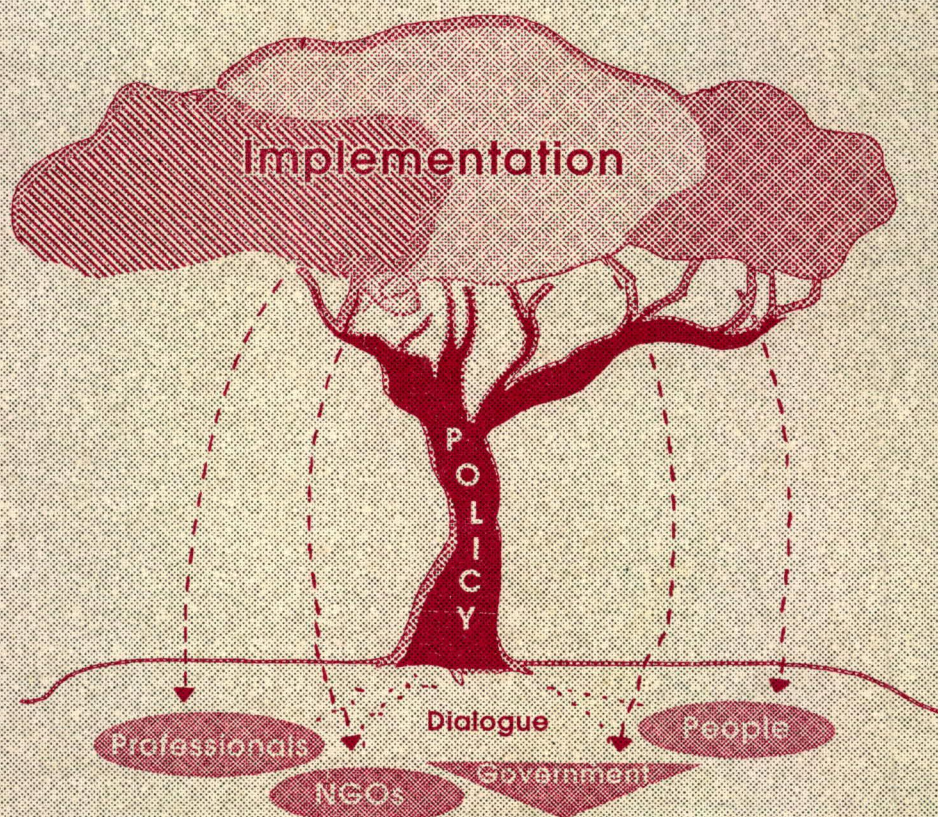


Policy for the Young Child in Tamil Nadu

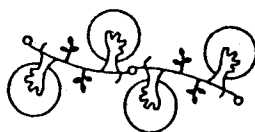


report
of a
seminar

POLICY FOR THE YOUNG CHILD IN TAMIL NADU

Proceedings of a Seminar
held at Madras
on October 22, 1994

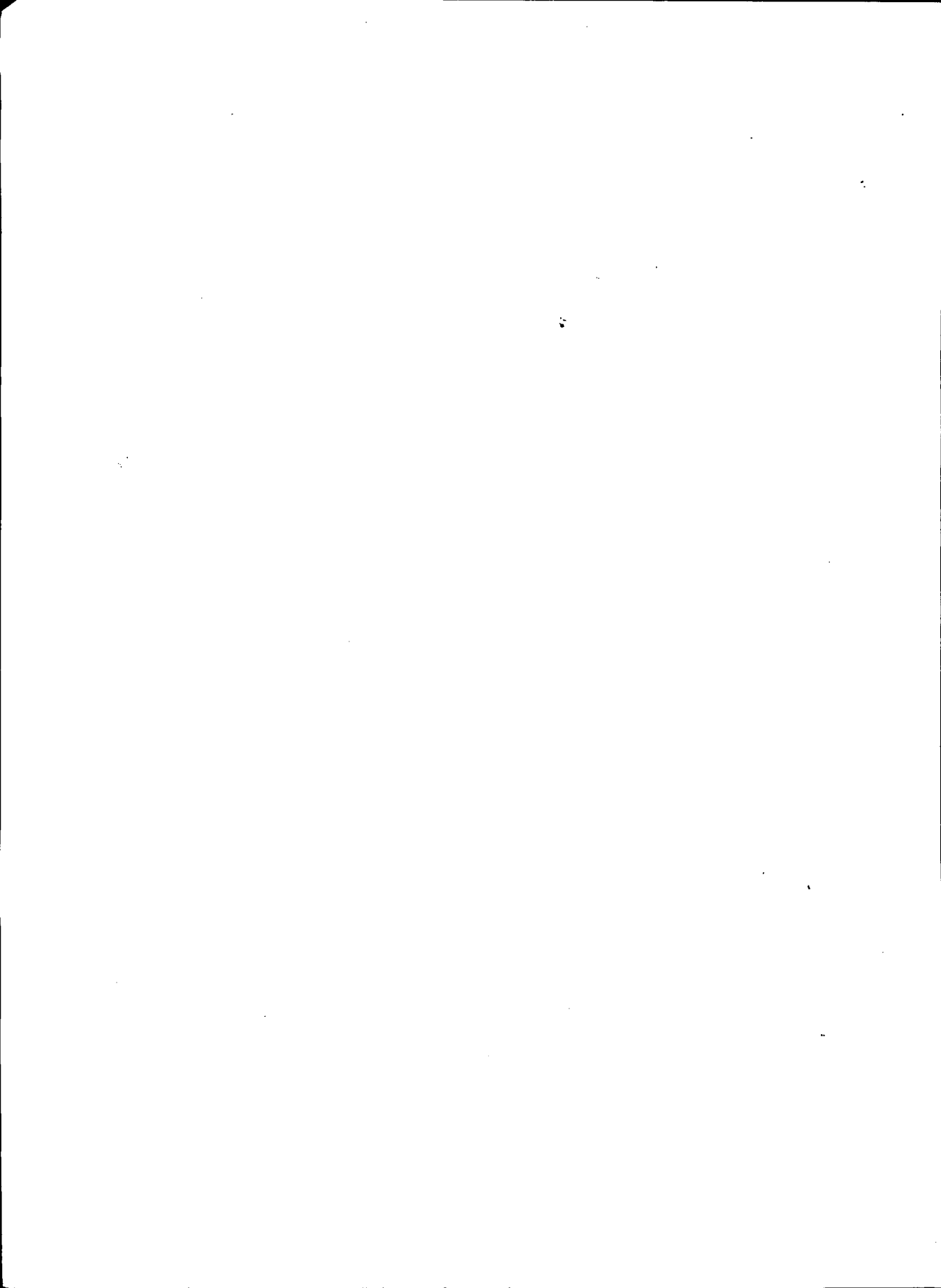
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FOREWORD

The crux of human resource development lies in providing an enabling environment for the young child to grow into a healthy and productive adult. This can be achieved by putting children on the agenda of several policies and programmes. The UN – sponsored global charter declaring the Rights of the Child adopted in 1989 could not have been more appropriately timed, given the context of Structural Adjustment Policies and the experiences of debt-ridden nations in combating the sufferings of the poor, particularly women and children.

Tamil Nadu has always been in the forefront in caring for women and children and designing and implementing innovative policies and programmes for them. The experiences gained after implementing several projects for many years are thought-provoking and need to be analysed and discussed for formulating effective strategies for the future. As a first step in this direction, existing policies have to be regularly reviewed, critiqued constructively and a process of dialogue initiated with policy makers.

The seminar on **Policy for the young child (0-6 years) in Tamil Nadu** jointly organised by Project ACCESS (Action for Child Care and Education Strategies and Services) of the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and the Professional Social Workers' Forum, is a part of this approach. This carefully-designed seminar attended by representatives of both Government and non-government organisations and supported by well-documented papers has made a review of the State Plan of Action and has come up with useful policy recommendations for the betterment of the lot of women and children. This publication is a record of the seminar.

We are indebted to the Bernard Van Leer Foundation for financial support, to the speakers for their well-documented papers, to Dr. Armaity Desai for chairing the sessions and Dr. Rajammal P. Devadas for her reflections on the seminar. Our special thanks go to the Honourable Minister for Finance, Thiru. Navalar V.R. Nedunchezian, and Pulavar Tmt. R. Indra Kumari, the Honourable Minister for Social Welfare, for delivering the Valedictory Address and Special Address respectively.

M. S. Swaminathan

Dr. M.S. SWAMINATHAN
Chairman

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Venue :
Madras School of Social Work
32, Casa Major Road
Egmore, Madras.

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE SEMINAR

Programmes without policies are like un-destined arrows from a bow which end in the wasting of energies, efforts and resources. Carefully developed policies are the backbone of meaningful programmes. A good policy should have defined objectives, stated goals, procedures for implementation and allocation of resources. Child welfare policies concern subsequent generations and are a powerful force moulding the lives of millions of young children.

Existing policies should be regularly reviewed and analysed to measure their elasticity to cope with the changing phases of the development scenario. The seminar attempted to trace the origin of policies and analyse the policies in practice.

Objectives

- To bring under one roof social scientists, professional social workers, child welfare personnel and policy makers to analyse the policies in practice for young children (0-6 years)
- To encourage multi-disciplinary dialogue among experts from various disciplines and to create an interest in policy research
- To critically review policies and suggest modifications

- To identify methods and strategies to initiate changes in policies.

Areas of concern

Keeping the major objectives in focus, the following broad areas of concern formed the subject of background papers.

Review and analysis of policies for young children

Social welfare policies evolve over a period of time. Policies for young children are an important dimension of social development. Holistic policy, which involves the overall development of the child includes facets such as health, nutrition, child care etc. There is a need to analyse the policies in practice in order to assess the shortcomings and to throw light on special features.

Problems and strategies in child care services

Tamil Nadu has a well-developed network of child welfare programmes. TINP, Chief Minister's Nutritious Meals Scheme, Muthulakshmi Reddy Maternity Benefit Scheme are a few major programmes. In addition to the governmental networks, hundreds of non-governmental organisations are working in the areas of health, literacy, child care etc. It is im-

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perative to conduct studies on problems and strategies in child care programmes.

Role of NGOs in the promotion of child welfare policies

NGOs have the major advantage of taking up experimental programmes in order to shape programmes to suit the needs of the people. NGOs also can play a major role in campaigning for changes in the existing policies.

Invitees and Participants

- Senior policy makers from the Departments of Health, Education, Social Welfare, Labour and Finance.
- Scholars and social scientists from Universities and research institutions.

- Experienced activists/workers from NGOs who are working in the areas of health, nutrition, child care.
- Professional social workers in government and non-governmental organisations.

Outcomes

The presentations were followed by a general discussion in which issues related to policy making and implementation were debated. The issues were then discussed in three groups and recommendations were drafted, which were presented at the Valedictory Session, in the presence of the Honourable Ministers for Finance and Social Welfare of Tamil Nadu.

