CHAPTER - IX
LEGISLATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HOUSEWIVES

"We have observed the year 2001 as the year of women's empowerment. Several important measures have been taken to elevate women from their present status. It is uplifting to see the ordinary and poor women actively participating in movements and campaigns, for constructive action such as the right to information, river revival programmes and rain water harvesting and watershed management schemes. Election of almost one million women to panchayat Raj institutions and their activities in such bodies have brought about a strategic shift in may of our developmental activities at the grass roots level".

—K.R. Narayanan

From Republic Day Speech, 2002

Changes in society is the outcome of planning and proper legislation, said Winston Churchill. Last few decades, India and all the states of India have been undergoing few positive changes, crucial in lessening the gulf between man-woman in the society. There are three major factors, instrumental in changing the status of housewives are legislation and law, planning of the government, and legislation regarding women education.

Although we have scanned the areas concerned, mention should be made of various law, plans initiated by the legislature as we cannot deny its role in the changing profile of educated housewives in Assam.

Legislation and law as a factor of social change

In ancient India social conformity was attained by means of two social mechanism – Dharma and Achara* Manu asserted that Dharma is that which is observed by the learned who are virtuous and who are always without hate or passion and that which is approved by one's own heart.1 Ancient Indians

* Custom
believed that Dharma has four sources, Veda or Shruti, Smriti, Sadachara, and what is satisfying to oneself*. In ancient and medieval times there were no power to promulgate a law. The duty of the king was to administer justice according to only "dharmasastra". Those laws were not helping in the personality and status of women.

As an instrument of social change, law involves two interrelated processes. By means of new enactment it institutionalise a new pattern of behaviour manifesting new social values. When the new pattern is incorporated in the legal code any deviance from this new pattern could be punished according to law.² laws are more dynamic in instrumental in bringing social change by influencing behaviour, beliefs and values. Almost all changes in the status of women are possible in India and other states in India, due to various democratic laws and constitutional provision and the scope for amendment give space to law to enforce laws for the changes and development of woman. The parliamentary democracy a quasi-federal centre-state relation and a flexible constitution all acting as determination in the growing status of woman which effects the housewives too are as follows –

Constitutional provisions:

The Constitution of India was ahead of its time, not only by the standards of the developing nations but also of many developed countries, in removing every discrimination against women in the legal and public domain of the Republic. While Article 14 conferred equal rights and opportunities on men and women in the political, economic and social spheres. Article 15 prohibited discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of sex and Article 15(3) empowered the State to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women and children. Article 39 enjoined upon the State to provide equal

* "Swasya Cha Priyamaatmanaha."
2. Kumar Chandra : Political analysis, p. 28
means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work and Article 42 directed the State to make provisions for ensuring just and humane conditions of work and also for maternity relief. Article 51A (e) imposed a fundamental duty on every citizen to renounce the practices derogatory to the dignity of women.3

Constitutional guarantees to India's women

Fundamental Rights:

Article 14: "The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws and within the territory of India."

Article 15(1): "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them."

Article 15(3): "Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children."

Article 16(2): "No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of, any employment or office under the State.

Directive Principles of State Policy:

Article 39: "The State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing

(a) that the citizen, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood.

(d) that there is equal pay for equal work for both men and women.

(e) that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter vocations unsuited to their age or strength."

Article 42: "The State shall make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief."

Review of laws and legislative measures:

10.2.11 The Union Government had referred a list of 39 legislations which have a direct bearing on women, for review by the National Commission for Women. During the year under report, the Commission reviewed the following 11 legislations and forwarded their comments to the Government for consideration.

1. Amendment to the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act.
2. Amendment to the Dowry Prohibition Act.
3. Amendment to the Hindu Marriage Act.
8. Guardian and Wards Act, 1869 (4 of 1869)

The Ministry of Human Resource Development was set up in 1985, with the objective of integrating efforts for the development of human potential
in the areas of education, women and child development, arts and culture, youth affairs and sports. During the year 1998-99, the Ministry continued its efforts in fulfilling these objectives through its constituent Departments of Education, Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports and Women and Child Development. The report of the Ministry has four parts dealing with the concerned Departments.

Department of Education

Department of Culture

Department of Youth Affairs and Sports

Department of Women and Child Development

The major policy initiatives undertaken by the Department in the recent past include the establishment of the National Commission for Women (NCW), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), adoption of National Nutrition Policy (NNP), universalisation and strengthening of ICDS, setting up of National Creche Fund (NCF), launching of Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY), Balika Samriddhi Yojana (BSY), and Rural Women’s Development and Empowerment Project (RWDEP).

