

Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS)

Child protection deals with reducing the vulnerability of a child from any risk or danger to his/her life, personhood and childhood. India is home to almost 19% of the world's children. It is estimated that around 170 million children in India are vulnerable to or are experiencing difficult circumstances.

Extent of the problem

- Around 11 million children live on the streets in India (UNICEF). They are exposed to health hazards, harassment and exploitation.
- Over 12 million orphaned and abandoned children in India.
- Around 90 million child labourers (age group 5-14) in India (NSSO).
- Number of juvenile delinquents increased from 17,203 (1994) to over 30,000 (2004).

Objectives

ICPS is based on the principles of 'protection of child rights' and 'best interests of the child' and aims to institutionalize services for emergency outreach, family and community based care, counseling and support. ICPS sensitizes functionaries in the system towards child protection, and raise public awareness. It seeks to put in place both preventive and curative mechanisms for a child needing protection from exploitation, harassment, health hazards, etc. The model adopts government-civil society partnership to ensure child protection and create a safe and healthy environment for the children of India.

Framework for Implementation

National level

- Childline India Foundation is a voluntary organization established by the Government of India. Under ICPS, Childline Foundation is the nodal agency for running operations in India.
- National institute of public cooperation and child development (NIPCCD) has the responsibility of carrying out all child protection training and research activities in the country.
- Central adoption resource authority (CARA) shall function as an autonomous body under the Ministry and as an advisory body for in-country and inter-country adoptions.

State level

- State child protection society is the fundamental unit for implementation of the scheme in every State/U.T. and is under the Secretary of child welfare/development in the state.
- State adoption resource agency is a unit under the state child protection society and coordinates and monitors adoption in the state and provides support to CARA.

District level

- District child protection society is the fundamental unit for implementation of the scheme in every district and is chaired by the District magistrate or the Chairman, Zila parishad
- Sponsorship and foster care approval committee is present in each district to review and sanction sponsorship and foster care fund. It functions under the District child protection officer (who is appointed on deputation or contract). While sponsorship aims at giving support to families in conditions of extreme deprivation to raise their children, foster care is a non-institutional programme that provides temporary/substitute care for children through foster parents.

Village and Block level

- Block level child protection committee is under the chairmanship of the block/ward level elected representative with the block development officer (BDO) as member secretary, and will recommend and monitor the implementation of child protection services at block level.
- Village level child protection committee will be under the chairmanship of the head of the gram panchayat, and will recommend and monitor the implementation of child protection services at village level.

The Juvenile Justice Act requires state governments to establish a child welfare committee and a juvenile justice board in each district.

- **Child Welfare Committee** is chaired by a person well versed in child welfare issues and at least one member of the board must be a woman. The committee has the same powers as a metropolitan magistrate. A child facing a problem can be brought before the committee by a police officer, public servant, Childline personnel, social worker, public spirited citizen, or by the child himself/herself. The purpose of the committee is to determine the best interest of a child and find the child a safe home and environment either with his/her original parents, adoptive parents, foster care or an institution. Under the ICPS, funds are available for setting up and maintenance of a child welfare committee.
- **Juvenile Justice Board** is presented with juveniles accused or detained for a crime. The aim is to hold a child culpable for their criminal activity, not through punishment, but counsel. The board consists of a metropolitan magistrate and two social workers with at least one woman. The board is responsible for deciding the best course of action for the rehabilitation of the child. The child is typically brought before the board by a police officer or a person from the special juvenile police unit. Under the ICPS, funds are available for setting up and maintenance of a juvenile justice board.

Programmes and Activities

- **Emergency outreach service** – Childline is a toll-free 24/7 emergency phone outreach (by calling 1098) service for children in need of care and protection. As of March 2013, a total of 27 million calls since inception have been serviced by Childline, which operates in 291 cities in 30 states and U.Ts through its network of 540 partner organizations. Childline provides assistance towards medical causes, protection from abuse, emotional support, etc. After emergency needs have been addressed, Childline ensures the long-term rehabilitation of the child. 100% central assistance is available for Childline under ICPS.

