

# CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILD UNDER THE TWELFTH FIVE YEAR PLAN IN INDIA

Ankita Pandey<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

‘Childhood’ and ‘children’ are broadly construed as golden age being synonymous to freedom, play, innocence, joy and the like. It is the probably the only period in one’s life when there are no obligations or responsibilities towards anyone. But then, it is during this time that the children are most vulnerable.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, they need are in dire need of care and protection from the outside world. Such care and protection is best catered for in the form of adult-child relationship, particularly by the parents by subscribing to the ‘best interest of the child’ principle and meeting their day to day requirement of ‘survival and development’. Childhood however, is not a static and objective concept rather a social construction which differs from culture to culture and also historically.

In addition to the parents or guardians of the children, the state is also under an obligation, both positive as well as negative to not only protect the child’s interests but also to provide an environment congenial for their holistic development. At this juncture, it would be relevant to state that the five year plans outline the development programs in the country, including those for the children. These programs are either funded by the central government or the state government or jointly by the central and the state governments. Some of these are even implemented in collaboration with the international organisations and the non-governmental organisations which play a significant role in the contemporary period by contributing to the developmental sector in all spheres and agendas at the national level.<sup>3</sup>

India is said to be the home to the largest number of children in the world. As per the report of the Planning Commission “*Nearly every fifth child in the world lives in India. It is estimated that there are about 43 crore children in the age group of 0–18 years. It is estimated that a large proportion of these children are in very difficult circumstances or vulnerable. This includes children in poor households without family income, children denied education opportunities and forced into labour, abused/trafficked children, children on the streets,*

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<sup>1</sup> 1st Year LL.M. Student, National Law School of India University

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Savita Bhakhry: ‘Children in India and their Rights’, National Human Rights Commission (2006), available at <http://bhrc.bih.nic.in/docs/childrenrights.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

*children affected by substance abuse, by armed conflict/civil unrest/natural calamity and so on. Survival, growth, development and protection of these children therefore need priority focus and attention.”<sup>4</sup>*

As a matter of fact there are diverse geographical, cultural and socio-economic conditions in the country which result in diversification of the needs of children.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the government adopts an inclusive approach towards the development of children in the society especially those who are most vulnerable. The most important concerns are to ensure the right to life, survival and safety to all children with special emphasis upon their holistic development. Further, the issues of inequities, exclusion and discrimination which are experienced by the children at various stages are also addressed with utmost importance.

The Constitution of India provides that all persons, including those below the age of 18 years are entitled to certain inalienable and inherent rights. India is a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child and its commitments towards the core principles of UNCRC like best interest of child, capacity development, child participation etc. are reflected in the various legislations, schemes, programs and policies in force. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is a nodal agency working towards the protection of the rights and concerns relating to women and children. In this way, it can be said that the focus remains on the inclusive growth of children and fulfillment of their rights through such policies, programs and legislative framework. This approach of care and protection which is reflected in the various five year plans in India, especially the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan has been carried forward in the 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan as well. This is also reflected in the approach paper to the 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan which states that *“the 12<sup>th</sup> plan must make children an urgent priority.”<sup>6</sup>*

In view of this, we shall discuss in the present work the rights of child as incorporated in the various policies, programs, schemes and legislations brought about in accordance with the 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan in India. Firstly, the paper shall give an overview as to the history of the Planning Commission and the previous five year plans. It would also review the recommendations, work, challenges and success of the 11<sup>th</sup> five year plan. When we come to the analysis of the 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan (2012-2017), the various concepts, issues, institutional setup and the schemes programs and legislations shall be addressed. We would finally conclude on the basis of the above detailed analysis as to how far and in what respects the 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan has succeeded or failed with respect to the protection and promotion of child rights.

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Twelfth Five Year plan’, (2012-2017): Social Sectors Vol. III, available at: [http://planningcommission.gov.in/plans/planrel/12thplan/pdf/12fyp\\_vol3.pdf](http://planningcommission.gov.in/plans/planrel/12thplan/pdf/12fyp_vol3.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Working Group on Child Rights for the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2012-2017), available at [http://planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/committee/wrkgrp12/wcd/wgrep\\_child.pdf](http://planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/committee/wrkgrp12/wcd/wgrep_child.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

## **HISTORY OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION AND THE FIVE YEAR PLANS**

Rudimentary economic planning, deriving the sovereign authority of the state, first began in India in 1930s under the British Raj, and the colonial government of India formally established a planning board that functioned from 1944 to 1946. Private industrialists and economist formulated at least three development plans in 1944.

