

HANDBOOK OF POLICY AND RELATED DOCUMENTS ON WOMEN IN INDIA



**National Clearinghouse for Information
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P R E F A C E

As we are poised to enter the decade of the 90s with Indian women numbering approximately 331 million, a time comes to take stock of governmental and non-governmental efforts for women in the country. The challenges of development and change in women's status have to be met in the coming years, disaggregated and planned for. In this mammoth effort one major component is the policy and planning perspective for women in India. Since 1970 at the national level, and in the centralised planning process at the centre the Sixth and the Seventh Plan documents for instance have been clearly developmental and progressive, providing for new programmes and approaches to improve the status of women. Similarly, other reports such as the Report of the Working Group on Employment for Women, 1978 have made forward looking recommendations. The second half of the eighties witnessed an unprecedented spurt in policy perspectives on women. Among these are two critical documents i.e. the National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000, which is a comprehensive all round projection for women's development in India and the report of the National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector that has also made far-reaching recommendations in terms of the unorganized sector particularly, issues, constraints and strategies for women in this sector.

The National Clearinghouse for Information on Women was set up in 1988 at the Women's Development Division at the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development. Among its multi-farious activities is the compilation of handbooks and resource books on various issues pertaining to women in development. For the first time a compilation of existing policy and related documents both national and international has been undertaken for dissemination on a wide scale. As a focal point in the national network of information on women, the NCIW prepared this volume in response to the needs enunciated and articulated by policy makers, planners, administrators, academicians, grassroots organizations and activists. In all 22 national and international documents have been included in this document. Most of the documents are annotated. The Sixth and Seventh Five Year Plan chapters have been included. In terms of the National Perspective Plan and the Report of the National Commission on Self Employed women, all the recommendations have been incorporated into this volume.

We hope that this handbook will be useful for both better planning and implementation of development programmes both governmental and non-governmental; or to dialogue for higher resource allocations within mainline ministries or the Planning Commission; or in the struggle for drafting more effective laws to ensure bettered enforcement as well as to check exploitation/family violence against women; or raise awareness

and self-perceptions wherever needed and redefine images and roles of women; or in the effort at advocacy to counter fundamentalism/communalism and also in assisting the improvement of programmes through monitoring/evaluation, and in turn analysing the improvements and changes in women's status particularly in relation to men in the various sectors.

On the programming side, we hope this handbook will assist in providing the policy context while dealing with social and economic costing of programmes; employment/demand/production projections and a correlation of these to ensure optimum effectiveness of policies; investment priorities on women in relation to growth rate; awareness raising and capacity building; creating alternative and empowering participative training versus didactic approaches; the relevance of processual projects for women versus blueprints and schemes; gender issues in project planning and more specifically strategies for maximizing benefits of development programmes through perspectives of holistic planning and coordination. This trend reflects the need to utilize existing scarce national resources through strategies of coordination and networking amongst ministries/institutions/NGOs/other agencies as well as building technical inputs to support and improve programmes, creation of policy support data, dissemination of information to development agencies at all levels i.e. at the policy project and especially at the grassroots levels.

We are grateful to Ms. Neena Ranjan, Director, NIPCCD for her full support and co-operation. The Project Director of the National Clearinghouse for Information on Women Ms. Hema Balasubramanian has been responsible since inception for collecting and collating these documents for the National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 AD of which these documents form the second half. Dr. Usha Goela, Asstt. Director has provided inputs and worked hard in the collection and collation of these documents. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Geeta Dhawan and Mr. B.R. Siwal for assisting in the compilation of this volume. The financial support for the publication of this document was provided by UNICEF to the National Clearinghouse of Information on Women.

New Delhi
December, 1988.

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Introduction

Policy documents concerning Indian women have been guided by the Constitution. The Preamble to the Constitution of India assures "to secure to all its citizens: Justice, social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation". To attain these national objectives, the Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights and freedoms such as freedom of speech, protection of life, personal liberty and the prohibition of discrimination or denial of equal protection.

Indian women are the beneficiaries of these rights in the same manner as Indian men. For instance, Article 14 ensure 'equality before law' and Article 15 'prohibits any discrimination'. There is only one specific provision in Article 15(3) which empowers the state to make 'any special provision for women and children'. This is in violation of the fundamental obligation of non-discrimination among citizens, inter alia of sex. Consequently, this provision has enabled the State to make special provision for women, particularly in the field of labour legislation like the Factories Act, the Mines Act and so forth.

Article 16(1) guarantees "equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State". And Article 16 (2) forbids discrimination "in respect of any employment of office under the State" on the grounds only of "religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth residence or any one of them".

Enunciated in Part IV of the Constitution, the Directive Principles of State Policy embody the major policy goals of a welfare State. Together with the chapter on Fundamental Rights they concretize, the constitutional vision of a new Indian socio-political order. Even though the state is charged with "a duty....to apply these principles in making laws" and are "...fundamental in the governance of the country" (Article 37) these Principles are declared as non-justiciable. They were made non-enforceable in courts because it was felt that their fulfilment would require a time-dimension of a few decades. Whereas the constitutional values embodied in the Fundamental Rights chapter needed immediate implementation. In the case of the Directive Principles this was not possible save at the cost of the viability of the state.

Juridically, the Directive Principles are a vital part of Indian Constitutional Law. Like the Preamble, they reflect high ideals of a liberal democratic polity. They are meant to be used by all agencies of the State as guidelines to action as major goals of policy. Courts can use them as a body of values and standards relevant to the act of judicial choice-making. But the Directive Principles confer no power or legislative competence, rise to a cause of action for which remedy is available in a court of law, bestow rights, or create remedies. At the same time, they cannot be amended, save through the prescribed procedure.

Some of the Directive Principles are "women-specific". Others concern women indirectly or by necessary implication. Amongst those which concern women directly and have a special bearing on their status include: Article 39 (a) the right to an adequate means of livelihood for men and women equally; Article 39 (d) equal pay for equal work for both men and women; Article 39 (e) protection of the health and strength of workers—men, women and children from abuse and entry into avocations unsuited to their age and strength; and Article 42—just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.

In the second category fall the omnibus provision of Article 38 which in brief directs the state to secure a just social, political and economic order, geared to promote the welfare of the people; Article 39(b) (c) and (f) for the distribution of ownership and control of material resources of the community for the common good, prevention of concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment, and protection of childhood and youth against exploitation, and moral and material abandonment; Article 40 -organization of village panchayats to promote self-government; Article 41—right to work, education and public assistance in cases of unemployment, oldage, sickness, disablement and other types of underserved wants; Article 43 - provision of work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure, of social and cultural opportunities, and the promotion of cottage industries; Article 44 -

uniform Civil Code; Article 45 - free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14; and Article 47 - raising the level of nutrition and the standard of living of the people and improvement of public health.

In 1971 following a resolution of the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) was constituted at the instance of the U.N. General Assembly. The presentation of the report of the CSWI report "*Towards Equality*" coincided with the celebration of 1975 as International Women's Year. To operationalize the recommendations of the CSWI a *Blueprint of Action Points and National Plan of Action for Women, 1976* was formulated by the then Department of Social Welfare, Government of India. This in turn led to the presentation of the *Report of the Working Group on Employment for Women, 1978* as well as the *Report of the working group on Development of Village Level Organizations of Rural Women 1978*. It also formed a part of the Sixth Five Year Plan exercise. The impact of these reports resulted in a separate chapter on *Women and Development 1980-85* in the Sixth Five Year Plan. It also resulted in women being perceived as productive contributors to the nation's economy.

Following an agreement signed between the then Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Government of India and the Food and Agricultural Organization (UN), a *Report of the National Committee on Role and Participation of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development 1980* was submitted. The *Report of the Working Group on Personnel Policies for Bringing Greater Involvement of Women in Science and Technology - 1981* reviewed the extent of participation of women in scientific establishments and suggested measures for promoting greater involvement of women in science and technology.

In the Seventh Five Year Plan, the Chapter on *Socio-Economic Programmes for Women-1985-90* moved further away from a "welfare" approach to a more positive "developmental" approach to women's concerns. More recently, the Indian Parliament adopted a *National Policy on Education-1986* which included a chapter on Education for Women's Equality.

The Government of India launched the Twenty Point Programme in 1975 pinpointing areas of special thrust which would show immediate tangible results. The programme has been subsequently recast and redefined in 1982 and then in 1986. The text of the *Twenty Point Programme, 1986* is reproduced in full.

The Report of the National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners (1987) identifies the gaps and drawbacks in existing facilities and services for women offenders and recommends a more humane policy for them. The *National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector* was appointed in Jan. 1987 to look into the ways and means to ameliorate the sufferings of the unprotected labouring women. In its report *Shramshakti* submitted in June, 1988 the Commission has outlined many comprehensive policy recommendations towards this end. Also in 1987, a Core Group was set up by the Department of Women and Child Development to formulate a *National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 A.D.* The report was released in October, 1988.

The year 1975 was declared as International Women's Year by the United Nations. As a result of the World Conference held during June-July 1975, the *Declaration of Mexico Plans of Action-1975* was adopted. The purpose was to promulgate 30 principles on the equality of women and their contribution to national development and international peace. Also, the Action Plan stipulated 14 minimum objectives to be met before the midterm appraisal in 1980. In December 1979 the U.N. General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*. At present, India is not a signatory of this convention.

A midterm appraisal, *Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations. Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace* of the World Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference of the International Women's Year, took place in Copenhagen in July 1980. The Ministry of Social Welfare prepared a paper *India-A Status Paper-1980* to review India's progress in attaining the minimum objectives. The paper also highlighted the constraints and problems faced in promoting participation of women in development.

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific held a preparatory meeting for the World Conference on Women, at the Ministerial level in March 1984. The deliberations of the meeting resulted in the *Report of the Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory meeting for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace-1984*.

At the Ministerial level, another conference took place in April 1985 of the Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries. The intention was to approach the World Conference on Women with full knowledge of their achievements and failures, as well as to evolve a strategy to tackle the problems confronting the world. The recommendations were compiled into *New Delhi Document on Women in Development - 1985*.

Finally, at the end of the United Nations Decade for Women, the World Conference was held in Kenya in 1985. The World Conference adopted *Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women-1985* to serve as guidelines for creating a new world order based on equality, development and peace. For the closing conference of the Women's Decade, the Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare prepared *Women in India : Country Paper 1985*. This status paper assessed the impact of the Decade on the development of women, the constraints that exist and strategies for the advancement of women.

In the field of regional cooperation, the decision was taken hold the first summit of the Heads of State or Government of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, 1985. The first Ministerial meeting on Women in Development was held in Shillong in 1986 at the invitation of the Government of India. It resulted in publishing the *Women in Development: Report of SAARC Ministerial Meeting 1986*.

In the following sections, the highlighted documents have been included in the order cited. Most of the documents have been annotated. For others only relevant chapters from the main document have been inserted.

NATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. December 1974. Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Department of Social Welfare, New Delhi.

The Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) was appointed by the Government of India in 1971 (i) to evaluate the changes that had taken place in the status of women as a result of the constitutional, legal and administrative measures adopted since independence, (ii) to examine the impact of the complex processes of social change on various sections of Indian women, and (iii) to suggest measures which would enable women to play their

full and proper role in building up the nation.

The Committee set up six Task Forces and two Study Groups to examine the changes in the field of social life, law, economic, participation, educational development, political status, and women's welfare and development. The summary of recommendations of the CSWI was as follows:

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter III-The Socio-Cultural Setting of Women's Status

The review of the disabilities and constraints on women, which stem from socio-cultural institutions, indicates that the majority of women are still very far from enjoying the rights and opportunities guaranteed to them by the Constitution. Society has not yet succeeded in framing the required norms or institutions to enable women to fulfil the multiple roles that they are expected to play in India today. On the other hand, the increasing incidence of practices like dowry indicate a further lowering of the status of women. They also indicate a process of regression from some of the norms developed during the Freedom Movement. We have been perturbed by the finding of the content analysis of periodicals in the regional languages, that concern for women and their problems, which received an impetus during the Freedom Movement, has suffered a decline in the last two decades. The social laws, that sought to mitigate the problems of women in their family life, have remained unknown to a large mass of women in this country, who are as ignorant of their legal rights today as they were before independence (3.362).

1. We realise that changes in social attitudes and institutions cannot be brought about very rapidly. It is, however, necessary to accelerate this process of change by deliberate and planned efforts. Responsibility for this acceleration has to be shared by the State and the community, particularly that section of the community which believes in the equality of women. We, therefore, urge that community organisations, particularly women's organisations should mobilise public opinion and strengthen social

efforts against oppressive institutions like polygamy, dowry, ostentatious expenditure on wedding and child marriage, and mount a campaign for the dissemination of information about the legal rights of women to increase their awareness. This is a joint responsibility which has to be shared by community organisations, legislators who have helped to frame these laws and the Government which is responsible for implementing them (3.36).

Chapter IV-Women and the Law

2. Eradication of Polygamy in Muslim Law:

Full equality of sexes can hardly be possible in a legal system which permits polygamy and a social system which tolerates it (4.13). The only personal law, which has remained impervious to the changing trend from polygamy to monogamy is Muslim Law (4.14.).

The solution of standard contracts fails to provide a substantive relief to the first wife with children. As the second marriage is not invalidated, the position of the husband is not prejudicially affected but for the financial implications arising out of the step. The deterrance of the criminal sanction when a person intends to contract a second marriage is absent. Further, it is ineffective in cases of fake conversions to Islam from other religions, to circumvent the prohibition against bigamy. The remedy is out of step with the position in the other personal laws in India and should be rejected (4.20).

While the desirability of reform in Muslim Law is generally acknowledged, the Government has taken no

steps towards changing the law for over two decades on the view that public opinion in the Muslim community did not favour a change. This view cannot be reconciled with the declaration of equality and social justice. We are of the opinion that ignoring the interest of Muslim women is a denial of social justice. The right of equality, like the right of free speech, is an individual right (4.26).

2. We are of the firm view that there can be no compromise on the basic policy of monogamy being the rule for all communities in India. Any compromise in this regard will only perpetuate the existing inequalities in the status of women (4.30).

3. Enforcement of Provision Against Bigamy under Hindu Marriage Act:

(a) In our opinion the right to initiate prosecution for bigamy should be extended to persons other than girl's family with prior permission of the Court to prevent the current wide-spread violation of a most salutary provision of the law which very clearly lays down the social policy of the country (4.33.34).

(b) We recommend that the words 'solemnized' should be replaced by the words "goes through a form of marriage". Further an explanation should be added to section 17 of the Hindu Marriage Act that an omission to perform some of the essential ceremonies by parties shall not be construed to mean that the offence of bigamy was not committed, if such a ceremony of marriage gives rise to a de facto relationship of husband and wife (4.39).

(c) We recommend that a provision be introduced in Section 6 of the Hindu Marriage Act to the effect that nothing contained in the Hindu Marriage Act shall prevent a court from granting an injunction against a proposed bigamous marriage under the Act or under the provisions of the specific Relief Act, 1963.

4. Reform of Marriage Laws Prevalent in Former French and Portuguese Territories:

In our opinion continuation of such diverse laws (permitting polygamy), contradictory to our social policy, in these territories is totally unjustified. We recommend the immediate replacement of these laws by the Hindu Marriage Act 1965 (4.51).

5. Restraint of Child Marriages:

(a) When the legal age of marriage in case of a female is

below the age of discretion she cannot be expected to form an intelligent opinion about her partner in life. The policy of law which permits the marriage of a girl before she is physically and mentally mature is open to serious question. Child marriage is one of the significant factors leading to the high incidence of suicide among young married women in India. Therefore, increasing the marriage age of girls to eighteen years is desirable (4.61).

(b) An anachronism in Muslim Law governs some sects. After puberty, a Muslim male in all sects and a Muslim female belonging to the Hanafi and Ithana Ashari sects can marry without a guardian. 'But a Malik, Shafi or Daudhi or Sulayamani Bohra virgin cannot marry without a guardian and her only remedy is to change over to the Hanafi School and marry according to its tenets (4.62).

In our opinion a change in the law to remove the existing disability in these sub-schools, to bring them in conformity with the Hanafi law is necessary (4.63).

(c) There are large scale violations of the Child Marriage Restraint Act, particularly in the rural areas. The State of Gujarat has made it a cognizable offence with provisions for appointment of a Child Marriage Prevention Officer.

We recommend that all offences under the Child Marriage Restraint Act should be made cognizable, and special officers appointed to enforce the law (4.65).

(d) The right to repudiate a child marriage by a girl on attaining majority is provided under Muslim Law if the following facts are established:—

- (i) that she was given in marriage by her father or other guardian before she attained the age of 15;
- (ii) that she repudiated the marriage before she attained the age of 18;
- (iii) that the marriage was not consummated (4.67).

In our view the right to repudiate the marriage on attaining majority should be made available to girls in all communities whether the marriage was consummated or not (4.68).

(e) The Parsee Marriage and Divorce Act provides that "no suit shall be brought in any court to enforce any marriage between Parsees or any contract connected with or arising out of any such marriage, if, at the date of the institution of the suit the husband shall not have com-

pleted the age of 16 years or the wife shall not have completed the age of 14 years.”

We recommend legislation prohibiting courts from granting any relief in respect of a marriage solemnized in violation of the age requirements prescribed by law, unless both the parties have completed the age of 18 years (4.69).

6. Registration of Marriages :

Compulsory registration of marriages as recommended by the U.N. will be an effective check on child and bigamous marriages, offer reliable proof of marriages and ensure legitimacy and inheritance rights of children (4.70—4.72).

We recommend that registration should be made compulsory for all marriages (4.73).

7. Prevention of Dowry :

The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961 has signally failed to achieve its purpose. In spite of the persistent growth of this practice there are practically no cases reported under the Act (4.75). There is hardly any evidence of social conscience in this regard in the country today (4.77). The educated youth is grossly indifferent to the evil and unashamedly contributed to its perpetuation. Stringent enforcement of the policy and purpose of the Act may serve to educate public opinion better.

(a) A very small but significant step could be taken by the Government by declaring the taking and giving of dowry to be against the Government Servants' Conduct Rules. Such a lead was given earlier to prevent bigamous marriages and giving or taking of dowry should be similarly dealt with (4.78).

(b) The policy of making the offence non-cognizable nullifies the purpose of the Act. We recommend that the offences under the Dowry Act should be made cognizable (4.80).

(c) One of the major loop-holes in the existing legislation is that anything is allowed in the name of gifts and presents. Therefore, any gifts made to the bridegroom or his parents in excess of Rs. 500/- or which can be so used as to reduce his own financial liability should be made punishable (4.81).

(d) The practice of displaying the Dowry tends to perpetuate the practice as others follow suit. To curb the evil of dowry we recommend legislation on the lines of the

West Pakistan Dowry (Prohibition of Display) Act 1967 which penalised display of gifts made at the time or immediately before or after marriage (4.82).

(e) An evaluation of the impact of the amended Dowry Prohibition Act should be made after 5 years. The next step should be to set a ceiling even on the gifts that may be made to the bride (4.83).

8. Improvement of Laws of Divorce :

The concept of 'union for life' or the sacramental nature of marriage which renders the marriage indissoluble has gradually been eroded and through legislation the right on divorce has been introduced in all legal systems in India, but the same variations and unequal treatment of sexes characterises this branch of law also (4.84).

We recommend the following changes :

Hindu Law: (a) difference in the place of work should not be regarded as a ground for a case of desertion or restitution of conjugal rights (4.94).

(b) cruelty and desertion should be added as grounds for divorce in the Hindu Marriage Act so that persons are not compelled to follow the present circuitous route and undergo the expense of going to court twice (4.95).

Muslim Law: (c) We recommend that the right of the wife to divorce on the failure of the husband to maintain her, irrespective of her conduct which may be the main or contributory cause, should be clearly spelt out (4.100).

(d) We recommend immediate legislation to eliminate the unilateral right of divorce, and to introduce parity of rights for both partners regarding grounds for seeking dissolution of a marriage (4.103).

Christian Law: (e) We regret that the reforms in Christian Marriage laws as recommended by the Law Commission and incorporated in the Christian Marriage Matrimonial Causes Bill 1960 have not yet been enacted and recommend that no

further time be lost to reform and amend this law (4.104 4.106)

Jewish Law: (f) We recommend that reform and codification on the Jewish law be undertaken and the principle of monogamy as well as the normal grounds for divorce as provided in the Special Marriage Act be adopted for this community also (4.108).

General:

- (g) In our opinion conversion should not be a ground for divorce as it offers an easy way of avoiding matrimonial obligations (4.111).
- (h) We recommend that mutual consent as a ground for divorce should be recognised in all the personal laws so that two adults whose marriage has, in fact, broken down can get it dissolved honourably (4.112).
- (i) The provision in the Parsee Marriage and Divorce Act which enables the wife to obtain a divorce if her husband has compelled her to prostitution should be included in all other personal laws (4.113)
- (j) As a general principle, we recommend parity of rights regarding grounds for divorce for both husband and wife (4.114).

9. Adoption:

- (a) We recommend that the right of adoption should be equal for husband and wife, with the consent of the other spouse (4.125).
- (b) We welcome the step taken by the Government in introducing a uniform and secular law of adoption, the adoption of Children Bill, 1972, and recommend an early enactment of the Bill as it will extend the right of adoption, equally to men and women of all communities, and will be a step towards a uniform secular law (4.129).

10. Guardianship:

We recommend:—

- (a) that the control over the person and property of minor cannot be separated and should vest in the same person;
- (b) that the question of guardianship should be determined entirely from the point of view of the child's interest and not the prior right of either parent;
- (c) that the parent who does not have guardianship should have access to the child;

- (d) that whatever the decision taken earlier, the child's choice of guardian should be obtained when the child reaches the age of 12 (4.143).
- (e) We support the recommendations of the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women as follows:—
 - (i) Women shall have equal right and duties with men in respect to guardianship of their minor children and the exercise of parental authority over them, including care, custody, education and maintenance;
 - (ii) Both spouses shall have equal rights and duties with regard to the administration of the property of their minor children, with the legal limitations necessary to ensure as far as possible that it is administered in the interest of the children;
 - (iii) The interest of the children shall be the paramount consideration in proceedings custody of children in the event of divorce, annulment of marriages or judicial separation;
 - (iv) No discrimination shall be made between men and women with regard to decisions regarding custody of children and guardianship or other parental rights in the event of divorce, annulment of marriage or judicial separation (4.144).

11. Maintenance:

The provision for maintenance in the Criminal Procedure Code continues to reflect the old attitude to women. With some modifications like extending the rights to demand maintenance to indigent parents and to divorced wives, the obligation to maintain continues to be that of the man. There are today women economically independent who cannot only look after themselves but also their husband and children (4.147).

- (a) As we believe in the equal status of husband and wife, and of son and daughter, we recommend amendment of the law of maintenance to provide for the obligation of the economically independent women:—
 - (i) to maintain her dependent husband;
 - (ii) to share with him the duty to maintain their children;
 - (iii) to share with her brothers the duty to maintain their indigent parents (4.148).
- (b) The underlying principle for the inclusion of the

right of maintenance in the Criminal Procedure Code is to prevent starvation and vagrancy. The ceiling of Rs. 500/- on the total amount of maintenance for all dependent persons seems unjustified (4.148).

In extending the right of maintenance to divorced wives, an exception has been introduced to deny maintenance to those divorced wives who have received a sum of money payable under customary or personal law. This exclusion of all divorced Muslim women defeats the purpose of the section to provide a speedy remedy to indigent women (4.149).

We therefore recommend that the ceiling placed on the maximum amount payable as maintenance should be removed and the term 'wife' to include divorced wife be made applicable to all women without any exception (4.150).

- (c) Under Muslim law the wife's right to maintenance lasts only as long as she remains a wife. If she is divorced, she loses her right and is only entitled to maintenance for 3 months. This has created a discrimination between the Muslim and other Indian women. We recommend the removal of this discrimination and extension of right of maintenance to divorced wives (4.155).
- (d) In order to minimise the hardship caused by non-payment of maintenance, and to ensure certainty of payment, we recommend that all maintenance orders should be deducted at the source by the employer as done in the case of income-tax. Where it is not possible to deduct at the source, as in the case of a business man or a self-employed person, the arrears of maintenance should be recovered as 'arrears of land revenue or by distress' (4.159).
- (e) An additional mode of execution of the maintenance decree may be to adopt the same procedure as is done in the case of fines under the Criminal Procedure Code (4.160).

12. Inheritance:

(a) The Indian Succession Act confers no restrictions on the power of a person to will away his property. Therefore, the protection enjoyed by a Muslim widow to a share of the estate and by a Hindu widow to be maintained is denied to other widows under this law. There is a need to incorporate some restriction on the right of

testation, similar to that prevailing under Muslim law to prevent a widow from being left completely destitute (4.165).

(b) A characteristic feature of the Travancore and Cochin Christian Succession Laws is the discrimination against women (4.167). We recommend that immediate legislative measures be taken to bring Christian women of Kerala under the Indian Succession Act as a first step to unify the law (4.173).

(c) According to the law prevailing in Goa, the widow is relegated to the fourth position and is entitled to only the fruits and agricultural commodities. This needs to be remedied immediately (4.177). Similar anomalies prevail in the succession laws governing Christians of Pondicherry which relegate a woman to an inferior position and do not regard her as full owner even in the few cases where she can inherit property (4.178). We recommend the extension of the Indian Succession Act to Goa and Pondicherry (4.178).

(d) The one major factor which helps to continue the inequality between sons and daughters under Hindu law is the retention of the Mitakshara co-parcenary, the membership of which is confined only to male members. A number of decisions and legislation in the 20th century have made inroads in the concept of the co-parcenary, but the suggestion regarding its abolition received opposition at the time of Hindu Law reform. The compromise arrived at provides limited inheritance rights to the nearest class I female heirs of a co-parcenary but perpetuate unequal treatment between brother and sister. The right of a co-parcener to renounce his share in the co-parcenary deprives the female heirs of any share. Secondly, the right to transform self-acquired into joint family property is frequently used to reduce the share of a female heir (4.189-4.193).

We recommend the abolition of the right by birth and the conversion of the Mitakshara co-parcenary into Dayabhaga (4.194).

(e) Section 4(2) of the Hindu Succession Act, excludes the devolution of tenancy rights under State laws from the scope of the Act. This had led to the elimination of the beneficial effects of the Hindu Succession Act under the land legislation in many States (4.195-200). In order to achieve the social equality of women as also in the interests of uniformity, we recommend the abolition of the exception provided in section 4 (2) of the Hindu Succession Act, relating to devolution of tenancies (4.201).

(f) Section 23 of the Hindu Succession Act relating to the right of inheritance to a dwelling house has also resulted in some discrimination between unmarried, widowed and married daughters. The main object of the section is unexceptionable as it asserts the primacy of the rights of the family as against the right of an individual and therefore the restriction against partition which is against the family interest should be retained. But nothing justifies the invidious distinction between married and other daughters (4.204 and 4.205). We recommend the removal of the discrimination between married and unmarried daughters regarding the right over a dwelling house (Sec. 23 Hindu Succession Act).

(g) The unrestricted right of testation often results in depriving female heirs of their rights of inheritance (4.206). We recommend that the right of testation should be limited under the Hindu Succession Act, so as not to deprive legal heirs completely (4.207).

(h) We recommend legislation in Muslim Law to give an equal share to the widow and the daughter along with sons as has been done in Turkey (4.218)

(i) The medley of laws which govern the right of inheritance, not only of female heirs of different communities; but even of female heirs of the same community require immediate measures. Broad principles like equal rights of sons, daughters and widows, a restriction on the right of testation, so that dependent members are not left completely destitute are needed immediately (4.219).

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

13. Matrimonial Property: In the socio-economic situation prevailing in our country the contribution of the wife to the family's economy is not recognised. A large number of them participate in the family's effort to earn a livelihood as unpaid family workers. Even when they do not do so the economic value of their effort in running the house, assuming all domestic responsibilities, thus freeing the husband for his avocation is not accepted in law either directly or indirectly. Married women who do not have independent source of income or give up employment after marriage to devote their full time in family obligations are economically dependent on their husbands. In majority of cases, movable and immovable property acquired during marriage are legally owned by the husband, since they are paid for out of his earnings. The principle of determining ownership on the basis of financial contribution works inequitably against women. In case of divorce or separation, women without any earn-

ings or savings of their own are deprived of all property which they acquire jointly. Even property received by them at the time of marriage from the husband or his family is denied to the women in some communities. The fear of financial and social insecurity prevents them from restoring to separation or divorce even when the marriages are unhappy. It is necessary to give legal recognition to the economic value of the contribution made by the wife through house work for purposes of determining ownership of matrimonial property, instead of continuing the archaic test of actual financial contribution (4.222—4.225).

We, therefore recommend that on divorce or separation the wife should be entitled to at least 1/3 of the assets acquired at the time of and during the marriage (4.226).

14. Family Courts: The statutory law in all matrimonial matters follows the adversary principle for giving relief i.e. the petitioner seeking relief alleges certain facts and the respondent refutes them. In addition, most of the grounds in these statutes are based on the 'fault principle' instead of the breakdown theory. As a result, strong advocacy rather than family welfare is often the determining factor in these cases. The absence of distinction between matrimonial causes and other civil suits leads to unusual delay which stands in the ways of conciliation and further embitters the relationship of the parties. Conciliation, which needs to be the main consideration in all family matters is not the guiding principle in the statutes dealing with them (4.227—4.228).

We strongly recommend the abandonment of the established adversary system for settlement of family problems, and establishment of Family Courts which will adopt conciliatory methods and informal procedure, aiming to achieve socially desirable results (4.233).

15. Uniform Civil Code: The absence of an uniform civil code 27 years after independence is an incongruity which cannot be justified with all the emphasis that is placed on secularism, science and modernisation. The continuance of various personal laws which discriminate between men and women violates the Fundamental Rights and the Preamble to the Constitution which promises equality of status to all citizens. It is also against the spirit of national integration and secularism (4.236).

Our recommendations regarding amendments of existing laws are only indicators of the direction in which uniformity has to be achieved. We recommend expeditious implementation of the constitutional directive of

Article 44 by the adoption of a uniform Civil Code (4.237).

16. Needed Reforms in Criminal Law:

(a) *Consent to sexual intercourse:* While consent to sexual intercourse is strictly interpreted and excludes consent given by the woman under duress or fraud, no provision is made for consent obtained by putting someone else in fear in the presence of the woman. We welcome the recommendation of the Law Commission in this regard (4.242).

In our view consent to have sexual intercourse requires more maturity than to have an abortion. The same age-limit should be applied in both cases. We recommend that the age of consent below which a girl's consent to sexual intercourse is not legal should be 18, permitting some degree of flexibility to the court in border-line cases to decide whether the girl is mature enough (4.243).

(b) *Bigamy:* The present law restricts jurisdiction of the court to the place where the bigamous marriage was performed or where the husband and wife last resided. This causes difficulties to the wife who may have to move on after being abandoned by her husband. We recommend that in addition to the two jurisdictions under the Criminal Procedure Code, provision be made for inquiry and trial for bigamy in a court within whose jurisdiction the wife is residing (4.246).

(c) *Adultery:* Adultery in our opinion should be regarded only as a matrimonial offence, the remedy for which may be sought in divorce or separation. Retention of this as a criminal offence brings out clearly the values of the last century which regarded the wife as the husband's property. It also prevents lawyers and others from giving necessary help to an oppressed wife. We recommend that continuing to regard adultery as a criminal offence is against the dignity of an individual and should be removed from the Penal Code (4.248).

17. Nationality:

(a) In the absence of any provision dealing with the case of Indian women marrying foreigners in the Citizenship Act many of them have become stateless. We recommend that the Citizenship Act be amended to provide a special rule for Indian women marrying aliens, stating that she will in no case lose her Indian nationality as a result of her marriage to a foreigner (4.256).

(b) The present rule prevents the children of such Indian women from being considered as Indian citizens. Where the father and mother are separated and the mother is the guardian, there is no justification for the rule that the child's nationality will be transmitted through the father. We, therefore, recommend the amendment of section 4(1) of the Citizenship Act to read as follows :—

“A person born outside India on or after the 26th January, 1950, shall be a citizen of India by descent if his father or mother is a citizen of India at the time of his birth” (4.257).

Chapter V—Roles, Rights and Opportunities for Economic Participation.

The Indian Constitution guarantees equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment and directs the State to secure equal rights to an adequate means of livelihood, equal pay for equal work and just and humane conditions of work. The impact of transition to a modern economy has meant the exclusion of a increasing number and proportion of women from active participation in the productive process. A considerable number continue to participate for no return and no recognition. The majority of those who do participate fully or on sufferance, without equal treatment, security of employment or humane conditions of work, a very large number of them are subject to exploitation of various kinds with no protection from society or the State. Legislative and executive actions initiated in this direction have made some impact in the organised sector, where only 6% of working women are employed, but in the vast unorganised sector, which engages 94% of working women in this country, no impact of these measures have been felt on conditions of work, wages or opportunities.

Estimates of employment and under-employment clearly indicate that the position is worse for women. Measures to remove women's disability and handicaps in the field of economic participation have proved extremely inadequate. While several factors have handicapped and prevented women's integration into the process of development, the lack of a well defined policy, indicating areas where they require special assistance and protection, leaves them without access to knowledge, skills and employment.