The following chapters broadly cover the main activities of the Department during the year 1998-99.

The Department of Women & Child Development continued to implement various schemes for the welfare, development and empowerment of women and children through

Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) and Adolescent Girls Scheme.
**World Bank assisted ICDS Projects**

The World Bank multi-state ICDS projects are extending certain additional services like income generation activities for women, interventions for adolescent girls, nutritional rehabilitation of the severely malnourished in predominantly tribal and backward areas in the States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. The third phase of World Bank assisted ICDS projects is under approval. This will cover the States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and includes the training component of ICDS programme. In Andhra Pradesh the ICDS schemes has been approved as a component of Andhra Pradesh Economic Restructuring.

**Creches/Day Care Centres for Children**

12,470 creches provide day care services to children of 0–5 years of age, of migrant, casual, agricultural labourers and construction workers. The scheme of creches is being implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board, Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangha and Indian Council for Child Welfare. In addition to this, 2455 creches have been set up under the National Creche Fund.

**Early Childhood Education (ECE)**

Early Childhood Education Scheme was started in 1982 to reduce the drop out rates and to improve the rate of retention of children in primary school. It is being run by voluntary organisations in nine educationally backward States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tripura and West Bengal. At present there are 2613 ECE centres in the country.

**Training of ICDS Functionaries**

Training is given to the functionaries associated with the implementation of ICDS programme at all levels, such as Anganwadi Workers (AWW's),
Supervisors, Child Development Project Officers (CDPO's) and Programme Officers. The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, through its three regional centres at Bangalore, Guwahati and Lucknow, 36 middle level training centres and 392 Anganwadi Workers Training Centres impart training. In addition to this, the Central Technical Committee on Health and Nutrition also gives training to medical and paramedical staff.

National Commission for Children (NCC)

To safeguard the constitutional and legal rights of children, a proposal to set up a National Commission for Children is under consideration.

Working Women's Hostels (WWH)

Since the inception of the scheme of Working Women's Hostels, 815 hostels have been sanctioned to provide accommodation to 57,683 working women and day care facilities to 7528 children in 288 hostels.

Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP)

The programme of STEP, which was launched in 1987, seeks to provide new upgraded skills to poor women in the traditional sectors of agriculture, sericulture, handicrafts, fisheries, dairying, poultry, etc. for enhancing their productivity and income generation. During the year 1998-99 (unit December), 5 projects were sanctioned under STEP to benefit 31,320 women.

Training-cum-employment-cum-production centres (NORAD)

The Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) extends assistance for training and skill development and promotion of self-reliance through income generation for women in non-traditional trades in the country. During the year, (upto Dec '98) 81 projects have been sanctioned to benefit 6805 women.
Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

National Credit Fund, RMK was set up in March 1993, to extend credit facilities to poor and needy women in the informal sectors. Since inception, the Kosh has sanctioned credit of Rs. 57.09 crore through 367 NGOs to benefit 2,77,662 women.

Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY)

Launched on 15th August, 1995 the scheme is being implemented in 200 blocks in the country for the holistic empowerment of women. The main strategy of the scheme is to create an organisational base for women to come together, to analyse and fulfil their needs through existing departmental programmes of the State and Central Government. Till December 1998, 37,000 small homogenous women groups have been formed under the scheme out of which 9000 groups have been formed during the year under report.

Distance Education Programme for Functionaries Working in the Field of Women's Development and Empowerment

With a view to enhance the capacity of field level functionaries of different women's empowerment related programmes, the Department has approved a collaborative project with IGNOU for starting a certificate course in the Distance Education mode. The preliminary activities under this project have commenced and the first programme is likely to be started in the next year.

National Commission for women (NCW)

The National Commission for Women, set up in 1992 covers all facets of issues relating to safeguarding women's rights and promotion of their empowerment. During the year under report, the Commission continued to work for review of laws, intervention in specific individual complaints of atrocities and sexual harassment of women at work place and remedial action to safeguard the interest of women.
National Policy for Empowerment of Women

The National Policy for Empowerment of Women is being finalised by the Department. The policy would prescribe strategies and action points to bridge the gap between the equal de-jure status and unequal de-defacto position of the women in the country. It would seek to guide action at every level and in every sector by mainstreaming gender perspectives into all laws, policies, programmes, regulations and budgetary allocation of the Government.

National Resource Centre for Women (NRCW)

The Department is in the process of setting up a National Resource Centre for women. This would be a nodal body to mainstream gender issues in policies and programmes for women by training, policy support, information dissemination, research and documentation.

