

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2406
ANSWERED ON:25.07.2014
COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE POLICY
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Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a large number of children who live in marginalised and difficult circumstances need more comprehensive early childhood care policy;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Govt. thereto;
- (c) whether civil society groups have requested the Government to focus on a comprehensive approach towards providing a sound foundation for survival, growth protection, development and early learning under the proposed Early Childhood Care and Education Policy;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether there is any proposal to restructure the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Schemes;
- (f) if so, details thereof; and
- (g) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to frame comprehensive Early Childhood Care Policy to cater to the needs of children in all domains of development and to ensure health and nutrition to them?

Answer

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI MANEKA SANJAY GANDHI)

(a) & (b): Government of India has formulated a "National Policy of Children, 2013" under which, the State is committed to promote and safeguard the right of all children to live and grow with equity, dignity, security and freedom, especially those marginalised or disadvantaged. Further, the National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy, 2013, recently notified on 12.10.2013 covers all children from 0-6 years of age. One of the important objectives of the National ECCE Policy is to universalize and reinforce Early Childhood Care and Education.

(c), (d) & (g): National Policy on "Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)" has been formulated in consultation with States/UTs Government and Ministries/Departments of Government of India, civil societies, academic and experts. The National ECCE Policy lays down the way forward for a comprehensive approach towards ensuring a sound foundation for survival, growth and development of child with focus on care and early learning for every child. It recognises the synergistic and interdependent relationship between the health, nutrition, psycho-social and emotional needs of the child.

(e) & (f): Government has Restructured and Strengthened Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) in September 2012 in order to address various programmatic, management and institutional gaps and to meet administrative and operational challenges. The key features of Strengthened and Restructured ICDS inter-alia include addressing the gaps and challenges with (a) strengthening and repackaging of services with special focus on children under 3 years, pregnant and lactating mothers (P&L) and Early Childhood Care and Education for 3-6 years (b) strengthening of human resources and capacity building at all levels, (c) revision of financial norms, (d) strong institutional and programmatic convergence particularly at the district, block and village levels, (e) Promoting Quality and Public Accountability through Monitoring and Management of Information System (MIS), (f) introduction of Annual State Programme Implementation Plan (APIP), (g) provision for construction and improvement of building of Anganwadi Centres and (h) ICDS in a Mission Mode.