Prejudices regarding women's efficiency, productivity, capacity for skills and suitability debar them from employment in many areas, and result in wage discrimination. The criteria for determining their unsuitability for partic-

ular types of jobs are not clear or uniform. Recasting the employment policy for women requires re-examination of existing theories regarding their suitability for different types of work on scientific lines, and deliberate efforts to promote equality of opportunity by special attention to women's disability and handicaps. Our recommendations aim to make the Constitutional guarantees meaningful and arrest the trend toward gradual exclusion of women from their rights to a fuller participation in the economic process.

18. We therefore recommend the adoption of a well defined policy to fulfil the Constitutional directives and Government's long term objective of total involvement of women in national development. Such a policy should be framed by a Government Resolution. This policy will need to be implemented carefully to avoid evasion by direction or indirect methods. Apart from specific occupations from which women are debarred by law, employers should not be permitted to exclude them from any occupation unless the basis for unsuitability is clearly specified.

19. The creation of a cell within the Ministry of labour and Employment at both Central and State levels under the direction of a Senior Officer to deal with problems of women (5.323).

We further recommend the following changes in the existing laws:

20 A. Maternity Benefits Act 1961:

(i) This Act should be extended to all industries not covered by the Act at present and the provision of maternity relief ensured by the creation of a Central Fund levying contributions from employers. The administration of the Fund should follow the pattern already established by the Employees State Insurance Corporation.

(ii) The Act should also cover agricultural labourers in the same manner as suggested for other industries. To facilitate its implementation, the Central Fund should also include a levy on Agricultural Holdings Tax by the Committee on Taxation of Agricultural Wealth and Income.

(iii) The anti-retrenchment clause already included in the Employees State Insurance Act 1948 should be incorporated in the Maternity Benefits Act.

(iv) For women retrenched for short periods and reemployed on the same jobs, the period of

unemployment should not be treated as discontinuation of service for their eligibility for this benefit. For casual labour, a minimum of 3 months of service should be considered as qualifying them for this benefit.

(v) As decided by the Supreme Court in the case of bidi workers, the provision of maternity benefits should be extended to home workers in all other industries.

(vi) In order to eliminate unjust denial of maternity benefits, scrutiny of applications should be done by a Committee of the management and trade union representatives. The latter should preferably include a women. This will provide greater incentive to women workers to participate in trade union activities.

(vii) The penalties for evasion of this law should be made more stringent.

(viii) The system of paying cash benefits in a lump-sum sometimes gives rise to inadequate attention to the nutritional needs of the mother and the child. Payment of maternity benefits should be made periodically (5.324).

21B. Provision of Creches:

(i) The present limit of 50 women workers for the application of this provision under the Factories Act should be reduced to 20.

(ii) Women employed as casual labour or as contract labour should be entitled to share this benefit.

(iii) Wherever there is a demand, a room should be provided for keeping small children for other group of women workers e.g. workers in offices, hospitals, shops and commercial establishments.

(iv) As far as possible, creches should be established near the residence of women workers rather than the place of work. The ideal arrangements, in our view, would be neighbourhood creches (5.325).

22C. Working Time:

Permission to work upto 10.00 P.M. should be granted, provided arrangements for transport and security are made.

23. We further recommend effective implementation of the Maternity Benefits Act in all States, and the extension of the Employees State Insurance Scheme to those areas which are not covered by it at present (5.326).

24. Equalisation of Wages:

We recommend legislative enactment of Article 39(d) of the Constitution—equal pay for equal work—to add the weight of legal sanction to what is only a policy at present.

We further recommend incorporation of this principle in the Minimum Wages Act (5.327)

25. Integrated Development of Training and Employe.

(i) We recommend reservation of a definite quota for women for training within the industry in order to arrest their retrenchment as a consequence of modernisation.

(ii) A similar quota should be reserved for women for training of apprentices under the National Apprentices Act.

(iii) We further recommend development programme of vocational training in close relationship with industries and resources located in the area. Links with possible employing agencies have to be developed from the beginning so that the training does not end in futility.

(iv) As recommended by the Committee of the All India Council for Technical Education, Polytechnics for Women should include a production centre with assistance from the Small Scale Industries Departments of the State concerned.

(v) Training programmes in production and market organisation to develop self employment should be developed.

(vi) Special efforts have to be made to develop vocational training for both illiterate and semi-literate women workers.

(vii) We further recommend development of training-cum-production centres in small scale or cottage industries in both rural and urban areas to provide employment to women near their homes (5.328).

26. Part-time Employment:

We recommend specific provision for part-time employment of women by suitable revisions in recruitment rules and service conditions. We also recommend detailed investigation of areas where part-time employment could be generated by agencies like

the Directorate General of Employment and training, the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, the National Council of Applied Economic Research, etc. Such studies should include examination of existing avenues for part-time employment viz. in the unorganised industries and occupations (5.329).

27. Employment Information:

We recommend expansion of the national employment service, particularly in rural areas, and the development of a women's cadre in the service to provide employment information and assistance to women (5.330).

28. Provision for Re-entry:

We recommend that provision for special leave without pay, subject to a maximum of 5 years during service, should be made in all occupations, in order to enable women to devote full-time for the care of their family. Their lien should be protected (5.331).

29. Enforcement of Laws Protecting Women Workers:

We recommend increase in the number of women on the inspectorate different labour departments as well as provision for women welfare officers wherever women are employed (5.332).

30. We Further Recommend:

(i) Steps to organise labour unions in the field of agriculture, and other industries where such organisations do not exist at present.

(ii) Formation of Women's Wings in all trade unions, to look after the problems of women workers and to improve women's participation in trade union activities (5.333).

Chapter VI - Educational Development

Our investigation of the progress of women's education in India reveals that while there has been a tremendous increase in the number of girls receiving formal education in the period after Independence the gap between the enrolment of boys and girls has continued to increase at all levels and the proportion of girls in the relevant age groups covered by the school system still remains far below

the constitutional target of universal education upto the age (at 14. Social attitude to the education of girls range from acceptance of the need to one of the absolute in difference. The reasons for the variation in social attitude and the consequent slow progress of women's education are both social and economic, which are intensified by inadequate facilities and the ambivalent attitude regarding the purpose of educating girls.

In spite of the expansion, the formal system of education now covers only 10% of the total female population. Less than 7% of the 15 to 25 age group and less than 2% of the 25 and above age group have received any formal education. The number of illiterate women has increased from 61 million in 1950-51 to 215 million in 1970-71.

31. The challenge of the widening illiteracy gap will have to be borne in mind in determining priorities in educational development in the years to come. The claims of the formal educational system which can cater to the need of only a minority for a long time will have to be balanced against the claims of eradication of illiteracy. This stand out as the most important and imperative need to raise the status of women who are already adults and constitute the largest group (6.53). While the constitutional directive of universal education upto the age of 14 must receive the highest priority in the formal system.....an alternative system has to be designed to provide basic education to adult women, particularly in the 15-25 age group (6.55).

Imbalances in women's education and literacy are the consequences of great disparity of educational progress between rural and urban areas, between different sections of the population and between regions, which reflect, to a great extent, variations in regional attitudes to women (6.57). The influence of these and other sociological factors, which, for instance, influence the low educational development among Muslim women or women of Scheduled Castes and Tribes.....make the use of national or state averages in assessing progress of education or literacy rather meaningless (6.61-63).

32. In our opinion, any plan for educational development of women which does not take these imbalances into account will contribute to the increase of inequalities between different sections of the population. Removal of these imbalances will require special attention from public authorities based on careful identification of factors responsible for them. Special programmes will need to be designed for their removal if equality of educational opportunities is to be brought within the access of the majority of women in this country (6.64).

Recommendations Regarding the Formal System :

33. **Co-education:**— In our opinion, the considerations of efficiency, economy as well as equal opportunity require the acceptance of co-education as a long term policy. In view of the divergent social attitudes, however, we recommend:

- (i) Co-education should be adopted as the general policy at the primary level;
- (ii) At the middle and secondary stages separate schools may be provided in areas where there is a great demand for them. But the effort to pursue co-education as a general policy at these stages should continue side-by-side;
- (iii) At the university level co-education should be the general policy and opening of new colleges exclusively for girls should be discouraged;
- (iv) There should be no ban on admission of girls to boys' institutions;
- (v) Wherever separate schools/colleges for girls are provided, it has to be ensured that they maintain required standards in regard to the quality of staff, provision of facilities, relevant courses and co-curricular activities;
- (vi) Acceptance of the principle of mixed staff should be made a condition of recognition for mixed schools. There is a misgiving, however, that this provision may lead to exclusion of girls from some schools. Therefore, it is suggested that this measure may be reviewed a few years after it is implemented;
- (vii) Wherever there are mixed schools, separate toilet facilities and retiring rooms for girls should be provided (6.72).

34. **Curricula:**— We recommend:

- (i) There should be a common course of general education for both sexes till the end of class X, all courses being open to boys and girls.
- (ii) At the primary stage, simple needle craft, music and dancing should be taught to both sexes.
- (iii) From the middle stage, differences may be permitted under work experience.

- (iv) In class XI-XII girls should have full opportunity to choose vocational and technical courses according to local conditions, needs and aptitudes.
- (v) At the university stage there is a need to introduce more relevant and useful courses for all students (6.81).

35. Pre-School Education:—We recommend:

- (i) The provision of three years pre-school education for all children by making a special effort to increase the number of 'balwadis' in the rural areas and in urban slums.
- (ii) In order to enable them to fulfil the social functions discussed above, an effort should be made to locate them as near as possible to the primary and middle schools of the locality (6.85).

36. Universalisation of Education for the Age-Group 6-14:—We recommend:

- (i) Provision of primary schools within walking distance from the home of every child within the next 5 years.
- (ii) Establishment of ashram or residential schools to serve clusters of villages scattered in difficult terrains. Where this is not immediately possible, preparatory schools may be provided for the time being.
- (iii) Provision of mobile schools for children of nomadic tribes, migrant labour and construction workers.
- (iv) Sustained propaganda by all types of persons, preferably women-officials, and non-officials, social and political workers, to bring every girl into school in Class I preferably at the age of 6. They should visit local schools and involve parents and community leaders in order to promote the schooling of girls, particularly in backward areas.
- (v) Provision of incentives to drop-outs. Since poverty is the major cause of drop outs the most effective incentive, in our opinion is the provision of mid-day meals. The rate of children passing the primary level has definitely gone up in States

which have introduced mid-day meals. In Kerala, which has the highest literacy rate among women, this provision is one of the major factors for the enrolment and retention of children in schools to-day. In reply to our questionnaire, the majority has given highest priority to this incentive. The other important incentives which require to be provided to needy children are free school uniforms, scholarships or stipends and free supply of books and other study material. For girls particularly, the lack of adequate clothing is a great deterrent to attending schools. For schools which do not prescribe any uniform, some provision of clothing is necessary.

- (vi) Special incentives for areas where enrolment of girls is low. This will need to be worked out according to local conditions. We suggest special awards or recognition to the community, teachers, students etc.
- (vii) At least 50% of teachers at this stage should be women.
- (viii) Provision of at least two teachers in all schools, and conversion of the existing single teacher ones as early as possible.
- (ix) Developing a system of part-time education for girls who cannot attend school on a fulltime basis. This system should provide education to girls at a time convenient to them.
- (x) Adoption of the multiple entry system for girls who could not attend school earlier or had to leave before becoming functionally literate.
- (xi) Provision of additional space in schools so that girls can bring their younger brothers and sisters to be looked after, either by the girls themselves in turn, or by some local women(6.87).
- (xii) Opening of schools and greater flexibility in admission procedure in middle schools (multiple only), to help girls to complete their schooling (6.88).

37. Sex Education:—We recommend:

- (i) Introduction of sex education from middle school.

- (ii) Appointment of an expert group by the Ministry of Education to prepare graded teaching material on the subject. The group should include some experts on mass media, to advise on the use of films and other mass media for this purpose.
- (iii) This material may be used for both formal and non-formal education (6.89).

38. Secondary Education:— We recommend:

- (i) Free education for all girls up to the end of the secondary stage.
- (ii) Improving the quality of teaching and provision of facilities for important subject like science, mathematics and commerce.
- (iii) Introduction of job-oriented work experience, keeping in view the needs, the resources and the employment potential of the region e.g. courses leading to training as ANM, typing and commercial practice, programmes oriented to industry and simple technology, agriculture and animal husbandry (6.92).

39. General Recommendations:

- (i) Provision of mixed staff in all mixed schools. This should be made a condition of recognition.
- (ii) Adequate provision of common-rooms and separate toilet facilities for girls in all schools.
- (iii) Adequate arrangements for co-curricular activities for girls in all schools.
- (iv) Provision of more need-cum-merit scholarships and hostel facilities for girls (6.93).

40. Higher Education:— We recommend:

- (i) Development of more employment opportunities, particularly of a part-time nature, to enable women to participate more in productive activities.
- (ii) Development of employment information and guidance services for women entering higher education. Many of them suffer from lack of information regarding job opportunities and regret their choice of subjects when faced by difficulties in obtaining employment (6.96).

41. Non-Formal Education:

As stated earlier, the greatest problem in women's education today is to provide some basic education to the overwhelming majority who have remained outside the reach of the formal system because of their age and social responsibilities as well as the literacy gap. For the sake of national plans for development, it is imperative to increase the social effectiveness of women in the 15-25 age group even if we cannot do so for the still older groups. Ad hoc approaches through the adult literacy, functional literacy and other programmes of the Government have proved inadequate. They also draw a sharp distinction between men and women in the content of the training. These distinctions, in our view, are out of date. Changes in family life, food habits, family planning all require joint efforts of men and women and continuing this kind of artificial division between the sexes may defeat the purpose of these programmes. As for vocational and occupational skills, the needs of women are greater than those of men. While we do not deny the value of crafts, women's need for vocational training cannot be limited to them. The skills differ according to the industrial and market potentials of regions and it is imperative to relate the training to local needs, resources and employment possibilities instead of adopting an artificial sex-selective approach. Ad hoc approaches through a multiplicity of programmes by various governmental agencies will lead to overlapping, lack of coordination and wastage of resources. The problem is an integrated one and cannot be solved by short term programmes. What is needed is a continuous process (6.97—6.101).

No attempt to professionalise this system will lead to development of the limiting, selective and a rigid approach with fixed curricula and classroom procedures. The prohibitive cost of such professionalisation would inevitably limit its operation to a few selected centres. The teachers in a non-formal system must have other skills of direct relevance to the problems of the community. Without this kind of community involvement, such programmes will lack stability and continuity (6.104).

The object of the system should be to provide access to information and use of information for better participation in social life with literacy as the core of the package. Though primarily meant for adolescents, the system should not exclude the young, particularly those who have been denied any formal education. Some of the latter may use it as a stepping stone to enter the formal system if our recommendation regarding multiple entry is accepted (6.105—6.106).

The system will have to be organised through community groups. The Panchayats and the Women's Panchayats recommended in Chapter VII would appear to be the ideal bodies for this purpose. Government's role should be limited to providing technical guidance and advice and enabling Government functionaries at the local level to participate in the programme apart from supportive assistance in the form of literature and reading material. Development of basic libraries in villages and the slum areas of towns is an imperative necessity for this purpose. We therefore recommend concentration of governmental effort on providing this infrastructure (6.107).

42. Equality of Sexes as a Major Value to be Inculcated Through the Educational Process

The educational system is the only institution which can counteract traditional belief in inequality of sexes. The educational system today has not even attempted to undertake this responsibility. The schools reflect and strengthen the traditional prejudices through their curricula, classification of subjects on the basis of sex and the unwritten code of conduct enforced on their pupils. This is one area where a major change is needed in the content and organisation of education. Educators must admit their responsibility and bring about this much needed change in the values of the younger generation (6.108—111).

Chapter VII—Political Status

Though women's participation in the political process has increased, both in elections and in their readiness to express their views on issues directly concerning their day-to-day life, their ability to produce an impact on the political process has been negligible because of the inadequate attention paid to their political education and mobilisation by both political parties and women's organisations. Parties have tended to see women voters as appendages of the males. Among women, the leadership has become diffused and diverse with sharp contradictions in their regard and concern for the inequalities that affect the status of women in every sphere—social, economic and political. The revolution in status of women for which constitutional equality was to be only the instrument, still remains a very distant objective. While the position of some groups have changed for the better, the large masses of women continue to lack spokesmen in the representative bodies of the State. Though women do not constitute a minority numerically, they are acquiring the features of

one by the inequality of class, status and political power. In this sense, the new rights have proved to be only concessional. Our recommendations aim to make women's political rights more functional as required by the needs of a democratic system (7.95—101)

In order to provide greater opportunities to women to actively participate in the decision making process, it is imperative to recognise the true nature of the social inequalities and disabilities that hamper them. This can best be achieved by providing them with special opportunities for participation in the representative structure of local government*. The present form of associating women in these bodies, through cooption or nomination has become a kind of tokenism. The time has come to move out of this token provision to a more meaningful association of women in local administration, and to counteract the general apathy and indifference of the local bodies to women's development and change of status (7.115—6).

43. Women's Panchayats:

We therefore recommend the establishment of Statutory Women's Panchayats at the village level with autonomy and resources of their own for the management and administration of welfare and development programmes for women and children, as a transitional measure, to break through the traditional attitudes that inhibit most women from articulating their problems and participating actively in the existing local bodies. They should be directly elected by the women of the village and have the right to send representatives to the Panchayat Samities and/or Zilla Parishads. A viable relationship with the Gram Panchayats should be maintained by making the Chairman and Secretary of both bodies ex-officio members of the other.

44. Reservation on Municipalities ** : At the level of municipalities, the principle of reservation of seats for women is already prevalent in certain States. We therefore, recommend that this should be adopted by all States as a transitional measure. We also recommend the constitution of permanent committees in municipalities, to initiate and supervise programmes for women's welfare and development.

45. Policy for Political Parties: We recommend that political parties should adopt as definite policy regarding the percentage of women candidates to be sponsored by

*The Committee did not recommend special representation for women in legislative bodies. See Notes of Dissent by Smt. Lotika Sarkar and Smt. Vina Mazumdar.

** See Notes of Dissent by Smt. Phulrenu Guha and Smt. Maniben Kare.

them for elections to Parliament and State Assemblies. While they may initially start with 15%, this should be gradually increased so that in time to come the representation of women in the legislative bodies has some relationship to their position in the total population of the country or the State.

46. Association in Important Bodies: We further recommend the inclusion of women in all important committees, commissions or delegations that are appointed to examine socio-economic problems.

Chapter VIII - Policies and Programmes for Women's Welfare and Development

47. Health and Family Planning

Demographic indicators, viz, female, maternal and infant mortality rates, and indicators of access to medical care, both reveal an increase in the neglect of female lives as an expendable asset. This is the only reasonable explanation for the declining sex ratio observed to persist over several decades. In our opinion, the neglect of maternity and child health services and general public health services through over-concentration on efforts for family planning have contributed to this trend as well as defeated the ultimate objective of the family planning programme. We are entirely in agreement with the draft Fifth Five Year Plan that integration of family planning with more positive health services like maternal and child health, and nutrition and improvement in the life expectancy of children and mothers will provide a far greater incentive to the adoption of family planning measures than the hitherto adopted negative approach. While welcoming this proposed integration, we wish to offer certain suggestions with regard to its organization at different levels so that the objective of integration is not defeated by organizational separatism (8.117).

We recommend that:—

(a) The rank of the Chief Executive for the integrated maternity and child health services, including family planning, should be upgraded to at least Additional Commissioner, so that this service does not again become subordinate to family planning. This procedure should be adopted at all levels of the administration at the Centre and the States.

(b) A separate budget head for maternity and child health services should be created, drawing on the provisions now made for family planning and the general

health services. It is important to increase the provision for these services to avoid their being neglected as has been the trend so far. Since programmes for immunisation and nutrition of infants yield better results when they form a part of general maternity and child health services, we see no difficulty in increasing the allocation for these services.

(c) At the level of the primary health centres, the maternity and child health service should be separated for purposes of administrative provision, medical personnel and budget. While they may share the same buildings and equipment, a separation of the administrative structure required for maternity and child health services will ensure greater priority of treatment. Facilities in the way of maternity beds, equipment for immunisation of children and family planning for women could be allocated to the MCH Unit. The P.H.C. could be made responsible for sterilisation operations for men along with other general health services.

The MCH Unit could coordinate the nutrition and immunisation measures which form a basis component of the integrated child development programme. It could also collect and maintain fertility and morbidity statistics for women and children for better research and evaluation in these fields.

We recommend that each M.C.H. centre should collect this data which should be studied and evaluated at the district level by persons of required competence. This will call for a health statistics Section at the district level.

(d) We recommend the abolition of the present practice of providing financial incentives to promoters of family planning. Incentives to women who accept family planning should be in the shape of a token or certificate to ensure them greater priority in health care facilities for both the mothers and their children. Such a step will promote greater acceptance of family planning and correct social attitudes towards these practices. Compensation for loss of wages during sterilisation operations should however be paid to daily wage labourers. Others should be given paid leave for this purpose.

(e) The qualifications prescribed for recruitment of personnel for these services in rural areas need to be gradually raised. Until women of requisite higher qualifications are available, the present requirements may continue, but they should be reviewed and progressively increased after every 3 years. Attempts should also be made to obtain the services of older and mature women for these services in the rural areas.

(f) We further recommend the promotion of research in the field of female disorders e.g. puerperal psychosis and effects of family planning methods.

(g) We disapprove the denial of maternity benefits to women in Government service after three children as adopted by some State Government and recommend rescinding of such orders.

(h) We also recommend that mass campaigns for family planning should also aim to correct prevailing social attitudes regarding fertility and metabolic hereditary disorders and the sex of the child for which the women is generally blamed. Correct information in these matters would go a long way to improve the status of women (8.177).

48. Changes Needed in the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act:

(a) According to Section 4 (a) of the Act, consent of a minor girl is not required for this operation while in other surgical operations of children above 12 such consent is necessary. In our view this distinction is uncalled for and may lead to guardians compelling young girls to undergo this operation even when they do not want it. The consent of the patient should be essential. In the case of a minor girl nearing majority, if the doctor and the patient are in agreement, the consent of the guardian may be dispensed with. In all such cases, greater discretion should be permitted to the doctor (8.85).

(b) Sections 8 of the Act provides an overriding precaution to the doctor for any damage caused by the operation. Since no such protection is given for other operations, this seems an unnecessary clause and may lead to negligence. It may, therefore, be dropped (8.85).

(c) While we appreciate the ethical considerations which make many doctors reluctant to perform this operation, we feel that it is a woman's right to have control over the size of her family. At the same time it is important that doctors should have the authority to discourage such operations when they pose definite risk to the health of a patient. The condition being imposed in many hospitals that abortion will only be performed if the patient agrees to sterilisation, should not be compulsive. It would be far better to adopt methods of persuasion through expert counselling (8.80-81).

(d) The procedure and paper work involved in these operations need to be simplified. It is also necessary to extend facilities for authorized termination of pregnancies, particularly in the rural areas (8.83).

(e) Many hospitals continue to insist on the husband's consent before performing these operations though this is not required by the law. A special effort needs to be made to convince the medical profession of the social value of this law from the point of view both individuals and society (8.83).

(f) Most doctors are reluctant to perform these operations in the case of unmarried girls. It is necessary to clarify the point that rape is not the only ground to justify termination in cases of unmarried girls, nor is there any legal obligation on the doctor to inform the Police of an operation done in a rape case (8.84).

B. Welfare and Development

49. In order to prevent any ambiguity in the understanding of what constitutes women's welfare and to prevent the development of policies that sometimes go against the basic objectives, we recommend that the Government of India should evolve a national policy on women's development in the light of the constitutional directives and pledges made to the women of this country and to the international community from time to time (8.178).

50. In view of the need to maintain links between governmental, voluntary and community effort for promotion of women's welfare and to assist the process of Government planning with actual knowledge and experience of the problems and needs of women at different levels.

We recommend:

(a) Reorganisation of the Central Social Welfare Board as a statutory and autonomous specialized agency for planning, coordination and management of welfare and development programmes for women and children.

(b) Reorganisation of the State Social Welfare Advisory Boards as statutory autonomous agencies at the State level with similar functions. In addition, the State Boards may also serve as links between the Central agency, the State Government and the local bodies.

51. Need for Agencies for Coordination, Communication and Implementation of Measures to Improve the Status of Women (NOTE AFTER CHAPTER IX):

The U.N. Commission on the Status of Women in its 25th Report has recommended establishment of a National Commission or similar bodies "with a mandate to review, evaluate and recommend measures and priorities to ensure equality between men and women and the

full integration of women in all sectors of national life". We accordingly recommend the constitution of statutory autonomous Commissions at the Centre and the State with the following functions:

(a) Collection of information on different matters, e.g. education, employment, health, welfare, political participation, impact of social legislation, etc., with the right to call for information on different matters from the concerned agencies of the Government and to suggest improved methods for collection of data in different fields.

(b) Evaluation of existing policies, programmes and laws that have a bearing on status of women with the following powers:

(i) To ensure non-implementation of these measures;

(ii) To point out lacunae or deficiencies in such measures and suggest amendments.

The Commission's criticisms and suggestion made after due consultation with relevant Ministries or Departments of Government should be placed before Parliament or the State Legislatures. They would be answered by the Government within a stated period with explanation or assurances.

(c) Recommendations of new laws, policies or programmes aiming to implement the Directive Principles of

State Policy and the objectives of the U.N. Resolutions and Conventions regarding the status of women. These should be made to Parliament or the state Legislatures and Government will be statutorily responsible to consider such recommendations for action or to explain why they cannot be accepted.

(d) Redressal of grievances in cases of actual violation of existing laws.

The Commissions may be empowered to take effective steps to redress the grievances of affected parties.

Composition of the Commissions:

The composition of these Commissions should be broadbased, one category being selected for their representative status from different bodies like leading women's organisations, trade unions, legislatures, employers, etc., and the other group consisting of experts from the field of law, health, education, social research planning and administration. The Chairmen and the majority of the members of all the Commissions should be women. The Chairmen should be non-officials, but on a full time basis.

52. We further recommend the establishment of special Tribunals** for all violations of human rights, discrimination against women, violation or evasion of existing laws and policies for the protection of women and their rights in society.

**Shrimati, Urmila Haksar and Shrimati Sakina A. Hasan were not in favour of this decision.

BLUE PRINT OF ACTION POINTS AND NATIONAL PLAN OF ACTION FOR WOMEN

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI**

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BLUE PRINT OF ACTION POINTS

1. Legislative Measures

- 1.1 The existing legislations should be reviewed so that equality and social justice can be ensured to women of all communities and creeds. Where this involves amendments to existing personal Laws of minority group, initial efforts should be concentrated on arousing a desire for change from among the members of such minority groups. A vigorous campaign should be made to educate women about their rights, and to generate among all communities, a desire for a common civil code, to be achieved by the end of the U.N. Decade for Women in 1985.
- 1.2 Legal aid should be organised for women in need with the active assistance of the Bar Councils.
- 1.3 The setting up of family courts should be considered for speedy and effective adjudication in all cases concerning the family. Women, particularly in rural areas, should be protected against harassment.
- 1.4 The practice of dowry should be eradicated. The legislation should be strictly enforced. This is a social evil which requires sustained action not only on the part of Governmental agencies, but also on the part of voluntary organisations and public leaders.
- 1.5 The provisions of the existing Child Marriage Restraint Act should be reviewed. Special attention should be given to streamlining the enforcement machinery and involving local authorities and voluntary organisations in the implementation of the Act. Active public support should be mobilised by Governmental agencies, voluntary organisations and public leaders against child marriage, particularly in rural areas. Simultaneously, systematic programmes of education and training should be developed for girls till they marry.

2 Administrative Measures

Education:

- 2.1 Education is the greatest known catalytic agent

for social change. All out efforts should therefore be made to achieve the goal of universal primary education as early as possible. The ideas of equality between the sexes and participation by women in development should be woven into the fabric of the educational system.

- 2.2 The employment of women teachers should be actively promoted. The existing employment procedures, including those for part-time employment, should be reviewed and, where necessary, relaxations in age, etc., made so that more women teachers, can be employed, and husbands and wives are posted in the same schools or at the same station.
- 2.3 The content of education should be strengthened in terms of both life and work relevance. Attention should be given to vocationalisation and diversification of courses which should not only be limited to traditional women's vocations but also give emphasis on the preparation of women for participation in modern sectors of industrial production. Polytechnics (including mini-polytechnics) should be started for girls in the smaller urban centres to provide training facilities in trades crafts which will prompt self employment.
- 2.4 At the stage of higher education special incentives like freeships, scholarships, hostel facilities, and book loans should be made available to girls from rural, backward and hilly areas, from backward classes and from poor families. A greater diversification in the courses offered should be made to enhance work opportunities in non-traditional vocations in modern sectors of industrial production.
- 2.5 Adoption of multiple entry in education, non-formal part-time education facilities condensed courses for education correspondence courses and courses for continuing education should be made available in a larger measure to women in semi-urban and rural areas, and to working women in urban and semi-urban areas. Adult education and functional literacy programmes should be vigorously pursued through both official and voluntary agencies.

3. Employment

- 3.1 Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, has been passed, providing for the payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers and the prevention of discrimination on grounds of sex. Special steps should therefore be taken to review recruitment, promotion and other personnel practices in all public and private sector undertakings to ensure that there is no discrimination against women candidates. Women apprentices should be taken without discrimination in industries. Representatives of women's voluntary organisations should be associated in the machinery set up to ensure adequate participation of women in employment.
- 3.2 Village industries which provide scope for the employment of women should be further promoted. Special training services should be organised and credit, marketing facilities, etc. extended, specially in regard to crafts which can have a ready export market, through modernisation of design, etc. Integrated pilot projects to cover training, production and marketing should be started.
- 3.3 The existing recruitment procedures and employment conditions should be reviewed to encourage the re-entry of women into the work force. For this purpose, the provisions relating to maximum age of entry into service should be reviewed. Part-time employment of women should be promoted wherever feasible. Refresher courses and training programmes should be organised for adult women to make them fit for re-employment.
- 3.4 Organisations entrusted by the Government with the task of promoting self-employment opportunities should develop special women's entrepreneurial training motivation programmes and provide special assistance to women entrepreneurs and to women's co-operative in terms of credit, licensing, etc.
- 3.5 The existing legislation in regard to maternity benefits should be reviewed. It should simultaneously be ensured that there is no consequent adverse effect on the employment of women.

4. Health Care, Nutrition and Family Planning

- 4.1 Maternal and child health care facilities should be expanded, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas, and coverage provided to high risk pregnant women. Ante-natal and post-natal clinics should be started in every Primary Health Centre and district hospital.

- 4.2 Nutrition supplementation should be provided to high risk pregnant mothers. Simultaneously, nutrition and health education should be given to girls and to mothers through all available media and institutions (school, hospitals, PHCs, etc.)
- 4.3 Family welfare planning services should be expanded and measures intensified to educate and prepare couples to avail them, specifically in rural, backward and tribal areas. The facilities under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 should be made available in semi-urban and rural areas and information regarding the provisions disseminated among women, immunisation facilities should be gradually extended to all children.

Facilities of Working Women

- 4.4 The establishment of day care centres, creches, and balwadis should be promoted on a large scale in rural, semi-urban and urban areas to help working mothers and active women social workers discharge their duties, and enable the older children to attend school.
- 4.5 Hostel facilities for working women of the lower income groups should be expanded.

Care for the Socially Disadvantaged

- 4.6 Women without any means of support, and the physically handicapped should be provided services for education, training and rehabilitation so that they can become self-reliant. Old age homes should be opened for the aged and the infirm. Special programmes should be developed for unmarried mothers and their children
- 4.7 The provision of the Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act (1956) should be reviewed to facilitate their more efficient implementation. Comprehensive rehabilitation programmes for victims of immoral traffic and their children should be developed. Special steps should be taken to prevent vulnerable young girls and women from becoming victims of this social evil.

5. Promotion of Voluntary Effort

- 5.1 The growth of voluntary organisations, especially in rural, backward and tribal areas and in urban slums should be promoted to mobilise public sup-

port for different programmes of welfare Training facilities should be provided on a large scale to voluntary workers. Leadership training programmes, particularly for women from weaker sections, should be developed so that they can function effectively as agents of change. The establishment of Mahila Mandals should be promoted in every village so that they can function as field level agencies for social and economic transformation. Voluntary organisations have critical role in mobilising public opinion in favour of equality among men and women and eradicating superstitions, social evils and waste.

- 5.2 A vigorous campaign of education and action should be launched in favour of community sanitation and hygiene. Public utility services for women should be expanded wherever called for.

6. Machinery for Implementation

In order to ensure that the Resolution unanimously

passed by the two Houses of Parliament is acted upon and the implementation of the Plan of Action is ensured, it is proposed that:-

- (i) A Standing Advisory Committee should be set up at the national level which will review the progress every year so that a report is submitted to Parliament annually. The Committee may be called 'The National Committee on Women'.
- (ii) To service the above Committee a special bureau should be set up in the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare (Department of Social Welfare). The Bureau will keep in touch with the implementation of the various programmes by the Central Ministries, State Governments and non-official agencies.
- (iii) At the State level similar committees should be set up under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister. These Committees should also have adequate administrative support.

