

Development of women and children

10.97 While women (495.7 million) comprise 48.3 percent of the country's population, India is home to more than 350 million children accounting for nearly 30 percent of the population (Census 2001). Women and children together constitute more than 60 percent of the total population of the country. The Department of Women & Child Development, set up in 1985 acts as a *nodal agency* for formulating policies and programmes, enacting and amending legislations and implementing various interventions for the overall development of women and children.

10.98 The Tenth Plan approach aims at empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action and ensuring 'Survival, Protection and Development' of children through a Rights-Based approach. The Annual Plan 2002-03, being the first year of the Tenth Plan, has initiated and brought into effect the thrust areas outlined in the approach along with relevant policies and programs. For Annual Plan 2002-03 a total outlay of Rs.2,220 crore has been provided for the Women and Child Development Sector as against Rs.1650 crore made available in 2001-02 (BE) under the Central Sector. Rs.169.88 crore is for Women, Rs.22,014.01 crore for Children, Rs.130 crore for GIA and other schemes, and Rs.3 crore for the Food and Nutrition Board.

Empowerment of women

10.99 The Ninth Five Year Plan adopted the strategy of Women's Component Plan, under which not less than 30 percent of funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women-related sectors, for women specific programmes. A review by the Planning Commission of the progress of the Women's Component Plan during the Ninth Plan (1997-2002) has confirmed that nearly 42.9 percent of the Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) in 15 Central Ministries/ Departments, aggregating a total amount of Rs.51,942.53 crores, has been spent on women. In 5 Ministries/ Departments viz. Family Welfare, Health,

Education, Women and Child and Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy as high as 50 to 80 percent of the Plan expenditure was incurred on women. The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07) has undertaken to further strengthen the process of Women's Component Plan.

10.100 The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy was commissioned to analyse the Union budget for the year 2001-2002 from the gender perspective. Taking the study as a base, the Deptt. of Women and Child Development carried out an analysis of the Union Budget 2002-2003. The analysis revealed that allocations on Women Specific Schemes showed an increase of 3 percent from Rs.3,260 crore in 2001-2002 to Rs.3,358 crore in 2002-2003. Similarly, the budgetary allocations for pro-woman Schemes increased from Rs.10,596.37 crore in 2001-2002 to Rs.13,036.01 crore in 2002-2003, an increase of 23 percent. The Department of Women & Child Development has also initiated a gender analysis of Budgets of 22 selected States by involving some of the eminent research scientists/research organisations.

10.101 In order to address the developmental issues relating to women, a Task Force on Women and Children was constituted by the Government in August 2000 under the Chairmanship of Shri K.C.Pant. In its report submitted in April 2002, the Task Force inter alia recommended the setting up of an Inter-Ministerial Standing Committee in the Department of Women and Child Development, composed of officials and non-official experts to review and monitor gender mainstreaming in Government. This Standing Committee is being constituted by the Government. The Task Force also reviewed the whole gamut of legislations concerning women and recommended amendment of 22 laws to make them more effective. The concerned Ministries and Departments in the Government have initiated necessary action for amending these laws.

10.102 Under the programme of Support for Training and Employment (STEP) marginalized and asset less women are

provided training in new technologies in agriculture, dairying, horticulture, fisheries, handicrafts, handlooms etc, organized into groups and provided with necessary infrastructure, managerial and marketing support for productive activities on a sustainable basis. Since the inception of the programme in 1987, 134 such projects have been implemented benefitting more than 6 lakhs women throughout the country. About 60 percent of the projects were in the dairy sector, where as many as 10000 women's dairy cooperatives have been organized in the country. During 2001-02, 31 new projects have been sanctioned at a total estimated cost of Rs.15.56 crore to benefit 6,600 women in 3 States.

10.103 Under the Women's Economic Programme, now named Swavalamban, employment linked training is provided to women in various traditional and non-traditional trades. Annually more than a thousand projects are sanctioned to train about 50,000 women. During 2001-02, 1045 projects benefitting 53,050 women have been sanctioned.

10.104 Since its inception in 1993 the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) has sanctioned credit worth Rs.113.50 crore (upto October 31, 2002) to benefit more than 4.28 lakh women through 1046 NGOs spread over the country. Government of India has approved an increase in lendable resources of RMK to Rs 100 crore. Apart from its core activities, the RMK has been catalytic in the development of several new organisations dealing with micro-credit across the country both in the public sector and voluntary sector.

10.105 With a view to boosting its efforts to expand its outreach to hitherto uncovered / marginally covered States, the maximum amount of loan to an NGO has been raised from the present ceiling of Rs.1 crore to Rs.5 crore and the intermediate interest rate cap of 12 percent has been withdrawn, thereby giving necessary leverage to the prospective NGOs to fix interest rates for the ultimate beneficiaries between the range of 8 to 18

percent per annum. The objective of the above mentioned initiatives is to increase the outflow of RMK's funds to the needy women through the intervention of Women Self Help Groups.

