

## WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

### (Item No.25)

01. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment envisages entrustment of powers and responsibilities to Panchayat Raj Institutions in respect of 29 items of which "Item 25" is related to Women and Child Development. Item 25 covers Poverty Alleviation Programmes for Women, Women's Welfare, Child Welfare, Women Labour Welfare and Nutrition. Since Item 16 on the Poverty Alleviation Programme includes also those programmes for women, they are excluded here. In this item we will concentrate on women's welfare, child welfare, women labour welfare and nutrition.

### A. Child Welfare

#### I. Nutrition:

02. The programmes on Nutrition implemented in Tamil Nadu are intended to improve the health and nutritional status of children, pregnant and lactating women, to reduce IMR, SBR and MMR and to rectify the nutritional deficiencies of old age people. The three major programmes comprise (i) Tamil Nadu Government's nutritious Meal Programme (NMP), (ii) Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project (TINP) and (iii) Integrated Child Development Services scheme (ICDS). An externally Aided Project is implemented under the name SIDA-ICDS in the State. The number of centres and persons served under these programmes are given below:

Programme	No. of Centres	No. of persons served in lakhs			Total
		Children	Pregnant & lactating women	Oldage pensioners	
I. Nutritious Meal Programme					
1. Child Welfare NMP Centres					
a. Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (CWCs)	10085	5.74	1.65	-	7.39
b. Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project(CWCs)	18342	6.55	-	1.08	7.63
c. PT MGR NMP urban CWCs	882	0.38	-	-	0.38
2. School NMP Centres					
a. PT MGR NMP Centres Rural	37438	56.00	-	-	56.00
b. PT MGR MMP School Centres - Urban	2079	4.68	-	-	4.68
Total-NMP	68826	73.35	1.65	1.08	76.09
3. TINP-Supplementary feeding and other inputs	19482	3.58	2.86	-	6.44

### ICDS

03. The scheme aims to deliver a package of services in an integrated manner to the vulnerable children, pregnant and lactating women at a very crucial stage of development to tackle the problem of nutritional deficiencies. The ICDS was introduced in 1975-76 and at present there are 111 projects which include 2 tribal and 42 urban projects in Tamil Nadu. Out of these 111 projects, 47 projects are assisted by Swedish International Development

Authority (SIDA). The package of services under ICDS includes supplementary nutrition, pre school education, health check up, immunisation, nutrition and health education and referral services. SIDA-ICDS was introduced in 1989 and it is covering at present 47 blocks in Chengai-MGR, Pudukottai and Nilgiris districts. This project is for improving the delivery of services under ICDS and also enhancing it through additional inputs. The main components of the SIDA-ICDS project are to provide support to standard ICDS package including training, to provide materials to anganwadi centres, income generating activities, management information scheme, construction of new buildings, scheme for adolescent girls etc. Under ICDS and SIDA-ICDS, around 6 lakh children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years and 1.5 lakh pregnant and lactating women are benefitted.

#### **Nutritious Noon Meal Programme (NMP):**

04. The NMP has three components - the first component covers pre school children in the age group of 2+ to 4+ and it takes care of nutrition, education and health care of the children. There are 29309 pre-school child welfare centres (including those under ICDS and TINP) benefitting 12.67 lakh children. The second component covers children in the age group of 5+ to 14+ studying in standards I to X through 39517 centres located in schools benefitting 60.68 lakh children. The third component covers 1.08 lakh of old age pensioners, ex-servicemen and those who are eligible to draw old age pension from Government of Tamil Nadu. The other schemes include supply of eggs to pre-school/school children once in a fortnight and supply of energy food to those children who do not take eggs.

