

DRAFT

KARNATAKA STATE GIRL CHILD POLICY (KSGCP) 2015

INTRODUCTION***

1.1 The National Child Policy of 2013 and the Karnataka State Child Policy of 2015 affirm rights based approach in addressing to the continuing and emerging challenges in the situation of children in the State. To affirm the State's commitment to address the discrimination faced by girls in both private and public spheres affecting their development and status in society, the Government hereby adopts this resolution on the Karnataka State Girl Child Policy.

RATIONALE

1.2 Son preference, female foeticide, patriarchal attitudes, gender discrimination lead to the neglect of girls starting at conception and throughout childhood, as is manifested in the child sex ratios at birth, mortality, malnutrition, school enrolment and dropout. This increases their vulnerability to abuse and exploitation such as forced labour, child marriage, trafficking and sexual exploitation. Within the State, there are regional differences among the districts, urban and rural areas and the socially and economically vulnerable groups, including the differently challenged and migrant children, where the situation is worse than the State averages. The child sex ratio in the age-group 0-6 years for the State has dropped to 948 for 1000 boys in 2011 from 946 girls in 2001. The sex ratio is 930 girls for 6-14 years and an alarming 904 girls for 15-18 years. Eight districts in the North Karnataka Region and four districts in the South Karnataka Region have lower sex ratios than the State average. The infant mortality rate of girls is 32 compared to 30 of boys and the under- five mortality rate for girls is 32 compared to 30 for boys for the State (MDG Report 2015) but in some districts this is much higher. While the primary school enrolment rates are around 96% and comparable for boys and girls on the average, the situation changes as the percentage drops to 60% in the 14-15 years age group and 26% in the 16-17 years age group (MDG Report, 2015).

1.3 While all children at risk to violence, abuse and exploitation, girls are more vulnerable *and at greater risk* than boys to early marriage, sexual molestation and rape, trafficking and child labour. Two out of five girls in the State are married off before they are 18 years of age. In seven districts in North Karnataka it is close to or more than 50% (CRT report) and in four other districts the percentage of child marriage of girls is more than 30%. Girls engaged in work is prevalent both in urban and rural areas. There are inter-regional differences in the work participation of out of school children and it is reported that in agriculture girls outnumber boys. The extent of the vulnerability of girls is frequently under-reported but statistics show an increase in the number of reported sexual assault on girls and in the procurement of minor girls mostly for labour and prostitution over a five year period of 1999-2013(State Crime Record Bureau).

PREAMBLE

1.4 The Karnataka State Child Policy (2015) outlines the Government's vision and commitment to children from 0-18 years of age in the State and outlines the goals, priorities and provisions for guaranteeing all children the rights of survival, development, protection and participation. This Policy for the Girl Child fully endorses and builds on the goals, accepts the guiding principles and measures elucidated in the Karnataka State Child Policy. It draws attention to the discrimination faced by girls throughout their childhood impacting on their adult lives as women.

VISION

1.5 Every girl child in the State of Karnataka lives with dignity in a 'discrimination and violence free environment' and the rights of every girl to survival, development, protection, and participation throughout her childhood shall be protected and fulfilled.

MISSION

1.6 The Karnataka State Girl Child Policy commits to uphold, promote and safeguard *all* rights of all girl children from conception to adulthood, to live and grow with equality, dignity, protection and freedom, especially those who are vulnerable and at risk. It further reiterates that all girl children shall have equal opportunities and access, without discrimination or prejudice; and that no customs, beliefs, traditions, socio-cultural or religious practices shall be allowed to violate, restrict or prevent girl children from enjoying their rights to holistic development and empowerment.

1.7 The situation of girl children is integral to the macro issues of 'children and women' and therefore the need for prioritized, focused action for the development of girl children by the State is imperative.

1.8 This Policy is to guide and inform all laws, policies, plans, programmes, resource commitments affecting children. All actions and initiatives of the state and local government in all sectors must respect and uphold the principles and provisions of this Policy.