PROGRAMME

Morning Session : **9.30 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.**

Welcome : Prof. K.N. George

Introduction to purpose and
scope of seminar : Ms. Mina Swaminathan

Presentations

Formulation of Social Policy in India : Dr. Radha Paul

Child Welfare Policy in Tamil Nadu : Mr. S. Raja Samuel

Issues in Implementation of Child Care Services : Ms. Rama Narayanan

Role of NGOs in Child Welfare Policy : Ms. Kanan Varma

Discussions

Tamil Nadu's New Thrust in Child Welfare : Shri. T.V. Antony, I.A.S. (Retd.)

General Discussions

Chairperson's Summing Up : Dr. Armaity Desai

LUNCH

Afternoon Session : **2.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.**

Group discussion

Drafting of recommendations

Valedictory Session : **4.00 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.**

Welcome : Dr. M.S. Swaminathan

Report and Recommendations : Group representatives

Reflections on the Seminar : Dr. Armaity Desai
Dr. Rajammal Devadas

Special Address : Hon. Pulavar Tmt. R. Indra Kumari

Valedictory Address : Hon. Navalar Thiru V.R. Nedunchezyan

Vote of Thanks : Dr. K. Shanmugavelayutham

FORMULATION OF SOCIAL POLICY REGARDING THE CHILD IN INDIA

Dr. RADHA PAUL

Head, Department of Social Work, Stella Maris College, Madras

Childhood - intent and reality

There can be no two opinions about the honourable intent of Indian society, Indian Government and the Indian people with reference to providing the children of the country a healthy and happy childhood. Our Constitution is one of the most beautiful records of the aspirations of the people of India, reflecting the best of values, morals, principles and ethics. We have a long list of legislations that are aimed at safeguarding the interests of children, protecting them from exploitation and abuse, ensuring them the basis of health care, education and preparation for a productive future. The culture itself acts as a firm foundation for building up the child's future with the value that is placed on the child.

But the reality of the situation of the child in India is something else. The struggle for survival, the extent of malnutrition, the rampant illiteracy, the inhuman exploitation of the labour of the child, the gender discrimination against the girl child, the abuse of the child – all these belie the rhetoric that is often heard from political platforms. Why this gap between intent and action? Why this divide between rhetoric

and reality? What is the nation's policy with reference to its children? What is the process that goes on behind the adopting of a policy, if there is any? What is being done to translate policy into the reality that is experienced by the child in India?

Reasons for the gap

The commitment to the welfare of the child was enshrined in the Constitution itself, but the very fact that this commitment found place in the Directive Principles of State Policy and not in the Fundamental Rights itself speaks volumes about the confidence of the national leaders in the nation's capacity to fulfill the commitment. It was perhaps a realistic approach to accept the difference between what was desirable and what was possible. But the outcome has been that even after four decades and more, child illiteracy and child labour remain a harsh reality, child abuse continues to exist – reducing to nought all the beautiful and noble intent for giving our children a happy childhood.

However, one cannot be totally negative and critical about what has been attempted and

what has been achieved with reference to child welfare. The National Policy for Children adopted in 1974, the nation's affirmation of its commitment to the cause of children in the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, the World Conference on Education for All, the World Summit on Children, the SAARC Summit on Children, the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children, are all proof of the nation's concern for its children. The New Education Policy, the National Plan of Action, the 15-point programme of Tamil Nadu etc are milestones in the country's effort at ensuring for its children a safe, healthy, enlightened and happy childhood. But in the matter of implementation of these policies and programmes, much is left to be desired.

Is it because of lack of political will? Is it because policies are ahead of their time? Is it that vested interests are too powerful? Is it because crushing poverty makes the victim collude with the offender? Is it because the sheer magnitude of the problem pushes into insignificance all attempts at solutions?

I am sure we will have an interesting debate on these questions today. But my emphasis is on the policy-making process itself.

Process of policy formulation

Any policy has to be based on extensively researched facts and widely discussed viewpoints. The goals of the policy should be clear, the direction for reaching the goals should be clearly delineated, the institutional structures needed for achieving the goals should be provided. The means and methods of achieving the goals must be clarified. The policy must be translated into programme or activities. The resources for implementing the plan of action must be identified. The time frame for achieving the goals must be stated. The agencies and methods of monitoring must be indicated. Evalua-

tion of processes and outcomes must be provided for. And periodic review must be built in.

Against the above criteria of effective policy-making, if we evaluate some of our policies relating to children, we can identify some of the deficiencies of our existing policies. First of all, are we clear about our philosophy of child welfare? For example, do we believe that education is every child's right? or do we believe that we should entice the parents to send their children to schools by offering incentives such as free meals, free books, or free uniforms etc. The two beliefs will lead to two different policies on education for the child. The structures will be different, the programme will be different, the very goals and approaches will be different.

Consultation, decision-making and feedback

The choice of a particular philosophy itself depends upon the priorities of the government in power. Unfortunately in our country, once the elections are over, the electorate is forgotten. The elected representatives become the only players in deciding the fate of the country. Rarely is there a national debate on issues, policies, priorities and methodologies.

All debates are restricted to the drawing-rooms of the intelligentsia. Concerted action is not taken even by the educated sections to influence social policies. Even professional organisations are more often reactive and not proactive. Nor are professional organisations consulted or drawn into debate on the issues on hand. Even where scientific data are made available, they are not given their due importance in decision-making. How many are the research studies commissioned and funded by the Government that gather dust on forgotten shelves of Government offices, with their valuable findings and suggestions totally ignored!

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Seldom are the grassroot functionaries consulted while reviewing or formulating policies. Feedback is rarely solicited and if given, is not welcomed unless it is palatable. Interested NGOs and professionals are rarely involved at the state of discussions or decision-making but are expected to cooperate at the implementation stage.

As regards the implementing machinery, adequate attention is not paid to the resources

made available and the political support extended to the functionaries for effective implementation of the policies.

These are some of the lacunae that we see in our social policies. Unless these are acknowledged and action taken to rectify them, all our well-drafted policies professing to make the life of our children worth living, will be nothing more than empty words, leading to loss of credibility of the leadership of the country.

Any policy has to be based on extensively researched facts and widely discussed viewpoints. The goals should be clear, the direction for reaching the goals delineated, and the institutional structures needed should be provided.

CHILD WELFARE POLICY IN TAMIL NADU

S. RAJA SAMUEL

Lecturer, Department of Social Work, Loyola College

Introduction

Child care services address the needs of women, young children and older children, of which, providing for the survival, health, protection and all-round development of the young child is of tremendous significance for the stable future of our country. Hence it follows that policies that govern child welfare ought to be geared towards the fulfilment of these objectives. It can be noted with satisfaction that Tamil Nadu has taken rapid strides in this direction.

Tamil Nadu has the most extensive network of child care centres, throughout and in every nook and corner of the State. This infrastructure development over the years has facilitated the implementation of a wide variety of child care programmes. Tamil Nadu Government is presently managing what has been described as the largest school and pre-school feeding programme in the world (Hariss, 1991). Successive Governments have shown commitment to existing child care policies and programmes and also attempted to refine and reorient them towards fulfilling the actual needs of children in Tamil Nadu.

As such, these policies and programmes would merit a closer look, which will be of assistance in understanding them and eventually contribute to their improvement. This paper attempts to do the same and while doing so, limits

its ambit to policies and programmes for children 0-6 years of age, as these are the critical years in a child's growth and development.

A brief time line

Soon after Independence, Tamil Nadu (the then Madras State) was the first State to establish a Department of Women's Welfare (now Dept. of Social Welfare) in 1947, even before the Central Social Welfare Board was formed. The general understanding then was that if women's welfare is taken care of, the benefits would ultimately be passed on to children. In addition to nutrition, rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents formed a major portion of the child welfare programmes up to the end of the Third Five Year Plan (1961-66). Child health was looked after by MCH programmes.

The child welfare policies of Tamil Nadu during this time were more or less a replica of the Central Government policies.

A shift from the earlier tenor of policies came in 1967, with the advent of a popular State Ministry. This was the time when the ambitious Noon-Meal Programme for school children in Tamil Nadu was introduced for the first time (This programme was later on extended to pre-school children). The following years saw the creation of a Child Welfare Division within the Women's Welfare

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Department based on the realization of the importance of concentrating on child care services as the 'core' of Women Welfare Programmes.

The early 70's saw the child welfare policies of the Tamil Nadu Government focussing more and more on the pre-school child. This was reflected in the implementation of several nutrition programmes sponsored by both the State and Central Governments. The Sixth Five Year Plan (78-83) of Tamil Nadu, states that the need to give proper nutritional care to children of six years and below and lactating mothers is fully understood. Subsequently, in July, 1982, the Nutritious Noon Meal Scheme was extended to all children (2+), registered in balwadis in rural areas.

Efforts till early 80's by the State Government have produced about 25 nutrition programmes operating mostly under Government auspices. Some nutrition programmes covered child health and pre-school education also. With the importance of the pre-school child gaining ascendancy, the Government reorganised its nutrition programme during 1980-85, so as to focus mainly on the pre-school age-group. Most of the programmes were combined into three major projects:

1. Nutritious Noon Meals Programme.
2. Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project.
3. Integrated Child Development Services.

The policy for the welfare of young children now focussed mainly on nutrition along with health and education (overall development). The most recent development is the Chief Minister's 15-Point Programme for Child Welfare proposed in 1993, supported by the State Plan of Action for the Child in Tamil Nadu (Dec. 1993)-an important policy document which has proposed a set of strategies and programmes for child welfare till 2000 A.D.

A note on existing programmes/policies

This is given here as a backdrop to analyse policies and to set the pace for the following section. Each programme is briefly dealt with, focussing on its major objectives and targets.

i. **Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. Nutritious Noon Meals Programme (NMP)**

The objective of this programme is to provide nutrition, education and health care to pre-school children (first component). All the pre-school children in the age group of 2+ to 4+ are covered. The programme initiated in July 1982, has 18,514 centres (1991-92). The nutritious food consists of 80 gms of rice, 10 gms of dhal, 1 gm of oil and 50 gms of vegetables and condiments.

ii. **Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project (TINP)**

This project, Phase I of which was started in 1980, focusses on growth monitoring, selective supplementary feeding and integration of health and nutrition services. The main objective of TINP is to improve the health and nutritional status of pre-school children under 36 months, who were largely by-passed by earlier nutrition programmes. The project also extends health and nutrition related services to other high risk groups viz. pregnant and nursing mothers and older pre-school children aged 37-72 months. TINP Phase II was introduced in 1990 and is expected to cover 316 Blocks in Tamil Nadu. This project is funded by the World Bank.

iii. **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)**

This scheme was introduced in 1975-76 and it provides for major services encompassing supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, health check-up, immunisation, nutrition and health education and referral services. The target groups include children 0-72 months old

and expectant and nursing mothers. There are about 111 projects in Tamil Nadu (1991-92). The expenditure on supplementary feeding is met from State funds while the rest is met by the Central Government. The ICDS project in Chengai M.G.R. District is sponsored by SIDA.

iv. **Dr. J. Jayalalitha 15 - Point Programme for Child Welfare**

This programme is to fulfill the basic needs of children viz. safe water, nutritious food, preventive and primary health care, clean environment, basic education and loving care. This programme is based on the detailed State Programme of Action formulated by the Tamil Nadu Government, which contains the implementation strategies. The points that are directly relevant to the pre-school child are related to Maternal and Child Health, Nutrition, Family Welfare and Education. The special mechanisms to implement and monitor progress of this programme include the establishment of a Research Cell and converting child welfare centres into Child and Women's Welfare Centres.

