

# NATIONAL OBSERVANCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE FAMILY

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This paper is abridged from the Overview of the Report of the National Seminar on the International Year of the Family organised on May 15 and 16, 1994 by the Ministry of Welfare in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and UNICEF, India.

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The family is considered the basic unit of the Indian society in view of the fact that every individual has a family of origin and most people live within a family context all through their lives. The family is the first line of defense especially for children and a major factor in their survival, health, education, development and protection. It is also a major source of nurturance, emotional bonding and socialisation, and a link between continuity and change. It has the major potential to provide stability and support when there are problems from without. Human development can, therefore, be best enhanced by enriching family life.

The United Nations had phased out the activities of the International Year of the Family (IYF) into the preliminary phase (1991), the preparatory phase (1992-93), and the observance phase (1994). The activities for the IYF in India started later than in many other countries. However, India has, indeed, made a very systematic beginning with a long-term perspective.

## ***Activities for the IYF in India***

The Ministry of Welfare has been appointed the nodal ministry to observe the International Year of the Family in India. In collaboration with the UNICEF, the Ministry requested the Tata Institute of Social Sciences to organise a Consultation Meeting on IYF which was held in December, 1993, with representatives from the Ministry of Welfare, UNICEF and government, non-government and academic organisations. The outcome of this meeting was an "Approach Paper for Plan of Action in the IYF in 1994 and Beyond". Both, the year "1994" and "Beyond", have constituted equally important parameters for the deliberations on the IYF.

May 15 is proclaimed as the International Family Day by the United Nations. The first event of the IYF in India was a national seminar organised by the Ministry of Welfare in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and UNICEF, India on May 15 and 16, 1994, at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. The theme of this Seminar was "Enhancing the Role of the Family as an Agency for Social and Economic Development".

The major aim of the Seminar was exchange among government, non-government organisations, academic institutions, and international agencies in India for understanding the contemporary issues and needs of the family and its individual members and prepare an agenda for action for achieving the goals for family

well-being. Their combined experience of administration, field practice, teaching and research, brought fruitful deliberations.

After the inaugural presentation, the resource persons presented synoptic outlines for each of the following areas:

- Reforms in Economic Policies and Programmes for the Family.
- Reforms in Social Policies and Programmes for the Family.
- Reforms in Family Laws and their Administration.
- Media Campaign and Outreach Programmes for Family Life Enrichment.
- Directions for Family Research and Education.

This paper provides the perspective that integrates the contents of the approach paper and the IYF book, the inaugural presentations and the papers, presentations by resource persons, and group reports and their discussion.

### **Challenges for the Contemporary Family**

The contemporary challenges identified for the Indian family are broadly grouped as follows:

- Issues related to the normative family which is predominantly patriarchal
- Issues related to the effects of contemporary socioeconomic changes on the family.

The two are strongly linked. A change from an authoritarian or feudal to a democratic egalitarian society can be brought about only through a family revolution.

### ***Issues with the Normative Family Structure***

There is no single normative family structure in India. In our large and culturally diverse country, families have plurality of forms that vary with class, ethnicity, geographical location and individual choices. The joint family, which is considered the prototype of the Indian rural family, has been the normative pattern only among a minority of those who hold property.

According to the 1981 Census, joint households, consisting of a minimum of two couples, comprised about 20 per cent of the total number of households in India. These types of households formed 21 per cent of the rural households and 17 per cent of the urban households. In the same year, nuclear households, consisting of a couple and unmarried children, were the largest household type prevalent, forming about 39 per cent of the total number of households, 38 per cent of the rural households and 42 per cent of the urban households. Single-person households comprised six per cent of the total number of households, households of childless couples formed five per cent of the total and single-parent households formed four and half per cent of the total.

The People of India Project, completed recently by the Anthropological Survey of India, shows that of the 4,635 communities/castes in India, 4,122 communities have nuclear family as the predominant type. Besides the household pattern, this report narrates the vast range of institutional variety, customs and differentiation of forms of family practices such as residence after marriage, lineage, divorce, widow remarriage, remarriage of female divorcees, inheritance of property, monogamy

versus polygamy and consanguineous marriage. This wide range of family forms breaks the myth of the joint family as the single form of a typical Indian family.