1.9 The Government of Karnataka shall take favourable measures such as legislative, policy actions, plans and programmes, budgets, institutional mechanisms, infrastructure, monitoring mechanisms, capacity building and information systems for the optimum development and well being of the girl child.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

1.10 The Karnataka State Girl Child Policy shall strive to:

- 1.10.1 Improve the sex ratio in all age groups throughout the State through elimination of gender biased sex selection and neglect of girls;

- 1.10.2 Ensure survival, healthy growth and development of the girl child by providing equal and equitable access to immunisation, nutrition and quality early child care;
- 1.10.3 Ensure free and compulsory education of all girls in socially and economically disadvantaged section of society up to 18yrs of age or completion of class 12, whichever is applicable, and facilitate their access to higher education
- 1.10.4 *Promote* education of girls to empower them and enable them to improve the quality of life and be economically self-sufficient and self-reliant, through life skills programs;
- 1.10.5 Empower girls to participate actively in decisions that affect their lives and to take control of their life situation; and promoting their active participation for leadership, political representation and governance;
- 1.10.6 Protect girl children from all forms of violence, abuse and discriminatory practices through effective enforcement of legislation and policies;
- 1.10.7 Promote change in attitudes and behaviours within families, communities and society at large regarding girls and women by elimination of customs, beliefs, practices, and conduct that perpetuate discrimination and gender stereotypes.
- 1.10.8 Develop tools, systems and processes for setting up computerised data base of children at every level of governance, and also for the maintenance of data for boys and girls separately, and shall be updated periodically.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1.11 From the girl child perspective, the Policy recognizes and reaffirms:
 - A girl child is a female person from 0 to 18 years;
 - Every child, including girl child, is unique and a supremely important national asset;
 - All children, including girl child, have the right to grow in a family environment that is violence free and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and caring;
 - As a result of social discrimination, the girl child is neglected, disadvantaged and deprived of care during childhood with her family and society at large.
 - The best interests of the girl child is a primary concern in all decisions and actions affecting the girl child both in the public and private domains;

- The safety and security of girl children is integral to their well-being and they are to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, violence, maltreatment, and exploitation in all settings- public and private;
- Girl children are capable of forming views and must be provided a positive environment and the opportunity to express their views in any way they are able to communicate, in matters affecting them.

APPROACH

1.12 The approach of this Policy shall be to:

- Adopt a life cycle approach with continuum of care, measures and services in the different stages of childhood will be the basis for a holistic and integrated methodology that connects and reinforces the various policy support measures in a coherent manner;
- Adopt a long- term, sustainable, multi-sectoral, integrated and inclusive approaches required for overall and harmonious development and protection of girl child;
- Take special measures and ensure affirmative action and provide quality services to diminish conditions that cause gender based discrimination and prevent other vulnerability and disadvantage to girl child;
- Enact, enforce and amend legislation to respond to the specific situation and needs of girls in the State;
- Address prevailing traditional beliefs, superstitions and practices that are harmful and obstruct the proper care and development of the girl child and the lack of awareness on gender equality and equity.
- Develop and adopt focussed measures to address and respond to economically and socially disadvantaged families and the regional disparities in the situation of girls in the State and provide safety nets to prevent abandonment, female foeticide, trafficking, child marriage and child labour;
- Create and sustain an environment where the girl child receives respect and recognition as an asset to her family and society at large;
- Promote positive processes that will instil self esteem and self reliance in girls thereby empowering them;
- Proactively involve men and boys at all levels and processes, for sustained behavioural and attitudinal change towards girls and gender equity and equality;

- Sustain cohesive, collective and consistent actions from government, individuals, civil society, media and all sections of society including women’s groups throughout the State to foster an enabling environment for development of the girl child;
- Support research and documentation for evidenced based advocacy for the girl child.
- Develop a Plan of Action and prepare operational guidelines for implementation of this Policy

KEY PRIORITIES

1.13 The rights of every girl child in the State to survival, health, nutrition, clean and safe environment, education, development, protection and participation are the key priorities of this Policy.

1.14 The State stands committed to ensure equitable access to holistic child care, development and protection from the life-cycle perspectives from birth to 18yrs of age; and in the age groups 0-3 years, 3-6 years, 6-14 years and 14-18years.