Balika Samriddhi Yojana (BSY)

The scheme was launched in 1997 with the specific objective to change the community's attitude towards the girl child. A mother of a girl child born on or after 15th August 1997 in a family below the poverty line in rural and urban areas is given a grant of Rs. 500. In order to encourage enrolment and retention of girl children in schools an additional component regarding scholarship and lump-sum grant is being finalised.

Rural Women's Development and Empowerment Project (RWDEP)

2.19.1 The RWDEP has been sanctioned on 16th October 1998 as a Centrally Sponsored Project with an estimated cost of Rs. 191.21 crores. The project will strengthen the process of and create an environment for empowerment of women in the six States of Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. During 1998-99, an amount of
Rs. 8.00 crore will be spent on the project to organise 400 Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women.

Research Studies

The Department sponsored research studies/workshops/seminars in the areas of women and child development under the scheme of grant-in-aid for Research and Publication. The Department extends financial assistance to research institutions, professional bodies and voluntary organisations. Under this scheme. The Department has 3 autonomous organisations viz. National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) and the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) working under its aegis. NIPCCD and RMK are registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, whereas CSWB is a charitable company registered under Section 25 of the Indian Companies Act, 1956. These organisations are fully funded by the Government of India and assist the Department in its functions including implementation of some programmes/schemes. The National Commission for Women was constituted as a national apex statutory body in 1992 for protecting and safeguarding the rights of women.

The list of subjects allocated to the Department of Women and Child Development is as follows:

i. Family Welfare.

ii. Women and Child Welfare and coordination of activities of other Ministries and organisations in connection with this subject.

iii. Care of pre-school children.

iv. Coordination of National Nutrition Education of Women.

v. Charitable and religious, endowments pertaining to subjects allocated to this Department.
vi. Promotion and development of voluntary effort on the subjects allocated to this Department.

vii. All other attached or subordinate offices or other organisations concerned with any of the subjects specified in this list.


x. Coordination of activities of Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE).


xii. References from the United Nations Organisations relating to traffic in Women and Children.


xvii. Food and Nutrition Board (FNB).

xviii. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK).

In order to address the phenomenon of domestic violence, which is widely prevalent but has remained largely invisible in the public domain. The Department has been working to bring forth a Bill in the Parliament to empower Magistrates to grant protection orders to victims of domestic violence and provide other relief. The Bill was introduced in Lok Sabha on 8 March, 2002.

The Supreme Court of India through its activist role has infused dynamism into the constitutional and legal provisions and has issued directives to the State from time to time to further safeguard and strengthen the rights\(^4\) of women. Over the years a strong tradition of public interest litigation (PIL) has taken deep roots whereby in the event of the violation of rights of any person and such persons being unable to approach the court (by reason of poverty, disability, social or economic disadvantage), any member of the public can maintain an application for an appropriate direction, order or writ. This has further contributed to the cause of gender justice. Certain landmark pronouncements of the Supreme Court on such matters as the need for a Uniform Civil Code for all women irrespective of religion, the need for equal property rights for women particularly in case of inheritance, pronouncements on child labour, child prostitution and rape cases are evidence of such an activist role of the Court. In a landmark judgement in the 'Vishaka Case' in 1997 the Supreme Court laid down guidelines on sexual harassment at the workplace by holding the actual molestation or even physical contact is not required for it to be construed as sexual harassment, if the background of the entire case establishes the genuineness of the complaint.\(^5\)

4. Ibid pg. 78, 79, 80
A number of legislations have also been enacted to safeguard and protect the rights of the children. These are the Guardian and Wards Act, 1890; Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1958; Orphanage & Other Charitable Homes (Supervision and Control) Act, 1960; Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulations Act), 1986; Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply & Distribution) Act, 1992; Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights & Full Participation) Act, 1996, Juvenile Justice Act, 2000 etc.

**Strategies in the Five Year Plans**

Over the years the planning strategies on women and children in the country has evolved from 'welfare' to 'development' to 'empowerment.'

The approach in the **First Five Year Plan** (1951-56) was to provide adequate services to 'promote the welfare of women' so that they can play their 'legitimate role in the family and the community'. It was noted, 'the position and functions of women differ to a great extent in different communities, and therefore, community welfare agencies will have to work out their programmes and activities according to the specific requirements in which they work.'

The **Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Plans**, including the four years of Plan holiday that preceded the Fourth Plan continued the same approach for the welfare of women. The concept of women's development was mainly 'welfare' oriented and was clubbed with other categories of welfare such as the old and the disabled. The schemes of Condensed Course of Education and Women and Socio-Economic Programme were introduced during the Second Plan (1956-61) and that of Working Girl's Hostel and Short Stay Home in the Fourth Plan (1969-74). These were the only women specific schemes of the Department during the first twenty-eight years of the planning history.
These led to a definite shift in the approach from 'welfare' to 'development' in the Sixth Plan (1980-85), which recognised women as participants of development and not merely as objects of welfare. The Plan adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with a special thrust on the three core sectors of health, education and employment. Accordingly, priority was given to implementing of programmes for women under different sectors of agriculture and its allied activities of dairy, poultry, small animal husbandry, handlooms, handicrafts, small-scale industries etc. Women's Employment Programme was introduced in 1982 with assistance from Norwegian Development Agency (NORAD).

The Seventh Plan (1985-90) continued the stress on generation of both skilled and unskilled employment of women through proper education and vocational training. Two new schemes of Support to Training and Employment (STEP) and Awareness Generation Programme for Rural and Poor Women (AGP) were introduced. Three landmark reports, namely Shram Shakti, the Report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in Informal Sector, National Perspective Plan on Women (1988-2000) and SAARC Guidebook on Women in Development were prepared during this period. The Department of Women and Child Development was set up in 1985 to serve as the nodal point for women and children within the National Machinery.

Recognizing the role and contribution of women in development, the Eighth Plan (1990-95), adopted the strategy to ensure that 'benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women and special programmes are implemented to complement the general development programmes.' Two new schemes, which were introduced during this period, were Mahila Samriddhi Yojana and Indira Mahila Yojana. The other major developments during this plan period were setting up of National Commission for Women and National Credit Fund for Women known as Rashtriya Mahila
Kosh, and the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments wherein one third of seats of rural and urban self governing institutions were reserved for women.

The **Ninth Plan (1997-2002)** made two significant changes in the conceptual strategy for planning for women. First, 'Empowerment of Women' became one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth Plan. The approach of the Plan was to create an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside home, as equal partners along with men. For this purpose a 'National Policy for Empowerment of Women' was approved in 2001. Secondly, the Ninth Plan attempted convergence of existing services, resources, infrastructure and manpower available in both women-specific and women-related sectors. To this effect, the Plan directed both the Centre and the States to adopt a special strategy of 'Women's Component Plan' through which, not less than 30 per cent of funds/benefits should be earmarked in all the women-related sectors. It also suggested that a special vigil should be kept on the flow of the earmarked funds/benefits through an effective mechanism to ensure that the proposed strategy brings forth a holistic approach towards empowering women.

**Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2001)**


**Women's Empowerment Year 2001**:

We have made tremendous progress in the political empowerment of women. However, a lot more remains to be done in terms of social and
economic empowerment of women....I call upon every body to join hands with Government in upholding the dignity and protecting the rights of the girl child and further enhancing their status said: Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The Government had declared 2001 as Women's Empowerment Year. The purpose was:

- to create and raise large scale awareness of women's issues with active participation and involvement of all women and men;
- to initiate and accelerate action to improve access to and control of resources by women;
- to create an enabling environment to enhance self-confidence and autonomy of women.

Each month of year was dedicated to a particular theme such as Human Rights for Women, Economic Empowerment of Women, Social Empowerment of Women, Women in Difficult Circumstances, Women & Technology, Women & Governance, Women & Education, Women & Health, Women & Nutrition, Women & Media and Entrepreneurship in women around which series of programmes and activities were undertaken throughout the country.

Various rights provided by the constitution and law in India is a moral boost to the women few of the laws are mentioned below:

**Education Work for Prevention of Atrocities on Women**

The scheme of assistance to voluntary organisations for Education Work for Prevention of Atrocities on Women was started in 1982. Under this scheme, universities, colleges, women studies/centres, institutions of higher learning and voluntary organisations are given financial assistance for undertaking various activities such as production and publication of the educative journals, articles, books, conducting surveys and studies on violence.
against women, awards to best films, short plays, short stories, etc., translation of such material from one language to another language, holding seminars, conferences, meetings, exhibitions, film festivals etc., holding of training camps for social workers including Government functionaries, legal literacy camps/para legal training camps, use of traditional media such as street plays, puppetry etc. organising Women Development Centres in educational institutes and legal and counselling services to women prisoners etc. A budget provision of Rs. 28.00 lakhs was made for the year 2001-02.

The Department of Women and Child Development is reviewing the following five Acts with which it is administratively concerned with a view to make the provisions more stringent and to remove the lacunae:

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

(b) The Immortal Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956.

(c) The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

(d) The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987


The present status of review of these five Acts is as follows:

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

Based on the recommendations made by the National Commission for Women, the Department had drafted a Cabinet Note seeking approval to the proposed amendment of the title of the Act to 'The Derogatory and Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act' and to its consequential amendments, such as amendments to the Sections 2(a) (the term 'advertisements' to include electronic and other media), and Section 6 (to
enhance punishment for the offences under the Act) and insertions of section 2(g) (definition of the word 'publish' to cover the web services) and Section 4A (to empower notified voluntary organisations to make complaints). Further consultations with Department of Legal Affairs is taking place before its finalisation.