State Plan of Action for the child in Tamil Nadu - 1993 (SPA)

The SPA was formulated by consultation among eight government departments and representatives from selected non-governmental organisations. The objective of this plan is the same as was mentioned earlier under the 15-point programme. It points out that the emphasis of State policy has rightly moved from ensuring just child survival to ensuring growth and development of children.

The SPA has 11 major sectors detailing major goals, specific goals, strategies, on-going schemes and projects and key indicators under each sector. The sectors expressly concerned with the 0-6 child are Child Health, Maternal Health, Nutrition and Education.

There is also an overall strategy statement which includes common strategies to achieve these SPA objectives. The strategies are holistic development, co-ordination, convergence of services, bridging gaps in coverage, community mobilisation and action, management by local self-government, NGO collaboration, advocacy, innovative schemes, research and development, legislative measures and enforcement and evaluation.

The following section attempts to analyse the child welfare policy in Tamil Nadu as reflected by the aforementioned programmes and the SPA in particular.

Some observations

From the shift in child welfare priorities in the early 70's and the pioneering efforts of the State to the reorganised child care system today, it is observed that there has not been much of a change in the policy with regard to the 0-6 child, resulting in a qualitative stagnation in the child care system.

The SPA is intended to change this state of affairs and infuse dynamism in the policy thereby paving the way for more innovative and need-based projects. The SPA taken as a whole is an excellent document - comprehensive in its coverage with clear statement of objectives and goals. New areas such as HIV prevention, children in especially difficult circumstances, urban child and childhood disability are included. The SPA also tries to see the child within the setting of an environment, which is evident from the inclusion of recreation, water supply and environmental sanitation as major sectoral goals. The SPA also outlines certain overall strategies for child welfare which have been hitherto neglected.

However there are some issues to be addressed with regard to the SPA and certain other policies for the pre-school child, which it is

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hoped, would stimulate adequate discussion and action that would ultimately result in better fare for the pre-school child.

Policy formulation

The formulation of child welfare policies has been guided by general considerations from time to time. A few are political in nature. This is best exemplified in the launching of the Chief Minister's Nutritious Noon Meal Programme in 1982.

In the late 1960's USAID conducted an extensive survey of the nutritional status of people in Tamil Nadu, which established the size and extent of malnutrition according to the energy and protein requirement standards of the time. Their recommendations for policy involved highly monitored and targeted nutritional therapeutics.

The present nutritious meal scheme has not emerged as a result of this internationally funded technical spadework carried out earlier. The initiative apparently sprang from the experience of hunger of the then Chief Minister. On the eve of the start of the scheme, his professed objectives were unambiguous and candidly political (Hariss, 1991):

"This scheme is an outcome of my experience of extreme starvation at an age when I knew only to cry when I was hungry. But for the munificence of a woman next door who extended a bowl of rice gruel to us and saved us from the cruel hand of death, we would have departed this world long ago. Such merciful women folk, having great faith in me, elected me as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. To wipe the tears of these women I have taken up this project".

Similar motives characterise other programmes too. The SPA tries to take a break from this trend by looking into current realities

while formulating policies. However it appears that a systematic assessment of current realities, for the purpose of policy formulation, has not preceded the preparation of the SPA.

Needs

Any welfare policy should be need - based, either as felt by the people or as perceived by the policy makers. The more the policy is based on the latter, the wider would be the gap between the policy and actual needs. The query to be raised here is, does the policy provide for child care services to suit the needs of specific groups such as working mothers in the unorganised sector or children below two years of age whose needs are more acute?

A considerable number of women face the 'cruel dilemma' of either earning a living or caring for the child. There is an urgent need to make occupations in which women are employed more 'baby friendly' - particularly those occupations, in the unorganised sector, in which a considerable number of women are employed. As with earlier policies, that had a blanket approach towards child care, the present policy too is unable to recognise the limitations faced by certain target groups in utilizing existing services. This would obviously restrict the scope of the policy as these limitations are likely to persist.

The extent to which the SPA has taken into consideration actual needs of the target groups in formulating its strategy is debatable. As such there is no evidence in the SPA of an assessment of needs, prior to planning. Consequently, the emphasis of the plan is more on meeting the basic needs of all children, rather than the specific needs of groups of children and women.

Hence the issue to be addressed here would be formulation of child care policies, that

pave the way for flexible, accessible, need lo-cale-specific child care programmes.

Allocation

Allocation of fiscal resources - the mainstay of any programme - would be another major issue. As seen earlier there has been a tendency to announce programmes with an eye on the short-term benefits or political considerations without prior planning. This would call for allocation of additional resources. Failure to find such resources would result in redistribution of already allocated scarce resources and also cannibalisation of existing programmes. While this is the situation till now, the SPA does not mention how allocations are going to be made, the quantum of allocation, or whether there would be a considerable increase in allocation for child welfare as warranted by the new strategies.

Routine allocation already provided under sectors such as nutrition, sanitation and AIDS prevention are the only reference in the SPA with regard to allocations. In 1993-94, the budgeted outlay for child welfare by the State was Rs.4,17.21 lakh and in 1994-95, the proposed outlay of Rs.4,17.44 lakh reveals only a marginal increase. There is a need to considerably increase allocations to support the new strategies/activities envisaged by the SPA.

Pressure on resources and the search for alternatives have a long-standing history in the field of social welfare policy. The source of funding for the programmes is frequently arranged in such a way that it exerts minimum pressure on the exchequer. A case in point is the Nutritious Meal scheme which is funded from revenue enhanced by the lifting of prohibition on alcohol, imposition of additional taxes on luxuries, voluntary contributions and compulsory contributions from the government salariat.

Any shift in policies related to the aforementioned sectors would have immediate repercussions on the funding for the Nutritious Meal scheme. This places the scheme in a disadvantageous position.

Quality

Another issue that is too often influenced by allocation of funds, is the quality of child care services. Every assessment of child care services has revealed glaring deficiencies in the quality of service provided. There is a tendency among policy makers to think and plan in terms of quantitative targets rather than qualitative ones. Quantitative targets are indispensable. But a pre-occupation with the same would nudge quality out of place.

One of SPA's important objectives is to give wider coverage to its nutrition programmes. But the funds allotted for the 'Nutritious' Meal per person is 44 paise of which 13 paise is allotted for vegetables, fuel, condiments and iron-fortified salt (50 gm) all put together (Eighth Plan 1992). Such meagre allocations would obviously result in poor quality services.

Another question that arises here is the quality of the child care delivery system including the services of child care workers. Though the SPA has mentioned certain monitoring and evaluation strategies, a methodology for implementing these strategies has not been provided for. Perhaps one area that needs to be thought about is the role of legislation in ensuring quality as standards in child care services would be realisable only if backed by legislation.

Training

Training is another issue that has been frequently neglected by earlier policies. The untrained worker has no concept of the potential of early child care activities and the significant role they can play in the development of the

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child. The Eighth Plan document of the State Government has clubbed training of child care functionaries with communication, the latter claiming most of the allocated resources. The child care functionaries who have to be trained include the Community Nutrition Workers, Child Welfare Organisers of 35,958 child care centres (1991-92) apart from Traditional Birth attendants, women/adolescent groups and Female Multi-purpose Health Workers. The SPA states – "Training of all pre-school teachers including anganwadi and noon meal workers by 1995" as one of its specific goals. It remains to be seen how this stupendous task is going to be initiated and completed within the short period of time allotted for it without a clear methodology for doing so.

Education

Pre-school education has never been a major priority in the child welfare policies of the State. The general educational objectives of the State's Eighth Plan do not mention any specific objectives related to pre-school education. This is normally coupled with nutrition programmes where invariably the process of providing food takes precedence over education. Many balwadis function only as feeding centres, not as nurseries, attendance being restricted to meal times and the meal is frequently consumed by the children in their homes. With reference to this issue the SPA proposes to improve the knowledge and skills of mothers of young children (0-3 years) on Early Child Development while for children (3-5 years) it is proposed to ensure access to pre-school services.

How exactly the mothers are going to be taught to educate their young children and how access is to be provided for education is not mentioned by the SPA.

Educational activities in these centres would require more equipment/play materials

for which, the one-time grant of Rs.1,500/- allotted for each centre is insufficient. There is a need for the policy to concentrate more on this crucial issue.

NGO collaboration

Child care cannot be the sole responsibility of the State, but has to be a partnership involving parents, employers, community and the NGOs. With the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution, the subject of women and child development is to come under the local bodies (Panchayats and Nagar Palikas). In this context participation assumes a renewed significance requiring the NGOs to play a major role.

NGO collaboration is only briefly referred to by the SPA under its overall strategy for operationalising the plan. It appears that the full potential of the NGOs has not been recognised by the SPA as evident from the cursory and non-committal references to the NGOs in the document as well as the absence of a concrete proposal for collaboration. Several NGOs experienced in the field of child welfare, have advocated policy measures for child welfare through scientific sessions and workshops. It appears that very little of these have gone into the making of the SPA. Even earlier policies had a tendency to expect NGOs to function merely as information dissemination agencies rather than active collaborators in addressing core issues of child care.

Co-ordination

The SPA, by its very conception demands an exclusive system of co-ordination – a system that would mesh the child welfare – related programmes of about 8 different government departments. This inter-sectoral co-ordination would be difficult to accomplish without an apex co-ordinating body. The SPA provides for the establishment of one such co-ordinating

body in the form of a High Level Committee to be set up for managing programmes under SPA. However information related to the constitution of the committee, its duties and its modus operandi is not available in the SPA.

Methodology

Another area of concern would be the methodology to implement the overall strategies outlined by the SPA. This strategy statement contains the most recently evolved strategies in the field of social welfare. The strategies cover almost all the hitherto neglected issues that have been intensely advocated by NGOs. However one fails to see in the SPA any clear cut methodology for the implementation of these overall strategies. There is a need for a well-defined methodology that would answer the basic question of how the programmes are going to be implemented.

Concluding remarks

In spite of the aforementioned lacunae, it must be conceded that current child welfare policies in Tamil Nadu reveal a level of maturity that can only come by a gradual process of development. The ad-hocism that characterised the policies a decade back, has now given way to a more planned and comprehensive approach to the issue of child care.

Future child welfare policies may have to be oriented towards an accentuated participation of the actual beneficiaries – the children themselves - in policy formulation and implementation. This brings us to the issue of child rights. Child welfare is not the prerogative of the government which doles out programmes, but is the right of each and every child. The acceptance of this fact would naturally call for the participation of the child in the process of policy formulation.

Participation in Government parlance frequently refers to the actual consumption of the

service provided. It very rarely extends to the planning or delivery of the services. This situation has to change. Lessons can be drawn from the remarkably successful 'child-to-child' initiatives, which vested children with several responsibilities that were performed well by them. Hence, it is possible to involve children, right from the conception of a programme to its evaluation.

Policies in the field of health care, social security, education and housing may be said to have implications - short and long term, direct and indirect - for child welfare and child care problems. This intersection of policies has to be kept in mind while formulating policies for children.

