

TEAM TNIE

KARNATAKA has seen its fair share of controversy over the past year on the school education system. Whether it pertains to high-level policies, condition of government-run schools or ground-level schooling, all have brought the state school system to the fore and raised questions on how children are treated in their learning spaces.

On paper, these questions are answered by the Karnataka Child Protection Policy 2016, currently being revised by the state government. The policy is a comprehensive document, dictating the rights afforded to children by the state, as well as protection against any type of abuse they might face.

The policy framework for 'Child in Educational Institutions' includes two sections: Access to free, quality and equitable education, and safety and protection from any form of discrimination, abuse or exploitation. These two sections detail the rights of a child, and how they should be upheld by educational institutions. It includes encouraging the use of technology to document the extent to which the policy is enforced, ensuring access to education, rescue from abusive families, and basic child safety regulations.

However, lesser known and lesser still implemented, are points related to ensuring that children are given health check-ups - both physical and mental - every three to six months, access to a qualified and experienced counsellor, and compulsory background checks and police verification for every member of the staff working in an educational institution.

While the policy is comprehensive and presents a utopic view of what education should be like, the reality on the ground suggests the contrary.

Kavitha Rathna, one of the drafting committee members of the 2016 policy, told TNIE that several incidents have proven time and again that the policy is poorly executed, despite there being clear-cut guidelines to act to ensure safety of children within school premises and out-

side. The incident of Sannidhi, a Class 2 student from Byndoor, Udupi district, who was washed away in a stream while crossing an unsafe wooden footbridge in August this year, exposed how the child protection policy is poorly implemented.

Educationist and child rights activist B K Narayan said there is a need to improve awareness on the policy among teachers and School Development and Monitoring Committee (SDMC) members. It is the responsibility of all citizens to provide and protect the rights of children. School authorities, teachers and SDMC members have to ensure these rights are protected, while they have been diluted or neglected under various circumstances. Proper monitoring is important, he said.

NO SAFETY

There is no safety for children in state schools as ground-level officials allege that most schools have no Child Protection Policy in place.

"Absence of CPP has resulted in several violations. We came across a sexual abuse case last year in a school by a staff member, but it was not properly handled. There is no proper care in daycare centres as staff become violent. Corporal punishment, oral abuse, no space for right to participation and expression, neglecting children, be it physical or mental care, are some of the violations we come across," said Joyce Watson of PADI, a non-government organisation.

For example, last week, in a government school in Belthangady, Dakshina Karnataka, a student fell down and suffered head injuries, and teachers were accused of asking fellow students to give first aid to the injured child.

The Deputy Director of Public Instruction then sought a report and issued a circular to make sure such incidents do not repeat.

CHILD RIGHTS POLICY IS GOOD, BUT EXECUTION POOR

POLICY POINTS: Some measures mentioned under 'Child in Educational Institutions'. Includes points like: Age-and gender-appropriate infrastructure, Appointment of well-qualified, trained and experienced counsellors, Ensure that every school has established a 'child protection committee', Educate children in understanding, recognising and reporting crimes, etc.

LACK OF AWARENESS

There is lack of awareness about the policy in many parts of the state. For example, child marriage and child labour are still in practice in many villages of Kalaburagi district, says Child Welfare Committee district chairman Yallalinga Kalnoor.

"Children do not understand what abuse is, so there is a need to sensitise teachers. There should be awareness at all stages to make children more open and comfortable," said Joyce Watson of PADI.

In Shivamogga, CWC experts opine that most SDMC members and teachers don't have knowledge about the Child Protection Policy, and have failed to implement it at an optimum level.

Chairperson of Shivamogga CWC Rekha said that very few SDMC members and teachers have knowledge about the policy, not everyone has read it completely and none provides awareness about it. Sometimes teachers, despite having information about the policy, can't express it because of the management, she said.

She said the reasons for not having knowledge about the policy, and failure in implementing it, is because of a lack of awareness among the masses, frequent teacher transfers, heavy workload, lack of coordination between teachers and SDMC members at some schools.

Rekha said the government has issued many orders and circulars to implement the policy strictly. Some schools are implementing it, while at others, it is only on paper. She said the District Child Protection

Unit (DCPU) has a separate wing to provide training to stakeholders of child protection, teachers, headmasters and anganwadi teachers, regarding the policy. Regular training has been provided by DCPU in recent days.

ACTION TAKEN

DDPI Sakreppa Gowda Biradar said every government school in the district has first-aid kits and physical education teachers are trained to give preliminary treatment to children whenever they are injured during play. As Primary Health Centres (PHCs) are near, either the staff comes to school or the child is taken to the PHC within a few minutes. So far, no such health incidents have been reported, DDPI said.

In Kodagu, officials say that several private schools in the district have special staff appointed to ensure the safety of students. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Kodagu Vidyalaya in Madikeri has appointed a full-time professional nurse who is present on the school premises during working hours.

