

## Government of Odisha

### Department of Women & Child Development

#### Notification

Odisha State Policy for Children : 2022

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Children are not miniature adults; they are persons with dignity and special rights despite their characteristic and developmental differences from adults. They are weak and vulnerable only when society fails to respect and protect their rights and ensure their safety. Children do have universal, inherent, and indivisible rights to life and survival with dignity, to development and education for the realisation of full potential, and to protection and participation without any discrimination.

Convention on the Rights of the Child, under Article 3.1, highlights that

*"In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."*

While every individual under the age of 18 years is considered as a child, they are further sub-categorised into neonates, infants, young children, and adolescents, based on their specific age groups and accordingly, their rights are catered to, under various schemes, programmes, acts and provisions.

Government of Odisha is fully committed to provide every child with equal and equitable opportunities for a bright future. Children below 18 years of age constitute around 34% of the total population of the state of Odisha. The Government realises that childhood is an integral part of life with a value of its own. A long-term, sustainable, multi-spectral, integrated, and inclusive approach is necessary for the harmonious development and protection of children. In line with this, the state has taken several affirmative actions in the last few decades, including introduction of numerous policies and programmes to ensure equitable access to resources and creation of more opportunities for the children in Odisha.

While significant efforts have been made and opportunities created, there are still challenges in the state, concerning children's wellbeing and equitable and universal access to services related to their development and realisation of their potential. Apart from the challenges in service delivery to the most hard-to-reach areas, the social norms, values, and practices embedded in the collective conscience, coupled with systemic barriers, pose multiple challenges preventing the children from enjoying their fundamental rights.

Against this backdrop, and in line with the commitment of Government of Odisha to create a bright future for its children, and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the Odisha

- **State Policy for Children, 2022** has been framed. Through this Policy for Children, Government intends to significantly improve the overall wellbeing of children and set benchmarks for all indicators at par with national and international standards.

Desk reviews, field experiences and a series of consultations with various stakeholders and experts provided insights for the formulation of this policy. Four regional consultations (north, coastal, western, and southern) were organised on the 'Rights of Children in Odisha' with special emphasis on four thematic areas: migration, natural disaster, conflict, and mining. Further, two state-level consultations were organised: the first one covering different categories of vulnerable children; and the second one with CSOs, academia and other agencies on the key findings. The draft policy was also shared in an open platform for review and suggestions. Subsequently, in 2022 the policy was further reviewed in the context of children's vulnerability during the COVID19 pandemic and the policy measures needed.

Finally, based on the review and recommendations of all key stakeholders, the policy is now approved by the Government of Odisha for implementation.

The policy has seven focus areas:

- 1) Survival: Health, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- 2) Education and Holistic Development
- 3) Child Protection: Child Abuse, Exploitation, Neglect, Maltreatment, Violence, Child labour, Child Marriage, Child trafficking, Drugs/ Substance abuse, Online abuse, and other conditions of hardship
- 4) Identity, Family/Alternative Care, Birth Registration, Quality of Life
- 5) Special Measures for the Vulnerable
- 6) Dispensation of Justice and Legal Provisions for Children
- 7) Children's Participation

Further, enabling conditions in the form of Capacity building, Partnership, Advocacy and Funding support have been outlined to translate the policy into action. The policy, is aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to prevent and protect children from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination and to ensure respect and realisation of their cultural and linguistic rights as their right to identity and dignity. In addition, the policy recognizes the need to further strengthen the gender dimensions, with differential focus on girls, boys, and transgenders, in line with the Government of Odisha's current focus on inclusiveness. The policy has also considered the basic principles as highlighted in United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

This policy is a collective pledge by Odisha and its citizens to honour and uphold the rights of our children and to enable our social, economic, and political institutions to function in the best interest of every child. Through this policy, we affirm our belief that in securing the future of every child, we secure the present and future of Odisha, and the entire humanity.

## **Part 1: Introduction**

The quality of human life is inextricably linked to the quality of childhood. Universally, childhood is viewed as the most precious phase of human life, wherein the foundations of personality development and integrated development are laid. Investments during childhood yield maximum returns for the development of human resources. Therefore, it becomes imperative for the State to promote physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and holistic development of all children while recognizing their fundamental right to quality life and leading them to their 'fullest potential'.

The Odisha State Policy for Children is intended to stimulate, systematize, and coordinate actions in the children's best interest. For this policy, and in line with UNCRC, "**childhood**" is considered as a period from conception till 18 years of age". In the implementation of this policy, it is recommended to focus on specific sub-stages of childhood for optimal effectiveness.

This policy constitutes a comprehensive set of commitments to:

- i. Develop effective and enabling conditions in the State to safeguard the rights of children through equitable actions in all matters of governance and services, legislations, and dispensation of justice.
- ii. Stimulate governance and institutional practices in society ensuring children's best interest is the central guiding principle. Views of children will be sought, appropriately gathered, and will be included in decision making.
- iii. Foster inclusive child-friendly social environment for optimal development of children and development of deferential relations between children and adults.

### **1.1. Significance of Childhood and Rights of the Child:**

Children are extremely vulnerable and susceptible to adverse conditions. Lack of supportive environments and experiences, prolonged adversity in the absence of protective relationship and nurturance may lead to permanent, irreversible, and collective loss of several aspects of development. Preventable adversities associated with inequalities and discrimination, such as household poverty, malnourishment, poor maternal and child health, gender disparity and discrimination, high Infant Mortality, inadequate care-giving, child abuse (including online) and exploitation, exposure to conflict, violence, lack of access to education and family disturbances, migration, etc., are some high-risk factors which are barriers to the holistic development of children. Amelioration of the impact of such adverse conditions requires comprehensive measures recognizing the interdependency of the rights of children and their right to speak, participate and be heard.

### **1.2. Commitment to UN CRC and the National Policy for Children:**

Through this State Policy for Children, the Government of Odisha affirms its commitment to the broad principles of the National Policy for Children, 2013; the universal rights of all children within the framework of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (along with its two Optional Protocols, 2000) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under 2030 Agenda. At the same time, this Policy beholds that the children in Odisha are uniquely placed and challenged, in many aspects, by the degree of diversity, discrimination, inequality and hardships. Therefore, this Policy for Children in Odisha seeks to improve the

- responsiveness of our social, economic and political institutions to the needs of our children for quality of life as their universal and fundamental right.

## **Part 2: The Context and Challenges in Odisha: Rationale for the Policy**

Odisha has a population of 4.2 million, which makes up about 3.4% of the country's population. It is the 11<sup>th</sup> most populated state in the country with the population density of 270 per sq km, lower than India's average of 382. 40% of the total population belongs to the Schedule Tribe and Schedule Caste communities (22.8% ST and 17.1% SC, Census 2011). Further, nearly one-third of the population lives below the poverty line<sup>[1]</sup>.

