



**Guidelines for organizing**

# **CHILD FRIENDLY**

## **MELAS & LARGE GATHERINGS**

**An initiative of**  
**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION**  
**OF CHILD RIGHTS (NCPCR)**

**2017**





## Foreword

Due to the magnitude and attraction of celebrations like ‘**Melas**’ and large gatherings of people come in multitudes including children. Since lakhs of people participate in such events, including several children, it is pertinent to highlight that many children reportedly go missing or get lost and separated from their families/guardians during these Melas, in which they are vulnerable and at high risk of falling prey to trafficking, kidnapping, sexual exploitation and abuse. It is therefore of utmost importance to create a child friendly environment or Child Friendly Mela.

The document is a step in a direction with an objective to; provide indicators to organizers, administrators and other stakeholders for organizing Child Friendly Mela or Large gathering. These Guidelines has been formulated after two successful pilot (1) Krishna Pushkaram, Andhra Pradesh (2) Poush Mela, West Bengal and in consultation with all the concerned Ministries/Departments and stakeholders.

I am extremely happy to acknowledge the strenuous work done by the Commission and all the stakeholders and immense personal contribution made by Ms. Rupa Kapoor, Member, NCPCR and her team.

I am certain that these Guidelines will help all the stakeholders including State Government, local authorities and organizers/administrators in planning and making melas and large gatherings Child Friendly by implementing all the indicators given.

We hope that the Guidelines for organizing Child Friendly Melas & Large gatherings prepared in consultation with the concerned Ministries/Departments /Organizations will be used as a tool by all the States/UTs for organizing any Melas & large gatherings in their respective States/UTs.



(Stuti Kacker)

## Acknowledgements

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) acknowledges the valuable suggestions/feedbacks/inputs received from various Ministries/Departments/Organizations viz; Childline India Foundation; Ministry of Women and Child Development, Department of Telecommunications, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Science & Technology. I acknowledge and express my sincere thanks to each participating Ministry/Organization.

I express my sincere gratitude to Ms. Stuti Kacker, Hon'ble Chairperson, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), for her active involvement, guidance and support during the entire process of the drafting of Guidelines.

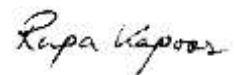
Acknowledgements are also to my colleagues Shri. Priyank Kanoongo, Member Education and his team, Sh. Yashwant Jain, Member, Laws relating to children, for their valuable inputs.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the active role of Sh. Gandham Chandrudu, Joint Collector & Additional District Magistrate, District Krishna, Andhra Pradesh for in making Krishna Pushkaran, Child Friendly Mela. Also wants to acknowledge efforts of Sh. P.Mohangandhi, District Magistrate, Birbhum, West Bengal in successfully piloting Child Friendly Mela at Shantiniketan as Poush Mela, 2016.

I am also grateful to Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal State Commission for Protection of Child Rights for their support and supervision in successfully piloting Child Friendly Mela in their respective states.

My sincere thanks to Ms. Geeta Sekhon, Consultant for her valuable inputs.

I am extremely grateful to my team member Ms. Shaista K Shah, Senior Technical Expert for her relentless work on these Guidelines.



**Rupa Kapoor**

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## List of Abbreviations

MWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child
NCPCR	National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
SCPCR	State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
CPCR	Commissions for Protection of Child Rights
GOI	Government of India
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
IEC	Information Education and Communication
RPF	Railway Protection Force
HIV	Human Immuno-deficiency Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
SP	Superintendent of Police
AHTU	Anti Human Trafficking Unit
SJPU	Special Juvenile Police Unit
DCPU	District Child Protection Unit
DCPO	District Child Protection Officer
PWD	Persons with Disabilities
PSUs	Public Sector Undertaking
CSRs	Corporate Social Responsibility
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution

## Introduction

India, land of spirituality and philosophy, is home to large number of religious and mass gatherings and pilgrimages such as Kumbh melas, Ardh Kumbh mela, Rath Yatra etc. Many of these gatherings attract millions of people from most parts of the country and also across the world. The influx of millions of pilgrims/visitors during such gatherings creates tremendous amount of pressure on their host cities and organizers with the result that any kind of disaster in those gatherings ends in widespread human and infrastructure impact. Some of the big fairs/mass gatherings in India are Pushkar fair, Baneshwar fair, Gangasagar fair, Tarnetar Mela, Chaitre Chaudash mela, Nagaur fair etc.

**Mela** is a Sanskrit word meaning '**gathering**' or 'to meet' or a '**fair**'. It is used in the Indian subcontinent for all sizes of gatherings and can be religious, commercial, cultural or sport-related etc. In rural traditions melas or village fairs were (and in some cases still are) of great importance. This led to their export around the world by South Asian diaspora communities wishing to bring something of that tradition to their new countries.

In recent times "Mela" also popularly refers to shows and exhibitions. It can be theme-based, promoting a particular culture, art or skill. Generally in "melas" people can find eateries, entertainment activities, shops and games.

Due to the magnitude and attraction of celebrations like '**Melas**' and large gatherings of people come in multitudes including children. Since lakhs of people participate in such events, including several children, it is pertinent to highlight that many children reportedly go missing or get lost and separated from their families/carers during these Melas, in which they are vulnerable and at high risk of falling prey to trafficking, kidnapping, sexual exploitation and abuse. It is therefore of utmost importance to create a child friendly environment or Child Friendly Mela.

## Definition of Child Friendly

According to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2015, *“Child Friendly” means any behaviour, conduct, practice, process, attitude, environment or treatment that is humane, considerate and in the best interest of the child.*”

A Child Friendly Mela should enable a safe space, which would ensure the right to child’s **Recreation, Protection and Participation**. In order to make it effective the Mela Organiser or event planner has to be sensitive to the needs of a child so that a system can be created for effective implementation.