#### **Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project (TINP II)**

05. The World Bank Aided TINP II has established a maternal and child nutrition, health and pre school services delivery system at the village level by focussing attention on the children aged 0-6 years, pregnant and lactating women. The Project commenced in 1990 and will continue upto December 1997 in 5 phases covering 318 blocks in 25 Health Districts. The project has the objectives of ensuring child survival, health and development, prevention of the incidence of severe and moderate mal-nutrition, control and prevention of specific infectious diseases, provision of prophylaxis against specific nutritional deficiencies, effective pre-school programme for children in the age group of 3 to 5 years, pre-natal, neo-natal and post-natal care of mothers, health and nutrition education, promotion of community participation at the grassroot level, provision of manpower etc. The project inputs are primarily delivered through 19482 Community Nutrition Centres (CNCs) benefitting 3.58 lakh children in the age group of 0-36 months and 2.86 lakh pregnant and lactating mothers. The Child Welfare Centres (CWCs) for pre school age group numbering 18342 which were functioning under NMP have been brought into the ambit of the project benefitting 6.55 lakh children in the age group of 3-6 years and 1.08 lakh old age pensioners.

#### **National Programme of Nutritional support to Primary Education Scheme:**

06. Under this centrally sponsored scheme, from 15.8.95 onwards, Government of India is supplying rice free of cost for providing midday meals to primary school children in selected 89 blocks in 14 districts of Tamil Nadu. Entire Tamil Nadu will be covered under this programme in a phased manner. During 1996-97, 96 blocks will be covered in 16 districts. The allocation of rice will be to the extent of 2.79 lakh quintals for 10 months.

#### **Feeding of pregnant women:**

07. From 6.12.1995, the pregnant women who are given Rs.300/- (Rs.500/- at present) as support under Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddy Ammaiyar Ninaivu Udavi Thittam (Cash assistance for pregnant women below poverty line) will be entitled to take free meal every day at the NMP centre for a period of 4 months. About 2 lakh pregnant women are benefitting under this scheme.

#### **Hunger free Area Programme:**

08. The Government has launched a new Hunger free Area Programme with an aim to eradicate poverty induced hunger. An amount of Rs.50 lakhs has been earmarked for the initial phase of the project for the year 1996-97. Under this project, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation has identified 7 blocks and 7 Institutions/Universities are undertaking a detailed analysis of ongoing poverty alleviation programmes. Poverty indicators include proportion of families without land, livestock, other assets, female literacy, IMR and families below poverty line.

## II. Other Child Welfare Programmes:

09. The programmes implemented for child welfare under Social welfare sector include setting up of orphanages, creches for children of working and ailing mothers, cottages for children in need of care and protection, prevention and eradication of female infanticide and welfare of girl child. The institutions and persons served are as follows:-

Institutions	Number	Persons served
Orphanages	25	5650
Creches (By S.W.Department)	117	2340
Creches (By S.W. Board)	789	
	906	
	905	
Cottages	176	4400
Welfare of Girl child		8000

## B. Women's Welfare:

10. The economic and welfare programmes for the rehabilitation of women below poverty line, widows, destitutes and deserted women are implemented through the following institutions.

Institutions	Number	Persons served
Orphanages Co-operative Societies	177	31920
Training Centres	49	775
Production Centres	6	
Service Homes	6	
Service Homes by voluntary agencies	3	200
Teacher Training Institute	1	60
Working Women's Hostels	7	390
Mahalir Manrams	11520	

11. In addition to the above, various schemes are being implemented granting financial assistance to women in difficult circumstances for marriage, pursuit of studies, self-employment activities etc. The women benefitted under these schemes are as follows:

Scheme	Women benefitted
1. Financial assistance for marriage of girls below poverty line	10000
2. Cash assistance to pregnant women below poverty line	291000
3. Widow remarriage	196
4. Marriage Assistance to Orphan girls	65
5. Marriage Assistance for marriage of daughters of poor widows	1050
6. Inter-caste marriage assistance	554
7. Free supply of sewing machines to destitute women/widows	1000
8. Free supply of Text books and notebooks to school children of poor widows	4000