10.106 The objective of the Family Counselling Centre is to provide preventive and rehabilitative services to women and children who are victims of atrocities and family maladjustments. The Scheme is being implemented since 1984 through voluntary agencies. During the year 2001-02 grants amounting to Rs.374.06 lakhs have been sanctioned for running 417 Family Counselling Centres benefitting 27,749 women.

10.107 In order to address the phenomenon of domestic violence, which is widely prevalent but remains largely invisible in the public domain, the Protection from Domestic Violence Bill, 2002 has been introduced in the Parliament. The Bill envisages that the Protection Officer would assist the victim of domestic violence to be secure from violence and help her to access shelter homes, health care and legal advice.

10.108 Under the Scheme of Short Stay Homes, an amount of Rs.603 lakh was released to 328 homes serving to 9,570 beneficiaries during 2001-02. The Department is also implementing a National Plan of Action for the rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration of women and girls trapped in commercial sex. The new scheme of *Swadhar* was launched last year for providing a comprehensive package of food, shelter, health cover, counseling and skill training to women and girls in difficult circumstances Major States have formulated Action Plans and comprehensive project proposals synergising the efforts of the government and non-government organisations have been formulated for all the mega cities. 21 projects have so far been sanctioned for the rehabilitation of nearly 2913 women in difficult circumstances.

10.109 After the success of the pilot project Swa-shakti under which more than 12000 self-help groups have been formed in 10 States, the Department launched a new scheme *Swayamsidha* on November 29, 2001. Under

the programme, 53,100 Self-Help Groups comprising of 9,29,250 women beneficiaries shall be formed in 650 blocks (including 238 IMY blocks) throughout the country. The total estimated cost of the programme is Rs.116.30 crore out of which Rs.92.30 crore will be spent at the block level, Rs.16 crore at the State level and Rs.8 crore at the national level.

Development of children

10.110 The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is a flagship scheme of the Department of Women and Child Development aimed at the holistic development of children in the age group 0-6 years and pregnant and lactating mothers from disadvantaged sections. The scheme seeks to provide a package of supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health check-up, referral services, pre-school non-formal education and health and nutrition education. Starting from 33 blocks in 1975, the scheme now extends to 5,652 projects (4533 - rural, 759 – Tribal and 360 – urban slums). 4761 projects were operational as on 30th September, 2002. The beneficiaries comprise of 332 lakh children (0-6 years) and about 62 lakh pregnant and lactating mothers. The scheme runs through a network of 5.8 lakh Anganwadi Centres at the village level. Out of 5,652 projects, 922 projects in 10 States are being assisted by a loan from the World Bank. The budgetary outlay for 2002-03 under ICDS (including World Bank assisted ICDS Project) is Rs.1,921.17 crore as against the actual expenditure of Rs.1,496.85 crore in 2001-02. During the period April 2001 to September, 2002, the beneficiaries receiving supplementary nutrition at Anganwadi Centres increased from 2.9 crore to 3.94 crore, ie 36 percent. The number of beneficiaries per centre also reflected a steep increase of 20 percent. Keeping in view the special need of the North Eastern States, construction of 4800 Anganwadi Centres has been sanctioned under ICDS.

10.111 UDISHA is a World Bank assisted country-wide training programme for all ICDS functionaries. It has three main components,

viz. Regular training (wherein basic job training is provided), Other trainings (wherein innovative, areas specific trainings are provided) and IEC etc. Over 3 lakh ICDS functionaries have been given job training and about 1.05 lakh have been given refresher training. A sum of Rs. 172.71 crore has been released till October 2002 to States. The project, which is a part of loan negotiated for ICDS-III, is scheduled to be closed on September 30, 2004. The syllabus of training has been revised to make it more state specific and permit states to incorporate state specific innovations.

10.112 Under the *Kishori Shakti Yojana* a number of options/interventions are available to the States/UTs to selectively intervene for the development of the adolescent girls on the basis of State/UT area specific needs and requirements. The interventions are limited to an amount of Rs.1.10 lakh per block/ICDS project per annum only. The funds under the Scheme are made available to the States/UTs through funds released for implementation of ICDS Scheme. This scheme is presently in operation in 2000 ICDS blocks in the country.

10.113 For the integrated & holistic development of children in so far as the two basic elements of human resource development, i.e., health and education, are concerned, by using ICDS (suitably strengthened) and other suitable existing/ new interventions, a few pilot projects across the country are being planned, which, if found successful are proposed to be taken up as pilot precursors to ICDS-IV. Towards this end, to begin with, work has started on preparation of two 'district action plans', one each in Assam and Karnataka, are being prepared in collaboration with UNICEF and World Bank.

10.114 The *Balika Samridhi Yojana*, launched in 1997, has benefited 3.5 million children in 2001-02. The scheme of Creches/ Day Care Centres for working /ailing mothers benefited 3.11 lakh children through 12,470 creches upto December 31, 2002. Under the National Creche Fund the Department has set up 4,885 additional crèches as on December 31, 2002.