

Call for separate schemes for single mothers

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: National Commission for Women (NCW) member Laldiangliani Sailo has said single motherhood is one of the growing problems in the country, which requires the more attention by the Centre and commitment of more resources towards their betterment.

"It (single motherhood) is perhaps one of the major growing problems in the country and the world. In the light of this, single mothers deserve a separate set of schemes and programmes for their well being," Sailo said while addressing a National Consulta-

tion on issues related to single mothers here on Monday.

"We also need to take note that this is not just for the sake of single mothers alone, but also because of the ramifications this has for society," she said urging the Centre to take a holistic look and adopt "integrated approaches" towards them.

"It is not a bad idea to create a separate schemes and programmes for the single mother. I would suggest that this conference should debate and consider whether single mothers should be considered as a separate category as they have their own (Contd on P-10)

Call for separate schemes...

(Contd from P-1) special problems," Sailo said.

Sailo observed that till few years ago, the government did not even recognize single mothers as a category that needed special schemes.

"Most states have now recognised the need for making provision of pension for single mothers in their plans. But, the pensions are low... just around Rs 1,000 a month," Sailo said.

The NCW member emphasised the need to increase the pension for single mothers to a level that would enable the women to look after themselves and her children.

Highlighting that skill development was important to alleviate the problem, the NCW member said providing vocational training to such women was as critical to enhance their lives.

She said that another scheme of Central Government "Swaddhar Greh" under the Ministry of WCD which caters women in difficult circumstances.

"The home or greh also includes mother along with their children (girls below 18 and boys below 12). This is a very laudable scheme. But the numbers of beneficiaries for this scheme are limited," NCW member said.

On the issue of economic opportunities of women, Sailo said that even in the matrilineal society like Meghalaya and Kerala, things may not be different because there would not be many women who own a property that gives them an income.

"Many are too poor to own a property and others may at best own a small dwelling unit. It is commonly seen that many of the single mother are not able to meet their expenses on food, clothing, children's education, electricity and medicine," Sailo said.

The State Assembly Speaker AT Mondal also spoke on the occasion.