

CHAPTER - 21

SUB-PLAN FOR WOMEN, MINORITY COMMUNITIES AND SCHEDULED CASTSES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

21.1 One of the important and basic objectives of economic planning is to correct uneven and unbalanced regional growth and to ensure a fairly equitable distribution of wealth and economic prosperity that the process of economic development has brought about amongst all the sections of the society, particularly to the vulnerable sections viz., Women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The level and extent of contribution of women to economic activities is generally regarded as one of the indicators of the overall development of a nation. Though, women's participation in economic activities is as old as civilisation, in India, traditionally, it was restricted to agriculture, forestry and rural based and cottage industries. Thus, the level of participation of women in economic activities is generally regarded as lower, than desired. This is also one of the reasons why women's participation is difficult to quantify and incorporate in the information system of the country's economy.

21.2 The Textiles sector has traditionally been one of the major means for livelihood for women and the backward sections of the society. The participation of women in handloom weaving, sericulture, handicrafts, and, lately, in the powerlooms, ready-made garments sector has been increasing. However, it still remains largely in the unorganised sector.

21.3 After agriculture, textiles and textiles based activities, including handicrafts, constitute the most important source of livelihood for these social groups. Many of these activities are, in fact, associated with distinct regions or even communities, and could also be gender specific, as in the North Eastern Region, where the whole chain of textiles related activity, from reeling of silk cocoons to weaving of the cloth, remain a female preserve. However, the majority of weavers/ artisans belong to the SC/ST population. These groups are normally linked to hereditary or subsistence based occupations in the unorganized sector.

21.4 The Government has been making budgetary provisions in successive Plans for the implementation of various schemes. Though the schemes/ programmes for textiles and textile based activities do not adhere to any specific community or social

groups, a majority of those employed in these sectors belong to these groups, and remain the main beneficiaries of these schemes. These schemes/programmes have had a significant effect on their development and progress in terms of employment opportunities, improvement in productivity levels, as well as income and living standards.

21.5 The sector wise details of the developmental activities for these groups is as follows-

HANDLOOM

21.6 The Handlooms sector employs over 6.5 million workers in weaving and allied activities on 3.5 million looms. The sector is wholly weaver oriented, with the majority weavers belonging to the poorest and marginalized sections of society. It is estimated that, of the total workforce, women constitute 60.60 percent, and SC/STs constitute 36.26 percent (as per the joint census of hand looms & powerlooms 1995-96).

21.7 To assist Handloom Weavers, including SC/ST and women, the Government of India implements various developmental schemes through the State Governments with the objectives of Employment Generation, Modernisation and Upgradation of Technology, Input Support, Marketing Support, Infrastructural Support, Welfare Measures, Development of Exportable Products and Research & Development.

21.8 Under the Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana (DDHPY), for agencies employing 100 percent SC/ST /Women/Minorities, the grant is shared in the ratio of 75:25 between the Centre and the State.

21.9 The Government of India has also taken new initiatives in launching the Integrated Handloom Cluster Development Scheme, the Health Insurance Scheme and the Mahatma Gandhi Bunkar Bima Yojana, during 2005-06. The assistance is to be continued and further raised during the Eleven Five Year Plan.

21.10 No Separate allocation for these groups is being proposed in the Eleventh Plan. This is because majority of the beneficiaries of the proposed total outlay of Rs.4028.68 crore for the Handlooms sector during the Plan period are going to be from these groups, including women. It may be expected that approximately 50 percent of the outlay will be spent on SC/ST and women. The proposed survey of the Handlooms sector will identify these groups and help to sharpen the focus of their

benefits

HANDICRAFTS

21.11 In the Handicrafts Sector, about 32.5 percent of the outlay in respect of identified Central Sector Schemes is earmarked for the benefit of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and women artisans. The allocation is 15 percent, 7.5 percent, and 10 percent, respectively. The major schemes being implemented are (1) Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana, (2) Design and Technology Upgradation Scheme (3) Marketing Support and Services Schemes, (4) Export Promotion Schemes, (5) Research & Development Schemes.

