

CHAPTER 13

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

Introduction

Women and children who represent 67.7 per cent of the country's total population should constitute the most important target groups in the present-day context of developmental planning. Therefore, their concerns are placed on the priority list of the country's development agenda.

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Commitments of Ninth Plan

2. The Ninth Five Year Plan commits to 'Empower Women' through creating an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside their homes, as equal partners along with men. This is planned to be realised through '*The National Policy for Empowerment of Women*', with definite goals, targets and policy prescriptions along with a well-defined *Gender Development Index* to monitor the impact of its implementation in raising the status of women. (See Box - 1).

Box No. 1

COMMITMENTS OF THE NINTH PLAN (1997-2002)

Objective

Empowering Women as the Agents of Socio-Economic Change and Development

Strategies

- To create an enabling environment for women to exercise their rights, both within and outside home, as equal partners along with men, through early adoption of 'National Policy for Empowerment of Women'.
- To legislate reservation of not less than 1/3 seats for women in the Lok Sabha and in the State Legislative Assemblies and thus ensure adequate representation of women in decision making;
- To adopt an integrated approach towards empowering women through effective convergence of existing services, resources, infrastructure and manpower in both women-specific and women-related sectors;
- To adopt a special strategy of 'Women's Component Plan' to ensure that not less than 30 per cent of funds/benefits flow to women from other developmental sectors;
- To organize women into Self-Help Groups and thus mark the beginning of a major process of empowering women;
- To accord high priority to reproductive child health services and thus ensure easy access to maternal and child health services;
- To universalize the on-going supplementary feeding programme - Special Nutrition Programme (SNP) and Mid-Day Meals (MDM);
- To ensure easy and equal access to education for women and girls through the commitments of the Special Action Plan of 1998;
- To initiate steps to eliminate gender bias in all educational programmes;
- To institute plans for free education for girls up to college level, including professional courses;
- To equip women with necessary skills in the modern upcoming trades which could keep them gainfully engaged besides making them economically independent and self-reliant; and
- To increase access to credit through setting up of a 'Development Bank for Women Entrepreneurs' in small and tiny sectors.

3. Accordingly, efforts are being initiated by setting up of a Group of Ministers in July, 2000 to examine/finalise the proposal of the formulation of a National Policy on Empowerment of women. The other major step in this direction was to seek 33-1/3 per cent reservation of seats for women, both in the Lok Sabha and in the State Legislative Assemblies. To this effect, a Bill on the subject was introduced in the Lok Sabha in September, 1996. The Bill is yet to be passed.

4. Besides, the Committee on Empowerment of Women, constituted in March 1997 by Lok Sabha to review the progress of empowering women from time to time, a Task Force on Women and Children was also constituted in August, 2000 to review all the related aspects of empowering women, including drafting a programme for celebrating 2001 as the 'Year of Women's Empowerment'. While the Committee on Empowerment of Women has, so far, reviewed the progress of the development schemes for rural women, the Task Force which met on 12 September, 2000 has finalised the programme for celebrating the Women's Empowerment Year.

5. With regard to earmarking funds/benefits under Women's Component Plan, the Planning Commission requested all Central Ministries/Departments and the State Governments to draw up Women's Component Plans. Also, the Minister for Human Resource Development asked Central Ministers for personal intervention to set aside funds/benefits under Women's Component Plan in the plans/programmes of their respective Ministries/Departments. The nodal Department of Women and Child Development also made a request to Ministries/Departments to - i) set up Advisory Committees to help them in the preparing the Women's Component Plan; ii) set up a 'Women's Cell' to monitor the implementation of Women's Component Plan; and iii) include a chapter on Women's Component Plan in their Annual Reports. According to information available, 12 Central Ministries/Departments viz., Health and Family Welfare, Education, Labour, Agriculture, Urban Affairs and Employment, Rural Development, Social Justice and Empowerment, Textiles, Industries, Non-Conventional Energy Sources, Science and Technology and Information & Broadcasting have confirmed their efforts of extending benefits for women under Women's Component Plan. While the State Governments of Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh have made bold initiatives of earmarking funds for Women's Component Plan; Rajasthan is also trying to follow the path very soon.

6. Although, it would be very difficult to quantify the efforts of various Ministries/Departments in terms of allocations, yet the flow of benefits to women from the core sectors of health and family welfare, education, labour and employment, rural development, urban development, agriculture, science and technology etc. can be easily enlisted, as reflected in the respective chapters of this document. Efforts have already been on for preparing a Gender Development Index to assess the impact of various policies and programmes in improving/raising the status of women at regular intervals. A set of 18 Developmental Indicators have been identified and the same are being field-tested to find out the feasibility of data being available at the district level on a regular basis. Results are still awaited from the respective State Governments. The Committee on Empowerment of Women referred to above, also *inter-alia*, reviews the implementation of the progress of the Women's Component Plan

Review of Policies and Programmes

7. The nodal Department of Women and Child Development, responsible for empowering women, formulates policies and programmes; enacts/amends legislation concerning women; and reviews, guides and coordinates efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations. In addition, the Department implements a few innovative programmes, which include - **i)** empowering strategies; **ii)** employment and income generation; **iii)** welfare and support services; **iv)** awareness generation and gender sensitization; and **v)** other enabling measures. These programmes are supplementary/complementary to other general developmental efforts for women. Progress of some of the important on-going programmes is given below:

i) Empowering Strategies

8. *Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY)* launched in 1995-96 aims to empower women through the following i) generating awareness amongst women by disseminating information and knowledge; ii) helping women achieve economic strength through micro-level income-generating activities; and iii) establishing convergence of various services such as literacy, health, non-formal education, rural development, water supply, training for capacity building and entrepreneurship. More than 37,000 homogeneous women's groups were set up by the end of 1997.

