

Women and Child Development

Development of Women

10.54 The three dimensional strategy for development of women, namely social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice continued during the terminal year of the Tenth Plan. Measures to uplift health and nutrition standards of women under ICDS include health check up for pregnant women and lactating mothers, pre- and post-natal care, and supplementary nutrition. The Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) aims at improving the nutritional and health status and their self development. In 2006-07, KSY has been expanded to cover all 6,118 ICDS projects. Under the 'Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls' (NPAG), special attention is being given to nutrition requirements of the potential mothers of the future. NPAG is being implemented as a pilot project in 51 districts. Under NPAG free food grains at a rate of 6 kg. per month are given to under nourished adolescent girls. Swayamsidha is a centrally sponsored scheme for holistic empowerment of women, through mobilization and formation of women into SHGs. Under the scheme, which was launched in 2000-01 and will end in March 2007, over 68,575 women's SHGs have been formed covering 10.00 lakh women members.

10.55 The Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) provides micro credit with a unique credit delivery model "RMK-Intermediary Organisations-SHG – Beneficiaries", one of the main reasons for its success. The other reasons are its flexible credit norms, hassle free loans, no collateral and reasonable rate of interest. Under the Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP), women are trained in various traditional trades and crafts (such as dairying, fisheries, animal husbandry, handlooms, handicraft, sericulture and social forestry). A comprehensive package of services provided includes access to credit, health care, elementary education, crèche facility, and market linkages.

10.56 Swawlamban Scheme, which provides training and skills to women in traditional and non-traditional trades, was transferred to States from April 1, 2006. To maintain continuity of implementation, States have been requested to make provision in their Annual Budget for the Scheme. To

facilitate employment of women away from their homes/towns, schemes such as Working Women Hostels with day-care centres and crèches/day centres continue. Care and protection of women in distress is a focused area for attention through Swadhar Homes and Short Stay Homes.

Legal safeguards for women

10.57 The National Commission for Women (NCW) safeguards the interests of women with a mandate covering all aspects of women's rights. Of the 42 Central Acts concerning or impacting women, 41 have been reviewed by the NCW for their efficiency and removing gender discriminatory provisions. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, which came into force on October 26, 2006, seeks to provide immediate relief to women facing situations of violence in their homes. Further, amendments are also proposed in labour legislations affecting women, such as Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 and Factories Act 1948.

Gender Budgeting

10.58 The Annual Plan 2006-07 carried forward the two important on-going strategies of Women Component Plan (WCP) and Gender Budgeting. The main objective is to mainstream gender perspective in all sectoral policies and programmes and to work towards the ultimate goal of elimination of gender discrimination and creating enabling environment for gender justice and empowerment of women. The WCP envisages that not less than 30 per cent of funds/benefits are earmarked under various schemes of women related Ministries/ Departments for women. Gender budgeting is perceived as a powerful tool for tracking not only allocation of resources for women but also implementation issues and outcomes. Rs. 28,737 crore was allocated for benefit of women under 24 Demands for Grants in 18 Ministries and Departments in 2006-07(BE). In 2006-07, to carry forward the exercise of universalizing gender budgeting exercises, gender budget cells have been set up in 50 Central Ministries/Departments, and several States have also undertaken steps in this regard. Apart from quantification of allocation of resources for women, the other initiatives include mainstreaming gender concerns in

policies and implementation process, collection and compilation of gender disaggregated data, gender development indices, and review and analysis of programmes, policies/interventions with a gender perspective.

Welfare and Development of Children

10.59 A rights-based approach has been adopted in the Tenth Plan with the strategy of promoting survival, protection and development of children. While the 'National Charter for Children' and the 'National Plan of Action for Children' were adopted in February 2004 and August 2005, respectively, a proposal to set up a 'National Commission for Child Rights' is under process.

10.60 Initiated in 1975, ICDS is one of the largest child intervention programmes in the world with a holistic package of six basic services for children up to six years of age, and for pregnant and nursing mothers. These services are: health-checkup, immunization, referral services, supplementary feeding, pre-school education, and health and nutrition education through one platform i.e. Anganwadi Centre. Starting with a modest 33 blocks/projects, it has gradually expanded to 6,118 projects of which 5,659 projects with 7,48,229 Anganwadi Centres were operational by March 31, 2006. ICDS covers 562 lakh beneficiaries consisting of 467 lakh children below 6 years of age and 95 lakh pregnant and lactating mothers. To fulfill the NCMP commitment of providing a functional Anganwadi in every settlement and ensuring full coverage of all children, and also to comply with the Supreme Court's directives, Government has approved 466 additional ICDS projects and 1,88,168 Anganwadi Centres. A number of new initiatives have been taken to improve the impact of the programme, which includes sharing of one-half of the cost of supplementary nutrition with the States under ICDS. To increase the outreach of the scheme, further expansion of the scheme to 173 additional projects, 1,07,274 additional Anganwadis and 25,961 Mini Anganwadi Centres have also been approved by the Government on December 7, 2006. In order to improve the functional efficiency, the field functionaries of ICDS are continuously being trained through Anganwadi

Training Centres (AWTCs)/Middle Level Training Centres (MLTCs) and the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD). In 2006-07, KSY, which uses the ICDS infrastructure for targeting adolescent girls (11-18 years), and addresses their needs of self development, nutrition and health status, literacy and numerical skills, and vocational skills, has been expanded from 2000 ICDS projects to all the 6,118 ICDS projects. The Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG), covering under-nourished adolescent girls in the age group of 11-19 years (weight less than 35 kg), has been operationalised through the administrative set up of ICDS in 51 identified backward/most populous districts of States/UTs. The Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for children of Working Mothers was launched on January 1, 2006 and is being implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board and two other national level voluntary organizations, namely Indian Council for Child Welfare and the Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh.

10.61 The Integrated Programme for Street Children provides basic facilities like shelter, nutrition, health care, education, and recreation facilities, and seeks to protect street children from abuse and exploitation. Child-line with a dedicated number 1098 is a 24-hour toll-free telephone service for all children in distress in 73 cities is also available under the scheme. An amendment to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, inter-alia, providing that in no case, a juvenile in conflict with law shall be placed in a police lockup or lodged in jail, was passed by Parliament and came into effect from August 23, 2006. Under Programme for Juvenile Justice, 50 per cent expenditure requirements of State/UTs is being provided for establishment and maintenance of various homes under the Juvenile Justice (care and protection of children) Act, 2000. The implementation of a Scheme for Welfare of Working Children in Need of Care and Protection commenced in January, 2005 to provide non-formal education and vocational training to working children to facilitate their entry/re-entry into mainstream education.