1. EDUCATION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In realisation of the importance of education in general and the need for equality in opportunities for the intellectual development of men and women, successive Five Year Plans have consistently placed special emphasis on the acceleration of women's education. The emphasis with regard to women's education has all along been to equip her for the multiple roles as citizens, house-wives, mothers, contributors to family income and builders of the new society. Efforts have been made during the past two decades of planned development to enrol more girls in school; to encourage girls to stay in schools; to continue their education as long as possible; and to provide non-formal education opportunities for women. The Draft Fifth Five Year Plan has declared that "the outlays for the education of girls will be stepped up.....". The fulfillment of the constitutional directive in respect of providing free and compulsory education upto the age of 14 years has been included as one of the components of the Minimum Needs Programme.

1.2 These efforts have had a significant impact on the progress of women's education in India. For example, there is a primary school within the easy walking distance from the home of almost all the children. This has resulted in an increase in the enrolment of girls in classes I-V as a percentage of total enrolment in these classes from 28.1 in 1950-51 to 37.6 in 1973-74. In respect of classes I-VIII, IX-XI/XII and university education also there has been an appreciable increase in the percentage of girls' enrolment to total enrolment, between the years 1950-51 and 1973-74 (see Table 1). In fact, girls' enrolment is observed to be growing at a faster rate than those of boys.²

1.3 Despite these encouraging trends and marked progress made in respect of women's education, the education status of women is still far from satisfactory for the following reasons:

(a) Literacy among women is generally lower than

that among men. According to the 1971 Census data, only 13.4 per cent of women in this age group of 25+ are literate. (Ref. Table 2).

- (b) enrolment of girls in classes I to V is only 66.4 per cent of girls in the corresponding age group, i.e. 6 to 11 years; while in respect of boys the relevant percentage is 100.2 (Ref. Table 3).
- (c) Drop-out rate is also very high in classes I to V. A recent study has shown that the drop-out rate especially accentuated in the case of girls from rural areas and from the less privileged sections of society, is as heavy as 42.85 per cent between classes I and II.
- (d) In classes VI to VIII, percentages of enrolment of girls and boys to the total girls and boys in the relevant age group (i.e., 11 to 14 years) are 22.2 and 48.3, respectively (Ref. Table 3).
- (e) At the secondary stage, i.e. classes IX to XI/XII girls enrolled constitute only 12 per cent of girls in the relevant age group 14 to 17 years as against 31 per cent in respect of the enrolment of boys in this age group (Ref. Table 3).
- (f) Enrolment of girls in Post-Matric classes constitutes only 2.3 per cent of girls in the concerned age group 17 to 23 years; while the enrolment percentage of boys in this age group is 7.5 (Ref. Table 3).

2. FACTORS RETARDING THE PROGRESS OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION

2.1 Girls and women in India have thus not been able to take full advantage of the available opportunities/facilities for intellectual development. This is mainly because of several social and cultural factors in addition to various other reasons. Action plans and strategies for women's

1. Ref. Draft Fifth Five Year Plan 1974-79 Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi 1974. P. 197

2. Ibid Draft Fifth Five Year Plan P.197.

education should, therefore, aim at neutralising the effects of the factors which have retarded the progress of women's education in India. With a view to facilitating the formulation of such a plan of action, in what follows, some of the major reasons which have operated against girls/women in taking full advantage of educational opportunities/facilities are listed below:

- (a) General indifference to education of girls.
- (b) Social resistance arising out of fears and misconceptions that education might alienate girls from traditions and social values and lead to mal-adjustments, conflicts and non-conformism.
- (c) Early marriage and social inhibitions against girls pursuing education after marriage.
- (d) Prevalence of child labour among girls belonging to weaker sections and the hard domestic chores which some of the unmarried girls—even in the middle class families—are required to perform.¹
- (e) The prevailing notion that the sole occupation of women is to bear children, look after her husband and children, and thus be restricted to domestic work.
- (f) Discrimination effected by employers against women labour in both organised and unorganised sectors in matters of recruitment, training and promotion.
- (g) Many girls and their parents find that the school curriculum do not conform adequately to their needs and interests.
- (h) Unsuitable and inflexible school timings and inadequate facilities for girls in schools, particularly in the co-educational schools.

3. MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION

3.1 It should be recognised here that the general objective of any policy towards women's education cannot be different from those relating to men. However, in view of the social and cultural handicaps that have operated

against women in general and in view of the multiple role that women are required to play, the need for a set of objectives specific to women's education is imperative. The following major objectives are, therefore, considered here :—

- (a) Prepare women to fully participate in socially productive work, fully aware of family planning needs with a view to achieving her full integration with the democratic and developmental efforts of the country.
- (b) Help break down overt covert biases against women.
- (c) Make women aware of the various legal, social and economic rights, provisions and privileges available to them and the way they can take advantage of them, for their advancement.
- (d) Enable women to be self-reliant to achieve economic independence.
- (e) Import the idea of equality between the sexes and participation by women in development through the educational system.
- (f) And above all, to find full expression for her talent, ability and personality and for this purpose, enable her to adopt a discriminating attitude so that she can escape the bonds of superstition and obscurantism.

4. ACTION PLANS

4.1 Action plans here are evolved within the general framework of major objectives mentioned above. In addition, the action plans have taken into consideration other objectives which are specific of educational categories like elementary education, middle stage education, secondary stage education, university education and non-formal education. For the sake of convenience, in what follows, action plans specific of each age-groups of girls, are all mentioned separately.

A. ELEMENTARY EDUCATION— GIRLS IN THE AGE-GROUP 6—11 YEARS

4.2 Girls in this age-group constitute the population of

³ According to the 1971 Census 2.56 per cent of girls in the age group 0-14 years constitute child workers.
2. Social Welfare/80

girls of *primary school* going age. Action plans for this age-group will need to be in two directions:

- (a) To universalise primary education for girls, and
- (b) To strive for the retention of girls already enrolled.

Towards this end, the following action plans are suggested:

Administrative and Structural Measures

- (i) State Governments should take note of the habitations without primary schools as indicated by the Third Educational Survey and make arrangements for providing primary school within a distance of 1.5 kms. of all habitations within next five years.
- (ii) Mobile schools should be provided for children of all nomadic tribes, migrant labour and construction workers.
- (iii) Girls in this age are often required to look after younger children and attend minor household duties, particularly in the rural areas and among the weaker sections of the society. As this is one of the major reasons that holds such girls from attending school, special efforts should be made to enlarge the scope and coverage of pre-school education programmes like *balwadis* and *anganwadis*, where the older girls can be given practical work experience and child care.
- (iv) These pre-school education programmes should, wherever possible, be attached to primary schools or at least located in the vicinity of primary schools, as that would help in cultivating a school going habit right from the childhood.
- (v) Supervision and inspection of primary schools should give particular attention to the problem of enrolment of girls, their retention, involvement of the community, etc.

Promotional and Motivational Measures

- (vi) Special and sustained persuasive and motivational campaign and organisational drives should be undertaken among regions/communities which have shown markedly a low achievement in girls enrolment. Voluntary organisations

at local level like Mahila Mandals and local bodies should be fully involved in this programme.

- (vii) Promotion and support to girls' education should also be tackled through a multi-pronged programme of incentives—both for bringing girls to schools and for retaining them in schools. The incentives can be in the form of mid-day meals, free supply of books and reading materials, scholarships awards, etc. Active collaboration of voluntary organisations may be sought in this regard.

Pedagogical Measures

- (viii) The primary teacher training course should undergo a major revision with a view to adequately preparing the teacher for the promotion of girls' education. Emphasis should be more on the use of such non-formal methods of imparting education that would interest and attract more and more girls to attend schools.

B. EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IN THE AGE GROUP 11—14 YEARS

4.3 Population of girls in this age-group constitutes girls of middle school going age. This group can be divided into three sub-groups:-

- (a) Girls students attending middle schools;
- (b) Girl drop-outs at various stages from Classes I to V;
- (c) Girls who have never attended schools.

The objectives of education and training are different for each of the sub-groups.

(a) Middle School—Girl Students

Action plans for education of girls in this age-group should be concerned about:—

- (i) encouraging further enrolment of girls at this stage,
- (ii) retention of girls already in middle schools, and
- (iii) rendering the curriculum more relevant.

The following action plans are suggested:—

Pedagogical Measures

- (i) The content should be more oriented to the needs of girls in the village communities so that

both the parents and the girls see relevance of this education for their own lives. The curriculum of the middle school stage needs to be given a strong work experience orientation, introducing girls to crafts and skills which will be of direct use to them in the family, community and farm, and help them in rural employment and self-employment. It should also introduce girls to scientific knowledge, principles of home-making, family life education, nutrition and diet, environment education and civic education.

- (ii) *Women Teachers:* It is very important for the promotion of girls' education to employ women teachers in schools. In fact, the general view is that women are more suited to be teachers and larger number of teachers should be women. However, the problem may come up in different ways. More number of men may be qualified and trained women may not be in a position to accept employment as full time teachers due to personal problems; women also have difficulties in working in rural areas. There has to be relaxation from age restrictions. The States may consider reserving a certain number of posts of teachers for women and where there are not adequate number of trained teachers, untrained persons may be recruited and deputed for training. The question of giving posting to husband and wife both of whom are teachers in the same place may be considered.

It may also be worth while in those areas which have schools without women teachers, to select educated women in that area and send them for training and appoint them in the schools in that area. Where educated women are not available for posting in a school, local women may be selected and posted as school *matas* (school mothers) to keep the girl students company and induce parents to send their girls and children to schools. The rules relating to age and qualification of recruitment and service may have to be relaxed in these cases and the deficiency made up through in-service training.

Women should not be discriminated against in matters of recruitment. Selection and recruitment should be made on merit. No qualified meritorious woman candidate should be overlooked. State Governments may contemplate providing for 50 per cent of teachers in schools being women and to look into this aspect while sanctioning grants to institutions.

In single teacher institutions (the exact position will be brought out by the Third Educational Survey), it may be desirable to ensure that where there are two teachers, one of them should be a woman. If locally educated women are available, they can be recruited. Husband-wife teams can be posted.

- (iii) The primary teacher training course needs to undergo a major revision to adequately prepare the trainees for their special responsibility for the promotion of girls' education in rural areas, especially in adapting the content to suit the needs and interests of girls, in adopting non-formal methodologies and in linking with community and developmental activities.
- (iv) Supervision and inspection of schools should give particular attention to the problem of enrolment of girls, their retention, factors contributing to wastage and stagnation, relevation of curriculum, involvement of the community, working conditions of women teachers, etc.

Promotional and Motivational Measures

- (v) School timings should be flexible, as many of the girls in this age group are required to help their mothers in routine domestic chores.
- (vi) Adoption of multiple entry and part-time courses is recommended.
- (vii) Incentives like mid-day meals, scholarships, free school uniforms, free books and study materials, stipend, awards, etc. should be extended to all girls in the rural areas and slums in the urban areas.

(b) Middle School—Girl Drop-outs

Alternative Measures

- (viii) For School drop-outs of girls, pre-vocational training programmes should be organised on an extensive scale to cover all girls in the rural areas and in the slums of urban areas. The objectives of such training should be to render them self-sufficient in home management, and help them to achieve economic independence. With this in view, such training programmes should include courses in sewing, knitting, cooking, nutrition, minor repairs of the house, motherhood, child care, etc.
- (c) **Girls who never attended Schools.**
- (ix) For the non-student girls in this age group, the

objective should be to provide adequate preparation in life through a combined three-year course in general education and vocational training. Vocational training should be on the lines of pre-vocational training mentioned above.

- (x) Such training programmes should be extended to all girls in the rural areas. In the urban areas, preference should be given to girls in slum areas and destitute girls.

C. EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IN THE AGE GROUP 14-17 YEARS

4.4 Girls in this age-group also can be classified into three groups:-

- (a) Girl students with motivation to attend secondary school;
 (b) Girl drop-outs from classes VI to VIII.
 (c) Non-student girls, i.e., students who never attended schools.

(a) Girl Students

The action plans under this category should emphasise more on:-

- (i) facilitating more girls to pursue education at the secondary stage, and
 (ii) strengthening the content in terms of both life and work relevance.

The following action plans are suggested:-

Administrative and Structural Measures

- (i) Separate girls schools or separate sections should be started where the social/cultural environment demands them.
 (ii) In co-education schools special attention should be given to the provision of adequate toilet, rest and recreation facilities, separately for girls.
 (iii) State Governments which have not yet made high school education free for girls should do so on a priority basis.
 (iv) Multiple entry system and part-time education may be provided.

Promotional and Motivational Measures

- (v) All courses of training in vocational and technical schools at the secondary stage should be open

to both boys and girls. There should be no discrimination in this regard.

- (vi) Liberal incentives in the form of book allowances, book-bank facilities, etc., should be extended to encourage more girls in rural areas and backward areas to pursue secondary education.
 (vii) Separate hostel facilities should be provided particularly in rural areas and residential scholarships should be offered.

Pedagogical Measures

- (viii) The curriculum should be more diversified taking into consideration the various occupational opportunities available to women and the interests and aptitudes of girls.

(b) Girl Drop-outs

Alternative Measures

- (ix) Condensed courses of education started in 1958 were found very useful. Under this scheme women in the age-group 13-30 years who have had some schooling are prepared for middle school, matriculation or equivalent examinations within a period of 2 years' duration. The minimum age limit here should be reduced to 15 years. This scheme should be extended to cover all rural areas and weaker sections of the urban community.

- (x) The condensed course should be organised for smaller groups, say 5 to 7 persons, using the community resources like girls' high schools and girls' colleges.

- (xi) Apart from imparting general education, condensed course should also aim at imparting job-oriented training with the active co-operation of existing vocational training institutions.

- (xii) Correspondence courses and self-study programmes may be introduced.

- (xiii) Efforts should be made to cover at least about 215 lakhs of girls in the age group 15-30 under the condensed courses programme during the Fifth Plan period.

(c) Non-student Girls

- (xiv) Fourth Plan introduced a programme of functional literacy with the objective of imparting elementary general education and vocational training-related to the functions performed- to men and women in the rural areas who never attended schools. This programme should be expanded to cover all rural areas.
- (xv) Apart from imparting general elementary education and knowledge about farming techniques, the curriculum for women should include courses of training in occupational skills like kitchen, gardening, food processing, poultry keeping, animal husbandry; household arts like cooking nutritional values of foods locally available, sewing, knitting etc, and motherhood, child care and family planning as also electronics and like fields.
- (xvi) Similar programmes should also be designed for girls in this age-group and under this category belonging to urban areas.

D. EDUCATION FOR GIRLS IN THE AGE GROUP 17 YEARS AND ABOVE

4.5 Education for girls in this age group also can be divided into three groups, as in the case of other age groups-

- (a) Education for girls at the higher education stage.
- (b) Education for girl drop-outs from the educational system beyond the secondary stage.
- (c) Education for non-student girls—girls who who never had any education.

In respect of the last category here, i.e. education for non-student girls, action plans are the same as those concerning non-student girls in the age group 14-17 years. Hence, this category is not dealt with separately here.

(a) Education for Girls at the Higher Education Stage

Action plans in this area should aim at-

- (a) Making higher education available to the less privileged sections of the society, particularly girls from the rural areas; and

- (b) Making the curriculum more relevant and responsive to the cultural and occupational needs of women

The following action plans may be taken up for consideration:-

Administrative and Structural Measures

- (i) The general policy here should be to discourage separate institutions for women and to promote co-educational facilities. However, in areas where separate institutions are required to promote education of women, they may be permitted on the merits of such cases.
- (ii) Vocational counselling and guidance services should be organised in a more meaningful way to help girls—in college and universities—opt for suitable courses relevant to their talent, interests and needs.

Promotional and Motivational Measures

- (iii) Incentives like scholarships, freeships, etc., should be provided to enable girls from rural areas to pursue higher education.
- (iv) For girls belonging to weaker sections, in addition to freeships and scholarships, bursaries should also be provided to meet their expenses on food and lodging.
- (v) Provision of self-cooking facilities in hostels for girls should also be considered.
- (vi) Girls pursuing higher education should be provided easy access to text-books and other reference material through book-bank facilities.
- (vii) Girls should be encouraged to enter professional courses. If necessary, reservation of seats for girls in professional courses may be considered.

Pedagogical Measures

- (viii) Diversification of courses at the junior college level and undergraduate level should be undertaken on a priority basis with a view to preparing the girls for the various employment opportunities open to them.

(b) Education for Girl Drop-outs

Girls in this age group drop-out of educational system for various reasons. Marriage is one of the reasons which force girls in this age group to discontinue further formal education. Economic hardship is another reason which forces some girls to drop-out and seek jobs, with a view to supporting their families. Social prejudices and cultural attitudes also force some of the girls to leave the formal educational system. For girls in this category, therefore, the policy should be to extend non-formal educational facilities on a large scale.

The following action plans are suggested:-

- (i) Facilities for part-time self-study and correspondence courses should be expanded on a large scale to enable working girls and non-working-married and unmarried girls to enhance their educational qualifications.
- (ii) In addition to course leading to degree/diploma, short courses in specific subjects through summer schools/sessions, ad hoc programmes like seminars, laboratory work, workshop experience, etc., should be organised for working girls, with a view to upgrading their professional skills and qualifications. Facilities for further education not necessarily leading to a degree, but for upgradation of knowledge and skills could be provided.
- (iii) While the initiative for organising such programmes should be taken by the Central and State Governments, the employees should also be increasingly involved.
- (iv) Pre-examination training facilities should be organised on a large scale for educated women from the rural areas and those belonging to weaker sections with the objective of equipping them to successfully compete in examinations for public jobs.
- (v) Entrepreneurship development programmes should be organised separately for educated women in the age group 18-30 years with a minimum of matriculation level of education.

The objective of such training programmes should be-

- (a) Make them aware of the various opportunities for self-employment;
- (b) Motivate them to take up self-employment;
- (c) Impart needed skills/training; and
- (d) Promote achievement motivation among them.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

4.6 To make the various action plans successful and to achieve a real breakthrough in women's education, there is urgent need for a matching and effective administrative set up, both at the central and state Levels. With this in view, the following suggestions are made:—

- (i) In the Union Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, a special unit/cell may be set up to be in charge of women's education to review and initiate follow-up action.
- (ii) In each State education department, a senior officer should be placed in charge of girls' education in order that it may receive adequate emphasis, execution and co-ordination.
- (iii) As the district is the operational unit for all educational programmes and as the needs of girls vary in extent and kind from area to area within a district, a separate cell for girls' education—formal and non-formal—may be created within the purview of the district educational officer at the district headquarters.
- (iv) School supervisory system should be staffed with more women.
- (v) A suitable machinery may be set up at the Centre and the States to help in the formulation of plans for women's education—formal and non-formal—to monitor, co-ordinate and evaluate progress of women's education from time to time, to create public opinion in favour of women's education etc.

II—HEALTH FAMILY PLANNING AND NUTRITION

5. INTRODUCTION

5.1 As recognised in the Fifth Year Plan, "even with expanded employment opportunities, the poor will not be able, with their level of earnings, to buy for themselves all the essential goods and services which should figure in any reasonable concept of a minimum standard of living. The measures for providing larger employment and income to the poorer sections will therefore, have to be supplemented up to at least certain minimum standard, by social consumption and investment in the form of education, health, nutrition, drinking water, housing, communication and electricity."⁴ In terms of health and nutrition, the Fifth Plan has, therefore, defined its primary objective as "providing minimum health facilities integrated with family planning and nutrition for vulnerable groups—children, pregnant women and lactating mothers"⁵. The strategy is to consolidate past gains in the various fields of health such as communicable diseases medical education and provision of infrastructure in the rural area; and increasingly to integrate family planning services with health, maternity and child health (MCH) and nutrition activities.

5.2 The Fifth Plan has paid special attention to providing health services for pregnant women and lactating mother. However, as the intent here is to develop a comprehensive plan of action in respect of women, it is necessary to emphasise—

(a) The problems/areas of concern in respect of women in India;

(b) The goals and objectives—long term as well as short term—which will best overcome the problems.

6. In this regard the following major problems/areas of concern are identified:

(i) *Unfavourable sex ratio in respect of women:*

The decennial census from 1901 to 1971 have shown a steady declining sex ratio. From 972 women per thousand males in 1901, the sex ratio has declined to 930 women per thousand males in 1971. Such a phenomenon is observed only in very few countries, besides India.

(ii) *Lower life expectancy for women:*

The expectation of life at birth for women is lower than males in India.⁶ In most other countries and particularly in the developed countries the expectation of life for women is observed to be higher than for man.

(iii) *Higher death rates among women:*

It is observed that more girls die than boys among infants and children. A distinctly higher death rate is also observed among women during the period of reproduction. Indeed the female death rate seems to be higher than the male death rate in almost all age groups except after the age of 45.⁷

7. The problems identified above are mainly due to the following reasons:

(a) Ignorance and prejudices inherent in the social and cultural milieu.

(b) High prevalence of diseases, and poor environmental sanitation.

(c) Repeated child bearing in quick succession leading to maternal depletion.

- (d) Lack of proper knowledge with regard to the available family planning and health care facilities.
- (e) Low level nutrition, particularly among the poorer sections of the rural masses.
- (f) Female illiteracy.

8. The causes mentioned above are not exhaustive. Also they are not mutually exclusive and hence interactions among the causes listed are not ruled out. However, they help considerably in identifying a national strategy for women with reference to Health, Family Planning and Nutrition. A broad set of goals/objectives which constitute such a strategy could be as follows:

- (i) Change our attitudes to provide prompt and adequate medical care for girls.
- (ii) Prepare girls for better motherhood.
- (iii) Reduce infant and child mortality of girls.
- (iv) Reduce maternal mortality.
- (v) Ensure adequate maternal health care, pre-natal, natal and post-natal.
- (vi) Ensure proper knowledge and services for family planning.
- (vii) Provision of basic health and nutrition services for girls and women.
- (viii) Raise the level of literacy and education among women.

9. Plans of action to make these goals a reality will have to cover a wide spectrum of programmes for providing medical care, prevention health service, family planning and nutrition services for creating awareness, acceptance and demand for such services in the target group through education, etc. Further, such plans of action will have to be well integrated with the strategy as emphasised in the Fifth Plan. Ideally, it is desirable to identify a set of action plans for each goal/objective or a group of goals/objectives. However, it is not possible to attempt such an exercise because of the unavoidable overlapping among the affects of various action plans that can be conceived.

10. With this in view, the various action plans visualised

are grouped under the following broad categories of action:-

- I. Provision of Services.
- II. Development of needed Human Resources.
- III. Mass Education Programmes.
- IV. Legislative Measures.
- V. Role of Voluntary Organisations.
- VI. Areas of Research.

11. In what follow, details of action plans under each broad category will be outlined.

1. Provision of Services

Women as a member of the family is a beneficiary of the health services offered to the community as a whole. However, infrastructure for delivering health, family planning and nutrition service is not the same in rural and urban areas. In the rural areas, health, family planning and nutrition services are provided through the primary health centres (PHC) complex one PHC for every National Extension Services (NES) Block of about 80,000 to 100,000 population with a net-work of sub-centres at the rate of one for every 10,000 population. The PHC provides medical care, maternal and child health services, family planning services, control of communicable disease, health and nutrition education, environmental sanitation, and health and vital statistical collection. The PHC also has provision of a minimum of 6 beds for giving inpatient medical care. In addition to providing inpatient and clinic services, domiciliary services, are also provided, especially for women and children.

The current plan also envisages that one out of every four primary health centres will be upgraded to become 30 bedded hospitals. The upgraded PHCs will provide improved medical, surgical, and maternal and child health care. Further, it also serves as the referral hospital for the PHCs complex in its neighbourhood.

Besides, the PHC complex sponsored by the Government of India, the State governments run hospitals and dispensaries which provide medical care only, without any extension services.

In addition to the Government institutions, private medical practitioners practising in the different systems of medicine augment the medical care facilities in the rural areas.

The Fifth Plan has emphasised the need for delivering a package of services to the rural community through multi-purpose workers. The idea is to transform various single purpose health programmes like eradication of smallpox, malaria, etc., into a type of worker competent to cater to the total health needs of the community. Under this multi-purpose workers' programme, women workers will be primarily responsible for providing maternal and child health services, while male workers will attend to the public health programmes. A tier of supervisory workers—men and women—to supervise the work of multi-purpose workers is also contemplated. When the concept is materialised it is expected that there would be a team of two workers for every 8,000 population, to start with. Through such a programme, eventually, the population coverage by a sub-centre is expected to be reduced to 5,000.

Infrastructure for the delivery of health care in the tribal areas is identical to that of rural areas. However, the population covered by each PHC is less than that in the rural areas. Yet, the infrastructure provided is not adequate because of low density of population in the tribal areas. Also, there is no concept of village in the tribal areas, as group of houses are scattered over the entire area

In respect of urban areas various agencies like Government institutions, institutions maintained by the local bodies and voluntary agencies cater to health care—thus urban areas are better covered than rural areas. However, as in the case of rural areas, there is no specific norm for the coverage in urban areas.

Present practice in PHCs and hospitals is to run an out-patient department (OPD) catering to all categories of patients—men, women and children. This practice obviously cannot provide special health care for children and women particularly, pregnant women. In view of this the following action plans are suggested:

- (i) Identifiable special services for children should be provided in all types of medical and health institutions like cottages, hospitals PHCs etc.
- (ii) Similarly, there should be special identifiable services for women in all types of institutions.

- (iii) The approach to maternal health should be to concentrate on giving care to pregnant mothers and identify the "High-Risk" mothers for specialised care at appropriate institutions. This would mean starting regular ante-natal clinics at least at each PHC.
- (iv) Majority of child births take place in the homes and are attended to by the traditional village midwife (dai) or by elderly women in the house. It is not expected that this pattern will change in the foreseeable future nor is it recommended that we should attempt to change it. Till such time as sufficient number of trained A.N.Ms. are provided to cater to the needs of entire population, efforts should be in the direction of making effective use of existing system for maternity care.,
- (v) It is accepted that the existing infrastructure in the rural areas is not adequate for giving proper health, family planning and nutritional services for women. In this regard, it may be recalled that the Bhore Committee had recommended in 1946 that for effective coverage each PHC complex should be expected to cater to a population of about 25,000 to 30,000. A sub-centre in its turn can then be expected to provide adequate health care to a population around 3,000. Efforts should be made to implement these recommendations fully.
- (vi) In view of the geographical characteristics of tribal population, the norm for tribal health care should be based on area covered rather than population covered. In this regard, attempts should be made to provide a sub-centre within a radius of 5 kms and a PHC within the vicinity of every 10 sub-centres.
- (vii) After the child birth neither the family nor the health organisation pays due attention to the mother's health. During the period, immediately following child birth, the health and nutrition of women should be closely watched. For this purpose, regular postnatal clinics should be run at all hospitals and PHCs.
- (viii) Preventive programmes to reduce the morbidity should be undertaken on a large scale. Every new-born child should be protected at least against small pox, tuberculosis, diphtheria,

whooping cough, tetanus and poliomyelitis by giving them the required immunisation.

- (ix) The policy enunciated in the fifth Plan to integrate family planning with general health services should be implemented fully.
- (x) Responsibility for family planning should not be confined to those institutions employed in any special family planning schemes or projects. This should be the general responsibility of all institutions and personnel employed therein.
- (xi) Family Planning advice and conventional contraceptives should be provided through all the PHCs, dispensaries, hospitals, maternity & Child health (MCH) centres, etc.
- (xii) Under-nutrition and mal-nutrition are problems undermining the health of girls and women. However the health institutions generally do not provide any special nutrition services. There should be well equipped and staffed nutrition clinics attached to all hospitals and PHCs catering to women and children. Such clinics will give nutrition education supported by practical demonstrations as well as deal with diseases of nutritional origin.
- (xiii) There is no school health programme in the Fifth Plan. It is necessary to organise school health programmes to cover the children enrolled in primary schools, to start with, and extended to the middle and secondary school in a phased manner.

II. Development of the needed Human Resources

Mere provision of health, family planning and nutrition services are not enough for rendering health care delivery effective in respect of women and children, particularly, in the rural areas. It also calls for simultaneous reorientation of the various skill generation process which provide the needed human resources to man all types of services. Currently, it is a general feeling that the under graduate curriculum in medical colleges emphasis is more on curative treatment and it does not equip the under-graduates sufficiently to deal with the health problems of the rural community. Also the training programmes of ANMs are mainly directed towards meeting the requirements of Government programmes only and as such, no effort is made to promote self employment among workers in this

category. Further no effort is made to effectively use the traditional village birth attendants (dais). With imaginative re-training programmes it is felt that the village dais can be made to render the mid-wifery services more effectively. There is, therefore, the need for the following training and re-training programmes for various categories of health manpower, particularly, those involved in health care delivery for women and children.

- (i) The under-graduate curriculum in the medical colleges for teaching maternal and child health should be reviewed and modified suitably particularly to deal with health problems of women and children in the rural areas.
- (ii) As the reviewing of teaching in medical colleges is a long-term measure, until such time as doctors effectively trained in MCH are made available to all the hospitals and PHCs, in the intervening period all the doctors who are working in various Government hospitals and PHCs should be given a re-orientation in MCH to make them capable of giving better health care to women and children in the rural areas. This course should also be made obligatory for all doctors working in such institutions.
- (iii) The peripheral worker for maternal and child health care is the ANM. The present policy is to train this category of workers to meet the requirement of the Government programmes only. ANMs should be trained in a large number as possible so that besides serving in the Government health services, they would also be available to be self-employed and thus provide skilled maternity care to the community.
- (iv) Para-professional and semi-professional workers from the community should be trained to provide simple promotive, preventive and curative health services needed by the community. Young persons, elementary school teachers, educated and willing house-wives should form part of the pool and these services should be planned to cover the entire country by the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan.
- (v) The Government of India has sponsored the training of traditional birth attendants (dais) from the Second Plan period onwards. The training has been maintained at a very slow pace. It is necessary to step-up the pace of this training programme.

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- (vi) Suitable incentives should be offered to make the training acceptable to the dais.
- (vii) Awareness should be created among the community regarding the dangers associated with accepting services from un-trained dais with a view to exercising community pressure on the dais to receive the needed training. The training should be so organised that there would be at least one trained dai in every village by the end of the Sixth Plan period.
- (viii) There are text books on obstetrics and gynaecology and paediatrics written by Indian authors. However, there are no books dealing with the common problems of maternal and child health which face the general practitioners in the community. A low-priced book on maternal and child health care should be published to serve as a reference book for doctors working in all the PHCs Government hospitals, etc.
- (ix) Similar manual or hand-book should be developed for the use of peripheral workers like the ANM.

III. Mass Education Programme

It is commonly agreed that many of the problems relating to health and nutrition deficiencies among women and children are due to lack of knowledge with regard to the facilities available in the field of health family planning and nutrition. Also, the common practices inherent in the social and cultural milieu come in the way of utilising effectively some of the existing facilities. There is, therefore, an urgent need for undertaking mass education programmes to create awareness among general public, particularly in the rural areas and motivate them to use the existing services effectively. In this regard the following education programmes are contemplated:

- (i) The formal education given to girls through the school system should aim to prepare them for better motherhood. This would mean that they should be taught subjects like personal and environmental hygiene, human physiology, food and nutrition, mother and child health care, population problems and family planning. The inclusion of such subjects in the syllabus should be done by the Education Department.
- (ii) Till such time as the full coverage of education

programme is achieved and large drop-out of girls is minimised, other media of education and information dissemination will have to be emphasised. For example, hospitals and PHCs should organise regular courses of instructions for pregnant mothers covering various aspects like diet and hygiene in pregnancy, preparation for child birth, breast feeding, child care and family planning. Fathers should also be encouraged to attend such courses and these should be run regularly throughout the year. Films/film strips and other educational material should be made available to the institutions concerned.

- (iii) Courses of instructions covering health, family planning and nutrition should be organised for extension workers of other Government Departments like Gram Sewaks, Bal Sewikas, Teachers, Agricultural Extension Workers, etc. Similar courses should also be organised for community leaders, organisers of Mahila Mandals, etc.
- (iv) Education programmes through mass media like radio, satellite, TV, and posters should be organised to create awareness among the community on the health problems and needs of girls and women, as also on the available services in the area to ensure greater community participation and utilisation of services.
- (v) Illustrated pamphlets and brochures in regional languages covering these subjects should also be freely distributed through all extension workers. A hand-book on maternal and child health care for general readership should be produced in all regional languages.

IV. Legislative Measures

There are areas in which legal provisions could help considerably in improving the health status of women and children. In what follows, some of these areas are highlighted:

- (i) *Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971:*

The Act has been envisaged as a health measure for women to protect them from the dangers inherent in getting unwanted pregnancy terminated stealthily by unqualified practitioners. There is a need to disseminate information regarding the provisions under this act among women. Further, the

facility required under the Act should be provided through medical institutions not only in urban areas—as is done at present but also through the institutions in semi-urban and rural areas.

(ii) *Age at Marriage of Women:*

The present statutory minimum age of marriage of girls under the Child Marriages Restraint Act is 15. There are instances of girls being married younger. Early marriages and early pregnancies lead to greater pregnancy wastage, higher incidence of infant as well as maternal mortality. Though the age at marriage has been rising over the decades it has been very slow and there are regional differences. The age at marriage of women in several developed as well as developing countries has been above 20. The average age at marriage of girls in India is one of the lowest in the world. It is in the interest of the health and welfare of the mother and child and to plan a family responsibly that women attain adequate maturity before they marry and beget children. It is recommended that the statutory age at marriage for girls be raised from 15 to 18 and it may be more strictly enforced.