Thus a need was felt by the Commission to develop **Child Friendly Mela** guidelines for making melas/large gatherings safe for our children.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) took an early initiative, a first of its kind, to make **“Simhasth Kumbh mela”**, at Ujjain, M.P (April 22nd to May 21st 2016) a Child Friendly Mela, in which approx 5 Crore (50 Millions) pilgrims from all walks participated. The said mela was declared **Child Friendly** by Hon’ble Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh.



## About National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) was established in March 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005, an Act of Parliament (December 2005). The Commission's mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programmes, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective, as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Child is defined as a person in 0 to 18 years age group.

The Commission visualizes a rights-based perspective flowing into National Policies and Programmes, along with nuanced responses at the State, District and Block levels, taking care of specificities and strengths of each region. In order to reach to each child, it seeks a deeper penetration to communities and households and expects that the ground experiences gathered at the field are taken into consideration by all the authorities at the higher level. Thus the Commission envisage an indispensable role for the State, sound institution-building processes, respect for decentralization at the local bodies and community level and larger societal concern for children and their well-being.

According to Section 13(d) of the CPCRA Act, 2005, one of the roles of the Commission is to examine all factors that inhibit the enjoyment of rights of children affected by terrorism, communal violence, riots, natural disaster, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, trafficking, maltreatment, torture and exploitation, pornography and prostitution and recommend appropriate remedial measures;

The NCPCR strives to protect children by preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children – including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour and harmful traditional practices, such as child marriage.

Commission's programmes also target children who are vulnerable to abuses; such as children living without parental care, in conflict with the law etc. Violations of the child's right to protection increase during natural disasters, calamities, large scale events like Melas etc. The Commission strives to create a protective environment, where children are safe from violence, exploitation, and unnecessary separation from family; and where laws, services, and practices minimize children's vulnerability, address known risk factors, and strengthen children's own resilience.

Children subjected to violence, exploitation, abuse and neglect are at risk of death, poor physical and mental health, HIV/AIDS infection, educational problems, displacement, homelessness, vagrancy and poor parenting skills later in life.

## Objectives

- 1) Ensuring **‘Safety and Security’** of Children during large scale gatherings such as Melas/Fairs/Events etc.
- 2) Framing indicators for making such large scale events **‘Child Friendly’** to ensure zero tolerance for any violation of child rights and child protection
- 3) Fixing accountability of the concerned officials to ensure **zero tolerance** w.r.t the indicators outlined by the Commission for such melas/large scale gatherings thereby facilitating smooth logistic coordination and ensuring safety & security of children during such events.
- 4) Leveraging technological innovations to promote **“Child Friendliness”** during such Melas. For example; using bar coding technique and other available technological medium to prevent and track missing children.
- 5) To ensure optimal usage of all available information and communication channels for making such events **‘Child Friendly’** such as: Audio visuals, banners, posters, announcements etc.
- 6) To create gender sensitive and **Child-Centred; Child Friendly** environment for promoting child participation at melas and large gatherings.
- 7) To ensures a healthy, hygienic, and safe environment, with adequate water and sanitation facilities and healthy practices (e.g., a Mela/ large scale gatherings free of drugs/Harmful substances, violence, Child labour, Child trafficking, and harassment), and to arrange provisioning of health/medical services and nutritional supplementation and counseling.
- 8) **Establishing a Child Rights Desk:** To increase awareness about Child Rights and entitlements under laws, creation of a Child Rights Desk for dissemination of information on existing laws/schemes/policies available for children.
- 9) To ensure convergence of various stakeholders viz. various Departments of State Governments and District Administration with NGOs etc.
- 10) Encourage Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)/ Corporate Social Responsibility (CSRs) to partner in sponsoring various aspects of Child Friendliness during such Melas.
- 11) Provide **positive experiences** to make children excited such melas/gatherings, where they can feel welcome and safe.
- 12) **Creating an inclusive environment** for such melas/gatherings thereby making them friendly for Children with Special Needs.
- 13) **To encourage active involvement and participation of children.**

## Indicators

To ensure **zero tolerance** for any violation of child rights and child protection, the following indicators have been framed for making such large scale events ‘**Child Friendly**’

1. **Ensure Child Friendly set up (Police Station, Children corners, separate toilets etc)**
2. **No Missing Children**
3. **No Physical and sexual abuse against children**
4. **No Child Trafficking**
5. **No Child labour**
6. **No Child Begging**
7. **No harmful traditional practices, such as Child Marriage etc**
8. **No Harmful Substances**
9. **Safe Drinking Water and Proper Hygiene and Sanitation Measures**
10. **Emergency/First Aid/Medical Care and linkage with nearby hospital/PHC**
11. **Disaster Preparedness**
12. **Nutrition Awareness**
13. **Maintenance of Law and Order**

## Definitions

### Missing Children:

The Hon'ble Court (BACHPAN BACHAO ANDOLAN Petitioner(s) VERSUS UNION OF INDIA & ORS) has defined Missing children as "a person below 18 years of age whose whereabouts are not known to the parents, legal guardians or any other person who may be legally entrusted with the custody of knowing the whereabouts/well being of the child whatever may be the circumstances/causes of disappearance. The child will be considered missing and in need of care and protection, until located and/or his/her safety/well being is established"

### Sexual offences against children:

**The POCSO Act 2012** ".Penetrative and aggravated penetrative sexual assault, sexual and aggravated sexual assault, sexual harassment, and using a child for pornographic purposes are the five offences against children that are covered by this act. This act envisages punishing even abetment or an attempt to commit the offences defined in the act. It recognizes that the intent to commit an offence, even when unsuccessful needs to be penalized. The punishment for the attempt to commit is up to half the punishment prescribed for the commission of the offence

### Begging

As per the sec 2 (8) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015; Begging means any child soliciting or receiving alms in a public place or entering into any private premises for the purpose of soliciting or receiving alms under any pretence or exposing or exhibiting with the object or obtaining or extorting alms, any sore, wound, injury, deformity or disease, whether of himself or of any other person or of an animal.