Another issue with the ideal of the patriarchal family structure is that it should comprise of conjugal (husband-wife) as well as filial (parent-child) dyads. The institution of endogamous marriage and the event of child bearing are considered absolutely essential for ideal family life. As a result, single-person households, single-parent families, mixed marriages, cohabitation without marriage and childless couples are not accepted as complete or normal family types. These families need acceptance by society and attention by the policy makers. In fact, the definition of the family may be broadly conceptualised as a unit of people united by marriage, blood, adoption or consensual unions.

The family in India is often understood as an ideal and strong unit as it has remained united and stable over a period of time. As a social institution, family has consisted of more or less formal rules and regulations organised around the fulfilment of societal needs. It has been an integral part of the ethnic community which has promoted patriarchy in the family, especially in the upper economic groups where property is the base. In the patriarchal structure of the family, roles and responsibilities and control and distribution of resources are strictly determined by a hierarchy of age, gender and generation. Control over resources and assumption of superiority give the man the authority to make decisions about his dependents which would mainly include women and children.

The women's movement started in 1974, drew attention to the unequal allocation of family resources and family labour. An impetus was given to study the intra-household dynamics of unequal resource allocation, related to the basic parameters such as food intake, health care, shelter, access to education and so on. Some examples of common patriarchal family practices are the headship of the family by man, celebration of the birth of a boy child, natural guardianship by father, marriage of the girl child, dowry demands and so on. The most violent manifestations of patriarchy are female foeticide and infanticide, dowry related murders, commitment of *Sati* by widows and violence against women, in general.

Patriarchy generally leads to patriliney and patrilocality which separate the woman from her natal home after her marriage to which she has no claim. Moreover, women, often, does not have the title to the matrimonial home in which she concentrates all her time and energy. Hence, in the case of death of her husband or desertion or divorce, she is often rendered destitute as she neither has a home in her family of marriage nor in her natal home.

Studies show that working women do not necessarily have a decision making status in the family. Her paid work is often a part of the family strategy to increase its income and does not stem from her own choice of aspiration for independence. The patriarchy within the family, that is the control over non-wage labour within the family, also continues to affect the work situation around paid labour which reduces its liberatory impact.

The family has thus not been a cradle for nurturing democratic values. In fact, the child gets socialised into the concepts of inequality by gender and age in the name

of family stability and family unity. Kinship and the ethnic community have a strong hold on marriage and other family practices which perpetuate patriarchy. Individuals or families who deviate from the patriarchal norms often face ostracism. Even women ingest patriarchal values and, in turn, utilise their power and position over others such as the younger women within the family as well as over men and women of lower castes and classes. However, family being considered a personal matter, the patriarchal control of woman has rarely been questioned and even physical violence against women remains invisible and largely unpunished in spite of the legal provision against them. If India is to nurture a democracy, based on its constitutional mandate, it has to be reflected in the microcosm of its society, the family, and woven into its social fabric.

Patriarchy needs to be abolished not only for the sake of women, but for the democratisation of the family as a whole. Family as a primary support unit for an individual cannot be stabilised and mutual reciprocity cannot be reconstituted, unless patriarchy is arrested. If men are willing to forgo their power of control and share more responsibilities of unpaid domestic work, the family unit can be reconstituted on the basis of democratic rights and more stability to the society and security to the individual can be granted. If the family is facing problems of instability and disintegration today, it is not because women are asking for their rights, but because of socioeconomic changes, market forces, consumerism and environmental degradation.

### ***Issues with the Socioeconomic Changes***

The family has responded in many ways to the processes of technological, cultural and economic changes. Studies on the relationship between economic development and family system have revealed that extended families have made a positive contribution both in the growth of the "green revolution" in the countryside and in the establishment of successful industrial entrepreneurship. However, the green revolution in villages has brought about technological changes and a new mode of work relationship in which women find themselves increasingly alienated and suffer a loss of status. There is also a loss of status for the traditional male patriarch since modern agriculture depends less on inherited experience and more on the management of new techno-scientific, marketing and negotiating skills. This process of change reinforces a new form of patriarchy, that of the relatively younger males. However, the traditional patriarch still holds power in social domains such as marriage, customs and rituals.

The haphazard growth of our economy, the mega-development projects with inappropriate technology, and centralised urban development structure have increased the gap between men and women, on the one hand, and between the rich and the poor, on the other. It has led to migration and displacement of individuals and families from their roots, traditional sources of livelihood and community bonds and supports. It has led to a disenchantment with rural life. Both, the rural poor and the younger generation of the rural middle class, seek their future outside the village economy.

People move seasonally, rotationally, or otherwise, to seek a livelihood, and this movement does not permit them to be identified as target groups in the different

state schemes such as removal of poverty, local resource mobilisation, land development, housing or health. With the parents constantly on the move, schooling becomes difficult for the children.

There is no place in the present economy for those whose land is appropriated through the market forces or those displaced due to development projects. Compensation for losses is given to those who had resources. For landless families and the marginal farmers, scheduled castes and tribes, who are already marginalised, the conditions deteriorate further.

Migration has fundamental implication for women and children, who suffer whether the male migrates or they migrate with the male. The kinship network is broken and the traditional skills are no longer useful in the urban economy. Such a process of development has not only not led to community development but, in fact, struck at the roots of the community. The security net, which existed, is also losing out.

The result is urban ghettoisation, expansion of slums and pavement dwelling, growth of fragmented families, worsening condition of women and children and ecological decay. It also results in child labour, urban violence and criminalisation of urban life. The cleavages among groups and classes are gathering intensity, both in the rural and urban areas, leading to confrontations and symbiosis.

Single-parent families and female-headed households need particular attention as they are found to be poorest of the poor. Single-parent families are generally headed by women who may be widows, divorced, separated, deserted or unmarried mothers. Female heads of households who are not single parents, may have a husband who is a migrant, disabled, or imprisoned, or he may not be contributing his income to the family. These women have the main earning responsibility for the family when they are neither trained nor experienced in working in the modern economy. When they have young children to look after, they are further marginalised and exploited in the unorganised sector.

Problems such as occupational health hazards, disability, chronic/terminal illness, AIDS, substance abuse, and so on, are not just individual problems but family problems as well. Some of these problems may have their sources in the family. They also affect family interaction and development of other members. Especially in families with limited resources, these problems imply further financial and emotional strain.

The new economic policy followed by the Government of India, has initiated policy changes towards expanding the role of the private sector and relying increasingly on market forces for the allocation of resources. The NEP directly affects the agriculture sector. It aims to link Indian agriculture to the world markets, on the one hand, and remove input subsidies, on the other. Even the consumption subsidies and the public distribution system have been cut drastically. Subsistence crops are being undermined as cash crops and exports receive emphasis. Moreover, there is considerable reduction in the work force in the formal sector. Women are the first to go as they are largely in the aided social sectors of health and education. As large numbers of men lose employment, the load on women to earn through the informal sector increases.

Activities which have so far been considered a domain of the informal sector, are now being discovered as profitable propositions. Large private entrepreneurs with automatic machines may take over some of these activities, thereby rendering a large number of informal sector workers jobless. Thus, these policies aggravate marginalisation of vulnerable families.

Print and electronic mass media play a major role in family life. Electronic media has the potential to play promotional as well as destructive roles. As of now, it promotes individual aspirations of consumerism and violence. It also reinforces stereotyped patriarchal images of families and their members. On the other hand, it reduces family interaction.

The cumulative effect of all this results in a crisis of values. Social mobility and economic growth have inhibited the faith in values of liberalism, humanism and social justice.

Family, being the primary and universal institution among all communities, provides a base for social action which can reform and moderate the disorderly forces of social change. For the family to meet these challenges from within and from its environment, it is necessary to rethink the goals for family well-being.

## **Agenda for Action**

### ***Goals for Family Well-being***

The goal of the United Nations for the IYF in 1994, is "Building the smallest democracy at the heart of society". The principles of the IYF seek to promote the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms accorded to all individuals by the set of internationally agreed instruments, formulated under the aegis of the United Nations. Family well-being may be perceived as a combination of family rights and responsibilities that cut across the diverse forms of families.

Such goals for family well-being are threefold.

- We may aim at a democratic family with scope for the development of each individual member and for enriched family relationships.
- We need a democratic environment for the family with scope for the well-being of each family unit and for its harmony with its environment.
- We may aim at a family for every individual, unless an adult leaves it by choice.

These goals are elaborated below.

#### **A. *The Individual's Rights and Responsibilities within the Family***

1. It is the responsibility of every family member to promote sensitivity and responsiveness, positive communication patterns, relationship of companionship, democratic decision making, respect for individual needs and differences, peaceful and non-violent approaches for resolving conflicts and support in crisis situations, thereby promoting development of each family member.
2. The vulnerable members in the family need special attention as they lack access to and control over resources and are, therefore, powerless. In the family, children, disabled and elderly are vulnerable due to their low capabilities. Women are relatively powerless due to their low socioeconomic status in the

patriarchal family structure. There is a need to prioritise attention to the vulnerable members in the family, protect them from deprivation and exploitation, and promote intrafamily equity.

3. Every family member is equal in dignity and worth, irrespective of age, gender and abilities. Every family member, therefore, has the right to equal allocation of family resources and division of labour.
  - Every family member has equal right to physical care and development through food and health care.
  - Every family member has equal responsibility to do household work.
  - Every family member has equal right to family housing. The ownership title to the house should be shared by all the adult members.
  - Every child has equal right to inheritance of parental property, irrespective of gender and marital status.
  - Every family member has equal right to education and training, to work and earn, to rest and leisure.
4. Both the married partners have the right to gender equality in marriage with respect to monogamy; role, power and status; parenting and guardianship of children; ownership title to matrimonial home and property; dissolution of marriage and division of matrimonial property. The concept of man as the head of the family needs to be replaced by the concept of the couple jointly sharing the family responsibilities.
5. Every family member has the right to freedom and choices in opinion, expression and behaviour, in the areas of occupation, marriage and child bearing.
  - Every adult has the right to marry and have children or choose not to marry and/or not have children provided this is made clear before entering into a marriage.
  - Every adult has the right to choice with reference to age at marriage, selection of marriage partner, mixed marriages, consanguineous marriages, marriage rituals, lineage, adoption and remarriage.

There is a need to accept plurality of family forms, especially single-person households, childless couples, mixed marriages and cohabitations.
6. Every family member has the right to life and security, privacy and honour and protection from mental and physical violence.

Family practices such as female foeticide and infanticide, dowry related murders, commitment of *Sati* by widows, and family violence against women and children, in general, extinguish these rights and, therefore, they should be halted.

#### B. *The Family's Rights and Responsibilities with Reference to its Environment*

The family's environment may include nature, community/society, the state and other systems with which it interacts.

1. Every family has a right to freedom of residence in its natural environment. It is the state's responsibility to decentralise development in order to stabilise families in their natural environment. Every family has a responsibility to maintain harmony with nature.
2. The society and the state have the responsibility to protect the individual's rights within the family with respect to the following aspects of family life: marriage;

annulment and divorce; guardianship and custody of children; maintenance; inheritance; and abuse and violence in families.

3. Every family is equal in dignity and rights, without distinction of family form, language, ethnicity, political opinion, social origin or class. It is the responsibility of every community/society and state to respect plurality of family forms and avoid discrimination.

The following families require attention and acceptance as they have not been accepted as "normal" family types: single-person households, single-parent families and female-headed households, childless couples, mixed marriages and cohabitations.

4. It is the responsibility of the state and of every family to register birth, marriage and death of every family member.
5. Every adult man and woman has the right and responsibility to work and earn a living. However, no individual/family should be held in slavery or servitude.
6. Every family has the right to adequate housing in a clean, healthy and peaceful environment. It is the responsibility of every family and the state to keep its environment clean, healthy and peaceful.
7. Every family and all its members have the right to information about the access to appropriate public services provided by financial, legal, health, education and training, child care and other systems.
8. Every family has the right to social security in times of individual crises such as disability, terminal illness, unemployment and ageing; and in family crises such as displacement and victimisation by political violence and environmental disasters.
9. Every family has the right to consumer protection.
10. Vulnerable families need special attention as they lack access to and control over resources and are, therefore, powerless and "at risk".

Families of the following groups are "at risk" due to their low socioeconomic status in society:

- Landless and marginal farmers
- Displaced and migrant families
- Pavement and slum dwellers
- Unorganised labour
- Single-parent families and female-headed households
- Individuals in institutions and on the streets.

The following families are considered "at risk" because of the crisis situation that they face within or outside the family.

- Families of the disabled/chronically/terminally ill/substance abuse addicts
- Families victimised by political/societal violence
- Families affected by environmental disasters.

There is a need to prioritise attention to these "at risk" families and enhance their access and control over natural and public resources and services, and to protect them from deprivation and exploitation.

11. It is the responsibility of every community/society and the state to promote and protect every family's right to intra-family equity and rights with reference to its environment and provide an eco-balance to the family. It is the state's responsibility to frame an explicit national family policy in this direction.



12. It is the responsibility of every family and all its members to protect the rights of other families and their members and promote and protect the functioning of the community/society and the state.

C. *The Individual's Right to have a Family*

1. Every child has the right to be reared by his or her natural parents and the family. Both the parents and the family have the primary responsibility to rear their children.

Parents who face problems with child care may first be provided supplementary services such as day care, sponsorship and guidance. Removal of the child from the family may be avoided as far as possible. If necessary, it may be considered as a temporary arrangement with other families, preferably, in the kinship or neighbourhood network, that is in foster family care, with the goal of sending the child back to his or her family after rehabilitating the natural family. When going back to the natural family is not possible for destitute children, these children may be legally placed in adoption with substitute families. Institutional care may be considered as the last resort when all the above efforts have failed. With reference to this goal, family contacts of children in institutions and on the streets need to be strengthened and these children need to be reunified with their natural families or rehabilitated in substitute families. The concept of illegitimacy vis-a-vis children needs to be abandoned.

2. Every adult has the right to marry and found a family.

3. Every elderly person has the right to be cared for by his or her family with the necessary socioeconomic supports where required.

*Conclusion*

Thus, the urgent need is to find a rightful place for every individual in the family and a rightful place for every family in its environment. Achievement of these goals will enrich the family unit and prevent exploitation, disintegration and destitution of families and their members. Achievement of these goals, calls for not only laws, policies and programmes but also increased public awareness.

The following modules of family life enrichment are recommended for increasing people's knowledge, attitude and skills for enriched family life.

- Attitude development in favour of a democratic family life
- Education for enrichment of family interaction and relationships
- Education for preparation of different stages of family life span.
- Strengthening family's interaction with other systems in the environment.

Towards achievement of these goals for family well-being, commitment and coordinated action are needed by the government, non-government and academic organisations.

**Role of the Government**

***Weed for a National Policy***

A holistic national policy based on the goals of family well-being would guide the legislative bodies, different Ministries and their Departments and other government organisations and infrastructures at the state, district and village levels. Through

such a policy, the government may enrich the family and its interaction with its community, so that the needs of individual members are met. In the case of failure of the family, community can take its place. The community includes the collective initiative of the people and the NGOs. The state may substitute families only as a last resort, and, preferably, within the community and culture nearest to individual's needs.

### ***Recommendations for Government Infrastructure***

The following recommendations are made for coordination and convergence of various government programmes towards the achievement of the goals for family well-being:

- A national council/board for family well-being/development may be set up as a permanent infrastructure for coordination and convergence of activities by the government, NGOs, academic institutions and international agencies.
- The need for coordination, integration and consolidation of the various government schemes within a Department/Ministry and across Departments and Ministries may be examined for service delivery to the family as a unit. Proliferation of schemes may be halted and new and emerging components may be integrated with the existing schemes.
- In order to reach out to the "at risk" families in each village in a consolidated manner, the Panchayati Raj system may be considered the nodal service delivery system for the central and state Ministries/Departments of Home, Agriculture, Rural Development, Labour, Human Resource Development, Health and Family Welfare, Welfare and others. This system may employ a community organiser for each village/cluster of villages. He/She may identify the needs of the "at risk" families in the village and integrate the implementation of relevant government schemes for them. Literate people from the villages may be trained for these jobs. Administrative and supervisory services may be provided at Taluka and District levels. The finances for these schemes may be obtained from the above Ministries and Departments by a review and reallocation of funds.

Similarly, in order to reach out to the "at risk" families in each ward of the city in a consolidated manner, the municipal system may be considered the nodal service delivery system for the central and state Ministries/Departments of Home, Urban Development, Labour, Human Resource Development, Health and Family Welfare, Welfare and others. In this system, a community development centre may be set up which may employ trained community organisers. Their functions may be to identify the needs of the "at risk" families in the ward and integrate the implementation of the relevant government schemes for them. The financing may be obtained from the above Ministries and Departments by a review and reallocation of funds and personnel of the existing schemes.

### ***Overall Tasks for the Government***

The following are the overall tasks recommended to be undertaken by the government, for the achievement of the goals for family well-being.

- Review and reform the government economic policies, development projects, and programmes, for decentralisation and for the achievement of the goals of

family's rights with reference to its environment and enhancing the vulnerable families' access to and control over natural and public resources and services.

- Review and reform laws, social policies and programmes with reference to achievement of the goals of intra-family equity, protection of the rights of vulnerable family members, acceptance of plurality of family forms, and family's rights with reference to its environment.
- Each policy and programme should have an in-built mechanism of monitoring and evaluation in the initiation, implementation and conclusion stages. The beneficiaries should play an active role as participants of this process. The assessment should be quantitative as well as qualitative.
- Incorporate the modules of family life enrichment for development of a democratic family life, enrichment of family interactions and relationships, preparation for different stages of the family life span, and strengthening family's interaction with other systems in its environment, in all the developmental schemes of the government.
- Replace the concept of man as the head of the family in laws and policies by the concept of the couple jointly sharing family responsibilities. The ration cards, housing allotments and other government grants should be made in their joint names.
- Enhance government interaction with the NGOs and the corporate sector for achievement of the goals for family well-being.
- Encourage people's participation, self-help groups and cooperatives for understanding and meeting family needs.
- Incorporate the components of family issues, goals for family well-being, modules of family life enrichment and strategies for family intervention in the training programmes of government and NGO functionaries that implement government schemes.
- Review and revise the schedule/questionnaire of the Census of India, method of data processing, publication of data and their accessibility to consumers.
- Review the family terms used and their definitions in various laws and policies in order to recommend terms with uniform definitions.
- Incorporate the goals for family well-being in the plans of actions of the state governments and widen their scope to include family focus.
- Develop and maintain a national and inter-state data bank on the family.

Some of these tasks may be allocated to the relevant ministries, departments and government organisations.

### ***Role of Non-government Organisations***

The following tasks are recommended for the NGOs towards the goals for family well-being:

- Create public awareness and opinion about the need for reforms in family laws and policies.
- Organise NGOs and people and act as pressure groups to increase government accountability regarding reforms in family laws and policies and financial disbursements.

- Monitor the enforcement of family laws and conduct social audit of family law developments. Conduct para-legal structures accessible to families for education and referral.
- Undertake a comprehensive approach, including a range of psychodynamic, ecological and advocacy approaches of intervention with families and their members, in order to meet the needs of the families holistically.
- Reach out to and protect the interests of vulnerable members in the family and of the "at risk" families.
- Encourage the families in the neighbourhood to form self-help groups and cooperatives.
- Strengthen the family contact of individuals in institutions and on the street and facilitate the process of their reunification with their families.
- Understanding the family context and involvement of the family members are necessary while working with individuals.
- Stress a developmental approach through family life enrichment programmes to create people's knowledge, attitudes and skills about a democratic family life, enrichment of family interactions and relationships, preparation of different stages of the family life span and strengthening family's interaction with its environment, for all the family members.
- Strengthen information and referral services and networking with government organisations and other NGOs to avoid fragmentation of service delivery to the family and to have a strong joint forum for advocacy.
- Monitor and evaluate their work with the families, with reference to the goals of family well-being.
- Document their experiences of work with the families and feed the findings to the academic institutions and training programmes. Training of non-government functionaries in managing information systems is necessary to evolve a data base.

### ***Role of Academic Institutions***

The academic institutions may carry out the following tasks:

- Examine the academic curriculum and text books at every level of the education system to identify stereotyped family roles and relationships and advocate for their replacement with modules which give messages of intra-family equity and plurality of family forms.
- Conduct curriculum review and planning at the school level and in the social science disciplines of the university to incorporate the Indian content on applied family studies. Courses on children, women, disabled and elderly may particularly incorporate the content on family context.
- Develop indigenous text books on family in the context of Indian reality.
- Carry out research on family issues in the context of socioeconomic changes with special emphasis on the vulnerable family members and "at risk" families.
- Encourage interdisciplinary and applied research on the family, with plurality of methods and people's participation.
- Require every academic research to draw implications for developmental issues and, wherever possible, for policies and programmes. These implications may be conveyed to the relevant government and non-government organisations.

