

# Government making all efforts for care and protection of street children: Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi

## A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for street children already released, action plan for care and protection of child beggars being formulated

Posted On: 17 MAR 2017 5:52PM by PIB Delhi

The Government is making all efforts for care and protection of street children including rescue and rehabilitation. This was stated by the Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in reply to a supplementary question in the Lok Sabha today on the subject of street children.

To achieve this, the WCD Ministry gives funds under Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) to the states for running various institutions and organisations as well as for child friendly initiatives like Open shelters, Specialised Adoption Agencies, Child Welfare Committees, DCPUs, Childline etc among scores of other such agencies. Over the last three years, 500 Child Care Institutions (CCIs) have been added in the country to look after destitute children, Smt Maneka Gandhi disclosed. 306 Open Shelters with facilities have also been started for children in distress.

The WCD Minister said that a rapid assessment survey of street involved children carried out by Don Bosco National Forum in the year 2013 for the Young at Risk (YaR), New Delhi and Don Bosco Research Centre, Mumbai in the 16 cities of India has come to the notice of the Government of India. This survey states that Delhi has the highest number of street children i.e. nearly 70,000 followed by Mumbai i.e. 16,000 and Kolkata i.e. 8300.

The WCD Ministry is formulating a plan which is based on zero tolerance to child begging and a meeting has been called of State Government of Delhi, NGOs and other stakeholders on how to place these children in Child Care Institutions for their proper care and protection. The plan will be finalized by next month, the Minister disclosed.

Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi said that 9000 CCIs have been surveyed and orphanages are being upgraded to provide them with the necessary facilities and infrastructure as per requirement. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for care and protection of Children in Street Situations has been developed by NCPCR in collaboration with the NGO - 'Save the Children' (Bal Raksha Bharat) to streamline the processes and interventions regarding children in street situations.

A new initiative called Railway Helpline has helped to rescue 17,900 children since it was started. 30 main railway stations have been provided with Helpline and Helpdesk for children in distress. Childline (Child Helpline 1098) receives nearly four lakhs phone calls from children in distress in a month and is backed by 700 NGOs in its operations. A new and unique initiative of POCSO e-Box has been started to receive complaints from children who are being sexually harassed by the people around them.

This information was given by Minister of Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

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