

## "બાલવાટિકા"

### (Expansion of Signal School Project)

The National Legal Services Authority has framed a Scheme, viz. 'NALSA (Child Friendly Legal Services to Children and Their Protection) Scheme, 2015, the objects of which are to outline the basic rights and benefits that should be afforded to children, to ensure legal representation to the children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with law at all levels. Moreover, sub-clause (l) of Clause 10.6 stipulates that each SLSA shall organize intensive legal awareness campaigns at all levels about children's right to education as well as fundamental duties of parents to send their children to schools.

Moreover, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, in **Salil Bali vs Union of India & Anr**, on 17 July, 2013, observed that – "It cannot be questioned that children are amongst the most vulnerable sections in any society. They represent almost one-third of the world's population, and unless they are provided with proper opportunities, the opportunity of making them grow into responsible citizens of tomorrow will slip out of the hands of the present generation."

Further, the Hon'ble Apex Court, in *Suo Moto Writ* © No. 06 of 2021, has taken a note about the conditions of Child in Street Situation and has, time to time issued several directions to the State and Central Governments and other bodies.

Considering the ratio laid down in above judgment and considering the mandatory duty cast upon the State Legal Services Authority, GSLSA initiated a project in the name & style Signal School in association with Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Ahmedabad Municipal School of Board with assistance from Government of Gujarat. The project was flagged off on 06.03.2022 by the dignitaries.





- 10 Buses of Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Services (AMTS) have been converted in to School Bus, with various amenities like LED TV, Wifi, Uniform, Shoes, Books, Board, Drinking Water, etc.
- The Municipal School Board has spared services of 02 teachers for each bus.
- This Bus will go to the specific spot/Cross Roads where children are found begging. Hence, rather children to go to school, in this Scheme, the School came to the Children to give them education for betterment of society. At present, 10 spots/cross roads have been identified for the project.



- This scheme is connected with the Mid-day Meal Scheme and accordingly, the children under this Scheme of Signal School will be provided lunch along with education.
- The object behind this scheme is to see that no child can be deprived of education.
- The above project proved to be a real success, as since its inception more than 500 children indulged in the begging work had been imparted education through bridge course and out of said number many children have been mainstreamed for education in nearest Municipal School.
- The project has been looked after primarily by Ahmedabad Municipal School Board with guidance of Hon'ble High Court of Gujarat and Gujarat State Legal Services Authority. The project has also been provided a National Award for its' unique concept.

Taking into consideration the success of the Project, Hon'ble the Chief Justice and Patron-in-Chief, Gujarat State Legal Services Authority has decided to extend the project for the children below six years by providing them ideal platform of play school (pre-school) by starting the project in the name "બાલવાટિકા" with following detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).

## **Standard Operating Procedure**

**Project Name:-** The project shall be named as "Balvatika"

**Project Associates:-** The project shall be launched by Gujarat State Legal Services Authority in association with Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Ahmedabad Municipal School Board.

**The Functioning of Project:-** The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation like the existing project of Signal School shall utilize the unused Ahmedabad Municipal Transport Corporation Bus for creating a moving school. Till the budgetary provision sanctioned, the corporation can utilize the infrastructure and the manpower of Signal School Project without disturbing the education of children. The interior of the bus would be done up considering the fact that same shall be for the children below six years. The bus shall have one trained teacher and one caretaker. The project is proposed to be started for the target group of children of the women inmates of the Sabarmati Central Jail and the surroundings area who are below six years. The details of the project have been apprised to the SP Sabarmati Central Jail, who in principle has agreed to the same. It is proposed that the Mother of the children at Sabarmati Central Jail would be apprised about the concept of the "Balvatika", through the Para Legal Volunteers of the GSLSA or DLSA Ahmedabad (Rural) who would try to inform the positive things associated with the project and what benefits could be achieved if the child is agreed to be send for "Balvatika". With proper counseling if the Mother of the child agrees to send her kid for the Balvatika, the kid will be taken with all apt security arrangements ensured by Jail Administration in a Bus to the

nearest Municipal School. It is made clear that if consent is not given by the Mother the Child shall not be taken to "Balvatika". The "Balvatika" shall work for 2.00 Hrs. The kids would be taken to nearest Municipal School and would be engrossed in Music, Dance and other creative activities and would be provided meal at School. After the session at school is completed the children would be brought back to jail. SP Sabarmati Central Jail shall nominate one PI ranked officer to look into the security and other aspects of the project. All the stakeholders associated with the project must make sure that at no point of time the identity of the child is revealed. In case any child above six years staying with her/ his Mother is not afforded education he/ she shall be offered the bridge course of regular signal school project.

The children whose parents are engaged in any unorganized sector job or are working at construction site or who are coming from very poor strata residing in the vicinity of the Sabarmati Central Jail area can also be enrolled in the school.

Preferably the teacher and the caretaker should be female. The bus should contain the fans and must be neat and clean. Care must be taken to see that it is mosquito free. Proper arrangement of drinking water should be made available in the bus. All efforts must be made to see that children enjoy their experience in the bus.

All other modalities including the budgetary and financial aspects would be the same as that of original Signal School Project. Member secretary, GSLSA shall coordinate with

Administrative officer and Jail Authority for smooth functioning of the project.

Key persons associated with proposed project suggested by Hon'ble the Chief Justice, High Court of Gujarat.

Sr.	Name of person	Designation	Contact No.
1	Mr. Rahul A. Trivedi	Member Secretary, GSLSA	98253 15548
2	Mr. L. D. Desai	Administrative Officer, Ahmedabad Municipal School Board (AMC)	93756 87555
3	Mr. Vakil	P.I. Sabarmati Central Jail	87587 75056

