

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 208
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2024

'RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL CRECHE SCHEME'

208. SHRI GAURAV GOGOI

Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that several creches under the Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme are closing down due to lack of funds;
- (b) if so, the details of funds released under RGNCS along with its utilization in the FY 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22;
- (c) whether the extra funds disbursed to the State councils without any reference to the ground situation regarding the number of creches functioning and number of children enrolled are to be reconsidered and initiatives for the refund of additional funds to be taken by the Government;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (e) the details of the number of creches working under the scheme?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
(SHRIMATI SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI)

(a) to (e): Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme (RGNCS) for the Children of Working Mothers was launched as a central sector scheme w.e.f. 1st January 2006 by merging the National Creche Fund with the Scheme of Assistance to Voluntary Organizations for creches for Working/Ailing Women's Children. The Scheme was implemented through the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) and two voluntary organizations, namely Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) and Bhartiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh (BAJSS) in States/UTs. The funding pattern of the scheme was 90:10 where in 90 was Centre and 10 was Implementing Agency which were the voluntary organisations. State/UT governments were not the stakeholders in the scheme, so monitoring and supervision was inadequate.

In view of complaints regarding irregularities in management of creches by BAJSS, 5631 creches were temporarily transferred to CSWB with effect from 18 November 2008. A writ petition, W.P.No.11116/2015, had been filed in the Honorable Delhi High Court alleging misappropriation of funds by ICCW, one of the implementing agencies. In this regard, Honorable Delhi High Court had directed that States/UTs have to verify the functioning of those creches. Subsequently, RGNCS was discontinued w.e.f. 31 December 2016.

From 01.01.2017 onwards, the Crèche services were provided by the Ministry of Women and Child Development through the erstwhile 'National Crèche Scheme (NCS)', for Children of Working Mothers, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, wherein Stand-alone Crèches were being operated through NGOs as implementing agencies.

The Ministry introduced *Palna* sub-scheme under *Mission Shakti* for all States/UTs w.e.f. 01 April 2022, for providing day care facilities and protection to children. *Palna* is a Centrally sponsored scheme ensuring the participation of State/UT government to ensure better day-to-day monitoring and proper implementation of scheme.

Anganwadi centres are the world's largest childcare institutions dedicated to providing essential care and support to children ensuring delivery of care facilities till the last mile. In a first of its kind approach, Ministry has extended the services of childcare through Anganwadi cum Crèche. This will ensure whole day childcare support ensuring their well-being in a safe and secure environment. Anganwadi cum Crèche initiative aims to increase the women work force participation in the economy. The objective of *Palna* component is to provide quality creche facility in safe and secure environment for children (from ages 6 months – 6 years), nutritional support, health and cognitive development of children, growth monitoring, immunization, education etc.

Proposals for establishment and operation of Creches are received from the respective State Governments/UT Administrations, who are also responsible for contributing their corresponding share for the implementation of the Scheme. During the 15th Finance Cycle, a total of 17,000 AWCCs have been envisioned to be set-up, out of which, 5631 AWCCs have been approved till date, as per proposals received from various States/UTs. As on 30.11.2023, 2249 Gol aided Standalone Creches are operational.

In the 15th Finance Commission (2021-22 to 2025-26), a total of Rs. 20,989 Cr including central and state share has been allocated under Mission Shakti.