It is hoped that the policy will continue to grow on these lines and in the long run attempt to reduce dependency and empower children as well as parents and ultimately contribute to a bright future for all.

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The ad hocism that characterised policies a decade ago has given way to a more planned and comprehensive approach to issues of child care.

ISSUES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD CARE SERVICES

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Introduction

The period of early childhood is characterised by rapid growth and development. The unfolding of the true potential of every individual will largely be determined by the extent to which the developmental needs are fulfilled. Adequate nutrition, access to health care facilities, educational opportunities, love and affection are some of the important needs that have enormous influence on the young child's body and mind. While opportunities that exist in the immediate environment for optimal growth will vary from one country to another, depending upon the socio-economic and political scenario, the strategies adopted to provide conditions for maximum growth and development will depend on the ideological base and political commitment of the Governments in question, along with the cultural context in which nations are placed.

Concepts and definitions

The term "child care" encompasses the entire spectrum of physical, mental, emotional, cognitive and spiritual development of the young child, including access to adequate health and nutrition facilities and day-care for the children of working mothers. The operational definition of early childhood being 0-6 years, the need to create an environment conducive to the optimal growth of children has been well recognised and is reflected in the policies evolved by the State.

The commitment of the State to provide services is reflected in the policies evolved by it. A policy is a plan or statement of intent while programmes and schemes are translations of the policy in action. The effectiveness of programmes can be gauged from two aspects

- a. The extent to which the programmes fulfill the objectives originally set out and
- b. The extent to which the needs of users are met.

The various programmes and schemes in Tamil Nadu addressing the period of early childhood are briefly described in the next section and the problems and issues arising therefrom are raised in the following sections.

Programmes and schemes for young children in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has been in the forefront in providing several programmes and schemes for young children. Of all the States in India, Tamil Nadu is unique in having a political commitment to clear-cut and well enunciated policies for children. From the mid-day-meal of the fifties, which had the simple and straightforward policy of reducing hunger and increasing school attendance, to the more elaborate and holistic 15-point programmes for children, the State is a trail-blazer in showing the country the path to development of young children.

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While a programme may be described as a continuous ongoing activity in which the same participants may also continue to benefit along with new entrants, a scheme is a one-time support provided for a specific purpose. The

various programmes and schemes operative in Tamil Nadu are summarised in Tables 1 and 2. All of these are operational through the Government and cover a wide spectrum of areas such as health, nutrition and pre-primary education.

Table 1 – Child Care Services in Tamil Nadu - 1992

Auspices	No. of Centres (in thousands)	No. of Beneficiaries (in lakhs)
Government Sector		
Nutritious Meals Programme	18.5	14.81 (2 1/2 - 5 Years)
Integrated Child Development Services	10.04	4.02 (0 - 6 Years)
Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Programme	7.39	4.62 (6 months - 3 years)
Non-Government Sector		
Creches – Voluntary Sector	1.01	0.25 (0 - 5 years)
Statutory Creches	0.69	0.17 (0 - 6 years)

Table 2 – Schemes for Maternity and Child Care in Tamil Nadu

Name of the Scheme	Objective	Provision
Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Memorial Maternal Assistance Scheme	1. To compensate loss of income during pregnancy 2. To maintain the health of pregnant women	A sum of Rs.300/- is offered in two instalments of Rs.150/- each prior to and after the delivery.
Chief Minister's Cradle Scheme	1. To check female infanticide 2. To increase sex ratio	Unwanted female children left in the Government child care centre would be placed in foster homes.
Girl Child Protection Scheme	1. To improve the image and status of the girl child	Poor families who have undergone sterilisation after one or two girls will receive Rs.1200/- for each girl child, with a lump sum of Rs.10,000 when the girls reach age 20.

Sources:

1. Indian Council for Child Welfare, **Early Childhood** Vol 1, No.3, 1993
2. State Planning Commission, Govt. of Tamil Nadu, **8th Five Year Plan**, 1993
3. Department of Social Welfare and NMP, Government of Tamil Nadu, **Dr. J. Jayalalitha 15-Point Programme for Child Welfare**, 1993

In addition to the governmental network, hundreds of non-governmental organisations are working in various parts of Tamil Nadu, in several aspects of child care. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to list all of them, it is sufficient to say that they show a rich diversity in terms of approach, coverage and scope.

Issues related to the delivery of child care services

While the issues raised here are closely linked to one another, and may even overlap at several points, for the purpose of discussion and analysis they have been dealt with individually.

1. Meeting diverse needs

While the coverage of services is impressive in terms of both geographical spread and numbers, it is not very clear whether the services are flexible enough to respond to diverse needs, for example the day-care needs of children of working mothers. Ninety percent of working women are in the unorganised sector and the range of occupations include agriculture, fishing, beedi and cigar rolling, home-based self-employment etc. The very nature and diversity of the work indicates that the amount of time spent on work would differ with different occupational groups. Do the child care centres function at the times when mothers are away at work and at places convenient to them? Again, do children in remote, small or isolated hamlets have access to services? In a study of the Noon Meals scheme conducted in 1984 (Harris, 1991) it has been reported that about 28% of the children in malnourished households were excluded from partaking the meal due to non-attendance. Among the malnourished, three out of five school-aged children and four out of five preschoolers got left out. The reasons attributed for this situation are that boys are hired out for agriculture or rural industry while girls either work for wages

or work unwaged at household maintenance tasks. (data relates to 1984) While this study relates to the earlier stages of the NMS and TINP, it is also true that due to inflation, there has been a sharp decline in the quantity and quality of food.

Q. How can programmes be designed to suit the needs of diverse groups and to reach the unreached?

2. Quality of services

While a vast infrastructure of manpower and material has come into existence, making child care available to virtually every child, the quality and content of services is in need of improvement. Day care offered to children is of poor quality, from the standpoint of child development, and in most cases it is purely custodial (Khullar, 1991). It is only recently that the educational component of children's development is being given increased attention and is finding its way into the conventional nutrition programme.

The difficulty in incorporating a holistic approach in programmes is a major reason for this weakness. Even though most programmes pay lip service to the totality of development, in practice they assume a fragmented approach e.g. in the context of other competing claims in the primary health care system, nutrition has now come to occupy a place of low priority within the health system. So the creation of a separate nutrition component under its own exclusive administrative unit was welcomed on the basis that it would receive better attention (Gopalan, 1987).

While such an approach may improve the operational aspects of programmes by ensuring appropriate division of labour, it nevertheless ceases to encourage workers to think of children or women as whole beings who are influenced simultaneously by various factors.

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Q. What are the programme implications for achieving a holistic perspective in the delivery of child care services?

3. Decentralisation

Involvement of local people is an index of both success and sustainability of any programme. However, participation by the community is often seen only in the light of passive receipt of the services offered (Chidambaram, 1989). The tendency of the general public to view all programmes as 'Government programmes' is largely due to the lack of identification of the participants with the objectives and implementation of the programme. Participation should be conceived as equal partnership with the community in terms of planning and decision-making.

Such a process implies decentralisation so that greater control rests with the people. The term 'decentralisation' is often viewed with misgiving by the authorities who feel that their positions may be threatened when increasing control is vested with the community. However field experiences have shown that such an approach is possible and that it helps to bring the worker and the community together, and be mutually appreciative of each others roles (Swaminathan, 1994).

In the early stages of the child care programmes in Tamil Nadu, there was participation from the community by way of donation of site, material and labour. However this gradually declined and there was no sustained participation from the community, in terms of monitoring the programme, i.e. playing a watchdog role, or in management. This lack of participation, both managerial and financial, has serious implications for sustainability. The issue of decentralized management assumes critical importance in view of the 73rd and 74th amendments relating to Panchayati Raj and in the context of reservation of one-third of the

seats for women, who are likely to be keenly interested in child care.

Q. What policy can ensure continued ongoing community support in programmes?

4. Training and orientation

The quality of services is heavily dependent on the training of workers. This becomes even more important in view of the large number of child care services in the State and the number of personnel. The machinery for training is still inadequate. While a number of institutions and various types of courses were available to suit the needs of both regular and *ad hoc* personnel until nearly a decade ago only those provided by the Government are in vogue as on date, (Pankajam et al, 1989) and these are mostly of a limited 'job-training' type. Most of the workers have received only an *ad hoc* one-time short orientation, and the backlog for refresher training is enormous. The content and process of training needed to prepare workers to promote holistic development can therefore hardly receive adequate attention. Training often does not prepare for implementation. An evaluation of the training component of the ICDS programme functionaries observed that the training was highly theoretical, leaving workers with few skills to cope with the field situation (Punhani and Mahajan, 1987).

For effective implementation and utilization of any social welfare programme, training has to be visualised at three levels -- namely that of policy makers/administrators, middle level supervisors and field workers; but the need for training for the first two groups is seldom recognised. While the training programme for field workers is very clearly spelt out, it is not very clear as to what kind of exposures and orientation the other two categories undergo. Professional supervision and guidance become all the more important in the context of a vast and poorly trained work force. Further, training

has to be seen as ongoing and continuous, rather than a one-time exposure, for all groups.

Q. How can a holistic and comprehensive training for programme effectiveness be realised?

5. Funding of programmes

Continuity of funds determines the sustainability of programmes. Funding sources for Government programmes are usually the outlay earmarked in social welfare sector as in ICDS, and at times foreign aid as in TINP. Funds are also generated by States or Centre through donations. While sustainability is maximum for programmes for which there is a clear budgetary allocation, it remains a question mark for programmes run through aids/ loans, especially at a time when debt servicing and balance of payments are placing economic constraints on developing nations.

Indigenous funding sought through other strategies such as lifting of prohibition, which enabled the state exchequer to compensate the expenditure on noon meals and diversion of rice from the PDS, have been responsible for creating further hardship for the poorest in the society (Harris, opcit). Another issue of equal concern is the dependency syndrome of the weaker sections on the bureaucracy for fulfilling its needs, created by having free access to all welfare measures without even a token commitment. This runs contrary to the development principles befitting a democratic society and diminishes community participation.

Much of the NGO funding is sought through foreign aid, in order to avoid the bureaucratic delays in domestic funding. Very often aid is received after compromising the objectives originally set out in order to comply with donor requirement. The various options and strategies adopted by NGOs indicate the role of finance in influencing the course of programmes.

Q. What policies can ensure financial sustainability of programmes in both government and NGO sectors?

6. Early Childhood Education

The National Policy of Education (1986) gives a great deal of importance to Early Childhood Education by viewing it as a feeder and support programme for primary education and as a support service for working women of the disadvantaged sections of the society. It lays special emphasis on child-centred approach, play way and activity-based learning in place of formal methods of teaching and early introduction of three 'R's.

However, present trends in the country indicate that while preschool education component in programmes for the underprivileged are highly inadequate (Pankajam et al, opcit) a more recent and dangerous trend is the introduction of the three R's at the nursery level itself (IAPE, 1992). The pressures exerted on the preschool child by way of admission tests, class tests and exams, the heavy load of books to be carried and the burden of homework in urban schools, are matters of serious concern since they are detrimental to development.

