

CHILD WELFARE SCHEMES IN TAMILNADU (1975-1987)

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Abstract

The present paper aims to highlight child welfare schemes in Tamilnadu from 1975 to 1987. Child welfare refers to physical, mental, and social wellbeing of child. The government Tamilnadu launched various schemes to improve the condition of children. The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) introduced in the year 1975-1976 aimed at enhancing nutrition and learning opportunities the health of a infants, young children up to six years and their mothers. It consists of programs, pre - school education, supplementary nutrition, immunization, health checkups, referral services and nutrition education. Child welfare schemes also includes balwadies for tribal's, balwadies in harijan colonies, welfare of destitute children, chief ministers nutritious meal program, free supply of text books and dresses, free foot wear to the children, students scholarship, day care centre in city slums etc. This programs enhanced the social, economic condition of children.

Keywords: *child welfare schemes, tamilnadu, balwadies*

Introduction

The UNO has declared 1979 as an international year of the children and created awareness among the parents of the children and nations all over the world about the protection of child right. Every child has the right to lead a decent life. The physical, mental, and social well being of a child is very important for their development: A Chinese proverb states that "If you are investing for one year, invest in rice, if you are investing for ten years, invest in fruits and if you are investing for the future, invest in children."

Welfare is not a matter of charity but of right and it is a responsibility of the state to its citizens. Indian Constitution has incorporated the concept of welfare. Article 38 of the Constitution specifically authorizes

the state to work for establishing a welfare state. It states that the state shall strive to promote the welfare of "the people by securing and protecting effectively as it may, a social order in which justice, social, economic and political shall prevail in all the institution of national life". Welfare administration can be defined as the progress of transforming social policy in to social service; It is the process of translating policies in to action program. Child welfare is a continuum of the services designed to ensure that children are safe and that families have the necessary support to care for their children successfully.

- Child welfare agencies typically support or coordinate services to prevent child abuse and neglect.

- Provides services to families that need help protecting and caring for their children.
- Receive and investigate reports of possible child abuse and neglect, assess child and family needs, strength and recourses.
- Arrange for children to live with kin or with foster families when safety cannot be ensured at home.

Constitutional Safeguards for Indian Children

The Indian Constitution has provided various safeguards, provisions, opportunities and facilities for their integrated development.

Article-15&15(1): promises that the State shall prohibit discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of religion, race, caste and sex. Nothing in article prevents the state from making any special provision for women and children.

Article-21A: of the Constitution states that the state shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age 6-14 years in such manner as the state may, by law determine.

Article-24: defines no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.

Article-39(f): Enjoins the state to ensure that children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that the childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

Article-45: guarantees that the state shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of 6 years.

Article-243G provides for institutionalization of child care by seeking to entrust programs of women and child development to Panchayat (Item 25 of Schedule 11) (Chinmayee Satpathy 24).

Welfare Schemes

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)

The Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is aimed at enhancing nutrition and learning opportunities of the health of infants, young children up to 6 years and their mother. It is a pioneer scheme taking care of the welfare of child and mother. The Integrated Child Development Scheme was started during 1975-76. It is a centrally-sponsored scheme. Initially it was introduced at Madras city (Urban), Nilakottai in Madurai district, Thally in Dharmapuri district. Services are rendered through 100 centers of the three Integrated Child Development Scheme centers through the following package. 1) Pre-school Education 2) Supplementary Nutrition 3) Immunization 4) Health Check-up 5) Referral services 6) Nutrition Education (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1981-1982, 457).

Pre-School Education / Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is currently being universally recognized as an important input for the development of the kid. The goal of ECE is development of the whole child-physical, mental, language, intellectual, social and creative expression

and aesthetic appreciation. ECCE has received its due stress within the National Policy on Education (1986) as an essential input each for the holistic development of an individual and for its impact on the enrolment and retention of children in the primary grades. In principle, it is a process and development oriented system and therefore ECCE programs are transacted through the medium of play and activity according to the age of the pre-schoolers (ECCE). Program is development directed and child-centered in approach and places a great deal of stress on children's interaction and active expertise of the environment (Integrated Child Development Services, Government of Tamilnadu, icds.tn.nic.in).

Pre-school Education in the pattern of nursery schools through stories, rhymes and plays. These children are also taught to develop general knowledge to improve creativity and to follow hygienic and good habits. It gave emphasis to the age group of 2 ½ to 5 years which is the age when foundation is laid for the good citizenship. Under Third plan 747 pre-schools were sanctioned and they functioned well. During 1982-83 about pre-school education 4,140 centers were functioning in the state (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1984-1985, 283-284).