9. In 1997, while considering expansion of IMY, the Planning Commission suggested that a Joint Study Team of the officers of the Department of Women and Child Development and the Planning Commission undertake a quick evaluation of IMY's working. Accordingly, a study on a sample basis was conducted in the States of Goa, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The evaluation, inter-alia, revealed certain deficiencies even though it found IMY had the potential to use women's groups as an instrument of women's empowerment. The deficiencies covered lack of training, funding for income generation, convergence of services and lack of animators. Taking into consideration the weaknesses pointed out by the study, IMY was being recast to fill the gaps through additional components of income generation, training for capacity building; provision for 'forward and backward' linkages; and tie-ups with Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) for credit services. Merged with the programme of Mahila Samridhi Yojana, the re-cast IMY promises to be an effective instrument for empowering women, socially and economically, besides organising them into Self-Help Groups to form a strong institutional base.

10. The Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project (RWDEP), now called *Swa-Shakti, Project* is yet another governmental intervention which is already put to test in Tamil Nadu and found successful in empowering women through awareness generation and income generation. The project is being replicated in Bihar, Haryana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh with the assistance from IDA and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Women's Development Corporations and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in these States are actively associated in implementing the programme. As the project is still in its infancy, it is too early to assess its impact.

ii) Employment and Income Generation

11. The programme for Support for Training and Employment (STEP), provides a comprehensive package for up-gradation of skills through training, extension inputs, market linkages, etc, in traditional sectors such as agriculture, dairying, handicrafts, handlooms, animal husbandry, sericulture and fisheries. Since the inception of STEP in 1987, till date, about 4,48,245 women have benefited from 86 projects, in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Of the total coverage, 3.11 lakh women belonged to dairy sector, followed by 29,500 under sericulture, 18,686 under handlooms, 16000 under handicrafts and the rest of the 13,059 under fisheries, poultry, horticulture, carpet weaving, knitting, goatbreeding, piggery, mushroom cultivation, book binding, etc. Efforts are now being made to merge STEP with three other on-going schemes: i) Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD), which assists Training-cum- Production Centres that train poor and needy women in the age-group 18-45 years in up-coming non-traditional trades; ii) socio-economic programme which provides 'work and wage' to needy women such as destitutes, widows, deserted, disabled etc; and iii) Condensed Courses of Education and Vocational Training which open up new vistas of employment through continuing education and vocational training for school drop-outs, thus bringing out an umbrella scheme of 'Training and Employment for Women.'

iii) Welfare and Support Services

12. Support services to working women are being extended through the programme *Hostels for Working Women* (HWW) which aims to promote greater mobility for women in the employment market by providing them safe and cheap accommodation to suit the lower income strata they belong to. Since inception of the Scheme in 1973 till 2000, 841 Hostels have been sanctioned to accommodate 59,600 working women. Of these, 78 Hostels have been sanctioned during 1997-2000 to house 7,486 working women and their dependent children. The programme has already undergone a number of successful evaluations during the 25 years of its implementation. The last being the nation-wide study in 1998 by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, has suggested expansion of the scheme to meet an increasing demand for such facilities. The Master Plan of Operations (MPO) prepared by the Department in 1992 also indicated the need to provide hostel accommodation for about 1.35 lakh working women throughout the country. Not even half of this target could be achieved. The two other support services are: i) Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) through its nation-wide networking of 6 lakh anganwadi centres and ii) creches/day-care centres for working and ailing mothers. Details of these two programmes are given under the section 'Development of Children' in this Chapter.

13. The welfare programme of *Short Stay Homes (SSH)* for Women and Girls has been under implementation since 1969 to protect and rehabilitate those who are in social and moral danger due to breakage of families, mental strain/stress, social ostracism, exploitation, etc. During the year 1999-2000, the financial pattern and norms under the scheme were revised as a mid-term correction during the Ninth Plan. At present, there exist 357 SSHs benefitting about 12,000 women/girls. The SSH scheme was evaluated in 1998 by Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of the Planning Commission.

Based on their recommendations, the scheme has been transferred to Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) to develop linkages/get merged with a like scheme called *Family Counselling Centres* launched to help families on the verge of a break-down.

iv) Awareness and Gender Sensitization

14. The Ninth Plan attaches great importance to efforts that trigger changes in societal attitudes to women and the girl child. An integrated media campaign projecting a positive image of both women and the girl child through electronic, print and mass media forms the most important component of the government's communication strategy. Also, a set of 10 *Legal Literacy Manuals* were brought out in 1992 with the aim of educating women about the laws protecting their basic rights. These Manuals are simple and illustrated, therefore even semi-literates and neo-literates can easily comprehend the message. The manuals have been distributed to all the State Governments and NGOs for wider dissemination and they are also being translated into other Indian languages.

v) Other Enabling Measures

15. *Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)* is a national-level mechanism to meet micro-credit needs of poor and asset-less women in the Informal Sector. From its inception in

Box No 2

MICRO-CREDIT FOR WOMEN THROUGH RMK

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) set up in 1993, extends micro-credit to poor and assetless women in the informal sector through the medium of NGOs. Since the inception of RMK, a total credit worth Rs. 77.36 crore was sanctioned benefiting 3.5 lakh women through the 688 channelising NGOs, spread all over the country. The recovery rate of RMK was as high as 95 per cent. RMK with its success stories could raise its original corpus of Rs.31.00 crore to Rs. 48.06 crore within a period of five years. In the process of expanding scope of its activities, RMK has been developing linkages with the Self-Help Groups coming up under the programme of IMY.