(iii) *Curb Advertisement of Baby Foods:*

The manufacturers of baby foods put forth grossly exaggerated claims for their products in their advertisements through the mass media. They often mislead mothers belonging to the middle and lower income groups who can ill afford such high priced commercial foods. Yet, they go after them because of the advertisements, and on account of the frivolous prestige and social status implied. This leads to neglect of breast feeding and use of traditional home-made foods for babies. The cumulative results of this is very often, faulty feeding of infants leading to malnutrition and diarrhoea contributing to illness and death among infants. The provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act should be evoked, to prevent manufacturers of commercial baby foods from making exaggerated, unwarranted and misleading claims for their products

(iv) *Provisions of Maternal and Child Health Services in Municipalities and Local Bodies :*

Women living in urban towns have special problems on account of the congested poor housing,

nuclear families, working status, etc. Provision of maternity and child health services should be made obligatory for Municipalities/Local Bodies.

(v) *Regulation of the Practice of Midwifery by Unqualified Traditional Birth Attendants :*

The Nurses and Midwives Act requires that all those who practice midwifery should be registered. However the provisions of this Act are not strictly enforced to cover unqualified midwives—particularly dais. If there is no clause, under the Act, for regularising the unqualified practising midwives, the Act should be amended accordingly and enforced strictly.

V. Role of Voluntary Organisations

Women voluntary organisations are best suited for motivation in the field of health family planning and nutrition. There is, therefore, every need for creating a conducive climate for the functioning of such institutions, so that they can render the needed service effectively. The following measures are suggested in this regard:

- (i) Women organisations working with a missionary zeal in the field of maternity care and child health should be given all legitimate assistance by the Central and the State Governments for carrying on the work, both in the shape of grants-in-aid and MCH supplies.
- (ii) Voluntary organisations are also involved in the training of health manpower, particularly women workers. Such programmes should be further encouraged and regularised.
- (iii) Voluntary organisations are currently involved in providing school health. Such services should be encouraged by providing the necessary assistance in terms of resources—men and materials.
- (iv) The women in slum areas in cities form a significant segment of the urban population. Women voluntary organisations should be assisted in rendering proper motivational and health services to this type of population.
- (v) The services of voluntary organisations should be utilised in the dissemination of relevant health and family planning information to the women

so that they are kept informed from time to time of the developments in this field and the facilities available.

- (vi) Women voluntary organisations should be effectively used to function as liaison between the Government and the community, particularly in the matter of rendering MCH services, and also in enforcing the provisions of the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act.
- (vii) Women voluntary organisations should be involved in conducting surveys, research studies etc. in areas relevant to the health care of women and children.

VI. Areas of Research

In addition to several plans of action envisaged above there is every need for augmenting the information available in the field of health, family planning and nutrition through the following research studies:

- (i) The data available at present regarding maternal morbidity and mortality are based on hospital statistics and hence are of limited value. The system of registration of vital events is also incomplete. It is suggested that periodic special surveys be undertaken to study the pattern and causes of mortality and morbidity among

women and female children. The studies should cover different communities and different regions. Such studies would also provide information on the relative value of age-structure, parity and other "High Risk" factors in the delivery of the maternity services.

- (ii) Practical service-oriented field studies should be undertaken to assess the felt needs of the community and their attitudes towards the services offered, with a view to providing guidelines for framing health policy decisions relating to the delivery of maternal care and family planning services.
- (iii) Studies should be conducted on the inter-relationship between pattern of family formation, nutrition, health and causes and incidence of sterility.
- (iv) Studies into attitudes, beliefs and practice of traditional birth attendants (dais) should be made to improve upon the training programme now designed for them and to obtain their greater participation in maternity and family planning services.
- (v) The base line data will have to be established first against which the impact of this plan of action could be measured.

III EMPLOYMENT

12. INTRODUCTION

12.1 The Constitution guarantees equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment and directs the State to secure equal rights to an adequate means of livelihood, equal pay for equal work and just and humane conditions of work. The impact of transition to a modern economy has resulted in the exclusion of an increasing number of women from active participation in the productive process and only a limited recognition of their contribution and ability to contribute⁸. The factors which have caused such an exclusion need to be examined and corrective action and supportive measures initiated to ensure equal opportunity in the economic process "which would enable women to play their full and proper role in building up the nation"⁹.

12.2 Fuller economic participation has to be understood then, in the context of human rights and social justice, utilization of human resources¹⁰, bridging economic disparities and providing the impetus for social and economic change towards an equality of 'status'¹¹.

13. PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT

13.1 As stated in the Approach Paper to the Fifth Plan, the employment policy must aim at expanding both wage employment and self-employment and raising their productivity to achieve both economic growth and reduction in inequality¹². The policy in regard to employment of women must be within this framework and it is within this framework that the aspirations in regard to women's economic and social development must be realised. Employment in the organised sector for both male and female is less than 10 per cent of the total employment. Women's employment in the organised sector is about 6

per cent of the total employment of women. As such, it is wage employment in the unorganised sector or self-employment particularly in rural areas, which need special attention and is more difficult to monitor.

A. WAGE EMPLOYMENT

Situational Analysis and Identification of Problem Areas.

13.2 Wage employment is a result of economic activity and the opportunities for such wage employment can be considered as 'set' to be shared by men and women. Any effort in the direction of securing more wage employment for women would decrease the wage employment for men. It must also be noted that the total number of women employment in the organised sector¹³ at the end of March 1973 was 21.35 lakhs which was an increase of about 1.20 lakhs or 5.5 per cent over the position a year ago. Thus employment growth rate in this case was higher than the overall employment growth rate which was 4.1 per cent. In fact growth rates of women employment have been consistently higher than overall employment growth rates over the last three years¹⁴. On employment of women in the unorganised sector, no specific data are available¹⁵.

13.3 *The problems* constraining participation of women as wage employees may be broadly listed as follows :

- (i) Limited overall opportunities available for wage employment.
- (ii) Attitudes to wage employment and working women, whether by women themselves, by men or society at large.

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8. "Report of the Committee on Status of Women in India—Towards Equality", Government of India, December 1974, pp. 365-366 (hereinafter referred to as CSWI Report)
 9. CSWI Report, p. 1.
 10. CSWI Report, pp. 148, 149.
 11. For a detailed discussion, see CSWI Report, pp. 6-7.
 12. Planning Commission, Government of India "Approach to Fifth Plan 1974-79", January, 1973, pp. 1-5.
 13. Organised sector is defined here as it is by DGET "All establishments in the Public Sector (except Defence) and non-agriculture sector establishments employing 10 or more in the private sector."
 14. DGET Government of India, "Employment Review", 1272-73, New Delhi, 1974, p. 34.
 15. In terms of total employment as reflected in 1971 Census, there appears to be decrease in the employment growth rate of women. However, comparisons of 1961 Census suffers from limitations of definition of what constitutes employment.
 16. Census of India, 1971, Series 1— India—Part VIII Degree holders and technical personnel, Special Tables G.1-G-J pp. 28-147

- (iii) Prejudices of employers in terms of women's employment.
- (iv) Inadequate education/training opportunities for women and attitudes to such education/training.
- (v) Lack of easily available information and guidance on career choices *i.e.*, vocational counselling.
- (vi) Inability to combine work with other household and child rearing responsibilities.
- (vii) Lack of situational support: whether at home in terms of household work, availability of organised creches, etc., freedom from incessant child bearing etc.

13.4 The Action Plan besides finding solutions to the problems affecting participation of women will have to actively promote participation of women so as to bring about improvement in the economic and social status of women and a positive change in the attitude towards working women. In this context analysis of the existing situation at a national level through an examination of published data indicate that the following guidelines will be meaningful:

- (i) Increase participation of women in occupations where women can be more than or as 'productive' as men. 'Productive' both in terms of job/skill requirements and of women's ability to manage a job along with household chores and fulfil her child rearing responsibilities. The occupations indicated are largely those requiring either certain levels of professional/vocational/technical training and skills requiring manual dexterity in handling the work or non-formal education. The major occupations in which women are employed in significant numbers are nurses, other medical and health technicians, teachers, stenographers, typists, card punching operators, maids, sweepresses and such other service workers; plantation, forestry and mining labour; spinning weaving, tobacco production. Some of these are occupation where women are perceived as being more/equally productive; in some employment is a result of economic incidence.

- (ii) Encourage participation of women in occupation where women can be equally productive as men but where participation has been negligible. At the national level, some/such occupations indicated by the 1 per cent sample of the 1971 Census data are salesmen (Sales agents), Shop assistants and Demonstrators; Agents and Salesmen-Insurance.
- (iii) Encourage participation in certain types of occupations where such increased participation will provide the impetus for change in women's status. This relates, particularly, to rural women educated and trained in rural institutions and seeking employment in rural areas. These are in subject fields, such as, Veterinary Science/Medicine, Commerce and Agriculture. As per the Census, G-Series table¹⁶, there are such professionally trained women who are unemployed.

14. ACTION PLANS

14.1 In addition to the action required by "The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976" which provide for

- (a) The payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers; and
- (b) Prevention of discrimination on the grounds of sex against women in the matter of employment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

1. The Central Government departments/agencies as well as each State Government *will determine in what directions and how participation in each of these sets of occupations*, classified as indicated above, will be increased. For instance,

- (i) "Where women's participation is significant....", ensure equal opportunities for in-service training;
- (ii) "Where women's participation is negligible....", ensure special facilities for/in-service training to women employees to develop useful additional skills multi-craft so that women employees can improve their careers; and
- (iii) "For occupations participation which will provide the impetus for change....", *in rural*

areas, at first point of entry, give preference to women candidates, so long as they meet the job requirements.

II. Industries, such as, village industries which provide ample scope for the employment of women in rural areas, shall be promoted within the framework of the overall economic development plans. Efforts of secure participation of women in full measure in the promotion and management of such ventures, will be stepped up. These will require joint action by the State and concerned departments/agencies.

III. The maximum age of entering service for women—whether Government or Public Sector—should be raised up to 35 years of age to encourage married women who have dropped out of employment to fulfil child bearing responsibilities (maximum of three) to re-enter employment.

IV. Each establishment, public and private, shall :

- (i) Set up a committee to review recruitment, promotion and other personnel practices to ensure that there is no discrimination against women candidates and that re-entry of women, who have had to discontinue employment for child bearing/rearing reasons, is made possible and encouraged. Such a committee will include as its members women employees and where this is not possible because women employees are in negligible number, etc., women members will be co-opted from outside the establishment. Involvement of women employees, members of the establishment's selection, training promotion and other personnel committees, will also be encouraged.
- (ii) Identify within the establishments work design jobs which can, without affecting productivity and smooth work flow, be undertaken on a part-time basis, such as, typing jobs, cashew curing work, etc. Having identified opportunities for part-time employment, women should be attracted to such jobs.
- (iii) Give preference to women candidates, for all temporary and daily wage employment, provided they meet the minimum requirements.
- (iv) Independently or in collaboration with other establishments and assistance of Government or other voluntary agencies.

- (a) set-up creches and child care centres for working women:
- (b) organise family planning education programmes; and
- (c) set-up career counselling centres for employees' children with special programmes for female children.

V. For women, particularly agriculture labourers and women working in small establishments, the State will have to organise through State agencies and voluntary organisations creches and child care centres.

- VI. (a) Review should be done of existing arrangement in employment exchanges to bring about improvements in facilities available for women in the matter of registration, vocational guidance, etc., which will help provide better employment facilities for women. Feasibility of mobile vocational counselling bureaus/training camps for women should be examined.
- (b) Employment of women officers and staff in Employment Exchanges should be encouraged.

VII. Lack of necessary data in respect of employment in unorganised sector greatly restricts any plans for employment, as the unorganised sector is crucial for employment generation. Hence, efforts should be made to generate the needed data on a periodic basis and at regular intervals.

VIII. The Advisory Committee as envisaged by the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 to be set up by the appropriate Government will advise and oversee the specific action taken on the plans listed above.

15. REVIEW MECHANISMS AND FOLLOW-UP ACTION

15.1 Once the action plans are finalised, each agency/establishment will be called upon to integrate these into its manpower/personnel plans and indicate its plans and targets for 1976-77 on a simple proforma. As the number of establishments is large, a system for coordinating the information at the local level in homogeneous groups—location, size of establishment/industry classification—will be determined and responsibility, both at the National and State levels, assigned.

15.2 In March 1977, progress of action plans will be reviewed alongwith any other recommendation by the various establishments/agencies and advisory bodies for improving the employment status of women short-term (1977-79) as also over a decade.

B. SELF-EMPLOYMENT

16. Self-employment generates economic activity and can be viewed as providing unlimited opportunities for participation by males and females such that participation by one does not result in deprivation of opportunities to the other, except in the sense that total organised financial and other supporting services are limited. Various programmes have been undertaken by Government to promote self-employment through training and credit assistance.

17. All efforts should, therefore, be directed towards enhancing self-employment for the large masses of women both in small towns and rural areas and not merely for the small minorities in the metropolitan cities. The Approach to the Fifth Plan, in fact, envisaged expansion of self-employment in agriculture, village and small industries, retail trade and service.¹⁷

18. *Situation analysis and identification of problems:*

The problems and constraints that such self-employment activities in general face and consequently the nature of support they require, are being and continue to be investigated and dealt with. Over and above the constraints, which operate generally on all self-employment ventures, the significant constraints deterring women from self-employment are as follows:

- (i) Women's illiteracy.
- (ii) Attitude of women, men or society at large regarding women entrepreneurs resulting in inadequate motivation.
- (iii) Inadequacy of facilities extended by credit institutions to business ventures organised by women.
- (iv) Lack of training opportunities for women whether for skill training or for different aspects of production, marketing and entrepreneur skills.
- (v) Inadequate knowledge of opportunities and market conditions as also how to go about setting up self-employment ventures.
- (vi) Inadequate marketing arrangements.

19. Analysis of present self-employment opportunities availed of by women at the national level indicate the following broad classification.

- (a) Traditional occupations open to women generally on the basis of their castes and which could be described as self-employment¹⁸ (urban/rural separately).
- (b) The self-employment occupation recently adopted by women¹⁹ (urban/rural separately).
- (c) The self-employment opportunities that are now being sponsored and encouraged and in which women's participation should be encouraged²⁰ (rural/urban separately).

The agencies, which are involved in promoting self-employment, will be the best judges for identifying the occupations whether traditional or those recently adopted by women or the new occupations which are to be sponsored/encouraged. The idea is not an indiscriminatory encouragement of all occupations but a studied policy. For instances, self-employment as tailors and dress makers, dairy & poultry farmers, etc.

20. The problems of literacy, health welfare, etc., have been discussed in the Chapters on Education, Health, Family Planning and Nutrition, etc. The pertinent question here is, having identified the occupation as per guidelines out about, what additional support and encouragement should be provided to women.

Action Plans

21. Each organization/agency (illustrative Table 6) concerned with promoting self-employment opportunities (or, may be, part-time employment) will, therefore, be required to do the following :

- (i) Identify those occupations which fall in categories (a), (b) and (c) defined above, which they can encourage in terms of women's self-employment and indicate specific plans.
- (ii) Organise publicity through mass education media particularly among rural areas, with regard to the facilities available for self-employment.

17. Draft Fifth Year Plan, Planning Commission, Government of India.

18. C.S.W.I., pp. P 180-181.

19. C.S.W.I., p. 181 and DGET, Government of India, "Careers for Women", April 1970.

20. Career Study Centre, Central Institute for Research and Training in Employment Services (DGET, Government of India): "Be Your Own Employer" and "Towards Self-employment", 1970 and 1971.

- (iii) Develop special women's entrepreneurial training/motivation programmes.
- (iv) Provide special assistance to women entrepreneurs in terms of applying for credit facilities, processing, licensing, requirements for raw-materials and such formalities, organising marketing arrangements, etc.
- (v) Provide support to voluntary organizations cooperatives promoting self-employment among women. Efforts in these directions by widows/unmarried mothers should receive priority assistance in terms of finance, permissible relaxation of conditions, etc.
- (vi) In the year 1976-77, initiate and test pilot projects for encouraging self-employment and developing women entrepreneurs; these pilot projects would include both schemes to provide assistance to minimise difficulties faced by women as also schemes to provide financial and other incentives and assistance. Such pilot projects will be taken up on a priority basis for groups of women in the rural/backward regions or for educated but lower income levels in the urban areas and the feasibility and usefulness of these schemes in actual practice for extensive application would be tested.
- (vii) Special training services will be organised for women and credit, marketing facilities, etc., extended specially in regard to crafts which can have a ready export market through modernisation of designs, etc., Integrated pilot projects to cover training, production and marketing should be started.
- (viii) In subsequent years, based on insights gained develop specific plans of action to encourage women's participation in self-employment activities.

Specific Plans and Review Mechanisms

22. Organisations/agencies entrusted with the responsibility of promoting self-employment are required to initiate the following specific actions on a priority basis :

- (i) Based on its scope, each agency will indicate by March 1976 its action plans including pilot/test projects for increasing self-employment facilities to women both in traditional and non-traditional occupations, particularly in rural areas.
- (ii) In March 1977, they will submit a review of their activities against plans set, as also recommendations as to specific schemes to be initiated in coming years, based on their experience of pilot/test projects. The organisation-

s/agencies will also indicate their plans of action for 1977-79, review mechanisms and additional financial support, where necessary, as also broad plans of action for the coming decade.

23. National/State-awards/other incentives will be declared to those organisation/agencies which recommend, based on their actual experiences/pilot projects, etc., schemes which have a broad-based application.

C. RESEARCH FOR FORMULATION OF POLICIES AND ACTION PLANS ON AN ON-GOING BASIS

24. A number of studies are available both on the quantitative and qualitative data on the position of women and their roles in different areas of activity. All these need to be coordinated and gaps in information filled. Towards this end, a research plan will have to be worked out by the Coordinating body in collaboration with established research organisations as also employer organisations and agencies concerned with self-employment etc. Such research should provide the basis for formulation of adequate policies and plans to promote the integration of women in the total development process.

25. These should include :

- (a) Productivity studies occupation-wise (may be for selected occupations on a priority-data) for women and men.
- (b) Studies to identify the problems and analysing the needs and requirements of weaker sections of women in terms of seeking and securing employment.
- (c) Studies on motivations and attitudes towards occupational—particularly the non-traditional occupations.
- (d) Estimates of the establishments' loss due to withdrawal and re-entry of women in employment.
- (e) Other gaps in existing information—quantitative and qualitative particularly employment potential in unorganised sector.

26. At this stage, the studies can only be defined here in general terms. The coordinating central agency will have to work out by 1976-77 a time-bound biannual research plan.

D. LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER ACTIONS

27. Some changes in the existing legislation have been suggested²¹ such as—

- (i) *Maternity Benefits Act 1961* : Extend the benefits under this Act to all employees.

Further, the Act should be amended to incorporate the anti-retrenchment clause included in ESI Act of 1948 and some protection for discontinuance upto 5 years for child bearing etc. Review of the cash benefits to meet pre- and post-maternity nutritional needs etc.

- (ii) *Creches*: Reduce the present limit of women workers for application of the provision under

the Factories Act from 50 to 20. Also extend these benefits to casual and contract labour. Establish day centres.

- (iii) *Working Time* : Permission to work upto 10 p.m.

- (iv) *Employees' State Insurance* :Extend to all areas not covered at present.

IV. SOCIAL WELFARE

28. As recognised in the Fifth Five Year Plan, even with expanded employment opportunities, the poor will not be able, with their level of earnings, to buy for themselves all the essential goods and services which should figure in any reasonable concept of a minimum standard of living. The measures for providing larger employment and incomes to the poorer sections will, therefore, have to be supplemented upto at least certain minimum standard, by social consumption and investment in the form of education, health, nutrition, drinking water, housing, communications and electricity, and social welfare services²². Social Welfare services* are intended to cater for the special needs of persons and groups, who by reason of some handicap—social, economic, physical or mental—are unable to avail of or are traditionally denied the amenities and services provided by the community.²³ Women are handicapped by social customs and social values and therefore social welfare services have and should specially endeavour to rehabilitate them by inducing a change in the attitudes of society towards women, their role and contribution.²⁴

Identification of problem Areas

29. A statement of a plan of social welfare programmes relating to women even if it is within the purview of the overall social welfare programmes, will help in providing the correct emphasis on the problems and development needs of the weaker sections of women and provide voluntary organisations and voluntary effort "a certain" direction. The problems and consequently the developmental action required are, it appears, unlimited and the resources are limited. As such, priorities have necessarily to be assigned.

30. Among women, the following categories and some of the problems faced by them, call for special attention on a priority basis. The categories are :

- (A) Working women. To include
 - (i) The low-income women living in tribal and backward rural areas and urban slums.
 - (ii) The migrant women.
 - (iii) The divorced/ separated.
- (B) Physically and mentally handicapped women.
- (C) Widows with or without children.
- (D) Destitute women.
- (E) Women who come into conflict with law.
- (F) Exploited women and unmarried mothers.

31. The problems faced by each of the above categories are numerous and some of them are common to other categories. To decide on action plan priorities, the handicaps and/or the factors which impose constraints need to be understood.

A. WORKING WOMEN

32. According to 1971 Census, women workers constitute nearly 12 per cent of the total women population and well over 90 per cent of the women workers are found employed in rural areas.²⁵ It should be recognised here that the problems faced by women workers in rural areas are altogether different from those in the urban areas.

33. *Rural areas including tribal and backward areas :* Women workers in rural areas are largely landless agricultural labourers; members of households with uneconomic holdings; those engaged in traditional household industries like hand-spinning, hand-weaving, oil pressing, rice pounding, leather, tobacco processing, etc. These household industries—which are predominantly female labour intensive and which have been a major source of employment in villages—appear to have declined in importance during the post-Independence period.²⁶ This is also evi-

22. Government of India Planning Commission. "Approach to the Fifth Plan", January 1973, p. 9.

23. "Plans and Prospects of Social Welfare in India, 1251-61" Planning Commission.

24. CSWI Report p. 306.

25. See, Tables 8 and 10.

26. *Towards Equality*, Report of the Committee on the State of Women in India Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, December 1974.

*See Table 7 for Plan outlays over the years.

denced by the distinctly declining trend in employment of women workers in the rural areas between the decennial Census 1961 and 1971 (Refer Table 8). It has not been possible to reverse this trend because—

- (i) Almost all the women workers in the rural areas are handicapped by illiteracy and lack of mobility.
- (ii) In addition to this, incessant child bearing coupled with hard domestic work does not provide them any time to go through formal education/training to acquire new skills. Facilities for acquiring new skills are still sparse.

34. *Urban Areas* : Women workers in the urban areas fall into three distinct categories :

- (i) The first category consists largely of migrants from villages and members of families whose economic position has deteriorated to near starvation. The women of this class work mainly as domestic servants and as unskilled labour in various unorganised industries.

This category of women workers, who are largely slum dwellers, are below subsistence level. Their problems are to find a job which is secure or provides them regular income at least to subsist, a place for comfortable living, as most of them are away from their homes located in villages; and rehabilitation facilities for their families, particularly children and preparing them for better livelihood, through better education and training; in that order.

- (ii) The second category consists of women, who need employment either to keep their families away from starvation or to ensure better standard of living. Most of such women are found employed in industries, services and professions. Some are even self-employed.

In the case of this second category of women workers in urban areas, *their existence ranges from subsistence to security*. Some of these women, particularly those residing away from their families, are likely to be exposed to the dangers of exploitation from undesirable and anti-social elements. Personal security is therefore a major problem for them.

- (iii) The third category consists of women who are highly educated and work in higher ranks of services and professions for personal satisfaction and independence. Belonging as they do at least to the *upper middle* class family, they do not as group face any serious problems requiring immediate attention here.

Divorced/separated women are part of each of these categories. Issues relating to working women have also been spelt out in the Employment Chapter.

B. PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY HANDICAPPED WOMEN

35. There are several types of physical handicaps like blindness, deafness, orthopaedic handicap, leprosy, mental retardation, etc. which hinder women from even entertaining the hopes of equal participation in the overall social activity. These problems are common to both men and women.

36. Estimates of physically handicapped women are not separately available. To provide a basis for the formulation of Fifth-Five Year Plan, the working group on the Handicapped—constituted for the purpose—estimated that “India may have well over 12 million blind, deaf and orthopaedically handicapped persons. In addition, an estimated 2 million suffer from moderate to severe retardation. The number of persons suffering from leprosy is believed to be around 2.5 million”.

37. *The basic problem* concerning these physically handicapped persons is lack of adequate facilities for differential medical care, educational training and rehabilitation programmes and a lack of knowledge about these facilities by handicapped person. Further, it is widely known that though the existing facilities are largely used by men, a majority of physically handicapped women are not coming forward to utilise the available facilities.

C. WIDOWS WITH OR WITHOUT CHILDREN

38. The 1971 Census distribution of women according to marital status indicates that roughly about 9 per cent of the women are widows.²⁷ Further, they are almost evenly distributed between the rural and urban areas.

27. See Table 9.

39. Widowhood is a curse for most of the women in India for various reasons :

- (i) it is almost invariably accompanied by economic disaster. This is because a large number of the families in India survive at below subsistence level and hence death of a male earning member pushes down the families concerned to near starvation. Also many of the females are voluntarily out of work force.²⁸ And illiteracy remains the greatest barrier for the improvement of the economic position of widowed women, particularly in the rural areas.²⁹
- (ii) age-old traditions, social prejudices and cultural practices almost exclude widowed women from any socially productive work. Social acceptance of women is reduced with widowhood. In some communities/regions, there is almost a sort of social boycott of widowed women.

The problems faced by widowed women are not all the same as between different age-groups; and as between rural and urban areas.

- (a) For widows in the younger age-group—particularly those belonging to 15-44 years of age—the problems are more related to economic independence and rehabilitation in the society—preferably through remarriage.³⁰
- (b) For widows in the age-group 45 and above, the problem is more that of social acceptance and security. Most of such women, if not previously employed, will be unfit for employment. Even in respect of employed women—widowed after 44 years of age—it is difficult to impart the needed training/skills for more remunerative jobs within the existing framework of education/training facilities.

40. Problems of widowed women in the rural areas are even more severe than those in the urban areas. In addition, economic dependence and the social stigma attached to widowhood, there are no opportunities for their emancipation. Many of them are possibly not even aware of the efforts being made by the Government agencies through voluntary organisations to redress their miseries.

D. DESTITUTE WOMEN

41. These destitute women can be classified into three age-groups as their problems are different :

- (i) *Below 15 years* : Persons in this groups can be categorised as children. They are mostly orphans and are, therefore, deprived of the tender parental care. They are also subjected to malnutrition and the consequent diseases. This age-group, viz., below 15 years of age constitutes the formative years in a person's life, as the process of development and learning are most rapid during these young years. During these formative years, the effects of environment greatly influence the personality development, mental attitudes, moral character, etc. Often, destitute persons in this age-group fall a prey to the environmental disadvantages.
- (ii) *15-44 years* : This second group of women are both in the productive and reproductive age-group. Their main problems are those pertaining to economic independence, social acceptance and security.
- (iii) *45 years and above* : In the case of third group of destitute women, their major problem is social security. They are mostly unfit to be employed. They cannot even be trained to earn their livelihood.

E. WOMEN WHO COME INTO CONFLICT WITH LAW

42. Women who fall under this category, are (i) juvenile delinquents, (ii) women in moral and social danger—particularly those who indulge in immoral traffic and (iii) women prisoners.

- (i) *Juvenile delinquents* are again a creation of the society. The environment in which they are brought up; the deprivation of proper nutrition and training/education which would enable them to earn a better livelihood, etc.
- (ii) *Prostitutes* : Women subjected to severe economic distress and hardships often come into the clutches of persons who have vested interests in immoral traffic. Once they succumb they do not receive proper health care—curative and preventive treatment for the diseases associated with immoral traffic; many of them are not aware of the existing health care facilities and added to it is the innate fear of being exposed to the general public and the

28. This is evidenced by the very low work force participation rates among women in India. See Table 10.

29. Illiteracy among women is of the order of 82 per cent in 1971. Refer Provisional Population Totals Paper 1 of 1971 supplement Census of India.

30. Widowed women in this age group constitute about 9 per cent of all widowed women. See Table 9.

resulting social reactions. The existing health facilities are also not adequate and are not perceived as being sympathetic towards their health problems.

- (iii) *Female prisoners* : Many of the problems faced by female prisoners are in common with male prisoners. However, some of the problems are peculiar to female alone. For example, women prisoners with children—particularly in case children are below five years—have problems in arranging for the care of their children. Also, problems in getting rehabilitated—after they are free are more severe in the case of women prisoners than men prisoners.

F. EXPLOITED WOMEN AND UNMARRIED MOTHERS

43. (i) *Out-of-wedlock Pregnancies* are on the increase, judging from the number of abortions and live births among single women recorded at various institutions. Estimates of medical termination of pregnancies (MTP) in the case of single women alone range from 10 to 30 per cent of total MTP cases. In respect of live illegitimate births estimates based on hospital records range from 2 to 3 per cent of the total confinements. In reality many more clandestine live illegitimate births may be taking place which are not brought to public notice.
- (ii) *Pre-marital pregnancies, are as generally believed, no longer confined to the illiterate and depressed classes. According to some case studies in this field, nearly 50 percent of the pre-marital pregnancies were observed in the case of women who are at least matriculates³¹. A few were graduates. Some of them were observed to be belonging to the privileged classes of the society. A more distressing feature, however, is that pre-marital pregnancies are being observed even in the case of school girls.*

44. Among the reasons attributed to pre-marital pregnancies, interactions between various social, psychological and economic force like break down of joint families; overwhelming poverty, rapid urbanisation bringing in its wake the social transformation which leads to increasing permissiveness, lack of communication between children and parents; emotional immaturity and craze for excitement among the youth; antipathy towards the introduction of basic sex education among school children, etc. are the most important reasons cited.

45. Permissiveness and promiscuity increase with rapid urbanisation and measures to avoid such premarital pregnancies is a long drawn social education problem and cannot be expected to decline rapidly. However, the problems concomitant to pre-marital pregnancies can and should at least be tackled effectively.

46. The action plans should be directed primarily to solving the problems of these six target groups (A—F).

There is considerable overlap both in terms of the causes and programmes and agencies concerned with eliminating the problems and building rehabilitation/development plans for these target groups. As such, the action plans are classified under broad groups of actions rather than in terms of categories of women discussed above :

- I. Provision of Services/Infra-structure.
- II. Education/Training Programmes for the Target Groups.
- III. Promoting Voluntary Effort : The Role of women.
- IV. Development of Human Resources.
- V. Administrative Set-up and Coordination.
- VI. Legislative Measures.
- VII. Areas of Research.

47. The Fifth Five Year Plan has rightly emphasised the need for a shift in the approach towards social welfare, from a mere provision of curative and rehabilitative services—the kind of approach adopted during the past two decades of planning—to promoting the needed preventive and developmental aspects of social welfare. The action plans should necessarily have such a preventive and development orientation.

ACTION PLANS

- I. PROVISION OF SERVICES/INFRA-STRUCTURE
 48. (i) Services for the care of girls below 15;
 - (ii) Facilities for women in the productive age-group *i.e.*, 15-45 years;
 - (iii) Programmes for the care of aged and infirm women; and
 - (iv) General welfare programmes.

Services for the Care of Girls below 15

49. There are three categories of children who need particular attention *viz.*, children of working women, destitute children—particularly female children. and juvenile delinquents. The following action plans are suggested :

31. Ref. "The Unwed Mother" by Cecilia D'Souza, The Times of India, November, 9, 1975.

- (1) The child population below 6 years of working mothers in urban and rural areas is estimated to be around 20 lakhs and 166 lakhs, respectively.³² With a view to helping the working mother discharge her duties—both as a mother and worker—better family aid services like anganwadis, balwadis, creches and day care centres might be launched in a big way. Both in the rural and in the urban areas efforts should be made to cover more than 40 per cent of the children of working mothers.
 - (2) There are about 11 lakh destitute children in the country.³³ The girls among them need particular attention, because they are likely to be exposed to social and moral dangers when they grow up. Efforts should be made to provide institutional facilities whether through the foster care programmes or otherwise for taking care of a majority of the destitute female children.
 - (3) It is not possible to discriminate between male and female juvenile delinquents, as the problems are common to both. However, the approach towards juvenile delinquency as such should be to provide the needed atmosphere for a child to develop personality, character and social conscience through setting up of cactact clubs, play centres, juvenile guidance units, workshops, etc. etc.
 - (4) Holiday homes schemes initiated earlier to provide organised and guided recreational facilities to children can be one of the measures to prevent juvenile delinquency. Such facilities should at least be extended to cover all the children residing in the slums of major cities.
- (6a) Socio-economic programmes were initiated in 1958 with the objective of providing full or part-time work to the needy/destitute women and the physically handicapped either through full wage or a wage sufficient to supplement the meagre income of their families. These programmes, should be expanded considerably in both rural and urban areas, as they have the potential to provide the needed economic independence to women belonging to the weaker sections and thus act as a preventive measure to many of the social evils.
 - (6b) For effectively implementing these socio-economic programmes, active collaboration should be sought from agencies like Handicrafts Board, Handloom Board, Khadi and Village Industries Board, Small Industries Service Institutes, Small Industries Development corporations at the State level and the nationalised banks.
 - (7) To increase the employment potential for the following types of schemes additional steps should be undertaken within the purview of socio-economic programmes:
 - (i) Small scale industries.
 - (ii) Units as ancillary to large production of handicrafts.
 - (iii) Units for the procurement and production of handicrafts.
 - (iv) Handloom training-cum-production units.
 - (v) Agro-based industries like dairy, poultry farms, etc.
 - (vi) Traditional female labour intensive industries like rice pounding, oil-pressing, etc.