### **Setup of Planning Commission:**

After India gained independence, a formal model of planning was adopted, and the planning commission, reporting directly to the Prime Minister of India was established. Accordingly, the Planning Commission was set up on 15 March 1950, with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as the chairman. Planning Commission though is a non-statutory as well extra constitutional body, i.e. has been brought by an executive order.<sup>7</sup>

For the smooth functioning of any economy, planning plays an important role. The Planning Commission has been entrusted with the responsibility of the creation, development and execution of India's five year plans. India's five year plans are also supervised by the Planning commission. From a highly centralised planning system, the Indian economy is gradually moving towards indicative planning where the Planning Commission concerns itself with the building of a long-term strategic vision of the future and decide on priorities of nation. It works out sectorial targets and provides promotional stimulus to the economy to grow in the desired direction. It also plays an integrative role in the development of a holistic approach to the policy formulation in critical areas of human and economic development.<sup>8</sup> In the social sector, schemes that require coordination and synthesis like rural health, drinking water, rural energy needs, literacy and environment protection have yet to be subjected to coordinated policy formulation.

### **The Start of the journey:**

The first Five-year Plan was launched in 1951 and two subsequent five-year plans were formulated till 1965, when there was a break because of the Indo-Pakistan Conflict. Two successive years of drought, devaluation of the currency, a general rise in prices and erosion of resources disrupted the planning process and after three Annual Plans between 1966 and 1969, the fourth Five-year plan was started in 1969. The Eighth Plan could not take off in 1990 due to the fast changing political situation at the Centre and the years 1990-91 and 1991-92 were treated as Annual Plans. The Eighth Plan was finally launched in 1992 after the initiation of structural adjustment policies. For the first eight Plans the emphasis was on a growing public sector with massive investments in basic

<sup>7</sup> Manisit Das and Ankit Munka, 'Children in India's Five Year Plans' (2011), available at [http://www.cry.org/resources/pdf/va/Children\\_In\\_Indias\\_FiveYearPlans\\_2013.pdf](http://www.cry.org/resources/pdf/va/Children_In_Indias_FiveYearPlans_2013.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

and heavy industries, but since the launch of the Ninth Plan in 1997, the emphasis on the public sector has become less pronounced and the current thinking on planning in the country, in general, is that it should increasingly be of an indicative nature. Till now, twelve five year plans have been formulated; currently we're going through the 12<sup>th</sup> plan period.<sup>9</sup> The Planning Commission in the process of preparing an Approach to the 12th Five Year Plan adopted a new and more consultative approach. In addition to consultations conducted across the country by organizations representing various citizens' groups e.g., women, dalits and youth, the Planning Commission for the first time adopted consultation from interested stake holders via the Commission's web-site. Even the Commission for the first time opened up a page on popular social networking site Facebook to help us share our ideas to tackle India's twelve developmental challenges.

### **REVIEW OF THE ELEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN**<sup>10</sup>

The strategies, policies and initiatives of the twelfth five year plan will be developed on what has already been achieved by those developed during the eleventh plan. So, in this way a review of the previous plan becomes pertinent in order to be able to appreciate the existing plan in a better manner. In light of this, the eleventh plan witnessed the universalization the *Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)*<sup>11</sup> and succeeded in the expansion of the *Anganwadis* from 10.5 lacs to 13.17 lacs by the end of the eleventh plan. ICDS covers around 7.9 crore children through a network of 13.17 lac AWCs in 7005 projects operating within the country. Two important schemes that were introduced during this period as part of the ICDS were the *Indira Gandhi Matritava Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY)* and *Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (SABLA)* to address the needs of the pregnant and lactating mothers and adolescent girls respectively. IGMSY was primarily introduced in 53 districts and is benefitting around 12.5 lac mothers annually and the SABLA which was introduced in 200 districts is likely to benefit around one crore adolescent girls every year.