2. SURVIVAL, HEALTH AND NUTRITION

2.1 The State shall implement and encourage continuum of care approach acknowledged as the key to address the problems of maternal and child health issues and shall design strategies to ensure the survival, health and nutrition of all children, especially girls, as they are typically more disadvantaged. Girls receive less medical attention, care or nutritional inputs, and less schooling than boys, but are subject to more work burden; early/frequent childbearing with little or no spacing takes a heavy toll of their health and survival; they are less informed about health and nutrition issues and have little or no say in decisions about these matters. Hence, there is need for a special focus on girls' health, hygiene and nutrition, and the environmental effects on them, as also their access to water and sanitation.

2.2 Low birth weight (below 2.5 kgs) is a cause of concern in general . Since newborns are not weighed systematically throughout the State and therefore data is not available for all districts, . Data from the UNICEF RSOC (2013-2014) shows that

2.3 It is imperative to monitor the food intake and provisions of nutrition provided through crèches, ICDS, MDM and in the JJ institutions to ensure the overall health and nutrition status of girls in all age groups.

0 to 3 years of age

2.4 This policy will abide by the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy of 2013 where all children under six years of age are to be covered by ICDS, as well as

provided for by creches as needed. The coverage is to be holistic, including survival, health, nutrition, care, protection, stimulation and playful age-appropriate learning as also training in parenting skills for caregivers. For the first two to three years, the services will be provided both at the Anganwadi Centre or Health Centre and at home; thereafter, they will mainly be centre-based.

The State shall take measures to:

2.5 improve the birth, death and marriage registration system in the State through simplifying procedures, increasing access to registration units, etc.

2.6 review the working of the PCPNDT Act in the State to plug in the loopholes and strengthen the implementation, monitoring and enforcement of the system;

2.7 Strengthen the Reproductive and Child Health Services and interventions; scaling up care for neonates and infants at household, community and health institutional levels based on the new guidelines of Integrated Management of Neonatal and Childhood Illness (IMNCI);

2.8 Recognise that the first 1000 days [from conception to the age of two] are critical to the survival, health and nutrition of infants and frame strategies to prevent the onset of child ill-health and malnutrition even in the womb. Strengthen counselling and supporting of pregnant women to prepare for breastfeeding; provide facilities for care of mother and girl child upon delivery, ensure that mothers do not discriminate against girl child in exclusive breast feeding,

2.9 Maintain a card for every pregnant woman to record the antenatal care received, delivery and postnatal care of the child, immunisation, ECCE enrolment, ICDS and school enrolment, vocational training - from conception to 18 years of age

3-6 years of age

The state shall take the following measures in addition to those noted above for 0-3 years age group:

2.10 Scale up routine immunization to reach universal immunization with special attention to the girl child. Frontline health and ICDS workers need to counsel and ensure that girl children receive proper care and treatment for common childhood illnesses and diarrhoeal diseases;

2.11 Review and strengthen the supplementary nutrition delivery system through AWCs with particular focus on pregnant women and girl children with specific needs. Ensure periodic deworming of children, check-ups to detect early signs of anaemia, with corrective doses of Iron Folic acid and Vitamin A.

2.12 Systematically maintain the growth chart for girl children and ensure follow-up

2.13 ANMs, AWWs, ASHAs should counsel and motivate parents to send their girls to the AWCs and get the periodic health check-ups;

2.14 Early detection of disability among children as part of the restructured ICDS/ECCE programs will be undertaken giving special attention to SC, ST, minorities and other socially

disadvantaged groups.

6 to 14 years of age

2.15 Expand the school health program with regular school health check-ups involving parents for informative counselling to ensure healthy food habits especially for the girl child. Include iron rich foods in the MDMs and Take Home Foods, de-worming and weekly iron and folic acid supplementation.

2.16 Provide with nutrition counselling for adolescent girl children (13 -18 years) who are anaemic at school and at community level for out of school girl children. Build the knowledge and capacity of teachers and frontline worker capacity to handle these tasks.