**The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956**

The Commission has informal that they are holding state level workshops to finalise its proposals regarding amendments in the Act. Further action on review of the Act will be taken up after receipt of the final comments from NCW.

**The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**

In respect Dowry Prohibition Act, the NCW is holding nation-wide consultations to consider the amendments in that Act. The final recommendations of NCW are awaited.

**The Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987**

The amendments to this Act were discussed in a meeting taken by Secretary (WCD) on 25 July, 2000 and the decisions taken thereon were circulated to all concerned Ministries/Departments. Legislative Department has been requested to convey their comments on the amendments proposed by NCW in Section 3 of the Act. A draft Cabinet Note for making changes in the Act on the basis of decisions taken in the meeting held on 25 July, 2000 is presently under consideration.

**National Commission for Women Act, 1990**

At the instance of the Department, the National Commission for Women sent a draft proposal regarding amendment to the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to the Department during July, 2000 which
was discussed in a meeting taken by the Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development on 19 July, 2000. Based on the discussions, a revised proposal was received from NCW during November 2000. The amendments provide for strengthening of the Commission. A draft Cabinet Note for making changes in the Act on the basis of decisions taken in the meeting held on 19 July is presently under consideration of the Department.

Protection from Domestic Violence Bill, 2002

In order to address the phenomenon of domestic violence, which is widely prevalent but has remained largely invisible in the public domain, the Department proposes to bring forth a legislation in the Parliament to empower Magistrates to grant protection orders to victims of domestic violence and provide other relief. The draft Bill envisages that the Protection Officers would assist a victim of domestic violence to be secure from violence and help her access shelter homes, health care, legal advice etc.

Grant-in-Aid for Research, Publication and Monitoring

The Department promotes research studies for development of innovative programmes, for testing the feasibility and efficacy of existing programmes and services and on emerging issues in the field of women and child development. It also supports workshops and seminars which help in formulating research proposals and disseminating research findings or in social situation analysis, likely to be helpful in planning, programming and review of implementation.

The scope of the Scheme has been widened to cover additional activities such as –

(a) Innovative activities like, setting up of Chairs in the Universities/Institutions on Women and Child, Fellowships for academic work, Lecture on major topics of the day,
(b) Monitoring of women schemes,
(c) Strengthening of institutions for monitoring purposes
(d) training of personnel etc.

These activities are being carried out through Research Institutions, Universities/Colleges/Schools of Social Works and registered Social Organisations with minimum experience of three years in the field of women and child development. Priority is given to research projects of an applied nature keeping in view the policy requirements of the Department, social problems requiring urgent public interventions and evaluation of the ongoing programmes. A Research Advisory Committee (RAC) under the Chairpersonship of Secretary (WCD) has been constituted with the objective to promote, coordinate, identify and sponsor research projects in the field of women welfare, child development and nutrition. The Committee also approves new research proposals, which are financed by the Department.

**Information and Mass Education Activities**

Information and mass media has remained a very critical component in the functioning of the Department. The Media Unit of the Department took up sustained multi-media campaigns through electronic, print and folk media for creating awareness about issues concerning the development of women and children. Press advertisements were released in prominent newspapers to inform, educate and motivate people, for bringing about changes in the attitude to achieve developmental goals. Mobilization of public opinion on issues pertaining to the girl child, the development of children, women's empowerment, early child development, nutrition, equal status for women and social evils like child marriage, dowry, gender discrimination, sexual abuse of girl child, exploitation of women and children has been the focus for all media
activities. As a part of Women's Empowerment Year 2001 Mukta a film festival on Women's Issues was organised at New Delhi, Thiruvananthapuram and Kolkata in collaboration with Directorate of Film Festival. The festivals included award winning feature and documentary films of renowned Directors in different Indian languages. The festival evinced keen interest among the film lovers and critics. Department's quarterly newsletter Stree Shakti was published regularly to highlight the policies, programmes and activities of the Department. TV and Radio spots were produced on different issues concerning women and children which were telecast/broadcast through the electronic media for wider reach and to promote positive social attitudes on issues like gender discrimination, violence against women, women's empowerment, breast-feeding etc. A new sponsored radio programme Aakash Hamara Hai was launched in August 2001 to broadcast social messages on issues concerning women and children for generation of awareness. This programme is being regularly broadcast throughout India in Hindi and regional languages. A teleserial under the same title is also under preparation by the Department.