"Any untoward incident is first attended to by the nurse, and first-aid extended to the injured child. Further, all students are covered by an insurance policy extended by the school management. We are also creating awareness among parents on the need for medical insurance for kids. The management also holds ESI. Emergency cases are first referred to a government hospital as per the guidelines of the education department," confirmed a committee member of BVBBK management.

In Dharwad, DDPI SS Keladimath said there is a continuous process of training teachers and students on the CPC. "Such training is going on in Hubballi. Schools have all emergency kits to treat children, and there

is no issue with emergency vehicles in city limits. In rural areas, private vehicles are arranged.

ACTION NEEDED

Childline officials have demanded that the government come up with a strong CPP, and not make it toothless. "They have called for recommendations for the Karnataka State Child Protection Policy draft, and we too have sent our suggestions which the government should consider," said Renni D'Souza, chairman of Child Welfare Committee, Mangaluru.

Kavitha Rathna said the policy was prepared in 2016 after consulting many stakeholders and also contains that it needs to be revised every five years. Apart from revision, rapid response at the school level and BEO level should happen to ensure the policy is not compromised in any school, she added.

In the event of violation, the children, or a person with social concern, or through Childline (1098) can approach the District Child Welfare Committee for redressal. The District Child Welfare Committee can register suo motu cases and initiate proceedings to provide justice to the child. In this regard, various awareness programmes should be arranged by the Childline, District Child Protection Unit, departments of education and women and child development, from time to time, said activist B K Narayan.

Children can also approach the police station and meet the child welfare officer who will provide all assistance. This officer is child-friendly and in civil dress, and is part of the Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU), B K Narayan informed.

(Inputs from Donna Eva, Divya Cutinho/Mangaluru, Ramakrishna Badshahi/Kalaburagi, Arpitha I/Shivamogga, Prakash Samaga/Udupi, Prajna GR/Kodagu, Pramodkumar Vaidya/Dharwad)



Four killed in rain havoc in Tamil Nadu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

AT least four people died and thousands of acres of paddy, sugarcane and banana crops went under water across delta districts due to record rainfall over the last two days.

While Chellappappa (55), wife of Murugaiyan, of Nedungal village in Thanjavur district, died on Sunday after the wall of her rain-soaked house crashed on her, K Ravichandran (42) of Komalappettai near Mannargudi in Tiruvallur district died of electrocution suspected to have been triggered by the downpour.

Singaravel, a 55-year-old farmer in Salem, died after he came in contact with a snapped power line in his field on Saturday. Settu, a 45-year-old mason in Tiruvannamalai, died on Saturday in a wall collapse.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin told reporters in Chennai he will visit Sirkazhi on Monday (November 14) to



Tamil Nadu Fire and Emergency Services personnel rescue people from Om Shakthi Nagar near Mangadu in Chennai on Sunday | JASHWIN PRASATH

take stock of the situation. The town in Mayiladuthurai district received a record rainfall of 44cm in 24 hours on Saturday.

A total of 16,807 people have been sheltered in 38 relief centres in Chengalpattu, Mayiladuthurai, Cuddalore, Villu-

HEAVY SHOWERS LASH NELLORE, TIRUPATI

Nellore: Heavy rains continued to lash several parts of Nellore and Tirupati districts affecting normal life. Several rivulets are overflowing across the district. Following a downpour since the early hours of Sunday, low-lying areas on the outskirts of Nellore city were inundated. The situation was no different in Kavali and other areas. Somasila reservoir has been receiving nearly 16,000 cusecs of water from upstream.

standby. Three NDRF teams have been sent to Nilgiris, Dindigul and Theni districts to carry out search, rescue and relief work. Five SDRF teams have been stationed in Cuddalore, Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Mayiladuthurai districts.

Kancheepuram district received the highest of 68.17mm rainfall. Chennai received 47.01mm of rainfall in 24 hours ending 8am on Sunday.

17-yr-old student ends life over ragging, blames 3

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Adilabad

A second-year Intermediate student of the Telangana Minorities Residential College for Boys in Bhainsa of Nirmal district committed suicide in the prayer room on Sunday after being allegedly subjected to ragging on a regular basis.

The victim, Mohammad Farhan Nawaz, 17, hanged himself from the ceiling. Bhainsa Town police reached the spot and recovered a suicide note, and the body has been sent for postmortem.

Police said that the victim had mentioned the names of three students who allegedly used to harass him, by picking on him for being good in studies, and called him the 'principal's agent'.

The victim's father, Md Abdul Hafeez Nawaz, alleged that the school principal has failed to take action after Farhan had filed a complaint.

Town Circle Inspector M Praveen Kumar said a case under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the IPC has been filed against the three students.

Parents demanded that counsellors be engaged by schools so that students don't resort to such extreme measures.