### Child Marriage:

Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006 - bars the marriage of girls below 18 years and boys below 21 year but compliance is low and needs strict monitoring. A child marriage is void if the child is taken away from their lawful guardian by enticement, force or use of deceitful means or is sold or trafficked for the purpose of marriage. The Courts have the power to issue injunctions to prevent child marriages from taking place. The solemnization of child marriages is a cognizable and non-bailable offence.

### Child Labour

**The Child Labour (Prohibition And Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016-** prohibits employment of adolescents aged between 14 and 18 in any of the hazardous occupations or processes set forth in the



Schedule. The hazardous occupations and processes include mines, inflammable substances or explosives, and hazardous process as defined in clause (cb) of the Factories Act, 1948

### **Child Trafficking:**

As per section 370 of Indian Penal Code: **Trafficking of persons means**, whoever, for the purpose of exploitation, (a) recruits, (b) transports, (c) harbours, (d) transfers, or (e) receives, a person or persons, by—using threats, or using force, or any other form of coercion, or by abduction, or by practising fraud, or deception, or by abuse of power, or by inducement, including the giving or receiving of payments or benefits, in order to achieve the consent of any person having control over the person recruited, transported, harboured, transferred or received, commits the offence of trafficking.

### **Child Friendly Corner**

A child Friendly Corner is a demarcated area in the Mela/venue/premises which is Child Friendly and provides information regarding access to services for children in crisis or an adult seeking help on behalf of a child.

# Protocols for making Melas & Large Scale gatherings: Child Friendly

## 1. Set up for a Child Friendly Mela/Large Gatherings

- **Mapping** of population of the district, specifically child population, where the mela is being planned may be done in advance by using the database of Registrar General of India. This will enable to ensure safety measures for children before organizing the mela/large gathering. The mapping of child vulnerability done by Child line India Foundation can be used as a planning tool to add District/area specific elements to the services being provided for the protection of children.
- Leverage maximum usage of various available technologies for example: *bar coding technique* and other available technological medium to ensure that no child goes missing and can be easily able to trace.
- **A web page** to be created on the official website of the State/District with all necessary information pertaining to mela including, route maps showing the locations of all mela/event sites in the city. This shall also be given on the official website of the concerned Departments and mela/event organizing committee.
- To create attractive, playful and engaging environments that stimulates the imagination and is fun for children, colours should be used for ground coverings, furniture, and lighting to make the place feel inviting and child friendly.
- Before organising a mela or a large scale gathering, a preparatory meeting with the young people/students may be called to invite their fresh ideas to make the design modern, exciting and Child Friendly. Designing of the premises should be done in a way to make the best use of the available space.
- **Special Radio Jingles** should be developed and **announcements** can be made by the eminent personalities/actors on the importance of safety mechanisms.
- **Inclusive** – providing opportunities for safe and healthy enjoyment for all ages and abilities, especially children with special needs.
- Provide a comfortable physical environment (shade, shelter, winter & sun).
- Ensure Mela/event places are accessible and link in with public transport services. Information regarding public transport with routes should be made available for commuters.
- Fire exit and emergency evacuation routes to be planned. Arrangement of Fire services/ambulance should be made. **Risk assessment** of those hazards which could cause harm

to staff or members of the public attending the event, should be undertaken before setting up mela/large event. This may be done as per guide prepared by NDMA for State Government, local authorities, Administrators and Organizers, titled as, *“Managing crowds at events and venues of mass gatherings”*.

- Smoke detection fire alarms should be placed all over the mela premises.
- **Setting up lost and found centres** across the mela/ event premises. This should also be link with **Khoya Paya** portal for missing/found children initiated by MWCD if the child is not traceable within 3-4 hours.
- To engage multilingual persons to make announcement for easy communication with the wards of missing children who came from various states of the Country.
- Leaflets to be distributed with Do’s & Don’ts’, route maps, locations and emergency contacts. Emergency contacts should be displayed at the website of State/District and public places. Emergency telephone directory should include telephone numbers of key personnel and external agencies
- Helpline numbers at railway stations, bus stands and inside the mela premises should be displayed

### 1-a) Entry Gate

- Security Guard/Police Personnel/ Commandos to be deployed at each entry gate for crowd control, safety and security and also to check any cases of harassment. Barricades should be used to restrict the crowd.
- **Technology based innovations** for ensuring protection of children mainly to track missing children viz: Bar-coding, RFID (Radiofrequency identification) tags and other available digital technological innovations to be introduced for example a tamper-proof wrist band may be tied to every child at the entry gate .Parents' mobile number or any other contact number should be on the tag using indelible ink. This could be feed into a special mobile and Internet application and whenever a child is found lost, the parents can be contacted by using the mobile number.
- Awareness campaigns on advantages of tagging & what to do when lost must be clearly impressed upon both the parents/guardians & children themselves.
- Entry & Exit Gates from Ghats (if near river side) should be separated & number of tags issued at entry gates should be retrieved/returned on exit gates.
- **Installation of CCTVs** cameras at entry and exit gate and within mela/large gatherings.
- Awareness/information dissemination regarding probable kinds of abuse against children through various audio visual means: such as: pamphlets, loudspeakers etc.