12. The Tamil Nadu Corporation for Development of women Limited with a focus on empowerment strategies to women in Tamil Nadu has served 70342 women below poverty line since its inception in 1983. The Tamil Nadu Women's Development Project with financial assistance from International Fund for Agricultural Development is being implemented since 1989 covering Dharmapuri, Salem, South Arcot, Villupuram,, Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts benefitting 55503 women who are being assisted in income generating activities like agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, oilseeds, animal husbandry or cottage and village industries by forming women's groups. The Government have decided to extend this scheme to the whole state. It will be integrated with IRDP, DWCRA, Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana, Entrepreneur Development Programme for women, Indira Mahila Yojana, Special Component Plan, Wasteland Development Programme and the Watershed Development Programme. The Vocational Training Programme conducted by the Corporation benefitted 335 women during 1992-93.

13. The number of women workers increased from 63.43 lakhs in 1981 (26.52% of total workers) to 82.37 lakhs in 1991 (29.89%) and the number of women in organised sector employment from 32.47 lakhs to 50.19 lakhs during the same period.

### Financial support by the State:

14. The allocation of funds for the various programmes of Women and Child Development has been as follows:

	1994-95 Actuals	1995-96 R.E.	1996-97 Revised B.E.
	(Rs.in lakhs)		
1. Nutrition Of which	36028.02	38214.44	39548.34
(a) TINP II	163.81	1051.33	1690.62
(b) ICDS	1819.82	2034.62	2108.40
(c) Other special nutrition programme	83.98		
(d) Midday Meals	27981.38	28816.00	29290.83
2. Child Welfare	509.36	434.57	458.66
3. Women's Welfare	2444.15	2594.59	4912.17

### Achievements and deficiencies:

15. When we take stock of the past achievements, it could be seen that the IMR of Tamil Nadu has fallen from 91/1000 live births in 1981 to 57/1000 in 1991, and the post-natal mortality from 29/1000 to 14/1000 during the same period. The National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau data show that the severe malnutrition among the under-five children has come down from 12.6% in 1975-76 to 4.2% in 1988-90 and the percentage of normal children increased from 6.2 to 8.0 during the same period. There is a decreasing trend in the clinical nutritional deficiency symptoms in children, especially that of Bitot's spots, from 2.9% in 1975-76 to 0.6% in 1988-90 and that of marasmus from 0.6% to 0.2% during the same period. Though the overall achievements are quite significant, there are certain areas which require substantial attention. In the last four years i.e. from 1991, the IMR of Tamil Nadu has remained almost static at 58/1000. The districtwise data on Rural IMR reveal disparities - it is high in Dharmapuri with 98.1 per 1000 live births, Madurai with 84.4, Salem with 80.1 and Ramanathapuram with 78.1. Though the Rural MMR in Tamil Nadu is 1.9/1000 live births in 1995, it is the highest in Nilgiris with 4.5 followed by Perambalur with 3.6, Pasumpon and Trichy with 3.3. The Rural Still Birth Rate (SBR) is 18.9 per 1000 deliveries. The high rate of rural IMR and MMR is due to the neo-natal deaths.

16. The reports indicate that 40% of children in the age group 0-5 years and 70% of pregnant and lactating women suffer from nutritional anaemia. The National Family Health Survey 1992 points out that 47% of the

children under the age of four years are underweight for their age and 13% are severely underweight. The overall percentage of low birth weight children remains at a level of 25.30%. The problem of micro-nutrient malnutrition is now being increasingly realised. Lack of Vitamin 'A' afflicts nearly one percent of pre-school children and 2.7% of children in the age group of 5-12 years in Tamil Nadu.