Odisha, in the past few decades, has made significant progress in ensuring and fulfilling the rights of children, particularly in the areas of protection, survival and health, education and development through the formation and implementation of state-specific policies, schemes and programmes, in addition to national schemes and programmes, like Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS), National Health Mission (NHM), Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), etc. Some of the state-specific schemes, programmes and interventions for children are given under Annex II:

However, still more initiatives and interventions are needed to achieve the optimum standard of quality care, education, and well-being for the children in Odisha. For example, though the recent NFHS 5 data, demonstrates significant improvement in the nutrition and health status of children and women in Odisha, it also highlights key areas, that need immediate attention.

- Child health indicators confirm the need of additional healthcare support for children. For example, Odisha's neonatal mortality rate is 27 (NFHS 5) and infant mortality rate is 36.3, (NFHS 5) which are higher than the national average. In addition, Odisha's under 5 mortality is 41.1 (NFHS 5) which is slightly lower than the national average.
- Further, 31 percent of children in Odisha are stunted and 18 percent are wasted and 64.2 percent children under 5 are anaemic (NFHS 5, 2019-21), signifying malnourishment as a major issue requiring special attention. The rate of anaemia among pregnant women (15-49 years) is also high, with 61.8 percent (NFHS 5).
- There is a sizeable gap between institutional delivery and practice of early initiation of breastfeeding, which highlights the importance of promoting optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices and making health institutions as baby-friendly.
- The female child marriage rate in Odisha is 20.5 percent (NFHS 5). The school dropout rate in the upper primary is 4.5 percent and at secondary level, it is 23.6 percent (DISE, 2019-20). The sex ratio at birth for children is 894 (NFHS 5), which has reduced from 932 (NFHS 4)
- According to, India: Health of the Nation's States report - 2017, 129 deaths per lakh population in Odisha is owing to diarrhoea.
- Children from ST and SC communities, from critical situations of poverty and deprivation, and from hard to reach areas need additional support for quality care, health and nutrition, education, and development.

- Further, children residing in slums, as well as street children, orphans and children with disabilities are susceptible to distressed situations such as illnesses, violence, poor access to water and sanitation, lack of education, exploitation, food insecurity, malnourishment and lack of protection and safety.
- Children in destitution, children from migrant communities and displaced families and victims of disaster need special care and protection. Additionally, prevention of child abuse - including sexual abuse, online abuse, child trafficking, cruelty and violence against children, superstitious quackery, and various harmful healing practices, is an urgent need in the state.

In addition, Government of Odisha recognizes that COVID-19 pandemic presents one of the greatest challenges for children in the state, as many of them have tragically lost their parent/s, family members, or caregivers to COVID-19. Physical distancing and lockdown measures, restrictions of movement have all affected children in numerous ways. Onsite child services: including schooling, nutrition programmes, maternal and new-born care, immunization, sexual and reproductive health services, alternative care facilities, community-based programmes and supplementary care, including those with disabilities and abuse victims, have partially been affected. The Government has also taken cognizance that the pandemic is having profound effects on children's mental well-being, psycho- social development, economic security and beyond, which requires immediate and concrete follow-up actions.

With this broad agenda, it is imperative for the family, community, childcare institutions, the government, and society at large to be more proactive and forward looking in their approach to ensure quality of life, care, and education for children in the state.

The State spent 17.42 percent of its total expenditure and 4.12 percent of the total GSDP for the children.<sup>[2]</sup> Public spending on children in developed and developing countries worldwide targets around six percent of the GDP - as in the United States and other countries. The Government of Odisha recognizes that spending money adequately and optimally on education, health and nutrition, development, protection, and welfare of the children is a productive investment and should be progressively enhanced.

**The National Policy for Children, 2013** affirms a right-based approach to address the challenges faced by children and identifies priority areas and principles for safeguarding the best interests of children. The National Policy was followed by the **National Plan of Action for Children, 2016**, which provides a roadmap to link the policy objectives to actionable strategies under four priority areas. While reiterating its commitment to the major tenets of the National Policy, the Odisha Policy for Children seeks to emphasize that children are not just passive targets of the policy intervention; they are the rights holders and have major stakes in the process of social transformation required in achieving their fundamental right to a life of quality involving optimal health care and nutrition, education, protection and participation.

Odisha is committed to fulfilling its duty to protect children's rights, to ensure their quality of life and dignity, development and to promote their participation in a deferential social environment. This Policy outlines the broader principles and steps in this direction. This Policy is also a significant step in furtherance of State's effort to enrich the life of every child towards a better future.

## **Part 3. Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles**

### **3.1. Vision:**

For every child: A life of health, happiness, honour, freedom and dignity, equal opportunities, protection, meaningful participation, and rightful place in the society, without discrimination.

### **3.2. Mission:**

To honour, uphold and protect children's rights, strive to secure their well-being and dignity and ensure that all acts of governance, legislation and justice are guided in the best interests of children.

### **3.3. Guiding Principles:**

The policy envisages that in all its actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration and the following guiding principles will serve as the framework for implementation of the policy.

- As members of the family and larger society, all children have equal and inalienable rights: to identity; protection against neglect, exploitation, violence and abuse; to adequate provisions for all basic needs to ensure survival, care, health and nutrition and education for their holistic development; to the protection from any form of harm and hardship; and to participate in all matters and decisions affecting their best interests and well-being.
- Children are persons bestowed with rights, and the State shall pursue a rights-based approach that recognizes rights of survival, development, protection and participation and freedom from discrimination as universal, inalienable, and indivisible right of every child in the state. Special measures are to be pursued to ensure the realisation of these rights for children who are differently-abled and children with special needs.
- The rights of children are interrelated and interdependent; the nature and priorities of these rights evolve along with challenges at different phases of development in a child's life. Therefore, safeguarding children's best interests and their rights needs an all-inclusive, multi-dimensional life cycle approach and multi-pronged, inter-sectoral solutions.
- Children need special safeguards and care, including legal protection before and after birth, to fully develop their physical and mental capabilities and realise their full potential.
- Reducing gender inequality and building gender inclusivity at each level of service delivery will strengthen economies and build stable, resilient societies in Odisha, that will give all individuals, including boys and men, the opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- It is the responsibility of everyone in the society to ensure for each child, a life of dignity, peace, freedom, equality, tolerance, and non-discrimination and to provide each child with equitable access to all services for their welfare, development, protection, and participation.

- Family is a fundamental group of the society and a natural environment for development, well-being, and cultural identity. Therefore, children should grow up in a family for a full and harmonious development of their personality in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding.
- Children in adverse and exceptional conditions affected by climate-induced natural disasters, in underprivileged households, orphans and disabled or with special needs, require special protection of their rights, care and support of the State and the society for leading a quality and dignified life and for realisation of their potential to the fullest
- The right of children to participate in all matters relating to their well-being, development and dignity should be respected with due recognition of their capabilities to form and express their views through creation of adequate platforms for the expression of such views. The State and the society may facilitate and ensure proper mechanisms for effective and meaningful participation of children in all matters including decision making related to their rights.