It would also be significant to note in this regard the constitution of the *Prime Minister's National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges* at the end of 2008 and their policy directions provided a road map for the twelfth five year plan.

In the field of education, a milestone was achieved with the enactment of the *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009*. It basically provided for the much needed rights based and justiciable platform

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Sub Group Report- Child Protection in the Twelfth Five year Plan (2012-2017), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi, available at <http://wcd.nic.in/reportsgtd01032012.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> It is an early childhood development programme which aims at addressing the issues of health, nutrition and development of young children and breast feeding mothers.



to the right of education. Also, a draft national policy on *Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)* was formulated by the group of experts constituted by the Ministry of Women and Development. This policy was proposed to be finalized during the twelfth five year plan.

The *Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)* was introduced in 2009-10 to comprehensively deal with the filling up of the implementation gaps in the Juvenile Justice Act.

Further, the *Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012* was passed by the parliament which seeks to protect children from sexual abuses and also ensures the best interest and well-being of the child at every stage of the judicial process, thereby contributing towards the creation of a child-sensitive jurisprudence in the country. This approach is sought to be strengthened even more during the twelfth plan in the form of amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000.

The eleventh plan took another form of significant initiatives in the form of setting up of the *National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)* in 2007 with similar institutions at the state level.

Also, the eleventh plan sought to review and update the *National Policy for Children, 1974* so as to incorporate and implement a shift from the 'needs based approach' to the 'rights based approach' for strategic implementation in the twelfth five year plan.

### **ANALYSIS OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> FIVE YEAR PLAN<sup>12</sup>**

The 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan seeks to provide utmost priority to the issues of child care and protection focusing primarily on the basic needs of the children from all strata of the society. It recognizes the right to survival, protection, participation and development as the cornerstone of human development and all these are necessary to be endowed upon children essentially as a matter of right. Some of the targets which the 12<sup>th</sup> plan seeks to achieve with respect to children are:-

- To improve the child sex ratio from 914 in 2011 to 950 till 2017;
- To prevent and reduce children under nutrition (0-3 years) by half of the NFHS-3 levels;
- To reduce anaemia in girls and women by half;
- To ensure that children receive a protective environment in family and community and through schools, child care centers and other facilities;

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<sup>12</sup> Sub Group Report- Child Protection in the Twelfth Five year Plan (2012-2017), Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi, available at <http://wcd.nic.in/reportsgtdtd01032012.pdf>

- To ensure that 80 per cent and more of the cities, districts and panchayats become child friendly.

Now, we shall discuss in detail as to what all policies, programmes, legislations and institutions the 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan aims to implement with respect to the various issues concerning the status of children in our country as well as to meet the set targets to be achieved till 2017.

## **CONCEPTS**

### **1. Child Participation**

Child participation relates to the involvement and participation of children in all the decisions, policies, programmes, schemes etc. meant for them. This method basically functions as a key in institutionalizing a child centric approach within the country. There should be such an environment wherein the children are aware of their rights, have freedom and opportunity to not only exercise their rights but also express their views, and that their views, particularly those of the girl child and children belonging to the minority groups are duly respected. The twelfth plan seeks to take the issue of making information with respect to child rights, laws and policies easily and readily available as a matter of priority.

### **2. Capacity Development**

The plan recognizes capacity development as essential and which can only be realized by taking steps so as to enrich human resources. For this, the Ministry of Women and Child Development will have to provide technical support at the national, state and the district levels. It seeks to organize a planned mechanism whereby such support and aid can be provided by the government itself without requiring any kind of an external aid. In this regard it also emphasizes on the need for a Technical Directorate for Child Development and Protection for quality implementation and expansion of the existing as well as the proposed policies, programmes and legislations. The role of NIPCCD in networking with other national institutions such as NCERT, NIN, NHSRC, NIHFW, NIUA and others working on child specific and child related themes needs to be enhanced. It further suggests the establishment of a Child Web Portal for creating a comprehensive data base for information relating to child survival, development, etc.

### **3. Childhood care, protection and development**

The twelfth five year plan comprehensively deals with all pertinent issues relating to children and their rights. In so doing, it caters to significant concepts of childhood care, protection and development. All the policies, programmes, schemes, legislations, institutions etc. that are sought to be implemented or set up under the present five year plan are focused towards ensuring that children are endowed with certain

essential and indispensable rights and are thereby well cared for and protected leading to their holistic development.

