

Population and Family Welfare

30. In keeping with the democratic traditions of the country, the Family Welfare Programme seeks to promote the small family norm and reproductive and child health, through free and voluntary choice. The Eighth Plan document visualised that the goal of reaching Net Reproduction Rate of Unity (NRR-I) might now be achieved by 2011-2016 instead of 2000 as laid down in the National Health Policy, 1983. As per the estimates of the Technical Committee appointed by the Planning Commission, NRR of unity is unlikely to be achieved before 2025. Through Family Welfare Programme, Government has been able to achieve decline in Fertility Rate from 4.5 in 1981 to 3.5 in 1994. The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) has decreased from 33.9 per thousand population in 1981 to 27.4 in 1996 as per the provisional estimates of the Sample Registration System (SRS). The Crude Death Rate (CDR) has also declined from 12.5 to 8.9 per thousand population over the same period. As a result, the rate of growth of population declined to 1.85 per cent in 1996.

31. During the last two years of the Eighth Five-

Year Plan, certain policies underlying the family welfare programmes have been reviewed and reorganised. The first pragmatic initiative has been reorganisation of the Child Survival and Safe Motherhood and related programmes into the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) package of programmes. A provision of Rs.450 crore has been made in 1997-98 (RE) for RCH scheme. The second initiative has been to abolish targets for individual contraceptives, though the overall population control and health related goals remain. With the replacement of the system of setting targets from the top, the emphasis on quality has been strengthened.

32. In order to foster community involvement in the Family Welfare Programme, two new schemes viz. Community Award Scheme and Family Welfare Plan for Watershed Project Areas introduced in 1996 on a pilot basis has become operational in 1997-98.

33. The Pulse Polio Immunisation has been continued for the third year during 1997-98 targeting children in the age group of 0-5 years. Two supplemental doses of oral polio vaccine were administered to 127 million children on 7.12.1997 and to 133 million children on 18.1.1998.