Even more serious is the spread of the malady to rural areas where parents may be tempted to put their wards in so-called "English medium" schools, reconciling themselves to the financial burden that it may impose, in the belief that it would provide quality education. Private nursery schools have mushroomed all over the state and no information is available on the infrastructure facilities, adequacy of staff and their training, or learning experiences provided to children. There is no legal provision to regulate and monitor the functioning of these schools. While play-based teaching methods is a policy declaration, very little of it is being implemented.

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Q. What measures need to be taken to regulate the growth of private nursery schools and what steps can be taken to encourage schools to shift to activity-based teaching?

7. Special needs of 0-2 year old children

A decline in the trend of breast feeding is now an issue of major concern the world over, particularly in developing nations, in whose context replacement of the breast by the bottle would have serious consequences for the health of the child. Little information is available on how this decline is related to the work status of the mother, the number forced to stay in home-based, casual or less-paying alternatives because of breast-feeding and child care needs, and the number of women forced to drop out of labour force at certain periods due to demands of breast feeding and child-care (Swaminathan, 1994).

The Muthulakshmi Reddy scheme is the only scheme in Tamil Nadu which offers indirect support to 0-2 year old children by providing cash relief to women who are forced to stay at home during the last stage of pregnancy and soon after delivery, in order to help them to eat nutritious food. However, the support service offered to the mother to combine work with breast feeding is very limited.

For the 10% of women working in the organised sector, the laws provide for maternity leave only for three months, thereby preventing even healthy mothers from exclusively breastfeeding their children. For the 90% in the unorganised sector, laws would not be of much help since the employer is not clearly defined. Creches are inadequate in number and even when available are not suited to take in breastfeeding mothers and children. Creches for the very young should operate under strict hygienic conditions, with well - trained staff, failing which the consequences for the children may be very severe. As all the laws and

schemes regarding creches refer in general to children between 0 - 5 years of age, facilities, funding and training needed to serve children between 0 - 2 years and specific support for breastfeeding are lacking.

Q. What innovative laws and schemes can be evolved to help working women to continue breastfeeding and to promote infant development.?

8. Needs of the girl child

The declining sex ratio in Tamil Nadu (Government of Tamil Nadu, 1993) and the incidence of female infanticide in some parts of the State are some indicators of the low status accorded to women. While some short-term measures have been worked out by the State, long-term planning is necessary to help women grow up in an environment free from discrimination. Empowerment of women is the key to achieving this objective.

Literacy plays an important role in the empowerment process. There has been an increase in the female literacy rate from 2.82 in 1951 to 39.42 in 1991 (Literacy Digest, 1991). Consequently there has also been an increase in the entry of women into non-traditional occupations and in the tertiary sector especially in teaching and health service areas. Simultaneously there has also been an increase in the work force participation rate in the unorganised sector.

In the rural areas one of the main reasons for girls not attending schools is sibling care while mothers are at work (Swaminathan, 1985). While important links between women's employment, child care support services and fertility rate have been clearly established (Bodrova and Anker, 1985) there exists a paradoxical situation wherein much of the child care needs of working women are met by young girls, who are hence deprived of facilities for

their own education, development and empowerment.

- Q. What policy measures can help to release young girls for education by linking child care services with girls education?

9. Status of the child care worker

In order to have job satisfaction and to develop an attitude of professionalism to work, the status of the child care worker needs to be enhanced. At present however, working conditions are unfavourable, while the salary of child care workers is less than the minimum wages laid down for an unskilled worker. Her worth as a full-time skilled worker who should be paid fair wages, in both Government and non-government sectors, is still not recognised.

In a study conducted in plantation creches in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala a variation between expected level of income and actual income was noticed. (Gopal, 1983) Service rules, employment benefits and working conditions have to be improved, to ensure job satisfaction, promote self-esteem and raise social status. One main reason for the existing situation is lack of recognition of the child care worker as a professional since the task of taking care of children is widely perceived as an "instinctive" and "natural" activity which does not require training. Unless a degree of professionalism is introduced in child care services and the worker recognised as a specially trained person with appropriate skills such a situation is likely to continue.

- Q. What policy measures can be suggested to improve the working conditions and status of child care workers?

10. Media

The media has an important role to play in generating awareness on the need for child care services, in creating a climate conducive to Early Childhood Education and promoting healthy and

positive attitudes in society. Both print and the electronic media can be used effectively to convey messages on child care issues. The vast outreach of both the radio and the TV enable them to become agents of change in influencing the public.

Very little information is available on the portrayal of women and children in both the print and electronic media, but whatever is available provides a discouraging picture (Sureshpaul and Narmada, 1994). In children's programmes developed by adults, children are found to be engaged in adult activities, with very little perspective of child growth and development. Women's programmes are generally concerned with home-making and very rarely issues such as women's economic contribution, needs of working women, portrayal of fathers in a positive role of taking care of children are dealt with.

- Q. What steps can be taken to promote a more constructive portrayal of women and children in the print and electronic media?

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The effectiveness of programmes can be gauged from two aspects - the extent to which the programmes fulfil the objectives originally set out and the extent to which the needs of users are met.

ROLE OF NGOs IN CHILD WELFARE POLICY

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Introduction

Any form of planning requires involvement of those responsible for formulation and those who will be involved at the implementation stage.

For successful implementation of any programme, the involvement needs to be from its inception. Government as an agency and non-government organisations are like two wheels of a cart. Any malfunctioning on either part may prevent it to reach its destination.

NGOs which vary from multinational to indigenous local agencies, have come a long way, from relief and welfare services to development, mobilization and advocacy. They substantially fill functional gaps often neglected by governments and private commercial sector. They may also serve as alternatives, or even compete with government.

Whatever may be the situation, one thing is very clear that NGOs are concerned with delivering of needed services or promotion of social change. "NGOs have now emerged as those organizations with unique capabilities and untapped potentials. There is no doubt that NGOs perform more effectively, particularly at grass-root level. They have the unique ability to

help empower the poor. Their sensitivity to local conditions indicates certain catalytic characteristics, making them effective in specific situation or issues". (D.F.)

NGOs are described in three categories as, first generation NGOs, focussing on relief and welfare and the second generation NGOs like small-scale local self-reliance projects. In contrast the third generation is characterised by an NGO having a catalytic role, with skills in strategic management, facilitation and coalition and network building. Such organisations, act as catalysts to promote the local institutional capacities necessary for policy reforms.

Present scenario

As mentioned earlier, though the widely recognized role of the NGOs in Third World countries has been in relief activities, usually with collaboration of private and public resources, over the past two decades, there has been a shift towards developmental activities.

The transition from voluntary organisations to NGOs is an indicator of the growth of an organization from mere social welfare to development. The present-day NGO offers something much more than just a few services.

The matter presented in this paper is a collection of views expressed by various NGOs through articles, newspapers, and interviews as well as my personal views.

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The NGOs have now come to be recognised as agencies working effectively, enabling people and specific groups to identify their issues and develop attitudes required to attain expected goals (PRIA). The NGOs now advocate and practise participation at the micro as well as macro level, for various purposes such as development, conscientization, mobilization and organization of communities.

Michael Jarman, President I.F.C.W. in his welcome speech at World Forum 1994 commented on the increasing influence of NGOs around the world. He is of the opinion that NGO sector is a major partner in tackling the complex and difficult issues which affect children. The crucial role played by NGOs in the child welfare field cannot be ignored and the number of success stories is an indicator of their dedication and involvement in child related issues.

James Grant, Executive Director UNICEF says "NGOs function as catalysts for change by introducing new ideas, and new ways of doing things. They are especially strong in working to change attitudes". It is increasingly getting obvious that there is closer relationship between people and NGOs. NGOs are able to develop rapport with communities at a faster pace with specific reference to children. To quote James Grant again,

'We have always looked to the NGO community as a close collaborator and as a source of inspiration, in its efforts to create the kind of world all children need. Their dedication, commitment and ability to mobilize made many *impossibles*, possible'.

The new emerging trends are now giving rise to development approach of the present day NGOs. They have great wealth of experience and knowledge required to handle the specific issues. The NGO community besides offering

welfare services has now gone into research, advocacy, and critical evaluation of various issues.

Interactions with communities and innovations experimented by NGOs are now well accepted and their role is recognized in influencing the policies. Local level development and micro-experimentation are seen as the hallmark of NGO contribution.

In the present context, distinctive contribution made by the NGOs is in the form of advocacy and their participation at micro and macro level. This has been well recognised by virtue of their close interaction, direct involvement with the communities and the related issues. Participatory involvement by the NGOs in evolving solutions acceptable to the people, brings it closer to their hearts and helps in bridging the gap otherwise existing between the people and those working for them.

Methods and strategies

NGOs have great potential to act as catalysts for policy reforms and social change.

If NGOs are to have a significant influence in the development process, they will need to make further transitions to new roles. They are now at cross roads and need to make changes to maintain their unique advantage in the developing process.

Perhaps the government can utilize the NGOs as the launching pad for schemes by making the NGOs partners at the policy formulation stage as well. It will be worth-while sitting together and working out ways and means of how to launch the scheme right from planning to implementation stage, involving the NGOs right from its inception.

The NGOs need to develop methods of influencing public policies through systematic use of representations which could be carried

out with the help of various issue-related forums and groups. By systematic is meant representing the views through a selected and nominated representative voicing the feelings and views, and the concern expressed by the NGOs in the related issue. Strong support for the issue needs persistent efforts, through contact, communication and reminders. For better and lasting effect the NGOs need to come together and network under issue-based umbrellas. Any representation of individual's ideology can have a damaging effect as it represents one individual's opinion and does not project the issues.

The issue needs to be kept alive, and the methods required, include strong issue-based networking among the NGOs and continuous support from the media. The issue needs to be brought into the focus (of people) through writing regular articles and getting those published in newspapers, periodicals and magazines in different languages. Print media plays a very significant role in keeping the issue alive. Invariably an issue dies or survives based on the attention it gets through the media. NGOs need to shift from mere experimentation and take required steps for getting involved at the planning level, by developing new capacities and roles necessary for such participation and partnership. Government needs to identify the strengths of NGOs. There is no doubt that NGO involvement is invariably selfless. NGOs have time. NGOs have motivation and some times even personal involvement in the issues for starting of an agency.

Government therefore should come forward and take advantage of those qualities of the NGOs, and utilize them for the better implementation of programmes and activities. Need of the time is exchange of ideas, and sharing of experience and knowledge between Government personnel and the NGOs. There is need for open-mindedness and need for recognizing the constructive role played by the

NGOs in the implementation of schemes. Dialogue needs to be initiated for listening to the point of view of each other. (Garain, 1994)

Very often, in spite of favourable policies a lacuna exists for the actual implementation. Government needs to pay attention to the advocacy role played by the NGOs in such situations. Government as a welfare agency has funds, has human and material resources, and has the power to make and implement the laws. Involvement of NGOs at policy-making level can broaden the horizon for action and the expected goal achievement. By accepting the importance of the role played by the NGO and involving them at policy level, Govt. could in fact be recognizing NGOs as a body of involved people working for and with people.