- Volunteers of Child line India Foundation to be deployed to support Frisking booths for Women. Women booth should have facility for frisking children rather separate children Frisking booths. Frisking of a female child is to be done by a female volunteer only; therefore at least one shift based volunteer has to be available throughout the day.
- The Registration Counter should be attached to the Frisking Booth.
- **A Child Help Desk** should be established for dissemination of information related to laws/policies/schemes related to children etc. CWC member, Childline, Counselor, an official of AHTU, and a Social worker should be part of this Desk. Child Help Desk should be equipped with facilities like video conference, CCTV, Computer etc.
- If children found in **begging, performing Road shows, circus or in any kind of child labor** should be brought to **Child Help Desk** and from there CWC may send the child to Children Homes as per Act.
- **Easy signage's** (in local language also) for Child Rights Desk/ toilets/food area/entry and exit should be displayed all over the premises. Registration counters for adults accompanying children/children coming alone. If a missing child is found, whose parents are from some other State and help to understand the language being used is required, a call to 1098 may be able to resolve the language issue.

### **1-b) inside the premises**

- CCTV coverage at all vulnerable locations to be monitored at the control room.
- **Large hoardings** of visuals on the mela and safety instructions should be made to create awareness
- **Lost and Found Centre.**
- Language experts should be appointed for making announcements in local language including sign language experts should be positioned at Help desk Counters
- **Child Friendly Corner/space;** Multiple Children corner to be established
- **First Aid and Medical Desk;** Medical Tents should be set up in the mela premises in every one km distance. Free Medical aid/first aid should be provided.
- Entry/Exit/Toilets with ramps for disabled should be, Attendants and adequate security.
- Ramps for Children with special needs
- Prohibition of selling of Harmful Substance like: cigarette, bides, gutkhas etc.
- First Aid Volunteers, Disaster risk volunteers and health volunteers should be posted across the mela and from points where people enter, at bus-stands, railway platforms etc.



- Waste management (garbage bin arrangements, waste collection schedule, recycling plan) should be ensured.
- The Mela authority should ensure placement of separate waste bins for bio-degradable/food waste and non- bio-degradable waste.
- For easy identification colour coding may be done for these separate types of bins.
- The disposal of the waste collected in bins should be done frequently.

### **1.c) Exit Gate:**

- The counting of tags at exit gate and comparing with those issued at entry gate will ensure, no child missing, no of strips/wrist bands tagged at the time of entrance in zone/ghats must be matched with the numbers of strips/bands while exiting. The serial number of strips/wrist bands must be recorded in a register while exiting. In case of shortage of strips/wrist bands, location of children must be verified from the mobile number, recorded at time of entrance and prompt action may be initiated to trace the children.
- CCTV cameras at each exit gates.
- Security Guards/Police/Child line volunteers at each exit gate
- Special vigilance at exit gates to ensure no child goes missing/trafficked.
- Emergency exits to be planned.

## Stakeholders

1. Ministry/Department of Women and Child Development (ICDS & ICPS)
2. Ministry/Department of Urban Development
3. Ministry/Department of Road Transport
4. Ministry/Department of Labour and Employment
5. Ministry/Department of Health & Family Welfare
6. Ministry/Department of Rural Development
7. Ministry/Department of Home Affairs
8. Ministry/Department of Panchayati Raj
9. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
10. Ministry/Department of Telecommunications
11. Ministry/Department of Electronics and Information Technology
12. Ministry of Science & Technology
13. Ministry/Department of Tourism
14. Ministry of Railways/Indian Railways (Divisional Railway Managers)
15. National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
16. State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR)
17. Mela/Event Organizing Committee
18. District Administration
19. Police Department
20. Child line India Foundation
21. Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU)
22. Students/Non-Government Organizations
23. Department of Fire and Rescue Services
24. Municipal Corporation
25. Electricity Board

## Roles and Responsibilities

### NCPCR

- NCPCR being an apex body is responsible for monitoring and ensuring child rights and child protection and deliberate on the preventive measures undertaken by the Local Mela Authority for children, who go missing during this event, prevention of child labour, child trafficking and child abuse.
- NCPCR would finalize the concept of Child Friendly Melas/Large gatherings and build partnerships with State Government and other stakeholders to implement the said Guidelines.
- NCPCR will generate awareness and disseminate information on child rights and entitlements under laws/schemes/policies.
- To assess the situation of arrangements made by Mela/Event Authorities and district administration for safety and security of children during the said Mela, the Commission will hold preparatory meetings before the melas/Large scale events.
- To facilitate the replication of best practice models across the country.

### SCPCRs

- Under Section (17) of CPCRA Act 2005 SCPCRs are being established in most of the States/UTs. SCPCRs in the States will be responsible for overall coordination with State authorities and other stakeholders for organizing the mela and for ensuring proper implementation by the stakeholders. SCPCRs will also be organizing trainings for the volunteers/students on child Protection issues.
- To ensure convergence between various Departments/agencies to make a Child Friendly Mela.
- SCPCR will also prepare a monitoring and progress report and send it to NCPCR.

### Mela Organizing Committee

- The retrospective analysis may be done by the Mela Organizing Committee to make strategies for risk management and better disaster preparedness.
- Ensure discussion on **Child Safety** in agenda of preparatory meetings for the event.
- Mela Organizing Committee should inform the local body (Municipality, PRI) concerned well in advance for necessary information and support.
- Organizers should ensure that no shopkeeper will engage any form of child labour. child beggars inside and outside the premises; child goes missing, falls into the clutches of traffickers, who could exploit them and subject them to various kinds of abuse including child labor.

- The whole information related to mela should be made available in related websites of the District.
- At the time of distribution of the stalls, the mela authorities should take an affidavit from the shopkeepers that they will not engage any Child Labour.
- Leverage maximum usage of various available technologies to ensure a Child Friendly Mela. Like **Child tracking bands** with name of the child and mobile number of the parents on it.

