

Chapter

22

Women Empowerment and Social Welfare

22.1 Women Empowerment

The Government of Pakistan is committed to ensure an active role for women in the socio-economic field through their active participation relating policies and programs. The current situation is briefly described as:

- ? 68 percent rural women fall in the category of the vulnerable lacking in assets, access to services and economic opportunities.
- ? Women dwelling in slums or katchi abadis or just above the poverty line-lack basic needs.
- ? Both rural/urban women suffer socio-cultural gender biases.

In the Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF), the following objectives are envisaged for women development:

- ? Greater participation of women in political, economic and legislative- decision-making.
- ? Enhanced availability of Micro credit facilities for women.
- ? Accurate gender and rural/urban disaggregated database for planning & programming purposes

The overall strategy of Women Development is the socio-economic and political empowerment of all Pakistani women and eradication of extreme poverty. The objective is to bring rural women into the mainstream. The major aim is to ensure women's equal access in the development process. A national and four provincial Gender Reform Action Plans (GRAPs) have been prepared through a consultative process under the aegis of Ministry of Women Development.

Economic Empowerment

Concerted efforts are being made by the Government to alleviate poverty amongst the women of Pakistan. Consequently, the Ministry of Women Development in collaboration with development partners and financial institutions like Aga Khan Rural Support Program (AKRSP), First Women Bank Ltd (FWBL) and Khushhali Bank (KB) conceived pilot projects for economic empowerment of rural women under the umbrella of National Fund for Advancement of Rural Women, *Jafakash Aurat*. Three pilot projects were launched in remote areas of Balochistan, NWFP and Punjab under the *Jafakash Aurat* Program for this purpose.

Social Empowerment

Establishment of Women Centers

Women Centres has been established at place where temporary shelter, free legal aid, medical relief and psycho-social counseling services to women in distress are provided The Government has established 25 Women Centers with shelter homes in various districts of the country, which include, Sahiwal, Vehari, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Kohat, Mainwali, Quetta, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, Mirwala (Muzaffargarh) Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Abbotabad, Sibi, Mirpur (AJK), Jacobabad. Khushab, D.G. Khan. Khuzdar and Mingora.

Review of PSDP 2006-07

An allocation of Rs 269.2 million has been earmarked for 17 projects of the Ministry of Women Development in the PSDP 2006-07. The Ministry will incur an expenditure of Rs 126.3 million by the close of the financial year.

Physical Achievement

Economic Empowerment

A number of measures have been taken to enhance the economic empowerment of women, through training, jobs and protection measures. Some projects/activities under taken for rural women are listed below:-

- ✍ 5237 women have been trained in different trades under “Patti development project Chitral (AKRSP)”. This would enable the Women to earn money for their livelihood.
- ✍ 953 women have been trained in different trades under the project, “Economic Empowerment of Rural Women” Shaikhupura and Gujranwala through FWBL. The training imparted to women has encouraged them to support their families.
- ✍ Advances disbursed among 272 women and 200 trained in different trades under the project Supporting Skill & Micro- Enterprise Development amongst Gwadar women (Khushhali Bank). These advances had not only helped in reducing poverty in the area but also encouraged the women to stand on their own feet.

Social Empowerment

Some 8,314 women in different districts benefited from women centers in the form of shelters, free legal aid, free medical aid and psycho-social counseling.

Annual Plan 2007-08

An amount of Rs 163.1 million in PSDP 2007-08 has been allocated for 12 on-going and new projects. Some of the major projects are Gender Reform Action Plan (GRAP) which includes inter-alia a national and four provincial plans, establishment of Crisis Centres in various Districts of the country, National Fund for Advancement of Rural Women, *Jafakash Aurat* and Pilot Project for District Resource Centers for Women in Local Government.

Physical Targets

The Ministry of Women Development plans to establish District Resource Centers for Women in Local Government throughout Pakistan under its Gender Reform Action Plan to provide conducive atmosphere for the women councilors. More Women Crisis Centers are envisaged throughout the country to provide legal aid and protection to women. Under the *Jafakash Aurat* Program, technical, vocational, marketable skills and micro credit facilities will continue to be provided to local women entrepreneurs.

22.2 Social Welfare

Sectoral Policy

The Medium Term Development Framework (MTDF) emphasizes equitable social development. The document aims to translate National Social Welfare Policy and National Policy for Persons with Disabilities and child protection into programs of action, with the support of Civil Society, Organization including NGOs.

The Government is also implementing an expanded program for education of special children. Their education is being upgraded to middle level with inclusive education as a high priority area.

The National Social Welfare Policy, 1994 and National Policy of Persons with Disabilities 2002, approved by the Cabinet, envisage an action plan of social welfare services for rural areas and enhancing people's access to education, health, income generation, training and technology, employment and efficient utilization of resources. The overall vision on disabilities is to provide an environment that will allow realization of full potential of such persons. Mainstreaming is envisaged through the required support of the Government, private sector and civil society.

