

POLICY:

- The National Policy on Child Labour, August 1987 contains the action plan for tackling the problem of child labour. It envisages:
 - A legislative action plan
 - Focussing and convergence of general development programmes for benefiting children wherever possible, and
 - Project-based action plan of action for launching of projects for the welfare of working children in areas of high concentration of child labour.

In pursuance of National Child Labour Policy, the NCLP Scheme was started in 1988 to rehabilitate child labour. The Scheme seeks to adopt a sequential approach with focus on rehabilitation of children working in hazardous occupations & processes in the first instance. Under the Scheme, after a survey of child labour engaged in hazardous occupations & processes has been conducted, children are to be withdrawn from these occupations & processes and then put into special schools in order to enable them to be mainstreamed into formal schooling system.

Strategy for elimination of child labour in Xth Plan

Keeping in view the policy of the Government as laid down in the National Agenda and Prime Minister's directions in the National Conference on Child Labour, the evaluation studies carried out by the VVG NLI and the approach defined in the working paper for the Tenth Plan, the strategy adopted during this Plan period aims at bringing qualitative changes in the scheme for elimination of child labour. The details are as follows:

- Policy and programmes for elimination of child labour would be continued in a more focused, integrated and convergent manner.
- Focused and reinforced action to eliminate child labour in the hazardous occupations by the end of the Plan period.
- Expansion of the NCLPs to additional 150 districts during the Plan.
- Ensuring that the NCLPs have a focused time frame of 5 years with clearly defined targets.
- Linking the child labour elimination efforts with the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan of the MHRD an attempt to ensure that small children in the age group of 5-8 years get directly linked to school and the older children are mainstreamed to the formal education system through the rehabilitation centres. Increased efforts to provide vocational training to the older children.
- Strengthening of the formal school mechanism in the endemic child labour areas in the country both in terms of quality and numbers in such a manner as to provide an attractive schooling system to the child labour force and its

parents so that motivational levels of both the parents and such children are high and sending these children to school becomes an attractive proposition.

- Convergence with the ongoing schemes of the Dept. of Education, Rural Development, Health and Women & Child Development would be critical for the ultimate attainment of the objective of elimination of child labour in a time bound manner.
- Large-scale involvement of the voluntary organizations at the district level to assist in the running of the NCLP schools. The attempt during this Plan would be to encourage the running of the rehabilitation schools only through accepted and committed NGOs so that the Government machinery is not burdened with running of such schools.

Certain important and enhanced parameters that have been introduced in the scheme *now* are as under:

STIPEND: In the existing arrangement, the stipend of Rs. 100/- per child per month was being disbursed every month. As per the revised scheme, the monthly stipend of Rs. 100/- per month per child will be disbursed only after the child is successfully mainstreamed into formal system of schooling. Till that period, the amount of stipend will be regularly deposited in the Bank Account of the child. The accumulated stipend amount could be handed over to the child at the time of her/his getting mainstreamed.

NUTRITION: The amount for provision of nutrition to the children in the special schools has been doubled from Rs. 2.50/- per child per day to Rs. 5/- per child per day.

HEALTH COMPONENT: In the existing scheme, there was no separate budgetary provision for any health component to take care of the health-related aspects of the children. In the revised scheme an amount of honorarium (Rs. 5,000/- per month for one doctor for every 20 schools) has been provided to put in place an institutionalised mechanism for regular and periodical effective health care of the children by a doctor. A health card in respect of every child also needs to be maintained with all the necessary entries.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING: In the existing scheme, there was no separate budgetary provision for the services of any Master Trainer for imparting training to the children/teachers. In the revised scheme, budgetary provision (Rs. 5,000/- for one Master Trainer for each NCLP) has been provided to hire the services of a Master for each NCLP.

TRAINING FOR EDUCATIONAL TEACHERS: In the existing scheme, there was no separate budgetary provision for providing training to the educational teachers. In the revised scheme, budgetary provision has been provided to impart training to the teachers twice during the 10th Plan period.

SURVEY: In the revised Scheme, provision (Rs. 2.75 lakh per survey) has been made to conduct surveys of working children two times during the 10th Plan period.

By following the strategy enunciated above and combining this with the existing established mechanisms of enforcement, it is expected that a drastic reduction in child labour would result by the end of Plan period.

The problem of child labour requires to be dealt through sustained efforts over a period of time. Government is committed to the goal of eradication of child labour in all its forms. Considering the nature and magnitude of the problem a gradual and sequential approach has been adopted to withdraw and rehabilitate child labour beginning with the children working in hazardous occupations.