

Bal Mela and Career Counselling Sessions Held in Government Schools in Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh



School children participating in Bal Mela

As part of an integrated village development project, titled LIC HFL HRIDAY (Holistic Rural Initiative for Development Action & Yield), we organised Bal Melas and career counseling sessions in government primary schools of five villages in Sonbhadra district in Uttar Pradesh to support educational activities. These were organised in five government schools in *Gidhiya*, *Dumar*, *Chanchikhurd*, *Kota*, and *Nighai* villages.

On the one hand, Bal Melas aimed to expose school children to creative activities that nurture their interests and understanding, and on the other hand, help them enhance their memory, concentration, creativity, and imagination through interactive activities like speech modulation, reading aloud, painting, origami, and working with old newspapers. About 650 students and 21 teachers participated in this activity across all five schools.

Activities were conceptualised in context to the geography of these marginalised villages in Sonbhadra and only locally available resources were used as materials for the activities so that teachers could replicate these later.

Further, career counseling sessions were organised for upper primary classes before their exams to give them a detailed overview of available career options. The sessions focused on interest identification, setting aspirations, discussing role models, and information



Children participating in an activity during Bal Mela in Dumar Village, Sonbhadra

dissemination for different career paths. Students were informed about career pathways such as Civil Services, Defense Services, Management, Medical, Finance, Law, Accountancy, Architecture, and Marketing along with Entrepreneurship, Design, Media and Journalism, Hotel Management, Para Medical, etc. Relevant information on required skill sets, eligibility, and scope was shared with students.

The career sessions intended to support the students' aspirations and helping them in choosing the correct career path. Right knowledge will build their confidence, boost their morale, and help them overcome barriers. In this activity, around 120 students from upper primary classes participated.

Development Alternatives entered into a technical partnership with Eklavya Foundation to make both the activities impactful. Such activities focus on confidence building in these children and help them grow with informed choices that are good for their future and the environment.



Career counselling session conducted at a government school in Kota Village, Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh