



Programmes for Women

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Programmes for Women

2.1 As per 2001 census, women constitute 48 % of the total population. Women as an important human resource were recognized by the Constitution of India which not only accorded equality to women but also empowered the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in their favour. Drawing strength from the Constitution, the Government of India has been engaged in committed and continuous endeavours towards ensuring allround well being, development and empowerment of women. One of the six basic principles of governance laid down in the National Common Minimum Programme is to empower women politically, educationally, economically and legally. The upgradation of Department of Women and Child Development to a Ministry under the independent charge of Minister of State for Women and Child Development with effect from 30.01.2006 is an important mile stone in that direction. In its nodal capacity, the Ministry has been striving for the holistic empowerment of women by reviewing the laws to remove gender bias, bringing new legal measures aiming at gender justice and implementing programmes to achieve the social and economic empowerment of women.

Planning Process and women empowerment

2.2 The planning process has evolved over the years from a purely 'welfare' oriented approach to the development approach and currently to their 'empowerment.' It was only from the Sixth Five year Plan onwards that women secured a

special niche and space in the national plans and planning process primarily with thrusts on health, education and employment. A paradigm shift occurred in the Eighth Plan where 'empowerment' of women was recognized and accepted as a distinct strategy. A further impetus for sectoral contribution to women's programmes was received with the introduction of the concept of Women's Component Plan in the Ninth Plan whereby identified ministries were required to indicate the flow of funds to the women's programmes and schemes. In the tenth Plan, for the first time, monitorable targets were set for a few key indicators of human development, which include reduction in gender gaps in literacy, wage rates and reduction in MMR. The Ninth Plan Document (1997- 2002) laid emphasis on the participation of people in the planning process, and the promotion of self-help groups. The approach was to access women living in poverty and to guide them to help themselves. The Tenth Five Year Plan called for the three pronged strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment and providing gender justice to create an enabling environment of positive economic and social policies for women and eliminating all forms of discrimination against them and thus advance gender equality goals. During the 10th Plan also, emphasis continued on empowerment of women through SHG movement. The Eleventh Plan seeks to reduce disparities across regions and communities by ensuring access to basic physical infrastructure as well as health and educational services to all, recognize gender as a cross - cutting theme across all sectors

and commits to respect and promote the rights of the common person. The Approach Paper to the Eleventh Plan specifically states that 'gender equity requires adequate provisions to be made in policies and schemes across Ministries and Departments. It also entails strict adherence to gender budgeting across the board'.

2.3 Keeping with its mandate, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has taken several initiatives during the past years for bringing about gender equality, empowerment and development of women. These initiatives are discussed below:

Swayamsidha

2.4 Swayamsidha is an integrated scheme for women's empowerment through formation of women into Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The scheme was launched in February 2001 across the States and Union Territories of the country with

a total budget outlay of Rs. 116.30 crore. But subsequently discontinued from Goa, Daman & Diu, Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Chandigarh due to lack of interest among the UTs. The scheme is expected to culminate in March 2008. The long-term objective of the programme is holistic empowerment of women through a sustained process of mobilization and convergence of all the on-going sectoral programmes by improving access of women to micro credit, economic resources etc. The programme is being implemented in 650 blocks in the country including 238 Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) blocks, covering 335 districts. Each block consists of 100 Self Help Groups. The programme is being implemented in many States through ICDS infrastructure; while in some States, the scheme is implemented through State Women's Development Corporations. In addition to monitoring the scheme through normal means such as Quarterly Progress Report (QPR) and field visits, a system



Swayamsidha women's SHG- Towards Economic Empowerment in Tamil Nadu



Soft Toy Training Unit in Himachal Pradesh under Swayamsidha Scheme

of Quarterly Review Meetings of State Nodal Officers has been put in place.

2.5 The most important component of the programme is the formation, implementation and monitoring of blocks specific composite project for 4-5 years incorporating the following four elements:-

- Group formation/mobilisation activities;
- Community oriented innovative interventions;
- Convergence with specific schemes of MWCD, namely STEP, SEP and AGP along with other schemes, if there is a felt need for the same; and
- Schemes of other Ministries, whether converged under Government of India's directions or State Government initiative.

Achievements under Swayamsidha:

- **69,690 SHGs have been formed against the target of 65,000 SHGs**

- **10.03 lakh women are covered under the scheme**
- 8198 clusters of SHGs have been formed
- 579 block level federations of SHGs have been formed
- Rs. 143.64 crores have been saved by SHGs under the scheme
- 63,714 SHGs (98%) have Bank Accounts
- Rs. 100.55 crores have been deposited by the SHGs in Banks
- 34,806 SHGs (54%) have availed Bank loan
- Rs. 154.34 crores loan has been taken from Banks by SHGs
- 51,208 SHGs (79%) involving over 5.98 lakhs women are engaged in Income Generation Activities (IGA)
- 45,060 SHGs (69%) are given Skill Development Trainings

- 41,365 SHGs (64%) are benefiting from convergence with other Government schemes
- Many States have created Community Assets and the process is going on. Till now, 4322 Community Assets have been created

2.6 Trainings on ten basic topics (Concept of Swayamsidha, SHG Concept, Savings and credit, Group Rules, Group Dynamics, Confidence building, Conflict resolution, Book Keeping and cash management, Opening bank account and Leadership development) have been imparted to SHGs.

Financial achievements under Swayamsidha

2.7 Against the BE of Rs.27.90 Crores for 2007-08 under Swayamsidha, an expenditure of Rs. 11.52 crores (as on 31.1.2008) has been incurred. State-wise funds released during 2006-07 and 2007-08 (as on 18.3.2008), number of districts covered, blocks allocated and SHGs formed under Swayamsidha are given in **Annexure-V** and **Annexure-VI** respectively.

Review Meetings for Nodal Officers of Swayamsidha

2.8 The Ministry has organized three exposure-cum-review meetings of Nodal Officers implementing Swayamsidha, the details of which are as given below:



Review-cum-Exposer Visit of Nodal Officers of Sawayamsidha at Kovalam, Kerala (25-27th September 2007)

Exposure-cum-Review Meetings

Date	Venue	Participants
16 July 2007	Delhi	31
25-27 September 2007	Kovalam, Kerala	29
3-4 January 2008	Delhi	22

2.9 The review meeting and exposure meets served as a platform to discuss the achievements made in the previous quarter with focus on training, convergence, bank linkage, income generation/micro enterprise activities and community assets created under the project. Expenditure and utilization of funds, problems and issues relating to implementation etc. were also discussed. Technical guidance was also given to the States. The Nodal Officers were taken to field to study base practices adopted in the States during exposure visits.

Evaluation of the Scheme of Swayamsidha

2.10 The Scheme was evaluated by an external agency, IIPO, New Delhi in 2005. The major findings of the evaluation are as under:

Formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs):

2.11 Under Swayamsidha, group formation target was 65,000 SHGs for 650 blocks. So far, 67,971 SHGs have been formed. Most of the States achieved their targets and some States formed more SHGs than the target set for them. The analysis of data reveals that in most cases, the number of SHG members fall between 10-20 against the target of 15-20 members per SHG. The total number of SHG members is 9.89 lakhs against the target of 11.37 lakhs. Registers and cash boxes were provided to most of the groups as soon as these were formed. All groups have formulated their by-laws and followed them. Attendance is 100% in nearly all sample blocks except a few cases where revenue villages are scattered over several kilometers. The low rate of savings is usually in areas where group members are extremely poor and are not able to

save regularly. Otherwise savings and inter-lending is the backbone of these SHGs. Most of the groups received all basic training and are receiving training on income generation activities. Nearly all groups have their bank accounts. So far as the Community Asset Creation is concerned, in some States, it is completed or work is in advanced stage. In other States the SHGs have already planned the type of community assets to be created. Thus, Swayamsidha has benefited women in several ways by increasing income, awareness level, decision making process, participation in political and social processes, knowledge of legal rights, health issues etc.

Economic Empowerment:

2.12 Economic status of women has definitely improved after joining the SHGs. The Swayamsidha group members have been able to further strengthen their own economic activities as individuals and as groups by taking loans from their own kitty and from the banks and other credit institutions. This has generated enthusiasm and self confidence in women in the Swayamsidha SHGs who become role models for other women in the village to emulate. The result is that once one or two groups get formed, there is a chain reaction and other groups come up. These women handle their own money, keep their own accounts, maintain group registers and individual pass books as also are proud of their Group's account in the banks with photographs of their office bearers. The Scheme has helped in poverty alleviation and income increase has definitely taken place from moderate to high level among the SHG members. Lakhs of rupees have been pooled to start income generation activities that reflect the local needs. With a few exceptions, all SHG members are involved in individual or group income generating activities - some with loan from their groups and others with Bank loans. 50-60% of nutritious meals in ICDS centers are supplied by the SHG members. There are good number of success stories that speak of their economic empowerment and augmentation of family income.

Social Empowerment :

2.13 Awareness on various social issues has also been created among women. Under the convergence component of the scheme, they are now being made familiar with various developmental schemes of several Departments which benefit women. Women now always enjoy relatively more freedom and there are no restriction on their movement outside home for social or business purpose. Being part of the Swayamsidha group has given them enhanced status. After joining SHGs, the women members are increasingly participating in family decision making, demanding their rights from family, community and government. They have developed the ability to interact with others and have developed negotiation skills. In conclusion, women in Swayamsidha Blocks have strengthened their social standing in society. Awareness of social evils like alcoholism, dowry & female feticide has shown that sex ratio in Villages has improved. A strong bond has been established between group members. They have attachment for each other. Being members of the group, gives them a feeling of security.

Political Empowerment :

2.14 Politically women are active. Thus whoever gets time participates in Gram Sabha activities. The participation of women in local self-government has increased. The percentage of women's voting has gone up considerably. The members are now more sensitive about political issues and their impact on their lives. Participation of women at Panchayat levels has increased and some of them have been elected to the Panchayats and urban local bodies. Most of the members of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are elected from the SHGs. Almost all the members participate in election / political process.

Bank Linkages:

2.15 The scheme helped to establish close linkage between SHGs and banks/credit societies. The

bank officials were sensitized about SHG concept. The Animators and Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs) were quite helpful to SHGs in opening bank accounts and monetary transactions. Initially all the SHGs faced some problems with regard to opening bank accounts. With the intervention of District Collector and PIAs soon these were resolved. Banks that extended help and co-operation are Nationalised banks as well as private banks. Banks were made aware of the guidelines issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for opening accounts of SHGs. Banks that participated in SHG stabilization activities are lead bank officers and rural bank officers. Women are involved in micro credit operations and are interacting with different financial institutions like the nationalized banks, private banks, cooperatives, rural banks etc. In most places, the banks are providing all the cooperation to SHGs in their activities. Some bank officials try to reach out to SHG women personally and have relaxed their timings so that the SHGs can operate their bank accounts comfortably. Some banks organized Loan Mela for SHG group members. The overall experience with the Credit institutions was found positive.

Legal Rights:

2.16 The SHG members have begun to know their legal rights through the awareness generation programmes organized under the scheme. All women members are now aware of their legal rights and laws forbidding child marriage, child labour, equal wages for equal work, among others. They have awareness on dowry laws; age of marriage, and state that they do not discriminate between sons and daughters. They are opposed to sex selective abortions but admit that this practice is going on and women actually do not have much control over it.

Health Issues:

2.18 Swayamsidha Awareness Camps and Basic Training programmes created awareness among

SHG members on issues such as Family planning, health and nutrition of pregnant women, child care, issues of adolescents, need for immunization of children, problems of HIV/AIDS, to name a few. They know the importance of a clean environment, keeping the house and surroundings neat and clean; importance of health care (family health, reproductive health) etc. Some groups participated in Pulse Polio, Immunization, and Awareness programmes.

Community Asset Creation:

2.19 The scheme of Swayamsidha has provision for creation of community assets as per felt needs of the women SHG members. The cost of community assets could be up to Rs. 10 lakhs per block out of which Rs. 6 lakhs would be GOI share and the remaining amount would be State share. The evaluation report indicates that in some States creation of community assets has been completed or in advanced stage. The other States have already planned the form of community asset to be created. The community assets are being created after consulting the SHGs and to meet their requirements. There is delay in the initiation of community assets in some States due to non availability of 40 % community share. The sources identified by the states for the 40% state share are State Rural Development Department, concerned Deputy Commissioners, Block Development Officers, MP/MLA Grants, other donors, etc. Only some states have been able to raise this share for Swayamsiddha Blocks.

Conclusion :

2.20 In conclusion, women in Swayamsidha Blocks have strengthened their social standing in society. Awareness of social evils like alcoholism, dowry & female feticide is visible. Economic status of women has definitely improved after joining the SHGs. Number of women members in Panchayat levels has increased and some of them have been elected to local bodies.

2.21 Women across the board have asked a pertinent question, “ Why did it take Sarkar to bring in this scheme 50 long years.” At places, they are willing to sustain the movement with or without support. Groups are fairly stable although at different stages of evolution. Swayamsidha is a movement and a dynamic process. This programme has unleashed woman power and one comes across some very vibrant, confident women who understand the concepts of savings and investment and the need to equip themselves with sound economic skills. On the technical front, more work is needed but the programme is moving towards the broad goals of social, economic and political empowerment of women. The scheme needs to run for another five years for stabilization, growth, sustainability and self reliance.

Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)

2.22 This Programme launched in 1987, seeks to provide updated skills and new knowledge to poor and asset-less women in the traditional sectors such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairying, Fisheries, Handlooms, Handicrafts, Khadi and Village Industries, Sericulture, Social Forestry and Wasteland Development for enhancing their productivity and income generation. This would enhance and broaden their employment opportunities, including self-employment and development of entrepreneurial skills. A comprehensive package of services, such as health care, elementary education, crèche facility, market linkages etc. are provided besides access to credit.

2.23 During the 9th Plan period about 255635 women beneficiaries were covered under 66 projects implemented in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh,

Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal. During the 10th Plan period about 215651 women beneficiaries have so far been provided training under the Scheme. So far, women in the dairying sector have been receiving the maximum support, keeping in view the nature of demands.

2.24 In the year 2006-07, 13 new projects were sanctioned to benefit 31177 women and an amount of Rs.1597.63 lakh was released. During the current financial year 2007-08, 13 new projects have been sanctioned benefiting 34390 women and an amount of Rs.1474.00 lakh released as on 31.1.2008. State-wise funds released under the scheme during 2006-07 and 2007-08 (as on 11.1.2008) are given in **Annexure-VII** and funds released to organisations during 2007-08 are in **Annexure-XLIII**

Evaluation of the scheme of STEP

2.25 An independent agency i.e. Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), New Delhi has evaluated the STEP programme to assess the sectoral impact of the programme under implementation and has submitted its final report which is under examination by the core group constituted in the Ministry for the purpose.

Hostels for Working Women

2.26 The scheme of assistance for construction or expansion of hostel buildings for working women with day care centre for children is in implementation since 1972-73. Under this Scheme financial assistance is provided to non-governmental organizations, cooperative bodies and other agencies engaged in the field of women’s social welfare, women’s education, etc., public sector undertakings, women’s development corporations, local bodies, universities, State Governments etc., for construction of building for Working Women’s Hostel. This scheme envisages provision of safe and affordable hostel accommodation to working women (single working women, women working

at places away from their home-towns, working but husband out of town, widows, divorcees, separated women etc.) and women being trained for employment and girl students. Trainees are permitted to stay for a period of one year and girl students for a period of five years, but with the conditions that first preference would be given to working women. It is also stipulated in the scheme that the category of women who are being trained for employment and girl students should not exceed 30% of the capacity of the hostel.

2.27 Though the scheme was initiated in 1972-73, so far (upto 2007) only 876 hostels have been sanctioned throughout the country. Since the demand for Working Women Hostels is on the increase due to increasing number of women in employment, a Committee was set up to revamp the scheme so as to make it more viable. The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women also took up the scheme for examination. The scheme is being revamped taking into account the suggestions that have been made by both the Committees.

2.28 During 2006-07, it was decided to set up a 500 seat hostel at Jasola in Delhi for working women from the North Eastern States. Foundation stone for the hostel was laid by the Minister of State (IC), WCD on 7.3.2007. Two new hostels with a capacity to accommodate 208 women have been sanctioned in the year and so far Rs.1.32 crore has been released as on 31.1.2008. State-wise funds released during 2006-07 and 2007-08 and distribution of Working Women's Hostels are given in **Annexure-VIII and IX** respectively. Funds released to different organisations during 2007-08 (as on 24.1.2008) are in **Annexure-XLIII**

Swadhar-A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances.

2.29 This scheme was launched by the Ministry during the year 2001-02 for the benefit of Women in difficult circumstances with the following objectives:



Swadhar Home- Inmates in a monthly group discussion in Bangalore

- To provide primary need of Shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances who are without any social and economic support;
- To provide emotional support and counseling to such women;
- To rehabilitate them socially and economically through education, awareness, skill upgradation and personality development through behavioral training etc;
- To arrange for specific clinical, legal and other support for women/girls in need of those interventions by linking and networking with other organizations in both government and Non-Government Sectors on case to case basis;
- To provide Help-line (24 hour Telephone facility) or other facilities to such women in distress; and
- To provide such other services as will be required for support and rehabilitation of such women in distress.

Target Group/ Beneficiaries

- Widows deserted by their families and relatives and left uncared at religious places where they are victims of exploitation;
- Women prisoners released from jail and without family support;
- Women survivors of natural disaster, who have been rendered homeless and are without any social and economic support;
- Trafficked women/ girls rescued or runaway from brothels or other places or women/girl victims of sexual crimes, who are disowned by family or who do not want to go back to respective family for various reasons;
- Women victims of terrorist/ extremist violence who are without any family support and without any economic means for survival;

- Mentally challenged women (except for the Psychotic categories) who are without any support of family or relatives;
- Women with HIV/AIDS deserted by their family or women who have lost their husband due to HIV/AIDs and are without social and economic support;
- Similarly placed women in difficult circumstances.

Implementing Agencies

2.30 The implementing agencies can be the Social Welfare/Women and Child Welfare Department of State Governments, women's Development Corporation, Urban Local Bodies and reputed Public/ Private Trust or Voluntary Organizations, who are willing to take up the responsibility of rehabilitating such women. The organizations must have adequate experience/ expertise for taking up such work of rehabilitation.

Performance during 2007-2008

2.31 The budget allocated by Government of India for Swadhar Scheme for the year 2007-08 is Rs.15.00 crores. Out of this, Rs.8.59 crores has been sanctioned and 40 new Swadhar Shelter Homes have been sanctioned and funds have also been released for 153 ongoing cases(Swadhar Shelter Home and Helpline) for 2nd and subsequent instalment.

2.32 At present, a total of 208 Swadhar Shelter Homes and 210 Women Helplines are functional across the country and 8 Swadhar Shelter Homes have been closed by the organization (up to 12.2.2008). Statewise funds released during 2006-07 and 2007-08 (as on 27.2.2008) is given in **Annexure-X** and funds released to different organisations during 2007-08 (as on 12.2.2008) are given in **Annexure-XLIII**.

Evaluation of the Swadhar Scheme:

This Ministry intended to get evaluation of the two Schemes being run by the Ministry namely Swadhar Scheme, Short Stay Home Scheme and Women Helpline. The main objective of the evaluation study was to undertake a systematic

review of the performance of the Swadhar Scheme, Short Stay Home Scheme and Women Helpline and to suggest whether both the Schemes can be merged together. The Contract was executed by this Ministry with Centre for Market Research and Social Development, East of Kailash, New Delhi. The final report is awaited.

Prevention of Trafficking of Women and Children for Commercial Sexual Exploitation

2.33 Trafficking in human beings is an organized crime violating all basic human rights. India has emerged as a source, transit and destination country. It is estimated that there are 3 million sex workers in India, of which 40 percent constitute children, as young as 10 years old. Most often these victims are trafficked through means like duping, luring, fake marriages, abducting, kidnapping and manipulating social and economic vulnerabilities and sold to brothels where they are continuously subjected to abuse, violence and exploitation by perpetrators of crime.

2.34 Article 23 of the Constitution of India prohibits trafficking in human beings and begar. The principal legislation “Immoral Traffic

(Prevention) Act, 1956” lays down provisions for providing stringent punishment to the perpetrators of crime. In addition, the Indian Penal Code also provides provisions for crimes related to trafficking. India is also signatory to various International and regional Conventions such as UN convention against Transnational Organized Crime with its protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children, SAARC convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in Prostitution, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2.35 The growing incidence of trafficking in the country is a major concern to the Government of India and the Ministry of Women and Child Development has undertaken a number of initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking. These include: -

- The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 is being amended to provide for stringent punishment to the traffickers and other perpetrators of crime, deletion of Sections of the Act that re-victimizes the victim and providing an institutional mechanism. The proposed amendments to Immoral Traffic



Conference on Prevention of Trafficking being addressed by Smt. Renuka Chowdhury, Minister of State(I/C), MWCD on the occasion of International Women's Day



Smt. Renuka Chowdhury, MOS(I/C), MWCD addressing UN-GIFT International Conference on Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking held at Vienna from 13-15th February, 2008

Prevention Act, 1956 were submitted for Cabinet Approval. The Cabinet has recommended that a “Group of Ministers (GOM)” be constituted to go through the proposed amendments and give their recommendations. The Group of Ministers met on 23 November 2007 and subsequent meetings are to be convened for further deliberations.

