

SAKHI NIWAS

With the progressive change in the socio-economic fabric of the country, more and more women are leaving their homes in search of employment in big cities as well as urban and rural industrial clusters. One of the main difficulties faced by such women is lack of safe and conveniently located accommodation. The Government of India being concerned about the difficulties faced by such working women, introduced a scheme in 1972-73 of grant-in-aid for construction of new/ expansion of existing buildings for providing hostel facilities to working women in cities, smaller towns and also in rural areas where employment opportunities for women exist. The scheme was revised in 2017. However, based on the evaluation studies, the existing scheme has been revised to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women and other women pursuing higher education or training, who need to live away from their families due to professional commitments.

While other schemes promote skill development and employment generation among women, none of these provides women with support services like safe accommodation with food and medical assistance. The Sakhi Niwas - Working Women Hostel component of the sub-scheme will fill this critical gap. This is also necessary in view of increased demand for Working Women Hostels (WWHs) due to changing preferences leading to more women entering employment/workforce and migrating to employment hubs.

Further, the scheme aligns well with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG-5) that mandates adopting and strengthening sound programs for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls at all levels. The scheme also addresses women's right to work and to free choice of profession and employment as mandated under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Another objective of the Sakhi Niwas component under the sub-scheme is to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women, with day care facilities for women living in hostels. The Day care/ Palna facility will also be open for the children of other working women living in the vicinity, subject to availability of slots, wherever possible. The working women's hostel projects under this scheme shall be made available to all working women without any distinction with respect to caste, religion, marital status etc., subject to norms prescribed under the scheme.

The facility of Shakhi Niwas can be availed by any working women, who may be single, widowed, divorced, separated or married (whose immediate family does not reside in the same city/area). Preference will be given to women from disadvantaged sections of the society. Special preference would be given to beneficiaries with physical disabilities,

in case there is shortage of accommodation. Women who are under training for a job will also be considered for accommodation subject to availability and provided that the total training period does not exceed one year. The number of women under training for jobs should not exceed 30% of the total capacity. Girls up to the age of 18 years and boys up to the age of 12 years, accompanying working mothers will be provided accommodation with their mothers. Working mothers may also avail of the services of the Day Care Centre, as provided under the scheme.

The gross income of the beneficiaries should not exceed Rs. 50,000/- consolidated (gross) per month in metropolitan cities, and Rs 35,000/- consolidated (gross) per month, in any other 22 place. The income ceiling can be relaxed by District Magistrate or any other authorised officer based on the local requirement and subject to availability of accommodation. When the income of any working woman already residing in a hostel exceeds the prescribed limits, she will be required to vacate the hostel within a period of six months of crossing the income ceiling.

The implementing organisation may charge from the residents of the working women's hostel a reasonable rent not exceeding 15% of their total emoluments/ gross salary in the case of single bedrooms, 10% in case of the double bedrooms and 7 ½ % in the case of the dormitories. Fees charged from the children in the Day Care Centre should not be more than 5% of the emoluments of their mother, or the actual expenditure whichever is less. The rent for women under training for job shall not exceed the lowest rent charged from any of the working women residing in the same facility. The rent for such trainees may be charged from the institution/ organization sponsoring the training and in case that is not possible from the woman herself. The rent does not include use of the mess and other facilities like washing machines for which user charges should be collected.

As far as possible, women with children are accommodated in single/ double bedrooms instead of dormitory. No working woman is allowed to stay in a hostel, assisted under this scheme for more than three years. In exceptional circumstances, the District Administration may, for reasons to be recorded in writing, allow working women to stay in a hostel, beyond the three-year period, subject to the condition that the period of extension, shall not exceed one year at one time, and that the total stay of the woman, with extensions, shall not exceed five years.

Monitoring and management of the hostels on day to day basis, will be done by the Hostel Management Committee (HMC), which will send its recommendations and quarterly reports to the District Administration. The HMC may ordinarily meet once in a fortnight. In case of an issue that requires immediate resolution, extra ordinary meeting may be held. Annual or biennial review meetings of the HMC may be attended by National/ State level officials. The Hostel Management Committee shall comprise of the following:

- i. District Programme Officer WCD/ District Social Welfare Officer - Chairperson,
- ii. Resident Superintendent,
- iii. Two representatives preferably of the senior residents
- iv. Prominent woman social worker/ representative from prominent organization in that area
- v. Any other person with social standing co-opted by the Chairperson.

The States/ District Administration may also collaborate with service provider/ NGOs/ nonprofit organisations for establishing Working Women Hostel in Public Private Partnership Mode (PPP). However, for entering into partnership, background/ antecedents check of the organization (by police) and inspection and certification of the premises and facilities by an authorized officer (generally the officers assigned the charge of looking after Mission Shakti) of the State/ District shall be mandatory. Further, such inspections are to be carried out at least once a year for continuance of the facility. The Central Government may prescribe SoP/procedure in this regard in consultation with concerned State/ UT and may also provide online platform for dissemination of information of such facilities.

The States/ UTs may also utilize the funds available under the “Building and other Construction Workers' Welfare Fund” for establishment of Working Women Hostels with day care facility for the children of working women in construction and other sectors as prescribed under the fund. However, while doing so, efforts may be made to establish such hostels preferably in dormitory style with required standards of cleanliness and hygiene, in areas near industrial and construction hubs, so that the services are accessible and affordable for the needy women employed in those sectors.

Details of Basic Facilities

S.No.	Facilities/amenities to be provided	Frequency /details
1.	Food	Breakfast, Lunch, Afternoon refreshment and Dinner (to be arranged by implementing agency on paid basis)
2.	Medical Aid	Need basis (to be arranged by implementing agency on paid basis)
3.	Security	To be arranged by implementing agency
4.	Group activities	To be arranged by implementing agency, as per requirement
5.	Creche/Day care facility	Need basis (paid services)

Ideal Structure of Manpower and their qualification under the Scheme

Sakhi Niwas Manager	1	Graduate in Social Work/Psychology/Sociology with 03 years supervisory experience in running of such hostels. The Manager must live at the hostel and provide overall supervision to ensure smooth functioning of the hostel.
Warden	1	Graduate (with proficiency in computer operations). Preference will be given to those who have experience in handling women related laws / policies / programmes.
Caretaker	3	Higher Secondary/10+2 or equivalent qualification from a recognized Board with 2-years' experience as Caretaker of Building and Supervision of work of Multi Tasking Staff or equivalent staff.
Security Guard/ Night Guard	3	The services could be outsourced to any person having at least 2 years" experience of working as security personnel in a government or reputed organization at the district/ state level. He/ she should preferably be retired military / para-military personnel.

Financial assistance to be provided

(Amount in Rupees)

Components	Per annum
Sakhi Niwas rent for 1000 sq mtr.	4,50,000/-
Sakhi Management cost	10,08,000/-
Repair of Sakhi Niwas operated in Govt. land every 5 year	5,00,000/-
Crèche established in Sakhi Niwas	90,600/-
