication.
- Training in Saving Habits
- Training in writing stories, essays and poems
- Training children in the use of public libraries
- Training to evaluate activities
- Training in gardening
- Training in understanding of different cultures
- Training to celebrate world days
- Social orientation courses
- Social Analysis Training
- Training in dealing with various social issues
- Training in music and art
- Introducing children to different methodologies used in education
- Training in cooperation for implementing government schemes
- Training in spreading the concept of children's parliament and finding promoters
- Training to prepare for children's events like *Bala Mela* (children's festivals)
- Training to promote peace
- Counselling

APPENDIX

Songs for Use as Entertainment or Party Songs

It is advisable every animator keeps a collection of songs that could help to inspire or enliven Children's Parliaments. Here we give a few samples.

If you're happy

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands. (clap clap)
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands. (clap clap)
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it;
If you're happy and you know it clap your hands. (clap clap)

If you're happy and you know it tap your toe. (tap tap)
If you're happy and you know it tap your toe. (tap tap)
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it;
If you're happy and you know it tap your toe. (tap tap)

If you're happy and you know it nod your head. (nod nod)
If you're happy and you know it nod your head. (nod nod)
If you're happy and you know it then your face will surely show it;
If you're happy and you know it nod your head. (nod nod)

Oh, when the saints

Intro: We are trav'ling in the footsteps
Of those who've gone before
And we'll all be reunited,
On a new and sunlit shore,

Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Oh, when the saints go marching in
Lord how I want to be in that number
When the saints go marching in

And when the sun begins to shine
And when the sun begins to shine
Lord, how I want to be in that number
When the sun begins to shine

Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Oh, when the saints go marching in
Lord how I want to be in that number
When the saints go marching in

Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call
Oh, when the trumpet sounds its call
Lord, how I want to be in that number
When the trumpet sounds its call

Oh, when the saints go marching in,
Oh, when the saints go marching in
Lord how I want to be in that number
When the saints go marching in

Come from Holland Come from Poland
Come from any land
Come from England Come from Scotland
Come from Ireland
If you want have a pleasant holiday
Come to Bombay Come to Bombay
Bombay merry hai
Bom (4) Bombay merry hai (2)
Our ladies are nice Gents are full of spice
Come to Bombay (2) Bombay hurray
Bel puri Shev puri you will like it well
Idli dosa hot samosa you will like it well
Once you come to Bombay you'll never go away
Come to Bombay (2) Bombay hurray

I've got joy

I've got joy down in my heart
Deep deep down in my heart
JoY is down in my heart
Deep deep down in my heart
God has put it there and no one can
Destroy destroy destroy.

Bombai se aya mera

Bombai se aya mera dost dost ko salam karo
Raat ko khao peeo Din ko aarraam karo
Va va va va va va va va va va va va va va va va (2)
Dost ke liye maine cigarette mangvaayi
Beedi peenewala dost Dost ko salaam karo
Dost ke liye maine Whisky mangwayi
Country peenewala dost Dost ko salam karo

Darling open the door

Darling open the door darling open the door
Why are you angry so (2)
I'll take you to Dadar and show you my father
Why are you angry so?
I'll take you to Delhi and show you my belly
Why are you angry so?
If you want to come my darling do not come at one
My dada will be waiting with a double barrel gun

In the morning in the morning
In the morning by the sea (2)
Re ma ma Re ma ma Re (2)
Hum to gaye bazaar me lene ko aalu
Aalu gilu kuch na mila peeche pada baalu
Hum to gaye bazaar me lene ko Roti
Roti geeti kuch na mila peeche padi moti

Old MacDonald

Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o
And on his farm he had some chicks
Ee i ee i o
With a cluck-cluck here
And a cluck-cluck there
Here a cluck, there a cluck
Everywhere a cluck-cluck
Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o

Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o
And on his farm he had some cows
Ee i ee i oh
With a moo-moo here
And a moo-moo there
Here a moo, there a moo
Everywhere a moo-moo
Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o

Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o
And on his farm he had some pigs
Ee i ee i o
With an oink-oink here
And an oink-oink there
Here an oink, there an oink
Everywhere an oink-oink
Old MacDonald had a farm
Ee i ee i o
Add in other animals that you teach on the farm like :
dogs - woof-woof
cat - meow-meow
sheeps - baa-baa
horses - neigh-neigh

This Old Man

This old man, he played one;
He played knick-knack on my thumb.