- An Integrated National Plan of Action for preventing Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children, is being drafted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Labour, National Commission for Human Rights and National Commission for Women. The Integrated National Plan of Action addresses trafficking for all purposes and including commercial sexual exploitation. For this purpose wide ranging Consultations with State Governments, NGOs and experts through Regional Consultations, one each in Guwahati, Hyderabad and Goa and a National Level Consultation in Delhi were held wherein the draft Plan of Action was deliberated and recommendations received. The draft Plan of Action is under finalization.
- Three pilot projects are being implemented viz i) to combat trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation under the sanction of tradition ii) Pilot project to combat trafficking of women and children for commercial, sexual exploitation in source areas and iii) pilot project to combat trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation in destination areas. In the year 2007-08, 34 projects were sanctioned benefiting 250 women and girls.
- Based on the favorable feedback on the implementation of the pilot projects, it was decided to formulate a comprehensive scheme to combat trafficking in the Eleventh plan. A new Central Scheme “Ujjawala”—a Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation and Re-Integration and Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation” was launched

on 4 December, 2007. An Outlay of Rs 10 crore has been approved for the Scheme in the year 2007-08.

The scheme comprises of five components: -

1. Prevention, which consists of formation of community vigilance groups/adolescent groups, awareness and sensitization of important functionaries like police, community leaders and preparation of IEC material, holding workshops, etc.
 2. Rescue, safe withdrawal of the victim from the place of exploitation.
 3. Rehabilitation, which includes providing safe shelter for victims with basic inputs of food, clothing, counseling medical care, legal aid, vocational training and income generation activities etc.
 4. Reintegration, which includes restoring the victim into the family/community (if she so desires) and the accompanying costs.
 5. Repatriation, to provide support to cross-border victims for their safe repatriation to their country of origin.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with National Institute of Public Co-operation and Child Development (NIPCCD) is organizing a series of workshops for NGOs on issues relating to trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation. The Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with NIPCCD organized training courses for International delegations such as Mauritius and SAARC countries delegations on various aspects of trafficking.
 - The Ministry in collaboration with Ministry of Home Affairs and UNODC is developing Training Manuals for Police and Prosecutors and also setting up Anti- Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) in select States like Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Goa.
 - The problem of cross border trafficking especially of young children and women trafficked from Bangladesh and Nepal into

India for the purposes of prostitution has been growing in recent years. At present there are no streamlined procedures, to enable safe and quick repatriation of the victims. In this connection a draft Roadmap and Joint Plan of Action has been developed in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs and Bangladesh Counterparts with technical support from UNICEF.

- The First Regional Task Force meeting of the SAARC countries was held on 26th July 2007 at Delhi to discuss operationalisation of the SAARC Convention on prevention of trafficking. In the meeting, the SAARC Countries agreed to disseminate best practices, develop of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for implementing the provisions of the Convention and to train and build capacities of various stakeholders in SAARC Region. India has offered to hold training programmes and develop SOPs.
- UNODC in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and



Combating Trafficking- Central Advisory Committee setup to discuss related issues at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi (13th December 2007)

Ministry of Home Affairs organized the “South Asia Regional Conference on Human Trafficking” as a part of the Global Initiatives to Fight Human Trafficking (UN-GIFT). The Conference provided an effective platform to generate awareness on various issues relating to trafficking and

initiate a collaborative regional effort to tackle the problems.

- The Central Advisory Committee (CAC) to combat Child Prostitution headed by Secretary (MWCD) had requested focus groups to develop guidelines on six crucial issues – Inter State Rescue Protocol; Health issues of trafficked victims; Prevention of trafficking of women and children; Rehabilitating victims of trafficking; Legal issues; MIS and data base systems. All the above were discussed in the CAC meetings and adopted.

National Plan of Action for Implementing the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women

2.36 The Government adopted the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women on 20th March, 2001. The main objective of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women and to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to ensure their active participation in all spheres of public life and activities.

2.37 To ensure that the policy prescriptions get implemented, the Ministry is in the process of drafting a Plan of Action (POA). A core group has been set up to redraft the POA in the light of the observations made by the Cabinet Secretariat. Under the Policy's operational strategy, the Action Plan has to be drawn up with goals achievable by the year 2010. The POA will also identify commitment of resources and responsibilities for implementation and strengthen institutional mechanisms and structures for monitoring. The operational strategy also mentions the need to develop Gender Development Index as a method of gender auditing and stresses the importance of collecting gender-disaggregated data which will be useful for planning, implementation and monitoring.