Finally, in line with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, it is the responsibility of the State Government and the agencies to be guided by certain fundamental principles, of presumption of innocence, dignity and worth, non-stigmatizing semantics, non-waiver of rights with institutionalization as a measure of last resort, natural justice and repatriation and restoration, while dealing with a child, who needs care and protection.

#### **Part 4. Focus Areas and Strategies**

Based on extensive literature reviews, field-based observations and experiences, and a series of consultations and discussions, the focus areas were substantiated. Each focus area delineates strategies and action points and aims at the realisation of the rights of children in the state.

1.

##### **1. Survival, Health, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

Safeguarding and protecting the fundamental rights of every child - girl, boy or any other gender for health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene, and all-around physical and mental wellbeing without any discrimination is the primary focus area to ensure the development of a child. The state aims to:

1. Provide and ensure universal, equitable and easy access for every child before, during and after birth to comprehensive and quality health, including pre -natal care during pregnancy, new born care during delivery and post-natal care as per defined health standards and make health institutions as baby friendly.
2. Address the gaps in immunization, vaccination, safeguarding against infections and all essential services, including regular health check-ups for all children, for prevention, cure, rehabilitation of children in need.

3. Safeguard children from all major health issues such as acute respiratory infections, water-borne, vector-borne, communicable diseases, mental health and HIV infections and other forms of health risks.
4. Ensure optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) practices at institutional and household level, universal nutrition supplements (including micronutrients) and additional health and nutrition support for all children and especially for the most vulnerable including those who are severely acutely malnourished (SAM). Focus on increased consumption of iron-rich and Vitamin A and Vitamin C rich foods as well as protein-rich foods by young children.
5. Implement specific awareness programmes to improve the nutritional status of adolescent girls, children with special needs, ....specifically preventing and treating of anaemia for both in and out of school children, with focus on healthy food and beverage choices, promoting physical activity, and fortification of staple foods.
6. Undertake a multi-pronged approach for childcare to address malnutrition, childhood anaemia, susceptibility to infections and co-morbidities by establishing creches as day-care centres, in both rural and urban areas, for children under the age of three years and promoting intellectual stimulation.
7. Undertake annual nutrition survey that can measure the performance districts along with a comprehensive Child Development index and rank them accordingly.
8. Deliver timely interventions to prevent disabilities (both mental and physical), before, during and after pregnancy in the mother and child. Identify and intervene on development delays or disability among children.
9. Strengthen the School Health Programme with a focus on the preventive and promotive aspects. Combine health education, health promotion, disease prevention and improve access to health services in an integrated and systemic manner at the school level. Education institutions at all levels (both Government and Private) shall promote healthy living through yoga and physical training.
10. Provide comprehensive health education to children, including life skills and age-appropriate education on puberty, gender, healthy lifestyle, nutritional choices, and drug/ substance abuse prevention and dealing with sexual abuse.
11. Address the decreasing child sex ratio by way of prevention and response strategies with monitorable indicators. Focus female foeticide and gender discrimination through government and community-led initiatives and actions.
12. Monitor implementation of activities for children's holistic physical and mental health and well-being on regular basis, setting periodic targets in respect of all critical maternal, child health and nutrition indicators in a convergent manner.
13. Generate community awareness and strengthen public education for the promotion of children's health, nutrition, and hygiene, with special focus on the girl child and adolescent girls. Create awareness to prevent use of harmful food products and practices detrimental to child's physical and mental health.
14. Ensure access to clean drinking water, sanitary toilets, and good hygienic practices, both at the household and institutional level, to give the children a healthier start in life. Improve menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls, through strengthening existing mechanisms.

15. Ensure regulation and monitoring of commercially advertised products and services to ensure these are child safe, child friendly and in conformity with the principle of best interests of children.

## 2. Education and Holistic Development

Upholding, protecting, and promoting child's right to education and developing his/her/their full potential can ensure that every child receives holistic education of the highest standard. Therefore, in recognition of children's constitutional right to education and in pursuance of the goals for quality education as per the provisions of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, and National Education Policy, 2020, with a life cycle approach, the policy aims to:

1. Ensure universal and equitable access to age-appropriate quality educational opportunities, vocational and life skill education and services for all children in the state, including early intellectual stimulation and learning services for 0–3-years-olds, ECCE, Primary, Upper Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary level or equivalent education in a safe, protective and enabling environment.
2. Ensure that the quality and minimum standards of ECCE are as per the prevailing ECCE Policy and the norms prescribed by the Government. Anganwadi Centres will be integrated with neighbouring Primary Schools to ensure quality learning and easy transition. Monitor and evaluate play materials, TLMs and other equipment used under ECCE, disability friendly and modify them to accommodate need of children with disability.
3. Augment adequate and appropriate infrastructure and resources for AWCs to ensure continuum of ECCE and improved child-related outcomes. No-child-left-behind is a major thrust, and no 3- 6-year-old child can be denied access to ECCE services.
4. The concept of access to neighbourhood ECCE centres, including provision for admission of children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups, to be followed in all AWCs and non-government/private ECCE centres as per rules prescribed by the Government. Take optimum steps to ensure motor, cognitive, language and socio-emotional development.
5. Monitor and evaluate all ECCE service provisions to be undertaken periodically, adopting consistent assessment criteria as per quality norms with focus on building and infrastructure, pupil-teacher interactions and ratio, learning experiences, grade appropriate learning outcomes and school readiness of children, health, nutrition and protection measures, qualification and professional development of staff, parent/ caregiver and community involvement and organisation and management of all ECCE provisions including fee-related matters.
6. Equitable access to formal school for all children by 6 years of age, to opportunities for inclusive and quality education to all, including those belonging to the disadvantaged and weaker sections of the society, children who are differently abled, children with special needs, children in deprived conditions, migrant children, children displaced due to climate change, children without family support, third gender children and all other children in difficult circumstances and in need of care and protection..
7. Ensure that all forms and levels of education, hostels and residential facilities for children, both private and Government and all other unregulated schools and

educational institutions, including Child Care Institutions (CCIs), follow an appropriate and minimum set of quality standards that are prescribed, enforced, monitored and regulated by the Government through appropriate mechanisms to improve enrolment, retention and reduce dropouts

