

## **Empowerment of women**

10.52 The Mid-Term Review of the Tenth Plan has identified areas of concern such as adverse child sex ratio, high infant and maternal mortality, wide gender gaps in literacy and wage rates, escalating violence against women, and child trafficking. It has recommended universalizing programmes like Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), expanding crèches, evaluation of existing programmes, strengthening the delivery mechanism, and assessing the gender impact of all programmes. Planning, policies, programmes and schemes of the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) are being specially formulated to ensure that these objectives in terms of social and economic empowerment of women and gender justice reach the targeted groups.

### *Health and nutrition of women*

10.53 Measures to uplift health and nutrition standards of women, under the ICDS, include health check up for pregnant women and new mothers, immunization, pre and post-natal care, and supplementary nutrition. Under the 'Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls' (NPAG), special attention is being given to nutrition requirements of the potential mothers of the future. DWCD has been operating NPAG as a pilot project in 51 districts with the ultimate objective of universalizing the scheme.

### *Training and Employment of women*

10.54 Empowerment of women cannot happen unless they are provided with adequate income generating activities, through wage and self-employment. A number of schemes such as Swyamsiddha, Swablamban and Support to Training-cum-Employment Programme (STEP) are in progress where women mobilized as viable SHGs are utilizing micro credit with the help of agencies like the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh for income generating activities or getting trained in various traditional trades and crafts (such as poultry, bee keeping and weaving) as well as newly emerging

vocations (such as the IT sector), or skill up-gradation and capacity building. To facilitate the employment of women away from their homes/towns, schemes such as Working Women Hostels with day-care centres and creches/day centres are also being implemented. Care and protection of women in distress is a focused area for attention.

### *Legal Safeguards*

10.55 The National Commission for Women (NCW) safeguards the interests of women with a mandate covering almost all aspects of women's rights. There are about 42 Central Acts concerning women, of which 32 Acts have been reviewed by the NCW for their efficiency and removing gender discriminatory provisions. In addition, the DWCD is also in the process of initiating new legislation amending existing ones so that they become more potent in protecting women. These include Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, which came into force on September 14, 2005. The Act seeks to provide immediate and emergent relief to women who face situations of violence in their homes. Protection Against Sexual Harassment of Women Bill, seeking to confer on women the right to be protected from sexual harassment, is being drafted at the moment.

### *Gender Budgeting*

10.56 The Tenth Plan reinforced the commitment to gender budgeting to establish its gender-differential impact and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments. It is perceived as a powerful tool not only for tracking allocation of resources for women but also covers implementation issues and outcomes. The Union Expenditure Budget 2005-06 has institutionalized Gender Budgeting in the budget document through statement 19, Expenditure Budget, Vol. 1 wherein it has been indicated that the budget provision in the BE 2005-06, substantially meant for welfare of women and children, is Rs. 14,378.68 crore. At present Gender Budget cells have been set up in 35 Departments of the Government of India.