Strategy

The strategy recognizes that:

- ? For growth to reduce poverty, it must emanate from sectors that have greater potential to generate employment.
- ? Targeted policy interventions are required to provide quick relief through short-term employment opportunities, social safety nets and financial assistance.
- ? There is need to improve access to basic needs (primary education, primary health care, drinking water, access to justice) and good governance.
- ? Involvement of the poor in the formulation of these policies and management of their affairs through broad-based alliance with civil society and the private sector is critical in attaining the objectives of the strategy. To foster social mobilization and to nurture organized forums, Community Organizations (COs) of Citizens Community Boards (CCBs) and intermediary support organizations are needed.

Social Welfare Programs

Action plan prepared in light of the MTFD has been translated into specific programs/projects. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education and the NGOs are actively involved in the implementation of their respective programs / projects.

For implementation of the rehabilitation strategy, the ERRA in the 2005 earthquake areas has taken a number of initiatives: i) Establishment of Rehabilitation Centres at Abbottabad, Muzaffarabad ii) Institutional Strengthening at NIHD, DHQs & THQs, (Shangla, Mansehra, Balakot, Bagh, Hattianbala, Atthmuqam iii) Community Based Rehabilitation: Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Sanghla & Mansehra.

Rehabilitation Strategy

The rehabilitation strategy has been approved by the Prime Minister on 21st July, 2006 for the Earthquake Affected Areas. An amount of Rs 50 billion is earmarked for ERRA in the current financial year (2006-07) PSDP for the rehabilitation of the Earthquake Affectees in Earthquake Areas. A medical rehabilitation project has been cleared by the CDWP for disabled persons costing Rs 742.3 million for consideration of the ECNEC.

Social Safety Nets

Pakistan Baitulmal has initiated various programs and expanded its social safety nets to all the districts of Pakistan. These programs include individual financial assistance scheme (approximately Rs 200 million) per annum for the poor in relation to i) Income generating activities ii) Medical care iii) Educational stipends iv) General assistance.

Public Private Partnership

There are four programs under PSDP 2006-07 for promotion of the public private partnership. These are:

- ? Fiscal Incentives, technical assistance and other measures for growth of NGOs in rural, farflung and under developed areas.
- ? Grant for Self-Help Project.
- ? Non profit organization certification program by the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy.
- ? Child domestic labour project basic enabling education program (non formal) centres.

Pakistan Baitulmal has expanded its social safety nets through food assistance for vulnerable groups, affordable health packages and community participation.

Review of PSDP 2006-07

During the financial year 2006-07, a revised allocation of Rs 321.340 million was provided for the expansion and development of social welfare activities in federal PSDP. This includes allocations for a Nutrition Package for Primary School Girls. An amount of Rs 4.458 million for Staff Welfare Organization (Establishment Division)

was also allocated. The sector has utilized an estimated amount of Rs 268.1 million, 83 percent of allocation.

Physical Achievement 2006-07

There are 35 ongoing and 52 new projects/schemes under the auspices of Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education. Progress of some projects is outlined as under:

a) Special Education Centres

- ? 12 Special Education Centres for Physically Handicapped Children, Visually Handicapped Children & Hearing Impaired Children upgraded from primary to middle level located at Rawalpindi, Quetta, Dadu, Abbotabad, Sialkot, Gujrat, Larkana, Mirpurkhas, Sargodha, Jhang and Sukkur. Construction of Special Education Centre at Okara.
- ? Seven (7) new Special Education Centres for Physically Handicapped Children & Mentally Retarded Children have been established at Karachi, Peshawar, Muzaffarabad, Faisalabad, Nawabshah, Mardan & Khuzdar.
- ? The construction work of 5 special education centre is to be completed at Gilgit, Kohat, Sibbi, Hyderabad & Hunza.
- ? Two Model Centre for Inclusive Education of Hearing Impaired Children at Mirpurkhas has been established and is in process of establishment in the Province of Baluchistan.

b) Community Development & Social Services (Medical) Projects

- ? Eleven community development projects are providing community based vocational training, especially in the field of knitting, embroidery and related skills to females and radio/television repairing at village Noon Islamabad, Ghanche, Astore and District Ghizer in Northern Areas, Kurram Agency, Khyber Agency, South North Waziristan, South Waziristan Agency and Bajour Agency.
- ? One National Child Protection Centre has been established at Islamabad.
- ? Twelve Social Services Medical Projects have been established in FATA, FANA and Karachi to help the poor patients.

Annual Plan 2007-08

An amount of Rs 414.8 million has been earmarked for the sector in the PSDP 2007-08, which shows an increase of Rs 93.4 million (29 percent) over the revised allocation of Rs321.0 million in the last financial year (2006-07). The physical targets to be achieved by the implementation of 79 ongoing schemes of Ministry of Social Welfare and Special Education. These schemes are related to construction, establishment, up gradation of special education centres, community development project and other social service projects.