21.12 In the Handicrafts Sector, women constitute 47.42 percent of the total workforce, while 37.11 percent of the workforce belongs to the SC / ST category (Source NCAER survey, 1995-96). There are certain crafts which are practiced predominantly by women, like embroidery, beadwork, appliqué, durries, shawls, cane and bamboo work, artistic textiles, mat weaving, etc. The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) pays special attention to ensure that a large number of women artisans get the benefit of all the developmental schemes, including training and marketing related programmes. Voluntary organizations like Self – Employed Women Associations (SEWA), Ahmedabad; SHASHA, Kolkata; Mahila Kalyan Samithi, Pilibhit, SHRUJAN Trust, Bhuji, TRIFED , etc., are being financially assisted to encourage participation by women, and artisans belonging to SC / ST communities.

21.13 As in the other unorganized sub-sectors of the textiles sector, schemes formulated and implemented are not targeted at any specific group, but their implementation ensures that the desired benefits do trickle down to these vulnerable sections of the society. Among the schemes implemented by the Development Commissioner for Handicrafts is the scheme for setting up a Craft Development Centre to offer a package of services such as raw materials, common facilities, design inputs, procurement and marketing to a cluster of craftsmen.

21.14 While all the schemes recommended for the Eleventh Plan shall be applicable to artisans belonging to the above categories, the Working Group has recommended some special features such as :

- A Scheme for skill upgradation under the Guru Shishya Pattern of the Special

Handicrafts Training Project (SHTP) shall be implemented **ONLY** in respect of women artisans and the artisans belonging to the SC/ST communities.

- Special components shall be introduced in the Scheme in association with the National Minority Commission in order to fulfill the specific needs of artisans belonging to minority communities.

CLOTHING INDUSTRY

21.15 The Clothing industry is considered the growth engine of the textiles industry and is a labour intensive industry. This industry has a female friendly employment orientation, and provides employment to a large number of women. In fact, 38 per cent of the total employment in clothing sector is accounted for by women.

SERICULTURE:

21.16 **Gender sensitization in Sericulture:** The approach for Eleventh Plan is to provide greater emphasis to the empowerment of women in sericulture by installing a mechanism wherein the policies and programmes in the sector would be initiated and taken up on a long term basis. The steps would include fiscal policy planning for women, infrastructure support, review mechanisms, capacity building, access to credit by creating a Womens Credit Fund, access to land, special marketing facilities, creating and disseminating women friendly technologies, social security measures, technology creation and up-gradation, special subsidy for women beneficiaries, quality consciousness, study tours, publicity and propaganda measures, publication of women friendly literature, etc.

21.17 Some exclusive women oriented programmes / schemes shall be formulated during the Eleventh Plan where the focus would be on the creation of Self Help Groups for various activities. These schemes would be assisted by the Central Government / State Government / Contribution by women Self Help Groups, and also dovetail resources from schemes of other Ministries wherever applicable.

21.18 **Focus on SC/ST communities in the industry:** It is proposed to extend certain concessions like reduced beneficiary share (by 10 percent) in schemes and give preference to these communities when extending the benefits. Special programmes will be taken up in the areas where there is a larger population of Scheduled Castes / Tribes.

21.19 It is proposed to formulate special projects for women, particularly in training, and organize group activities like reeling, spinning, weaving, making silk products, etc. A token provision of **Rs. 8.53 crore** has been made during the Eleventh Plan.

Tribal Sub Plan (TSP)

21.20 Special schemes will be taken up under the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), particularly in the Non-Mulberry sector which is a major activity of tribals. The schemes will be integrated with the schemes of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Rural Development, etc. Cultivation of silkworm food plants will be integrated with the schemes like Water-shed Management, Rain Water harvesting and Water Saving Practices, etc. Voluntary Organisations working for the upliftment of the STs will be encouraged to participate. In addition, a token Provision of **Rs. 1.00 crore** has been kept in the Eleventh Plan for group activities to give them exposure to the sericulture activities in developed areas.

JUTE INDUSTRY

21.21 A definite plan of action for diversification at the small scale / cottage and NGO's level has been worked out for jute sector. Though it cannot be quantified, it may be presumed that a majority of the beneficiaries from the proposed activities in the decentralized jute sector are going to be women. The National Centre for Jute Diversification (NCJD) has taken up a number of activities for the betterment of women through various schemes. About 40 percent of the beneficiaries are targeted to be SC / ST women.