



WOMEN & CHILDREN IN RURAL AREA (DWCRA)

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Development of Women and Children in Rural Area (DWCRA), sub-scheme of IRDP, introduced in 1983 became very important programme throughout country and especially in state of Andhra Pradesh. UNICEF introduced DWCRA programme to strengthen women's poverty alleviation programmes. The objectives of programme are to organise women into socio-economic activity groups, to provide self-employment opportunities and to make them economically strong. It also aimed to increase basic services of health, education, child nutrition, safe drinking water, sanitation and environment to women. Subsequently UNICEF withdrew its support because; scheme goal did not match with goal of UNICEF, particularly with regard to children. By end of November 1994, in the country 86,944 DWCRA groups formed against target of 81,900, with 14.96 lakh members. The progress in the group formation steadily increased from 80 per cent of target achievement in Seventh Plan⁷ to above 140 per cent by end of Eighth Plan.

The emphasis on rural women development was mostly on economic front, through programmes of IRDP, DWCRA, TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment), NREP (National Rural Employment Programme), JRY - (Jawahar Rozgar Yojana) and many others. Over a period of 15 years, about 24.5 lakhs DWCRA groups were formed (Up to January 1999) in the country. The total number of women benefited was 38 lakhs. The data indicate that the number of women organised into DWCRA groups are about 141,314 against a target of 91,900 during the Eighth Plan. The performance of DWCRA (1995-96) indicates that some state governments like Andhra Pradesh (17,164), Bihar (2,697), Uttar Pradesh (2,252), Orissa



(1,730), Maharashtra (2,173) and Madhya Pradesh (1,592) performed much better than the other states in terms of formation of women groups. About 245,463 DWCRA groups formed and 3803,576 women benefited under National Social Assistance Scheme during year 1998- 99.

The Unique feature of DWCRA is group strategy. The rural poor women form groups each, 10 to 15 in number for income generating activities (IGA.) suited to their skills, attitude and the local conditions. The group strategy helps the rural women to break social barriers and take initiatives in developing the economic activities. The group dynamics give them moral support, increase bargaining and decision making power for sale of their products in market, (Note on SGSY presented at National Conference, Hyderabad,2001).

Training is important aspect for effective DWCRA programme. TRYSEM organises number of training programmes, exposing visits, regular capacity building programmes, skill development including entrepreneurial skills. Some nationalised banks also, conduct training programmes to help for development of entrepreneurial skills among rural women. Training imparted to rural women under DWCRA is quality oriented. The choice of activity by group members is under guidance of DRDA. The functionaries of DRDA, like Assistant Project Officer (APO) DWCRA, *Mukhya Sevika* and *Gram Sevika* trained on techniques of communication, to identify the problems and to seek solutions, to find the local demand for the produced goods and credit systems. The Project Officer or the Project Director heads the implementation of DWCRA in the District. DWCRA *Bazaars* and technical resource centers provide economic ' and infrastructure support to women?

' *Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana* (SGSY) is Central Government and State Government sponsored scheme, in the ratio of 75:25. Schemes under FRDP, TRYSEM, TOOL KITS, DWCRA, merged in SGSY. This programme came into existence with effect from 01 April 1999. The objective of SGSY is to bring poor families above the poverty line by providing income-generating assets with help of bank credit and government subsidy. The main element in this



programme is the democratic choice of the activity basing on local resources, aptitudes, and skills of rural women.

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