Government as an agency which conceives and gives birth to the policy invariably confers a status of foster parent on the NGO. The missing link is the actual involvement of the NGOs who has been just given the role of bringing up some body else's child, by fitting and adjusting it within one's own routine, in return for some resources provided for it's upkeep.

Rekha Vohra, Resource Development Manager, CRY is of the opinion that Government schemes are generally planned without any advice from NGOs. She believes Government and NGOs should sit together and chalk out child welfare schemes.

Bandana Dutta, Branch Manager at CRY says "There is need for closer relationship between Government and NGO. Both can work hand in hand". She continues saying "Government has money, manpower and infrastructure, while the NGOs have motivation and better knowledge about the urgent needs of the children". (My name is Today).

Both the above statements have one thing in common – the need for sitting face to face

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and working out the modalities of NGO involvement at policy level. "Influencing public policy at state, national and global level may thus become the distinctive contribution of NGOs world-wide". (PRIA).

"For useful interaction and appropriate achievements, Government can set up consultative groups of NGOs on specific issue related areas, to widen the role of NGOs in the implementation of the scheme. The need of the day is political will indicating the willingness to listen to the NGOs". (Garain, opcit)

There is urgent need for a continuous dialogue between the NGOs and Government to create opportunities for the NGOs to interact with the policy maker, instead of the climate of suspicion and non-acceptance. There is need for mutual trust towards the common cause. They need to come to an understanding that Government and the NGOs are partners in a mission, aimed at working towards the development of those in need.

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NGOs need to develop methods of influencing public policy through systematic use of representations which could be carried out with the help of various issue-based forums and groups.

TAMIL NADU'S NEW THRUST IN CHILD WELFARE

Mr. T.V. ANTHONY, I.A.S. (Retd.)

Governments have a key role to play in improving the quality of life of children, and welfare programmes are an indication of this commitment. The style of functioning of the Government is not so important as its efficiency in implementation of these programmes. While all programmes cannot be uniformly successful in the realisation of their objectives, a few do achieve spectacular results. An outstanding example of success is the Family Welfare Programme of Tamil Nadu. The birth rate in Tamil Nadu fell from 28 per 1000 in 1984 to 19.2 as of 1993 (provisional S.R.S) thus substantially bringing down the number of children born every year.

The State Plan of Action (SPA) of the Government of Tamil Nadu was drawn up after consultation with several non-governmental organisations. It touches on several aspects such as health, nutrition, education, increasing the age of marriage, birth spacing, status of the girl child etc. The budget has not been spelt out in detail and only the broad goals are indicated. The SPA is a statement of intent or an expression of the commitment of the Government to improving the quality of life of children.

The C.M.'s-15 point Programme for children was drawn up within the framework of

the State Plan of Action last year at the personal initiative of the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and UNICEF. The programme is intended to ensure the convergence of many programmes. The total financial outlay is 697 crores which is the sum of various departmental budgets under various heads under which the programmes are operative. Under each area, objectives are laid down, targets and indicators developed and an operational time-frame set out for fulfilling these objectives.

A committee has been constituted for implementation with a coordinator at the helm. In every district there is an elaborate exercise of discussions with the Collectors, local NGOs and the people on how these targets are to be realised. Such an exercise has already been completed in 15 districts. For example, in Madras the Corporation officials have held discussions at the slum level wherein items on the agenda have been discussed. Both larger and smaller voluntary organisations are involved in implementation and plans are being made at the city, district and block levels. At the State level, the committee reviews the figures from each department and places them before the Social Welfare Minister, and ultimately the C.M.

Some of the targets likely to be achieved by the end of 2000 A.D. are:

- Eradication of polio and neo-natal tetanus
- Increasing the age of marriage to 21
- Achieving 100% literacy rate
- Reducing I.M.R to 30/1000
- Bringing crude birth rate to 15 per thousand
- Increasing average birth weight to 3 kg.
- Increasing spacing between two children to 3 years.

Several strategies have been adopted for the realisation of these objectives, for example

- Marriage registers have been issued in every village. This is undertaken to ensure that

age of marriage is at least 18 and see whether there is any upward change in the age at marriage towards the desired norm.

- The role of media is very well recognised in influencing the behaviour of the public. This medium would be exploited and as part of advocacy, propaganda on the issues would be introduced on television in small sequences of 5-10 minutes each.
- It is important to influence young minds in order to bring about changes in the attitudes and practices of a society. Keeping this in mind, school children themselves would be encouraged to participate in various activities like acting out socially relevant dramas in school.
- A software of "Social messages" would be prepared and disseminated widely through the mass media.

The SPA is a statement of intent or an expression of the commitment of the Government to improving the quality of life of children.

DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS

Comments on the State Plan of Action

India is a signatory to the Declaration of the World Summit for Children and has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This was the starting point for a National Plan of Action for children and the impetus for the States to work out a plan of action for implementing child welfare policies. The SPA forms the nucleus of analysis and is an indication of the commitment of the Government towards providing welfare measures for the sake of young children. It has to be seen in this context and in response to a query, it was clarified that it cannot strictly be described as a policy, since it has not been placed before the legislature nor accepted by it.

Among other things, it was noted that there was inadequate reference to women, especially mothers. Programmes for children and mothers are inseparable and a properly balanced package of child welfare and mother welfare services coupled with an efficient delivery system is necessary for maximising benefits. There is also little or no reference to certain issues like early childhood care and education, imposition of the three "R"s at the nursery level, pressures on the preschool child in the private sector, problems of working women and support services for them.

Increasingly, the focus of development for the young child has shifted from mere survival to development, but this is not reflected in the strategies envisaged in the plan. The involvement of the family in programmes for the child

is also negligible, which is a pity in the context of the Year of the Family. It was noted that no new budgetary provision has been made over and above the already available sanction. While this is understandable in the current social and economic context, an analysis of the intra-budgetary allocation has to be made, to find out the amounts spent on monitoring and programmes respectively.

Decentralisation

Decentralisation is of great importance in the effective implementation of programmes, both in order to respond to local needs and to enable people to participate effectively in their own development. The Eleventh Schedule of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution enlists 29 items with which the States can empower the Panchayats. This is an enabling law for mother and child welfare policies and programmes, allowing these programmes to become the responsibility of the elected bodies at the local level. However, since the framing of rules, allocation of powers and responsibilities and finances by the State Government has yet to be done, the details of operation cannot be clearly visualised at this stage.

Role of Non-Governmental Organisations

There are a very large number of NGOs who are extremely heterogeneous in terms of operation, goals and activities. Consultation with each and everyone of them would be impossible. So various methods of informal coor-

DISCUSSION

dination of NGOs are necessary. One way to do this for purposes of consultation would be to use existing networks of NGOs and professional associations. A directory of about 1,000 NGOs working for children is also available.

While it is true that large-scale operations are possible only by Government, the support of NGOs is equally important for implementation, developing contact with the community and creating awareness among the people. Strategies on how this can be accomplished need to be worked out. One such strategy is sharing of resources as in the case of mini-health programmes, in which two-thirds of the funding was borne by Government and one-third by NGOs.

NGOs should be involved right from the planning stage of the policy-making process. They can effectively play a watchdog role, keep a check on the leakage of resources, be involved in data collection and monitoring, as well as evaluation. Data collected by the Government can also be assessed.

Role of professionals and existing structures

The role of professional groups is of great importance in the designing and implementation of programmes. There is no reference to professionals in the State Plan of Action or programmes. Professionals from disciplines such

as social work, child development, nutrition, law, education, medicine and other social sciences should be involved in the planning stages.

The Total Literacy Campaign is an unique contemporary example of the way in which Government and non-governmental organisations can be welded together for a common cause. Structures have been created at the grassroot level which are not formal, but participatory in nature. These people's committees can be drawn upon to bring in the participatory dimension in governmental programmes, which is often lacking. One has to learn to create space and maximise its use, and not simply wait for structures to be evolved.

Media

The media play a very important role in influencing the attitudes and behaviour of people and therefore should be carefully studied. Media can be used in both positive and negative ways. The commercialised media reflect the latter approach as they do not adequately reflect the multidimensional nature of women's role nor correctly portray healthy positive images of women. Often there is little relevance to or concern for social issues. This raised the question as to who is using the media and for what purpose, and that it was essential to seize opportunities to use media positively.

The Total Literacy Campaign is an unique contemporary example of the way in which Government and non-governmental organisations can be welded together for a common cause.

CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMING-UP

Dr. A. DESAI

1. The State Plan of Action is a statement of commitments to certain grassroot level programmes. Though it can be seen as a draft for discussion, it cannot yet be described as a people's policy. The nitty-gritty of developing a plan through the processes of consultation has not yet been adequately looked into.
2. People should be involved at the policy level itself, and more wide-ranging discussions for development of policies through NGOs should take place. The experience of Maharashtra is worth recapitulating. The Chief Minister personally attended several meetings with NGOs and women's groups and the outcomes of these discussions formed the basis for the State Plan Action for women. A similar exercise could be adopted in other States also. **It is time to stop confrontation and begin dialogue to enrich policy.**
3. Research information and data base should be made more use of in policy formulation. Reliable data collected through meticulously planned studies should form the basis on which the policies are developed.
4. Training programmes should be designed and implemented thoroughly and with proper planning. Only lip service is presently being given to training. All "crash" training programmes have a natural tendency to crash.
5. Funding for programmes should be looked at in the context of the New Economic Policy, in which the social sector is getting less priority. Efforts must be strenuous to reverse this trend and strengthen the "safety net".
6. The role of media has to be carefully analysed. Most of the messages, overt and covert, which are currently being broadcast are inappropriate when seen from the point of view of development of women and children. Appropriate messages have to be worked out by professionals and artists in cooperation, in order to educate the public.
7. Realistic targets have to be aimed at in a policy document. These should be defined in terms of time-frame, and a step-by-step approach in implementation should be worked out.
8. Legislation is an important mechanism for translation of a policy into action. It is very difficult to bring in the element of accountability without legislation. So appropriate laws supportive to policy measures should be enacted.
9. Professional Social Workers' Organisations and other professional associations should join in providing research, analysis and insights for policy formulation. Networks too have to be energised and activated to play in active role.
10. Finally, there has to be an examination of values at all levels, involving those who plan and those who are planned for, the professionals, the media and the public. Unless we are constantly aware of the value base, there is a danger of falling into contradiction.

CONCLUSION

RECOMMENDATIONS

Group I

Issues for discussion

Policy formulation process

Role of NGOs

Role of professional organisations /
educational institutions

Role of research

Legislation

1. Policy formulation – participation and consultation process

Preamble

In addressing the issue of who should participate in the process of policy formulation, it is usually seen that while all concerned with the issue have the right to get involved in it, governments do not engage in a wide-ranging consultation process.

Given the large number of NGOs and the difficulty of identifying the appropriate ones for consultation, government often takes the easy way out by avoiding consultation in the name of avoiding conflict.

Recommendations

- Government should use available networks, forums and federations as well as professional associations and non-political bodies to and identify appropriate participants in policy formulation.
- Government should disseminate information widely on draft policy documents, invite comments and give time for response, so that concerned individuals and groups are enabled to respond, and it becomes their responsibility to do so.
- While government may invite comments and involvement in policy issues, as in the case of the development of the women's policy in Maharashtra, the NGOs themselves can take the lead and initiate discussions so that consultations become a two-way process.
- Public debates on policy may be organised at the local level through decentralised mechanisms, involving media to reach out to people at the grassroots, and giving them a chance to air their views.