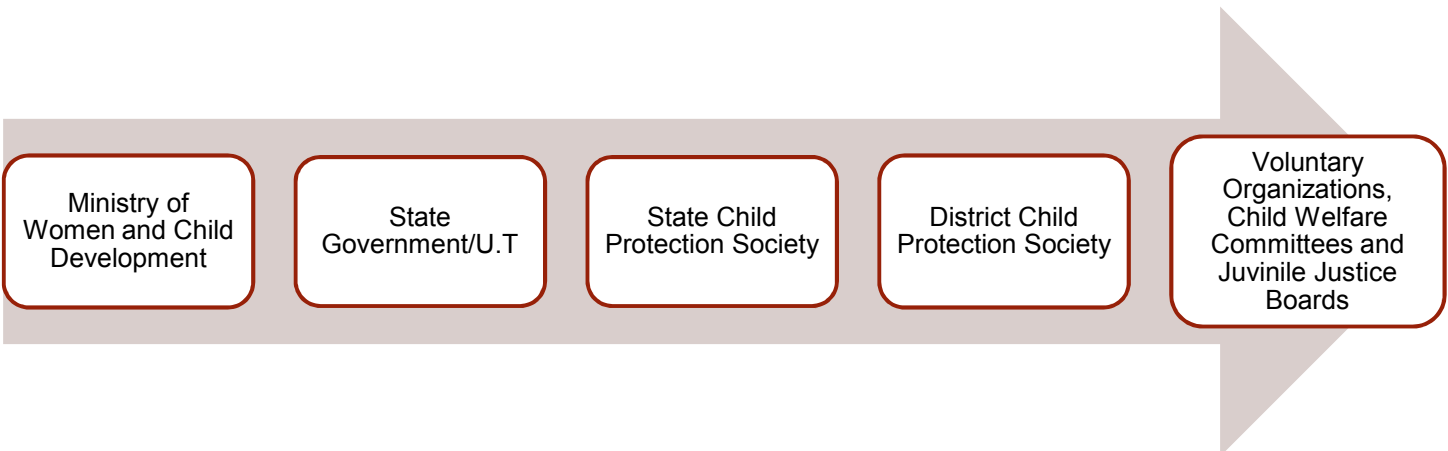
- **Open shelters** – ICPS facilitates setting up of open shelters particularly in the urban areas. Open shelters provide a space for children where they can use their time productively, have access to healthcare and education, and be protected from abuse and neglect on the streets. Financial assistance is provided through the state governments to voluntary organizations for the setting up of open shelters. Where voluntary organizations are not present, the states will run them themselves.
- **Sponsorship and foster care** – An amount of Rs 5 lakhs per district shall be provided for sponsorship and foster care. Children in institutions who can be restored back to families and children in families with net income not exceeding Rs 12,000 shall be eligible for sponsorship. The quantum of sponsorship would be Rs 500 per month per child, and support will be for maximum two children per family. The Sponsorship and foster care approval committee will decide the duration of sponsorship. The quantum of foster care would be Rs 750 per month per child.
- **Adoption** – Adoption must be authorized by the Child welfare committee (established as per the Juvenile justice act). All institutions must disclose details about the children in care and those free for adoption must be recorded with the state/central adoption resource authority. Inter-state coordination to match the prospective parents with available children must be done by state adoption resource authority. No parent will be forced to give up their child for monetary or any other considerations. Monitoring, regulating and promoting ethical adoptions shall be done under the scheme.

Funding Mechanism

The scheme will be implemented on the following cost sharing ratios:-

Parties	Cost Sharing
Centre: State	90:10 for all components for all North east states and J&K.
	75:25 for all components for other states
	35:65 for all the regulatory bodies provided under the Juvenile justice act- Juvenile justice boards, child welfare committees
Centre: NGO	90:10 for all scheme components
	100:0 funding by Centre to Childline services, National institute of public cooperation and child development, Central adoption resource agency

In case a state is unable to spend the complete funds allocated to it, the excess funds will be reallocated by the ministry to another state which requires additional funds. The flow of funds would be as depicted below:



Sponsorship Project in Odisha

In 2009, 39% of the population in Odisha was children. Number of children without parental care was 15-20,000 and children in recognized children homes were 9000. A task force on non-institutional care was set up with members from leading organizations working on child protection issues such as Basundhara, Youth council for development alternatives and EKTA. A tri-partite partnership to promote non-institutional forms of childcare was established involving the Department of women and child development, task force and UNICEF. A 'Right to Family' campaign was launched to create awareness on non-institutional forms of childcare. A pilot program was launched in Khurdha district in which 40 cases were identified and private donors following state sponsorship guidelines provided sponsorship. 42 children and their parents were counseled, resulting in children's reintegration with their families.

Protection and Rehabilitation of children from Railway Platforms, Bengaluru

According to the Society for assistance of children in difficult situation (SATHI), hundreds of children run away from homes every day. Approximately 20-children/day end up on Bengaluru railway platforms. SATHI staff does patrolling on the platforms around 16 hours per day. Furthermore, a SATHI contact centre is present on the railway station. Children are rescued and taken to the SATHI shelter. The basic needs (food, clothes, hygiene) are taken care at the shelter. Counseling, non-formal education and reunification with the family is done at the shelter. Almost 80% of the children brought to the shelter home are reunified with their families. The remaining are referred to government homes. As per telephonic follow up, 95% of rescued children are retained at home.