1993 till date, RMK has sanctioned credit totaling Rs.77.36 crore; it has benefited 3.5 lakh women through 688 NGOs spread all over the country. During the period under this appraisal, a total credit of Rs.43.56 crores was extended to 1.68 lakh women. RMK has been maintaining a very

creditable recovery rate of 90 to 95 per cent. To expand its credit services, RMK also ventured to develop an institutional base at the grass-root levels through Self-Help Groups (SHG). In this process, it also started developing linkages with the existing Women's Groups of IMY and Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA). For expansion of these activities, RMK needs financial support from the Government.

16. The National Commission for Women was set up in 1992 with a mandate to safeguard the rights and interests of women. The Commission has continued to pursue its mandated activities through legal awareness programmes; looking into the individual complaints/pre-litigations, sexual harassment of women at work place; organising 'Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats' with the help of local NGOs and Legal Aid Boards; reviewing existing legislations and preparation of new Bills relating to Prevention of Inter-Country trafficking in South Asian region; framing rules under Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, etc. The Commission accords highest priority in securing speedy justice to women.

Box No.3

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

The National Commission for Women (NCW), set up in 1992, has a mandate to safeguard the rights and interests of women. The Commission continued to pursue its mandated activities, namely safeguarding women's rights through investigations into the individual complaints of atrocities; sexual harassment of women at work place; conducting Parivarik / Mahila Lok Adalats, legal awareness programmes/camps; review of law and legislations etc. The other activities of the Commission include campaigning against gender-based violence in India. The Commission also took up the development of special womens groups viz., widows, women in custody and mentally ill, destitute etc. It also prepared two draft Bills viz – i) SAARC Regional Convention for Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children; and ii) framed Rules under Section 9(b) and Section 10 of the Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 for consideration of the Government, besides advising the Government on various issues including legal and developmental matters.

Among its the success stories, the Commission appealed to all States to allot Fair Price Shops to women co-operatives or to needy women on a priority basis and several Chief Ministers responded favourably by allotting such Shops to women; Recommended that the Tenth Finance Commission set up an Expert Group to evolve strategies to facilitate women's political empowerment as one of the criteria for devolution of funds from the Centre to States; Requested the State Governments to reserve a certain percentage of resources for women even at the village level in programmes such as water supply, health services, nutrition, sanitation, etc.; Organised a workshop on 'Gender Perspective for the Electronic Media' urging them to revise their guidelines to eliminate gender-stereotyping and negative portrayals of women and modifying their policy to serve the cause of women's advancement; Reviewed the functioning of women cells in Governmental Organisations and issued fresh guidelines to reactivate the cells and get the Government organizations to reserve 30% of the posts for women at all levels -- in the Government, Public Sector undertakings, Universities and other autonomous bodies.

Review of Legislation

17. The National Commission for Women, as per its mandate, has started reviewing all the 39 legislations which have a bearing upon women. So far, it could complete review of 14 legislations. Based upon their recommendations, the nodal Department of Women and Child Development, in consultation with the Ministry of Law & Justice and Home Affairs, has initiated action to amend the following - **i)** the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987; **ii)** Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; **iii)** Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 ; **iv)** Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 ; **v)** Guardians & Wards Act ; **vi)** Family Courts Act ; **vii)** Foreign Marriage Act ; **viii)** Amendment in IPC relating to Rape. Besides, the nodal Department has also initiated drafting of the Prevention of Domestic Violence against Women Bill. The National Commission for Women is re-considering the amendments proposed in the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and is in the process of holding nation-wide debates/consultations.

Monitoring Beneficiary-Oriented Schemes (BOS)

18. At the instance of the Prime Minister's Office , the nodal Department of Women and Child Development monitors the progress of implementation of 27 Beneficiary-Oriented Schemes (BOS) for Women through the mechanism of Inter-Ministerial Review Meetings. Based on the findings of the review, the nodal Department plays an interventionist role with the help of PMO in removing obstacles/impediments and thus improve the implementation of the 27 BOS. Status Reports, prepared by the nodal Department forms the base for follow-up action by individual Ministries/Departments. The review of the 27 BOS reveals: - i) an outlay of Rs. 20,686.70 crore representing 2.4% of the total public sector outlay is available in the Ninth Plan for empowering

women; ii) of this, while Rs. 12,878.28 crore (62.3%) flow from six women-related Ministries/Departments, the remaining Rs.7,810.42 crore (37.7%) comes from one single Department of Women and Child Development. This justifies the fact that the Women's Component Plan needs to be concretized right from the very beginning of formulation /launching of every Plan to see that benefits from other developmental sectors do not by-pass women.

DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

Commitments of Ninth Plan

19. The Ninth Plan reaffirms its priority for the development of early childhood as an investment in the country's human resource development. While the first six years are acknowledged as most critical in the development of children, greater stress will be laid on younger children below two years. To this effect, two National Plans of Action - one for Children and the other exclusively for the Girl Child (adopted in 1992) -- will provide the guidelines underlining the importance of '*Survival, Protection and Development*'. Efforts in the Ninth Plan will, therefore, be made to expedite effective implementation and achievement of the goals set in the two Plans of Action. To realize this, the Ninth Plan proposes adoption of certain inter-ministerial strategies covering both the child -specific and child- related sectors (See Box - 4).

Box No. 4

COMMITMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN

Objectives

- To place the Young Child at the top of the country's Developmental Agenda with a Special Focus on the Girl Child, and
- To re-affirm its priority for the development of early childhood services as an investment in country's Human Resource Development.

