

## Development of Women and Children

26. The strategy of women's development comprises social and economic empowerment of women through attitudinal change towards girl child, and education, training, employment, support services and emphasis on women's rights and law. Similarly, for the child, various schemes to raise nutritional and early childhood care and pre-school educational status have been implemented. A provision of Rs.1226 crore has been provided in 1998-99 (BE) as against Rs.1026 crore in 1997-98 (RE), for implementation of various welfare schemes for women and children.

27. Under the scheme of Balika Samridhi Yojana launched on October 2, 1997 with a specific objective to encourage the enrolment and retention of girl child in the schools, the mother of a girl child born on or after August 15, 1997 in a family, below the poverty line in rural and urban areas is given a grant of Rs.500 besides a scholarship for education of the girl child when she attends school. 12 lakh girl children were benefited during 1997-98. A sum of Rs.60 crore has been provided in 1998-99 (BE) under the scheme.

28. The scheme for school drop-out adolescent in the age group of 11-18 year is being implemented in 507 blocks of ICDS projects. So far four lakh adolescent girls have been benefited. Six projects under Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) were sanctioned to benefit 53325 women during 1997-98. A sum of Rs.16 crore has been provided during 1998-99 (BE).

29. Under Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) for empowerment of women, 28000 small homogeneous women's groups were formed up to 1997-98. A sum of Rs.10 crore has been provided in 1998-99 (BE). The scheme of Mahila Samridhi Yojana (MSY) to inculcate habit of saving among rural women is being revised and

merged into IMY to have an integrated package of 5 components including formation of viable women's group.

30. Under the scheme of Employment and Income Generating Training-cum-Production centres, partially funded by Norwegian Agency for International Development and Cooperation (NORAD), 178 projects were sanctioned to benefit 36095 women in 1997-98. A budgetary provision of Rs.18 crore has been provided in 1998-99 (BE) under this programme.

31. The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) set up for meeting the credit needs of the poor women has sanctioned loan to 250312 women during 1997-98. Under the scheme of Short Stay Home for Women and Girls, there are 361 short homes running in the various parts of the country to benefit 10830 women. Since inception, 811 working women hostels have been sanctioned to benefit 56974 women for single, divorced, married and widowed women who migrate to towns and cities in need of employment.

32. For the welfare and development of the children, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme aims to provide an integral package of services of health check-up, immunisation, supplementary nutrition, referral services, pre-school education, nutrition and health education to children, pregnant women and nursing mothers. The scheme which started in 1975-76 on an experimental basis in 33 projects has been extended to 5614 centrally sponsored ICDS projects of which 4200 projects are now operational. The programme benefited 3.81 million expectant and nursing mothers and 21.0 million children under six years of age. A sum of Rs.603 crore has been provided in 1998-99 (BE). Apart from ICDS the other programme for child development are day-care centers for children below five years belonging to weaker sections of the society, Balwadi Nutrition Programme, Early Childhood Education and National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development.