There have been a series of ragging incidents reported in the state. Visuals of a first-year LLB student of ICAFI Business School being ragged went viral on social media, prompting the police to register a case against the accused.

'Is the statue only for netas?'

CONTINUED FROM P5

NIRANJAN VK, a resident of Basavanagudi, said, "I went out on a weekend drive and wanted to see the statue up close. But the authorities had closed the gates and were forcing the public to leave the premises. I was upset. Later, I went to Nandhi Hills.

Chandrakala Gopinath, who came from Banaswadi along with her two children, said, "The government spent crores of rupees to build this statue. What is the purpose if people are not allowed to see it? Is it meant only for politicians?"

A police officer from the KIA police station said, "We don't know if the area around the statue is being maintained by KIA or BBMP. We have not deployed any police. The public may be allowed after some days."

MHA worried over Left extremism in Wayanad

SHAN AS @T'Puram

THE Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has included Wayanad in the 'district of concern' category to spearhead its action plan against left-wing extremism (LWE) in the country.

The 'district of concern' and the 'most affected LWE districts' are the two categories brought about by the MHA to distribute the funds under the Special Central Assistance (SCA) scheme, which is meant to fill the developmental void in areas affected by left extremism.

The 'most affected LWE districts' are the ones that witness large-scale violence, while the 'district of concern' include geographical areas which could be targeted by the left extremists.

With its inclusion in the SCA scheme, Wayanad will collectively receive Rs 40 crore from this year till 2026 (Rs 10 crore annually). The inclusion of Wayanad in the scheme came in the wake of intelligence reports from both the central and the state agencies regarding the presence and activities of armed Maoist cadres in the forests.

However, the breather for Kerala is that no other districts have been included in the SCA scheme. Under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme, which primarily focuses on catering to the security needs of the state, three districts of Kerala-Wayanad, Malappuram and Palakkad have been counted among the LWE-affected districts.



4 Rajiv case convicts sent to Tiruchy spl camp

Tiruchy: Four of the six life-term convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, who were formally released from prison on Saturday, were ordered to stay in special camps (foreigners' detention centre) in Tiruchy, Murugan, Santhan, Robert Payas, and Jayakumar, who are Sri Lankan nationals, were brought to the special camps on Saturday night. A source said that the Foreigners Regional Registration Office invoked Section 3(2)(E) of the Foreigners Act, 1946, which imposes any restriction on their movements until further order. ENS

EXPRESS READ

TN introduced engg courses in Tamil 12 yrs ago: Minister

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu started teaching engineering courses in Tamil 12 years ago when M Karunanidhi was chief minister, said Higher Education Minister K Ponnudiy on Sunday, adding that work to translate study materials for medical courses were on. He was replying to the request of Union Home Minister Amit Shah. He added the government also enacted a law to make Tamil must in all schools up to Class 10. ENS

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH SAMAGRA SHIKSHA STATE PROJECT OFFICE, KBC BOYS HIGH SCHOOL CAMPUS, OPP. RAITHU BAZAR, PATAMATA, VIJAYAWADA, ANDHRA PRADESH. TENDER NOTICE. e-procurement notice No. SS-16/34/2022-CMO SEC-SSA, Dt. 11.11.2022

COCHIN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LTD Kochi Airport P.O., Ernakulam - 683111. TENDER NOTICE 14/11/2022. BDDS EQUIPMENTS. Item rate E-tenders are invited from reputed contractors for SITC of 6 nos. of various BDDS Equipments at Cochin International Airport.

KARNATAKA STATE BIOENERGY DEVELOPMENT BOARD (KSBDB) No. 116, 8th Cross, Railway Parallel Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru-560 020. Telephone: 080-23568200. No.: KSBDB/CR-11/vol/11/2020-21/201 Date: 14.11.2022. Notification. The Karnataka State Bioenergy Development Board invites applications from Biofuel industries to avail the benefit of biofuel industry promotional incentives/grant.

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED (CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521) No. 506/BGM/SEE/Tr.(W&M)/C/EE/O/AEE-1/22-23/F-6672-84 Date: 10.11.2022. BRIEF RE-TENDER NOTIFICATION (THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT MODE ONLY) KPTCL invites bids against this office tender Indent No. Bid Enquiry No. KPTCL/2022-23/SS/WORK_INDENT 9636/CALL-3 for the work of Transportation (To & Fro), repair of sick power transformer and testing, assembling, erection and commissioning of repaired power transformer of rating 20MVA, 110/33-11KV Class, INDOTECH-MAKE, SI. No. IT-37431, year of manufacture-2004 power transformer failed at 110KV S/S Yalparatti in TL&SS Division, KPTCL, Chikodi and laying at 110KV/S/S Yalparatti on Total Turnkey Basis on Percentage Tender basis.