Grand-in-Aid to the Voluntary Organisation in the Field of Women and Child Development

Under the scheme, assistance is given to voluntary organisations working in the field of child and women welfare to take up innovative projects and activities, which are not covered, in the existing schemes of the Department. An allocation of Rs. 25 lakh has been spent during the current year under this scheme.

Financial Assistance to Voluntary Organisations

A list of voluntary organisations who have received a recurring grant of Rs. 1 lakh and above from the Department for various activities in the field of women and child development is published every year.
International Cooperation to women in India and various states in India

From the very beginning the Department of Women and Child Development has been working very closely with important international organisations. Major UN bodies and other multi-lateral and bilateral agencies and international voluntary organisations have extended their helping hands in supporting many major programmes of this Department for a long time. Besides the humanitarian grants and material support, the Department in the recent past has started utilising long term soft loan of World Bank, IFAD etc. for various developmental activities related to women and children. Most of these are used in time bound projects with specific objectives for specific target groups. Sizeable portion of international grants are also being used for capacity building specially training, skill upgradation and development of resource material.

A resume of the major international conferences organised during the year is presented as follows:

**UNICEF**

UNICEF is operating their programmes in India since 1949. These programmes are implemented through their Master Plan of Operations (MPO) drawn up in consultation with Government of India and State Governments. The Department, being the nodal Department of Government of India in respect of matters relating to UNICEF, had finalised the GOI-UNICEF Master Plan of Operation for the period from 1999-2002 and signed an Agreement with UNICEF on 3rd May 1999.

**UNFPA**

United Nations Fund for Population Agency (UNFPA) started its programme in India in 1974 with an allocation of $46 million mainly for
improving family planning services and establishing a population database. Over the years, UNFPA's support to India has been increasing. In recognition of the vast, complex and multi-dimensional nature of India's population and developmental problems, the country has become the largest recipient of UNFPA assistance in the world.

**UNIFEM**

The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), was born in response to the call of women from all over the world, for a Fund within the United Nations system, to aid and advocate for women of the developing world - to give them voice and visibility. The Fund was created to provide direct support to women and to promote the inclusion of women in the decision-making process of mainstream development programmes.

**World Bank**


**IFAD and IDA**

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and International Development Association (IDA) are supporting the Integrated Women's Empowerment Project, also known as Swa-Shakti Project, in the form of Short-term credit to the Government of India. Out of the total project cost of Rs. 191.21 crores, the contribution of IFAD is Rs. that of IDA is Rs. 67.84 crores. The Project will continue till 2004.
NORAD

The Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation (NORAD) continued to extend its support for the Women's Economic Programme for the development of women, specially for the development of women, specially poor and needy women in urban slums and rural areas and women from weaker sections through provision of training in traditional and non-traditional trades. The pilot phase of WEP had started with the signing of the Indo-Norwegian Agreement on 27 December, 1982 and continued till 1991, at a total cost of NOK 64 million, provided by the Government of the Kingdom of Norway. During this period 250 economic projects were supported and 23632 women were trained in thirty vocational skills. In the Phase-I of WEP, which coincided with the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97), a total amount of NOK 46.4 million was provided for the programme and 708 projects were implemented benefiting 50,863 women.

WFP

World Food Programme (WFP), an agency of the United Nations, extends food aid for supplementary nutrition to children below 6 years of age and to expectant and nursing mothers under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme. The WFP operation in India has completed 6 phases from March 1976 to March 1999. The Plan of Operations for Expansion Phase VI was signed between the Government of India and the WFP on 1 June, 1999 for a period of three years in the five states of Assam, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The new State of Orissa has been taken up under WFP assistance with effect from 11 November, 1999. During 2001 WFP supplied 68,810 MT of food commodities to cover 26.07 lakh beneficiaries.

World Food Programme has also been providing relief assistance to children affected by natural calamities, 8079 MTs of food items, which included
Biscuits, Indiamix, Wheat Flour and Pulses were distributed by the WFP in the earthquake-affected areas of Gujarat.

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh

The Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was set upon 30 March, 1993 as a Registered Society under the Societies Registration Act 1860, under the auspices of the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India. RMK was given a one time corpus fund of Rs. 31 crore. The Kosh is administered by a Governing Board of 16 members consisting of senior officers of Central and State Governments and specialists and representatives of organisations active in the field of micro-credit for women. The Board is Chaired by Minister of State for Women and Child Development. Since its inception, RMK has established itself as the premier micro-credit agency of the country, with its focus on women and their empowerment through the provision of credit for livelihood and related activities. Its success can be gauged by the geographical spread of its credit delivery system and its partnership with about 700 NGO partners.