8. Establish norms so that no child is subjected to any form of physical or mental abuse, punishment (including corporal punishment) or discrimination and that children get quality education that develops their identity and individuality, promotes dignity and self-respect, respects their cultural and social rights and the right to play, advocates right to democratic participation fostering a sense of self-efficacy, developing critical thinking and aiding the development of scientific temperament.
9. Safeguard children from being used or employed for armed conflicts and acts of violence. The degree and manner of political participation shall be appropriate to the child's age and evolving capacities.
10. Provide adequate and safe spaces, science and computer labs, services, and equitable access to all children to play sports and games, for recreation and leisure activities, cultural and scientific activities in schools and educational institutions, special services and facilities in neighbourhoods and in high density residential areas.
11. Promote literary and creative activities amongst children through availability of non-text reading materials, children's magazines and books at school, neighbourhood and community libraries and other services in the State.
12. Promote new subjects and mother-tongue based teaching and learning corresponding to the contextual social norms in line with the National Education Policy 2020. Further, as per Odisha Cabinet Minister's resolution - 2021, disaster management and climate change adaptations shall form an integral part of school, college, and technical education curriculum.
13. Confirm that all schools and institutions (public, private, partnership mode) promote children's autonomy, collaborative classroom learning under low-stress conditions, family and community participation in school activities and provide appropriate guidance and counselling to promote children's mental health, to identify and nurture children's giftedness and non-conventional talents.
14. Harness modern technology, including ICT applications, to promote the developmental and learning needs of children and for monitoring, evaluation, capacity building and training. Learning from the success of recent innovations, promote Mo School Abhiyan, Smart Classrooms, and Libraries across the state.
15. Ensure inclusivity in AWCs, schools, and all other child centric institutions by provisioning appropriate infrastructure, trained personnel, and educators for children with disability and special needs.
16. Prioritise identification and monitoring of cognitive and motor development of children (0-6 years) at AWC. Conduct surveys of school going children (6-14 years) on a periodic basis for identifying children with disabilities and ascertaining their special needs. Provide with therapy, assistive devices and counselling services to all the children with disabilities to ensure their mainstreaming.
17. Strengthen community-based mechanisms, multi-sectoral collaborations, partnerships, and convergence, working with local bodies and civil society

organisations. Strengthen 'School Management Committees' to ensure inclusive, and equitable education, including keeping schools free from alcohol, tobacco and other narcotic substances.

#### **4.3 Child Protection: Child Abuse, Exploitation, Neglect, Maltreatment, Violence, Child labour, Child Marriage, Child trafficking, Drugs/ Substance abuse, Online abuse, and other conditions of hardship**

Safeguarding children's rights to protection against any harm, deprivation of entitlements, discrimination, neglect, exploitation, violence, and abuse is a minimum condition to ensure for each child a quality life of dignity, self-determination, and optimal realisation of potentials. It is important to provide effective protection to all children<sup>(2)</sup> to ensure their safety and well-being and minimise their vulnerability in all domains of their lives and activities. To fulfil this responsibility, necessary measures are to be taken to:

1. Protect children from all forms of discrimination and deprivation, neglect, exploitation, abuse (including but not limited to physical, sexual, mental, online etc), humiliation, shame and indignity, and harm to their personhood and all other conditions detrimental to their development and realisation of potentials.
2. Safeguard rights of children under conditions of permanent or temporary deprivation of parental and familial care and support by providing suitable alternate family-based care through adoption, foster care, and similar modes of quality child support in the best interest of the child. Childcare institutions will be considered temporary and the least preferred arrangement till a child in such care is suitably placed under family-based care.
3. Provide preventive and statutory care and rehabilitation services through statutory bodies such as Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) , Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU) and community based child care and protection mechanisms through District, Block and Gram panchayat level Child protection committees to secure rights and entitlements of all vulnerable children in difficult circumstances and in need of special protection and support.
4. Rehabilitation and restoration of all rights of children, with a life of dignity and free of prejudice and stigmatization for those who have been victims of any form of abuse, neglect, exploitation, child labour and who have suffered conditions of hardship.
5. Create awareness among children regarding prohibition of child labour, exploitation, sexual abuse, drug abuse and conditions of hardship and vulnerability and prevention or amelioration of such conditions.
6. Strategic and urgent action by the state and the communities on one of the critical barriers to adolescents in achieving their full potential - child marriage. Child marriage action plan in Odisha to be implemented with strong collaborations among all stakeholders and in a coordinated way across all tiers of governance with an increased focus on gender dynamics, social norms, vulnerability from disasters and climate risks and cultural barriers.
7. Implement highest standards of safety and security within all child-care institutions with a mechanism for complaint and grievance redressal. Upgrade rehabilitation services with focus on mental health and psycho-social support.

8. Emphasize complete eradication of child labour, which is directly linked to lack of education, migration, children in street situations, health-related hazards, etc. with a root cause of ingrained poverty and deprivation. Strengthen seasonal hostels for the children of seasonal migrant workers in the migration prone districts to ensure continuity of education during migrations of parents.
9. Reinforce strict implementation of child and adolescent labour Act. Facilitate dialogue with Industries, develop zero tolerance policy for private sectors, develop guidelines for rescue and rehabilitation of child labour and implement SoPs for effective use of Child and Adolescent Labour Rehabilitation Fund.
10. Promote an all-inclusive preventive model of creating community-based safety nets for children and their immediate family through strengthening the Block Child Protection Committee and Gram Panchayat Child Protection Committees. Extend the DCPUs to Block level with positioning of adequate human resources.
11. Prevent misuse of technology and the internet and protect children from potentially harmful effects of internet surfing, online abuse, virtual reality applications, social media apps, cyberbullying, and cyber-crimes and to regulate all such technological applications in the best interests of children. Create and promote safe, respectful, caring, child-friendly, public learning, media, and online spaces
12. Reinforce readiness of data repository and data management systems to provide real-time data to enhance monitoring, evaluation and decision making around child protection

#### **4.4. Identity, Family/Alternative Care, Birth Registration, Quality of Life**

Family is the primary social unit for early socialisation and holistic development of children and, therefore, every child is entitled to a family. Towards this, it is aimed to:

1. Protect and facilitate the integral relationship of children with their families through necessary support to the families for adequate care and optimal development of children. Necessary steps to be taken to prevent and alleviate conditions of disturbed families under hardship, violence, abuse, and other situations, which are potentially harmful to children.
2. Make sure that adequate facilities for alternate care to children in conditions of family violence, abuse, disturbance, loss of family caretaker(s) or other conditions in which a child is orphaned or abandoned are available. Placement of children in any alternate care to be in conformity with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. Follow proper assessment and monitoring of the conditions of such care for adequate protection and provisions for all-round development of the children and be guided by the goal of restoring proper family life for every child. Provision appropriate financial assistance to ensure that these most vulnerable children continue to be productive assets for the community.
3. Guarantee Birth Registration of all children in the state as per the provisions under RBD Act. Also respect rights of and identity of children without birth registration and abandoned/ lost children. Take necessary steps to provide them identity through appropriate registration so that all orphaned children, cases of child labour, trafficked child, child marriage, school dropout and children in conditions of hardship can be tracked for necessary protection and support.