Strategies

- To institute a National Charter for Children ensuring that no Child remains illiterate or hungry or lacks medical care;
- To continue to lay a special thrust on three major areas of child development viz. health, nutrition and education;
- To ensure '*Survival, Protection and Development*' through the effective implementation of the two National Plans of Action - one for the Children and the other for the Girl Child;
- Acknowledge that the first six years as critical for the development of children, therefore, greater stress will be laid on reaching the younger children below two years;
- To universalize ICDS as the mainstay of the Ninth Plan for promoting the overall development of young children, especially the Girl Child and mothers all over the country;
- To arrest the declining sex ratio and curb its related problems of female foeticide and female infanticide;
- To bring down the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to less than 60 and the Child Mortality Rate (CMR) to below 10 by 2002 by offering easy access to health care services including Reproductive Child Health (RCH) services and 100% coverage of immunization in all vaccine preventable diseases;
- To universalize Nutrition Supplementary Feeding Programmes to fill the existing gaps in respect of both pre-school and school children and expectant and nursing mothers with a special focus on the Girl Child and the Adolescent Girl;
- To promote the nutritional status of the mother and the child by improving the dietary intake through a change in the feeding practices and intra-family food distribution;
- To strengthen the early joyful period of play and learning in the young child's life and to ensure a harmonious transition from the family environment to the primary school;
- To view girl's education as a major intervention for breaking the vicious inter-generational cycle of gender and socio-economic disadvantages;
- To expand the support services of crèche / day-care services and to develop linkages between primary schools and child care services to promote educational opportunities for the Girl Child;
- To expand the scheme of Adolescent Girls in preparation for their productive and re-productive roles as confident individuals not only in family building but also in nation building;
- To widen the scope and the spectrum of child development services with necessary interventions related to empowerment of women and children, families and communities through effective convergence and coordination of various sectoral efforts and services.

Review of Policies and Programmes

20. Efforts are being made to strengthen the on-going approach of converging the basic services of health, nutrition and pre-school education towards promoting a holistic development of the young child through Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). As a nation-wide programme, ICDS continues to be a major intervention for the overall development of children. It caters to the pre-school children below six years and expectant and nursing mothers with a package of services viz. immunization, health check-ups, referral services, supplementary nutrition, pre-school education and health and nutrition education.

21. Universalisation of ICDS was contemplated by the end of 1995-96 through expanding its services all over the country. Of the 5614 ICDS projects sanctioned till 1996, only 4200 became operationalised by the end of Eighth Plan and the position continued even during first two years of the Ninth Plan. However, the process of universalisation will continue during the Ninth Plan till all the 5614 projects become operationalised. The total number of beneficiaries has risen from 16.6 million in 1992 to 32.1 million in March 1999, which include 26.5 million children and 5.6 million expectant and nursing mothers (See Box No – 5).

Box No. 5

TOWARDS UNIVERSALISATION OF ICDS

ICDS - launched in 1975 - is a nation-wide programme for the overall development of children below 6 years and of the expectant and nursing mothers. It provides a package of 6 services viz., supplementary feeding, immunization, health check-ups, referral services, pre-school education and health and nutrition education for its beneficiaries. Of the total 5614 ICDS Blocks, only 4200 Blocks could be operationalised by 1999-2000, benefiting 26.5 million children and 5.6 million mothers. The same level continued along with a special coverage of 3.51 lakh Adolescent Girls in 507 ICDS blocks. ICDS also receives assistance from the World Bank to add some additional inputs. During the Ninth Plan period, efforts are being made to expand the programme to another 851 Blocks (461 under the World Bank assisted ICDS and 390 under General ICDS), as part of the universalisation of ICDS.

22. The World Bank-assisted ICDS programme has also been in operation since 1990-91 apart from providing the normal ICDS package. World Bank extends assistance for a few additional inputs like construction of Anganwadi buildings and Child Development Project Officer (CDPOs) office-cum-godowns on a selective basis, strengthening of training and communication, improved health facilities and income-generation activities. While a first WB-ICDS Project-I (1991-97) covered 301 ICDS projects in the States of Andhra Pradesh (110) and Orissa (191), the WB-ICDS Project II (1997-2000) would be covering 454 projects in the States of Bihar (210) and Madhya Pradesh (244). The WB-ICDS Project III (1998-2004) started in 1998-99 and it proposes to cover 461 projects in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The programme in Andhra Pradesh is being implemented as part of a larger Andhra Pradesh Economic Reconstruction Programme (APERP).

23. The impact of ICDS, which would be completing 25 years of its implementation in October 2000, was evaluated by a number of individual experts and various research organisations. Of these, the National Evaluation of ICDS conducted by the National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development (NIPCCD), New Delhi, in 1992 and the Mid-term Evaluation of World Bank-assisted ICDS need special mention. The findings of the NIPCCD study indicate a very positive impact of ICDS on the

health and nutrition status of pre-school children. The Mid-term evaluation of the World Bank assisted ICDS (Project-I) conducted in Andhra Pradesh during 1995-96 also revealed that the Project interventions had brought down the IMR to 62 per 1000 live births which was in consonance with the project objective of 60 per 1000 live births. The incidence of severe malnutrition amongst children of 0-3 years was reduced to about 5 per cent and that of 3-6 years to 3 per cent. The proportion of low birth weight babies also came down to 20 per cent as against the project goal of 24 per cent. Similarly, in Orissa, the IMR had come down to 93.6 and the incidence of low birth weight babies to 23 per cent.