The main objective of RMK is to facilitate credit support or microfinance to poor women, as an instrument of socio-economic change and development. RMK mainly channelises its support through Non-Governmental Organisations, Women Development Corporations, Women Cooperative Societies, Indira Mahila Block Samities under the Indira Mahila Yojana and suitable State Governments agencies.

Legislation in Assam and Kamrup various planning which have been crucial in the development of women in all age group, children, girls housewives are –

The Destitute Home in Assam and its inmates gives a picture of government's proper legislation in sheltering those women and housewives
who are the victim of destiny and fate or the social system last few years. The number of homes are as follows –

**STATE HOME/DESTITUTE HOME IN ASSAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>No. of Inmates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(A) STATE HOME:

1. State home for rescued women, Jalukbari 33
2. State home for male ex-convicts, Silchar ......
3. State home for women, Nagaon 57

(B) DESTITUTE HOME:

1. Destitute Home for women, Jalukbari 41
2. Destitute Home for women, Nagaon 73
3. Home for destitute and helpless widows, Boko 41
4. Central Destitute Home, Meherpur 201
5. Permanent Liability Home, Bamunigaon, Boko 242
6. Destitute Home for Women, Dighaltari 40

(C) CHILDREN HOME:

1. Home for orphan and destitute children, Nagaon 73
2. Home for destitute and vagrant children, North Lakhimpur 20
(D) VAGRANTS HOME :
1. Vagrants Home (Beggars), Fatasil, Guwahati 70

(E) OBSERVATION HOME :
1. Observation home, Lichubari, Jorhat 100

(F) OTHERS :
1. Vocational Training for Rehabilitation Centre, Beltola 40
2. Vocational Training for Rehabilitation Centre, Barama 32
3. Vocational Training for Rehabilitation Centre, Kachukala 12
4. Vocational Training for Rehabilitation Centre, Morigaon 80
5. Vocational Training for Rehabilitation Centre, Haflong 30
6. Vocational Training for Rehabilitation Centre, Maibong .....
7. School for hearing impaired, Jorhat 25

Source : Statistical Hand Book Assam, 2001

In this respect we have gone through various welfare scheme initiated by the state government for the housewives such as scheme for weaving and sericulture. Weaving and sericulture constitute one whole aspect of life in Assam. The State in fact enjoys the suitable climate for practising sericulture. Assam is famous for mulberry and other kinds of silks known as pat, eri and muga. There are altogether three varieties of domesticated silk worms in the State : Muga silk is produced nowhere else in the world except Assam.

According to official estimates, there are about 1.28 lakh families in Assam who are into the culture and production of eri. Muga on the other hand is produced in all the districts of Brahmaputra Valley except the two hill areas.
The number of families who practice muga culture is around 30,000. While the three types of silk are available in different districts, the village of Sualkuchi in Kamrup district has developed over the years as the major centre for production of fabrics especially of apt and muga silk over a period of several centuries. Sualkuchi, the Manchester of Assam, interestingly was established by Momai-Tamuli Barbaruah, a great Ahom officer who carried out massive administrative reforms during the reign of Swargadeo Pratap Sinha (1603-1641). Barbaruah, who carried out the first census in Assam, set up Sualkuchi by shifting large number of master weaves from all over the region to that village. Efforts are being made continuously by the State Sericulture Department to produce more and more mulberry silk worm seeds by organising a systematic seed organisation programme.

Sualkuchi remain a mystic village of technically expert, weaving housewives, who's weaving trait is not just a commercial venture but actually a labour of love. In our visit to the whole of Sualkuchi we met more than 100 housewives who are not highly educated yet are sole earners of the family. They are socially and politically aware.

A total of 2,562.48 production out of 24 Khadi & Village Industries in 1999-2000, gain a profit of 311593 in later employed 86724 population. A survey in Kamrup district reveals that majority of rural housewives are involving themselves in Khadi, Food, Pottery, Cottage, Drying and Printing, Bee-keeping, Cane & Bamboo, Agarbatti and hand made paper industries. A visit to the villages of Hajo, Chandrapur, Dumunichowki, we observed that more than 100 housewives with the assistance of Central government schemes, and NGOs are newly starting piggery, fishery, chicken farms, heavy hand made paper mills.

There is no discrimination between husband and wife, said a women entrepreneurs of a hand made paper mill in Kalitakuchi. On the other hand,
after the loss of "the dept of small scale industry" in a visit to Chandrapur, we surveyed that husbands who's lost permanent job, and not yet employed are survived by educated wives, who's starting weaving to feed heir family, "without them, we would have starved to death, said a husband and criticised government's policy."

