

Gaping holes in child development scheme

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“People say hungry children is a shame for India. I don’t give a damn whether it is shame for India. It is a question of well-being and opportunities for these children,” said Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen expressing outrage at the state of India’s children. He was speaking at Bal Adhikar Samvaad, organised by the Citizens’ Initiative for Rights of Children Under Six.

Sen released FOCUS, a report that highlights the startling contrasts in the effectiveness of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme — designed to meet the educational, health and nutritional needs of children under six through an anganwadi centre for 1000 families — within different states.

It adds to the findings of the recently released National Family Health Survey-3 data for 22 states, which has made the startling revelation that in the last eight years, there has been no change in child malnutrition levels, no progress on immunization and no decline in the incidence of anaemia.