

CHAPTER 17

SOCIAL WELFARE

The population includes vulnerable groups such as children, women and the elderly. In addition, there are the physically and mentally handicapped, street children, juveniles, beggars, orphans, widows, prostitutes, the infirm and destitute who need the care and attention of the state. The Social Welfare Department of Delhi Government is implementing a number of welfare programmes for this purpose.

1. Welfare of the Disabled By March 31, 1999, Delhi had 4 schools for the physically disabled with 870 students, 4 training cum production center and 2 sheltered workshops for the physically handicapped, 1 hostel for college level blind boys,, one school for the visually handicapped with 225 students and one school for mentally retarded children with 35 students. Two homes have been established that provide free boarding and lodging to the disabled population; there are 232 inmates in these homes.

Apart from providing free education to disabled people, the Delhi Government also provides stipends and scholarships ranging from Rs. 125 to Rs. 500 per month depending upon the level of disability. 830 physically handicapped students benefitted under this programme during 1998-99. The Department of Social Welfare plans to set up a Corporation to provide disabled people with financial assistance and training for self-employment.

2. Welfare of Juveniles/Beggars To take care of young juveniles and beggars, the Social Welfare Department has set up 14 Juvenile Homes which housed 1,232 juveniles by the end of March 1999. In addition to these, there are 12 homes for beggars in various parts of the city, which have a total of 1,032 residents.

3. Welfare of Women The Social Welfare Department provides assistance, training, shelter and counselling to women. By the end of March 1999, 4 shelter homes housing 192 women had been set up and 550 women were assisted through counseling. To provide accommodation for working women, 2 working women's hostels with 204 boarders have been set up, and 2 more hostels are under construction. In 1998-99, vocational training was given to 1,437 women through 25 training centres. Under the Financial Assistance to Widows for Self-employment scheme, the Social Welfare Department provides financial assistance of Rs. 10,000 to widows aged 18 to 45 years and Rs. 5,000 to widows aged 46 to 59. By the end of March 1999, 1,507 widows had benefited under this scheme. The Delhi Women's Financial and Development Corporation is being set up to train, guide and provide financial assistance to women in self-employment activities. The Delhi Commission for Women has also been established to safeguard the interests of women.

4. Integrated Child Development Scheme Under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), 28 ICDS centres are functioning in various parts of Delhi covering a targeted population of 4.74 lakh children up to the age of 6 years, as well as pregnant and nursing mothers who are economically deprived. Under the ICDS, supplementary nutrition was provided to 4.85 lakh children and women through 3842 anganwaris in 1998-99.

5. Welfare of Senior Citizens According to the 1991 Census, about 4.8 lakh persons were above the age of 60 (5.11% of population). The Delhi Government provides financial assistance of Rs. 200 per month to senior citizens in indigent circumstances. By March 1999, 76,313 people were benefitted under this scheme; the target is to cover 80,000 senior citizens in 1999-2000. Apart from financial assistance, residential facilities in the form of old-age homes and recreational facilities at recreation centres are being provided. Three old-age homes (one of which is under the NDMC) with 129 inmates and 28 recreation centres have been set up by the government. The Social Welfare Department is planning a more concerted effort in this area, to commensurate with the declaration of 1999-2000 as the International Year of Older Persons.

6. Welfare of Minorities As per the 1991 Census, 16.33% of Delhi's population belongs to minority communities such as Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. The Delhi Minorities Financial and Development Corporation is proposed to be set up to train minority youths and provide them with financial assistance to set up self-employment ventures.

7. Other Welfare Measures The number of persons who suffer from tuberculosis (TB) in Delhi has increased. Most people who suffer from TB do not get adequate medical attention either due to negligence or financial constraints. The Social Welfare Department provides Rs. 1,200 a year to each TB patient. In 1998-99, 1,100 patients were benefited from this scheme. The Rehabilitation Center for Leprosy treated 1,920 leprosy patients during 1998-99.