Scheme for Relief and Rehabilitation of Victims of Rape

2.38 The Supreme Court, in a judgment dated 19.10.1994, directed the Government to evolve a scheme to mitigate the sufferings of victims of rape and to constitute Criminal Injuries Compensation Board to pay them compensation. A meeting of the Committee of Secretaries (COS) was held on 4.3.2005 to discuss the implementation of the Supreme Court judgement. In pursuance of the decision taken in the COS meeting, the National Commission for Women (NCW) has formulated a scheme titled 'Scheme for Relief and Rehabilitation of Victims of Rape, 2005' providing for constitution of (i) Criminal Injuries Relief and Rehabilitation Board at each and every district to award compensation to rape victims; and (ii) District Monitoring Committees to provide shelter, protection, legal and medical aid and other rehabilitative measures for the victims. The Scheme has been included in the Report of the Working Group on Empowerment of Women for the XIth Plan. An amount of Rs.1 crores in the year 2007-08 has been allocated for the new scheme.

Laws on Women

2.39 The Ministry of Women and Child Development has set up a Committee to review laws so as to remove gender disparities, if any, in them. The Committee reviews the progress of action taken by the concerned Ministries in this respect. Current status of these laws is given at **Annexure-XI** The Ministry is concerned with the legislative aspects of the following Acts:

The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.

2.40 A proposal to amend the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986 in order to widen its scope and to make its

implementation more effective was considered by the Cabinet which directed wider consultations to be held for the amendment of the Act. The National Commission for Women has been asked to take action in this respect.

The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961.

2.41 The National Commission for Women has recommended amendments to the Act and amendment of section 304 B of Indian Penal Code in order to strengthen the anti-dowry laws. The recommendations are under examination in the Ministry.

The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987.

2.42 The amendments proposed to the Act have been dropped.

The National Commission for Women Act, 1990

2.43 Amendments to the Act have been recommended by the National Commission for Women in order to give more powers to the Commission. These are under examination in the Ministry.

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

2.44 The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 was notified in the Gazette of India on 14-9-2005. The said Act is a comprehensive legislation to protect women from all forms of domestic violence. The Act also covers women who have been/are in a relationship with the abuser and are subject to violence of any kind - physical, sexual, mental, verbal or emotional. The Act has been brought into force with effect from 26-10-2006.

2.45 The Ministry has also notified the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Rules, 2006 laying down the rules for implementation of the Act. The copies of the Act and the Rules have

been circulated to all State Chief Secretaries with the request to appoint Protection Officers, register Service Providers and to give wide publicity to the Act for creating awareness of its provisions among the public.

Salient features of the Act:

- It covers those women who are or have been in a relationship with the abuser where both parties have lived together in a shared household and are related by consanguinity, marriage, a relationship in the nature of marriage, or adoption. In addition, relationships with family members living together as a joint family are also included. Even those women who are sisters, widows, mothers, single women, or living with the abuser are entitled to the protection under the proposed legislation. However, whereas the Act enables the wife or the female living in a relationship in the nature of marriage to file a complaint against any relative of the husband or the male partner, it does not enable any female relative of the husband or the male partner to file a complaint against the wife or the female partner.
- It defines “domestic violence” to include actual abuse or the threat of abuse that is physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic. Harassment by way of unlawful dowry demands to the woman or her relatives would also be covered under this definition.
- It confers on the aggrieved woman the right to reside in a shared household, whether or not she has any title or rights for the same. In fact, a respondent, not being a female, can be directed under the Act to remove himself from the shared household or to secure for the aggrieved woman the same level of alternate accommodation as enjoyed by her in the shared household or to pay rent for the same.
- The orders for reliefs the aggrieved woman is entitled to under the Act include protection

orders, residence orders, monetary relief, custody orders and compensation orders.

- It empowers the Magistrate to pass protection order in favour of the abused to prevent the abuser from aiding or committing an act of domestic violence or any other specified act, entering a workplace or any other place frequented by the abused, attempting to communicate with the abused, isolating any assets used by both the parties and causing violence to the abused, her relatives or others who provide her assistance against the domestic violence.
- It provides for appointment of Protection Officers and recognizes and involves non-governmental organisations as service providers for providing assistance to the abused with respect to her medical examination, obtaining legal aid, safe shelter etc.

2.46 On completion of one year in October, 2007 a national conference was organized in collaboration with the Lawyer's Collective to review the implementation of the Act. This is the first time that implementation of an Act has been reviewed on completion of an year and it was found that though setting up of necessary infrastructure to implement the Act as prescribed therein is lacking in many states, as many as 7913 cases have been registered under the Act in one year.

The Protection against Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Bill, 2005

2.47 A Bill seeking to confer upon women the right to protection against sexual harassment at workplace has been drafted in consultation with the National Commission for Women and prominent women organisations working in the area having requisite expertise. The proposed new legislation would cover women working

in organised, unorganised and informal sectors and would have clear provisions about the employers' obligations to prevent and redress sexual harassment at workplace. The Bill is under examination in the Ministry.

National Commission for Women

2.48 The National Commission for Women (NCW) was constituted on 31.1.1992 as an apex level statutory body under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. The main task of the Commission is to study and monitor all matters relating to the Constitutional and legal safeguards provided for women and to review the existing legislations and suggest amendments, wherever necessary. NCW is also mandated to look into the complaints and take suo moto notice of the cases involving deprivation of the rights of women in order to provide support, legal or otherwise, to helpless and needy women. Ensuring custodial justice is another important function. The NCW is empowered to monitor the proper implementation of all the legislations made to protect the rights of women so as to enable them to achieve equality in all spheres of life and equal participation in the development of the nation.

