

THE NEPAL CHILDREN'S ORGANIZATION AND THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN OF NEPAL

by

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The Nepal Children's Organization is one of the class organizations of the country and is the modern agency entrusted to carry out Child Welfare Programmes in the country.

Her Majesty the Queen has kindly graced the Chairmanship of this organization. Her Royal Highnesses, Cabinet Ministers and various distinguished persons from different walks of life are members of the Central Committee. The Nepal Children's Organization was established in August 1964.

It carries out many programmes for the physical, intellectual and mental development of the children. The Nepal Children's Organization develops the potentiality of all children in literature, music, sports and cultural programmes. The Bal-Mandir (CHILDREN'S HOME) is the Centre for all types of extracurricular free time activity of the children.

There is also an ORPHANAGE which looks after 150 abandoned children. Besides providing them with food, clothing, shelter and protection of their health, it also prepares them for a vocation for life.

A BEGGAR REHABILITATION HOME has also been established which has 50 helpless children who are given general education and vocational training like carpentry, tailoring etc. A MODEL SCHOOL and also a DEAF SCHOOL have also been run by Nepal Children's Organization. The deaf school is the only one of its kind in the country. A CHILDREN'S MAGAZINE called 'Balak' (the Child) is published every month by this organization which is distributed to the 5000 schools all over the kingdom.

The Central Office and the Central Bal Mandir of Nepal Children's Organization has been undertaking these activities.

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THE DISTRICT COMMITTEES apart from the central office: There are 61 District Committees of Nepal Children's Organization. Eight of these Committees have constructed local Bal Mandirs out of their own funds. They are running extracurricular activities and PRESCHOOL PROGRAMMES for the children. Twentyfive district committees are running pre-schools programmes for their children. The funds are greatly mobilised by the local people themselves.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Nepal Children's Organization held its national conference last year and outlined future programmes in Child Health, Education, Vocational training and Organization. It was well represented by the Central Committee, the experts from various fields and the delegates from the district committees. The Government and the UNICEF supported the Nepal Children's Organization and have promised to assess it.

THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN

A look into the Census of Nepal shows that 40 to 50 percent of the population consists of the children. The growth of population is 52 per 1000, and the general fertility rate is 50 per 1000. The crude death rate, is 27 per 1000, and the infant mortality rate is 240 per 1000. Children under 4 years of age consist 15 per cent of the total population. Clearly the Infant Mortality Rate is very high. Again 79 per cent of infants die in the first year of life and the death rate gradually decreases as the child grows up thus leading to 40 per cent death rate by 4 years of age.

The health situation is far from satisfactory. Lack of environmental sanitation, and unprotected water-supply result in many infectious diseases carried by food and water. Overcrowded dwellings, flies, & rats further aggravate the situation. Again low income of the common man often leads to malnutrition of the infant.

Moreover only 30 per cent of the children are in school. Thus an alarming rate of population are growing up without any preparation for life which is naturally a waste of human resources. Our economy simply cannot afford this. *Also Child Labour has gone by unprotected so far.*

THE NEW PLAN OF NEPAL CHILDREN'S ORGANIZATION

Keeping in view all these conditions the Nepal Children's Organization has made a new plan for the pre-school children. The UNICEF is also assisting it. This is popularly called the COMPREHENCE, INTEGRATED TYPE OF PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMME to be implemented on a national scale. It aims to meet the needs of the child as a total person.

The life of the child under six is most vulnerable to social and health hazards. Since the majority of these children live in villages, and are deprived of minimum health and nutrition, assistance to them is an investment in human resources.

The programme takes the national need into consideration and has outlined health, nutrition and educational objectives.

The District Committees of Nepal Children's Organization are requested to seek the help of Maternal and Child Health centres for health. The aim is to immunise the child against Smallpox, Tuberculosis, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Whooping Cough and Poliomyelitis. This will be a joint venture of Nepal Children's Organization and the Ministry of Health with a view to reach as many children as possible.

Local people are encouraged to improve ENVIRONMENTAL SANITATION. Some HEALTH EDUCATION to the community is also to be given. The existing health service of the country should be utilised to the maximum. The poor family where INFANT MALNUTRITION often occurs will receive powdered milk. This will be made available by the W. F. P.

The educational and physical development of these children will be met by improving play and recreational centres for the pre-school children. Obviously for these activities the participation of the community and the involvement of the DISTRICT PANCHAYAT is the basic requisite of the programme. These centres for children will meet some of the basic needs of the children of Nepal.