

Women in the workforce

10.18 Women constitute a significant proportion of the labour force. Female participation in the workforce, however, varies across rural-urban areas. According to the 58th Round (July-December 2004) Survey of NSSO, the female Workforce participation rate in rural areas declined to 281 per thousand compared to 299 in the 55th Round (July 1999-2000). In Urban areas, it increased marginally from 139 to 140. In rural areas, 85 per cent of women workers are engaged primarily in agricultural activities, and related sectors such as animal husbandry. In urban areas, a significant proportion of women workers are employed in the unorganized sectors such as household industries, petty trade and services and building and construction activities. According to a National Institute of Public Finance & Policy (NIPFP) study on Gender Budgeting the average female wage is almost 80 per cent of the male average in urban areas, while it is less than 60 per cent of the corresponding male rate in rural areas.

10.19 Employment of women in the organized sector (both public and private) as

on March 31, 2002 at 4.95 million, constituted 18.1 per cent of the total organized sector employment in the country, compared to 17.9 per cent in 2001. The distribution of women employees across industries reveals that community, social and personnel services sectors employed 56.5 per cent of women workers followed by manufacturing (20.6 per cent), agriculture and allied occupation (9.4 per cent) and finance, insurance, real and business (5.2 per cent). The proportion of women in organized sector employment is higher in States with higher female literacy rates.

10.20 Improvement in the quality of women's employment depends upon increased access to education and skill-development training. Several initiatives have been taken to provide training for women. There are about 776 Institutes (224 Women Industrial Training Institutes and 552 Women Wings in General Industrial Training Institutes (ITI)/Private ITI) providing about 47,472 training seats for vocational training facilities for women at craftsman level.