## **ISSUES**

### **1. Health**

India faces major health problems in children especially in relation to low nutrition standards, highly prevalent neo natal and childhood illness, children suffering from diseases due to hazardous work, children infected with HIV/AIDS, children with disabilities etc. The twelfth five year plan addresses each of these issues by formulating various policies and programmes specifically addressing the widespread health problems of the children.

### **2. Education**

Education is considered as an important element for socio-economic mobility as well as for skill development. The twelfth plan places special attention to the issue of education of children which plays a critical role in their development. It provides a detailed strategy with respect to education at the elementary as well as at the secondary level. Education is recognized in the five year plans as an important tool of skill and capacity development of the children and thus it needs to be ensured without discrimination. The plan also talks about the expansion of education thereby improving the quality and access of education. In the same line of thinking, the eleventh five year plan also recognized the significance of education and public spending on this particular sector was increased rapidly during this period. As part of Gross Domestic Product, education expenditure rose from 3.3 per cent in 2004-05 to over 4 per cent in 2011-12. In addition to these the twelfth plan also seeks to focus upon enhancing the enrollment rates and in bringing about a decline in the drop-out rates. The four basic priorities are thus the access, equity, quality and governance.

### **3. Child Sex Ratio**

Child sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 years has declined from 927 per thousand boys in 2001 to 914 girls per thousand boys in 2011. These figures are really disturbing especially in light of the fact that the government has been and is implementing various legislations, policies, programmes to put an end to such discriminations and disparities but despite that not much effect is seen. The figures are unacceptably low. Chattisgarh is said to have reported highest sex ratio of 985 girls per thousand boys whereas Punjab the lowest of 832 girls per thousand boys.

#### **4. Child Mortality Rates**

The neonatal mortality rate in the country is 33 per 1000 births that take place contributing to around 55 per cent of under five deaths. Mortality rate in children under 5 years of age was 59 in 2010 showing a decrease of five points in contrast to 2009. While some of these statistics pertain to the child and infant mortality rates in general, others focusing on the wide disparities in these numbers on the basis of gender solely are even more discernible. Significant gender differentials are reflected in India's Child Mortality Rates (in children under 5 years) which were 64 for girls as against 55 for boys in 2010. This clearly is indicative of the need for immediate adoption of strategies and plans to combat the situation which have been addressed to some extent in the twelfth five year plan.

#### **5. Gender Discrimination**

Ensuring gender equality and in particular advancing the rights of the girl child is an important challenge in the present scenario. For this reason, the twelfth five year plan addresses for main issues- (i) protection and advancement of the rights of girl child, (ii) empowerment and enhancement of self-esteem, (iii) gender equality, and (iv) institutional arrangements, which are reflected in the various policies, programmes and schemes sought to be implemented under the plan.

### **LEGISLATION, POLICIES, PROGRAMMES, SCHEMES, etc.**

The plan emphasizes on the need for developing and strengthening certain child centric policies and programmes so as to ensure effective realization of child rights. It provides for the development of a comprehensive *Children's Code* for the purpose of harmonizing and updating the various provisions relating to children. In this regard, the plan seeks to take an important step of amending the *Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act* so as to bring it in consonance with RTE by abolishing all forms of child labour. Such an amendment is much needed for the reason that children cannot be working and attending the school at the same time. If such an amendment is delayed further, we would neither be able to ensure compulsory education for the children nor the vision of their holistic development in a child friendly environment. Further, it also requires the *Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA)* to be amended so as to clearly define trafficking and sexual exploitation and the different aspects relating to the same. The plan also seeks to take forward the *Protection of Children from sexual Offences Act, 2012* so as to monitor its strict enforcement and implementation.



The plan requires the review and updation of National Policy for Children, 1974 precisely the *National and State Plans of Action for Children (and progressively District Plans of Action For Children)* so as to welcome and harmonize the state policies in matters relating to children.