With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played two;
He played knick-knack on my shoe.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played three;
He played knick-knack on my knee.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played four;
He played knick-knack on my door.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played five;
He played knick-knack on my hive.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played six;
He played knick-knack on my sticks.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played seven;
He played knick-knack up in heaven.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played eight;
He played knick-knack on my gate.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played nine;
He played knick-knack on my spine.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played ten;
He played knick-knack once again.
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

Doggie in the Window

How much is that doggie in the window (bow wow)
The one with the waggely tail,
How much is that doggie in the window,
I do hope that doggie's for sale.

I must take a trip to California
And leave my poor sweet heart alone,
If she has a dog, she won't be lonesome,
And the doggie will have a good home.

I read in the papers there are robbers
With flash lights that shine in the dark
My love needs a doggie to protect her,
And scare them away with one bark.

I don't want a bunny or a kitten,
I don't want a parrot that talks.
I don't want a bowl of little fishes,
For you can't take a gold-fish for a walk.

Home on the Range

Oh give me a home
Where the buffalo roam
Where the deer and the antelope play where seldom is heard
A discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Chorus

Home, home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play
Where seldom is heard
A discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

Oh give me a land
Where the bright
Diamond sand
Flows leisurely down the stream.
Where the graceful white swan
Goes gliding along
Like a maid in a heavenly dream.

How often at night

When the heavens are bright,
With the light of the glittering stars
Have I stood there amazed
And asked as I gazed
If there's glory, which exceeds that of ours.

Where the air is so pure
And the zephyrs so free
And the breeze is so balmy and bright
I would not exchange my home on the range
For all of your cities so bright.

It's a Long Way to Tipperary

It's a long way to Tipperary
It's a long way to go
It's a long way to Tipperary,
To the sweetest girl I know,
God bless her.
Good-bye Piccadilly,
Farewell Leceister Square
But my heart's right there.

In the Army

The food in the army
They say is mighty fine
You ask for biryani,
They give you intestine.

Chorus

Oh, I don't want no more of army life
Gee boy, I want to go,
Oh boy I want to go,
Show me the way to go home.

The pay in the army
They say is mighty fine
They give you fifty dollars
And take back forty nine

The biscuits in the army
They say are mighty fine
One rolled off the table
And crushed a toe of mine.

The coffee in the army
They say is mighty fine
It's used for cuts and bruises
And tastes like iodine.

The movies in the army

They say are mighty fine
You ask for Brigitte Bardot
They give you Frankenstein.

The shoes in the army
They say are mighty fine
You ask for No. 7
They give you No. 9.

The life in the army
They say is mighty fine
If you're going on 27
You're dead by 29.

My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

My Bonnie lies over the ocean,
My bonnie lies over the sea,
My Bonnie lies over the ocean,
O bring back my Bonnie to me.

Chorus Bring back, O bring back,
O bring my Bonnie to me, to me,
Bring back, O bring back
O bring back my Bonnie to me.

Last night as I lay on my pillow,
Last night as I lay on my bed.
Last night as I lay on my pillow,
I dreamt that my Bonnie was dead.

O blow ye winds over the ocean,
O blow ye winds over the sea,
O blow ye winds over the ocean,
And bring back my Bonnie to me.

Oh Susana

I came from Alabama wid a banjo on my knee,
I'm going to Louisiana my true love for to see,
It rained all night the day I left the weather it was dry.
The sun so hot froze to death Susana, don't you cry.

Chorus
Hi Susana, oh don't you cry for me,
I've come from Alabama, wid my banjo on my knee.

I had a dream the other night,
When everything was still;
I thought I saw Susana,
A-coming down the hill;
The buck wheat cake was in her mouth,

A tear was in her eye,
Says I : I'm coming from the South,
Susana, don't you cry.

Oh You Can't Go to Heaven

Repeat each verse in chorus ending with
(And I don't agree with the Lord no more)

Oh, you can't go to heaven
On roller skates
Cos you;ll go right past
Those pearly gates

Oh you can't go to heaven
In a limousine
Cos the Lord ain't got
No gasoline

Oh you can't go to heaven
In a old ford car
Cos an old ford car
Can't go that far

Oh you can't go to heaven
In a boeing jet
Cos the lord ain't got
No runway yet

Oh you can't go to heaven
With a bottle of gin
Cos the Lord don't want
No drunkards in.