24. ICDS, as it stands today, reaches out to 90 per cent of the community development blocks in the country. Keeping in view the goals set in the National Plan of Action for Children to be achieved by the year 2000 AD, it is necessary to ensure universalisation of ICDS at the earliest possible. However, in view of the resource constraint, the Department has proposed to operationalise only 851 additional projects during the Ninth Plan and that too in a phased manner. The following Action Points will receive special attention during the remaining period of the Ninth Plan, keeping in view the future prospects of ICDS:

- Special efforts to ensure adequate funds for supplementary feeding of ICDS by all the States/Union Territories (UTs) as there exists a large gap of around 50 per cent between the 'need' and 'supply'. ICDS becomes meaningful only when the funds for food supplementation from States/UTs get synchronized with the funds contributed by the Central Government towards maintenance of the super-structure for operation and supervision of ICDS.
- The Adolescent Girls Scheme which has been launched to take care of the specific needs of the adolescent girls has been in operation in 507 blocks. It is proposed to cover 1493 additional blocks during the Ninth Plan period.
- The concept of mini-anganwadi (four mini-anganwadi centres can be opened in lieu of full fledged anganwadis) is flexible enough to take care of the sparse population in remote hilly areas dominated by tribals. The process will continue during the Ninth Plan.
- Other innovative activities include models for community participation; integration of the scheme with the activities of Department of Indian Systems of Medicine & Health (ISM&H); strengthening of MIS of ICDS in States; improved service delivery by providing IFA and vitamin 'A' supplementation to adolescent girls; quality improvement at anganwadi centres; strengthening women's component; action research projects aimed at improved nutritional level, inter-State coordination and consultation for devising replicable innovative models and area/project specific intervention for tackling early childhood disabilities etc.

25. An ever growing burden of ICDS has already disturbed the budgetary balance between the development of women and the development of children. As of date, ICDS alone claims 82.9% (Rs.6,473.08 crore) of the total budget of the Department. It is, therefore, necessary to start transferring the ICDS projects to State sector in a phased

way. To start with, it would be ideal to transfer 2428 projects - the level of achievement by the end of the Seventh Plan. However, while considering the proposal for expansion of ICDS in December, 1999, it emerged that the performance of the Scheme in some of the States had been very low as they had not contributed sufficient counter-part funds for nutritional component of ICDS. Suitable modifications in the programme with respect to these States in this context are being explored to correct this deficiency.

26. *UDISHA* is an effort to strengthen the on-going ICDS Training Programme into a dynamic, responsive and comprehensive training-cum-human resource development programme. For its implementation, World Bank has agreed to extend financial assistance to the extent of Rs.600.55 crore. The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, New Delhi, with its nation-wide network of 3 Regional Centres, 18 Middle Level Training Centres (MLTCs) and 300 Anganwadi Workers Training Centres (AWTCs) is set to implement UDISHA. During first 3 years of the Ninth Plan, 1157 CDPOs/ACDPOs (Assist and Child Development Officer), 3072 Supervisors and 97353 Anganwadi workers were trained.

27. The Scheme of *Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY)* originated from an announcement of the Prime Minister on 15 August 1997 promising financial help by the Government for the families to whom a girl child is born and if they are living Below Poverty Line (BPL). Later, scholarships would also be given when the girl child goes to school. Accordingly, a programme of *Balika Samridhi Yojana* was launched on 2 October 1997 to

<p>Box No.6</p> <p>Balika Samridhi Yojana (BSY)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ BSY - a special intervention to raise the overall status of the Girl Child - promises a post-delivery grant of Rs.500/- to be deposited in an interest-bearing account in the name of the girl child with the nearest bank/post office; and ▪ Scholarships for each class of study successfully completed by her, ranging from Rs.300/- for Class I to Rs.1000/- for Class X . The amount of Scholarship will also be deposited in the same interest-bearing account ; ▪ The accumulated value of the deposits in the account will be payable to the girl child on her attaining the age of 18 years and having remained unmarried till then
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extend a post-delivery grant of Rs.500/- for the mother of the Girl Child belonging to the BPL Group. For this, the Government released an ad-hoc grant of Rs.60 crore to cover 12 lakh girl children in the financial year 1997-98 (See Box No 6).

28. To make the programme more effective, a Group of Ministers reviewed the implementation of the programme in 1999. Based on their recommendations, the programme was recast as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the following features: - i) instead of payment in cash, a post-delivery grant of Rs.500/- per girl child, upto two girl children (born on or after 15 August, 1997) will now be deposited either in Bank / Post Office in an interest-bearing account in the name of the girl child. Withdrawal of a portion of the post-birth grant of Rs.500/- or the amounts of the annual scholarships eligible for deposit may be permitted to be applied for paying premium on an insurance policy in the name of the girl child under the Bhagyashree Balika Kalyan Bima Yojana. Such a utilization may be permitted with due authorization of the mother/guardian of the girl ; ii) Annual scholarships would also be given to the girl child when she starts going to school. The rate of scholarships will be Rs.300 each in classes I-III, Rs.500 in class IV, Rs.600 in class V, Rs.700 each in classes VI and VII, Rs.800 in class VIII and

Rs.1000 each in classes IX and X per annum. The scholarship amount can also be deposited in the same account (where the post-delivery grant has been kept) at the option of the guardian of the Girl Child. These deposits will be paid to the girl child on attaining the age of 18 years and remaining unmarried till then. The amount of scholarships can also be paid in kind at the discretion of the guardian of the girl child. The Recast BSY with the above revisions was being put into action during 1999-2000.

29. The scheme of Creches and Day Care Centres for children of working/ailing mothers, a non-expanding scheme, maintained the same level of 12470 creches benefiting 3.12 lakh children. However, to meet the growing demand for more creches, a National Creche Fund (NCF) was set up in 1994 with a corpus of Rs.19.90 crore received under Social Safety Net. NCF extended financial assistance for the opening of creches besides conversion of the existing Anganwadis into Anganwadi-cum-Creches. Under the NCF, 2,455 creches were added benefiting about 0.61 lakh more children. A wider expansion of Creche/Day-care services under NCF is envisaged during the Ninth Plan.