4. Suitable legal provisions and their implementation to be ensured to mandate adequate child-care facilities including crèches, day-care and other measures for children of working parents (mother, father or both), single parents, parents with temporary or permanent disability, parents with life threatening illnesses, parents with mental diseases and all other similarly placed children in need of proper care.
5. Ensure the availability of child-care, ECCE centres and child-safe play areas in urban regions through proper area planning and building plan rules and slum development programmes.
6. Promote adoption in the best interest of the child. Adopt a state specific and context appropriate approach within the legal parameters to support an adoption.
7. Involve more boys and men in a responsible and meaningful way at all stages and in all processes of children's survival, development, protection, and participation for more equitable, far reaching, and sustainable outcomes.

#### **4.5. Special Measures for the Vulnerable**

To safeguard and promote equality, non-discrimination and protection of children's rights, the focus shall be on special provisions for children in extreme hardship such as poverty, disadvantage, gender discrimination, special challenges, homelessness, trauma, abuse and all other conditions that make them vulnerable. Towards this end, it is aimed to:

- I. Assure equality of status, non-discrimination and no stigmatization, safety, security, equal opportunities, protection from abuse and exploitation and enabling conditions for the most vulnerable children, including the third gender, as equal citizens with equal rights.
- II. Create and sustain gender-sensitive, inclusive and effective health services to ensure rights to survival, growth and development of all children before, during and after birth and the educational system for equality, especially for girls and third gender for the full realisation of their potential.
- III. Ensure the right to survival, care, protection, development and security, inclusive and quality education, vocational training and gender-responsive rehabilitation may be required in the best interests of children with special needs, physical and mentally challenged, street children, children without family, children affected by HIV/AIDS and all other children placed in potentially hazardous conditions.
- IV. Implement extraordinary measures for all children under conditions of hardship such as extreme poverty, disadvantaged children from SC, ST, PVTGs, and other weaker sections, children in disaster and traumatic conditions including those affected by the pandemic, displaced children, children from migrant families, children in mining and hazardous conditions, children whose parents are in prison.
- V. Ensure adequate special provisions for children in all relief- and rehabilitation measures, keeping in mind their specific gender needs. Promote capacity building among children for disaster preparedness, climate change adaptation, and pandemic management. Develop and establish measures to improve access to services and portability of social benefits, particularly for migrant children and their families.
- VI. Prohibit harmful practices like iron branding, witch hunting, son preference, health-nutritional taboos, gender taboos etc., which have devastating consequences on the child's life,

development, health, nutrition, education, and protection. Ensure harmonization of customary and religious laws towards prohibition of harmful practices, supported by the promotion of positive behavioural practices with a focus on knowledge, attitude and practices of communities and service providers at the grassroot level. Prevent exposure to the quacks' unprofessional and dangerous healing practices.

#### **4.6. Dispensation of Justice and Legal Provisions for Children**

A child-sensitive, gender-responsive, participatory, inclusive and responsive system of justice delivery, including judiciary, police and local authorities, child-care and child rights professionals, civil society organizations is critical for ensuring the protection of child rights, holistic reform measures for children in conflict with the law and all other matters in the best interest of the child. Keeping these broad objectives in view, the aim shall be to:

1. Ensure effective implementation the acts for safeguarding the rights of children. The Acts are given in Annexure IV
2. Safeguard the rights of children in need of care and protection and children in conflict with the law as defined under the JJ Act and children who meet the law, either as victims or witnesses or due to any other circumstances. The 1098 (CHILDLINE) will be closely monitored to ensure immediate action is taken.
3. Ensure effective implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, and Rules under the Act, and that no child is detained either in police custody or judicial custody without proof of the age and/or age determination procedures as laid down under Juvenile Justice Act.
4. Regular awareness, gender-responsive sensitisation and training of police officials, subordinate judiciary, doctors, and all other concerned professionals to corroborate that all laws for children are followed keeping the best interests of the child and confidentiality in the matter.
5. Establish specialised law enforcement systems such as Child-friendly Police Stations and Special Courts for effective, efficient and timely justice delivery to all children, with a long-term objective to create child-friendly environment in all government offices.
6. Create a Child Census database for child protection services, including MIS and child tracking system for effective implementation and monitoring of child protection services. Mandate all public and private organisations, dealing with rights of children and managing the juvenile justice system within the territorial jurisdiction of the state of Odisha, to maintain relevant and updated information on children and make them available to the state and citizens under the Right to Information Act, 2005.
7. Establish database for children with gender-disaggregated data to track missed, displaced, migrated children, children from periodic, seasonal or long-term migrant labour families and all others who are likely to have discontinued or fallen out of the purview of services and care facilities
8. Undertake periodic review of the operation and implementation of legislation, policies and programmes and the functioning of authorities – legislative, executive, and judicial concerning child rights. Ensure that all matters relating to children and the law including adoptions/permanent placements of children, children's right to property as well as State's intervention essential for the protection of rights in matters of

guardianship, probate, maintenance of all children (including child widows) are effectively undertaken in accordance with the laws and judicial guidelines in force.

#### **4.7. Children's Participation**

Children are rightful stakeholders and have a universal and fundamental right to information and participation in all matters relating to their development, welfare, and protection of their rights. They are also capable of such participation and expression of their views in an appropriate manner. In this regard, everyone should ensure and enable such participation and expression with dignity and mutual respect and strive to provide:

1. Enabling environment for children's participation by adequately safeguarding their right to age-appropriate information, awareness of their rights and entitlements and all other relevant aspects for their welfare and well-being and create safe space to develop children's ability for expressing their views, their dissent in a respectful manner.
2. Create conducive environment through appreciation and giving due weightage to children's voices and perspectives in all matters and decisions concerning them and their best interests. Develop suitable gender sensitive mechanisms for appropriate participation of children in the local/ regional governance processes.
3. Create mechanisms for sharing information with children in a child-friendly way, unrestrained and appropriate expression of children's voices and ensure their participation and involvement in matters of their rights, development, and wellbeing.
4. Promote children/youth groups in educational institutions and communities, particularly at Panchayat and Urban Local Body level, to encourage children's participation in the management of institutions and groups and obtain their views and feedback in all matters pertaining to their interests.
5. Promote Child Friendly Gram Panchayats through creation Bala Sabhas in all Gram Panchayats where all children in age-group of 12-18 will be the members. Bala Sabhas shall meet as the Gram Sabhas and pass resolutions on matters related to children and submit it to Gram Sabhas.
6. Develop guidelines, build capacity, provide resources, and promote monitoring to ensure children are at the forefront of the panchayat planning process.
7. The State will work with child development professionals and researchers to develop suitable and effective models, procedures, and best practices in a gender-responsive manner for fostering appropriate child participation and empowerment.
8. Put in place a simple, effective, and child-friendly mechanism for any child to share his/her grievances without any barrier, fear, or restraint and to get due and expeditious redressal of such grievances.
9. Role of children as active participants and agents of change for addressing issues of climate change, disaster management inextricably linked to SDGs.

