

WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

10.43 The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme was expanded twice in 2005-06 and 2006-07. To cover the hitherto uncovered habitations across the country towards universalization, a proposal for third phase of expansion of the ICDS scheme for 792 additional projects, 2.13 lakh additional Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and 77,102 mini-AWCs and a proposal for 20,000 AWCs on demand has also been approved in October 2008 and administrative sanctions have been issued to all states/UTs. This would take the total number of Anganwadi Centres to 14 lakh across the country with special focus on coverage of SC/ST and minority population. The financial norms for supplementary nutrition have been revised from Rs. 2.06 to Rs. 4.21 per beneficiary. Honoraria has also been enhanced by Rs. 500 above the last honorarium drawn by anganwadi workers and by Rs. 250 of the last honorarium drawn by helpers of AWCs and workers of mini-AWCs. Alongside gradual expansion of the scheme, its budgetary allocation has increased from Rs. 10,391.75 crore in the Tenth Five Year Plan to Rs. 44,400 crore in the Eleventh Five Year Plan.

10.44 Two schemes are being implemented for the development of adolescent girls viz. Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) and Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG). KSY is an intervention for adolescent girls and aims at addressing the needs of self-development, nutrition and health status, literacy and numerical skills, vocational skills of adolescent girls in the age group of 11-18 years. The scheme is currently operational in 6,118 ICDS projects. NPAG is being implemented in 51 identified districts across the country to provide free foodgrains at Rs. 6 a kilogram per beneficiary per month to undernourished adolescent girls (11-19 years) irrespective of financial status of the family to which they belong. Both the schemes are being implemented through the infrastructure of ICDS.

10.45 The Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) has been formulated for implementation during the Eleventh Five Year Plan period to provide a safe and secure environment for comprehensive development of children in the country who are in need of care and protection as well as children in conflict with law. The Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers provides services to the children of age group 0-6 years which includes supplementary nutrition, emergency medicines and contingencies. As of now, 31,718 creches have been sanctioned to the implementing agencies up to March 31, 2009. The number of beneficiaries is around 7,92,950.

10.46 The bias against the girl child is reflected in the fall in child sex ratio (0-6 years) which has declined drastically from 945 in 1991 to 927 per 1,000 males in 2001. Female foeticide is found more in the urban educated prosperous classes, and in the states of Punjab, Haryana and Gujarat with low sex ratios. Efforts are therefore being made to ensure the survival of the girl child and her right to be born, and nurture her so that she grows up to be an informed, secure and productive participating member of the community and society. A multi-dimensional strategy has been adopted with legislative, preventive, advocacy and programmatic inputs. Dhanalakshmi, a conditional cash transfer scheme for girl child with insurance cover, was launched as a pilot project in March 2008. The scheme is aimed at providing a set of staggered financial incentives for families to encourage them to retain the girl child and educate her. The scheme provides cash transfers to the family of girl child on fulfilling certain specific conditions such as birth and registration, immunization, enrolment and retention and remains unmarried at the age of 18 years. The scheme is being implemented in 11 blocks across seven states.

10.47 The Support to Training & Employment Programme for Women (STEP) scheme seeks to provide updated skills and new knowledge to poor and assetless women in 10 traditional sectors for enhancing their productivity and income generation. Twenty new projects have been sanctioned during 2008-09 benefitting 31,865 women. Presently, there are 876 hostels functioning throughout the country and during the year 2008-09, 11 new hostels which will benefit 933 women and girl students have been sanctioned under the scheme of Working Women Hostel. Till March 31, 2009, 287 Swadhar homes and 210 helplines were functional under the Swadhar Scheme. 69,803 SHGs have been formed against the target of 65,000 SHGs under Swayamsidha which was an integrated scheme of the Ministry for holistic empowerment of women through the formation of self-help groups (SHGs), awareness generation, economic empowerment and convergence of various schemes. The scheme ended on March 31, 2009.

10.48 Priyadarshini Project is a Rural Women's Empowerment & Livelihood Programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development and funded by International Fund for Agriculture Development, (IFAD) in the Mid-Gangetic Plains. The programme will be implemented as a pilot project in the district of Madhubani and Sitamarhi in Bihar and Shravasti, Bahraich, Rai Bareilly and Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh. Gender Budgeting Cells (GBCs) have been put up in 56 ministries and departments.