UNDP-GOI Project on Gender Equality

2.49 The Ministry signed a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with UNDP in July 2004 for implementation of a project titled "Promoting Gender Equality". A Standing Committee under the chairpersonship of Joint Secretary (Women Welfare) was constituted to facilitate programme implementation. Activities finished so far in the current year are as below:

- The process of Engendering of the Eleventh Five Year Plan formulation was taken up by Government of India through National Alliance of Women's Organisation (NAWO) under this Project in collaboration with UNIFEM. The objective of the process (that included five regional consultations and a

national consultation) was to reflect on the impact of macro processes and policies on women at the grassroots.

- Training workshops on gender budgeting were conducted under this project for both Central and State government officials.
- Three studies on elderly, disabled and home based workers have been completed to identify options for reducing their vulnerability.
- International Conference on “Mainstreaming time use survey in the National Statistical System in India” was held and the report is under print.

Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

2.50 India signed the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 30th July 1980 and ratified it on 9th July 1993 with one reservation and two declaratory statements. The convention obligates the State parties to undertake appropriate legislative and other measures to eliminate discrimination against women and for guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedom on the basis of equality with men. The First Report was submitted (on 21st October) in 1997. This was considered (on 24th and 30th) in June 2000, when the Indian delegation led by the Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development made an oral presentation before the Committee. A combined 2nd and 3rd Periodic Report was submitted in June 2005. The UN Committee on CEDAW considered the Report on 18th January 2007. The next Report is to be submitted in 2010.

2.51 As the implementation of the provisions of CEDAW requires a greater dialogue and convergence among the various ministries

responsible for implementing different legal provisions, policies and programmes that work towards women’s equality and elimination of discrimination against women, an Inter-Ministerial Committee has been constituted, under the chairpersonship of the Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development. India is the second country in the world to have such a Committee for implementation of CEDAW.

Beijing Platform for Action

2.52 The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995 was a landmark event that set the pace for women’s empowerment when a Declaration and Platform for Action (BFPA) were adopted. India adopted both without any reservations and identified 12 critical areas of concerns which include Poverty, Education & Training, Health, Violence Against Women, Women in Armed Conflict, Economy, Power & Decision Making, Institutional Mechanism for advancement of Women, Media, Environment, Human Rights of women and girl child. The Commission on the Status of Women reviews the progress made by the member countries in these areas. The 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held in New York from 26th February to 9th March 2007. A delegation headed by Economic Adviser in the Ministry attended the meeting. Elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against girl child was taken up as the priority theme. The 52nd Session of CSW has been scheduled from 25th February to 7th March 2008. Priority theme would be financing for gender equality and empowerment of women.

Second East Asia Gender Equality Ministerial Meeting

2.53 The Ministry organized the Second East Asia Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi on 6th and 7th December 2007. Sixteen countries viz., the 10

ASIAN nations of Brunei Darussalam, Kingdom of Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Union of Myanmar, Republic of the Philippines, Republic of Singapore, Kingdom of Thailand, and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, together with Australia, People's Republic of China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and New Zealand were to participate in the meeting. However the countries of Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Laos, were not represented. The Meeting was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. The inaugural address was followed by ministerial addresses. The thematic issues taken up for discussion were Home Based Workers, Violence against Women and Women in Decision Making. The meeting ended with the adoption of a joint ministerial communiqué.

2.54 The first Meeting was held in Japan in 2006 and the next and third meeting would be held in Korea in 2009.

South Asia Regional Ministerial Conference

2.55 The Sixth South Asia Ministerial Conference was held in New Delhi from 17-19 January 2008. All the SAARC countries including Afghanistan were represented. The conference was inaugurated by the Honourable President of India. The SAARC Secretary General also attended the inaugural function. This meeting is held once in every two years to review the action taken and progress made by the respective Governments on the Beijing Platform for Action which has become a base document for measuring gender justice and women's empowerment. This conference initiated by UNIFEM-South Asia Regional Office in September 1996, brings together governments, NGOs and member of the civil society. In pursuance of the Islamabad Declaration : Review and Future Action adopted in the last meeting in 2005, this meeting brainstormed and strategized on some critical concerns related to gender



Smt. Renuka Chowdhury, MOS(I/C), MWCD with Leader of Pakistan Delegation in the Sixth South Asian Regional Ministerial Conference(17-19th January, 2008)



Sixth South Asian Regional Ministerial Conference(17-19th January, 2008)



Participants of the Sixth South Asian Regional Ministerial Conference(17-19th January, 2008)

equality especially ‘Substantive Equality and Gender Justice in South Asia’. The meeting ended with the adoption of forward moving strategies on crucial gender issues affecting women across countries in the region.

International Women’s Day

2.56 8th March is celebrated as International Women’s Day all over. A week long celebration was scheduled this year to mark this day starting



Celebrating International Women’s Day-8th March 2008 - Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson UPA, Smt. Renuka Chowdhury, MOS(I/C), MWCD and Smt. Gursharan Kaur w/o Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Sh. Anil Kumar, Secretary, MWCD and two Sarpanches from Haryana State

from 3rd March 2008. The theme adopted by the Ministry for this day is ‘Survival to success: Celebrate her life’. This year, special focus

revolved around three themes viz., Girl Child, Trafficking and Eve Teasing.