Review of Legislation (child-specific & child-related)

30. A thorough review of all the existing child-specific and child-related legislations needs to be undertaken to plug loopholes in their implementation. Simultaneously, every effort needs to be made to protect children from all types of exploitation through strict enforcement of the existing legislations viz. the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (as amended in 1986) to check child prostitution; the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986 to remove maladjustment and ensure rehabilitation of juvenile delinquents in the family and society; the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986 to eliminate child labour; the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 as amended in 1993 to ensure equal rights to the girl-child in the property of parents; and Compulsory Registration of Marriages and Minimum Age of Marriage to avoid child marriages etc. Enforcement of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and the Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 should receive a special attention to arrest the increasing incidence of Female Foeticide and Female Infanticide.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Impact of Policies and Programmes

31. The impact of various developmental policies and programmes and the efforts put in by both governmental and non-governmental organisations over a period of time in empowering women and development of children, have brought forth a perceptible improvement in the status of women and children, as reflected in the following 21 selected Gender Development Indicators.

Select Developmental Indicators Relating to Women and Children *

Sl. No.	Indicators	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Demography						
1	Population (in million in 1971 & 1991)	264.1	284.0	548.1	407.1	439.2	846.3
2	Decenneal Growth (1971 & 1991)	24.9	24.4	24.6	23.2	23.8	23.5
	Vital Statistics						
3	Sex Ratio (1971 & 1991)	930	-	-	927	-	-
4	Expectation of Life at Birth (1971 & 1996-2001)	50.2	50.5	50.9	63.4	62.4	-
5	Mean Age at Marriage (1971 & 1991)	17.2	22.4	-	19.3	23.9	-
	Health						
6	Birth Rate (1971 & 1998)	-	-	36.9	-	-	26.5
7	Death Rate (1970 & 1998)	15.6	15.8	15.7	8.8	9.2	9.0
8	Infant Mortality Rate (1978 & 1998)	131	123	127	74	70	72
9	Child Mortality Rate (1970 & 1997)	55.1	51.7	-	24.5	21.8	23.1
10	Maternal Mortality Rate (1980 & 1998)	468	-	-	407	-	-
	Literacy and Education						
11	Literacy Rates (1971 & 1991)	7.9	24.9	16.7	39.3	64.1	52.2
12	Gross Enrolment Ratio (1990-91 & 1998-99)						
	- Classes I-V	85.5	113.9	100.1	82.9	100.9	92.1
	- Classes VI – VIII	47.8	76.6	62.1	49.1	65.3	57.6
13	Drop-out Rate (1990-91 & 1998-99)						
	- Classes I – V	46.0	40.1	42.6	41.2	38.6	39.7
	- Classes I – VIII	65.1	59.1	60.9	60.1	54.4	56.8
	Work and Employment						
14	Work Participation Rate (1971 & 1991)	14.2	52.8	34.3	22.3	51.6	37.7
15	Organised Sector (No. in lakhs in 1971 & 1997)	19.3	155.6	174.9	43.9	231.8	275.7
		(11 %)			(15.9%)		
16	Public Sector (No. in lakhs in 1971 & 1997)	8.6	98.7	107.3	26.1	162.6	188.7
		(8 %)			(13.8%)		
17	Government (No. in lakhs in 1981 & 1996)	11.9	97.1	109.0	15.0	92.7	107.7
		(11 %)			(13.9%)		
	Decision Making (Administrative & Political)						
18	Administration (IAS & IPS in 1987 & 2000)	360	6262	6622	645	7815	8460
		(5.4%)			(7.6%)		
19	PRIs (No. in lakhs in 1995 & 1997)	3.18	6.30	9.48 [@]	8.14	17.84	25.98
		(33.5%)			(31.3%)		
20	Parliament (No. in 1989 & 1999)	47	721	768	67	723	790
		(6.1%)			(8.4%)		
21	Central Council of Ministers (1985 & 1999)	4	36	40	8	65	73
		(10%)			(10.9%)		

@ Refers to 1995 in respect of States namely Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura and West Bengal

Note: Figures in paranthesis indicate the percentage to the total and year of the data in respective columns. Although, efforts were made to keep a common 'base' and a common 'comparable' but the same could not be kept up because of the limitations in the availability of data and other practical problems

* The years given in the parenthesis refers to the Year of the Data in columns 3,4 & 5 and 6,7 & 8 , respectively

- Source: (1) SRS Bulletin 2000, Registrar-General of India, Govt. of India, New Delhi
(2) Employment Exchange Statistics 1996-97, DG-E&T
(3) Women in India - A Statistical Profile, 1997, Dept. of Women and Child Development, M/o HRD, New Delhi
(4) Selected Educational Statistics 1997-98, D/o Education., M/o HRD, New Delhi.
(5) Annual Report, 1999-2000. Departments of Elementary & Literacy and Secondary & Higher Education, Ministry of HRD, Government of India.

Issues / Concerns

32. No doubt, the mid-term appraisal has helped list out several quantifiable gains/achievements in the sector, but the appraisal has also brought into surface many critical issues concerning women and children, especially those of the Girl Child, as discussed below:

33. The burden of poverty upon women has been increasing as they are more vulnerable to the extremes of poverty and its consequences. For poor households, the woman's capacity to work, her health, knowledge and skill endowments are often the only resources to fall back upon for survival. In other words, the poorer the family, the more the dependency upon the woman's earnings. Around 30% to 35% of rural households are estimated to be headed by women and dependent exclusively on their income. Women are thus critical to the processes of moving their families out of poverty. Therefore, they require special attention as extreme poverty by definition implies low absorptive capacity for development programmes.

