

## I. INTRODUCTION

Children are the supreme assets of our country. India is home to the largest child population in the world. "The development of children is the first priority on the Country's development Agenda, not because they are the most vulnerable but because they are our supreme assets and also the future human resource of our country".

It is now globally agreed that investment in human resource development is essential for economic advancement of any nation. Government of India has accorded high priority to ensure that children of India have access to essential services of nutrition, health care and education. India has recently introduced the Right to education Act 2009 which ensures free and compulsory education to all children in India in the 6 to 14 age group. More over to safe guard the rights and enhance the development of children, Government of India has been implementing various programmes and policies both in government and in non-government sectors.

Even though considerable progress has been achieved in all children related indicators, the tasks yet to be done are sizeable. One of the main reasons for the same is that the Child related programmes are planned in the absence of adequate data on the nature and extent of problems and needs of the children. The programmes on children have not succeeded in having their impact on children up to the expected level because most of the programmes did not have an information system for monitoring the programmes for rectification of defects in the delivery of services.

A sound information system on children is an essential pre-requisite for decision making in modern administration. Since children have been included in our national endeavours, it is imperative, to establish a database on them. Accordingly, the need for developing appropriate statistics on children has been felt and emphasised during the last few years.

As an outcome of the resolution adopted in the conference of Central and State organisations (COCSSO) held in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat on 7-8 February 2008, the Central Statistical Office has initiated action for setting up of a "India Forum on Child Statistics " as an institutional mechanism comprising all major stake holders dealing with child related issues. The main objective is to foster co-ordination and collaboration and improve the scope, content, quality and

transparency in the collection and reporting of statistical data on our children and the families they come from. The National Statistics Day 2010 was celebrated by the Central Statistical Office and the Directorate of Economics and Statistics of all States and Union Territories on 29<sup>th</sup> June with the theme of "Child Statistics"

The present publication of this Directorate on "Children Statistics" is the maiden attempt and gives a brief account of demographic details, health, education, nutrition facilities available to children. The details of benefits extended to children under various programmes implemented by government departments for the development and welfare of children in Puducherry are also incorporated in the publication.