Moreover, the plan seeks to restructure and strengthen the *Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)*. The work of restructuring and strengthening of the ICDS scheme has been approved by the Cabinet based on the decisions of the Prime Minister's National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges and the recommendations of the Inter Ministerial Group on ICDS Restructuring. It is proposed that the reformed ICDS would adopt a life cycle approach to the early childhood care and protection strategy. By this, the Angan Wadi Centres (AWCs) would be transformed into child friendly ECD centres i.e. Bal Vikaas Kendra which would ultimately be owned by the women in the community. These would function as centres for providing services such as nutrition, hygienic arrangements, early learning environment and other child and women related services. The implementation of various important schemes of the government such as the *Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls, The IDA assisted Integrated Child Development Services Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Project (ISSNIP), Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme* would also come within the domain of the Anganwadi Management Committee.

An important component or innovation of the life cycle approach of the ICDS scheme is **SNEHA SHIVIRS<sup>13</sup>** so as to promote community based care and protection to the several undernourished children.

The plan also seeks to strengthen *Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)* under the ECCD scheme by aiming to provide for joyful learning methodologies for children between 3-6 years of age. The main aim of the strategy is to ensure universal access with inclusion. However, what is more importantly required is the need for quality access to ECCE. For this purpose, it is proposed that a *National Policy on ECCE* be formulated along with a plan of action for the same. Under this policy there would be a shift from the present centralized to a more of a decentralized planning mechanism.

Strengthening the implementation of the *Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)* is an important aspect of the twelfth plan and within this scheme the proper monitoring and implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act is a priority. This particular scheme focuses not only on the reformation, rehabilitation and re-union of children with their families but also on the implementation gaps and as to how the states can develop improved implementation mechanisms. With regard to the missing children, children being exploited, street children who require immediate

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<sup>13</sup> These include 12 day Nutrition Care and Counselling Sessions at AWCs, using positive role model mothers, whose children are growing well, for demonstrating positive care practices, cooking and feeding, (with mothers' contribution) to mothers of undernourished children in similar community environments.

help there is an existing CHILDLINE service running in 181/291 cities. Under the twelfth plan, it is proposed to extend this helpline to more and more districts/cities.

It is suggested to develop *Girl Child Specific District Plan of Action* in order to have an integrated approach towards the issues pertaining specifically to girl child. In this regard, it requires the strengthening of the *PNDT Act* so as to ensure that the medical technologies are not misused for sex selection. Other strategies that the plan seeks to focus upon in this regard are the need for increasing access to quality education for girls, prohibition of practices such as child marriage, dowry etc. In addition, under the twelfth plan the Government of India's pilot scheme on conditional cash transfer with insurance benefit, titled 'Dhanalakshmi' also will be revisited and the possibility of providing ownership of assets such as a house under the Indira Awas Yojna will be explored.

It is proposed to extend the benefit of *Right to free and compulsory Education* under the RTE Act upto *senior secondary* with the intention of addressing the issues of early marriages of girls, juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancy. Also, the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)* will continue as the flagship programme even during the twelfth plan for developing right to elementary education for every child. It recognizes the need for special facilities catering for the needs of the differently abled children and the role of NGOs and other private bodies as partners to the government to facilitate the process. During the twelfth plan, the *Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS)* will be expanded to cover pre-primary schooling, private unaided schools and poor children admitted in neighbourhood private schools. However, with respect to the MDMS, what we have seen in the past years is not regarding the expansion of programmes to a wide class of the society or the allocation of funds but the problem has remained with respect to its proper implementation at the ground level. (Decentralization of the scheme) The twelfth plan also focuses on the continuance of the *Mahila Samakhya* programme for promoting inclusive education through the scheme of RTE-SSA. Further, the *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* shall be extended to higher secondary education as well for promoting greater coverage and quality education. The focus is also placed on the vocational education. It is proposed that 2,500 model schools, 500 KVs and 378 JNVs to be established. To prevent drop-out rates and enhance enrolment rates, it provides for the creation of *Comprehensive Student Financial Aid Programme* to increase the number and amount of scholarships. In this regard, we have recently seen a hike in the amount of UGC scholarships by fifty five per cent.