## District Administration

- The District Magistrate/Commissioner shall be responsible for effective implementation of indicators of Child Friendly Melas/Large gatherings in his/her respective District including at the ward and village level.
- Plan for more foot bridges/walkways/subways and emergency exits to be planned
- Evolve strategies for crowd management, traffic management, safety and security,
- Pre and Post assessment of the mela on the set indicators.
- Hold preparatory meetings with mela organizers and other concerned persons.
- Helpline Numbers to be displayed at various places in the mela premises.
- Issue key warning indicating provisions of **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) Act 2012**, The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, and relevant sections of the Juvenile Justice (Care and protection of children) Act 2015.
- Audio visual messages for protection and promotion of child rights to be displayed during mela/ large scale gatherings.
- To make arrangements for display of awareness material at Railway station, bus stops and at other public places.
- District Level Inspection Team in collaboration with CWC, DCPU, SJPU, Mela/event Organizers, Child line may be constituted.

## Police Department

- Police verification of all the volunteers should be done.
- To alert the public, the names and photographs of those who have been arrested previously for child trafficking/POCSO or related offences may be displayed during the Mela/large events.
- Deploy sufficient Police force to maintain law and order, especially women police officers.
- Take necessary steps to ensure safety and security of all visitors with special attention to children.

- Set up **Control Room** and ensure that CCTV cameras to be install at each Entry & Exit Gates, and inside the premises.
- Deploy Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU) officials to ensure no incidence of child trafficking occurs.
- Police officers should be in plain clothes while handling children.
- The traffic directions and guidelines should be imposed by the Traffic Police authorities.
- Electronic signboards should be used by traffic police to give important messages with regard to safety and security of visitors.
- Traffic Police monitor and limit the speed of vehicle near to Melas to avoid any mishap.
- Orientation to Auto/Taxi drivers on Helpline numbers to help unaccompanied children.

## **Health Department**

- Deploy onsite Medical emergency response teams and alert nearby hospitals as part of mass gathering preparedness plan for mass casualty.
- Medical Tents should be set up in the mela premises in every one km distance. Free Medical aid should be provided.
- Prepare a plan for mass casualty management at venue and direct nearby hospitals to prepare hospital preparedness plan with specialized service for the children
- Keep updated contact details of nearest hospitals, private ambulances and primary health centers for emergency communication
- Make sure that all staff know their roles and responsibilities and communication procedure needed for handling emergency especially sensitivity to the children.
- Ayush stalls should be set up for providing information on Ayurvedic medicines and plants.

## **Urban Development**

- Provide adequate numbers of toilets at safe location within the Mela premises.
- The toilets should not be located at remote corners of the premises for ensuring safety of children visiting them.
- The location of the toilets should be conveniently approachable locations and there should be adequate numbers.
- The toilets should be regularly cleaned by a dedicated staff.
- Separate facilities of toilets should be made for girls, boys and disabled children.
- The toilets for children should have child friendly provisions like fixtures and fittings (eg. Doors

with child friendly latch, toilets with natural light and ventilation, adequate squatting area, water points and soaps et at child accessible heights) and should have requisite faecal sludge managements provisions to ensure that hazards of backflow or back siphonage is avoided.

- The toilets should be provided with running water and light bulbs on every toilet seat.
- The floor of toilet should not be wet or too slippery to avoid slippage of children.
- The dustbins should be placed at convenient location at every 250 meters with adequate numbers and should be emptied on regular basis.
- Close circuit televisions (CCTV) should be installed near toilets to monitor safety of children.
- To provide inputs with regard to possible vulnerabilities of children in the area eg. Child Trafficking etc.

### **Department of Fire and Rescue Services**

- Conduct a safety audit in the notified area and share the details with Police and disaster management department.
- Maintain a list and location of food vendors using gas cylinders.
- Inspect stalls, especially food and tea stalls that they have taken safety measures.
- Fire stations should be set up in the mela area and firemen should be deployed all over the area.
- Deploy rescue team and swimmers, if the gathering is organized near water body.
- Verify emergency evacuation routes, exit points and its accessibility.

### **Electricity Board**

- Set up additional transformer for melas/large gatherings with respect to the required electricity.
- Repair Street lights.

### **Indian Railways (DRMs)**

- Additional Number of trains to be arranged to cater the rush.
- Railway Police Force to keep vigilance to ensure no child missing/trafficking. Whenever a child is found on the railway premises or train by RPF, GRP/Railway employee or other public servant or public spirited citizen, he/she may come to the aid of the child and bring him/her to the station Master/station superintendent”. *Reference: SOP for Railways to ensure care and protection for children in contact with railways by NCPCR.*
- Helpline numbers should be displayed at all the railway stations.

## State Transport Department

- Special buses to be introduced for transport.
- GPS mapping of all public transport should be ensured.
- Information regarding bus routes and numbers should be made available on the web page of the State/District.
- Staff on Bus/Bus stand and other Public Transport should be sensitized on issues related to protection of children and ways to identify and support children in need of care and protection.
- Child Helpline Numbers should be displayed prominently at bus stands and in buses on route.

## Municipal Corporation/ Panchayati Raj Institutions

- Ensure that the mela/event organizer has arranged all necessary facilities and safety for the public, especially children
- Ensure that the event organizer has proper waste management system for the mela/large scale event.
- Coordinate waste disposal, if the event are notified as state level event.
- Ramps and walk ways should be widened.
- Special elevators should be provided for the persons with disabilities.
- Provisions of temporary toilets to be made.

## Department of Labour and Employment

- To issue an order to all the stall owners for non engagement of any form of Child Labour.
- Obtain affidavits from the stall owner for making mela *Child Labour free*.

## Department of Revenue and Disaster Management

- Field checks for ensuring safety measures.
- Verify the licenses obtained for special needs of the event
- Disaster Relief Force should be deployed.
- Planning meet on disaster preparedness should be held before organizing any large scale event.

## Department of Women and Child Development

- A Monitoring mechanism shall be developed by the Department of WCD.
- **Nutrition Corner** for children.