2. Role of legislation

Preamble

Legislation is an important enabling mechanism and base for bringing about social change. It is also important to remember that policies that have legislative sanction cannot be easily tampered with or dropped when the political leadership changes.

Recommendations

- All legislation should be supportive to the process of decentralised policy formulation.
- Old legislation no longer relevant to the present context needs to be amended and regular reviews instituted for such amendment and for bringing in new laws from time to time.
- The enforcement machinery should be strengthened so that legislation becomes meaningful.
- Professional bodies like lawyers, associations should be involved in the process of review as advisory bodies.

3. Role of research

Preamble

Factual information on fast-changing ground realities is a vital input in policy formulation. Unless backed by adequate data and addressing current needs, policies would not reach a high level of effectiveness.

Recommendations

- Government should make use of the enormous body of information now available in the form of research studies, reports and evaluations

- Universities and research bodies should take the initiative in identification of issues and problem areas through experiment and action research, and in providing data.
- Research bodies and universities should hold regular consultations with policy makers to share information that would form the backbone of policy.
- Research institutions should draw on the voluntary efforts of scholars (both faculty and students) to compile and present data relevant to the policy process.

Group II

Issues

Quality of services
Training and orientation
Funding
Decentralisation
Media

Preamble

The approach to child care services should be holistic and integrated in nature, implying that programmes should promote overall development of children between 0-6 years of age. Such an approach requires in-depth training of grassroots level workers. From this perspective and keeping in mind that the child is a valuable human resource for the future, adequate funding is needed for child care programmes, and community leaders and local groups should be involved in decision-making as well as day-to-day running of the programmes. In addition, the media should be utilised sensitively to disseminate child care messages.

CONCLUSION

Recommendations

1. Quality of services

- Minimum standards for all child care programmes should be laid down. A technical group should spell out the standards and also be responsible for monitoring the programme periodically.
- Standardised curriculum of ECCE based on the child's developmental needs should be evolved in consultation with professionals.

2. Training and orientation

- Training should help workers develop sensitivity to the needs of parents and children.
- The curriculum for training should be realistic, practical and participatory in approach.
- Periodic refresher trainings are needed.
- Training and supervisory staff should supervise, monitor and guide to ensure the maintenance of minimum standards for providing quality services.
- A three-tier system of training should be designed in which the field-level functionaries, trainers, supervisors and policy makers should be included.

3. Funding

- Each programme should ensure adequate funding for staff, training and materials.
- Family and community contributions should be encouraged in kind, cash and services.
- Wherever possible child care programmes should be linked with income-generation.

4. Decentralisation

- Local communities and local bodies should be closely involved in monitoring.

5. Media

- Standardised messages should be developed on women and child care issues and provided to the media for dissemination. Positive images of women and children should be portrayed through the media.
- A definite time slot should be provided for enrichment programmes for young children, formulated with the help of child development professionals.

Group III

Issues

Needs assessment for special groups

Working women

Children below 3 years

Girl children

Child care workers

Unreached children

Recognising women's triple roles of economic support, home-making and child bearing, programmes should pay special attention to the needs of working women, and children 0-2 years, who require breastfeeding as well as other developmental care, an activity requiring skilled workers. Other groups requiring special attention are girl children, children in unreached groups and child care workers.

Recommendations

1. Maternity benefits for working women

- For working women in the organised sector, the existing maternity leave benefit should be for 4 months from the date of childbirth to enable mothers to breastfeed for at least 4 months. Leave taken prior to the birth of the child should be treated as medical leave.

- Maternity leave benefits should be extended to women adopting children
- The existing nursing breaks of 20 minutes available to working women to breastfeed should be increased to 45 minutes.
- These provisions should be popularised and women workers made aware of their rights.
- Under Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy scheme the incentive should be increased to Rs.2000/- at least to compensate for wages lost, calculated at the rate of Rs.10/- for 200 days.
- A State-level Maternity and Child Care Fund should be set up with contributions from all employers. Tax reliefs could be provided for such contributions, and the Fund should be utilised for providing child care services. Implementation could be through government, local bodies and NGOs.

2. **Creches and day-care services**

- All institutions including hospitals, educational institutions, government and quasi-government organisations, should be obliged to provide child care services by appropriate amendments in the Shops and Establishments Act.
- For women in the unorganised sector, existing programmes such as ICDS and TINP should adopt flexible working hours depending on local conditions and in consultation with local people, and function as day-care centres to cater to the children of working mothers.
- Local bodies should be mandated to provide child care services to working women in the unorganised sectors.

3. **Children below 3 years**

- Care of children below 3 years is a highly technical and skilled activity. A study group should be formed consisting of experts in

Child Development and Social Work to work out the norms and details of the programme.

- Special training of child care workers for care of children below 2 years has to be initiated and as a first step a training module has to be developed.
- The concept of family day care should be popularised and women appropriately trained.

4. **Girl child**

- Creches and day care services should be extensively provided so as to liberate the girl child from the burden of taking care of children and to give an opportunity to attend school. The slogan "a creche in every school/every community" should be adopted and implemented.
- Primarily school curriculum should be revised to rule out gender bias.

5. **Child care workers**

- Child care workers should be considered as full-time skilled workers.
- Their services should be regularised, and they should get wages on par with those of comparable skills and responsibilities, for example, school teachers.

6. **Unreached groups**

- Migrant workers, and displaced persons need child care services to be provided at particular points or members from such groups should be selected and trained in child care.
- Special ration cards should be issued to them so that they may avail all other services.

POLICIES FOR THE YOUNG CHILD - SOME POINTERS

Dr. RAJAMMAL P. DEVADAS

*Chancellor, Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women
(Deemed University), Coimbatore.*

The society wedded to democracy and development finds itself both a subject and an object of the government. The government is expected to take care of the future citizens by participating in their development through improvement of environment, physical, social, educational and economic. The citizens in turn, with their electoral power can stimulate government and make it participate in the improvement of quality of life. No wonder that nurturing the human potential is a universal responsibility and there is no greater human potential than the millions of children on whom progress and national development depend.

Taking into consideration the basic needs of the young child below six years, the Tamil Nadu Government has taken steps to formulate the State Programme of Action. It is a welcome feature that the Project ACCESS has organised such a participatory meet to discuss policies for the young child.

Enumerated below are some pointers that might contribute to the overall policy of achieving wholesome development of the young child (0-6 years). The action points need to be geared up and operationalised effectively.

Health and nutrition

- All-out efforts must be made to improve child health by aiming at reduction in infant mortality rate to less than 30 per 1000 live births and 1-4 years mortality rate to less than 10 by 2000 A.D.
- Efforts to sustain 100 per cent immunisation coverage in each district need to be targeted to eliminate vaccine – preventable diseases.
- Health functionaries need to be trained in diarrhoeal management and management of other infectious diseases.
- Multi-channel media need to be vigorously used to promote ORS concept and timely referral for dehydration among public and private sectors.
- Propagate feeding of colustreum, breast feeding and appropriate weaning at least for six months among the late adolescents (to-be mothers).

Strengthen health and nutrition education inputs/components in all the developmental programmes in operation.

- Water is a life saver. Ensure protected water supply in all the preschools, anganwadis, and other public places.
- Make available, fruits and vegetables at subsidised rates for improving the purchasing power of the consumers and to ensure better intake of nutrients by the children.
- Mapping the high-risk areas and 'at risk' children requiring attention in order to plan intervention strategies for them.
- Promote PHC services in rural areas/remote hills.
- Vaccine potency should be improved to 100 per cent.
- Macro and micro-nutrient deficiencies should be arrested through educational intervention programmes among children and public.
- All the anganwadis that are located in unhealthy surroundings need to be identified for implementing accelerated programmes to make them desirable.
- The anganwadi personnel need refresher training in first aid and emergency care for children.
- The health infrastructure in the MCH services in rural areas is not satisfactory. Hence the centres need recharging in terms of personnel, emergency equipment, medicinal supplies and other essentials.
- Extend and strengthen the existing maternal and child nutritional programmes in the State with special focus on reaching the currently excluded hamlets and needy areas.
- The data generated in child health and nutrition under different schemes should be widely used to improve public awareness of the benefits of the scheme.
- Awareness generation on important micro nutrients and their deficiencies and measures to address their problems needs to be strengthened.
- Increase access of creche facilities for working women.
- Target poverty alleviation and income-generating activities to families with inadequate food situation.
- Exercise strict enforcement of laws pertaining to commercial infant formulae.

Education and play

- Concerted efforts need to be made to educate mothers and to-be mothers on development of children in the age group (0-6) through ICDS, TINP activities and functionaries.
- Ensure play-way education in all the Early Childhood Education centres.
- Only 38 per cent of estimated 37 lakhs of children in the 3-5 age group are enrolled in the 22,000 preschool centres/TINP/other Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres. 100 per cent enrolment coverage of preschool children must be aimed in the anganwadis/preschools/ECE centres.
- All kinds of ECE centres/creches must be attached to schools.
- Services of non-governmental organisations need to be converged and balanced among the ECE centres.
- The personnel of ECE centres need to be trained on play-way approaches for the young child.
- In-service training of ECE teachers must include sensitization for acceptance and support to children with disabilities.

VALEDICTION

- Provision of drinking water supply, electricity, sanitation and playground facilities must be undertaken on a war footing.
- Supply of instructional materials and play equipment must be speeded up for all the ECE centres, since play is life for children.
- Strengthen ECE centres' manpower with appropriate training and skills.
- The remuneration of ECE personnel needs to be enhanced to fill up all the vacant posts and retain sustained cooperation among the trained teachers. Political will needs to be created for this task.
- District-level Resource Centres/Toy centres/Toy libraries may facilitate ECE personnel and offer teacher support system. Probably this can be part of the ICDS cell office.
- Recognise and offer incentives to teachers who follow innovative techniques in Early Childhood Education centres.
- Sports and recreational facilities for children below six needs to be rechecked and activated involving youth club members/NSS volunteers/women's groups.
- Folk arts need to be developed among young children in ECE centres drawing parental potentials and community support.
- The ECE teachers need to be educated about gender issues.
- Create among the public an image of positive profile of ECE staff through effective mass media.
- Special focus needs to be given to orient the ECE personnel on the rights of the young child.
- Government/NGOs to undertake the responsibility of strengthening *Mahalir Mandrams* with leadership training, skill development and income-generation programmes and use them as agents to remove gender disparity and the hurdles faced by the anganwadis.
- Strict enforcement of laws against the employment/placement of children of 5-6 years age need to be undertaken as a crash programme.
- Since the basic issues of child development including healthy environment, involve political action, people's representatives need to be educated on needs and policies for the young child.

The citizens can, through their electoral power, stimulate Government and make it participate in improving the quality of life.

