

Social welfare

10.136 The Social Welfare Groups, include —Persons with Disabilities, viz., loco- motor, visual, hearing, speech and mental disabilities (estimated at 50 million or 5 percent of the total population in 2001); the Social Deviants who come in conflict with law viz., juvenile delinquents/vagrants, drug addicts, alcoholics, sex workers, beggars etc; and the Other Disadvantaged viz., the Older Persons (70.6 million or 6.9 percent of the total population in 2001), children in distress such as Street Children, orphaned/abandoned children etc.

10.137 The Tenth Plan will continue the three-pronged strategy initiated in the Ninth Plan of – (i) Empowering the Disabled; (ii) Reforming the Social Deviants; and (iii) Caring for the Other Disadvantaged with a special focus on convergence of the existing services in all related welfare and development sectors. The Annual Plan 2002-03, being the first year of the Tenth Plan has initiated this approach and the policy thrusts and programmes to be undertaken in the course of the next five years.

Welfare of the physically/mentally challenged

10.138 In line with the commitment of the Tenth Plan to empower as many disabled as possible to become active self reliant and productive contributors to the national economy, the Annual Plan 2002-03 has relied upon the strength and support of the provisions of Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act 1995. To ensure adequate fund availability, steps are being taken to introduce a component plan for the disabled in the Budget of Ministries/Departments to ensure that the funds /benefits as mandated under the Act, flow to the disabled. During 2002-03, the allocation for Welfare of Persons with Disabilities is Rs.206.55 crore out of which an expenditure of Rs.109.34 crore has been incurred upto November 30, 2002.

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10.139 Over 130 districts have been identified for providing comprehensive rehabilitation services at the doorsteps of disabled persons. 83 District Disability Rehabilitation Centres (DDRCs) have started functioning. The Expert Committee has identified 120 jobs at the supervisory, executive and managerial levels and 945 jobs at the level of skilled /semi-skilled for persons with disabilities, in the private sector. A new scheme of scholarships for the disabled students had been launched for pursuing higher and technical education. A one-time contribution of Rs.100 crore from the Central Government is envisaged towards the corpus of the National Trust set up under the National Trust Act for affirmative action in favour of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple disabilities. Upto 2001-02, Rs.99 crore has been released to the Trust and the balance of Rs.1 crore will be released to complete its corpus during the current year. In addition to the corpus of Rs.100 crore, a sum of Rs.20 crore is being provided as additional corpus during Annual Plan 2003-04, for expanding the activities for the welfare, development and protection of the severely disabled persons.

10.140 Under the scheme of Assistance to the Disabled for Purchase/Fitting of Aids and Appliances (ADIP) Rs.33.55 crore has been released to 150 agencies during 2002-03 (upto November 2002).

10.141 The Scheme to promote Voluntary Action for Persons with Disabilities (Umbrala, Scheme) is aimed at providing education, training and rehabilitation services through Non Governmental Organizations. During the current year 550 voluntary organizations have so far been released Rs.47.28 crore (upto November 30, 2002) for implementing the scheme.

Reforming social deviants

10.142 Recognising that social deviants such as juvenile delinquents, alcohol and drug addicts are victims of circumstances and situational compulsions rather than habitual

criminals engaged in organised crime, the Annual Plan 2002-03 advocates reform and rehabilitation of these social deviants in a humane rather than a punitive environment, with a view to transforming today's social deviants into tomorrow's responsible citizens.

10.143 Under the 'Programme of Juvenile Justice', the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment shares the cost of maintaining mandatory homes for the juveniles with the States and presently assists 30,000 juvenile inmates in over 550 mandatory homes.

10.144 The Annual Plan 2002-03 has envisaged an integrated and comprehensive community based approach to curb the growing problems of alcoholism and drug abuse in the country. This is being strengthened and expanded to reach needy areas like the rural areas and North East and the high risk groups like street children, commercial sex workers, truck drivers etc. For tackling the problems of alcohol and drug abuse, 90 Counselling Centres and 369 Treatment cum Rehabilitation Centres are being supported under the scheme of Prevention of alcoholism and substance (Drugs) Abuse.

Caring for the other disadvantaged

10.145 The Other Disadvantaged include the aged, the orphaned, abandoned, destitute and street children, who, in the wake of declining family support systems and other socio-economic circumstances are left helpless and require the support and protection of the State.

10.146 To fulfil the commitments of the National Policy on Older Persons for providing health, shelter, vocational training, recreation, protection of life etc for the Aged, special

emphasis is being placed on expanding the on-going programmes of old age homes, day care centres, mobile medicare units and medicare centres being implemented under the scheme of 'Integrated Programme for Older Persons'. Under this, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has extended financial assistance to 308 NGOs for running 222 Old Age Homes, 201 Day Care Centres and 27 Mobile Medicare Units.

10.147 A special scheme is being initiated during the Annual Plan 2002-03 for 'Welfare of Children in Need of Care and Protection.' The objective of this scheme is to cater to child workers and potential child workers (such as street children, children of pavement dwellers, migrants, sex workers, destitute children etc.) and provide opportunities to them to facilitate their entry into main stream education through non formal education, bridge education, vocational training etc..

10.148 The Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA) has also initiated various steps in promotion of in-country adoption. These include strengthening the Voluntary Coordinating Agencies (VCAs) by providing them grant-in-Aid.

10.149 The newly autonomous National Institute of Social Defence is being strengthened professionally, technically and financially, to enable it to broaden its activities in the field of social defence and for the other disadvantaged groups. The Institute will focus on training and manpower development of social defence personnel, especially in the areas of community-based services for juvenile justice, prison welfare, prison administration, child adoption, children in need of care and protection, prevention of drug-abuse, welfare of senior citizens and other emerging social problems.