### **Future thrust areas:**

17. Since programmes for children and women are inseparable, a properly balanced package of child welfare and women welfare services coupled with an efficient delivery system is necessary for maximising benefits. A sustained thrust has to be given for eradication of female infanticide and a package of programmes formulated. The creches, orphanages, working women's hostels and other institutions should be need-based. The Social and Economic security measures should be linked with the abolition of child labour. Women need better access to income-generating activities, self-employment ventures and vocational training, improvement in their entrepreneurial ability, upgradation of skills, increased awareness of their rights and attitudinal changes about women's status. It is necessary to lay emphasis on qualitative improvement of the rehabilitative services to destitute women, widows, girls in low income groups and poor families by making the existing programmes cost effective and responsive to need. The State has a well-established infrastructure such as Mahalir Manrams and Noon Meal Centres, which should be restructured, strengthened and reactivated to play a dynamic and positive role in the implementation of various programmes at the village level focussing on the qualitative improvement and responding to the local needs of women and children. The NGOs and women's groups should actively participate not only in the implementation but also in the formulation of plan programmes.

### **Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994:**

18. The Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994 outlines some of the functions of the 3 tier Panchayat Raj Institutions relating to 'Women and Child Development' thus:

- i) The Panchayat Union Council, within the limits of its funds, may make reasonable provision for the establishment and maintenance of maternity and child welfare centres and maintenance of a thai service. (section 112).
- ii) The Panchayat Union Council may review the schemes, programmes and other activities executed by the Government or by any statutory body or other agency within the Panchayat Union (Section 114(2)).
- iii) Two or more Panchayat Union Councils may establish and maintain common dispensaries, Child Welfare Centres and institutions of such other kind. (Section 118).
- iv) The District Panchayat and the Panchayat Union Council may transfer to the Village Panchayat with its consent, the management of any institution or the execution or maintenance of any work or the exercise of any power or the discharge of any duty, whether within or outside the village (section 119(2)).

### **Entrustment of powers to Rural Local Bodies:**

19. The aim of fulfilling the nutritional needs of the vulnerable sections of society, developing the physical and mental abilities of children, empowering women to participate in their own development and raising their social and economic status, needs an effective and efficient delivery system for the implementation of the programmes and in this context decentralised planning gains much importance.

20. With the above background of the services rendered through programmes and institutions for the welfare of women and children and in the light of the provisions made in the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994, and other legislations for maternity and child care support, the State Planning Commission Group recommends that (a) planning and implementation of the schemes on nutrition, child welfare and women's welfare should be entrusted to local bodies. The role of the Department should be that of providing technical guidance;(b) funds for the operation of the schemes will be made available to the local bodies; and (c) the service conditions of the rural functionaries will be protected as per Government rules but they should function under the control of the respective local bodies and accountable to them. The division of powers and responsibilities as recommended for entrustment to the 3 tiers of Panchayat Raj Institutions is outlined below:

## I. VILLAGE PANCHAYAT

<i>ACTIVITY</i> (1)	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> (2)
1. Nutrition Delivery Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Assist the nutrition staff in the identification of girls, women and children with nutritional deficiencies like nutritional anaemia, micro-nutrient deficiencies, goitre etc.</li> <li>(ii) Assist in the selection of beneficiaries for the various nutrition programmes.</li> <li>(iii) Operate and maintain the Nutritious Noon Meal Centres with financial support of the State Government.</li> <li>(iv) Encourage the local community support for the supply of vegetables and other items to the noon meal centres.</li> <li>(v) Form local committee for each NMP centre and involve women's and parents' groups to participate in the promotional activities of the Noon Meal Centres.</li> <li>(vi) Involve the Village Panchayat women members to assist the nutrition staff in the activities connected with growth monitoring, pre and post-natal care of women, care of low birth weight babies, severely and moderately malnourished children.</li> </ul>
2. Ancillary and supervisory activities of the nutrition programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Mobilise the support of voluntary organisations, form women's groups and mothers' committees, organise regular meetings and involve the groups along with women members of the Village Panchayat in supervising the activities of the programmes</li> <li>(ii) Assist the nutrition staff in conducting surveys and collection of data on nutritional status of the population in general and that of women and children in particular.</li> </ul>
3. Establishment operation and maintenance of child welfare centres and other noon meal centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Assist in the selection of sites for locating anganwadi CWCs and NMP centres.</li> <li>(ii) Mobilise community support for construction of proper buildings for the centres with store rooms, water supply, toilet facilities, play grounds and kitchen gardens.</li> <li>(iii) Involve the women members of the Village Panchayat in supervision of the operation and maintenance of the centres.</li> </ul>
4. Nutrition and health education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Spread messages for educating the public on the appropriate dietary habits.</li> <li>(ii) Mobilise the support of voluntary organisations and women's groups on counselling activities on               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Infant feeding practices</li> <li>(b) Child spacing and small family norm</li> <li>(c) Breastfeeding</li> <li>(d) Nutritional needs of adolescent girls</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
5. Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Assist in identifying the children who need care and protection.</li> <li>(ii) Assist in setting up creches and day care centres near the work places and setting up of orphanages.</li> </ul>

