

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

NATIONAL POLICY FOR CHILDREN

RESOLUTION

No. 1-14/74-CDD—The Government of India have had under consideration the question of evolving a national policy for the welfare of children. After due consideration, it has been decided to adopt the policy enunciated below :—

Introduction

1. The nation's children are a supremely important asset. Their nurture and solicitude are our responsibility. Children's programme should find a prominent part in our national plans for the development of human resources, so that our children grow up to become robust citizens, physically fit, mentally alert and morally healthy, endowed with the skills and motivations needed by society. Equal opportunities for development to all children during the period of growth should be our aim, for this would serve our larger purpose of reducing inequality and ensuring social justice.

Goals

2. The needs of children and our duties towards them have been expressed in the Constitution. The Resolution on a National Policy on Education, which has been adopted by Parliament, gives direction to State Policy on the educational needs of children. We are also party to the U.N. Declaration of the Rights of the Child. The goals set out in these documents can reasonably be achieved by judicious and efficient use of the available national resources. Keeping in view these goals, the Government of India adopts this Resolution on the National Policy for Children.

Policy and measures

3. It shall be the policy of the State to provide adequate services to children, both before and after birth and through the period of growth, to ensure their full physical, mental and social development. The State shall progressively increase the scope of such services so that, within a reasonable time, all children in the country enjoy optimum conditions for their balanced growth. In particular, the following measures shall be adopted towards the attainment of these objectives :

- (i) All children shall be covered by a comprehensive health programme.
- (ii) Programmes shall be implemented to provide nutrition services with the object of removing deficiencies in the diet of children.
- (iii) Programmes will be undertaken for the general improvement of the health and for the care, nutrition and nutrition education of expectant and nursing mothers.
- (iv) The State shall take steps to provide free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 for which a time-bound programme will be drawn up consistent with the availability of resources. Special efforts will be made to reduce the prevailing wastage and stagnation in schools, particularly in the case of girls and children of the weaker sections of society. The programme of informal education for pre-school children from such sections will also be taken up.
- (v) Children who are not able to take full advantage of formal school education shall be provided other forms of education suited to their requirements.
- (vi) Physical education, games, sports and other types of recreational as well as cultural and scientific activities shall be promoted in schools, community centres and such other institutions.
- (vii) To ensure equality of opportunity, special assistance shall be provided to all children belonging to the weaker sections of the society, such as children belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and those belonging to the economically weaker sections, both in urban and rural areas.
- (viii) Children who are socially handicapped, who have become delinquent or have been forced to take to begging or are otherwise in distress, shall be provided facilities for education, training and rehabilitation and will be helped to become useful citizens.
- (ix) Children shall be protected against neglect, cruelty and exploitation.

- (x) No child under 14 years shall be permitted to be engaged in any hazardous occupation or be made to undertake heavy work.
- (xi) Facilities shall be provided for special treatment, education, rehabilitation and care of children who are physically handicapped, emotionally disturbed or mentally retarded.
- (xii) Children shall be given priority for protection and relief in times of distress or natural calamity.
- (xiii) Special programmes shall be formulated to spot, encourage and assist gifted children, particularly those belonging to the weaker sections of society.
- (xiv) Existing laws should be amended so that in all legal disputes, whether between parents or institutions, the interests of children are given paramount consideration.
- (xv) In organising services for children, efforts would be directed to strengthen family ties so that full potentialities of growth of children are realised within the normal family, neighbourhood and community environment.

Priority in programme formation

4. In formulating programmes in different sectors, priority shall be given to programmes relating to:

- (a) preventive and promotive aspects of child health ;
- (b) nutrition for infants and children in the pre-school age along with nutrition for nursing and expectant mothers ;
- (c) maintenance, education and training of orphan and destitute children ;
- (d) creches and other facilities for the care of children of working or ailing mothers ; and
- (e) care, education, training and rehabilitation of handicapped children.

Constitution of National Children's Board

5. During the last two decades we have made significant progress in the provision of services for children on the lines detailed above. There has been considerable expansion in the health, nutrition, education and welfare services. Rise in the standard of living, wherever it occurred, has indirectly met children's basic needs to some extent. But all this work needs a focus and a forum for planning and review, and proper coordination of the multiplicity of services striving to meet the needs of children. A National

Children's Board shall be constituted to provide this focus and to ensure at different levels continuous planning, review and coordination of all the essential services. Similar Boards may also be constituted at the State level.

Role of voluntary organisations

6. The Government shall endeavour that adequate resources are provided for child welfare programmes and appropriate schemes are undertaken. At the same time, voluntary organisations engaged in the field of child welfare will continue to have the opportunity to develop, either on their own or with State assistance, in the field of education, health, recreation and social welfare services. India has a tradition of voluntary action. It shall be the endeavour of the State to encourage and strengthen voluntary action so that State and voluntary efforts complement each other. The resources of voluntary organisations, trusts, charities and religious and other endowments would have to be tapped to the extent possible for promoting and developing child welfare programmes.

Legislative and Administrative action

7. To achieve the above aims, the State will provide necessary legislative and administrative support. Facilities for research and training of personnel will be developed to meet the needs of the expanding programmes and to improve the effectiveness of the services.

People's participation

8. The Government of India trust that the policy enunciated in this statement will receive the support and cooperation of all sections of the people and of organisations working for children. The Government of India also calls upon the citizens, State Governments, local bodies, educational institutions and voluntary organisations to play their part in the overall effort to attain these objectives.

New Delhi, 22nd August, 1974.