The percentage of tribal women, like Boro, Koch, Kachari are by stand of living and not different from average village Assam – A visit to a Boro village near Changsari and interview and door to door observation documented few women who's of later starting their new social farm of nursery, piggery, weaving by the help of local NGO. The local NGO Dhaniram Kalita, let us know that in 2001-2002, there are 10000 approved beneficial and 15380 lack grant released from Assam when 31 percent sanctioned by : NORAD has 107 operational project in Assam for women's economic programme.

Number of creches beneficiaries in Assam is 195. 85 creches sanctioned 7,000 are beneficiaries under the scheme.

Kamrup, Rangia, Chandrapur, Doimukh of Assam are the area, covered by under nutrition education and orientation programmes.
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<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agriculture and Co-operation</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>44.53</td>
<td>73.88</td>
<td>-164</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>686.70</td>
<td>663.42</td>
<td>708.69</td>
<td>-33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Family Welfare</td>
<td>2025.68</td>
<td>1855.86</td>
<td>2932.06</td>
<td>-845</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Indian System of Medicine and Homeopathy</td>
<td>49.67</td>
<td>40.45</td>
<td>60.26</td>
<td>-1921</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3359.25</td>
<td>3478.88</td>
<td>4048.03</td>
<td>421</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Youth Affairs &amp; Sports</td>
<td>94.50</td>
<td>96.64</td>
<td>C101.82</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>287.15</td>
<td>238.81</td>
<td>240.02</td>
<td>-17-16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Non-conventional Energy Sources</td>
<td>74.52</td>
<td>63.39</td>
<td>74.62</td>
<td>-150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Science &amp; Technology</td>
<td>247.19</td>
<td>237.68</td>
<td>304.28</td>
<td>-423</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Small Scale Industries and Agro &amp; Rural Industries</td>
<td>276.68</td>
<td>259.10</td>
<td>282.81</td>
<td>-62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Urban Employment &amp; Poverty Alleviation</td>
<td>50.40</td>
<td>13.65</td>
<td>31.50</td>
<td>-73-38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. Rural Development

|                | 3299.39 | 4108.62 | 4052.45 | 25 | 23 |

13. Social Justice and Employment

| and Tribal Affairs | 100.24  | 103.42  | 125.60  | 3  | 25 |

Total

|                | 10596.37 | 11204.45 | 13036.01 | 6  | 23 |

Source *

In the final analysis we have observed that in this regard differences have been seen in the areas of male, female work participation. Assam place 13 in India, when the difference in 29/32, Mizoram has 265% the highest in gender participation. The literary group in Assam is between 1991 and 2001 is 15.90% and 18.84% men reached 23 in India is not a satisfactory state, where the school drop out role of girls in Assam is 42.20% from a total of 33.69.7 A total of female literary in Assam is 56.03, while in 1991 it was 43.03. Although there is a slow growth of literary last few years yet, the special central plan for the North East like Assam. As per the guidelines of planning commission and ministry of finance the department from North East region has allocated 10% of the annual plan outlay from the explanation of progress related to women. Assam was included in the seven north east states. While social efforts were also made to involve social organisations of North East with existing support available ... various grant in aid schemes of the department of women and child development.

The secretary of 'Sodou Asom Karmachari Parishad' express their anguish on Assam Government's inability to payment of salaries in the few

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6. Ibid p. 17.....95


months of 2002, caused great concern to family who are survived by only male income resulted in the suicide of few teachers and government service holder, what's for delay of ... payment starve to death, in depression and hunger combined with uncertainty. This uncertainty in the planning and proper legislation generating a new sense of freedom and need of more and more housewives in income generated activities are indirectly empowering housewives socially and economically said few educated housewives in Guwahati. "We have to work or we will starve to death"— is the realization they express— Besides the political legal, social and economic changes that have been taking place during recent decades have definitely brought about perceptible changes in the status of women in the country. Many of changes have been in a positive direction. But most of the changes have not been uniform through the country and still a wide ranging variation between and within regions and states different to explain simply by any single factor like better governance or legislation of service only.

Proper legislation is possible only, if there is full co-operation of the Central and State Government, besides mishandling of government's grant in the Non-governmental organisational sector, the rampant level of corruption of all the welfare level and board, lack of consciousness and ignorance regarding the role of citizen's resistance to such corruption has aggravated loss in the process of changes. Unless a comprehensive set of proper planning and stern scrutiny against corruption at the welfare level funds allocated for the development of women, The will be mishandled by those who believe in the welfare of self. More aware, more educated housewives can act as a torch of the proper legislation. undoubtedly changing profile of educated housewives are reflection of proper, welfare programme and planning executed by the respective government.