<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
	(iii) Assist the Social Welfare staff in identifying causes for female infanticide and take measures to eradicate.
	(iv) Assist and activate NGOs, Mahalir Manrams and other women's groups to participate in child welfare activities.
	(v) Assist agencies of Government and NGOs for identification and elimination of child labour.
6. Women's Welfare: socio-economic development of women.	(i) Disseminate information about the available Government programmes for the welfare of women.
	(ii) Assist the Social Welfare staff in the identification and selection of women beneficiaries for financial and technical assistance.
	(iii) Assist in the formulation of self- help groups and thrift societies among women.
	(iv) Mobilise community support and the support of NGOs to eradicate social evils like dowry and atrocities against women; and assist in establishing Family Counselling centres.
	(v) Involve Mahalir Manrams and activate them to participate in various welfare and economic activities of women.

## II. PANCHAYAT UNION

<i>ACTIVITY</i> <i>(1)</i>	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> <i>(2)</i>
1. Nutrition delivery services	(i) Assist the Village Panchayat in the identification of children and women with nutritional deficiencies and also in the selection of beneficiaries.
	(ii) Supervise the activities of the Village Panchayat in their functions of operation and maintenance of noon meal centres.
2. Ancillary and supervisory activities of the nutrition programmes	(i) Collect the data from the Village Panchayat, document and transmit to District Panchayat; collect the survey reports on the nutritional status of population in general and that of women and children in particular.
	(ii) Review the implementation of nutrition programmes funded by the State and Central Governments.
	(iii) Involve NGOs and women's groups in all the activities of the programmes.
	(iv) Assist the Village Panchayat in their functions of child care, pre-school activities and other educational needs of children in the centres.
3. Establishment, operation and maintenance of child welfare centres and noon meal centres.	(i) Assist in the construction of buildings for the centres, and provision of infrastructural facilities.
	(ii) Supervise the provision of water supply and other facilities in the centres.
	(iii) Provide technical and financial assistance to establish child and NMP centres by the Village Panchayats.

<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
4. Nutrition and Health Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Assist the Village Panchayat to spread messages using message delivery systems like mass media, popular cultural forms such as songs, posters and folk media, preparation and distribution of pamphlets, face-to-face communications with health and nutrition workers and para professionals.</li> <li>(ii) Organise periodical campaigns and involve the hospitals, educational institutions for nutrition and health education.</li> </ul>
5. Child Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Document data on child labour, female infanticide, children needing care and protection.</li> <li>(ii) Assist the Village Panchayat and NGOs in               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Setting up creches, day care centres and orphanages.</li> <li>b) Setting up centres for abandoned children.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(iii) Supervise the functioning of the institutions for child welfare;</li> </ul>
6. Women's Welfare: Socio-Economic Development of women.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Assist the Village Panchayat in disseminating information about the available Government programmes for the welfare of women.</li> <li>(ii) Monitor the selection of women beneficiaries for financial and technical assistance programmes.</li> <li>(iii) Assist the Village Panchayat, NGOs, self help groups, women groups in identifying the income generating activities for women and organise training and necessary support.</li> <li>(iv) Assist in the eradication of social evils like dowry, gender discrimination, atrocities against women; mobilise the community support; and assist in establishing Family Counselling Centres.</li> <li>(v) Review all schemes programmes, projects implemented for women with State and Government of India support in the Panchayat Union area.</li> </ul>

