CHAPTER XVI

GENDER JUSTICE
CHAPTER XVI
GENDER JUSTICE

It is estimated that out of the total number of persons employed in the decentralized sectors of the Textiles industry, especially Handlooms, Handicrafts, and Sericulture, 50% are women. There are more women in the household industry than in the registered small scale or cottage units. Within the registered units, there are more women in unskilled and low paid jobs than in the skilled or trained category. However, in the organized sector the percentage of women workers is extremely low.

In the Government and Public sector, in accordance with the guidelines of the National Commission for Women, Committees have been set up in this Ministry and its offices/organizations to deal with complaints relating to the sexual harassment of women in the workplace. The presence of senior women in these committees as chairperson or as members has been mandated, and detailed guidelines on handling such work with firmness and tact have been issued. Emphasis is being laid on sensitizing departmental staff on gender issues.

In compliance with the guidelines and norms given by the Supreme Court to prevent and deal with cases of sexual harassment of women in the workplace, this Ministry has also constituted a Complaints Committee. The Committee was reconstituted on January 10, 2007. It consists of 6 members including a senior officer as the Chairperson. No case has been brought to the notice of the Committee.

Sector wise details

Sericulture

The project for the establishment of a Seri-technology Complex for Women commenced in February 2004 for a period of 5 years. Under the programme, women sericulturists are imparted training for skill development in the areas of integrated nutrient and disease management of the host plant, silkworm rearing, quality silkworm seed production, etc.

Stimulating the formation of women groups and learning from experience with Self-Help groups and projects such as the ‘Mahila Samakhya’, an endeavor has been made to organize women to improve their capacities through solidarity and through mutual help, and to access facilities that would be denied to them as individuals. In the sericulture sector Self-Help Groups and Sericulture Quality Clubs are being created that impart training on group dynamics, empowerment, enlargement of the decision making process, SHG concepts, thrift, micro credit, etc. NGOs are also being involved in this effort to organize women’s groups. In the Handicraft sector, marketing services and extension centers encourage group action for women.
Under the Centrally sponsored Catalytic Development Programme, the Central Silk Board (CSB) implements a number of programmes in collaboration with State Governments. Financial and technical assistance is provided for on-farm and post-farm activities like reeling, dyeing, twisting, printing, finishing, etc. Benefits accrue, inter-alia, to SC/ST, and women workers. Under the Catalytic Development Programme, the following programmes are being implemented by CSB in collaboration with the State Sericulture Departments for the benefit of women workers:

Promotion of women friendly technology packages, developed by the research institutes of CSB;

Supply of improved reeling cum twisting devices, and spinning wheels to the NGOs, women groups, individual women reelers/spinners at 50% subsidy;

Training programmes are being organized to impart training to women reelers/spinners on the operation of improved devices; and

CSB is helping States to implement Cluster Development Projects by the integration of CDP schemes, wherein support is provided to Women Self Help Groups.

Handlooms and Handicrafts

The Handlooms sector has taken up a massive programme to train 1 lakh weavers. Many of them will be women. The aim is to upgrade weaving and design skills and impart information that will enhance their skills in accessing raw material and markets.

The Deen Dayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana encourages replacement of looms and pit looms with improved looms that are more productive. Similarly, in the Handicrafts sector, the emphasis on improved tools in carpet making, bamboo, and cane craft, etc., has led to the induction of technology that empowers women with increased incomes from better quality products.

Wool

The Central Wool Development Board, Jodhpur administers various schemes/programmes for the development of wool and woolens in the country. Most of these schemes help the handlooms sector and provide employment to a large number of women weavers/workers.

Cotton sector

The Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) has total strength of 1099 employees including 122 women employees as on March 31, 2007 (i.e. about 11% of total employees). CCI has framed certain rules and regulations such as Recruitment Rules, leave Rules, CDA Rules, Medical rules, TA/DA Rules, HBA Rules, Staff Welfare Rules, Vehicle Advance/maintenance Rules, etc. for all regular employees of the CCI including women employees.

In CCI, basically there are two streams in the staffing pattern i.e. General and Accounts/Finance. The entry point in CCI is at present generally at the level of Junior Cotton Purchaser, Junior Assistant and Grade-I employees. The recruitment/promotion policy of the CCI is governed by the Recruitment Rules, which are applicable to all employees including women employees. The CCI have different employees Welfare Schemes which are open for all the regular employees to avail the benefits thereof irrespective of any gender differentiation.

A Committee on “Sexual Harassment of Women in the Work Place” has been
constituted at Head Office based on the directives of Hon’ble Supreme Court in order to protect working women from sexual harassment and to ensure gender equality. This Committee is headed by a Senior Lady Officer of the level of General Manager, and one Lady Officer from the Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe representative is also a member of the Committee. However, it may be mentioned that the Committee has received no complaints so far regarding Sexual Harassment of women in work place from any employee in this regard. A detailed instruction has already been sent to all the offices under the administrative control of the CCI to protect working women from sexual harassment and to ensure gender equality. The relief in the basic tax slab of Income Tax is applicable to resident women below 65 years is Rs.1.45 lakh instead of Rs.1.10 lakh for individual male employees in relation to assessment year 2008-09. Leave including maternity leave is allowed to women employees as per Central Government Rules.

**Jute sector**

The Government is implementing the Scheme for helping the NGOs & Women Self Help Groups for developing JDPs with the objective to create domestic demand for Jute development parks through mass awareness and also to expand the production base for various Jute development parks with the involvement of NGOs and Women SHGs, especially in rural areas with a view to improve the economic status of the rural women.