- **Breastfeeding Booth:** for women with small children, where they could feed their children. A Health Worker to be appointed at the booth to give advice to the mothers on importance of breastfeeding and health diets for lactating mothers.
- **ORS** and other medicines should be provided to children and senior citizens, if required.
- To ensure *no junk food* will be served in mela/event, ensure **Nutritious packed food** for children.
- Organize **Child Friendly Corner** in the mela premises. Children can be engaged in creative activities like: drawing/paintings etc at this corner.
- Arrangement for short term Shelter homes for children/families.
- Mobile Anganwadis by ICDS. All the important information will be shared by Anganwadi workers.

### **District Child Protection Officer (DCPO)**

- DCPO of the concerned District should be the Nodal Officer designated for ease of functioning.

### **Child line India Foundation (1098)**

- Display of Helpline number, 1098 at various places inside and outside the premises.
- Child line volunteers may be deployed in the melas/large scale events for providing assistance.
- Childline may provide support for training Mela volunteers.
- Assist in framing **Child Protection Policy**.

### **Students/Volunteers/NGOs**

- Police verification of the volunteers should be done before engaging them in the activity. The volunteers should be trained and sensitized to deal with children.
- A standard questionnaire to be prepared in consultation with NCPCR and the same can be given to every volunteer.
- Volunteers may be recruited from NSS/NCC units of colleges/universities.
- There must be one volunteer per 10000 sq ft. OR, 5 volunteers per Acre land of Mela. (Depends on the magnitude of the mela).
- Volunteers may be given badge/T-shirts /cap/uniform with some messages written on it. Volunteers can be called **Baal Mitras**.
- Volunteers would be deployed at Bus stands, Railways stations and other areas to spot and locate Missing /found children.



## Child Friendly Mela Piloted at Krishna Pushkaram Mela, Vijaywada,

**Krishna Pushkaram, 2016** was one of the largest gatherings in Andhra Pradesh. This Mela was organized once in 12 years for 12 days. Crores of people gather in this Mela to take a dip in the river Krishna and pray to the Goddess at a temple at top of a hill. Earlier in this Mela, there have been instances where children have been reported missing and several organizational issues would come up. However in 2016, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh decided to make this Mela a far more organized and safe. The Mela was organized from 12<sup>th</sup> Aug'16 to 23<sup>rd</sup> Aug'16. As expected more than a *crore* participated in the Mela.

NCPCR shared the indicators for organizing this Krishna Pushkaralu Mela 2016 as a **Child Friendly Mela** with A.P State Government/District officials and other stakeholders. On Commission's initiative, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh declared Krishna Pushkaralu Mela 2016 a "**Child Friendly Mela**".

### Some of the Highlights of this Child Friendly Mela were:

- **Complete discipline** was maintained by Police to manage the crowd as there were multiple entry and exit gates. The river had a barricade which people could not cross; they had to take a dip only till that level which had knee deep water, to **prevent drowning**.
- The best innovation was **the Child Tracking Band** which was given to each and every child in the Mela. This band was also supplied for senior citizens. The innovative initiative of **Child Tracking Band** involved tagging a wrist band around a child's wrist with the name of the child and mobile number of the parent written on it with indelible ink. Further details like their address and parents name etc, were captured in the application '**Kris Pushkaram,2016-Child Tracking**' as well as through a web link.
- Total **9,38,818** children were tagged by using **Child Tracking Bands** through web/app based address and manually. More than **20 children**, who were lost, **were traced** within 30 min and handed over to their respective parents/guardians. The toll free number and one emergency contact number provided by the district administration was pre-printed on this tag.
- **Volunteers** continuously provided water and other liquids to devotees waiting in queues. Drinking water booths were also set up.
- **Butter Milk, Water and food** was distributed free and the State crossed a world record in its distribution.



## Medical Assistance

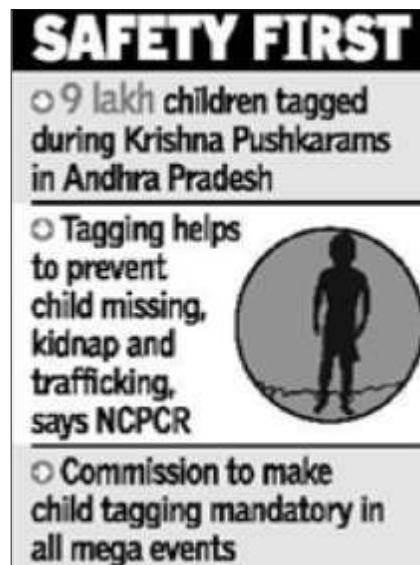
- **Medical Aid tents** were set up every *1 km distance*. Free Medical Aid was provided. Ambulances were ready. Hospitals nearby were made ready to accommodate patients. Free Bedded temporary Health facility was set up in the Mela campus as well. **Ayush stalls** were also opened to give information on ayurvedic medicines and plants.
- **Sanitation facility** was maintained. Continuously water was used through big pipes to clean the Ghats. Dustbins were kept at regular intervals. A large number of sanitation workers were deployed. Some workers regularly cleaned the river with nets, so flowers and other puja items dropped by devotees were instantly picked up.



- Travel was free for devotees. Wheel chairs and other *e rickshaws* were installed for old and disabled people.
- A total of **500** Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) staff and more than 1500 volunteers were involved in the process of tagging the children, old people and uploading the data through webpage and app.
- **Special Volunteers** in 'Pink Jackets' were deployed to only look for missing/ abandoned children. *(This idea was shared by NCPCR)*
- **A Nutrition Corner/Breastfeeding Booth**-a unique concept observed for the first time in Melas, where women with small children could rest and feed their children in privacy. A health worker present in that booth advised mothers on the importance of breastfeeding and healthy diets. Milk packets were given to older children.
- Continuous **ORS medicines** were provided to children & adults to prevent dehydration.
- **Nutritious packed food for children:** Children were getting nutritious packed food in the mela by SHG groups.
- **Focus on Hygiene surroundings.** A big number of staff for cleaning the area was deployed. All the ghats were made clean.



- **Do's/Don'ts** were also clearly mentioned on the official website and in the mela.
- Children found **begging or in child labor** were saved and brought to CWC from where they were sent to special Homes for observation. These Homes were set up primarily for the Mela. NGOs helped in identifying these children.
- Continuous announcements, IEC materials, hoardings, directions were present as per guidelines.
- **Special Radio Jingles** and **announcements** by Chief Ministers and eminent personalities/actors were made on the importance of child tagging and other safety mechanisms.
- **Large hoardings** of visuals on the mela and safety instructions were made to create awareness
- **Helpline:** Krishna Pushkaralu Helpline Phone Numbers, Krishna Pushkaram Toll free Numbers for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, 24X7 Help lines call centre numbers Vijayawada, Emergency Contact Information were given on the website and also displayed in the mela premises.
- **Website [krishnapushkaralu.com](http://krishnapushkaralu.com)**, was hosted by the State Government with all the relevant information, map showing the locations of all mela/event sites in the city published on the official website.
- **Leaflets** were also given with Do's & Don'ts', route maps, locations and emergency contacts.
- **Security Guard/Police** were deployed in big numbers at entry gate/Exit gates for crowd control, safety and security.
- **CCTVs** were installed at each entry/exit gate. Police and Commandos continuously monitored the crowd to check any cases of harassment.
- **Youth volunteers** continuously searched for children who may not be wearing the band and also to sensitize parents to be cautious of traffickers. First Aid Volunteers, Disaster risk volunteers and health volunteers were posted across the mela and from points where people entered- bus-stands, railway platforms etc.



## Outcome

The **Krishna Pushkaran Mela** followed all the guidelines (as mentioned above) proposed by NCPDR and a number of children were saved from being missing, trafficked and in child labour. The best innovation was **the Child Tracking Band** which was given to each and every child traced in the Mela and **breastfeeding booth** for lactating mothers.



## Glimpses of Krishna Pushkaran Mela, Vijaywada



# News clippings



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### 'Child tagging' to help lost kids reunite with family in fairs

By PTI | Published: 19th August 2019 05:18 PM | Last Updated: 19th August 2019 05:18 PM



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VIJAYAWADA. Fairs are infamous for kids separating from their parents and the issue has been the theme of many an Indian movie.

To end this problem, two young IAS officers here have come up with a smart solution of 'child tagging' to end this problem.

Gandham Chandrudu, Joint Collector of Krishna district, and G Sujanya, Sub-Collector of Vijayawada, came out with this simple but realistic solution which is now being effectively used during the ongoing Krishna Pushkaram.

Ever since the 12-day river festival started on August 12, at least 20 children got separated from their parents at different bathing ghats in Vijayawada but, thanks to the 'Child Tagging' initiative, they got reunited in no time.

"The maximum we took was about 30 minutes to reunite a lost child with the parents. All it takes is just a mobile number," Chandrudu said.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, impressed by the new initiative, has lavished praise saying the Krishna Pushkaram is the "first child-friendly mela" in the country.

NCPDR member Roopa Kapoor visited Vijayawada during the river festival and studied how the Child Tagging worked.

A tamper-proof wrist band is tied to every child before he/she ventures into a bathing ghat with parents or kin.

Teja is dumb but luckily the volunteers on duty at the ghat found her wandering and immediately called her father on the mobile number.

"In an minutes of our call, Teja was reunited with her parents," the Joint Collector said.

The child tagging proved helpful in an other way as well. A person was coming out of the ghat along with his three-year-old daughter but suffered an epileptic attack.

As the girl looked around helplessly, volunteers called their hotline number written on her wrist band.

His family members were notified of the matter before he was shifted to a hospital for treatment.

This man listed both his mobile and landline numbers and that saved him the day.

"This is a small initiative but helping even a big way," a gleaming Chandrudu noted.

In all, 10 lakh wrist bands were needed for the Pushkaram and so far over three lakh were used, indicating that those many children came for a boy dip in the river.

"Not just children, we are using this even for senior citizens and disabled persons as well. And, everything is working smoothly," the young officer observed.



### Child tagging to help lost kids reunite with family in fairs

By PTI | August 19, 2019 | Updated: 19:03:07

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"Basically the parents mobile number or any other contact number is written on the tag using tamperable ink. It is fed into a special mobile and internet application and whenever a child is found lost, the parents are contacted using the mobile number," Chandrudu said PTI.

At Sura ghat, the main venue of Krishna Pushkaram in Vijayawada that teams with thousands of pilgrims at any moment, a 10-year-old girl Teja from West Godavari district got separated from her parents.

Teja is dumb but luckily the volunteers on duty at the ghat found her wandering and immediately called her father on the mobile number.

"In ten minutes of our call, Teja was reunited with her parents," the Joint Collector said.

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UR-24/8/16

'CHILD TAGGING' TO HELP LOST KIDS REUNITE WITH FAMILY IN FAIRS

# Future-proofing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Vijayawada, 19 August

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## 'Child tagging' to help lost kids reunite with family in fairs

PTI / Aug 19, 2016, 3:36 PM IST

ANTHE (Senior) 2016 Exam  
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## Poush Mela, Shantiniketan, West Bengal as Child Friendly Mela



### About the Poush Mela

The Pous Mela is an annual fair and festival that takes place in Shantiniketan, in Birbhum District of West Bengal, marking the harvest season. Commencing on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Poush, the fair officially lasts for three days, although vendors stay until the month-end. The key characteristic of this fair includes live performances of Bengali folk music, notably the 'Baul' music.