### III. DISTRICT PANCHAYAT

<i>ACTIVITY</i> <i>(1)</i>	<i>ENTRUSTMENT OF POWERS</i> <i>(2)</i>
1. Women and Child development planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Collect the documented data from Panchayat Union and prepare Annual Status Reports on the nutritional status of women and children, social status of children, social and economic status of women, women's labour in organised and unorganised sectors, compare them with the best in the State and in the country.</li> <li>(ii) Prepare Annual Plan for women and child development in the district and advise the Government in this regard.</li> <li>(iii) Review the women and children development schemes, programmes and projects implemented in the district.</li> </ul>
2. Nutrition delivery services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Monitor, supervise and assist in the functions and activities of the Panchayat Union; and ensure the proper selection of beneficiaries, provision of nutrition services, identify the gaps and give guidelines for corrective measures.</li> </ul>



<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>
3. Ancillary and supervisory activities of the nutrition programmes.	(i) Supervise and monitor the provision of infrastructural facilities to the centres. (ii) Review the regular procurement and distribution of materials for the nutrition programmes and the implementation of the nutrition programmes funded by the State and Central Governments.
4. Establishment, operation and maintenance of the CWCs and noon meal centres.	(i) Review the proper functioning and maintenance of the centres. (ii) Provide technical and financial assistance for the establishment and maintenance of the centres.
5. Nutrition and Health education	(i) Assist and supervise the Panchayat Union in the dissemination of information and ensure the coordination in the activities of the Departments involved in health, nutrition, education, water supply, rural development etc. (ii) Involve the hospitals and academic institutions at the district level in nutrition and health education.
6. Child Welfare	(i) Collect the documented data on child labour, female infanticide, children needing care and protection and prepare Annual status reports for advising the State Government. (ii) Conduct impact studies on the various child welfare programmes. (iii) Take steps to remove the bottlenecks in obtaining credit for income generating and self-employment activities. (iv) Render assistance to Panchayat Unions for eradication of social evils relating to women and children. (v) Assist the Panchayat Unions in establishing institutions for women in need and in distress.

### **Administrative, Financial and Legal Implications :**

21. As per the recommendations of the State Planning Commission group, the Child Welfare Centres, Community Nutrition Centre, Noon Meal Centres and other institutions for child welfare and women's welfare will be brought under the control of the Panchayat Unions. Irrespective of the fact whether it is run in a school campus or elsewhere, NMP Centres should squarely be the responsibility of the Village Panchayats. In order not to have any disruption in the functioning of NMP Centres, the existing administrative arrangement for handling the procurement and distribution of materials will be continued as is for the present.

22. The present process of procurement and distribution of food items for Noon Meal Programme will continue to be supplied by the Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation. The operation and maintenance of the NMP Centres will be given to Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions will play a supervisory role. Financial grant may be released by Panchayat Unions to Village Panchayats and the emoluments to NMP staff should be paid by Village Panchayats.

23. From the point of view of Social Development, the child welfare centres should function as "Women and Child Development Centres" and besides nutrition programmes, these centres should be involved in other activities such as health care, family welfare, pre-school education, recreation, vocational training, literacy, sports and adult literacy.

24. On balance, it is advisable that the Mahalir Manrams should be linked with Village Panchayats. There are at present 11520 Manrams and annually an amount of nearly Rs.50.00 lakhs is allotted for their activities. These Manrams should be reactivated to play a dynamic and positive role in the envisaged programme focussing attention on the quality improvement and responding to the needs of women and children.