

Welfare and development of children

10.57 A 'rights based' approach has been adopted in the Tenth Plan with the strategy of promoting survival, protection and development of children, and the adoption of the 'National Charter for Children' in February 2004 and the 'National Plan of Action for Children' in August 2005. Proposal to set up a 'National Commission for Child Rights' is under consideration of the Parliament.

10.58 One of the largest child intervention programmes in the world is the ICDS Scheme initiated in 1975 with a package of six basic services for children up to six years of age, and for pregnant and nursing mothers. These services are: health-checkup, immunization, referral services, supplementary feeding, pre-school education, and health and nutrition education through a single window delivery system. Starting with a modest 33 blocks/projects, it has gradually expanded to 5,652 projects of which 5,624 projects with 7,43,156 Anganwadi Centres were operational on July 31, 2005. ICDS covers 484.42 lakh beneficiaries consisting of 403 lakh children below 6 years of age and 81 lakh pregnant and lactating mothers.

10.59 To fulfill the NCMP commitment of providing a functional Anganwadi in every settlement and ensuring full coverage of all children, and also to comply with the Supreme Court's directives, Government has approved expansion of the ICDS Scheme to 467

additional ICDS projects and 1,88,168 Anganwadi Centres, out of which only 11 ICDS Projects remain to be sanctioned. A number of new initiatives have been taken to improve the impact of the programme, which includes sharing of a half of the cost of supplementary nutrition with the States under ICDS.

10.60 Special schemes such as the Ballika Samridhi Yojana (BSY) and Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) are being implemented for improving the life cycle approach of the girl child. The BSY initiated in 1997-98 provides for cash deposit in an interest bearing account to pay for the girl child's education and subsequently to revert to her on her attaining the age of 18 years. The scheme is in the process of being transferred to the States. KSY is a special intervention for adolescent girls (11-18 years), which uses the ICDS infrastructure to provide them all round development including nutrition, literacy and vocational skills. KSY, which was implemented in only 2000 blocks up to 2004-05, is being expanded to the remaining blocks of the country in 2005-06.

10.61 The scheme of Creches and Day-Care Centres for Children of Working and Ailing Mothers is being implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board and two other national level voluntary organizations, namely, Indian Council for Child Welfare and the Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh.