

## NEWS FROM DEPARTMENTS AND RESEARCH UNITS OF THE INSTITUTE

This section of the Journal will be devoted to reports in order to acquaint readers with developments in Departments and in Research Units of the Institute. The following report pertains to the Unit for Child and Youth Research.

### THE UNIT FOR CHILD AND YOUTH RESEARCH

#### *The Background*

The concern of the UNICEF with welfare and development of the younger generation is too well-known to be emphasized here. However, the UNICEF itself was aware that its involvement was rather limited in meeting the needs of children and youth in the urban areas in India. As one of the steps to increase such involvement, the UNICEF, South Central Asia Region, decided to sponsor a research unit at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). The move was initiated in 1967 and after discussions between the UNICEF, the Government of India and the TISS, the Unit for Study of the Urban Child and Youth came into being on January 1, 1969.

Besides being a training institute in the fields of social work and personnel management, the TISS is one of the major social research agencies in India. Even so, it suffered from inadequate finances for research. It had to depend on various funding agencies and had to follow, to a considerable extent, the priorities or *ad hoc* requirements of the funding agencies. As a result, the TISS was unable to develop for a long time any identifiable research programmes of its own.

Setting up special research units to study certain specific areas or themes was one of the ways of developing such identifiable research programmes and also a means of giving opportunities to the personnel to develop their different fields. Thus, the

UNICEF's offer to sponsor the Unit was most welcome to the TISS.

The UNICEF's valuable sponsorship continued from January 1969 to March 1974, sufficiently long to put the Unit firmly on its feet. In April 1974, the TISS incorporated the Unit in its own work-programme with financial assistance from the University Grants Commission. It may be mentioned here that Prof. P. Ramachandran, who had assisted the Director, Dr. M. S. Gore, in the discussions leading to the formation of the Unit, was the Hon. Project Director of the Unit, until Miss Mandakini Khandekar took over as the Head of the Unit in December 1969.

#### *The Objectives*

The principal objectives of the Unit are:

- (1) to conduct research studies in relation to needs of and services for children and youth,
- (2) to develop teaching materials to feed into training programmes for child and youth welfare workers, and
- (3) to serve as a documentation and information cell.

#### *The Enlarged Perspective*

Very few research agencies can hope to study in depth the full range of the large spectrum of regional variations in a continental country like India. Though the term "urban" is broad in its scope, the Unit was to limit its research studies to Greater Bombay which exhibits many of the best as well as the worst features of the urban

situation in India as indeed in many developing countries. Thus, the very first task that the Unit undertook was to prepare a *Report on the Situation of Children and Youth in Greater Bombay* on the basis of the available secondary data. The subsequent nine studies too pertained to Greater Bombay.

In recent years, the need was felt to step outside Greater Bombay and to expand the scope of work so as to cover Maharashtra. The expectation is also that should there be an occasion to study the problems of rural children and youth, the Unit would be prepared to take on the research studies.

In view of this changed perspective, the name of the Unit was changed in early 1977 to "Unit for Child and Youth Research" (UCYR).

During the transitional stage when the change-over was being contemplated, the Unit prepared a report entitled *Children and Youth in Maharashtra* based on all available secondary data and started a research project to evaluate the work of the institutions in Maharashtra covered by the scheme for destitute children.

Soon after the Unit assumed its new name, it started a secondary analysis of the National Sample Survey data (28th Round) on Maternal and Child Care in Maharashtra and a research project on the Levels of Development of Social Welfare Services in Maharashtra.

The new name is indicative of the Unit's desire and willingness to study the problems of the urban as well as the rural children.

#### *Work Done*

*Bibliographies:* The Unit had prepared an unannotated bibliography on child welfare and related subjects in 1970 which is being updated now. An annotated bibliography on pre-school children is at

present available for consultation at the Unit as it is still on cards. A select bibliography on the young child in India is also ready. The three other lists prepared are: selected Acts in force in Maharashtra; a list of books, documents, etc. consulted while formulating a proposal for integrated services for children in Greater Bombay; and a preliminary bibliography on population pressures.

*Research Studies:* The following research reports have been prepared.

1. *A Report on the Situation of Children and Youth in Greater Bombay*, by Mandakini Khandekar, published by the TISS, 1970.
2. *Profiles of Urban Youth Seeking Employment*, by R. D. Naik, published by the TISS, 1971.
3. *Parents and the Bombay International School*, by M. Khandekar, 1971. For limited circulation.
4. *The Neighbourhood House in Nagpada*, by M. Khandekar and P. N. Vasudevan, 1971, For limited circulation.
5. *People's Problems in the Project Area: An Opinion Survey*, by M. Khandekar, P. N. Vasudevan and P. V. Gopujkar, 1973, (Mimeo.).
6. *A Study of the Drop-outs* by M. Khandekar, published in the *IJSW* Vol. XXXIV No. 4 and Vol. XXXV, No. 1, 1974.
7. *Utilization of Social and Welfare Services in Greater Bombay* by M. Khandekar, published by the TISS, 1974.
8. *The Disadvantaged Preschoolers in Greater Bombay* by M. Khandekar, published by the Somaiya Publications, 1975.
9. *Financial Ratios for Child Welfare*

*Agencies*, by M. Khandekar, 1976, (Mimeo.).

10. *Children and Youth in Maharashtra*, by M. Khandekar, 1976, (Mimeo.).
11. *Towards Minimum Content of Parent Education: A Survey of Experts' Opinions*, by Kamini J. Ramaiya, 1976, (Mimeo.).
12. *Bringing Up Deprived Children* by M. Khandekar, 1977, (Mimeo.).

*Reviews of Research:* As a result of the Unit's documentation work, it has been possible to undertake reviews of research. Simultaneously, abstracts of research studies are also under preparation. The book, *Abstracts of Selected Research Studies in Child Health and Nutrition* prepared by K. J. Ramaiya and R. Kumar is on the threshold of publication. The Review on the same subject by Kamini Ramaiya is nearing completion. *The Review of Research in Employment and Training of Children and Youth (1977)* has been finalized by P. V. Gopujkar. She has also prepared *Abstracts of Selected Research Studies* on the same subject. Similar reviews and abstracts are under preparation on child and youth welfare.

Based on such reviews of research, members of the Unit offer a course to the

students specializing in Family and Child Welfare.

*Papers:* From time to time, members of staff of the Unit have written papers on different topics. So far, 25 such papers have been written. Many have been published. Some were written for conferences, seminars, etc.

*Guiding Student Research:* So far, the staff of the Unit has guided nearly 30 M.A.-level students. The Unit encourages students to take group projects and after the students write their individual reports, the data are re-analysed and consolidated reports are written. Three such reports have so far been prepared. They are: "Profiles of Urban Youth Seeking Employment," "A Study of Drop-outs," and "Minimum Content of Parent Education". The author of the last mentioned report Kamini Ramaiya, who is now on the staff of the Unit, was one of the three students who carried out the research project.

At present one M. Phil and three Ph.D. scholars are placed with the Unit.

*Consultancy:* The Head of the Unit is often consulted by research and service agencies and other research workers for their research studies. So far, she has been so consulted for nine projects and three research reports.