

## **Welfare of Weaker Sections**

10.34 Socially disadvantaged groups such as Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Minorities have received special focus over the years. Various programmes for welfare and development of SCs, OBCs and Minorities are implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. For STs the Ministry of Tribal Affairs was set up in October, 1999 exclusively to attend to the needs of tribal population keeping in view their special needs and problems.

10.35 An enhanced central plan allocation of Rs.969.34 crore has been provided for the welfare schemes for SCs, OBCs and minorities during 2000-01 (BE) as against Rs.887.27 crore in 1999-2000 (RE), registering an increase of 9.25 per cent. Similarly, a budget provision of Rs.810 crore has been allocated for the welfare and development of Scheduled Tribes for the year 2000-01 (BE) registering a growth rate of 18.38 per cent over 1999-2000 allocation of Rs.684.25 crore (RE).

10.36 The financial institutions *viz.*, National Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and National Minority Development and Finance Corporation (NMFDC) have been strengthened by enhancing their authorized share capital with the aim of improving their performance and coverage.

## **Welfare of disabled and other disadvantaged people**

10.37 The Persons with Disability (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 has become the anchor for rendering help to the disabled to become, as far as possible, self-reliant and productive. Instead of the welfare and charity approach, the Act ensures movement toward protection of rights, equal opportunities and, full participation in various developmental activities by the disabled.

10.38 A National Programme for Rehabilitation of the Persons with Disabilities (NPRPD) has been launched for 'Reaching the Unreached', which envisages rehabilitation services right from the village level. The scheme will provide support to the State Governments for setting up of District Level Rehabilitation Centres and

State level Apex Institutions for extending rehabilitation services besides training and manpower development. During 2000-01, an amount of Rs. 43 crore has been provided to the States/U.Ts as Additional Central Assistance.

10.39 A National Trust with one time contribution of Rs.100 crore has been set up for affirmative action in favour of persons with autism, cerebral palsy, mental retardation and multiple disabilities with one time contribution of Rs. 100 crore from the Central Government to the corpus of the Trust.

10.40 Disability has been included as a separate category in Census 2001 in order to ascertain correct number of persons with different kinds of disability. This would facilitate better planning of welfare schemes for the persons with disabilities.

## **Care of Elderly**

10.41 In order to take care of the well-being of the elderly, Programme for Older Persons continued to extend financial assistance to Voluntary Organisations for setting up/continuance of day-care Centres, Old Age Homes, Mobile Medicare Services, etc. Under the Scheme of Grant-in-Aid to NGOs, financial assistance to NGOs was extended to establish 42 new Old Age Homes, 16 new Day Care Centres and 17 new Mobile Medicare Units. As a result of this initiative, 290 Old Age Homes, 403 Day Care Centres, 59 Mobile Medicare Units and 3 Projects for extending non-institutional services for Older Persons were functioning in different parts of the country.

## **Juvenile Justice**

10.42 The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Bill 2000 has been passed by the Parliament which would replace the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986. The Bill provides for proper care, protection and treatment of children by catering to their development needs and by adopting a child-friendly approach for the adjudication and disposition of matters in the best interest of children and their ultimate rehabilitation. Childline, a 24 hours free phone emergency service for children in distress has become operational in 15 cities. By the end of 2001, this service is to be made available in 30 cities. So far, Childline has received 5 lakh calls for helping children in distress.