

Bal Mela Held in Sonbhadra, Uttar Pradesh



To celebrate creativity among children, we organised Bal Melas in primary schools of two villages – Kota and Doomar in the Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh on 23 and 24 September, 2022. The activity was conducted as a part of the Holistic Rural Initiative for Development Action and Yield (HRIDAY) project.

The project is supported by LIC Housing Finance Limited and aims to work with marginalised communities for holistic development under the themes of health, education, community engagement, natural resource management, and basic infrastructure development in five villages, namely Gidhia, Kota, Doomar, Chanchikhurd, and Nighai.



Children participation in Bal Melas in schools

In these Melas, children participated in fun and creative activities including making paper hats using recycled newspapers, painting with leaves, and learning origami techniques through storytelling. Children were also enlightened about breaking superstition via scientific demonstrations. Scientific experiments were conducted in front of the excited participants, which made them question superstitions with logic and rationale.

These villages are far away from cities not only in terms of distance but also in terms of resources. People are still living in mud houses, with restricted availability of electricity and drinking water, and very few livelihood opportunities.

It was also observed that school-going children of these villages do not have exposure to educational resources as compared to the school-going children in metropolitan cities. The team members interacted with these children and understood their perspective on the scope of development required for their respective villages. Activities conducted with the children were as follows:

- Developing communication and team-building skills of these children through an activity on the 'sound of rain clap and sound of running train'. In this activity, children were instructed to synchronise their actions with one another by listening to sounds
- Poetry narration through origami techniques
- Painting using green leaves
- *Topi* making by using recycled newspaper
- Chemical reactions of glycerin and potassium to break superstition stories