2.17 Ensure early detection and early intervention of disability, especially for girl children, by facilitating identification, assessment and determination, diagnostic and rehabilitative services as well as training of health workers for the various types of physical and mental disabilities; counselling and parental skill training for caretakers and the community to avoid stigma and faith-based views.

2.18 Universalise understanding and practice of personal hygiene, access to safe drinking water, provision of latrines at home and school for bettering health benefits for girl children;

2.19 Educate girls and their families on menstrual hygiene and provide needed resources within their communities for safe and hygienic practices.

14 to 18 years of age

2.20 Provide counselling and life-skills training to adolescents of both sexes. Include reproductive and sex education in school curriculum and promote information and services for sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDs. Conduct campaigns to address stigma and discrimination against affected/infected girls by the community;

2.21 It is established that girl child survival and health will involve building a well-nourished girl from adolescence or earlier with good health and banishment of anaemia before her very first conception through good nutrition and health services;

2.22 Expand and strengthen the implementation of the Sabala program for wider reach to include girls out of school who are not covered under the school health program. This will also include maintaining Kishore cards to monitor anemia and Body Mass Index (BMI) among adolescent girls.

2.23 In the case of adolescent girls who are pregnant, ensure health check-ups, nutritional supplements and counselling during pregnancy and lactation, support for delivery, and information on parenting skills;

2.24 Address the needs of mental health of girls through proper referral for treatment and counselling of parents and the community to remove stigma and seek treatment for the affected children.

3. EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy (ECCE) recognizes that learning begins at birth and calls for investments in quality early child care and development, at the first instance, to substantially enhance the holistic development of children and their lifetime potential for educational achievement and learning by strengthening the care services from the prenatal period to six years of age for children below 6 years of age. With the universality of the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS), the State is in a position to provide a basket of integrated quality services, which includes intellectual stimulation, within reach of all young children throughout the State. The enactment of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 has been a major milestone in ensuring universal access to elementary education for children between 6-14 years of age and the Government of Karnataka has taken several proactive steps to ensure that children are enrolled and retained in school. Although there are regional differences in the drop-out rates in the State, overall gains in the enrolment of girls at the primary level are commendable.

3.2 The scenario of secondary education, however, is different especially in some regions of the State. The higher dropout rate of girls is due to gender issues, community restrictions, poverty and institutional inadequacies. Reasons such as inadequate amenable facilities, particularly for the adolescent girls, family pressure to get the girls married soon after puberty or engage in paid work, fear of harassment issues, lack of aspiration, absence of skill development opportunities force girls to drop out of school. Many of those enrolled, do not attend classes.

3.3 It is evident from the educational indicators that education and development of girls need special focus and concerted efforts by all stakeholders. It is essential that all girl children are provided with an enabling environment which supports and promotes curiosity, creativity, reasoning, other life skills in addition to literacy and numeracy for their employability and empowerment as women.

Recognising the gender specific issues affecting girls' education, this Policy supports the following measures:

3.4. Reducing gender gap in higher education is essential for progress of girls and women in the state. This Policy recommends time bound targets with special focus on girls belonging to SC, ST, minorities and other disadvantaged communities, in existing and special programs, such as Open Schools, distance learning, Skill development, along with the formal systems.

3.5 Strengthen digital data and information systems to track all girl children in the ECCE/ educational system with reference to enrolment, retention and progress from early childhood to adolescence;

3.6 Address discrimination of all forms in schools and ensure that out of school children, child labourers, children in disadvantaged and marginalized situations are tracked, rescued, rehabilitated, supported and assisted to exercise their right to education;

3.7 Develop Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) tools for education for girls, and set up community based facilities in remote, tribal and hard to reach areas.

3.8 Upgrade teacher training from the perspective of creating gender sensitivity and in instilling cultural and social values in children to negate patriarchal attitudes. Also equip teachers to expose girls to child rights education, laws and services pertaining to children, protection mechanisms, gender issues, safety and security, trafficking of children, and issues of sex education and age appropriate life skill education in the school curricula;

3.9 Ensure safety and protection of children in schools in line with the Karnataka State Child Protection Policy for Educational Institutions (awaiting approval), and establish grievance redressal mechanisms in schools.

0 to 3 and 3-6 years of age

3.10 Implement the National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy and allocate sufficient resources for the implementation of this Policy at all levels with the aim to ensure universal, and equitable access to quality early childhood education and care services to all children in the 0-6 age group for their holistic development. Also establish, empower and ensure the functioning of ECCE Council as per the policy.

3.11 Restructure ICDS as per the guidelines quickly and effectively within specified timelines.

3.12 Provide adequate child care facilities (crèche/ day care facilities /AWCs) with special attention to vulnerable, poor, ailing, and working mothers.

3.13 Ensure ECCE centres are child friendly and offer joyful learning activities aiming at holistic development of children. Also ensure play activities and equipments are gender neutral.

3.14 Ensure mandatory tracking of girl children (both in Public and Private Institutions) availing ECCE facilities to ensure universal coverage for early care and stimulation.

6 to 14 years of age

3.15 Implement the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE Act);

3.16 Ensure adequate number of qualified female teachers' particularly in backward areas and periodically up-grade their knowledge, attitude and skills;

3.17 Provide quality services to girl children with special needs in regular schools and make all efforts to mainstream them;

3.18 Identify, encourage and assist gifted girl children, particularly those belonging to the disadvantaged groups and economically backward regions;

3.19 Support in-house education system in all children's institutions including JJ Homes by providing bridge course, formal education, and coaching for open school examinations.

14 to 18 years of age

3.20 Ensure education to all girls up to 18yrs through incentives and scholarships up to 18 years or up to 12th Standard to girls whichever is higher, from socially and economically disadvantaged communities.;

3.21 Take measures for remedial classes for mainstreaming girls who have dropped out, encourage girls to return to academics to complete their schooling through bridge courses, and reservation of seats for such categories, including in residential schools;

3.22 Develop and promote community based quality vocational training for girls to promote skills for livelihood;

3.23 Introduce mandatory career counselling and vocational guidance for girls in all schools and girls in all JJ/child care institutions

3.24 Encourage local elected bodies and gram panchayat, School Development Monitoring Committees, women's collectives, other statutory bodies to monitor enrolment, retention of girl child in schools (this has been brought over from the last point 4.7.7 in Section Protection and Safety)

4. PROTECTION AND SAFETY

4.1 Child protection means ensuring an environment:

- Where children are safe and free from neglect, abuse, exploitation and any form of violence; specially children in difficult circumstances
- Where the risk of physical and mental harm/injury/violence or danger to their life, personhood and childhood is prevented; within the family, at school, child care or educational institutions and all other living spaces
- Where vulnerability is reduced/addressed;
- Where children have access to services and support systems;
- Where the system prevents slippage from safety net or social security; and
- Where there is accountability of the State and people to the children.

4.2 The girl child in certain communities and districts of the state is further vulnerable and at risk of early marriage, early pregnancy, employment in harmful occupations, for commercial sexual exploitation (prostitutions) domestic labour etc and trafficking for various purposes. It is incumbent that the state will ensure safety and protection of such girls through special measures and programs.

4.3 The State shall pay special attention to girls with disability and special needs, and transgender (third gender) children

4.4 The State shall ensure effective enforcement of protective laws and policies in line with constitutional provisions to address gender discrimination, exploitation and violence against girl

children by strengthening existing protective measures, establishing coordinated efficient and effective response mechanism;.

4.5 The State shall ensure just and speedy justice delivery system in all crimes and offences against children, particularly girls, by strengthening functioning of the statutory bodies and other child protection mechanisms like the Childlines (1098) throughout the State; and uphold privacy and confidentiality of the girl child survivor of abuse and exploitation through appropriate standard operating procedures (SoPs) for all JJ functionaries, media reporting with gender sensitivity, etc.

4.6 The State shall encourage and promote participation of men and boys in prevention of and ending violence against girls and women, through public discussions, training and sensitization programmes, media messages, and community based events.