Supplementary Nutrition

Child welfare program is strengthened by supplementary nutrition and health components. It is provided in almost all the child welfare centers. 8gms of bulgar and 4gms of salad oil is given to each beneficiary free of cost by CARE Tamilnadu. In each child welfare centre an average of 70 beneficiaries i.e. 60 pre-school age children and 10 pregnant and lactating mothers are fed

cooked bulgur in the form of 'Uppuma' or 'Kitchadi' adding greens and vegetables to it. About 3.76 lakhs of children and mothers are benefitted by this feeding (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1981-1982, 458).

Immunization

Immunization of pregnant-women against tetanus and immunization of infants against six vaccine –preventable diseases such as Poliomyelitis, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus, Tuberculosis, Measles are carried out to prevent children from these diseases. These are major preventable causes of mortality, disability, morbidity and related malnutrition. The immunization of pregnant women against Tetanus also reduces maternal and neonatal mortality.

Health Check-ups

This includes health care of children under six years of age, antenatal care of expectant mothers and post-natal care of nursing mothers. The various health services provided for children by anganwadi workers and primary health centre staffs includes regular health check-ups recording of weight, immunization, management of malnutrition, treatment of diarrhoea, deworming and distribution of simple medicines, etc (Inflibnet.as.in 116).

Referral Services

During health check –ups and growth monitoring, sick or malnourished children, in need of prompt medical attention, are provided referral services through ICDS. The Anganwadi worker has also been oriented to detect disabilities in young children (ICDS). She enlists all such cases in a special register and refers them to the medical officer. The effectiveness of this service depends on

timely action, co-operation from health functionaries and willingness of families to avail of these services. Health Departments in states Union territory identify one hospital at the district level, which attends to the referral cases coming from ICDS areas.

Nutrition

This includes supplementary feeding; growth monitoring and prophylaxis against vitamin A deficiency and control of nutritional anemia (ICDS). All families in the community are surveyed, to identify low-income families and deprived children below the age of six, pregnant and nursing mothers and adolescent girl. They avail of supplementary feeding support for 300 days in a year (Inflibnet.as.in 117)

Balwadies for Tribal's

Under the integrated tribal development scheme 109 child welfare centers have been opened for the benefit of children of tribal people in sub-plan areas in North Arcot , Madurai, Kanyakumari, Nilgiris, Coimbatore, Periyar, Salem, Dharmapuri and Tiruchirappalli districts during 1976-1977 to 1979-1980. In addition to these during 1980-1981, 30 child welfare centers and 30 Balwadi buildings were sanctioned and started in Tribal areas. Thus totally 139 child welfare centers were run for the benefit of tribal children (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1980-1981, 385).

Balwadies in Harijan colony

During 1977-1978, 50 new child welfare centers were started in Harijan Housing and Development Corporation in addition to the 100 child welfare centers already functioning. For the child welfare centers started in harijan colonies. Buildings are

constructed by Tamil Nadu Harijan Housing and Development Corporation. In addition to the 50 child welfare centers started during 1977-1978 another 50 child welfare centers have been started during 1978-1979 under Harijan welfare budget (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1978-1979, 365).

Welfare of Destitute children

As a pilot project, the Government of India have started a scheme for the care and maintenance of destitute children by registered voluntary institution is the year 1978-1979. In order to avoid high institutionalization charges, the scheme is based on cottage system each unit consisting of 25 children. A liberal grant was given to voluntary institutions running the scheme which is 90 percent of the budget. The balance 10 percent expenditure is to be met by the institution. Building grant of Rs.40,500 was also given for each cottage to accommodate the children. During 1977-1978, a sum of Rs.20,61,400 has been sanctioned to 43 voluntary welfare institutions and 2,000 children have been benefitted from this scheme (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1977-1978, 348). During 1978-1979 a sum of Rs.27,95,798 has been sanctioned to 57 voluntary institutions to benefit 3,404 children in Tamilnadu (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1978-1979, 366).