Facilities for Women in the Productive Age-Group

- (5) In some selected urban areas, hostel facilities are available for working women of the lower income groups earning Rs. 50 to Rs. 800 per month. However, the coverage of the programme in terms of the proportion of working women needs to be stepped up considerably. Similarly, district-wise investigation would be undertaken about the need for working women's hostels and appropriate facilities set up. The matching contribution for grants for construction/addition/alternations should be stepped up.
- (This has also been discussed in the Chapter on Employment).
- (8) Attempts must be made to revitalise and activate the existing sick units falling under the purview of socio-economic programmes.

32. See Report of the Task Force on Welfare of Children, Youth, Women and Handicapped (mimeo), Planning Commission, Yojna Bhawan, New Delhi.

33. Ibid.

- (9) Ways to improve the working, efficiency and effectiveness of Mahila Mandals must be studied and necessary action taken. They should be re-oriented to aim at increasing the earning power of women in the rural areas.
- (10a) It is suggested that by the end of the Fifth Plan, about 10,000 Mahila Mandals should be developed through the country to provide an effective media for organising women welfare activities in the rural areas.
- (10b) Scholarship programmes of the Central and State Governments for the handicapped should be expanded considerably and efforts should be made to encourage women to make use of the scholarships available.
- (11) Sheltered workshops should be organised.
- (12) Schemes for the welfare of destitute women between the ages 18-44 and 45-65 providing for basic amenities of food, shelter, clothing, basic education and training in crafts should be implemented through voluntary organisations who may be given grants to cover 75 per cent of the expenditure. It is suggested that this scheme should be revived and implemented in all the States.
- (13) Homes for the rehabilitation of rescued and released women prisoners should be started in all towns with a minimum of 5 lakhs of population. Apart from providing shelter, food and clothing, the inmates should also be provided training in crafts like sewing, embroidery, knitting, etc. Efforts should, however, be made in the direction of making inmates self-sufficient and earn independent livelihood.
- (14) In some such protective homes, insame women are housed along with other women which is an unhealthy and undesirable practice and should be discontinued.

Programmes for the Care of Aged and Infirm Women:

- (15) Women in the age-group 65 years and over constitute roughly 85 lakhs according to the 1971 Census. Many of the women lack absolutely any security. They are mostly dependent on their children who often desert them. Thus, even

women belonging to upper middle classes are sometimes reduced to the status of destitute. Efforts should therefore, be made at least in a modest way to initiate social security measures through old age pension with the objective of providing economic independence to at least 25 per cent of women in the age-group particularly in the rural areas.

- (16) For the women retired from active service and for these who are in need of some residential facilities, hostels should be started in all the major cities. If necessary, subsidies may also be extended under the grant-in-aid programmes.

General Welfare Programmes

- (17) Slum clearance programmes should be initiated in all the major cities and towns with a minimum of 5 lakhs of population. People displaced should be provided alternative sites, with proper environmental sanitation, for building their homes.
- (18) Zila Parishads and youth in the districts should be entrusted with drinking water supply projects.
- (19) A vigorous campaign of education and action should be launched in favour of community sanitation and hygiene. Public utility services should be expanded. The practice of carrying night-soil as headloads must be eradicated.

EDUCATION/TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR THE TRAGET GROUPS

50. Analysis of the problems faced by the target group of women indicated that illiteracy, inadequate education/training, lack of facilities for training in alternatives skills and lack of knowledge about the existing facilities are some of the major problems that have hindered the progress of women in India. There is, therefore, the need for accelerating the efforts in this regard with renewed vigour. With this in view the following action plans are recommended:

(Some of these action plans have also been considered in the Chapter on Education).

- (1a) The Fourth Plan introduced a programme of financial literacy built round farmer's training in selected districts where high yielding varie-

- ties of crops were being cultivated.³⁴ It is estimated that about 90,000 women received this training during the Fourth Plan and about 5 to 7 lakhs of women are likely to be trained under this programme during the Fifth Plan. This programme must be extended to all the rural areas.
- (1b) Apart from imparting knowledge about farming, the curriculum for women should include courses of training in occupational skills like kitchen, gardening, food cultivation, poultry keeping, animal husbandary; household arts like cooking, nutritional values of foods locally available, sewing knitting etc. and family planning.
- (1c) Preference should be given to women belonging to scheduled castes, tribal women widowed women and destitutes under this functional literacy programme.
- (2a) For the non-student young girls without any education and school drop-outs particularly for girls in the age group 11-14 years, the pre-vocational training programmes should be reviewed and strengthened by enlarging the scope training and by increasing the number of trades.
- (2b) In respect of girls in the age-group 11-14 years, the objective of pre-vocational training should also be to train them to be self-sufficient in home management by organising courses of training in sewing, cooking nutrition, minor repairs of the house, motherhood, child care, etc.
- (2c) Pre-vocational programmes should be extended to cover girls in this age-group in the rural areas. In urban areas, preference should be given to girls in the slum areas and destitute girls.
- (3) Condensed courses of education were started in 1958 with the twin objective of (a) opening new vistas of employment to a large number of deserving and needy women, and (b) creating a band of competent trained workers required to man the various projects in the rural areas in the shortest possible time. Under this scheme, women in the age-group 18-30 who have studied upto classes IV and VI are trained for middle school/matriculation examinations within a period of two years. The scheme was found very useful but the statistics reveal that the beneficiaries have been mostly women belonging to the middle class families. Preference should be given to women belonging to backward classes, widowed women and destitute women.
- (4) Special efforts should be made to cover women belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes through condensed courses. An incentive of Rs. 1,000 (as recommended by the Review Committee), be given to the institution for every successful scheduled caste/scheduled tribe candidate trained.
- (5a) The condensed courses should be organised in a big way and for smaller group of say 5 to 7 with the help of high schools and colleges for girls. Efforts should be made to cover about 215 lakh women under the condensed course programmes, during the Fifth Plan period:
- (5b) Apart from imparting general education condensed courses should also aim at imparting to scheduled castes, tribal women, eradication of existing vocational training institutions.
- (5c) Under this programme of condensed courses, short-term courses should be organised to retain women who have been temporarily out of job-market to fulfil child bearing responsibilities.
- (5d) For the failed candidates, short-term course of six months to one year should be organised.
- (5e) Special efforts should be initiated to follow up successful candidates with a view to helping them in securing jobs.
- (6) Pre-examination training facilities should be offered to duly qualified poor women with the objective of equipping them to successfully compete in examinations for public jobs. It is suggested that about 80 lakh girls in the age 14-17 may be covered under this programme during the Fifth Plan period.

34. See report of the task force on Welfare of Children, Youth, Women and Handicapped (mimeo), Planning Commission, Yojna Bhawan, New Delhi. *Towyers' Equality*, p.280

- (7) The school curricula in various States in India should encourage the doing away of traditional prejudices of inequality of the sexes.³⁵
- (8) Sex education should be introduced at the appropriate stage with the objective of also educating the young girls about the social and moral dangers they are likely to encounter.
- (9) The value of physical training in the school curricula shall be emphasised.

III. PROMOTING VOLUNTARY EFFORT: THE ROLE OF WOMEN

51. Voluntary welfare service organisations have been an integral part of the cultural and social traditions in India. Soon after independence, it was estimated that there were 10,000 voluntary organisations engaged in social welfare. In fact, all the schemes of Central Social Welfare Board are implemented only through voluntary organisations. The reorientation given to social welfare in the Fifth Plan calls for more effort on the part of both voluntary organisations and the State agencies involved. The following action plans are, therefore, warranted in this regard:

- (a) Efforts should be made to promote a large number of voluntary organisations throughout the country. They have a critical role in mobilising public opinion in favour of equality among men and women, and eradicating superstitions, social evils and waste. The motivational strategy for encouraging voluntary organisations needs to be well thought through and support facilities provided. Women should be promoted to take the initiative and responsibility for organising voluntary effort, for not only can they bring to the tasks the necessary dedication, commitment and empathy, but their very presence will provide their socially handicapped sisters a source of inspiration and set in a cycle of social rejuvenation. All voluntary organisations particularly those concerned with social welfare *vis-a-vis* women must be encouraged to have women members. Women Panchayats, Mahila Mandals, working women, etc. should be encouraged to spearhead such voluntary activities. Mahila Mandals should be promoted in every village so that they can function as field level agencies for social and economic transformation.

- (b) Most of the voluntary organisations have been operating independently of each other. They have, therefore, not been able to fully benefit the community. The role of existing organisations should be determined and measures should be initiated to coordinate/supplement the efforts of various organisations *at each district level*.
- (c) Many of the women's voluntary organisations are located in urban areas, while only a few organisations have endeavoured to work amongst rural women. Efforts should be made to promote a large number of voluntary women's organisations in the rural backward and tribal areas and urban slum to mobilise public support for different programmes and to implement them. This calls for liberation of the rules regarding the matching grant through voluntary contributions, simplification of the rules and procedures of obtaining the grants as well as administering the organisations, provision of trained staff, organisation of leadership training programmes, etc.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

52. Administration of various social welfare programmes have become increasingly technical. During the past two decades of developmental planning, lack of technically competent workers has had an adverse impact on the quality and success of welfare programmes. With a view to provide the necessary support to various agencies, the following action plans are suggested:

- (1) Training facilities for the workers attached to all the voluntary agencies, like Mahila Mandals should be initiated immediately. The training needs of workers, however, differ from organisation to organisation depending on the nature of tasks required to be performed.
- (2) Through a proper investigation training requirements of workers in each district should be assessed and suitable training programmes designed.
- (3) These training programmes should as far as possible be organised at each district level.

35. *Ibid*, *Towards Equality*, pp. 281-282.

- (4) Trainees should preferably be local candidates.
 - (5) Effective implementation of the various socio-economic programmes require two cadres of workers: the grass-root workers and supervisory staff. The grass-root workers should be provided training in the latest techniques and methods of production with the active collaboration of well established industrial units and Industrial Training Institute. The supervisory staff on the other hand, should be trained in advanced techniques of production, business management, personnel management, etc.
 - (6) In the case of handicrafts units under the socio-economic programme, practising craftsmen should be trained as instructors and appointed.
 - (7) Short-term orientation should also be given to the members of the managing committees of the units—under socio-economic programmes—about the general working of such unit.
 - (8) Senior level officers in charge of the socio-economic programmes should also be exposed to short-term orientation courses in business management and allied fields through Small Industries Service Institutes, University departments of business management, etc.
- (2) Every State Department of Social Welfare should have a women's Welfare Division with responsibility for planning, programming and monitoring the implementation of schemes of women welfare.
 - (3) The Central Social Welfare Board is one of the most important agencies for the implementation of social welfare activities. It should be recognised and strengthened, and vested with larger funds and responsibilities for promoting and developing voluntary effort particularly in rural, backward and tribal areas and among the weaker sections of the community.
 - (4) The Central Social Welfare Board should a massive campaign for enlisting and developing a cadre of voluntary social workers who should be provided some normal assistance to enable them to carry out this work.
 - (5) State Social Welfare (Advisory) Boards should also be reorganised and strengthened.
 - (6) The State Board should also be made to function as liaison on among the State Government and the local agencies.
 - (7) Suitable infrastructure should be developed at each district level and block level for implementing and expanding the programmes of Central Social Welfare Board.
 - (8) Trained social welfare workers should be associated with all the committees to be set-up by the Central Social Welfare Board.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP AND COORDINATION

53. Administrative traditions in India have tended to attach least importance to departments dealing with social welfare. This is reflected even in the training imparted to administrators. Only recently it has been realised that administration must also be welfare oriented. The federal nature of our policy vests a large responsibility for implementing social policy and programmes with State and local authorities. There is therefore, the need for reorganising the administrative set-up with a view to effectively implementing the various welfare programmes. The following action plans may be taken up for consideration ;

- (1) Orientation/training programmes should be organised for social welfare personnel, particularly at decision making levels, to sensitise them to social welfare needs and adopt the extension approach of reaching out to the clients. The new developmental and preventive concept of welfare also needs to be imparted.

VI. LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

54. (1) International experience indicates that evolving a sound social security system takes a long period of time. However, suitable enactment can be initiated to provide public assistance to select group like destitute women and people above 65 years but without any means of livelihood. Assistance here need not be in the form of cash. It should be in the form of medical, housing feeding and recreational facilities, etc.
- (2) It should be open to the States and Union Territories to go in for taxation or special levy to

finance such public assistance schemes without prejudice to any assistance made available to States and Union Territories from the Central Government under plan schemes.

- (3) No child should be tried in adult courts nor should any child be sent to jail.
- (4) State Governments should enact legislation for apprehension, institutional treatment and rehabilitation of beggars, particularly women.
- (5) Machinery should be set up for speedy and effective adjudication in all cases concerning the family including the setting up of family welfare courts since the ordinary judicial procedure is not suited to handle such cases. Women, particularly in rural areas should be protected against harassment.
- (6) A vigorous campaign should be launched to educate women about their rights and the machinery through which they can seek their realisation.
- (7) Active public support should be mobilised by government agencies, voluntary organisations and public leaders against child marriage and dowry to support the legislative measures for the eradication of these undesirable practices. Ostentatious Weddings and other wasteful social ceremonies should be banned.

VII. AREAS OF RESEARCH

55. Primary data available with sources such as the Census, the National Sample Survey, are insufficient and are very scanty for social welfare planning, particularly on the needs and requirements of handicapped women, destitute women, women under the purview of the suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, etc. In view of this, the following areas of research are suggested:

- (i) Studies on 'Social Profiles(with district as unit wherein information on the prevailing conditions of social needs and requirements, etc. are investigated.
- (ii) Studies on the requirements of physically handicapped children and women.
- (iii) Studies on the requirements of destitute children and women.
- (iv) Studies on the training requirements of workers in voluntary welfare organisations.
- (v) Studies on the Socio-economic and psychological factors behind the problem of premarital pregnancies.
- (vi) Studies on the magnitude of problems facing prostitutes and their children such as problems of children of prostitutes, particularly female children.

V. LEGAL STATUS AND PROVISIONS

56. Legislation represents national intent and policy and it is necessary that existing legislation and personal laws be reviewed, appropriately amended or new laws formulated, to ensure equality before law among sexes. Equally important is the need to provide free legal services to weaker sections including women in need. A great deal has been done in recent months particularly regarding equal pay for equal work and steps are being taken for providing legal aid, etc. Needless to add, as has been emphasised in earlier Chapters, legislation in itself cannot achieve results unless it is supported by socio-economic changes, an awareness of rights and responsibilities by the weaker sections effective legal implementation and follow-up machinery.

57. Legislative measures *vis-a-vis* Employment; Health Family Planning and Nutrition; Education; and Social Welfare have already been discussed in the concerned Chapters earlier.

A. MARRIAGE LAWS

58. The legal system should ensure full equality of sexes even in terms of the personal laws. There should be no compromise about the objective of having monogamy as the rule for all communities in India. Any compromise in this regard will only perpetuate the existing inequality of the status of women. Towards this end, the following measures are suggested:

- (i) *Reform in law to prevent polygamy*—Among some sections of the population polygamy has legal sanction. However, before necessary changes in the law relating to polygamy are brought about, vigorous effort should be basically directed to generating initiative from among the affected groups so that by the end of 1985 it would be possible to have uniform legislation for all communities. For the purpose, the practices adopted in other countries with Muslim/Christian majority should be studied and made known widely.
- (ii) *Enforcement of provision against bigamy under Hindu Marriage Act.*—The right to initiate prose-

cution for bigamy should, be extended to persons other than the girls family with prior permission of the court to prevent the current violation of this very salutary provision of the law which presents the socially accepted policy of the country. The approach should be towards making it a cognizable offence.

59. REGISTRATION OF MARRIAGES

59.1 Registration of marriages should be made compulsory for all marriages. For this to be operationally effective, suitable administrative machinery will have to be designed particularly in the rural areas. Enforcement of this could be made operational through amendment to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, to include compulsory registration of marriages.

60. MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE

60.1 The Child Marriage Restraint Act should be amended to raise the age of marriage for girls to 18 and that of boys to 21. However, for effective implementation, proper machinery for enforcing the minimum age at marriage should be designed.

B. PROHIBITION OF DOWRY

61. Penalties for offence under the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, should be suitably enhanced to make the implementation of the Act more effective. To bring about greater awareness of the evils of dowry, socio-educational programmes should be launched by social welfare organisations.

62. Government servants giving or taking dowry should be treated as having violated the Government Servants' Conduct Rules similar to the Government Servants' Conduct Rules relating to bigamy.

C. DIVORCE LAWS

63. Although there is right to divorce, variations and unequal treatment of sexes, *vis-a-vis* divorce, characterise

the various personal laws. As a general principle, efforts should be made to bring about parity of right for both partners regarding grounds for seeking dissolution of marriage by 1985. Here too, vigorous efforts should be made so that there is a demand from the affected group for uniformity of legislation.

D. THE LAWS RELATING TO INHERITANCE OF PROPERTY

64. Action should be taken in conformity with the broad principles or equal rights of sons, daughters and widows to ancestral property.

64.1 The Indian Succession Act is not uniformly applicable to all sections of women. Efforts should be made for generating the initiative from among the affected groups of women for bringing about necessary changes in the Succession Act so that by the end of 1985 it is possible to have uniform legislation for all communities.

64.2 On divorce and separation, the wife should be entitled to some part of the assets acquired at the time of and during the time of marriage.

E. NATIONALITY LAWS

65. The present rule prevents the children of such Indian women from being considered as Indian citizens. Where the father and mother are separated and the mother is the guardian, the justification for the applicabil-

ity of the rule that the child's nationality will be transmitted through the father is required to be re-examined with reference to the relevant aspects which have a bearing in Private International Law. The Citizenship Act will therefore, be modified if need be.

66. The procedures for regaining Indian Citizenship in the case of women of Indian origin, declared as Stateless are tedious and cumbersome. Efforts should, thereafter, be made to design simpler procedure in this regard and what is more there must be a sympathetic and helpful orientation at its implementation stage.

F. NEEDED REFORMS IN CRIMINAL LAW

67. Bigamy—The present law restricts jurisdiction of the court to the place where the bigamous marriage was performed or where the husband and wife last resided. This cause difficulties to the wife who may have to move on after being abandoned by her husband. Therefore, the provisions of the Criminal procedure relating to jurisdiction should be widened to include trial for bigamy in a court within whose jurisdiction the wife ordinarily resides.

G. ADOPTION

68. There is need to have a uniform secular and enabling law of adoption. The passage of the Adoption of Children Bill, 1972 should, therefore, be expedited.

TABLE 1 : PROGRESS OF GIRLS EDUCATION

(Enrolment in million)

Year	Classes I-V			Classes VI-VIII			Classes IX-XI, XII			University Education		
	ENROLMENT		Col. 3 as per- centage of Col. 2	ENROLMENT		Col. 6 as per- centage of Col. 5	ENROLMENT		Col. 9 as per- centage of Col. 8	ENROLMENT*		Col. 12 as per- centage of Col. 11
	Total	Girls		Total	Girls		Total	Girls		Total	Girls	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1950-51	19.15	5.38	28.1	3.12	0.53	17.0	1.21	0.19	14.0	0.33	N.A.	N.A.
1955-56	25.17	7.64	30.4	4.29	0.87	20.3	1.98	0.33	16.7	0.54	0.08	14.8
1960-61	34.90	11.40	32.6	6.70	1.63	24.3	3.03	0.56	18.5	0.74	0.15	20.3
1965-66	50.47	18.29	36.2	10.53	2.85	27.1	5.28	1.20	22.7	1.24	0.29	23.4
1968-69	54.39	20.18	37.1	12.05	3.34	27.7	6.83	1.74	25.5	1.69	N.A.	N.A.
1973-74	63.75	24.40	37.6	15.03	4.54	30.9	8.50	2.34	27.1	2.90	0.68**	23.5

Note : *Enrolment for University education consists of that for Arts, Science and Commerce.
**Enrolment for University education given for 1973-74 is the actual for 1972.

Source : 1. Draft Fifth Five Year Plan, 1974-77.
2. Statistical Abstract, India, 1969.
3. Educational Statistics at a Glance, 1972, Ministry of Education.

TABLE 2 : LITERACY RATES ACCORDING TO THE 1971 CENSUS

Age-Group	Male	Female	Total
Below-15	27.91 (1180493)	13.98 (10742)	22.95 (2280235)
15-24	61.54 (466893)	32.50 (439090)	47.47 (05983)
25-34	49.27 (381266)	18.75 (384857)	33.94 (766123)
25	41.03 (1172085)	13.37 (1086903)	27.72 (2258988)
35+	37.05 (790819)	10.43 (702046)	24.53 (1492865)

Note : Figures in parentheses represent the total population in the age-group.
Source : Census of India, 1971—Tabulation of one per cent data.

TABLE 3 : ENROLMENTS AS PROPORTION TO THE POPULATION IN RESPECTIVE AGE GROUP IN 1973-74**

Classes	Enrolment as in millions			Enrolment as proportion to population in the relevant age groups		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
I-IV	39.35	24.40	63.75	100.2	66.4	83.9
VI-VIII	10.49	4.54	15.03	48.3	22.2	35.6
IX-XI,XII	6.16	2.34	8.50	31.0	12.0	22.0
Higher Education	2.22	0.68	2.90	7.5	2.3	4.96

Notes *Higher Education includes intermediates also.

**The relevant age-group are as under :

Class	Age-group
I-V	6-11
VI-VIII	11-14
IX-XI, XII	14-17
Higher Education	17-23

Source : 1. Draft Fifth Five Year Plan, 1974-79

2. Educational Statistics at a Glance, 1972 Ministry of Education.

TABLE 4 : AVERAGE LIFE EXPECTANCY FOR MALES AND FEMALES IN INDIA (IN YEARS)

Decade	Males	Females
1931-40	32.1	31.4
1941-50	32.4	31.7
1951-60	41.9	40.6
1971	47.1	45.6

Source : World Population Conference, Bucharest, 1971.

TABLE 5 : AGE SPECIFIC DEATH RATE, RURAL, 1968 AND 1969

Age Group	Death Rate			
	1968		1969	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
0—4	59.12	66.82	8.23	70.16
5—9	5.33	6.26	5.79	7.71
10—14	2.26	2.99	2.60	2.72
15—19	1.99	3.34	2.09	4.22
20—24	2.65	5.09	3.83	5.54
25—29	3.19	6.92	3.73	5.50
30—34	3.06	5.98	4.07	6.85
35—39	6.23	6.09	6.54	6.05
40—44	7.67	7.92	8.52	7.86
45—49	12.68	9.18	13.17	9.36
50—59	18.99	15.35	22.36	17.07
60 + over	65.08	60.54	1.21	66.48
All ages	17.46	18.96	18.23	20.11
15—49	4.77	6.01	5.32	6.05

Source : Sample Registration Scheme of Registrar General of India.

TABLE 6 : LIST OF AGENCIES (GOVERNMENT AND OTHER) AND NATURE OF SUPPORT PROVIDED FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Agencies	Business know-how	Extension Training	Technical assistance	Credit	Workshops/sheds	Machinery	Raw Materials	Marketing assistance (domestic)	Export assistance trade	Incentives	Invention promotion	Managerial assistance
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. State Bank of India and all Nationalised Banks	X		X	X						X		X
2. State Financial Corporation					X	X						
3. State Industrial Development Corporation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
4. Agro-Industries Development Corporation	X	X	X			X		X	X	X		X
5. Small Industries Service Institutes	X	X	X					X	X		X	
6. National Small Industries Corporation			X					X				
7. Small Industries Extension Training Institute	X	X	X					X	X			
8. State Trading Corporation/Minerals & Metals Trading Corporation									X			
9. Trade Development Authority									X			
10. Export Promotion Council										X		
11. Director of Invention Promotion Board												X

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
12. National Research Development Corpn.			X										
13. Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation				X									
14. Reserve Bank of India				X									
15. National Alliance of Young Entrepreneurs Delhi		X	X					X	X		X	X	
16. Federation of Association of Small Industries in India		X	X						X	X		X	X
17. National Co-operative Union			X	X									X
18. Khadi and Village Industries Commission		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
19. Handicraft Board		X	X	X	X				X	X	X		

- Notes :
1. Information is based on DOET "Career information series 8 and 9", 1970 and 1971, respectively. The list of agencies and nature of support may not be complete.
 2. A number of these agencies function through the State Government, Industries Department and some are controlled Directly by the Central Government.
 3. This does not include professional training institutions.

TABLE 7 : OUTLAY ON SOCIAL WELFARE IN THE FIVE YEAR PLANS

Plan	Total Outlay (Rs. Crores)	Outlay for Social Welfare	Outlay for Social Welfare as percent- age of Total Out- lay
First (1951—56)	2356	4.00	(1.60)
Second (1956—61)	4600	19.00	(13.40)
Third (1961—66)	7500	31.26	(19.40)
Annual Plans (1966—69)		13.48	(11.56)
Fourth (1969—74)	24882	92.94	(76.81)
Fifth (1974—79)	63751	63.53	0.09

Source : Relevant Five Year Plan Documents.

Notes : 1. Figures in brackets are actual expenditure.

2. Percentage worked out are on the basis of outlay for Social Welfare.

TABLE 8 : DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE WORKERS BY RURAL/URBAN AREAS

(Figures in 000's)

Area	1961 Census	1971 Census
Rural	45319	27967
Urban	3303	3331
Total	48622	31291

Source : Census of India, Report of Resurvey on Economic Question, Source Results Miscellaneous Study, Paper I of 1974, Register General and Census Commissioner of India, New Delhi.

TABLE 9 : DISTRIBUTION OF WIDOWS ACCORDING TO AGE AND RURAL/URBAN AREAS

(Figures in 00's)

Age	Total	Rural	Urban
0—14	200 (0.09)	178 (0.09)	22 (0.5)
15—39	24542 (10.67)	20398 (10.66)	4150 (10.37)
40—44	18797 (8.12)	15538 (8.12)	3259 (8.15)
45—59	79344 (34.28)	65069 (34.00)	14275 (35.68)
60 & above	108517 (46.90)	90211 (47.13)	18306 (45.75)
Total widowed women	231406 (100.00)	191394 (700.00)	40012 (100.00)
Total female population	2630731	2129404	501327

Source : The Census 1971 Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, New Delhi.

Note : Figures within brackets indicate percentages.

TABLE 10 : WORK-FORCE PARTICIPATION OF POPULATION BY SEX, RURAL/URBAN BREAK-UP

Sex	1961 Census			1971 Census		
	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total
Male	56.96	51.56	55.94	53.46	48.82	52.50
Female	25.66	9.13	22.85	13.09	6.62	11.85
Total persons	41.60	32.13	39.90	33.81	29.33	32.92

Source: Census of India, Report on Resurvey on Economic Question—Source Results, Miscellaneous Studies, Paper I of 1974, Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, New Delhi.

Note : Figures for 1961 are adjusted to the concept of worker adopted in the context of the 1971 Census.

Report of Working Group on Employment of Women (set up by the Planning Commission), September 1978. Government of India, Department of India, Department of Social Welfare, Women's Welfare and Development Bureau, New Delhi.

In the context of the preparation of the Sixth Five Year Plan, the Planning Commission set up a Working Group on Employment of Women to examine ways and means of increasing the employment of women. The Group scrutinized statistics on women's existing programmes/schemes of the Government pertaining to women, development of self-employment and entrepreneurship among women, skill development, and development of Cadres for promoting employment of women.

Their findings indicated that the problems of women's employment were characterised by (i) The inability of women to reach for services and assistance programmes offered by government and semi-government institutions; (ii) A lack of awareness among institutions about the need to promote employment of women (iii) The tendency of economically powerful organisations to obtain financial and other assistance in the name of women but diverting it to other areas of investment; and (iv) The failure of technological modernization of several industries in expanding employment opportunities for women, widening of skill training opportunities, and upward mobility of women workers.

The Group recommended earmarking of funds in sectoral plans; increasing their participation in decision making processes; and collecting of micro level data on employment conditions, unemployment situation and skill profile of local women, amongst others.

Development of Village Level Organisations: Report of the Working Group on Development of Village Level Organisation of Rural Women. June 1987. Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Department of Rural Development, New Delhi.

A Working Group was constituted by the Department of Rural Development with twofold purposes. One of the purpose was to review the objectives and functioning of associate organization, Mahila Mandals and youth clubs as well as their links with other agencies. The second purpose was to make recommendations on the basis of the findings especially about programmes to be implemented through the organization, coordination with the work of other agencies, association of weaker sections with the associate organizations, and strengthening the cadre of workers or extension agents.

For detailed deliberations, three sub-groups were constituted. These included sub-groups on the needs of rural women, objectives of Mahila Mandals and their involve-

ment in rural development; sub-group on rural youth, their promotion, strengthening and training for participation in rural development programmes; and sub-group on block, district and state level functionaries for women's programmes and their training.

The report was submitted in two parts. Part I dealt with village level organizations for rural women including indicators of neglect, assessment of existing programme, new programmes, implications, and so forth. Part II dealt with development of rural youth organization particularly to promote and strengthen Yuvak Mandals

Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85: Women and Development Chapter 27 Government of India. Planning Commission. New Delhi.

The Constitution of India not only provides for equal rights and privileges for women and men but also for making special provision for women. A series, of social legislations have been enacted from time to time for raising the status of women in the country. The Five Year Plans have consistently placed special emphasis on providing minimum health facilities integrated with family welfare and nutrition for women and children, acceleration of women's education, their increase in the labour force and welfare services for women in need. Various welfare and development schemes have been introduced to improve the living conditions of women and to increase their access to and control over material and social resources. Special steps have been taken to remove legal, social and other constraints to enable them to make use of the rights and new opportunities becoming available for them.

27.2 Various studies show that women are becoming increasingly conscious of their rights and capabilities. However, the demographic features of female population like excessive mortality in female children resulting in persistent decline in sex ratio, low rate of literacy, and low economic status stress the need for greater attention to the economic emancipation of women. The low status of women in large segments of Indian society cannot be raised without opening up of opportunities of independent employment and income for them. But the process of change to raise the status of women under various spheres of socio-economic activities would require sustained effort over a period of time.

REVIEW

27.3 Under the different Five Year Plans, general as well as special programmes were taken up for the welfare of women and also to cater to their special requirements. A wide network of maternity and child health centres and family welfare centres were established. An attempt to integrate the family welfare programme with general health services has been made. Prophylaxis against nutritional anaemia amongst mothers and immunisation of pregnant women against tetanus has been taken up along with prophylaxis against blindness in children caused by Vitamin 'A' deficiency and immunisation against diphtheria, whooping-cough, tetanus and polio for children.

27.4 Special nutrition programme was started in 1970-71 for providing nutritional supplements to the most vulnerable group of pregnant and nursing mothers and children of the age group 0—5. Nutrition education has been made a basic component of supplementary nutrition, health and education programmes.

27.5 Emphasis has been laid on increasing the enrolment of girls in schools by providing various incentives. Functional literacy as part of the national adult education programme as well as under the Integrated Child Development Services projects has been given special emphasis.

27.6 The Equal Remuneration Act aims to eliminate discrimination in remuneration against women. Labour laws have been made to provide for material benefits and creches in units employing women.

27.7 Social welfare programmes cater to the special needs of women who by reason of some handicap—social, economic, physical or mental—are unable to avail of or are traditionally denied the amenities and services provided by the community. In the beginning, emphasis was on the provision of institutional services but it has now been shifted to the preventive and developmental aspects.

27.8 Despite all these development measures and the Constitutional legal guarantees, women have lagged behind men in almost all sectors. There has been a steady decline in sex ratio. For 1,000 men there were 972 women in 1901, which became 946 in 1951 and 930 in 1971, while the position is opposite in the developed countries. Sex ratio for all ages in 1971 was 951 for rural areas and 857 for urban areas. The inter-State variations are considerable. The ratio is adverse in the States of Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and West Bengal. It is most favourable in Kerala, followed by Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Andhra

Pradesh. Similarly, the expectation of life at birth, a good indicator of development, shows that it is 44.7 for the females against 46.4 for the males in 1971.

27.9 The surveys by the Registrar-General of India reveal that the infant mortality rate (IMR) is more among female babies as compared to males in rural and urban areas as may be seen from the table below:

Infant Mortality Rate by Sex and Residence

Year	Rural		Urban		All India	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1972	141	161	85	85	132	148
1978	130	142	69	71	120	131

27.10 It has been estimated that in 1978-79 of the total non-enrolled children of the age group 6—14, two-thirds were girls. IN 1979-80, in the age group 6—11, the population of girls in schools was two-thirds that of the boys (about 66 per cent for girls against about 100.2 per cent for boys). In the age group 11—14, the number of girls in the schools was half that of the boys (28 per cent for girls and 52.0 per cent for boys).