4.7 The State shall specifically:

4.7.1 Ensure that there is a convergent and coordinated involvement from all stakeholders including government, Civil Society, Media, and make protection of children, especially of girls, everybody's responsibility;.

4.7.2 Proactively engage all stakeholders and promote open discussions on protection issues. Also ensure that all girl children have the space and opportunity to speak against violence, abuse, and other protection issues without fear and have access to qualified counsellors in both rural and urban areas ;.

4.7.3 Recognize specific categories of girl children are at more risk and vulnerability and hence require special attention, and receive priority care such as – a) those with special needs or differently challenged, b) girls living on the streets c) children without parental care d) working children especially in sectors such as domestic work, construction work, agriculture and allied areas e) children of *devadasi* families or women in sex work f) migrant families g) living in destitution and deprivation;

4.7.4 Prepare and implement specific concerted time bound action plan and rehabilitation services, and budget allocation for region specific or area specific vulnerabilities and issues of girl children in particular such as sale of girl babies, child marriage, child trafficking, dedication of girls as *devadasis*, begging, and domestic work.

4.7.5 Ensure minimum standards of care and protection in all day care centres, educational and child care institutions,(be they government, aided or private, reaching out to children from 0-18years), that are sensitive to the rights and needs of girls who are in conflict with law, have special needs or differently abled.

4.7.6 Promote a conducive environment, where girl children are valued and treated with dignity in families, communities and public spaces; and all forms of abuse, exploitation and gender based violence is condemned. Attitudinal and behavioural change shall be promoted through addressing superstitions, myths, beliefs,

customs and practices that perpetuate gender stereotyping and discrimination.

0 to 3 years and 3-6 years of age

The State shall ensure:

4.8 Effective enforcement of the PCPNDT Act and other relevant legislation including for survival of girl child, prevent female foeticide and sale of girl infants.

4.9 Protect girl infants from bodily harm such as scaring, mutilation due to superstitions and traditional beliefs, through legislation and campaigns for responsible parenting

4.10 The State shall ensure the rights of girl child temporarily or permanently deprived of parental care through promotion of alternate non-institutional care such as adoption, foster care that is kinship or community based, and sponsorship.

4.11 Adoptions are done as per procedures mandated by the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2015, and revised Guidelines of Central Adoption Resource Authority of MWCD.

4.12 Institute measures and ensure their enforcement to prohibit sale of girl infants and illegal adoption.

6 to 18 years of age

4.13 The State shall ensure safety and protection of all children and particularly girls through effective implementation of the Karnataka State Child Protection Policy for Educational Institutions (awaiting approval) that takes into account safeguard and protection from safety violations pertaining to infrastructure, transportation, health, sports; personal, emotional, sexual safety and cyber safety; disaster and emergency preparedness.

4.14 The State shall review and strengthen the quality of existing systems of support, protection, rehabilitation, and upgrade the services provided through 'Santhwana', Ujjwala and other such for girl child victims of marriage, trafficking and sexual abuse.

4.15 The State shall universalize the Childline service throughout the State and increase awareness and improve the responsiveness of Childline services for protection of rights of the girl child. The State shall also expand the reach of Childline to include reporting of domestic violence, incidences of kidnapping, trafficking etc.

4.16 The State shall recognise and provide special attention to prevent the impact of the emerging spread of Cyber crime and digital media abuse, especially of girl children through awareness and preventive measures, and strengthened response mechanisms.

4.17 The State shall develop schemes to mainstream and integrate the children living in institutions such as orphans, homeless children, children in conflict with law, children of mentally challenged/chronically ill parents/guardians, substance abuse etc. In addition to this, the

State shall also develop survivor protection scheme survivors of abuse, trafficking and prostitution.

4.18 The State shall develop effective mechanisms and educative services for preventing children, especially adolescents from school drop-out, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, human trafficking, trafficking of narcotic and psychotropic substances.

4.19 Every child institution such as schools, hostels, JJ homes should have a women's committee to look into the complaints of sexual harassment and take necessary actions.

