



**SETU Abhiyan**

*Strengthening Local Governance*

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# GIVING WINGS TO YOUNG DREAMS

*EMPOWERING ADOLESCENT GIRLS-  
BALLIKA PANCHAYAT.*



## SETU

SETUs as cluster level information centers emerged immediately post the 2001 earthquake to play a bridge role in coordinating effective relief and information needs. In these 15 years, SETUs carved its own niche – facilitating local people & external agencies towards strengthening communities to decide, negotiate and monitor for the kind & the pace of development that they need and can sustain. Over the time, SETUs realized the need to strengthen the local governance and thus reeducating the Gram Panchayats in governing their villages. Since 2004, SETUs thus focused on strengthening local governance more prominently through various innovations in urban and rural settings across 6 blocks in the district of Kutch.

## Empowering Adolescent Girls- Ballika Panchayat

To sensitize local government bodies, such as the Gram Panchayat, to the adolescent girls' specific issues to enable and empower them to have purposeful lives and positive futures. It aims at making the village child friendly, women friendly and socially just and secure. The specific initiative aims at positive outcomes for girls at an early stage so that they are exposed to a holistic view of development and growth.

A girl studying in the 8th from the Scheduled Tribe community was about to drop out of school due to the prevalent issue of child marriage. The Ballika Panchayat spoke to the girl's parents and convinced them to let her study further. The girl is currently pursuing her education and is in the 9th std.





## The Initiative

The Sarpanch of the Lohariya Ballika Panchayat was also studying in this school.. The Ballika Panchayat took the initiative, along with SETU and Panchayat to avail of a Transportation Facility Scheme. There are now two autos daily for their commute. As a result, the girls are now able to attend school regularly.



To realize the objective, SETU conducts regular meetings, where the girls are educated on various topics like the structure of the government, their rights as an individual, the importance of education, gender roles and equality, health, GPDP, etc. SETU also conducts many exposure visits for adolescent girls to build their knowledge and help them form an opinion about their lives and the rights they are entitled to as an individual.





## An Inspiring Illustration – Lohariya Ballika Panchayat

In these transformative workshops , the inputs, suggestions, and ideas of the girls are carefully documented. These inputs act as a guiding light in targeting specific issues put forth by them and working with them, for them. These are conducted at the Village level, Block Level and District Level.



The Lohariya Ballika Panchayat was established in 22nd July 2022. This Ballika Panchayat has crossed many hurdles and is self-functioning now. Let us take a look at two major concerns that they addressed and solved:

40 students, out of which most are adolescent girls had to walk 5km up and down daily. This was especially difficult for the girls and they were unable to attend school regularly.



## Ballika Panchayat

- The Ballika Panchayat is successful in nurturing the interests of the adolescent girls and further functions as a support group.
- The Ballika Panchayat has empowered the adolescent girls in protecting their rights, encouraging them and targeting specific issues faced by them.
- The Ballika Panchayat is actively involved in the GPDP planning process.

In villages where the adolescent girl's meetings are successful, a Ballika Panchayat is formed there. This is an initiative by the Women and Child Development Welfare department of the Gujarat Board, launched under the 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign.





## Empowering Young India

SETU plays a key role in facilitating and nurturing these groups for their active functioning and uncovering their full potential.

These councils represent the girl's interests, nurturing their leadership skills for a brighter future.

Beyond educating them on various topics, the Ballika Panchayat presents its concerns in front of the Gram Panchayat during the monthly meetings.

- The Gram Panchayat works in coordination with the Ballika Panchayat in providing a space for the Ballika Panchayat to put forth their concerns and requirements.
- 17 Panchayats have specially allocated part of their funds for the Ballika Panchayat.