If you go to heaven
Before I do
Just bore a little hole
And pull me through

But if I go to heaven
Before you I do
I'll plug that hole
And to hell with you.

Pontius Pilate King of the Jews

Pontius Pilate King of the Jews, parles vous (2)
Pointus Pilate king of the Jews
Sold his wife for a pair of shoes
Inky, pinky parles vous

When the shoes began to tear parles vous (2)
When the shoes began to tear

Pointus Pilate bought a mare.
Inky Pinky parles vous

When the mare began to kick parles vous (2)
When the mare began to kick
Pointus Pilate bought a stick

When the stick began to break parles vous (2)
When the stick began to break
Pointus Pilate bought a snake
Inky Pinky parles vous

When the snake began to sting parles vous (2)
When the snake began to sting
Pointus pilate bought a ring
Inky Pinky parles vous

But when the ring began to rust parles vous (2)
When the ring began to rust
Pointus Pilate turned to dust
Inky Pinky parles vous.

The Woodpeckers Song

He's up each morning bright and early
To wake up all the neighbourhood,
To bring to every boy and girlie
His happy serenade on wood.

Hear him picking out a melody
Peck, peck pecking at the same old tree
He's as happy as a bumble bee
All day along

To keep your hearts quite happy
Just find a tree that's shady
And when you hear that tick-a-tick
Tick-a-tick
Sing right along

Come on and try his rhythm
And let your heart beat with him,
Just listen to that tick-a-tick,
Tick a tick, tick,
Happy little wood-pecker's song.

We Shall Not Be Moved

We're on our way to heaven
We shall not be moved (2)
Just like the tree that's
Standing by the waterside

We shall not be moved.

Chorus

We shall not, we shall not be moved (2)
Just like a tree that's
Standing by the waterside
We shall not be moved

2. On that road to freedom
We shall not be moved.
3. We're brothers together,
We shall not be moved.

Big and Small

Big and small
Big and small
Goliath was big and David small
Big and small
Big and small
Goliath was big and David small

Trust in God
Trust in God
He'll take care of you so trust in God
Trust in God
Trust in God
He'll take care of you so trust in God

David and the Giant

There once was a giant who wanted to fight
God's chosen people
All were scared and wanted to hide,
Then out came David.

David was a small shepherd,
But he trusted God
He took a sling and five little stones
Down fell the giant.

Here We Go Round the Jericho Wall

Here we go round the Jericho wall
Jericho wall, Jericho wall
Here we go round the Jericho wall
Early in the morning

2. This is the way we blow our horns
3. This is the way we quietly walk

4. This is the way we shout really loud
5. This is the way the walls fall down

Please tell us the names of the Children Ministers of the State Parliament of Children of Tamilnadu.

We give below the names of the present ministers and deputy ministers at state level.

MINISTERS

Department	Name of the Minister	District of the Minister
Prime Minister	Paul Thomas	Dindigul
Deputy Prime Minister	Sumathy	Salem
Home Minister	Muthu Selva Ganesh	Theni
Parliamentary Affairs	Selvanathan	Nagapattanam
Finance	Damodharan	Thanjavur
Public Works	Revathi	Tirunelveli
Law	Satyaraj	Vellore
Communication	Jayalakshmi	Chennai
Health	Nithya	Cuddalore
Environment	Monica	Karur
Defence	Suresh	Erode
Food	Banupriya	Kancheepuram
Sports & Games	Ramesh	Perambalur
Arts and Culture	Nagajyoti	Coimbatore
Welfare	Sangeetha	Madurai
Social Welfare		

DEPUTY MINISTERS

Home	Idaya	Thoothukudi
Finance	Prema	Thiruvannamalai
Education	Ramya	Pudukottai
Welfare	Arokiaraj Manikam	Tiruchi
Law	Gayatri	Villupuram
Defence	Nivolin	Puducherry
Social Welfare	Prabhat	Ramanathapuram
Food	Arjun	Viruthunagar
Health	Govinda Raj	Dharmapuri