5. PARTICIPATION OF GIRLS

5.1 Participation is an inalienable right of every child, implying that child has every right to be heard and to have her or his views or opinions taken into account. The State has the primary responsibility to ensure that the girl children are made aware of their rights within the context of discrimination and violence faced by them, and provide an enabling environment, opportunities and support to develop skills, to form aspirations and express their views in accordance with their age, level of maturity and evolving capacities, so as to enable them to be knowledgeable and actively involved in their own development and all matters concerning and affecting them.

5.2 The State shall encourage and ensure recreation and sports opportunities for girls and set up creative spaces for arts, music, drama and cultural activities for girls and ensure adequate resources are provided to such facilities both in urban and rural areas. In addition, the State shall institute competitions, awards and incentives for the performance of such activities;

5.3 The State shall facilitate the joint interactions of boys and girls of different ages to deliberate on gender issues through community based initiatives both rural and urban areas;

5.4 The State shall create opportunities for girls to participate in public consultation at different levels of governance on affirmative action and measures to promote inclusiveness and participation of girls, particularly on issues that affect them;

5.5 The State shall promote meaningful and empowered participation of girls and all children within the family, community and schools, including within student council bodies and village/urban ward councils.

5.6 The State shall ensure child's participation especially in judicial matters which is very crucial, especially of children who are victims of crime and violence or in conflict with law, for them to make informed choices or influence decision making.

5.7 In order to ensure appropriate opportunities for girl children to be heard at all levels, the State shall:

- Establish and strengthen mechanisms for girl children to be heard at Gram Sabha (rural), Ward Sabha (urban), District Council and the State Legislative Assembly;

- Ensure involvement and engagement of girl children in the development of plans and policies concerning them and all children;
- Promote creative and innovative cultural platforms for children to express their views;
- Encourage and facilitate representation of girl children on committees concerning children issues at all levels;
- Ensure that the Right to Information is provided on all matters, as access to information is a key prerequisite for girls to make informed choices and confidence and maturity in expressing views and influencing decisions for themselves and others.

5.8 The State shall put in place mechanisms to build capacity of adults (duty-bearers and stakeholders) to seek the views and give attention to the views expressed by girls and children in general and effectively promote child participation in their deliberations and programmes.

6. ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS

6.1 Multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the implementation of the policy will be developed. The State shall encourage the active involvement, participation and collective action of stakeholders such as individuals, families, local communities, non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, media and private sector including government in securing the rights of the girl child.

6.2 The State shall ensure that service delivery and justice delivery mechanisms and structures are participatory, responsive and sensitive to the girl child, thereby enhancing transparency and ensuring public accountability. Synergistic linkages shall be created with other progressive and successful experiments to learn from best practices across regions.

7. COORDINATION AND MONITORING

7.1 Equality is dependent on the integration of all vulnerability concerns especially gender and requires programming across different sectors and integrating their impact on the child in a synergistic way. Effective, accountable and transparent institutions shall be set up at all levels for the implementation of the Policy. Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making structures, mechanisms and process shall be put in place to enable this. The State shall ensure multi-stakeholder partnerships in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all State supported policies, plans and programmes related to children's rights. State shall also undertake measures to effectively monitor the quality and coverage of services provided to children by the government, NGOs, religious institutions and other agencies in the private sectors.

7.2 The Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) shall be the nodal department for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of this Policy. A State Coordination and Action Group for Children with the Additional Chief Secretary as Chairperson, shall monitor the progress with other concerned Departments as its members will give specific attention to the implementation of Plan of Action for the Girl Child. At the District level, similar Coordination and Action Group shall also be formed headed by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Zilla Panchayat with the Deputy Director, DWCD as its member secretary. Additionally, programmes specific to the girl child could also be integrated into the KDP reviews at the District level and in the agenda of the District Child Protection Committee meetings.

7.3 The Department of Women and Child Development, in consultation with all related Departments, shall formulate a State Plan of Action for Children. Similar Plans at the District and local level, operational and implementation guidelines shall be formulated to ensure action on the provisions of this Policy. The State and District Coordination and Action Groups shall monitor the progress of implementation under these Plans.