34. Women also continue to be the most 'invisible,' despite their high levels of contribution to the national economy. As per the 1991 Census, more than 90 per cent of women continue to struggle in the informal/unorganized sector with no legislative safeguards. As a result, they are deprived of minimum / equal wages. The prevailing social constraints of gender largely relegates women to the inside sphere. Adding to this are the dual responsibilities of women tagged with heavy work responsibilities in agriculture, animal husbandry and other traditional sectors which create a syndrome of gender stereotypes, marginalisation, alienation and deprivation of women in the informal sector. In the 1991 census, the Government made efforts to capture data on women's work in the informal sector; that effort needs to be intensified in the Census of 2001 as well. Further, efforts are also needed to extend both legislative and welfare cover to women -- especially minimum and equal wages to them -- so as to control/eradicate their exploitation in the informal sector besides improving their working conditions.

35. Although the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) , Child Mortality Rate (CMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) have been showing a very steady declining trend during the last decade, these rates are still very high when compared to many other developing countries. Adding to this is the most disturbing feature brought out by Sample Registration System (SRS) of 2000 focussing on a slight increase in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) from 71 per 1000 live births in 1997 to 72 in 1998. Though it was a very insignificant change, yet this reverse in trend is a major cause for concern. Ten major States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Punjab have shown an increasing trend. This demands careful investigation of the factors responsible for such a situation and effective action to intensify measures for new-born care and institutional delivery systems since the emergence of a reverse trend can not be compromised with, especially at a time when the IMR is expected to go down further. MMR which also stands at a very high rate of 407 deaths per 1,00,000 live births (1998) needs special attention on priority basis through wide-spread coverage of RCH services.

36. Malnutrition and its related deficiencies and diseases amongst children and mothers especially with the girl child have become a big threat to their

development potential. Surveys conducted by the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau of Hyderabad in 1989-90 reported that more than 52.5 per cent of children in the age-group of 1-5 years and 49.3 per cent women suffered from various chronic energy deficiencies and 87.5 per cent of pregnant women were anaemic in various degrees during 1989-90. The ICDS programme which was launched to take care of these problems amongst children and mothers could not extend its coverage throughout the country. By the end of 1999, 1414 Blocks still remain uncovered. Action should, therefore, be initiated to expedite universalisation of ICDS in all of country's 5614 Blocks. Also, immediate measures are required to ensure that adequate allocations are made available to re-enforce the supplementary feeding services in all 6 lakh Aganwadis as per prescribed norms, both in quality and quantity.

37. Gender discrimination which is reflected in an ever declining sex ratio of 946 females per 1000 males in 1951 to 927 in 1991 illustrates the survival scene of both women and the girl-child in India. The adverse sex-ratio and its decline since 1901 is attributed mainly to higher mortality among females, as compared to males, in all age groups right from childhood through child-bearing ages. Limited access to health care services contributing to high maternal mortality and relative deprivation of the female child from nutrition, health and medical care have also been identified to be some of the other contributory factors. Interventions to this effect have been in progress.

38. Related to the problem of gender bias and the persistent discrimination against the girl child are the harmful practices of female foeticide and female infanticide leading to the un-wanted abortions and the present high rates of IMR / MMR. The sample studies sponsored by the Department of Women and Child Development in 1993-94 confirm that while female foeticide is widespread and rampant in the urban areas, female infanticide continues to be prevalent as a localized/community-based phenomenon in the States of Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana. As per the 1991 Census, 65 districts in these States have been identified as "problem districts," as the sex-ratio stood abnormally in favour of males with 1100 to 1218 males for 1000 females. These demographic imbalances require immediate attention of the Government. Action needs to be initiated to enforce both IPC and the Pre-natal Diagnostic Technique (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 effectively to control / eradicate female foeticide and female infanticide, respectively with very close vigil and surveillance along with severe punishment for the guilty. Along with this, the long-term measure of sensitizing the society to change their mind-set which is negatively disposed towards the girl child as she has become unwanted, neglected and discriminated both within and outside her home, is also very important.

39. The increasing violence against women is yet another manifestation of their low and unequal status and poses a big threat to their development. Violence against women and the girl-child, both domestic and at work-place, has been showing an alarming trend especially during the recent past. As per the latest data (1998) published by the National Crimes Record Bureau, New Delhi, there was an increase of 8.3 per cent in the number of crimes committed against women between 1997 and 1998. While the total number of cases registered under IPC stood at 1.31 lakh, torture claimed the highest share of 31.5 per cent; followed by molestation (23.6%); kidnapping and abduction (12.5%); rape (11.4%); sexual harassment (6.2%); dowry death (5.3%) and others (9.5%). Amongst the States, Uttar Pradesh reported the highest incidence of 13.3% of the total crimes, Madhya Pradesh (12.1%) and Maharashtra (10.9%). Delhi which shares 1.3% of the country's

total population, accounts for 1.9% of the total crime, and reports the third highest crime rate in the country with 19.6 (number of crimes per one lakh population), while the all India crime rate stands at 13.5. Violence against women needs to be addressed on a top priority basis with a well planned Programme of Action (POA) with both short and long-term measures. Discussion with activists suggests that violence against slum women can be reduced drastically if the housing patta and the ration card is in their names. The situation also demands activating the enforcement machinery, besides bringing some necessary amendments both in the Indian Penal Code and in other related legislations to make the punishment more stringent. Initiating efforts in close collaboration with committed NGOs to bring forth societal re-orientation is yet another important area for intervention. The National Commission for Women should play a lead role in combating the increasing violence against women and the girl child.