27.11 In literacy also, excluding 0—4 years age group, the number of women literates is less than half of the males (i.e., 21.97 per cent for women against 45.95 per cent for males). The rural female literacy rate is only 13.2 per cent (1971) while the urban rate is 42.3 per cent. About 83 districts have less than 5 per cent female literacy and 113 between 5 and 10 per cent. The female literacy for scheduled caste is 6.44 per cent and for scheduled tribe is 4.85 per cent. The rates of literacy varied widely from 3.58 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh, 4.8 per cent in Rajasthan, 7.2 per cent in Bihar to 61 per cent in Kerala.

27.12 Despite preventive legislation, the age of marriage for girls specially in rural areas and lower strata of society has remained low. The Report of the Committee on the Status of Women shows that the percentage of girls married by 14 years of age in rural areas in 1961 was as high as 22 as compared to 7 among the urban females of the same age group. By 1971, this percentage came down to 14 in rural areas while it dropped to 4 in urban areas. Early marriages result in frequent pregnancies, poor health and lack of opportunity for proper personality development. Repeated pregnancies account for high incidence of anaemia and maternal malnutrition, ultimately leading to high maternal mortality rate.

27.13 Women labour force participation rate remained generally unchanged for the last three decades around 28 per cent while in the case of men it was fairly stable around 57 per cent. In the organised sector the women's share increased only slightly from 11 per cent in 1971 to 12.4 per cent in 1979. A few women in all walks of life reached the top positions but on the whole they continue to be concentrated mainly in low-scale, low-wage and drudgery involving jobs. Women are mainly employed in the unorganised sector which forms the overwhelming majority of female workers (over 90 per cent). This is also linked with their low rate of participation in the training programmes in industrial training institutes, polytechnics, engineering colleges, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, technical and industrial schools, though special measures to expand training opportunities for women in non-traditional occupations have been taken. The details given in Annexures 27.1 and 27.2 are relevant in this regard.

STRATEGY

27.14 The main drawbacks in women's development have thus been mainly preoccupation with repeated pregnancies without respite in physical workload, lack of education—formal and non-formal and a preponderance of social prejudices along with lack of independent economic generation activity or independent assets. The strategy thus has to be threefold—of education employment and health. They are interdependent and dependent on the total developmental process. In addition, the voluntary adoption of the small family norm has to be promoted among all couples.

27.15 In the Plan, the basic approach is of the family as a unit of development. Within this approach, special attention on the most vulnerable members will be given. The most vulnerable members may change from family to family and within the family from time to time. But for some time in future, women will continue to be one of the most vulnerable members of the family. Hence, the economic emancipation of the family with specific attention to women education of children and family planning will constitute the three major operational aspects of the family centred poverty alleviation strategy.

27.16 In order to understand and analyse the backwardness of women a disaggregated view of the problem, according to groups, communities and areas is necessary. An aggregate picture is sometimes misleading, e.g., the average female literacy in India is 22 per cent against about 4 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh.

27.17 Separate cells in organisations and agencies gen-

erating substantial employment opportunities to look after the women's interests are helpful but have a limited role. It is more important to create a general awareness and understanding of the problems of women's employment in all the top policy and decision making and executive personnel. There is also the special problem facing women like the preference for male children for social and cultural reasons. This will require awareness, understanding and action. The best way to do so is to educate the children, orient the teachers, examine the text books and teaching-aids and ensure that the next generation grows up with new thinking. As it is not enough to wait for them, non-formal education of men and women is necessary as an immediate short-term measure. Both men and women need education in home science so that the concept of symmetrical families can take root.

27.18 In order to take coorrective measures as the programmes are implemented, the statistical data of physical achievement in beneficiary-oriented programmes will have to be collected by sex. The implementation of programmes would be reviewed from time to time.

27.19 Economic independence would accelerate the improvement of the status of women. Government would endeavour to give joint titles to husband and wife in all development activities involving transfer of assets. This would be taken up for implementation to start within programmes like distribution of land and house-sites and beneficiary-oriented economic units.

27.20 Voluntary action has a key role to play in mobilising public support against social prejudices. Hence its strengthening at the grassroot level will be necessary. Such organisation of voluntary action is necessary for creating a proper climate for the introduction of social legislation as well as for its effective implementation and the provision of legal aid.

27.21 For promoting adequate developmental efforts for women at different levels and creating needed channels for women to participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives, grassroot level organisations should be promoted. Mahila Mandals and other voluntary agencies would be encouraged to take up socio-economic programmes for providing wages and self-employment in rural areas. They would be linked with cooperatives and federations for marketing of products. Adequate attention should be paid to offer technical and managerial assistance to these agencies so that they would prepare viable economic projects for attracting institutional finance and market their products. Marketing, being crucial to the programme, the arrangements would need to be reviewed.

27.22 The Central Social Welfare Board would continue to be largely responsible to extend support, both technical and financial, to voluntary agencies, particularly in the backward areas. The programmes of the Central Social Welfare Board and those of individual developments will be functionally integrated so as to optimise the benefits from all programmes intended for women.

27.23 Advisory Committees at different levels would be set up for reviewing the adequacy of the implementing machineries and periodic progress for various social legislations such as Anti-Dowry Act, Child Marriage Restraint Act, Indian Succession Act, etc. The National Committee for Women headed by the Prime Minister will provide overall guidance and leadership in this field.

27.24 At district levels, special cell for increasing women's participation through wage and self-employment would be set up as part of the proposed machinery for district manpower planning and employment generation.

27.25 Research and studies to improve data base regarding women would be supported. Coordination, evaluation and monitoring of the programmes would need to be improved. Science and technology to reduce drudgery of household work would be supported.

Education

27.26 The programmes for universalisation of elementary education will be specially directed towards higher enrolment and retention of girls in schools. This would require Balwari-cum-creches attached to the schools to enable the girls to attend school since otherwise they would have to stay at home to look after the younger brothers and sisters in the absence of mothers at work. It would also require income-generation work for girls outside the school hours to supplement to family's income. Other incentives like uniforms, free books and stationery etc., already in force, would need to be effectively expanded. Women teachers, where necessary, would be appointed in rural areas to encourage girls education. Residential quarters for women teachers would also be constructed. Science teaching in girls' schools/colleges will be strengthened to achieve greater participation of women in science and technology. Admission policies will be streamlined to promote greater enrolment of women in engineering, electronics, agricultural, veterinary, fishery and forestry courses. In education and training, women would thus be brought to the mainstream along with men to share the facilities fully.

27.27 The functional literacy programme would be expanded, specially in areas having low female literacy

rates. Special non-formal educational programmes will be introduced for girls in the age group 15—20 years who could not complete formal schooling earlier. Every effort will be made to ensure that at least 1/3 of trainees under the TRYSEM programme are girls. Special Krishi, Udyog and Van Vigyan Kendras will be established for women.

27.28 For boosting the programmes for education of women belonging to backward classes the number of girls' hostels would be increased. The rates of post-matric scholarships for different courses are higher for girls as compared to boys. This scheme would be further expanded to provide larger opportunities for girls. Instead of increasing separate women's polytechnics, which were developed as multipurpose institutions for imparting training in arts, crafts, etc., co-educational institutions would be encouraged as far as possible.

Health

27.29 In health, provision will be made for continuing and expanding the maternal and child health schemes including ante-natal, natal and post-natal services, training of popular 'DAIS' who are already practising in every village so as to reduce the maternal and neo-natal deaths and complications. Training capacity for ANMs would be further augmented to meet the requirement of sub-centres. Experience reveals that ANMs posted in rural areas are not able to adjust to the local conditions due to lack of familiarity with the socio-cultural situation, accommodation and security. To overcome these field problems, efforts would be made to select girls from local areas, relax minimum educational qualifications, raise upper-age limit and give preference to widows or deserted women. In almost all the hospitals, the nursing personnel are mainly female. The training facilities for them will be expanded. Family welfare programmes will receive high priority. Sustained effort would be made to create consciousness, acceptance and demand for this programme. Co-operation of the voluntary organisations would be sought for disseminating relevant health and family planning information and for launching a national movement for population stabilization.

27.30 Effort would be made to expand the minimum health facilities integrated with family welfare and nutrition. The nutritional status of a child at birth is influenced by the nutritional status of his mother. It is well documented that a vast majority of pregnant and nursing mothers, especially belonging to the low socio-economic group, live on diets which are inadequate. The high incidence of pre-maturity, low birth weight of babies and

neo-natal mortality can be attributed to poor nutritional condition among the mothers. In view of this, importance will be given to improving the maternal nutrition status. With an increase in women's employment, the income of the household would go up thereby resulting not only in raising the nutrition and child-care in the family but also bringing down the birth rate and infant mortality rate.

27.31 The long-term approach to solving the problem of malnutrition in women would be to generate employment among them as it would provide purchasing power to women which will have an impact on her as well as her family's nutritional status. Along with this, basic services like health creche-cum-balwadis, etc, would be provided to enable their employment retention. Till the long-term programme effectively builds up, nutrition intervention to most vulnerable groups of women, namely pregnant and nursing mothers from the weakest sections of the society, would continue to get nutrition supplement under the Supplementary Nutrition Programme. Education will also be imparted on the production and consumption of nutritious foods and on the adoption of simple horticultural remedies involving kitchen gardening for the major nutritional maladies of each block.

Employment

27.32 One of the most important means of achieving improvement in the status of women would be to secure for them a fair share of employment opportunities. Areas and sectors where women's employment is either low or on the decline would be identified and corrective measures initiated to promote additional avenues for employment. Efforts would be made to offer larger employment for them in the schemes for public distribution system, rural godowns Operation Flood II, Dairy Development and social forestry and in armed forces. Modernisation of traditional occupations of women such as spinning and weaving, match-making, coir, cashew, rural marketing, agriculture, animal husbandary and fishery, etc., would be selective and would include simultaneous development of skills for alternative employment for them. Mechanisation will be encouraged in such areas where the processing or manufacturing involves extremely strenuous and debilitating hard work which is injurious to health. The impact of new projects on women's employment will be monitored.

27.33 Family aid services would be supported so as to enable women to remain in employment. Enforcement of statutory obligations for setting up creches would be

pursued vigorously. Creches would be established in the hostels for working women, State and Central Government offices, public sector undertakings, residential colonies and project sites. Creches will have to be designed for regular establishments as well as for agricultural, construction and migrant labour families. In rural areas this would be linked up with the scheme of NREP. The implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act would be reviewed and appropriate measures introduced for their effective functioning. Measures would be taken for the payment of wages/salaries earned by women directly to them.

27.34 The specific needs and problems of self-employed women will be identified and steps taken to extend appropriate support to self-employed women like street vendors, petty shop-keepers, weavers, etc.

27.35 A major step to be taken to promote female employment would be to expand and diversify the education and training opportunities available to women. Bias is often at work to prevent women from joining certain types of education and training in sufficient numbers. Appropriate training facilities would be initiated for the skill-development of women job seekers to promote their employability including self-employment. They would be eligible for employment and training in all fields provided they fulfil the required qualifications. Under the Apprenticeship Training Scheme, placement of increased number of women trainees would receive special attention. Under the Vocational Training Programme for women, rural training component and setting up of more regional institutions are envisaged. The national scheme of Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) is expected to cover a large number of rural women. These would also be expected to facilitate the removal of skill constraints and biases working against the recruitment of women trainees. A fair share of stipends, hostel seats, etc. would be made available in order to facilitate rapid growth in the number of female trainees. As an incentive, special prizes and awards may be instituted for women trainees or students in recognised institutes. The programmes would be integrated with production activities.

Social Welfare

27.36 The coverage of the programme of hostels for working women would be stepped up with emphasis on making this scheme a self-financing project as far as possible. Measures for re-entry of women who go out of

employment for raising their families would be considered along with the provision of part-time jobs in an organised manner. Besides arrangements for keeping their knowledge up-to-date, specially in science and technology would be considered. Training and rehabilitation schemes for women in need of care and protection would be formulated to facilitate their absorption into the normal stream of socio-economic life. Institutional services would be expanded selectively to provide shelter to the most needy and unrehabilitable category only. The socially and physically handicapped women would be helped to take advantage of the services provided under social defence and handicapped sub-sectors of social welfare programmes. However, the trades under the training programmes under various institutions would have to be diversified to make their rehabilitation successful.

27.37 In summary, the major thrust of the VI Plan in the field of welfare of women is their economic upliftment through greater opportunities for salaried, self and wage

employment. For this purpose, appropriate technologies, services and public policies will be introduced. The technological package will include imparting new skills and upgarding existing skills. The services package will pay attention to training and credit needs and to marketing. The public policy package will include measures in the area of ownership rights, enforcement of wage laws and employment impact assessment with reference to the employment of women in development projects. Women's organisations will be assisted to grow in effectiveness. Specific attention will be paid for the removal of socio-economic biases resulting in the neglect of female children and women. Measures for their improvement of health and nutritional status will be strengthened. Programmes relating to education, health, nutrition and employment would no doubt go a long way in the removal of social disabilities facing women. However, the improvements in the socio-economic status of women would depend to a large extent on the social change in the value system, attitudes and social structure prevailing in the country.

Annexure 27.1

Education level-wise participation of women in Labour Force and unemployment among them in 1977-78 as revealed by 32nd round of NSS.
(Principal activity rural-States)

Category	% Share in Labour force		Labour force Partici- pation Rate		Unemployment Rate	
(1)	(2)		(3)		(4)	
RURAL						
(i) Illiterate	88.11	(55.01)	34.19	(67.56)	4.04	(0.60)
(ii) Literate and upto Middle School	10.68	(39.33)	16.01	(57.56)	13.16	(2.75)
(iii) Secondary School	1.02	(4.64)	33.65	(75.27)	45.84	(13.01)
(iv) Graduate and above	0.19	(1.02)	55.54	(89.00)	44.81	(19.72)
ALL	100.00	(100.00)	30.51	(63.67)	5.52	(2.22)
URBAN						
(i) Illiterate	25.83	(22.09)	23.18	(60.39)	7.88	(2.16)
(ii) Literate and upto Middle School	35.49	(50.85)	9.03	(53.84)	25.65	(6.57)
(iii) Secondary School	25.71	(18.38)	22.26	(72.27)	42.37	(10.03)
(iv) Graduate and above	12.97	(8.68)	43.64	(88.02)	35.92	(9.31)
ALL	100.00	(100.00)	17.06	(16.12)	17.76	(6.48)
RURAL & URBAN						
(i) Illiterate	52.59	(48.43)	32.88	(66.84)	4.37	(0.74)
(ii) Literate and upto Middle School	28.56	(41.63)	13.49	(56.60)	16.18	(3.69)
(iii) Secondary School	13.78	(7.39)	25.80	(73.75)	43.78	(11.56)
(iv) Graduate and above	5.07	(2.55)	45.36	(88.33)	37.49	(12.63)
ALL	100.00	(100.00)	27.83	(62.92)	7.01	(3.07)

N.B. : Figures in brackets represent the male participation rate.

Annexure 27.2
Industry-wise Employment of women in the organised Sector (As on 31st March, each Year)

Sl. No.	Industry Division	1971		1979	
		Number of Women Employed	Proportion of Women to Total Employed	Number of Women Employed	Proportion of Women to Total Employed
(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
		(000)	(Percent)	(000)	(Percent)
1.	Agriculture and Allied Activities	405	37.6	581.6	35.9
2.	Mining and quarrying	54	8.9	85.8	9.64
3.	Manufacturing	422	9.0	573.3	9.78
4.	Electricity, Gas and Water Supply	16	3.7	13.4	2.0
5.	Construction	56	5.9	59.0	5.29
6.	Trade and Commerce	29	5.0	20.7	5.46
7.	Transport, Storage and Communications	44	1.9	67.9	2.54
8.	Financial, Insurance, Real Estate and Business	865	13.4	66.0	7.78
9.	Community, Social and Personal Services	(included in Item.8)		1194.2	15.56
	Total	1891	11.1	2760.8	12.4

SOURCE: Directorate General of Employment and Training.

Report of the National Committee on Role and Participation of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development, 1979-80. Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi.

An agreement was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Government of India and the Food Agriculture Organization (UN) to prepare a 'Country Review and Analysis on the Role and Participation of women in Rural Development'. The thrust of the report was women in rural setting and direction of change, planned development and rural women, statistical profile of rural women, emerging issues and suggested strategies and recommendations.

Amongst recommendations those mentioned in the Draft Sixth Plan were also included. The report focused on explicitly mentioning rural women as beneficiaries of all rural and agricultural programmes, provision of essential support services for rural women, promotion of programmes and appropriate technology to reduce domestic drudgery and improve local environ, and recognizing women's claim to land ownership. Other recommendations included promoting village level organizations of rural women, establishing institutionalized support for research and training in rural women's problems and increasing representation of rural women in policy framing, decision making and advisory bodies at all levels.

Report of the Working Group on Personnel Policies for Bringing Greater Involvement of Women in Science and Technology 1981, Government of India, Ministry of Social Welfare, New Delhi.

A working Group was set up by the Ministry of Social Welfare on 'Personnel Policies for Bringing Greater Involvement of Women in Science and Technology'. The purpose was (i) to review the extent of participation of women in scientific establishment at different levels; (ii) to consider the needs and difficulties of women scientists that may act as constraints in their fuller participation; and (iii) to suggest suitable measures for facilitating and promoting greater involvement of women in Science and Technology.

While acknowledging the necessity of personnel policies for increasing the participation of women in science and technology, the Group felt that it was also necessary to pay attention to the contribution that science and technology should make to improve the life and status of women. For instance, attention should be paid to development of low cost efficient fuel system, household solar cookers, solar drying equipments, simple technologies for household work, planting energy forests, coal utilization, energy storage, survey and screening of medicinal, aromatic and other economic plants, and technologies relevant to women's needs.

**Seventh Five Year Plan 1985-90: Socio-Economic
Programmes for Women Chapter 17.**

Government of India, Planning Commission, New Delhi.

Background

14.1 The Constitution of India provides for equal rights and privileges for men and women and makes special provisions for women to help them improve their status in society. A number of social enactments have been put on the statute books for removing various constraints which hindered their progress. In spite of these measures, women have lagged behind men in different spheres, especially in education. The female literacy rate has consistently been lower in rural as well as urban sectors. In rural areas, where 77 per cent of the female population lives, women's literacy rate is only 17.96 per cent. The urban literacy rate for females is 47.82 per cent. The literacy rate for females varies from 65.73 per cent in Kerala to only 11.42 per cent in Rajasthan. There are many reasons for this generally of sociological nature.

14.2 The health problem of women in society at large is another crucial area not given the required attention. Due to the predominantly patriarchal order, women are confined within an oppressive environment. Differences are frequently noted between health and nutritional status of men and women. Nutritional surveys have indicated high rates of inadequacies among females compared to males. Female infants and children are subject to neglect in respect of nutrition and health care. Statistics from primary health centres show that adult women do not generally take treatment from them. Maternal mortality continues to be very high. A number of studies have indicated that a large number of children suffer from malnutrition to which the mother's poor health contributes to a great extent. Anaemia among rural women is estimated to be as high as 60-80 per cent, leading to low birth weight among babies.

14.3 According to the 1981 Census only 14 per cent of the total female population in the country fall in the category of "workers". The unpaid economic activities of women and their contribution through work in the domestic sectors remain unreported in the census. An ILO study has estimated that the value of unpaid house-

hold work constitutes 25-39 per cent of the total gross national product in developing countries.

14.4 Women play an important role in agricultural production, animal husbandary and other related activities such as storage, marketing of produce, food processing etc. Apart from these, they spend almost 10-12 hours per day doing household chores including fetching of water and gathering of fuel. Large number of female labour are engaged in the plantation sector. About 54 per cent of rural women and 26 per cent of urban women are engaged in marginal occupations in order to supplement the family income by collection of fish, small game, firewood, cowdung, maintenance of kitchen gardens, tailoring, weaving and teaching but the quantification of this activity, in terms of work-hours contributed, or its income generating equivalent was not attempted or recorded.

14.5 Recently a declining trend has been observed in the employment of women labourers. Some of the new technologies have displaced women from many of the traditional activities. The incomes of the poor households are supplemented by women, although they have to face many problems due to family responsibilities, limited mobility and social restrictions. The Green Revolution has led to increased demands for casual labour dispossession of small landholders from their land and consequently, pushing out of women from such small landholding to become wage earners. Though many of the tasks performed by males are getting mechanised, the women continue to toil in labour intensive jobs like rice transplantation, cleaning and storage of grain in post-harvest operations, picking of leaves and fruit, handshelling groundnut, picking out common-seed etc. Women get limited job opportunities in modern occupations/trades as they do not have access to the training required for new technologies. In many areas where multiple crops are grown, the workload of women has increased. In industry women continue to be employed mostly on unskilled jobs. The average earning of a regular salaried woman worker continues to be less than that of a man.

14.6 An emerging phenomenon in the rural scene is the "single parent rural family," due to large scale migration of men seeking employment in urban areas. The woman has to assume the role of head of the household and responsibility for the support and care of children and also of the elders in the rural family. Her income is inadequate to meet the family needs. Thus, there is tension in the family as remittances from the men-folk are mostly irregular as also meagre, given the high cost (and many temptations) of urban living.

14.7 There is considerable evidence to show that parents discriminate against girls in the matter of science education. With the majority of women being engaged in agriculture and allied fields an exposure to science and technology aimed at, and for the benefit of women, has yet to come about. There is a felt need to structure courses, through visual as well as other (literacy-based) media, which are related to health and health care, nutrition (especially of young children), simple-to-follow techniques against morbidity (especially from water-borne infections) and infant mortality (e.g. oral rehydration therapy), food preservation and enrichment and for a balanced diet using readily available natural foods and additives. Inputs of science and technology are required also in housing cooking and performance of other household work, which can lead to a considerable reduction in drudgery. Time and energy thus saved could be used by rural women for improvement of their knowledge, skill and aptitude levels.

14.8 There has been, in general a lack of awareness among the people about various legislations and programmes being implemented for the benefit of women. Although the socio-cultural situation, to a great extent keeps women isolated, lately the radio, TV and other mass communication media have exposed them to information and knowledge. However, such exposure has not yet resulted in creating consciousness to the desired extent among women nor has it succeeded in loosening the hold of tradition oriented thinking and mores. The significant role that is rightly women's in such vital areas as attitudes to education, health and health care as well as nutrition and related delivery system reduction of infant mortality; in meaningful participation in many skilled jobs in advanced science and technology areas like medicine and medical research, electronics and informatics, education and teaching, energy conservation and in improving the quality of life, has not yet been grasped fully by society at large.

Sixth Plan Review

14.9 During the Sixth Plan, a variety of programmes were taken up under different sectors of development to ameliorate the working conditions of women and to raise their economic and social status.

14.10 A special cell created in 1976 continued to look after the employment of women and monitor the implementation of the equal Remuneration Act, enacted to provide for wages equal to those of men for work of similar nature. Three regional vocational training centres one each at Bangalore, Bombay and Trivandrum, and a National Vocational Training Institute at New Delhi, with a total annual intake capacity of 600 women trainees, were set up by the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE & T). A part from these 144 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) exclusively meant for women were functioning in different States by the end of the Sixth Plan. The intake capacity in these institutions is 11.200 per annum.

14.11 In the Rural Development Sector, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) accorded priority to women heads of households. On the whole women comprised 7 per cent of the beneficiaries covered under the IRDP during the Sixth Plan. A decision was also taken that a minimum of one third of the beneficiaries under TRYSEM would be women and thereby about 3.27 lakh women constituting 34.8 per cent of the total number of beneficiaries were trained. A new scheme, namely "Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas" (DWCRA) was started in 1982-83 as a pilot project in 50 blocks of the country. Women who were not in a position to take advantage of scheme under the IRDP Programme were organised into homogeneous groups of 15 to 20. Each such group was provided training in a chosen economic activity along with necessary infrastructure. Such activities included weaving, fish vending, broom and rope making, brick making and pickle making. Training was also given in candle making and in baking. The scheme has proved quite popular. Over 1900 groups were formed and trained, benefiting about 30,000 women during the two-year period, 1983-85.

14.12 The scheme of Krishi Vigyan Kendras introduced for bridging the gap between the farmer's knowledge and available technology also covered women. Eight home science colleges for women attached to agricultural universities were set up to provide training and research facilities.

14.13 A radical move in the concerted attempt to improve women's status was the decision to confer joint titles on husband and wife in all development activities involving transfer of assets distribution of land and house sites.

14.14 In order to encourage girls into elementary and higher education, a Centrally sponsored scheme was taken up for providing financial assistance to educationally-backward States for establishing non-formal education centres exclusively for girls. Financial assistance was given for appointment of women teachers in primary schools. Incentives were provided to States at different administrative levels for encouraging girls to enrol in larger numbers. Text-books for elementary and high schools were evaluated with a view to vocationalising higher education.

14.15 Nearly 73 per cent of the total non-enrolled children in the 6-11 years age group were girls. In the age group 11-14 years, only 38 per cent of girls had been enrolled for formal education. The drop-out rate for girls both at the elementary and secondary levels of education continues to be high. To boost enrolment in the primary classes, early childhood education centres for children in the age group 3-6 years were set up as adjuncts to primary schools for the first time in the Sixth Five Year Plan in rural and backward areas. These centres also provided creche facilities for younger siblings of girls attending primary schools. The scheduled caste/scheduled tribe girls continued to receive higher rates of post matric scholarship as compared to boys. Other incentives to girls included free clothing and free tuition. To give additional fillip to higher education among women, separate universities for women have been established in the States of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

14.16 Special programmes were taken up for women in adult education centres, providing education in subjects like health, nutrition, child care and family planning. The curriculum also included skills like teaching, sewing, embroidery and building up of a awareness and functionality through discussions and literature. The enrolment of women under the Adult Education Programme in December, 1984 was reported 2.89 million, the coverage being about 52 per cent of the total enrolment. Besides, 4,62,000 women were also covered under the programme "Functional Literacy for Adult Women", implemented by the Ministry of Social Welfare.

14.17 Under the scheme 'Science and Technology for Women' a wide spectrum of activities was taken up. Pro-

jects were sponsored for development of smokless chullahs, use of solar cookers, setting up bio-gas plants, and devices for improving the water purification system. New programmes which had a bearing on the overall economic development of women and reduction in their drudgery have been identified, such as improved agricultural implements for farming in hill areas, better methods of sheep-rearing and wool-spinning devices for women. Several technologies were developed in the areas of transplantation, post harvest activities, fish-cum-paddy culture, processing of rice products, fish processing, pearl culture and in the cashew and coir industry. Research and development activities were taken up to minimise physical discomfort to orthopaedically handicapped women while working on handlooms.

14.18 Added impetus was given to the training of women in instrumentation technology for repair and maintenance of electronic equipments in offices and hospitals. In certain areas of West Bengal, tribal women were trained in making blocks from stone chips, in bamboo craft and rope making. Tribal women were also trained as rural health workers in Maharashtra. With a view to training women in identification of herbs of medicinal value and cultivation and preparation of standardised medicinal formulations, experiments were conducted on vegetable gardening in courtyards and on rooftops. Studies were undertaken to assess the incidence of bronchial asthma and skin diseases amongst women engaged in sericulture.

14.19 A report was brought out on "Occupational and Environmental Health Problems of Indian Women", containing detailed information on the health hazards to women in different occupations. Also, a film, "Science and Technology for Women", is under preparation.

14.20 A number of technology demonstration-cum-training centres at selected focal points all over the country were set up by National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) to provide expertise and resources to women entrepreneurs in respect of new technologies relevant to their daily needs and economic enterprises. Low-cost industrial technologies were also developed, relating to food products, post-harvest operation, domestic aids for pure drinking water, educational toys, low-cost latrines and improved chullahs. A number of projects on agro-waste compaction, machines for converting agricultural waste into fuel and other technologies relating to food, chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals, energy and fuel, building materials, were taken up by NRDC. A

compendium on appropriate technologies for women developed by NRDC was also published.

14.21 A major step was taken by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to provide a boost to women's participation in the field of science and technology by enhancing by 10 years the age of eligibility for women scientists to receive research fellowships.

14.22 Various measures have been taken to improve women's health and nutritional status. Nutritional intervention to the most vulnerable group of women, namely, pregnant and nursing mothers belonging to the weaker sections, was given high priority. Under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), special nutrition was provided to pregnant women and nursing mothers. At the end of the Sixth Plan, more than 1.2 million such women were receiving benefits under the programme.

14.23 Provision was made for expanding maternal and child health (MCH) programmes including training of local dais. In order to induct local women as auxiliary nurse-midwives (ANMs), the educational qualifications for their training were relaxed to the seventh standard if girls with requisite educational qualifications at the higher level were not available. The upper age limit of training for ANMs was also raised. Prophylaxis programmes against nutritional anaemia of pregnant and lactating mothers were implemented. Iron and folic acid tablets were distributed to more than 72.5 million pregnant women and nursing mothers. Tetanus Toxoid was administered to about 36 million pregnant women.

14.24 Under the family welfare programme, the couple protection rate was expected to have reached 36.6 per cent by the end of March 1985. It is worth mentioning that the female infant mortality rate had fallen from 148 in 1972 to 115 in 1980, whereas the male infant mortality rate fell from 132 in 1972 to 113 in 1980. The fall in mortality rate of female infants has been more rapid as compared to males. However, the rate of infant mortality is still too high (though there are considerable inter-State differences) and needs to be reduced drastically. The sex ratio which had persistently been declining upto 1971 had shown a slight rise in 1981. In the 1971 Census, the sex ratio was recorded as 930, but this rose to 933 in the 1981 Census. The maternal mortality rate of 4.17 per thousand live births during 1980 continued to be disturbingly high.

14.25 A number of schemes were taken up in the social welfare sector to benefit destitute and needy women. By the end of 1984-85, voluntary organisations were assisted

in the construction of 344 hostels for working women. Nearly 3000 women were given training in skills in modern industries and provided employment under the scheme 'Employment and income-Generating Training-cum-production Centres for Women'. Condensed courses of education and vocational training courses were organised by a number of voluntary organisations benefiting 1,11,000 women. Under the 'socio-economic programme' 3589 units were sanctioned, with a coverage of 47,011 women. The scheme of "Assistance to women in distress" covered only 9,260 women through 267 vocational courses in non-traditional trades with the aim of making these women economically independent.

14.26 For creating increasing awareness of the role of women in development and the need for improvement of their status, various media units under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting presented appealing programmes on social and economic problems and other related issues faced by women.

14.27 To mould public opinion against atrocities on women, a number of interviews and discussions were held with legal experts, social workers and officials of women's organisations. All India Radio in collaboration with different State Governments and assisted by UNICEF, organised twelve radio workshops on maternity and child care. The various Doordarshan Kendras also included in their programmes messages pertaining to the status of women. Audience programmes for rural people and industrial workers were also telecast. The Press Information Bureau took up a programme of mass education and information to promote positive social attitudes towards women and motivate people to fight social evils like dowry, child marriage, drinking, etc. A booklet entitled 'Status of Women' was published by the Directorate of Field Publicity. The Song and Drama Division of AIR took up programmes for women's upliftment. The Film and Television Institute of India prepared programmes highlighting women's problems and development schemes for them.

SEVENTH PLAN : OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

14.28 The long-term objectives of the developmental programmes for women would be to raise their economic and social status in order to bring them into the mainstream of national development. Due recognition has to be accorded to the role and contribution of women in the various socio-economic, political and cultural activities.

14.29 In the Seventh Plan, the basic approach would be

to inculcate confidence among women and bring about an awareness of their own potential for development, as also of their rights and privileges. The various mass communication media would be utilised extensively in this task. Special measures would be initiated for strict enforcement of the Dowry Prohibition Act and also to prevent harassment and atrocities on women. Voluntary agencies and educational institutions would be fully involved in launching organised campaigns to combat these evils. An integrated multi-disciplinary approach would be adopted covering employment, education, health, nutrition, application of science and technology and other related aspects in areas of interest to women. Efforts would be made to extend facilities for income-generating activities and to enable women to participate actively in socio-economic development. The educational programmes will be re-structured and the school curricula will be modified to eliminate gender bias. Enrolment of girls in elementary, higher secondary and higher education courses, formal as well as non-formal, will be given high priority.

14.30 In the field of science and technology stress would be laid on evolving devices to reduce the drudgery of women so that the time saved is utilised for development activities. Training and retraining would be ensured for many S and T related programmes. The beneficiary-oriented programmes in the various sectors of development would be suitably modified or re-oriented so that the due share of benefits from such programmes is availed by them.

14.31 Collation and analysis of information and relevant data on the development programmes for women will be undertaken in an effective manner.

Major Programmes

14.32 *Education:* During the Seventh Plan, sustained efforts, through various schemes and measures, would have to be made in order to reach 100 per cent coverage in elementary education, for children upto the age of 14 years. The Scheme of "Financial Assistance to Voluntary Agencies to run early childhood education (pre-school) centres as adjuncts of primary/middle schools" would be expanded, particularly to evolve innovative models suited to specific learner groups or areas. The programme would receive greater attention in all the ICDS blocks. Educational campaigns for tackling the prejudices and socio-religious constraints would be taken up on a wider scale since nearly three fourths of the out-of-school children are girls. Efforts would be made to enrol and retain girls in school, especially in rural areas and for children belonging

to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other weaker sections. At the elementary stage, education has been made free for girls in all States/UTs. Priority would continue to be given to women in teachers training programmes to increase the availability of trained women teachers and thereby to enhance girls enrolment and retention in schools. Incentives like uniforms, free textbooks and attendance scholarships would be continued to the needy girls in all schools.