- Monitor and evaluate India's family laws and their enforcement, policies and schemes, and non-government intervention, for the family and analyse their impact on family well-being.
- Review family terms used in various laws and policies and their definitions and recommend terms with uniform definitions.
- Prepare an alternative model for plans and budgets after an analysis of the existing budget.
- Develop a draft of the Uniform Civil Code.
- Create public opinion through public debates on family issues, laws, policies and programmes.
- Conduct extension programmes of family life enrichment.
- Carry out demonstration of innovative family intervention programmes.

***Priorities of Action for the National Committee on IYF in 1994-95***

The following priority tasks are recommended to be undertaken by the National Committee on IYF during 1994-95:

- The report of the national seminar should be circulated and discussed widely as suggested below.
  - i. Securities of all the Ministries and Government Organisations listed in this report
  - ii. State Chief Secretaries
  - iii. National NGOs and professional bodies
  - iv. All the Universities
  - v. The Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries and its Branches
  - vi. The UN Secretariat of IYF in Vienna
  - vii. The media for reviews and reporting
  - viii. All those who ask for it.
- A people's report may be prepared, based on the overview, which may be translated into Hindi and other Indian languages for dissemination to the District Administrations, Panchayati Raj institutions and people.
- Regional seminars may be held for discussion of the report and follow up activities.
- Ministries, departments, government organisations, and international agencies in India, represented on the National Committee, may examine and implement the tasks recommended for them.
- Set up a Working Group for operationalisation and follow up of the recommendations made in the Agenda for Action, mainly in the following areas:
  - i. Develop training modules for government and non-government functionaries that would incorporate the components of family issues, goals of family well-being, modules of family life enrichment and strategies of family intervention.
  - ii. Undertake the media campaign for family life enrichment.
  - iii. Review the recommendations made for the Census of India.
  - iv. Develop training material and audio-visuals for different modules of family life enrichment, for all the family members.
  - v. Develop a National Directory of NGOs.

- vi. Try out the recommendations of the Panchayati Raj system employing a community organiser at the village level and the municipal system setting up a community development centre at the ward level for reaching out to the "at risk" families in a consolidated manner, on an experimental basis.
- vii. Develop a draft of a national family policy, including its goals and guidelines.
- Publish a newsletter to compile and disseminate information about activities towards achieving the goals for family well-being whether they are carried out by the government, the NGOs, academic institutions, international agencies or the corporate sector.
- Examine the need for setting up a National Council/Board for Family Well-being/Development, which would be a permanent infrastructure for coordination and convergence of government, non-government, and academic activities towards achievement of the goals for family well-being.

The International Year of the Family, 1994, should be seen as a catalyst for a continuing process. It has given an opportunity for local, state, national and international government and non-government organisations to review and renew their resolve to work together for the achievement of family well-being.

The International Day of Families is observed on the 15 May every year. The Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1993 with resolution A/RES/47/237 and reflects the importance the international community attaches to families. The International Day provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting families. Proclamation of the International Year of the Family. The International Year of the Family, 1994, was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 44/82 of 9 December 1989. The theme of the Year is "Family: resources and responsibilities in a changing world". Its motto: "Building the Smallest Democracy at the Heart of Society". In proclaiming the Year, the General Assembly decided that the major activities for its observance should be concentrated at the local, regional and national levels, assisted by the United Nations system. The United Nations Commission for Social Development International observance. "This is not a list of National Days, commemorative days, or days which have some significance in one or a very small number of countries." International observance (also known as international dedication or international anniversary) denotes a period of time to observe some issue of international interest or concern. International Year of the Family The UN often assigns years and days with International observance to have special names with meanings. Calendar of Observances 2020. The increasingly pluralistic population of the United States is made up of many different ethnic, cultural, faith and religious communities. To enhance mutual understanding among groups and promote inclusive communities, the ADL offers this resource as a tool to increase awareness of and respect for religious obligations and ethnic and cultural festivities that may affect students, colleagues and neighbors in your community. Religious Observations. Important national and international observances that may be commemorated in the U.S. are also included. Calendar System. NEW YEAR'S DAY The first day of the year in the Gregorian calendar, commonly used for civil dating purposes.