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CH 4.14

## A YEAR FOR THE CHILD

Children are the world's greatest resource. Investment in a child's development is an investment in the future of a nation. Yet children are still struggling to have their needs fulfilled — and because they are small, and not very strong, they do not always survive the struggle. Their life is hardest in the developing countries, where basic services like health, nutrition, safe water and shelter are inadequate and funds to provide them are scarce. But something has to be done, because more than half the deaths in developing countries occur among children under five years of age.

It is because the needs of children must be recognised — and must be fulfilled — that the UNITED NATIONS has declared 1979 the International Year of the Child (IYC). The aim of this declaration is to focus public attention on the plight of the child — and to promote active change to improve the quality of childhood. The welfare of children is closely linked to

economic and social progress. By dedicating a year to the Child, the UN hopes the nations of the world will recognise the rights of children and take action to ensure that all children enjoy these rights.

### **The Purpose of the Year**

The International Year of the Child (IYC) is concerned with all children in all countries, especially young children. Its major aims are :

- to encourage all countries, rich and poor, to review their programmes for the promotion of the well-being of children, and to mobilize support for national and local action programmes according to each country's conditions, needs and priorities;
- to heighten awareness of children's special needs among decision-makers and the public;
- to promote recognition of the vital link between programmes for children on the one hand, and economic and social progress on the other;
- to spur specific, practical measures — with achievable goals — to benefit children, in both the short and long term at the national level.

The Year should also provide an opportunity to emphasize the intellectual, psychological and social development of children, in addition to their physical welfare.

Since 1979 is the 20th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, IYC is an opportunity for each country to increase its efforts to implement those rights.

**EDUCATION :** Pre-primary and elementary education; pre-school education for weaker sections; mobile schools; children's literature; teachers training; orientation courses for women; education of handicapped; community training; community

**SOCIAL WORK :** Social work; creches; *balwadi*; for working mothers; Development Service

**LEGISLATION :** Children's Acts in States; enforcement of Child Labour Act; action on child labour; enactment of laws on equality and non-discrimination in respect of persons born out of wedlock.

**PUBLICITY :** Radio/TV programmes; documentary films; newspapers; printed publications; issue of commemorative postal stamps and coins; national/state/district/block level contests for primary/middle/secondary school children and non school-going children.

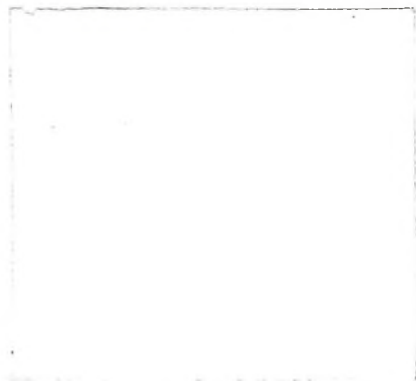
**FUND-RAISING :** Creation of a national children's fund and state level funds to raise resources for programmes to benefit children.

### **National Slogan, Symbol and Theme**

The Indian slogan for IYC is "Happy Child — Nation's Pride" and the Hindi version is "बच्चे की मुस्कान — राष्ट्र की शान।"

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The symbol depicts a boy and a girl with the sun and a slate. The sun signifies health and strength. The slate stands for the importance of education for the future of children.



The general theme of IYC in India is "Reaching the Deprived Child".

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