### **INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS**

The 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan requires the strengthening of the institutional mechanisms and arrangements for proper monitoring and implementation of child specific legislations, policies and programmes. It proposes for the redefining of the *National Co-ordination Group* and its linkage to the Prime Minister's National Council on

India's Nutrition Challenges. It further emphasizes upon the need for the establishment of a *Standing Council on Women and Children* under the National development Council. It requires the compulsory setting up of the *State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR)* under the supervision of the *National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)*. It also recommends the state to establish separate WCD departments and segregate the matters relating to women and children so that both the groups are on the high priority agenda of their concerned departments and that of the government.

A *National Early Childhood Development (ECD) Council* will be established to take up policies and other standards for implementation of the ECCE programme. Similar councils must be set up at the state level also.

The twelfth plan takes up the issue of differently abled children with utmost sincerity with more inclusive and community based management techniques. For this, it requires the setting up of a *National Task force for Childhood Disability* and *Childhood Disability Resource Centres* in various national and state institutions for training the NRHM, SSA, ICDS personnel.

Under the plan a *High Level Inter-Ministerial Committee* will be set up on "Care and Protection of the Girl Child," for the purpose of monitoring the adverse child sex ratio which is the major hindrance in the realization of gender equality.

## **CONCLUSION**

The twelfth five year plan recognizes the fulfillment of child rights jurisprudence as essential for attainment of rapid and sustainable development of the nation. The fulfillment of child rights to survival, development, participation and protection is critical to the development of social justice to be realized under the twelfth plan. The plan lays down various pertinent issues relating to children like health, education, mortality rates, gender discrimination, vulnerable children, etc. as high on its priority. While addressing these issues the approach of the twelfth plan for inclusive development is unique in itself. The plan also proposes the setting up of various institutional mechanisms for the proper and effective implementation of the policies and programmes.

It can be said that the various policies, programmes and institutions sought to be implemented through the twelfth plan are no doubt comprehensive in its approach and scope in covering almost all the pertinent issues relating to children. Even the situational analysis done by the planning commission has performed an excellent work. However, the problem which arises in the Indian scenario is with respect to the implementation of the policies and programmes. Thus, the greatest challenge before the twelfth five year plan is with respect to the effective implementation of these policies by removing the hurdles that come its way.

Some of the recommendations that could help in ensuring the effective implementation strategies are suggested as follows:

- Need for allocation of proper and adequate resources for carrying out the various policies and programmes at the ground level;
- Need for involvement and mobilization of the community in all matters and initiatives relating to development of child rights jurisprudence;
- Stricter implementation of the legislations and policies ensuring gender equality at all levels and considering it as the criterion or indicator of national development;
- Segregation of the departments relating to women and children so that both these issues can be taken as the highest priority agenda by the concerned department both at the national as well as at the state level;
- The suggested amendments in the various legislations to be brought in force as soon as possible;
- To encourage international and other private bodies collaboration in facilitating and implementing child related schemes and programmes;
- Creation of child friendly panchayats such as ‘baal panchayats’ so as to ensure that the voices of children are not only heard but also given weightage;
- Substantial increase in the number of ICDS and ICPS trained functionaries;
- Creating public awareness and education of the various policies, laws, programmes and schemes relating to child rights so that they can be properly utilized;
- Evolving a transparent appointment and selection policy in relation to ICDS, ICPS etc. and addressing the issue of vacant posts in this regard;
- Need for strengthening the partnership of the government with civil society, NGOs and other private bodies;
- Greater use of information technology and social media for proper implementation of the various schemes and policies;
- Need for strengthening the community and family based approach to the care and protection of children by inculcating methods such as adoption etc.
- Need for trained and sensitized police personnel for ensuring proper implementation of the legislative and policy framework;
- Building of co-operation and convergence between the various departments and ministries of the government to ensure effective implementation.



Thus, the twelfth plan has some of the finest laws, policies and programmes needed to ensure child rights jurisprudence within the country. However, where India is lagging behind is in the adequate distribution and management of resources as well as the corrupt and lethargic attitude of the implementation institutions and authorities in this regard. Unless this gets checked and rectified, no matter how so many laws and policies are brought on the agenda of the government, we can never be able to meet the target set to be achieved. This is what has happened with the past five year plans and would continue to happen if we do not adopt a strict focus approach on the implementation mechanisms.



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