7.4 As mandated by the Act, the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (KSCPCR) shall ensure that the principles of this Policy are respected in all sectors and at all levels in formulating laws, policies and programmes affecting children. Further, it will monitor implementation of this Policy and report non-compliance to the State Government. In order to fulfil role and responsibilities, the KSCPCR shall be enabled both programmatically as well as administratively, if need be.

7.5 A Special Session with an exclusive focus on children and girls, will be held by the legislature once a year, in order to ensure action and discussion on pertinent issues relating to child rights.

7.6 At the highest level, the State-level Monitoring Committee led by the Additional Chief Secretary shall review the progress in the implementation of this Policy and strategic action plans every year. This High Level committee comprising of Secretaries of all relevant departments such as Health, Women and Child Development, Education, *Panchayati* Raj and Rural Development and Home, Children's Commission will be overseeing the implementation of the policy, with regular reporting to the concerned Ministers. They shall set up mechanisms and processes to monitor progress against verifiable indicators, review the impediments to departmental and sectoral progress, and accelerate action in districts, blocks, urban wards and *gram panchayats* with the most adverse situations of gender disparities and decline in child rights indicators.

8. Research, Documentation and Capacity Building

8.1 The implementation of this Policy shall be supported by a constant process of developing a comprehensive and reliable knowledge base on all aspects of the status and condition of children. Establishing such a knowledge base would be compiled from reports of girl child focused research and documentation, both quantitative as well as qualitative. Dedicated annual publication of key bottlenecks that prevent the realization of gender equality for children at State, district and block levels shall be instituted.

8.2 Social audits will be undertaken to assess the benefits of the programmes and community based interventions at regular intervals. The reports of such audits and indicator-based child impact assessment and evaluation shall inform policies, plan and programmes for girl children.

8.3 The State Government shall commit itself to expeditiously improve its data collection system and analysis. The data shall be disaggregated by age, sex, geographic location, ethnic, State, district, sub-districts, and socioeconomic background in order to facilitate analysis of the situation of all children, highlighting the regional and district differentials as well as the situation and status of girl among SCs/STs and minority groups. Evidence based information, data and research findings shall provide the basis for the formulation of plans and programmes. Further, such information shall be utilized for monitoring progress shall be promoted at all levels of administration. In some instances, such information can be posted on websites and shared with the stakeholders, officials, functionaries and the community.

8.4 Academic institutions, research institutions, universities in the State shall be encouraged to undertake studies and surveys to draw attention to emerging problems and disparities within the State on the situation of girls;

8.5 The State shall ensure through appropriate selection of personnel and capacity building initiatives that there is professional and technical competence, and capability in all aspects of planning, implementation, management at all levels in all sectors.

8.6 Personnel at all levels working with children shall be sensitised and oriented on child rights, including rights of girl children at the time of their appointment and this shall include reorientation and refresher training going beyond the realm of their duties and responsibilities;

8.7 The State shall motivate and promote commitment among its personnel working for children and also ensure that such personnel shall be held accountable for their acts of omission and commission in the performance of their duties.

9 RESOURCE ALLOCATION

9.1 The State commits to allocate the required financial, material and human resources, and their efficient and effective use, with transparency and accountability, to implement this Policy.

9.2 Child budgeting and girl child budgeting processes shall be led by the DWCD with the support of other relevant Departments and will track allocation and utilisation of resources and their impact on outcomes for children, including girl children, with regard to budgets and expenditures on children by all related Departments and administrative levels.

10 REVIEW OF POLICY

10.1 A review of the implementation of the Plan of Action of this Policy will be undertaken annually. A Mid-Term Review of this Policy shall be taken up in the third years of its implementation and a comprehensive review after five years in consultation and the active involvement of children and youth, parents, NGOs, and other interested and relevant bodies. Social auditing methods such as children led reviews, participatory assessments by the community and children will add realism and field based first- hand knowledge to the review.

10.2. The Department of Women and Child Development shall lead the review process. The findings and conclusions from such reviews shall serve as inputs to revision of plans, programme procedures and processes. It shall inform legislation related to children to ensure the coherent and consistent harmonization of the legislative framework on children's and girls' rights at State level with the principles of this Policy.