14.33 Non-formal elementary education would be expanded to benefit girls in the age-group 6-14 years.

14.34 Under the Adult Education Programme, apart from increasing the coverage, the educational content of the programme would be modified to incorporate new value systems in the community regarding the role of women in the family and community.

14.35 The Seventh Plan envisages, among other schemes the preparation of district level plans as a mass movement with local community participation both for activating and implementing the literacy programmes, and the creation of special mechanisms to monitor the progress of implementation at State level. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Training of Rural Youth in Self-Employment (TRYSEM) and other such programmes would have a component of functional literacy for women beneficiaries.

14.36 Talented girls would be encouraged to pursue higher education. It is also proposed to expand the "Open Learning Systems", including correspondence courses for them.

14.37 In order to promote technical and vocational education for girls, more women's polytechnics would be set up and programmes for vocationalisation of education would be expanded.

14.38 To boost education among the girls of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, additional facilities would continue to be provided under the "Development of Backward classes" sector. Girls above the matriculation stage would get higher scholarships stipends than those for the boy students. Financial assistance is envisaged for construction of hostel buildings for girls at district level and for purchase of equipment furniture, utensils, books and periodicals in these hostels.

14.39 Under the National Sports Policy, participation

of women and girls in sports and games would be encouraged. Stress would be laid on the identification of sports talent among women and provision made for sports, scholarships, coaching and nourishment support for promising girls with a view to increase standards of their performance in competitive games. Besides, schemes for encouraging traditional folk, tribal and hill arts and cultural activities would be expanded and strengthened.

14.40 Health: Under the Health Sector, the major thrust during the next ten years will be directed towards the reduction of the prevailing high maternal and infant mortality rates. For this purpose emphasis will be placed on the expansion of MCH care which will give considerable importance to preventive promotive and educational services. Specifically schemes for giving tetanus toxoid to mothers and providing proper ante-natal care will be taken up on a sizeable scale. Besides close linkages with other related sectors will be established in order to make a dent on the problem. The health and family welfare services will be made available to all women in the reproductive age group. The existing bed strengths at the district hospitals would be augmented and a sizeable proportion of them would be allocated to women and children. The health sub-centre coverage for providing health services would be progressively reduced to below 5000 persons per sub-centre. Besides, nutrition supplements iron and folic acid tablets would be given to mothers for bridging the calorie-vitamin and mineral deficiency gap as well as for fighting anaemia. The scheme for training of birth attendants and auxiliary nurse midwives would be expanded considerably. Efforts would be made to promote health consciousness, so that the available health infrastructure could be fully utilised. Mass media, voluntary agencies, village health committees, women's organisations and dais will be employed to spread knowledge about simple remedies for common disorders. Women would also be informed about misleading advertisements regarding the use of tonics, health drinks, etc. Knowledge about the nutritional status of girls and its impact on the health and weight of the babies born would be disseminated widely. Such published information would include the demographic and socio-cultural implications of the present adverse sex ratio and low age at marriage will be publicised.

Employment:

14.41(i) Agriculture and allied sectors: Special attention would be given to improving existing skills of women and imparting to them new skills under the programmes of farmers' training, exchange of development, fodder production, post-harvest technology, application of pesticides,

budding and grafting, farmers training in horticulture, fisheries, poultry, dairy, social forestry etc. Horticultural research and development programmes would play a significant role in economic and nutritional progress particularly with respect to the problem of under-nutrition of pregnant women and nursing mothers and their children.

14.42 (ii) Rural development: The Integrated Rural Development Programme meant for the poorest in the rural areas, has been formulated for creating assets with a view to increasing the productivity and income-generation ability of the beneficiaries in a specified period of time. The programme has been extended to all the 5092 development blocks in the country during the Sixth Plan. About 20 million beneficiaries would be covered during the Seventh Plan. This would include 50 per cent of the old beneficiaries who may require a second dose of assistance at an average rate of Rs. 500/-. The new beneficiaries, however, would receive an enhanced rate of subsidy of Rs. 1333/-. The scheme covers landless labourers, small and marginal farmers, rural artisans and other workers like fishermen. Efforts have been made under this programme to select households headed by women beneficiaries. This approach will be continued during the Seventh Plan, and importance would be given to achieve a larger coverage of women. Households headed by women would account for at least 20 per cent of the coverage. The scheme of DWCRA would be strengthened and modified in order to ensure that the benefits reach the target groups.

14.43 The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Scheme (RLEGP) would generate additional employment in rural areas during the lean season. Stress would be laid on giving adequate employment to women beneficiaries under these schemes.

14.44 Under the programme of TRYSEM, 40 youths in the age-group 18-35 years per development block are identified and provided training in avocations which may enable them to set up self-employment ventures. About one third of the beneficiaries under this programme are expected to be women.

14.45 (iii) Land reforms: The scheme for providing financial assistance to the Assignees of Ceiling Surplus Land (ACSL) obtained from the implementation of land ceiling laws is under operation since August, 1975. The Central assistance for this scheme is intended to enable allottees to buy inputs and other necessary wherewithals of cultivation. This policy will be oriented to confer benefits on a larger number of households headed by women.

Families of landless agricultural and other sections of the vulnerable groups will be given usufruct rights to grow trees on road sides, waste lands, etc.

14.46 (iv) *Industry*: Public sector undertakings would be persuaded to sponsor ancillary industries in collaboration with State level agencies dealing with development programmes for women to provide increased employment opportunities around them. Attempts would also be made to identify and target the women beneficiaries under Entrepreneurial Development Programme (EDP) and Industrial Estates.

14.47 (v) *Village and small-scale industries*: The schemes for the introduction of new technologies and the induction of expertise through upgradation of training would be further expanded. The scope of the specific training programmes for women entrepreneurs will be widened in order to fully familiarise them with the technical know-how needed for setting up enterprises. The number of such women entrepreneurs would also be increased. Rural technology institutions, and mobile technology and training units would be considerably expanded. These organisations would regularly conduct special training courses for women at various levels. The training would be oriented, wherever possible, to schemes like IRDP, TRYSEM, etc. Taking up special programmes for women by agencies like process-cum-product development centres (PPDCs), training centres and small industries services institutes (SISI) would be examined. A massive programme for training of artisans, managers, supervisors and entrepreneurs would have to be taken up to expand efficient production and for promotion of skilled employment. Women's participation in these schemes will be increased substantially.

14.48 Besides the District Industries centres (DICs) will play a special role in the identification of groups of women artisans/workers for disseminating information relating to vocations to be taken up and the nature of support that could be extended by governmental agencies.

14.49 Presently, some special provisions in terms of infrastructure facilities like industrial sheds are being extended to women entrepreneurs. As this facility is not adequate efforts would be made to set up mini-industrial estates exclusively for women on a much larger scale. Special facilities like sheds and plots at subsidised rates to units exclusively run by women and/or employing female labour will be given.

14.50 The National Small Industries Corporation and

other apex organisations would extend support for marketing, product design and financial support for raw material procurement. Concessional financial requirements will also be considered for meeting fully the working capital requirements and for providing margin money for seed capital. The distinct and unique role assigned to the handloom sector will be preserved and several measures would be initiated both for consolidation and expansion of this sector.

14.51 Under the programme of training of workers and entrepreneurs, women beneficiaries will be given importance. Women are expected to obtain sizeable employment under this sector. Coir making, sericulture and small scale industries are some such sectors which offer great potential

14.52 (vi) *Khadi and village industries*: During the Seventh Plan the employment coverage under khadi and village industries is likely to increase from the present 3.80 million persons to 5.86 million persons. A considerable proportion of this additional employment will come to women and the percentage share of women is expected to increase from 46 to 48 per cent during the Seventh Plan.

14.53 (vii) *Other measures*: Efforts will be made towards creation and promotion of equal employment opportunities for men and women. Implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act will be strengthened to ensure that women workers are paid wages as prescribed in the Act from time to time. Studies would be sponsored to examine whether equal remuneration under the Act is related to work outputs under different sectors of employment. Similarly studies will be undertaken on the implementation of the Factories' Act 1948, the Plantation Labour Act 1951 and the Mines' Act of 1952 to assess whether the interests of women are adequately protected. Areas/sectors where women's employment is low would be identified and measures for improving their prospects will be taken. Emphasis will also be placed on the study and identification of factors that hinder women's employment. Special agencies will be set up for extending credit facilities for self-employment and home-based workers. Relaxation of age limit for women for entry into government services and public sector undertakings will be considered. Avenues for creation of part-time employment for women will also be explored.

14.54 *Science and technology*: Programme on 'Science and Technology for Women' would be further strengthened to identify, formulate, sponsor and implement research and development, demonstration and extension

programmes, with special emphasis on providing opportunities for gainful employment, self-employment to women specially to those in rural areas.

14.55 The training programmes at different levels such as those for unemployed graduates, school drop outs and housewives will be strengthened and expanded, for improving the trainees' skills. Besides, skill manuals and training aids in areas of agriculture, animal husbandry and other new occupations would be prepared to provide opportunities of independent employment and income for women. Assistance of voluntary organisations would be sought for taking need based technologies to the target groups and in obtaining feedback regarding the acceptance of the programme and in the identification of factors that influence the transfer of technologies. Under the concept of Vigyan Kendras, the possibility of setting up rural banks for lending improved agricultural tools would be explored and new groups would be identified, preferably those in which scientists and technologists are actively involved for taking up developmental programmes for women at the grassroot level.

14.56 Special training programmes would continue to be sponsored for women in polytechnics and other institutions of technical education in areas such as repair and maintenance of radios, television and other electronic hardware or consumer durables, manufacture of PVC goods, lacquer work, fibre reinforced plastics etc. Involvement of women voluntary agencies and home science colleges would be ensured.

14.57 *Social Welfare:* The programmes for women under the Social Welfare Sector are meant to supplement the services available to women under other developmental sectors. Further strengthening is envisaged of the ongoing schemes which have been found useful in skill formation and creation of gainful employment among women. Very close linkages with specialised agencies such as ICAR, ICMR, DST, Rural Development, Industry and Education are called for.

14.58 The Central Social Welfare Board would continue to extend grants in aid to voluntary organisations to set up a variety of income generating units under the 'Socio-Economic Programme' for the benefit of needy women. Efforts would be made to improve the programme by introducing better technical and marketing support. The scheme of assistance to public undertakings/corporations and autonomous organisations for supporting projects aimed at income generation and employment among women from weaker sections on a sustained basis

with the help of Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) would be further expanded, with focus on diversified occupations and inculcating new skills required by the job market. Grants would also be given for organising condensed educational and vocational training courses for adult women so as to improve their employment prospects. Short duration training courses (not exceeding one year) in non traditional trades would be expanded for rehabilitating women in distress and their dependent children. Construction/expansion of hostels for working women from low-income groups will be accelerated with a view to provide accommodation with improved standards of service at reasonable cost. The possibility of involving the inmates in the management of these hostels would be explored. The scheme of training of rural women in public cooperation will be extended to develop leadership qualities among them and to involve them in the developmental activities of the country.

14.59 A new scheme namely, Women's Development Corporations would be taken up for promoting employment generating activities by supporting schemes for women's groups and women from poorer sections of society. These corporations would identify potential areas of employment and assist beneficiaries in project formulation raising the requisite finances and marketing of their products. A Women's Development Planning and Monitoring Cell will be set up for collection of data and monitoring of Plan programmes. Provision has also been made for a few innovative schemes projects which if found successful would be replicated.

14.60 *Voluntary Organisations:* At present the effort by voluntary agencies is rather uneven, and is mostly concentrated in the urban areas. These agencies have to be stimulated to extend their programmes to rural hilly and backward areas. They would be encouraged to create public opinion against social evils like child marriage, dowry, illiteracy and atrocities on women. Sustained effort would be made for increasing the age at marriage of girls and for improving the adverse sex ratio. There is lack of awareness about the existing social legislation to protect the interests of women. Voluntary agencies would be supported to undertake educational work and bring in awareness among women regarding their rights and privileges. They would also be associated in extension activities.

14.61 The voluntary organisations would be involved in delivering the "Messages" on preventive and promotive health and social and nutritive care for women and children. It has been well established that blindness, leprosy,

tuberculosis, polio, accidents, drug addiction and prostitution afflict vast numbers of our population. Instead of expending large sums on therapeutic and rehabilitative services (which are costly for those affected), emphasis would be on preventive care. Voluntary agencies, educational institutions and training centres would be involved and aided to take up various activities for promoting preventive measures in a planned and coordinated manner. Production of films, documentaries, literature and other forms of mass communication and deployment of non-formal channels of communication by these agencies and institutions would be fully supported. Besides, they can also take up programmes of vocational training for adult women and girls from poorer sections on a large scale in order to enlarge and improve the avenues of employment. There is an urgent need for public conven-

iences' for women at those bus stands, railway stations, theatres and market places which lack this amenity. Voluntary agencies would be encouraged to take up this work in a big way.

Monitoring

14.62 A proper monitoring mechanism will be developed to ensure optimal utilisation of facilities meant for women under different sectors and to minimise leakages. The special cells which are being set up in the Ministries for this purpose will be strengthened in order to ensure proper monitoring and coordination of different schemes. Steps will be taken to strengthen the machinery for monitoring progress of various schemes at State and district levels.

Abstract : National Policy on Education - 1986 Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, New Delhi.

Education for Women's Equity Part IV

DISPARITIES

4.1 The new Policy will lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far.

4.2 Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived change in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. It will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions. This will be an act of faith and social engineer-

ing. Women's studies will be promoted as a part of various courses and educational institutions encouraged to take up active programmes to further women's development.

4.3 The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in, elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services setting of time targets, and effective monitoring. Major emphasis will be laid on women's participation in vocational, technical and professional education at different levels. The policy of non-discrimination will be pursued vigorously to eliminate sex stereo-typing in vocational and professional courses and to promote women's participation in non-traditional occupations, as well as in existing and emergent technologies.

National Policy on Education 1986: Programme of Action. Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, New Delhi.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, formulated a "National Policy on Education- 1986" with the objective of giving new directions to education and to meet the challenges of new economic, social and technical development. This document was adopted by the Parliament in 1986. Consequent to this, a Programme of Action for the implementation of the new education policy was prepared with the assistance of 23 Task Forces. Each task force was assigned a specific subject covered by the National Policy on Education.

The Programme of Action has envisaged that educa-

tion should be used as a strategy for achieving a basic change in the status of women. The policy placed for priority on effective universalization of elementary education, eradication of illiteracy and skill development in the 15-35 age group, vocationalization of education and preparation of the manpower needed for the development process, and scientific and technological research.

The recognition of the content and processes of education were suggested along the lines of national values. Abstracts from the chapter on 'Education for Women's Equality' are enclosed.

National Policy on Education 1986: Programme of Action. Education for Women's Equality Chapter 12. Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education, New Delhi.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

1. Provision of educational opportunities to women has been an important programme in the education sector since independence. Between 1951 and 1981, the percentage of literacy amongst women improved from 7.93 per cent to 24.82 per cent. However, in absolute numbers, illiterate women have increased during this period from 158.7 million to 241.7 million (excluding Assam). Women comprise 57 per cent of the illiterate population and 70 per cent of the non-enrolled children of school stage are girls. In spite of the efforts made so far, the education system has not been able to make sufficient contribution towards women's equality.

TARGETS

- (a) A phased time-bound programme of elementary education for girls, particularly upto the primary stage by 1990, and upto the elementary stage by 1995.
- (b) A phased time-bound programme of adult education for women in the age group 15-35 (whose number is estimated to be 6.8 crores) by 1995.
- (c) Increased women's access to vocational, technical, professional education and to existing and emergent technologies.
- (d) Review and reorganisation of the educational activities to ensure that it makes a substantial contribution towards women's equality, and creation of appropriate cells/units therefor.

POLICY PARAMETERS AND STRATEGIES

3. The National Policy on Education (NPE) envisages that education would be used as a strategy for achieving a basic change in the status of women. The National education system would (i) play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women, (ii) contribute towards development of new values through redesigned curricula and text-books, and (iii) women's studies will be promoted as part of various courses. The main features of the targets and implementation strategy will consist of the following:-

- (i) To gear the entire education system to plan a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women;

- (ii) To promote women's studies as a part of various courses and encouragement to educational institutions to take up active programme to further women's development;
- (iii) To widen the access of women in programmes of vocational, technical and professional education;
- (iv) To create dynamic managerial structure to cope with the targets envisaged.

STRATEGY ENUNCIATION AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

4. Women become empowered through collective reflection and decision making. The parameters of empowerment are :

- Building a positive self-image and self-confidence;
- Developing ability to think critically;
- Building up group cohesion and fostering decision-making and action;
- Ensuring equal participation in the process of bringing about social change;
- Encouraging group action in order to bring about change in the society;
- Providing the wherewithal for economic independence.

5. The following measures will be taken for the achievement of the above parameters:

- (a) Every educational institution should, by 1995, take up active programmes of women's development built around a study and awareness of the women's predicament and for promotion of communication and organisation among women.
- (b) All teachers and Non-Formal Education/Adult Education (NFE/AE) instructors

should be trained as agents of women's empowerment. Special training programmes will be developed by NCERT, NIEPA, Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), SCERTs, State Resource Centres (SRCs) and UGC to incorporate in all training programmes of teachers and NFE/AE instructors elements which would motivate them to work for women's empowerment. Voluntary agencies and activist groups for women's development will be involved in these training programmes.

- (c) Women teachers and women instructors in adult/non-formal education programmes should receive special orientation to enable them to play an activist role towards women's equality.
- (d) Special programmes should be developed by research institutions, voluntary institutions and professional groups of artists to promote general awareness and self-image amongst women through a variety of programmes like discussions, street plays, skits, wall papers, puppet shows etc.
- (e) An environment should be created in which practically all sections of the society will commit themselves and work for achieving this objective enunciated in the National Policy on Education. Keeping in view the important role played by media in this sphere, clear policy guidelines should be developed by radio and TV in 1986-87 and measures taken to persuade films and other media on these lines.
- (f) Preference in recruitment of teachers upto school level should be for women. This will create a greater confidence in the rural areas and motivate the parents to send girls to the school.
- (g) The common core curriculum is a powerful instrument for the empowerment of women through the incorporation of values commensurate with the new status of women. The Women's Cell in the NCERT will be revived and given the responsibility for preparing the component of the core curriculum relating to women's equality. The Cell should also accelerate its work of eliminating sexist bias and sex stereo-types from school text-books. The Women's Cell of NCERT should take active help of all persons on playing its assigned role.

- (h) Sensitisation of teachers, trainers, planners and administrators to women's issues will be taken up as a major programme by NIEPA and appropriate State level agencies, through initial training, in-service training and refresher courses. NIEPA should also have a strong cell for planning and execution of these programmes.

WOMEN STUDIES

6. Women's studies programme has 4 dimensions – teaching, research, training and extension. In teaching, the following activities will be taken up:

- (i) Incorporation of issues relating to women's status and role in the foundation course proposed to be introduced by University Grants Commission for all undergraduate students;
- (ii) Incorporation of the women's dimension into courses in different disciplines;
- (iii) Elimination of sexist bias and sex stereo-types from text books.

7. Under research, the following steps will be taken

- (i) Encouraging research on identified areas and subjects which are crucial in advancing knowledge in this area and to expand the information base;
- (ii) Critical appraisal of existing tools and techniques which have been responsible for the disadvantages suffered by them and where necessary reformation of research methodology.

8. The following measures will be taken under training:

- (i) Dissemination of information and interaction through seminars/workshops on the need for Women's Studies and its role in University education;
- (ii) Orientation of teachers and researchers to handle women-related topics and to incorporate women's dimension into general topics;
- (iii) Workshops for restructuring the curriculum.

9. Under extension, it is proposed to encourage educational institutions to take up programmes which directly

benefit the community and bring about the empowerment of women.

10. These would include actual implementation of development programmes directly aimed at women's empowerment such as adult education, awareness building, legal literacy, informational and training support for socio-economic programmes of women's development, media, etc.

UNIVERSALISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND ADULT EDUCATION

11. The present programme of non-formal centres for girls on 90:10 pattern will be extended to all educationally backward pockets of the country. NEF Centres should be community based. Responsibility of planning, selection of instructors and monitoring should be with the community including parents. Increased assistance to voluntary agencies to run nonformal education centres for girls should be given.

12. In the rural areas, girls are kept busy at home in sibling and household care, in fetching fuel, fodder and water, or in earning a day's wage. Therefore, special support services referred to in the Policy need to cover all these areas upto 1995. Early childhood education centres are important support service in increasing enrolment and retention of girls in schools. Programmes of social forestry, drinking water supply, mid-day meals, and other nutrition programmes, smokeless chullahs and other devices aimed at eliminating drudgery from women's lives should be formulated by the Ministry and organisation concerned upto 1990 to converge with the objective of universalisation of education.

13. Skill development linked to employment or work opportunities in the villages or local areas are required to be given overriding priority so that there is an incentive on the part of the parents to educate the girls.

14. Mass scale adult education programmes for women in the age group 15-35 should be developed to eradicate illiteracy amongst women by 1995. As majority of women in this age group are workers literacy per se may not have any relevance for them. It is, therefore, necessary to develop adult education programmes for women linked with upgradation of their skills and income generating activities.

15. Skill development for girls and women should be continuous process of learning starting from the NFE

centres and AE centres. Continuing Education Centres should be set up in a phased manner which should organise vocational training, provide opportunities for retention of literacy skills and application of this learning for improving their living conditions.

16. The skill development given by the Continuing Education Centres will be supported by other programmes of nonformal, vocational training and skill development to be administered by a variety of organisations and institutions, such as Polytechnics, Community Polytechnics, ITIs, Shramik Vidyapeeths, Central Social Welfare Board, State Social Welfare Advisory Boards, Voluntary agencies, Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Women's Centres in Agricultural and Home Science Collages as part of their extension activities. Besides, industries which employ women should themselves run non-formal vocational training courses. For effective learning and monitoring Women's Bureau is to be set up in the Department of Education.

WOMEN'S ACCESS TO VOCATIONAL, TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION AND TO EXISTING AND EMERGENT TECHNOLOGIES:

17. At each stage in school education; or a part of work experience or vocationalisation, girls should be exposed to a variety of vocational training activities. The method of vocational training should be both through the formal and non-formal courses. The choice of skills to be taught will depend on the natural resources, traditional occupations and new activities being taken up through government and private investment.

18. There are 104 ITIs functioning exclusively for women and 97 wings in general ITIs reserved for women. It is proposed that these institutions be revamped during the period 1987-90 on the following lines:

- (i) Diversification of trades and courses, will be done, keeping the job potential of the area in mind. There will be an efficient placement system which will enable the institutions to have continuous dialogue with employers. The idea behind this diversification is that while girls will continue to receive preferential treatment in trades/occupations, for which they are particularly well suited (e.g. teaching and nursing), this will not become a barrier for their participation in technical and professional courses of higher level and equal opportunities will be provided for them in all vocational, technical and professional courses.

- (ii) There will be a strong element of vocational counselling in each ITI/RVTI/NVTI, polytechnics. Suitable orientation should also be provided in the schools as preparation for motivating the girls to choose non-traditional courses.
- (iii) Information about credit, banking, entrepreneurial development etc. will be provided by the ITI/NVTI/RVTI/polytechnics and community polytechnics alongwith practical on-the-job training. The implementation of the apprenticeship scheme will be strengthened to increase the coverage of women.
- (iv) In order to substantially enlarge the opportunities to women for craftsmen's training, shift system will be introduced in existing ITIs—one in the morning and the other in the afternoon.
- (v) DGE&T office should have a separate Directorate of Women's Vocational Training.
- (vi) The women's access to technical education will be improved qualitatively and quantitatively. The choice of trades/disciplines offered to

women at Certificate/Diploma/Degree levels in all types of technical education institutions, will be made keeping in view the objective of bringing about women's equality. Necessary incentives, as spelt out in the section of Technical Education will be provided.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE AT CENTRE AND STATE LEVEL

19. The interventions and programmes referred to above will be planned, coordinated, monitored and evaluated continuously both at the national and state level. Each of the organisations responsible for the programme will have to be strengthened. The Women's Cell in the NCERT will be revived and strengthened. NIEPA and Directorate, of Adult Education will have strong cells to plan and administer Women's training programmes. The Women's Cell in the UGC will be strengthened in order to monitor the implementation of various programmes at higher education level.

20. At the State level, Women's Cell should be set up in all the States with adequate supporting staff to be headed by an officer of at least Joint Director's status.

THE TWENTY-POINT PROGRAMME 1986

The war on poverty is our first priority. In the past five years, more than ten crore of our poor have been raised above the poverty line. Our goal is to remove poverty and create fuller employment.

The Twenty Point Programme is the cutting edge of the plan for the poor. The programme has been restructured in the light of our achievements and experience and the objectives of the Seventh Plan. The restructured programme renews our commitment to:

- eradicating poverty
- raising productivity
- reducing income inequalities
- removing social and economic disparities, and improving the quality of life.

1. ATTACK ON RURAL POVERTY

We shall:

- Ensure that poverty alleviation programmes reach all the poor in every village;
- Dovetail wage employment programmes with programmes for area development and human resource development and create national and community assets like school buildings roads, tanks and fuel and fodder reserves;
- Correlate the various rural development programmes to:
 - Improve productivity and production
 - Expand rural employment
- Promote handlooms, handicrafts, village and small industries, and improve skills for self-employment;
- Revitalise Panchayats, cooperatives and local bodies.

2. STRATEGY FOR RAIN-FED AGRICULTURE

We shall:

- Improve the technology for conserving moisture and ensure better management of land and water resources;
- Develop and distribute appropriate and improved seeds;
- Reduce vulnerability to drought through suitable changes in drought-prone area and drought relief programmes.

3. BETTER USE OF IRRIGATION WATER

We shall :

- Develop the catchment areas and improve drainage in basins and deltas;
- Improve irrigation management in command areas;
- Prevent water logging, salinity and wasteful use;
- Coordinate the use of surface and ground water.

4. BIGGER HARVESTS

We shall:

- Revolutionise rice production in the Eastern Region and other areas of low productivity;
- Achieve self-reliance in edible oils;
- Secure greater production of pulses;

- Intensify the cultivation of fruit and vegetables;
- Augment facilities for modern storage, processing and marketing of agricultural produce;
- Help livestock and dairy farmers to increase productivity;
- Develop fish farming and sea fishing.

5. ENFORCEMENT OF LAND REFORMS

We shall:

- Complete compilation of land records;
- Implement agricultural land ceilings;
- Distribute surplus land to the landless.

6. SPECIAL PROGRAMMES FOR RURAL LABOUR

We shall:

- Enforce minimum wages for unorganised labour in agriculture and industry;
- Fully implement laws abolishing bonded labour;
- Involve voluntary agencies in programmes for the rehabilitation of bonded labour.

7. CLEAN DRINKING WATER

We shall:

- Provide safe water for all villages;

- Assist local communities to maintain the sources of such water supply in good condition;
- Pay special attention to water supply for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

8. HEALTH FOR ALL

We shall:

- Improve the quality of primary health care;
- Fight leprosy, TB, malaria, goitre, blindness and other major diseases;
- Provide immunisation for all infants and children;
- Improve sanitation facilities in rural areas, particularly for women;
- Pay special attention to programmes for the rehabilitation of the handicapped.

9. TWO CHILD NORM

We shall:

- Bring about voluntary acceptance of the two-child norm;
- Promote responsible parenthood;
- Reduce infant mortality;
- Expand maternity and child care facilities.

10. EXPANSION OF EDUCATION

We shall:

- Universalise elementary education with special emphasis on girls' education;

- Improve the content of education at all levels;
- Promote non-formal education and functional literacy programmes, including promotion of skills;
- Stimulate adult literacy programmes, with the participation of students and voluntary agencies;
- Emphasise national integration and social and moral values and instil pride in our heritage.

11. JUSTICE TO SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

We shall:

- Ensure compliance with the constitutional provisions and laws for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;
- Ensure possession of land allotted to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;
- Revitalise the land allotment programme;
- Organise and assist special coaching programmes to improve educational standards;
- Eradicate scavenging and undertake special programmes for the rehabilitation of Safai Karamcharis;
- Provide better direction and adequate funds for the special component programmes;
- Pursue programmes for the fuller integra-

tion of Scheduled Castes and Tribes with the rest of society;

- Ensure the rehabilitation of tribals displaced from their habitat.

12. EQUALITY FOR WOMEN

We shall:

- Raise the status of women;
- Enhance awareness of the problems of women;
- Create mass consciousness about women's rights;
- Implement a national programme of training and employment for women;
- Enable women to participate with equality in socio-economic development and nation-building;
- Rouse public opinion against dowry and ensure effective implementation of anti-dowry legislation.

13. NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

We shall:

- Enlarge opportunities for youth in sports, adventure and cultural activities;
- Promote physical fitness
- Involve youth on a massive scale in projects of national development such as:
 - The cleaning of the Ganga
 - The conservation and enrichment of the environment
 - Mass education.

- Identify outstanding young persons in all fields to encourage and develop their talents;
- Involve youth in promoting national integration, cultural values, secularism and the scientific temper;
- Expand the network of Nehru Yuvak kendras;
- Strengthen the National Service Scheme and the National Cadet Corps.;
- Encourage voluntary agencies working for the welfare of rural youth.

14. HOUSING FOR THE PEOPLE

We shall :

- Make available house sites to the rural poor;
- Expand programmes of house construction;
- Lay special emphasis on construction of houses for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;
- Develop low cost building materials.

15. IMPROVEMENT OF SLUMS

We shall:

- Restrict the growth of slums;
- Provide basic facilities in existing slum areas;

- Encourage planned house building in urban areas.

16. NEW STRATEGY FOR FORESTRY

We shall:

- Grow more trees and raise more forest, with the full involvement of the people;
- Protect the traditional rights of tribal populations and local communities of access to limewood and forest produce;
- Reclaim wastelands for productive use;
- Plant appropriate vegetation in hill, desert and coastal areas.

17. PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

We shall:

- Enhance public awareness of the dangers of environmental degradation;
- Mobilise popular support for environmental protection;
- Promote recognition that enduring development demands preservation of the ecology;
- Ensure judicious site selection for projects and proper choice of technology.

18. CONCERN FOR THE CONSUMER

We shall:

- Bring essential consumption goods within easy reach of the poor;

- Build a consumer protection movement;
- Restructure the distribution system so that subsidies reach the most needy;
- Strengthen the Public Distribution System.

19. ENERGY FOR THE VILLAGE

We shall:

- Expand the supply of electricity for productive use in the villages;
- Develop alternative sources of energy, particularly bio-gas.
- Promote integrated area specific programmes for rural energy.

20. A RESPONSIVE ADMINISTRATION

We shall:

- Simplify procedures;
- Delegate authority;
- Enforce accountability;
- Involve monitoring systems from block to national level;
- Attend promptly and sympathetically to public grievances.

THE TWENTY-POINT PROGRAMME- 1986

1. Attack on Rural Poverty
2. Strategy for Rainfed Agriculture
3. Better Use of Irrigation Water
4. Bigger Harvests
5. Enforcement of Land Reforms
6. Special Programme for Rural Labour
7. Clean Drinking Water
8. Health for All
9. Two-Child Norm
10. Expansion of Education
11. Justice to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
12. Equality for Women
13. New Opportunities for Youth
14. Housing for the People
15. Improvement of Slums
16. New Strategy for Forestry
17. Protection of the Environment
18. Concern for the Consumer
19. Energy for the Villages
20. A Responsive Administration

Report of the National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners 1986-87; Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development.

The National Expert Committee on Women Prisoners (1986-87) was constituted in order to identify the gaps in or drawbacks of existing facilities and services and to evolve a more humane policy towards women offenders. The specific terms of reference of the Committee were to:

- Study procedures for the handling of women offenders in detention or custody.
- Review conditions governing the treatment of women offenders in policy lockups and penal and correctional institutions.
- Examine the efficacy of institutional and other services for information and rehabilitation of women offenders.
- suggest legal, administrative and organizational measures for ensuring fair, humane and effective

handling of women offenders at various stages of criminal justice process.

- Go into any other aspect relevant to women offenders within the overall framework of the present policy of women's development.

The Committee noted that existing malpractices in the various terms of custody affect women more adversely than men. Specific and specialized interventions are necessary to dispense custodies justice to women and to protect her dignity and her person in custody. The Committee has proposed interventions addressed to policy making, reviewing enforcement and organizational and infrastructural level which embody the Committee's perceptions regarding a reform approach to correctional justice system.

**Shramshakti : Report of the National Commission
on Self Employed Women and Women in the
Informal Sector, June 1988**

The Commission was constituted by the Government of India in 1987 to make a comprehensive study of the working and living conditions of poor women in poverty. The terms of reference of the Commission were as follows:

- (i) To examine the present status of women in the self employed sector with special reference to employment, health, education and social status.
- (ii) To assess the impact of various labour legislations on the self-employed specially in respect of maternity benefits and health insurance.
- (iii) To identify the constraints on increase of productivity of self employed women and the gaps in training, credit, upgradation of skills and marketing.
- (iv) To survey employment patterns, including production relations and assess their impact on the wages of the self employed women.
- (v) To undertake a survey of the effects of macro policies relating to investment, production and technology on the status of self-employed women.