39. Adding to the serious problems listed above, lack of education and training, information and awareness generation and low rates of literacy (31.3%) aggravate the situation of deprivation of women and exclude them from political, social and economic processes and also from decision-making process. As per the 1991 census, women's work participation is as low as 22.3% as their contribution in the informal sector is neither recognized nor finds a place in the official records. Further, while their representation in the organized sector is only 15.9% (1997), they are 13.8% (1997) in the public sector; 13.9% (1996) in the Government; and 7.6% (2000) in administrative decision-making and 10.9% (1999) in political decision-making. No doubt, they represent 31.3% (1997) in Panchayats against the 33 1/3% reservation for women. When more and more women are positioned at various levels of decision making, it is bound to have a definite impact on public policy in favour of women and thus, women's issues will get transformed into societal issues.

41. It is the empowerment strategy that has emerged as the most challenging task in the Ninth Plan. It is therefore necessary to ensure that women are empowered socially, economically and politically. If women are to be empowered socially, it is necessary to make everyone of them literate, reach them information and generate awareness, equip them with legal literacy and help them in every way to realize their own potential. If women are to be economically empowered, it is necessary to equip them with vocational skills; provide employment and income-generation, extend free channels of micro-credit, provide management/entrepreneurial skills, social security and thus allow them greater visibility. If women are to be politically empowered, the immediate need is to resort to different forms of affirmative discrimination so that women in proportionate numbers reach critical places to ensure that their voices are heard. Once women are empowered, development of children is also ensured as empowerment of women and development of children are intrinsically inter-linked.

State Sector Programmes

42. A critical review of the women and child development sector at State level has revealed several lacunae in the on-going policies and programmes affecting their implementation and the standard of services. Important areas requiring attention of both State Governments and UT Administrations, during the last two years of the Ninth Plan include - i) States/UTs which have not yet set up exclusive Departments/Directorates for Women and Child, State Commissions for Women or Women's Development Corporations nor formulated State Policies for

Empowerment of Women and Plans of Action for Children/Girl Child should expedite positive action in this direction; **ii)** rationalization of on-going programmes of women and children and make for more and more productive projects for empowering women, both socially and economically, rather than extend doles/financial assistance for non-productive purposes; **iii)** prioritise the programmes while allocating the limited resources; for instance, except for a few States /UTs like Gujarat, Orissa, Sikkim, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Pondicherry, no State/UT could provide adequate resources for supplementary feeding of ICDS; **iv)** extend in-service training and refresher courses for the staff of the Departments/Directorates of Women and Child Development to keep them abreast of the latest developments including governmental policies and programmes; **v)** develop effective coordination with the Office of the State Director-General/Inspector-General of Police so as to keep a parole on the increasing incidence of crime/atrocities against women, especially the girl-child; **vi)** promote voluntary action especially in those areas where the voluntary efforts are missing/minimal.

Non-Governmental Efforts

43. While governmental interventions in this sector are operationalised largely through NGOs, the initiatives, innovative experiments and alternative models that the NGOs themselves have developed are rich and diverse. These efforts have demonstrated the success of alternative models of empowerment of women and development of children in the areas of welfare and support services; micro-credit, employment and income generation activities; awareness generation / gender sensitization programmes, and organizing women into self-help groups. The Central Social Welfare Board which is an apex organization for voluntary action has been networking with more than 12,000 voluntary organizations. It is time that all these voluntary efforts were streamlined and re-directed into effective channels of operation, besides ensuring an even spread of the voluntary effort all over the country.

Resource Position

44. Keeping in view prior commitments and programme priorities, the revised Ninth Plan outlay of Rs.7,810.42 crore was re-distributed amongst various programmes of the Department, as shown below:

Outlays and Expenditure Under WCD Sector During Ninth Plan (1997-2002)

(Rs. in crores)

Programmes	Ninth Plan (1997-2002) Outlay	1997-98 (Actuals)	1998-99 (Actuals)	1999-2000 (Actuals)	Exp. (1997 (2000)	% age (Col.6 to Col.2)	Balance (2000-02)	% age (Col.8 to Col.2)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
I. Central Sector	7810.42 (100.00)	894.69	1131.74	1247.39	3273.82	41.91	4536.60	58.09
- Child Dev.	6922.99 (88.63)	833.59	1030.2	1145.00	3008.79	43.46	3914.20	56.54
- Women Dev.	843.73 (10.80)	58.80	97.58	97.48	253.86	30.09	589.87	69.91
- Others	14.70 (0.19)	1.38	1.87	2.95	6.20	42.18	8.50	57.82
- New Starts	10.53 (0.14)	-	0.90	-	0.90	8.55	9.63	91.45
- Food & Nutrition Board (FNB)@	18.47 (0.24)	0.92	1.19	1.96	4.07	22.04	14.40	77.96
II. State Sector	----- Included under Social Welfare -----							

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate the percentages.

* This includes EAP of Rs.1134.51 crore in the Ninth Plan; Rs.116.07 crore in 1997-98; Rs.117.80 crore in 1998-99 and Rs.223.33 crore in 1999-2000.

@ Write-up on Food and Nutrition Board is available under the Chapter `Food and Nutrition Security.

45. As could be seen from the data above, the Department has given an over-riding priority to the programmes of child development, instead of having a balanced distribution of resources between `Empowerment of Women' and `Development of Children' - the two major responsibilities entrusted to the nodal Department of Women and Child Development. As the priorities of the Department stand today, programmes for children alone takes away 88.63% of the total resources, while the rest of the 11.37% resources remains with Women, Food and Nutrition Board and Other Grant-in-aid programmes. This, however, does not go in conformity with the priorities/objectives set in the Ninth Plan.