SPECIAL ADDRESS

Hon. Pulavar Tmt. R. INDRA KUMARI

Minister for Social Welfare, Government of Tamilnadu

I am sure your deliberations would have taken due note of our unique Integrated Nutrition Project assisted by the World Bank, and our other schemes like Cradle Babies Scheme, Vision-2000 for Women, Child Labour Abolition, Compulsory Universal Primary Education, Girl Child Protection Scheme, Prevention of Childhood Disability etc. You know that for 94-95 we have an outlay of Rs.100 crores for the total child welfare Plan. Our 15-pt. Programme announced by our beloved leader Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi has won worldwide acclaim, and so are the other schemes a model for the rest of the country. Our effort is not merely on child survival but on the healthy growth of the child and development of its full potential. We are going to have an International Summit on Policy for Handicapped on 3rd December when our beloved leader will announce her new policy.

We may call our beloved Chief Minister's 15 Point Programme and Vision-2000 as a unique project on human potential, bringing forth and nurturing the fullest potential in every child. Experts of this seminar, and their report, I am sure, will clarify more and more what is this human potential. It is something that has to be clearly grasped by everyone working in the area of welfare of the child, because it is in the age from zero to six that this human potential is established. I understand that the deliberations of this seminar have been really searching and probing and you have all done some solid reflection on the issues involved.

I have had occasion to see some papers of the Harvard Graduate School of Education assessing the state of scientific knowledge concerning human potential and its realization. They had summarized their findings in a form that would assist educational and social welfare policy and practice in the United States. They had suggested appropriate innovations in education and health to benefit especially the disadvantaged sections of children.

I wish to suggest that the esteemed M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation should prepare and organise such a project on the nature and realization of human potential with reference to our own situation and cultural conditions here. Documents like our 15-Point Programme and Vision-2000, and the various seminar papers that they have generated, will be a good starting point for organizing such a project.

Such a human potential project with special reference to Tamilnadu, at a moment in history when we are blazing a trail of innovative programmes under the leadership of our Guardian Angel, Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi, will have to include a general review of our entire literary and philosophical tradition. It will have to take into account the conceptions of human development practised in other countries, in diverse cultural backgrounds.

*When childhood dies,
its corpses are called ADULT*
says a British author, by name Brian Aldiss.

VALEDICTION

The challenge facing every human is how to have the foundation so securely laid that the child in him or her continues to live and love, instead of the ADULT called a CORPSE.

*To talk to a child,
to fascinate him, or her,
and to try to answer his questions,
is much more challenging than winning
an election*

says a French author called Colette.

How many of us really spend time with children, even our own children? How many of us benefit from such interaction? Is our materialist society leaving us no time at all to spend with children? I wonder how many here really play with little children?

At this point I wish to assure you that I myself, in spite of my busy schedule as a Minister, spend substantial time every day with my only daughter, discussing things with her and playing and joking and exchanging stories.

I wish to repeat, that the first step in a meaningful human potential project, should be that ADULTS spend substantial children-time, with their own children to begin with, then orphans and handicapped and street children and so on. This will be one way to avoid becoming the walking corpses that Brian Aldiss mentioned.

This year is the Year of the Family, to make everybody realize the sacredness of family life in these times of collapsing human relationships. I think the M.S. Swaminathan Foundation can organise regular surveys and competitions to give Awards like THE MOTHER OF THE YEAR. This will greatly educate and enthuse all mothers to put in their best for their babies. Perhaps Mr. Antony here will like to choose, for this award, a woman who is sterilized and who has only one child, preferably adopted!

Even in the years before completing age 5

or 6, all children fall victim to the evil influences in the adult world of mass entertainment and media. The violence and vulgarity around them affects adversely their healthy maturing process. We should find out ways of tackling this menace.

Every child is born a genius, says the great American futurologist, Buckminster Fuller. It is the society around them that has to be reformed. It is the society that destroys the human potential.

*It is sad to grow old,
but nice to ripen,*

says French film star, Brigitte Bardot.

Our beloved Navalur here is nicely ripening into a sage! With his saintly direction to our endeavours, we shall be able to accomplish a great deal.

Perhaps each of us here will try to recover one's own lost childhood that was left behind, and not get old, but nicely ripen, as useful members of society, caring for the little ones. Old age will not be a shipwreck if we stay as children with the children.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has given highest priority to child welfare programmes under the distinguished leadership of the Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi.

Under her leadership, we are the first government in India to involve the NGOs. In all our development programmes, specially for the mothers and children. We have appointed NGOs as members of the Planning Commission, State Women's Commission and other bodies. For example, M.S. Swaminathan and Rajammal Devadas are NGOs on our Planning Commission. We conducted a Women's World Summit on March 9th on women and children involving many NGOs.

It is important for you NGOs to know these programmes and come forward to give your service to these programmes, for example the 15-point programme for children.

I thank you for this opportunity to be with

you, and I assure you that your recommendations will be speedily processed for appropriate new measures by our Government, under the guidance and inspiration of our beloved leader Dr. Puratchi Thalaivi. Thank you.

The first step in a meaningful human potential project should be that adults spent substantial time with children, their own and others.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

Hon. Navalar Thiru V.R. NEDUNCHEZHIAN
Minister for Finance, Government of Tamilnadu

I am indeed very happy to be amongst you, to deliver the Valedictory Address at the concluding session of the seminar on **Child Welfare Policy in Tamil Nadu for Children 0-6 years**.

I hope that the well-learned and experienced participants, belonging to various departments, institutions and organisations, would have dealt in detail with the various aspects of the welfare policies for young children of 0-6 years of Tamil Nadu and attempted to trace out the origin of and analyse the policies in practice. The findings of the seminar, I think, will pave the way clearly for implementing the policy of child welfare schemes, by planning, programme, performance and progress.

The Department of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme in Tamil Nadu takes care of the development and welfare of the three most vulnerable sections of society, viz., the women, the children and the handicapped, to build a positive self-image and attain a sustained living of normal standard

The schemes for women's welfare cover economic programmes to improve the living standards of women below the poverty line, monetary assistance for marriage and times of pregnancy and desertion, etc., and running/supporting institutions to protect women in difficult circumstances.

The Rs. 320 crores Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project (TINP), Puratchi Thalaivar M.G.R. Nutritious Meal Programme and the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme are some of the major schemes implemented for the welfare of children.

The newly created Directorate for the Disabled pays special attention to the education and training of the physically handicapped, besides providing them the needed equipments and appliances and also striving to get them economic opportunities.

The Directorate of Social Defence provides care, correctional treatment, custody, training in educational and vocational programmes and rehabilitation of neglected (destitutes, deserted & orphans) and delinquent children; also children in difficult circumstances, like street children, rag pickers, working children, children of exploited women etc.,

Various social welfare schemes for 0-6 years children have been implemented very earnestly and effectively by the Government of Tamil Nadu in recent years. The basic needs of children are primary health care, nutritious food, safe water, clean environment, basic education, and love and care of mothers. For this, the 15 Point Programme was formulated, as a State Programme of Action for children. So far as child health is concerned, the following remedial measures are being carried out carefully and successfully;

1. Increasing birth weight to 3 kgs.
2. Elimination of polio myelitis and neonatal tetanus and also elimination of measles cases and deaths.
3. Reduction of infant mortality to 30 per 1000.
4. Reduction of severe and moderate malnutrition among 0-6 year children.
5. Elimination of Vitamin A, iodine and iron deficiency in children.
6. Making all hospitals baby-friendly.
7. Girl child protection scheme.
8. Prevention of childhood disabilities and early detection and rehabilitation.
9. Eradication of female infanticide.
10. Early identification of congenital heart disease and free surgery.

Puratchi Thalaivar MGR Nutritious Meal Programme has been implemented in rural areas, from 1st July 1982 and in urban areas from 15th September 1982. At present, 28, 044 child welfare centres and 36,859 school centres are functioning in rural and urban areas. This scheme has main components of nutrition, pre-school education and health care.

The packages of services under Integrated Child Development Services scheme includes supplementary nutrition, pre-school education, health check-up, immunisation, nutrition and health education and referral services. At present there are 111 projects in Tamil Nadu.

At present, Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project II is implemented in 18 districts of the State. This project aims at child survival, health and development and child nutrition from birth, preventing severe and moderate mal-

nutrition, prophylaxis against Vitamin A and iron deficiency. It also gives pre-school education to 3 to 6 years children.

The Puratchi Thalaivi Dr. J. Jayalalitha Scheme for the Girl Child is in order to promote Family Planning and to eradicate female infanticide. This scheme was launched in April 1992. The main conditions prescribed for the scheme are:

1. The parent should have one or two girl children and no male children.
2. One of the parents should have undergone sterilisation on or after 1.4.94.
3. At the time of sterilisation the parent's age should be within 40 years.
4. For parents who have undergone sterilisation their income should be below Rs.12,000/- per annum. The beneficiary child should be below the age of 3 years.

The following are the benefits of the scheme.

1. On enrolment Rs.5000/- will be deposited in a public account in the name of beneficiary girl child. Pass Book and identity card will be issued to them.
2. On the first birthday/succeeding birth day after enrolment the child will be given a gold ring of Rs.800/- value.
3. On enrolment in primary school Rs.250/- will be paid in cash.
4. On joining VI standard, Rs.500/- will be paid in cash.
5. From IX Std. to XII Std., every month Rs.50/- (each year 10 months totally for 40 months) will be paid in cash.
6. After completing 20 years, Rs.20,000/- will be paid for higher education/marriage.

VALEDICTION

It was brought to the notice of the Government that among some communities in Salem District, the barbarian act of female infanticide is practised. As an immediate measure, the Government ordered for placing cradles in the hospitals, primary health centres and orphanages. People were advised that they may leave their female babies, if they do not want to bring them up.

The Department of Social Welfare is running 25 orphanages in the State covering all the districts. The deserted/destitute/abandoned children who are in the age group of 5-18 years are admitted in these orphanages.

The inmates admitted in the orphanage are being provided free meals, shelter, clothing, books and note-books, education and free medical facilities.

Under the Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Ammaiyar Ninaivu Mahapperu Udhavi Thittam, cash support is given to women below poverty line for the last two months of pregnancy and two months immediately after delivery of the child, not only to compensate the loss of income during this period, but to give rest to the mother, which results in the better growth of the child.

I do hope that the guidances and inspiration derived from the seminar and the salient recommendations made, will be very useful in implementing the welfare schemes for the young children of 0-6 years. I congratulate very warmly the organisers of this seminar, for conducting the proceedings very efficiently and effectively. With these words, I pay my respectful thanks to one and all assembled here.

The 15-point Programme was formulated to meet the basic needs of children – primary health care, nutritious food, safe water, clean environment, basic education and the love and care of mothers.

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Recommendation Highlights

- *Government should involve available networks, forums and federations of NGOs as well as professional associations and non-political bodies in policy formulation.*
- *Draft policy documents should be widely disseminated to obtain responses from concerned groups.*
- *Minimum standards for child care programmes should be developed with the help of technical groups.*
- *Maternity leave for women in the organized sector should be extended to 4 months starting from the day of the child's birth.*
- *A State-level Maternity and Child Care Fund should be set up with contribution from all employers.*
- *Shops and Establishments Act should be amended to include provisions for creche, so that all women working in the tertiary sector can get the benefits.*

State parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.

Article 26 of the
UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD 1989