### **Part 5: Quality Standards and Quality Control**

A proper environment to be created through coordination of relevant departments such as W&CD, S&ME, Health and Family Welfare, Law, Home, PR & DW, ST & SC Development,

Minorities & Backward Classes Welfare, SSEPD, Skill Development, and Technical Education and others to encourage appropriate, equitable and child-friendly practices through multi-pronged approach laying down norms and quality standards for promoting equality and quality services for all children in the state. Towards this:

1. Develop appropriate measures for evaluation, certification and monitoring of all institutions/centres of health, education, sports and games, and all other welfare services for children based on minimum quality standards and facilitate linkages with the system to augment their child-readiness and to promote quality services in the best interest of the children.
2. Lay down and enforce minimum quality standards and specifications for all government, private and NGO-managed services for children in Odisha in line with the relevant National and State Policies and Quality Standards prescribed by the authorities.
3. Ensure that all child-related services, both Government and private, conform to certain minimum and non-negotiable standards. The quality standards would relate *inter alia* to buildings and infrastructures and all facilities and services intended to promote children's well-being, including health, nutrition, education, equitable gender socialisation and all child-protection measures.
4. Invest and take special measures towards the development of child-friendly structures, play areas and spaces in urban locations.

#### **I. Regulatory Mechanisms**

5. There shall be a nodal body to implement this Policy and the Department of Women and Child Development (DoWCD) shall be the nodal department for managing effective implementation of this Policy and the programmes and services for children in Odisha; DWCD will coordinate with other counterpart departments for the smooth realization of the Policy objectives.
6. The Plan of Action and major interventions required to implement the main provisions of this Policy shall be initiated within one year of the notification of this Policy.
7. Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights is an essential part of the regulatory mechanism to protect, promote and defend children's rights in the State and for matters connected to the same. In addition, Odisha State Child Protection Society is a fundamental unit for the implementation of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) and closely works with SCPCR.

### **Part 6: Enabling Conditions**

#### **6.1. Capacity Building**

- a. Develop a proactive and time-bound plan for identification of human resources, their training and capacity building for the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of appropriate set standards in respect of all child-related services in the State. Appropriate gender balance shall be ensured in this pool of resources.
- b. Identify and promote academic and research institutes as State Child Development Centres to provide continuous R&D support towards child development initiatives

(such as helpline; training; counselling centres; capacity development centres; assessment centres and advocacy hubs) in the state and regional Child Development and Protection Centres to offer academic consultation, training and other support to all child-centred services in the State.

- c. The policy recognizes that children are best nurtured in their cultural and family environment. Therefore, strengthening family and community capabilities to care for and protect the child shall receive the highest priority. Parents, family and community members shall be informed and educated about optimal gender-equal, and developmentally appropriate child-care practices and the rights of children.
- d. An extensive drive shall be conducted to involve parents and other caregivers/ family members with special focus on men and fathers in children's health, nutrition and protection issues, not just as passive beneficiaries but as active stakeholders and change agents to make children's lives better

## **6.2. Partnership**

- a. Resource Groups, NGOs, Volunteers, Groups of experts and professionals and higher learning institutions shall be identified and engaged with at regional, district and sub-district levels to support Government's efforts in identifications, monitoring, supervision and capacity building for the protection of child rights and promotion of the best interests of the children in the State.
- b. To achieve the objectives of the policy and support the implementation of the initiatives, the Government shall enter into specific time-bound partnerships with multiple stakeholders, including community, non-governmental service providers and the private service providers while ensuring adherence to specified guidelines and safety standards.
- c. Partnership shall be developed with prominent Academic Institutes including University Departments for long term support for Research and Development, Training, and other support activities.

## **6.3. Advocacy and Communication**

- a. The policy lays great emphasis on changing social norms and values that deprive children of their basic rights. Advocacy and awareness programmes shall be held at different levels beginning with family and community, local area functionaries/community leaders/civic bodies, media professionals and policy makers including Government Officials and Legislators, judiciaries including CWCs and JJBs, and police for effective lobbying to garner support, facilitate and mobilise resources for protection and promotion of the rights of the child in tune with their best interests in all matters relating to their wellbeing.
- b. Children's needs and views shall be heard and included to raise awareness and change norms and develop complaint mechanism in case of infringement of rights
- c. The state shall constitute district level committees under the Collectors for coordinating and supporting all child welfare and development programmes and services in the district.

## **6.4. Funding and Other Support**

- a. This policy emphasizes the need for increased investments towards the promotion of children's well-being, development of their potentials and protection of their rights; it is recognised that effective investments for children are known to yield high dividends.
- b. Undertake an annual comprehensive child budget analysis to ensure budgetary accountability on commitments made for wellbeing of the children in the State. Accordingly, all key Departments shall take up child budgeting and make resources available for policy implementation.
- c. Periodic monitoring shall be undertaken of budget outflows and its implementation for children at all levels against the outcomes achieved, through strengthening Child Centric Outcome Monitoring, in line with SDGs.

## **Part 7: Monitoring, Supervision, Convergence and Coordination**

### **7.1: Monitoring, Supervision**

- a. Monitoring and Supervision shall be focused for providing continuous conceptual, academic, professional processual and decision-making support to all Government and non-Government organizations/ institutes and it shall be strengthened based on a systematic framework.
- b. The status of children in the State shall be monitored by a high-level committee, under the Chair of Chief Secretary or Development Commissioner of Government of Odisha through application and periodic review. Following a scientific model, a Child Development Index (CDI) based on health, nutrition, education, child abuse, protection and other indicators will be developed while ensuring an inclusive and non-discriminatory approach.
- c. All institutions, including OSCPCR shall be further strengthened to monitor the situation of children in the State. In addition, a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) will be constituted with technical experts from development partners, CSOs, academicians for advising on all child-related issues. The TAG will also ensure the collection and presentation of good practices from other states and their adoption, if required. The TAG will also help the Government in identifying good practices from within the State and their replications elsewhere.
- d. A system for periodic Child Census, data collection/generation and information management shall be established across the State to allow regular collection, compilation, and analysis of the disaggregated data on children based on gender, age, socio-economic conditions and other similar factors for effective implementation of this policy.
- e. State would also promote the collection and analysis of gender and age disaggregated data for nutrition, health, education, and other important parameters to identify and address gender-based bottlenecks and barriers

### **7.2 Convergence and Coordination**

- a. Children's needs are multi-sectoral in nature and require plans and programmes across diverse sectors, including education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, protection and finance and other stake-holding wings of governance.