Nobel Laureate Shri Rabindranath Tagore's father Shri Devendranath Tagore initiated the Poush Utsav at Shantiniketan. A small fair was organised in December 1894. This small Poush Mela is now a large gathering that attracts International crowds as well.

The Mela is primarily an artistic and scholarly fair managed by the Visva Bharati University at Santiniketan.

## NCPCR's foray in Poush Mela

NCPCR drafted Guidelines on the child friendly initiatives that could be taken for any fairs, melas or gatherings in India. They were called the '**Guidelines for organizing Child Friendly Mela or large gatherings**'. To pilot this initiative NCPCR chose one large gathering-the Krishna Pushkaran Fair at Vijaywada and a relatively small fair of Poush Mela at Santiniketan.

In August' 16, NCPCR Member met the District Administration and mela authorities at Santiniketan to discuss whether the Poush Mela could be designed as a child friendly mela. Poush mela does not have cases of child missing or being trafficked but a large number of tribal and poor families came to sell their products. There were instances of child labour and child marriage in this mela along with child beggars. To make people aware of child rights and schemes related to children, member requested the authorities to consider developing certain aspects of the mela as child friendly.

In November' 16 Member once again met the authorities to finalise the child friendly components of the mela. It was determined that the mela would have

- **A child rights corner** with different stalls on different schemes of the Government
- A child Rights desk for information
- Provision of a Child tracking wrist band with telephone numbers so that children do not go missing
- Volunteers with bright Jackets to trace children without Child tracking wrist band and give support. Volunteers could be students who are trained by Childline
- Safe drinking water facilities
- Safe toilet facilities
- Police to develop a stall which would depict a child friendly police station
- Opportunity for children to express their views
- IEC materials across the District- in Bus-stands and Railway Stations for information on child friendly Poush Mela
- Emergency response/ disaster Management
- Provision of Ambulance and health safeguards
- Firefighting facilities
- Prevention of Child beggars, child labours: affidavit to be taken in advance from stalls not to employ child labours
- No child trafficking and missing

Member encouraged all Government Departments and NGOs to work in tandem and collect funds for applying these guidelines in the Mela. The District Administration took the task upon them and in



coordination with Visva Bharati University planned to initiate some guidelines of the child friendly mela in Poush Mela. They also planned advocacy initiatives and measures to promote the child friendly mela.

There were several administrative and financial problems that the mela authorities and District authorities incurred. This was also the very first time that a concept like this was initiated in Bengal and in Santiniketan. However from 23<sup>rd</sup> December to 25<sup>th</sup> Dec' 16, the authorities were able to set up a Child Friendly Poush Mela at Santiniketan, West Bengal's first mela of this kind.

## Introduction



## Dignitaries Present:

Vice Chancellor, Visva Bharati University Shantiniketan; Chairperson and Technical experts from West Bengal State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBSCPCR); District Magistrate Birbhum, ADM Birbhum, Shabhadhipati Birbhum Zilla Parishad, Registrar Visva Bharati University Santiniketan; MLA Dubrajpur Birbhum; Sub Divisional Officer Birbhum' Sub Divisional Police Officer Bolpur, Birbhum,, Dy. Director Directorate of Child Rights & Trafficking Govt. Of West Bengal;

## Conclusion

The Child Friendly Poush Mela was very successful. It was a new concept and people were attracted to the child friendly corner especially children. They got a chance to draw, express their views through role plays, show their talents and also enjoy. All the facilities catered to the child rights concepts. The handbands and volunteers prevented children from being missing. Total nine children were rescued by the District Child Protection team who were child labours .

## A Glimpse at the Child Friendly Pous Mela at Shantiniketan: 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> December 2016



*A designated child Friendly Corner for children in the Mela*



*Stalls of different Government Departments and schemes related to children  
(ICDS, ICPS, Kanyashree, Special Juvenile Police Unit, Childline, etc.)*



*Games and recreational facilities*

## A Glimpse at the Child Friendly Pous Mela at Shantiniketan: 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> December 2016



*Special volunteers to track children*



*Handbands to track children*



*Child Friendly Toilet*



*Safe drinking water facility*



*Learning & fun activities*

## A Glimpse at the Child Friendly Pous Mela at Shantiniketan: 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> December 2016



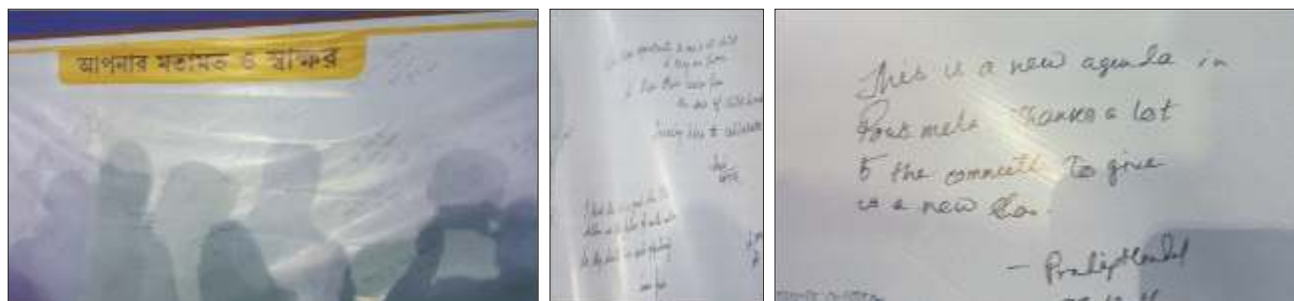
*Cultural events by children on various social issues- child marriage, education, child labour etc.*



*Information centres on various schemes*



*Advocacy*



*Opinion Boards*



**NCPCR**

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS (NCPCR)**

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