During 1980 -1981 a sum of Rs.44,190 has been released to Madras School of Social Work Rs. 44,190 to Guild of service (Central Madras), and Rs.44,180 to Punjab association Madras under this scheme (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1980-1981, 386). Besides

that social welfare department runs four Orphanages, each at Madras city Madurai, Kanniyakumari and Salem for the children of the age group of 5 to 18 years with a sanction strength of 250 in each orphanage. The children are provided with food, shelter, clothing and medical attention and developmental services of education. The children are given coaching up to fifth standard in the orphanage itself and then they are sent to the Government and Corporation schools for studies above fifth standard (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1981-1982, 459).

Chief Ministers Nutrious Meal program (Rural)

Chief Ministers nutritious meal program was introduced in the rural areas in Tamilnadu from 1/07/1982 to tackle the problems mal nutrition and to provide facilities for pre - school education and health care for the children in the age group of 2 plus to 4 plus. At this time a total number of 2292 child welfare centers were functioning in rural area and 4,931 centers in urban areas including Integrated Child Development Scheme centers. The total number of beneficiaries in the rural areas in the age group of 2 plus to 4 plus is about 19.45 lakhs in urban areas is about 3.17 lakhs. Under the scheme employment opportunities has been created for 83,577 women. They have been appointed as child welfare organizers and child welfare assistants. Out of 27,859 child welfare organizers 5,383 belong to Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, 979 are widows and 1,173 are destitute women. Three main components of this scheme was i) Nutrition ii) Pre - School Education and iii) Health coverage.

Under the nutrition scheme the children are supplied cooked food consist of rice (80 gms,

Dhall (10 gms.) vegetables and condiments (50 gms.) and oil (5gms). The cost per meal per day for a child is 44 Paise. It has been calculated by nutrition experts that this cooked meal provides all calories per day to the child. Cooking was done in a hygienic way and the meal was served hot, fresh and delicious to the children.

Under the Pre-School Education focuses on holistic development of the child and provides a stimulating play environment for his/her physical, cognitive and psychosocial development.

Under the health coverage facilities were provided in rural and urban areas. The Primary Health Centers medical officers and municipal health officers have been entrusted with the responsibility of carrying out health coverage in the child welfare centres (Report of the Tamilnadu State Administration, 1984-1985, 283-284).

Free supply of Text Books and Note Books

A scheme for Free supplies of text book and note books for the children of widows whose income was below Rs.3000 per year was implemented from 1978 on wards. Every year Rs 1.01 Lakhs was spending on this scheme (G.O.MS No.389, Social Welfare Department, 1981).

Free supply of Foot Wear

Free supply of foot wear to the children was given once in two years from 1987 onwards. A scheme for the free distribution of tooth powder to rural people was implemented by M.G. Ramachandran regime in 1982. The government authorized the Principal of Madras Dental College, Chennai as the officer – in charge of the implementation of the scheme (Policy Note. Social Welfare and

Nutrition meal Program Department, 2006-2007).

Student's Scholarship

Children studying in elementary schools were paid Rs. 15 per annum per child, Children studying middle schools were paid Rs. 40 per annum per child and children studying in high school level were paid Rs. 60 per annum per child. The financial assistance in the year 1982 was extended to 1500 children in elementary schools 900 in middle schools and 600 in high schools (G.O.MS No.673, Social Welfare Department).

Day Care centers in City Slums

To give a helping hand to women labourer and sick women aid is given to institution for starting crèche centers. Children of 5 years age group are left at the centre in the morning and taken back home when they return from work. Nutrition, health care and education through play were taken care by specially trained personnel. 868 units functioned for of benefit 21,100 children (Annual Report of the Tamilnadu Social Welfare Board, 1985, 5).

Twenty nutrition cum-day care centers were started in slums. There were 60

beneficiaries in each center. A trained Balasevika attended the centre duty assisted by ayahs. The expenditure on this program was Rs. 0.61 Lakhs (Tamilnadu state Administration Madras, 1973-1974, 351).

Conclusion

Child welfare is the continuum of child care services and programmes. It is implemented by the government for the care, protection, security and well being of children up to 18 years. The state is committed to promote and safeguard the rights of all children. The Government also gives special attention to issues relating to girl children who form vulnerable sections of the society. This is a very apt proverb as Rabindranath Tagore declares "Let the child of the 21st century find himself in to that heaven of freedom"

ICDS works as a primary agent targeting full integration of child care and pre- primary education. All schemes and programs related to child development and education, like mid-day-meal scheme, school health program, and non-formal education. This will lead to integrated development of children with optimal utilization of resources, which would lead to improved quality of life and opportunities for children in the new millennium.

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