- b. Regulatory, operational, and financial convergence between the related plans, schemes or programmes for children shall be encouraged and achieved over a stipulated period for optimal utilisation of resources.
- c. The Government shall develop a suitable organisational framework within the broad principles and spirit of this Policy for smooth implementation of the Policy and for promotion and management of child development and welfare services in the State.

## **Part 8: Revisiting the Policy and Policy Interpretation**

### **8.1. Revisiting the Policy**

The Policy is not a goal, nor is it a final one-time statement. The Policy must be revisited periodically for ironing out snags, difficulties, and obstacles in the evolving scenarios. Implementation and effectiveness of this policy could be reviewed periodically, at least once in five years to identify bottlenecks in the smooth application of the policy and suggest appropriate correctional measures to improve the quality of all services in the best interests of children in Odisha.

### **8.2. Interpretation of the Policy:**

Implementation of the policy directives shall be the collective responsibility of all stakeholders. Any queries or disputes relating to its operationalisation shall be referred to the appropriate authority and agency responsible for specific action.

Annex – I

## **Documents Referred**

1.	A World Fit for Children (General Assembly Resolution S-27/2), [50]
	UN General Assembly, Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20 November 1989
	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2015
	Census, 2011, Government of India
	Center for Budget and Governance Accountability (2011) Odisha: Tracking Public Investment for Children (Budgeting for Change Series), UNICEF
6.	National Family Health Survey 4 (2015-2016), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
7.	Mohanty, Siba (2016) Malnutrition Malaise still Grips Odisha Kids, Indian Express News Service, op.cit.
8.	Report (2016), WCD Department, Government of Odisha
9.	Government of Odisha (2016): Status of Elementary Education in Odisha, 2015-16, OPEPA
	Nanda Samir Kumar (2017), Labour Scenario in Odisha, Odisha Review, p-22
	NCRB (2015), Crime in India

12.	Disabled Person in India: A Statistical Profile, (2016) Social Statistical Division, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India
13.	Socio Economic and Caste Census (2011) Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
14.	Government of Odisha (2016): Odisha Economic Survey, 2015-16, Planning and Convergence Department, Bhubaneswar
15.	OECD (2016) Public Spending on Childcare and Early Education, OECD – Social Policy Division – Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, P.1
"	National Policy for Children, Government of India, 2013
"	National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC), Government of India, 2016
"	NCPCR (2013). CWCs in India: A Comprehensive Analysis aimed at Strengthening the Juvenile Justice System for Children in Need of Care and Protection, NCPCR, New Delhi
"	National Education Policy, Government of India, 2020
"	Odisha State Child Budget, 2021-2022

Annex – II

### Policy formulation process: An overview

The WCD&MS Department, Government of Odisha and Odisha State Commission for Protection of Child Rights co-partnered with UNICEF Odisha Office to formulate Odisha State Child Policy during 2017. Accordingly, Utkal University, Odisha was entrusted with the work to develop initial background notes, undertake situation analysis, and organize regional and state-level consultations through a participatory process to develop a draft state policy. Further, feedback was sought from citizens by putting the draft policy on the W&CD&MS department website. The Department also consulted with other relevant departments of the Government of Odisha and other key stakeholders by holding joint review meetings. The detailed process followed is given below:

- **Secondary Data analysis:** As an initial step, the process of formulation of the policy involved in-depth secondary data analysis through mapping of schemes and programmes for children in the state. Further, all the schemes, both state and national, were categorized under three thematic areas of preventive, protective and promotive. Secondly, the technical team reviewed existing literature, including national policy for children, national plan of action for children, the charter of UNCRC, etc. Studies, reports and relevant literature from Odisha and other states were also referred, which helped in identifying areas of interventions. The team also looked at the quantitative data available from various sources, including surveys, census, and department's MIS. These data sets provided an overview of the status of children in the areas of health, education, nutrition, demography, protection, etc. Primarily, the data sources like NFHS, NCRB, DISE, SRS, etc., were used for the situational analysis.
- **Consultations:** Four regional consultations were organized on key thematic areas focusing on children. The idea was to club the districts where children share a common plight. Accordingly, the disaster-prone districts of coastal Odisha came together at Jagatsinghpur in eastern Odisha, the migration-prone districts in the west met at Bolangir. Further, the mining districts met at Keonjhar in northern Odisha, whereas districts suffering from conflict assembled at Phulbani in the southern part of the state.

### Regional Consultations

Regional Consultation	Organised at (date)	Districts participated	Thematic Area discussed
Consultation-I	Jagatsingpur 12 <sup>th</sup> October, 2017	Balasore, Bhadrak, Puri, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapada	Children in the Disaster Affected Area
Consultation-II	Bolangir 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	Bolangir, Subernapur, Nuapada, Boudh, Kalahandi and Bergarh	Children of the migration prone area of Western Odisha
Consultation-III	Keonjhar 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2017	Keonjhar, Jharsuguda, Jajpur, Angul, Sundergarh and Mayurbhanj	Issues and Challenges Children faced in Mining Area
Consultation-IV	Phulbani 17 <sup>th</sup> February 2018	Koraput, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Gajapati and Kandhamal	Children in the district affected by conflict in the State

- **Interdepartmental Consultation and virtual platform:** Based on the secondary literature review and consultations, a consultative meeting for key departments was organized in W&CD & MS Department on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019. Further, to make the process more inclusive and participatory, the draft policy was put on the department's website for feedback by citizens and the civil society, and their inputs were noted and included in the draft.

Based on these activities, the child policy was finalised.

Annex III


### Odisha Specific Schemes and Programmes for Children

- To ensure survival and protection of the girl child and prevent gender-biased sex selective elimination, the state has launched the **Biju Kanya Ratna** scheme.
- With the objective of assuring protection, development, and sustenance of children without biological or adoptive parents or legal guardians and children who are affected with /infected by HIV, the Government is implementing a scheme called '**Biju Shishu Surakshya Yojana**' (BSSY). The scheme act and supplement the gap by providing additional resources and complementary modalities to the existing Centrally Sponsored Scheme, named ICPS.
- The Government of Odisha launched a unique cash transfer scheme, '**Mamata**' in 2011, which has led to a reduction of maternal and infant mortality by improving the health and nutrition of pregnant and lactating women in the state. In addition, the state is working actively to prevent still birth and address the issue of low birth weight by this programme.

- To tackle malnutrition by introducing millets in the public distribution system (PDS) and other state nutrition schemes, Odisha has established millet mission, and strengthening complementary foods and feeding.
- Intending to transform the nutrition outcomes in hard-to-reach-blocks, the Government is implementing a "Strategy for Odisha's Pathway to Accelerated Nutrition" or **SOPAN**. Under the scheme, pregnant and nursing women are provided with one extra meal under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP). Children (0-3 years) are covered under creches and provided with meals, health check-ups, and stimulation over their entitlements under SNP. There is also an additional provision of eggs and fish to tackle anaemia in this age group.
- The Government of Odisha is providing sanitary napkins under "**KHUSHI**" initiative with an objective to improve menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls, reduce the dropout rate among girls, and improve academic outcomes.
- Apart from several scholarship schemes implemented, Government of Odisha also provides scholarships to students with special needs under the 'Banishree' scheme to assist them in studying.
- The Government of Odisha has prioritised Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) with a focus on care, nutrition, play and early learning with a protective and enabling environment. ECCE day has been branded **Ankur** to germinate in the minds of the frontline workers, parents, and community on the need for early stimulation of children at home, community and in Anganwadi Centres. The Government has also announced '**Vatsalya**', a campaign to institutionalise care and stimulation of children under three years of age. Department of W&CD has also released '**Kuni (small) Calendar**' and '**Responsive Parenting**' with a mascot on early stimulation.
- One of the significant innovations in recent years has been setting up fully residential **Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya** in the Block headquarters, which provide free education, and target talented students through an annual entrance examination.
- To enable migrating parents to leave their children at home, thereby preventing child migration and child labour, and keeping the children in school, the Government of Odisha has put in place the seasonal hostels in four migration-prone districts of Odisha.
- The Government, in 2019, introduced a five-year strategic action **plan to end child marriage** in the State in the next ten years. To support this objective, particularly to reduce the vulnerability of adolescent girls and making them self-reliant, and empowered, the Government has put in place the **Advika** scheme.
- Under the **Swachh Odisha Swastha Odisha** initiative, significant progress has been made in the State. The access to in-house toilets has increased in all villages, leading to the status of open defecation free. The Government is now investing in addressing solid and liquid waste management. Odisha has also ensured 36 percent functional tap water connection at the household level.
- The Odisha police's state-wide campaign against child sexual abuse, "**Paree Pain Katha Tiye** (a word for little angle)" has invited appreciation from all sectors. The Government is also implementing a more aspirational scheme of child-friendly police stations and child-friendly courts across the State.

- Odisha is among the pioneers in setting up residential, educational institutions with the construction of hostels for ST & SC students. All educational amenities like school uniforms, reading and writing materials are provided free of cost, as also the provision of incidental facilities in the hostels.
- During the COVID period, the Government of Odisha launched an innovative **social protection scheme, 'Ashirbad'**, under which children who lost their parents during the pandemic are being provided monthly cash assistance.
- The Government of Odisha is implementing the **Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana** (Biju Health Welfare Scheme) to provide universal health coverage, with a specific focus on the health of economically vulnerable families. Under the scheme, the Government is bearing the cost of health services (irrespective of income) in Government health care facilities. Beyond this, the State Government is also paying the cost of healthcare provided in empanelled private hospitals for over 96.5 lakh economically vulnerable families in the State, amounting to Annual Health coverage of Rs. 5 lakh per family. As already witnessed, the scheme has a significant positive bearing on the lives of children and women in the State.
- The state has several programmes for strengthening child survival from a holistic perspective and strengthening mentoring and supportive supervision for child nutrition and health interventions. These programmes are Jiban Sampark, Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition, Odisha specific Mother and Child Protection Card, to name a few.
- Odisha has also launched a State Scholarship Portal to bridge the gap between the scholarship providers and scholarship seekers thus, encouraging more students to be in the system. Six major departments have on boarded onto this common platform for duplication and leakage-free scholarship disbursement. The Government is implementing a unique portal "Mo Sishu" as a comprehensive platform for managing information of all children who need care and protection.
- Further, Odisha has formulated a **State Policy for Girls and Women** to provide a comprehensive and actionable framework for the overall development of girls and women in the State.
- To augment resource allocations and to ensure their effective and efficient use for children, the Government is publishing two additional **budget statements, child budget and nutrition budget**.
- To establish synergy and bring harmony among various existing committees on Child Protection at district and sub-district levels, the state has declared a **'Day for Children'** guideline, which mandates fixed day meetings in every quarter at all levels - District, Block and Gram Panchayat. This is a unique initiative of the government to ensure the well-being of children.

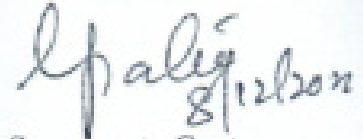
• By order of the Governor

  
8/12/2022  
Smt. Shubha Sarma

Commissioner-cum-secretary to Govt.

Memo No. 20612 / WCD&MS., Date: 08-12-2022

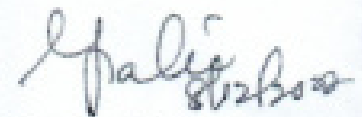
Copy forwarded to the Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi / Secretary, Ministry Legislative Department/ Chairperson, NCPCR, 36 Janpath, New Delhi-110001 for kind information.

  
8/12/2022

Addl. Secretary to Govt.

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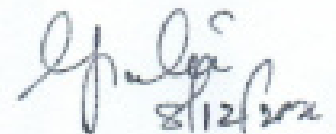
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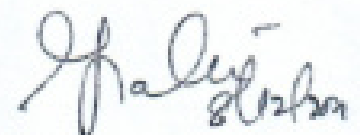
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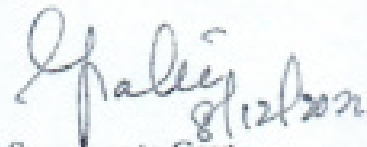
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Copy forwarded to P.S. to Hon'ble Chief Minister/ P.S. to Hon'ble Minister, WCD&MS / P.S. to Principal Secretary to Government, Dept. of WCD/ P.S. to Director, ICDS & Social Welfare, Dept. of WCD for kind information of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, the Hon'ble Minister, the Principal Secretary to Government and the Director, ICDS & Social Welfare.

  
Addl. Secretary to Govt.

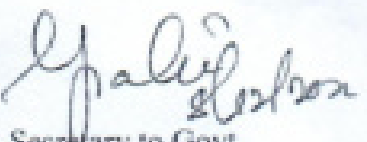
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Addl. Secretary to Govt.

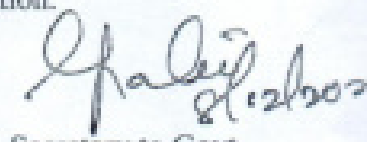
Memo No. 20618/WCD&MS., Date: 08-12-2022

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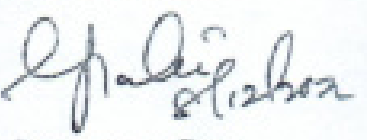
Memo No. 20619/WCD&MS., Date: 08-12-2022

Copy forwarded to the State Head UNICEF, Odisha / State in Charge, for information.

  
Addl. Secretary to Govt.

Memo No. 20620/WCD&MS., Date: 08-12-2022

Copy forwarded to the Under Secretary to Govt., I.T. Section for information and necessary action. He is requested to web-host the Notification in the website of this Department.

  
Addl. Secretary to Govt.