International Women’s Day -Inauguration of Workshop on ‘Prevention of Female Foeticide’ by Hon’ble MOS(I/C), MWCD at YMCA, New Delhi on 5th March, 2008

2.57 Celebrated on 8th March, International Women's Day is the global day connecting all women around the world and inspiring them to achieve their full potential. The United Nation's theme for 2008 is: Investing in Women and Girls.

The theme for the Ministry of Women and Child Development is

“Survival to Success
Celebrate her life”

A weeklong celebration has been organised beginning 3rd March 2008 with press conference as curtain raiser followed by the following activities:



Smt. Sonia Gandhi , Chairperson, UPA flanked by Smt. Renuka Chowdhury, Hon'ble Minister of State(I/C), MWCD during International Women's Day 2008

4th March 2008: Conference on Prevention of Trafficking at 10 AM at Vigyan Bhavan

5th March 2008: Workshop on Prevention of Female Foeticide at 10 AM at YMCA



Pledging support against the practice of 'Female Foeticide' on the eve of International Women's Day (March 5, 2008 at YMCA, New Delhi)

8th March 2008: Presentation of Stree Shakti Puraskaar at Siri Fort Auditorium

8-9 March 2008: Health Exhibition at Siri Fort

8-10 March 2008: Nutrition Exhibition at India Gate Lawns

9th March 2008: Screening of films Chameli and Dor at Siri Fort

2.58 This being the International Women's Day, the Ministries of Civil Aviation, Railways and Delhi Metro Rail Corporation have been requested to make special announcements. There would be a special announcement in all the flights/Rajdhani and Shatabdi/Metro Trains that day. The boarding passes and baggage tags would carry the slogan: "Survival to Success. Celebrate her life". They have also been requested to display our slogan in the airports and in the railway stations. Ministry of Finance has been requested to display the slogan in all the ATM receipts of that day and the Telecommunication Ministry to SMS it.

Stree Shakti Puraskar

2.59 Indian Women have taken on different roles before and after Independence and excelled in many fields. The fact that in most cases, success has been achieved in the face of adversity and

difficulties and with the strength of courage, initiative and determination makes them precious.

2.60 It is important that such success stories are publicly recognized so that such women become role models for the future generations of Indian women. As a measure of recognition of achievements of individual women in the field of social development, the Government of India has instituted five national awards titled 'Stree Shakti Puraskar'.

2.61 The Puraskaar is given in the names of Jhansi Ki Rani Lakshmi Bai, Kannagi, Rani Gaidenlieu, Devi Ahilya Bai, Mata Jija Bai. The award carries a cash prize of Rs.3.00 lakh and a citation.

2.62 On 8th March, fifteen women were awarded Stree Shakti Puraskaar by Smt. Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson, UPA in the presence of Smt. Gursharan Kaur, wife of Honourable Prime Minister of India. Details of the awardees are as given in the table below.

2.63 The Ananya Flag on empowerment of women was hoisted by Smt. Sonia Gandhi. UN Secretary General's message was read out by the Director, UN Information Centre and Spokesperson of the UN Secretary General.

Stree Shakti Puraskar Awardees

	Year-2004	Year-2005	Year-2006
Jhansi Ki Rani Lakshmi Bai (for courage)	Mrs. Tirveni Balkrishna Acharya, Maharashtra	Dr.(Smt.) Rani Bang, Maharashtra	Smt. Vanguri Suvantha, Andhra Pradesh
Kannagi (for social upliftment of women)	Ms. Pinki Virani, Delhi	Smt. Shaik Shamshad Begum, Andhra Pradesh	Smt. Kalpana Sarkar, Madhya Pradesh
Rani Gaidinliu Zeliang (for upliftment of tribal women)	Smt. Monmohani Debnath, Tripura	Smt. Salmin Lyngdoh, Meghalaya	Smt. Senu Tshah, Nagaland
Devi Ahilya Bai (for administrative skills)	Smt. Kavita Srivastava, Rajasthan	Smt. Neeta Bahadur, Uttar Pradesh	Smt. D. Shanthi, Tamil Nadu
Mata Jijabai (for the spirit of motherhood)	Smt. Shamshad Begum, Chattisgarh	Smt. Sandhya Raman, Delhi	Smt. Nighat Shafi Pandit, J & K

SAARC Gender Data base

2.64 The Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal agency for SAARC Gender data shop in India and is actively participating in its development. SAARC Gender data shop is a unique web site containing statistical data as well as important information related to gender issues which was launched during the 6th South Asia Ministerial Conference commemorating “Beijing Declaration” held in New Delhi on 17/1/08 by His Excellency the SAARC Secretary General.

Compilation of Gender Development Index/Gender Empowerment Measure

2.65 The Ministry of Women and Child Development has initiated the activity of compilation of Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Index for India and States under GOI-UNDP project of ‘Promoting Gender Equality’. The Indian Institute of Public

Administration is the collaborating National Institution for this project.

Mainstreaming Time Use Survey in India

2.66 The Central Statistical Organisation of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India had conducted the first Time Use Survey on a pilot basis in 1998-99 through the State Directorates of Economics and Statistics covering the States of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya. The Ministry of Women and Child Development conducted an International Seminar on ‘Towards Mainstreaming Time Use Surveys in National Statistical System in India’ during 24-25th May 2007 at Goa, in collaboration with Centre For Development Alternatives, Ahmedabad. The participants of the seminar included experts, policy makers and practitioners from India as well as experts from international organizations and from developing and developed countries.