(vi) To consider the link between the productive and reproductive roles of the self-employed women, with special reference to their health status.

(vii) To suggest measures relating to all sectors for removing the constraints which adversely affect the integration of self-employed women in the national development process.

The above terms of reference covered all unprotected women labour and women in the informal sector which included self employed and wage labour, paid and unpaid labour and contract labour.

The Commission set up five task forces to study (i) impact of macro policies and the role of development agencies, and the concept/ definitions adopted by the official data collecting agencies, (ii) occupational health, (iii) communication network systems, (iv) legislative protection, (v) area of exploitation, experience of organising, women workers' priorities as perceived by them. The recommendations of the Commission are as follows :

RECOMMENDATIONS

Approach

1.1 In the preceding chapters we have made an in-depth study in certain critical areas; detailed recommendations have also been made in respect of those subjects. The Commission had undertaken extensive field visits and interacted with the workers themselves to collect the required information. It also had discussions with experts in many areas and Government representatives of developmental ministries and departments at the Centre and the State. On the basis of the studies and discussions the main thrust of the recommendations have been put together in this chapter.

1.2 The coverage of the Commission has been extensive, in taking into account the entire gamut of poor labouring women. Though not a homogeneous group by way of caste, class or economic activity, deprivation and discrimination is common to all of them. They suffer from lack of opportunity to work, low and discriminatory wages and exploitative conditions resulting in casualisation. They lack social security, face occupational health hazards, they do not have access to new technologies, skills and knowledge. While making recommendations, the National Commission has made suggestions which should break the vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, low productivity, discriminatory wages, exploitation, subsistence level of existence, large families, poor health and increasing unemployment—all leading to greater poverty.

1.3 The preceding chapters of the report clearly establish that all women are workers because they are producers and reproducers. Even when they are not employed, they are involved in socially productive and reproductive labour all of which is absolutely necessary for the survival of society. Women's work as home-makers must be recognized as social/economic production, for, when women fetch water, gather fuel and fodder or tutor their children, they are performing services in the absence of which market services would have to be purchased. Only if this is recognized, can other consequences flow from it such as a broader definition of women's works.

The National Commission recommends that all subsequent data collection efforts should enlarge the definition of women workers to include all such activities paid and unpaid performed within the home or outside as an employee or on own account.

1.4 Enumeration must take into consideration the multidimensional functions of women workers which often vary within the day, from week to week and from season to season.

1.5 Therefore, there can be no straight-jacketed approach to any solution of the problems of women workers. A multi-dimensional flexible, integrated, coordinated and area specific approach must be adopted by the planners and implementers upto the last rung of the delivery system.

1.6 In all planning and decision making implementing bodies, women's participation should not be in terms of token representation but in proportion to their numbers.

1.7. At the same time, it is essential to attack the underlying factors of exploitation and lopsided control of resources which result in the cycles of poverty, underemployment and unemployment, pushing large numbers of the rural and urban poor in the informal sector which, perforce, only permit marginal levels of living. To overcome this, a mechanism must be evolved to give them access to knowledge, skills, resources and materials, without which there is a sense of powerlessness. Although the existing development/fiscal policies in theory do not discriminate against women, however, in reality they have not led to strengthening women. The reasons for this powerlessness are (a) The general image of women as subordinates which is reflected in the implementation of these policies that leads to men becoming the major beneficiaries, (b) The need of vested interests to keep women subordinate in order to exploit their cheap and docile labour. The Commission's Studies have revealed that women when given facilities and resources, have demonstrated high productivity and a better record of repayment of loans. The assets are also safeguarded and not disposed of. The Commission, therefore, recommends that a package of new policies and directives needs to be undertaken. The package should be developed with strategies which counter the existing system favouring the vested interests against the poor and powerless, specially women.

1.8 In discussing various strategies to enhance the economic status of poor women workers, particularly those who are self-employed and in the informal sectors of economy, several strategies have been tried, in both small experimental programmes and large scale national programmes. All these experiences have contributed to the understanding of two inter-related aspects:

- (i) Women working in the informal sector of economy, be it in the rural or in the urban areas, operate in a vicious circle of subsistence, deprivation and survival. They are largely assetless and do not own any productive assets in relation to their work. Even when some of these assets are

held by the family, women's own access to and control over these assets have been largely marginal.

- (ii) Provision of productive assets in the hands of women working in the informal sector of the economy, have led to qualitative improvement in their lives over a period of time, and given other inputs such as knowledge, skill, organization and confidence. This has been shown to be so in the case of women working in rural areas with assets of land, trees, cattle, and related equipment and machinery. This has been shown to be so also for women working in urban areas with assets like tools, equipment, plants, sheds and land.

1.9 It is important to recognise why the provision of such assets in the hands of women, that they have an ownership and control over, helps to substantially improve their economic situation over a period of time, and vice-versa. Lack of access to, and ownership and control over assets leads to only marginal and transient changes in their economic situation. Several reasons can be seen in this context. First, provision of assets related to the production and work of women helps build long term viability of that economic activity. If women continue to be dependent on others for access to and use of the productive assets, then they continue to be dependent on others for their economic well-being, and interventions focusing on other aspects do not necessarily provide long term viability of their economic activities. Second reason is that provision of productive assets in the hands of women provides for a greater potential for regeneration and recycling. On the basis of some assets women can reproduce and recycle their economic activity in such a way so as to enhance the economic potential. A third aspect is that ownership of and control over productive assets provides a different level of confidence and hope to poor women which is not possible through other interventions. By adding the dimension of longevity and stability in their economic activity, ownership of assets helps to substantially enhance their sense of self-confidence.

1.10 Thus, the Commission strongly recommends that **if we are serious about substantially improving the economic status of poor women working in the informal sectors of economy, we have to devise concrete strategies which can help to enhance the ownership of the control over productive assets by these women. Perhaps, it will be the single most important intervention towards both their empowerment and economic well-being. Some of the assets that women can be given are a plot of land, housing, tree pattas, joint ownership of all assets transferred by the**

State to the family, animals, licence, bank accounts, membership of organizations and Identity Cards.

1.11 It is imperative to recognize women's role as major earners of the family and not as marginal and supplementary contributors. At least one-third of the households are solely supported and another one-third receive at least 50 per cent contribution from women. Therefore, while fixing financial and physical targets and allocating of resources this reality should be kept in view. Such households should be specifically identified at the village level and covered by all programmes.

Planning and Monitoring

2.1 As mentioned earlier women are not only major earners of the family but they also perform necessary functions in the family, like rearing and bearing of children, fetching water, gathering fuel and fodder. These services are not quantified in economic terms, but they do substantially result in economic benefits to the family and the society. The Commission is not in favour of making reservations for women. However, recognising the actual contribution which a woman as an economic unit and the fact that for centuries she has been exploited and denied the right to productive resources, women must have all the attention that they deserve on account of their productive and reproductive functions and their numerical strength which is half of the population.

2.2 The National Commission is of the view that the planning processes carried out at all levels, including the Planning Commission and the State Planning Boards do not sharply focus their attention on the realistic situation of labouring women who are unprotected workers, largely invisible, easy subjects of exploitation, unorganised, illiterate, struggling to survive in adverse conditions and are facing a biased and insensitive administrative machinery at the field level. The macro policies and programme of the Government have resulted in eroding the employment opportunities of these women while ignoring their urgent needs. Neither the development process of the past decades nor the anti-poverty programmes for women have changed this basic situation significantly. Of late certain adhoc attempts have been made in fixing target by individual ministries but adhocism is hardly the right approach to deal with such a large section of our population. There are 27 women specific schemes which have been identified by the Government of India. The total outlay on these schemes in the 7th Plan is 2.4 per cent of the total allocation. The gender break-up is not, however available for the mixed schemes like RLEGP & NREP

2.3 The Commission, therefore, recommends that allocation of resources have to be enhanced in basic areas like the education, health rural and small industry, drinking water and housing. In the beginning of the First Plan, it was considered necessary in the interest of the country that certain heavy capital investments be made to provide the necessary infrastructure requirement for development. However, on the basis of experience, if investments are not made in developmental human resources such capital investments become counter-productive. The lessons of the past are evident. The Commission strongly recommends that 50 per cent of the to begin with Plans should flow to women, but in no case less than 30 per cent.

2.4 The Report fully documents the fact that women perform multifarious activities in the home and outside. Also, their working conditions are closely linked to their living conditions, for example, their homes are at times also their work place and the place to keep the fodder, fuel and animals. The Commission, therefore, recommends that in planning a basic strategy should be evolved the underlying objective of which should be to have an integrated and holistic approach towards tackling women's basic issues. This strategy should aim at-

- (a) Ensuring them fuel, fodder and water for meeting their basic requirements.
- (b) Strengthening their existing employment by providing appropriate support in the areas of skill, training, credit and marketing.
- (c) Protecting their employment in the sectors where it is declining due to technological advancements.
- (d) Creating new employment opportunities for them locally based on local markets for mass consumption goods.
- (e) Protecting women workers from casualisation and contractualisation which lead to their exploitation.
- (f) Provide supportive services to women like housing, toilets and child care facilities.
- (g) Proper and effective implementation of industrial and protective legislations.

To meet these objectives, the first step will be to formulate a set of macro policies in various areas which are well-integrated with each other like—

- (a) This will call for formulation of an integrated strategy for the use of natural resources like land, water and forests, keeping in mind the fuel, fodder and water requirements of the poor. For example, irrigation schemes should not destroy land and forests: forest policies should not hurt

the interests of the poor and land use policies should aim to meet the fodder requirements of the poor also.

- (b) An integrated strategy for industrial development for the healthy growth of the three sectors of industries, namely the large scale sector, the small scale sector and the traditional sector, needs to be promoted. Expansion of large scale industries, for example, should not result into erosion of employment opportunities of women workers.
- (c) The industrial policy will also have to be linked meaningfully with the policy pertaining to natural resources so that the resource use is directed towards creating employment opportunities for the poor, specially for women and also not deprive them of raw materials at a reasonable price.
- (d) Anti-poverty programmes will have to be reformulated in the light of the above policies so that they supplement and complement the development process.

2.5 In view of the above, individual macro policies will have to be modified and strengthened to keep in line with the basic developmental strategy. This will also involve taking care of women's needs. The technology policy, the licensing policy, the credit policy, the policy pertaining to training, marketing and raw materials will all have to be reformulated to meet the new needs. For example, the technology policy will aim at reducing the drudgery of women, improving the skills of women, supporting R and D for designing appropriate tools for women and at improving the access of women to upgraded skills. The credit policy will aim at supporting women's economic activities.

2.6 The Commission is also of the view that there is a need for administrative initiative to evolve the concept and approach to human resource development if it is to develop the potential of the people which the departments of the Ministry of Human Resource Development serve. The schemes in these Departments need to be reviewed in this context so that there is a coordinated approach in the Ministry resulting in effective flow of benefits to women.

Monitoring

2.7 The Commission is of the view that in no Ministry/Department of the Government, or semi-government agency, women should be marginalised. If the responsibility of looking after the interests of women is given to one agency the tendency is that the other agencies do not look upon women as their main responsibility and in the process women get marginalised. Being aware of this trap and

the fact that women should be in the main stream, the Commission strongly recommends that every agency of the Government should be responsible to ensure that their planned resources and programmes benefit men and women equally. Besides fixing this responsibility, there be a monitoring cell in each agency which should be able to monitor and evaluate the utilisation of the resources and the implementation of the programmes vis-a-vis women. Every agency should have this Cell. However, there should be nodal agencies in the Central and State Governments which could oversee, liaise and push through programmes of other Ministries/Departments relating to women. To begin with, monitoring cells in the Planning Commission and the Department of Women and Child Development in the Government of India should be strengthened. The Deptt. of women and Child Development has taken on this task, but it has not yet become very effective. A strategy should be evolved to see how the results of the monitoring and evaluation can be effectively conveyed to the concerned agencies and the necessary changes implemented by them. The Commission recommends that the Department of Women and Child Development should have periodical meetings not only with the related Central Ministries, but also with the State Governments. Meetings with State Governments could be held at a zonal level (policies and programmes of a number of States in a region could be taken up together).

2.8 More important than the Central Government for the purposes of monitoring are the State Governments. In the State Governments, the Commission recommends that a Development Commissioner for Women in the rank of the Financial Commissioner should be appointed. He/she should have enough seniority vis-a-vis the other Secretaries looking after development programmes so that he/she can coordinate the activities of other Departments. This is necessary as women perform multi-faceted activities and they do not always come under one department/agency. Besides, imaginative programmes and projects have to be formulated for them which may cover the purview of more than one Department. Apart from coordination, review meetings would be held under the Development Commissioner for Women, periodically, besides taking up the responsibility for monitoring. It is understood that after the National Plan of Action (1976) was formulated, the State Governments were asked to set up such review committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretaries. It is now more than 12 years, but nothing has come of it. The Chief Secretaries are pressed for time, and this matter is of so much importance that it should not be given as additional charge to an officer. If serious attempts have to be made in this direction, then this work should be entrusted, full time to a senior officer of the rank of

financial Commissioner only then the other State Secretaries and the Heads of the Departments are likely to respond. Suitable structures have also to be set up at the divisional district levels.

2.9 Similarly, at the district level there should be district-co-ordination officer somewhat equivalent to the status of the District Collector who could be put in charge of planning, monitoring, coordination and evaluation of all programmes affecting women. We may take the experience of ICDS which has become acceptable to the people at large and the State Governments, irrespective of their political ideology of the States, because, to begin with, the Central Government financially aided the State Governments in setting up some posts under the ICDS. The Commission is conscious of the constraint in resources, but would recommend that the Central Government should assist the States in creating such posts at the departmental and district level, otherwise, the tendency is to make one officer additionally in charge of work which does not yield the necessary results. The functionaries entrusted with monitoring work may also be involved in the planning process as needs of women, related to their economic activities, differ from region to region. Like the ICDS, the experiment may be started in a few districts preferably the backward tribal areas.

2.10 In carrying out monitoring and evaluation, the Government functionaries should liaise with voluntary agencies working for women, mahila mandals and representatives of the rural women, to get a proper feed-back of the policies and the programmes affecting them. The communication gap between the delivery system and the affected women needs to be bridged. This will be possible by involving women in planning and monitoring processes at appropriate levels.

Employment Policies & Programmes

3.1 Labouring women in poverty toil not only at home doing multifarious activities, beginning with collection of fuel, fodder, water, household chores, bearing and rearing of children but also work to contribute to the family income. Women in the labour force contribute to family economy and the national economy although this contribution is not recognised. Ninety four per cent of them work in the unorganised sector, 83 per cent participate in agriculture, and other allied activities like dairying, animal husbandry, fisheries sericulture, handlooms, handicrafts, and forests. A sizeable portion of women are involved in construction activities. Regrettably, women of this sector do not have the necessary visibility and do not get the focus of attention of the planners and implementers.

3.2 As regards women, the strategy should aim at ensuring them fuel, fodder and water for meeting their basic requirements; strengthening their existing employment by providing appropriate support in the areas of skill, training credit, and marketing, protecting their employment in the sectors where it is declining due to technological advancements, creating new employment opportunities for them locally based for the production of mass consumption goods and protecting women workers from casualisation and contractualisation which lead to their exploitation. To meet these objectives, the first step will be to formulate a set of macro policies in various areas which are well integrated with each other.

3.3 The introduction of the new technologies in the primary sectors has led to reducing the areas of women's involvement in the processes of production, forcing them to leave land and their home-based family occupations and to go into other areas like construction, piece-rate workers and akin manual labour, thereby resulting in further deterioration in the status of women. Their living conditions are also worsening. They are joining the ranks of migratory labour, having no permanent shelter. The development strategies have practically ignored the contribution of women in the unorganised primary sectors and they have had no positive impact on the conditions of the labouring women who are exposed to a great deal of exploitation because of casualisation, contractualisation and piece-rate work. The Labour Commissioners of the States do not have the inclination or the time to devote their attention to either the rural or urban unorganised sector, and more than 90 per cent of their time is devoted to barely 10 per cent constituting the organized sector. The labouring women work in pitiable condition with long hours of arduous work and receive discriminatory wages, with practically no social benefits and security. The Commission recommends the appointment of a separate Labour Commissioner, with supporting field staff, in every State, for the unorganised workers and with due orientation towards the unorganised sector particularly women.

3.4 The National Commission recommends that to enlarge the areas of employment for women, to improve their working conditions, to reduce their drudgery and to provide social security, a holistic and integrated approach be adopted. This is specially necessary since women do not perform one action and, therefore, a straight jacket approach cannot be adopted. The development strategies will have to take note of the existing constraints and biases and discriminations under which women work. The Commission makes the following sectoral recommendations:

Agriculture

3.5 Agriculture and allied fields provide the largest sector for women's employment. Fifty one per cent of working women's population is farm labour engaged in operations such as sowing, weeding, transplantation and harvesting. However, their contribution in these areas is not recognised. Women's access to land ownership is extremely limited. Land reforms have adversely affected the ownership of land by women even in those areas where traditionally women own some land. Women's membership in agro-based co-operatives is negligible. They do not have a say in decision making and in the use of credit technology and marketing. There is wage discrimination. The Commission observed that in certain areas for the same kind of work the women would get Rs. 3 to 4 per day, while men would get about Rs. 10 as wages. In many areas minimum wages were not being paid to agricultural labour.

3.6 The Commission recommends that women's contribution to agriculture should be recognised by the policy makers and this should be reflected in the country's Agricultural Policy and Programmes. There should be adequate resource allocation and orientation of programmes for women producers.

3.7 Since women labour involved in agriculture have seasonal work to do, there should be diversification of their activities in areas like horticulture, fruit processing, vegetable growing, animal husbandry and dairying.

3.8 The Commission has also observed that the number of women cultivators is declining. The distribution of surplus land has not gone to the poor women. Such distribution should be followed with concrete steps of providing assistance in improving the land and bringing it into cultivation.

3.9 The extension services provided in this field should be strengthened. The number of women extension workers should be increased. They should help women not only in imparting information on Government schemes under which benefits can be availed of, but should actively assist women in taking advantage of these schemes and training programmes, assisting them to form co-operatives and societies like Mahila Mandals. The number of women extension workers should be increased at all levels and they should be provided information and training on all aspects of women producers' work and data on intra-house distribution of resources. They should also be provided with infrastructural support by improving the living and working conditions of the female extension staff with better housing, hostel and transport facilities.

3.10 The Mahila Mandals should be energised to promote more economic activities and assist women producers to get such inputs as subsidies and fertilisers.

3.11 Women's co-operatives should be encouraged to involve women in management and decision making. Women's membership should be encouraged in the existing cooperatives.

3.12 Women should be mentioned as specific target groups for all agricultural development programmes. Efforts should be made to involve them in decision making at all levels.

3.13 Continuous monitoring should be done of women's programmes so as to improve the programme designing and implementation.

3.14 In the allied sectors of sericulture and animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, forests, handloom and handicrafts, the Commission recommends greater inputs of training and credit and as in the case of agriculture, women's co-operatives should be encouraged, and they should have greater access to extension workers.

Fuel, Fodder and Water

3.15 Large sections of women in the unorganized sector, living in rural areas, are involved in collection of fuel and fodder. With the process of deforestation, this task has become more strenuous as women have to walk long distances to collect fuel. Non-availability of grazing land has increased their problems. Social forestry was visualised both for satisfying the basic needs of rural households and for reducing pressures on the forests by generating resources for community needs outside the forest land. However, the programme, as implemented has developed a slant in favour of the larger farmers urban markets and industries, while the fuel fodder crisis continues to grow. Government policies in the last few decades have hastened degradation and privatisation of the common property resources through land allotment policy. Illegal encroachments by large farmers and operation of market forces have led to further deterioration of the state of the common land, affecting women adversely, specially with large tracks of agricultural land being diverted from food crops to cash crops and tree farming for commercial gains. The social forestry programme has not resulted in increased employment opportunities for women.

3.16 The National Commission agrees with the recommendations of the Workshop on Women, Social Forestry and Wasteland Development, held by Centre for

Women's Development Studies as reported in their document:

1. If Social Forestry or Wasteland Development is to provide economic independence for women, it is **essential to build in adequate wage and other technical/managerial support through the period of rearing, maintenance and protection of the plants.**
2. The basic aim of social forestry should be to create village woodlots on a sustained yield basis which will yield resources according to village needs.
3. Any social forestry programme which allows for clear felling of village woodlots must be avoided and only rotational harvesting should be permitted and need-based cutting cycle should be worked out.
4. **All social forestry programmes should be simultaneously agro-forestry programmes of which multi-layering and multi-cropping should be essential features, as per the local situation, to provide for both short and long term returns since the poor cannot wait for long. Species should be selected which compliment each other rather than compete for nutrients.**
5. The planning for social forestry programme should be based on a long-term perspective rather than short term perspective.
6. **Women's access to productive resources under social forestry programmes should be backed by State marketing supports.** The market structure for their products, under social forestry programmes, are controlled by distant monopolistic agencies and intermediaries which deprive them of their just returns. To ensure their participation as equal partners in this nationally vital activity, it is essential to guarantee strong and effective State support in the marketing of their products.
7. Direct benefits to women are in the form of wages. In consideration of the short term nature of the employment, and in view of the high financial output of the projects, the wages must be upwardly revised.
8. In all kinds of social forestry/wasteland development programmes, budget lines must include provisions for the development of women's organisations.
9. Review of forest regulations is needed to make possible the achievement of social forestry goals.
10. **Creation of tanks for water grown plants, and multi-layered useful plants below and above the soil, should be the basic strategy in community controlled and community managed social forestry system for involvement of women.**
11. Equitable distribution of all products of social fore-

stry like water, grass, fuel, fodder, fruits, tubercrops and timber will ensure community participation particularly by womenfolk who are hard hit from environmental changes.

12. An effective and powerful supporting infrastructure for developing effective models of investment, management, protection, and just distribution should be created at grassroots level for minimising drought, flood, unemployment, poverty and ensuring rural prosperity.
13. **A number of such experimental models be developed with total participation of village Mahila Mandals and Governmental functionaries, local people and various non-governmental agencies working at grassroots level for which support system should be ensured.**
14. This can generate a cyclical process for creating employment and resources which will have a demonstration effect. The funds generated could be ploughed back to make such projects self-sustaining, thus strengthening women's participation on a continuous basis.

Water

3.17 Though there are close links between forestry, agriculture, food production and water resources management systems, the macro policies of our Government which govern the use of these resources, are based on compartmentalised approaches to agriculture, forestry and water. For example, irrigation dams collect water for irrigation but also result in waterlogging and salination of land on the one hand and cutting down of forests and displacement of thousands of people from submerged lands on the other. The policies pertaining to the use of natural resources have not remained complementary and supplementary to each other. The result is that policy in one sector has adversely affected the other sectors which has deprived the poor of their life support systems and their resource base.

3.18 In the area of water resource development, major irrigation projects have not yielded expected results. The extent of utilization of irrigation potential has been low. The cost of irrigation projects rises to prohibitive levels due to delay in implementation. The construction of large irrigation projects have led to the displacement of the poor without land compensation which has affected the women adversely.

3.19 The National Commission recommends that **more resources should be put into watershed management areas and projects, with involvement of women, which will increase their opportunities of employment.** Similarly caution should be exercised in construction of irrigation dams and **there should always be land compensation for**

the poor instead of cash compensation as with cash compensation they get permanently deprived of their livelihood.

3.20 The problem of safe drinking water is very acute. Poor women have to spend a number of hours everyday and have to walk long distances to fetch water. This responsibility is exclusively theirs. The Commission, therefore recommends accelerated thrust on providing water to villages. At present 40 per cent of the villages are 'problem' villages with none or remotely located water sources. There should be increased plan allocation for providing drinking water to villages and stepping up of implementation of the programmes as water is a basic right of women. Non-availability of it adds to their drudgery and ill-health besides denying them a few hours daily which could be profitably used in income generating activities.

3.21 Women should be effectively involved in water storage, keeping in view the local conditions. The traditional methods of rainwater storage/conservation for drinking should be revived, improved and implemented.

3.22 The emphasis must be on recharging groundwater sources for sustainable use. Storage facilities (tanks, reservoirs) at the household level must be expanded, viable schemes for providing piped water in homes should be explored.

3.23 Effective water management in conjunction with management of our other natural resources is essential if we are to avert complete disaster. Local level mahila mandals should be effectively involved in the water management at the level of implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Construction Workers

3.24 A sizeable proportion of women in the unorganised sector is engaged in construction work. The condition of women construction workers is pitiable. They face instability and insecurity of employment, low wages, non-observance of labour laws, bondage to the middleman who employs them without providing the facilities enjoined by legislation. Their way of life is perpetually in a state of flux as they have to keep migrating from site to site. The average wages for women construction workers are generally lower than their male counterparts. Further women construction workers are almost always totally unskilled. There is no rational explanation why this should be so, since masonry or carpentry are not skills that are likely to require more physical prowess than the type of unskilled work women normally carry out.

3.25 The National Commission recommends the following measures to elevate the working and living conditions of women construction workers-

1. **There is need for much more stringent observance of existing labour laws with deterrent penalty clauses. There is unquestionable evidence from virtually all available studies on construction workers that there is flagrant violation of statutory provision regarding payment of wages, safety regulations, provision of housing, medical and other facilities, payment of travel expenses for migrant workers, compensation for accidents, sickness, insurance etc. Such violations need to be made punishable by law with strict penalties attached to them. In this context, it is necessary to provide legal literacy to construction workers, especially to women who also have special needs such as creches maternity benefits and toilets.**
2. **The judicial procedures relating to non-observance of such laws have to be considerably simplified to ensure that the organised workers can obtain legal redress without undue harassment. The cooperation of voluntary organizations and people's action groups may be useful in this regard.**
3. Much of the problem of non-implementation of legal provision can be traced to the institution of the labour contractor and middleman.
4. Efforts should be directed at the national level on devising tools, equipments and technology that make the jobs performed by unskilled women workers in construction less hazardous and more energy saving.
5. **Special care should be taken to impart skills like masonry and carpentry to women workers under government initiatives. This is necessary to break the seemingly existing taboos against women acquiring special skills in this industry. Initially, priority in employment may be given to such trained women in government construction sites, the idea being that in a situation of emerging excess demand for such skills, especially in urban markets, there will be no dearth of demand in the market for their skills in due course.**
6. **There should be a statutory provision for contribution by the contractors to the extent of 10% of net earnings towards a Construction Workers Welfare fund. The proceeds of this fund should be utilized in building up camping grounds with basic community medical and health facilities in all cities and townships. These can be used to house the workers. Given such an infrastructure, many of the existing statutes regarding the provision of various facilities to the workers which are being flagrantly violated**

now, will be automatically taken care of so that a large number of these women and children can be reached and a measure of stability is imparted to their home situation.

7. Although there are legislative provisions, women construction workers are by and large not provided facilities like creches, maternity benefits ration cards, toilets and clean drinking water. The implementation machinery should be strengthened to ensure that the facilities due to them are provided.
8. Finally, the value of community awareness and organisation for the poor cannot be over emphasised. To start with, the government can help in the process by providing assistance on worksites, for nonformal education, legal literacy, health care and child-care and encouragement for the formation of various community groups and workers' organisations and supporting NGOs to extend their operations among construction workers in general and women workers in particular.

Industrialisation

3.26 As far as industrial policy and programmes is concerned the encouragement given to the small sector has led to splitting of large units in small ones, contracting and subcontracting by large units, and the growth of home based industries. These forms of production are used as tools of avoiding labour laws and as means of exploiting workers. In this situation of exploitation, women have suffered more. The employment of women in the traditional household sector has been affected by severe competition from mass produced consumer goods. Household industries face a serious problem of market, raw materials and credit. Women are dominant in contract system as piece-rate workers. They work for long hours without the benefits of leave, holidays and permanency of work and get very low wages. Women labour in factories are also subject to casualization, contractualization and temporary employment. Although, women have been guaranteed legally certain maternity benefits, equal remuneration and child care facilities, in reality, they are deprived of them. Industrialization has not resulted in any significant occupational diversification of female labour force in the economy. Women dominate in the low-skill work area and their role in management and decision making is very limited. The commission recommends.

1. The formation of an integrated industrial policy for all sectors and regulation of the use of high technology in various industries, because it has been seen to adversely affect women's employment.

2. Attempts should be made to identify industries in the small scale sector which can help women to become self-employed. Industries based on labour intensive technology should be encouraged.

3. Serious attempts should be made to upgrade the traditional sector and to expand women's employment in the sector (which include rural artisan work, cottage industries and other household industries), by providing adequate support in the areas of technology upgradation, training, credit, raw materials, and marketing. A decentralised approach in providing these facilities will help considerably in the expansion of women's employment in these sectors. It must also be mentioned that the focus here should be on producing goods of mass consumption.

3.27 The State Handicrafts Boards do assist artisans to a certain extent by buying their products. But beyond that the Boards have no relationship with the life of the artisans and craftsmen, particularly women. The national Commission finds it important to have a national policy on craftsmen to be framed, ensuring a fair return for their work and self-respecting conditions of work and living.

3.28 Realising the urgent need of social security for craftswomen the Commission recommends that:

1. As their homes are their workplaces, proper housing and workshed should be provided, specially to women craftsmen are all home-based. Housing also adds to the security of women's lives.
2. General Insurance Companies should be roped in to devise suitable insurance against critical days of maternity, incapability, illness and old age.
3. For award winners, introduction of monthly income scheme under the Unit Trust may be explored.
4. A central fund may be created for medical care of the ailing artisans and craftsmen/women.

The following specific steps may be taken

- (i) Micro-level data collection regarding various aspects of "handicrafts"

- (ii) Government's support to help units in the initial stages.
- (iii) Treatment of handicrafts and rural artisan work as industry.
- (iv) Creating mass scale marketing for handicrafts, and
- (v) State level policies for state specific crafts.

3.29 The country earns annual foreign exchange close to rupees one thousand crores for handicrafts, handloom and readymade garments where women contribute to a very large extent. The Commission is of the view that there is ample scope and justification for investment in providing social security and welfare schemes for women artisans and craftsmen women of our country.

5. The handloom sector is a very important sector from the point of view of the present as well as the potential employment of female labour. The handloom weavers who have worked as household labour for a master weaver under the traditional jajmani system find it difficult to organise themselves into a cooperative structure.

3.30 To take the benefit of the various promotional schemes of the Government, they face major problems like inadequate, untimely and irregular supply of working funds from the Cooperative Banks which are more attuned to the needs of agricultural sector; the subsidies for loans and rebate are not released in time and in sequence, resulting in unsmooth running of the cooperatives, nonrecognition of women's pre-weaving and post-weaving work as 'work', Hence, they are ignored by the present cooperatives, and government development and welfare programmes.

The Commission, therefore, recommends:

1. The District Industries Centres and District Cooperative Banks jointly prepare a business plan for each handloom cooperative, in consultation with the members, women included.
2. The District Industries Centres should accordingly put demand for the necessary funds, well in time, from the Government banks and Nabard.

3. To adopt region specific measures viz, establishing of spinning capacity in the region, technological upgradation of looms, transport subsidy and linkages with outside markets.

3.31 The industry, at present, is facing a number of problems in the areas of technology, raw materials, and marketing organisation. In addition to removing these constraints, there is a need to take the following specific steps to help women workers:

1. Sensitisation of the concerned staff to take care of women's needs.
2. Promotional projects and schemes to indicate increase in income and employment of women.
3. Training of women in weaving.
4. Improved technologies for the tasks handled by women.
5. Facilities like creches and maternity benefits to support their employment.
6. **Women who do pre-weaving in the households should be immediately enrolled as members of the cooperatives to cover them under economic and welfare schemes' and**
7. Formation of women weavers cooperatives.

3.32 **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** is an important instrument to reduce rural poverty and promote women's development. However, certain drastic changes are required in the approach structuring and management of the KVIC.

1. At present, the women are involved in activities like making aggarabattis and papad rolling which are comparatively less paid than activities in which men are involved. KVIC should correct these distortion and promote women taking up trades bringing in higher incomes like hand made paper and weaving.
2. KVIC should provide support services like

child care, elementary education, health and family planning. It should provide employment generation through organisation of actual producers or workers, and it should raise awareness among women about their rights and responsibilities to enhance their general participation in all fields of national development. Secondly, KVIC and KVIB programmes should be directed to poor women belonging to low castes, including the SC/ST. Further, KVIC should also involve women in supervision and management also, so that women workers do not remain only in the subordinate or secondary position.

3.33 As far as **small industry sector** is concerned, attempts should be made to strengthen it economically and steps should be taken to protect women workers of this sector from various types of exploitation—

1. Labour laws should be enacted to cover contract and sub-contract workers, home-based workers and seasonal workers.
2. Appropriate laws should be formulated to protect home-based workers from different types of exploitation.
3. Strict observation of labour laws should be insisted in the small factory sector, including seasonal factories.
4. The laws regarding permanency should be strictly enforced in this sector. To start with, all public sector units should provide permanency of job to their workers.

3.34 **Licensing policy**, which is intended to regulate the production of goods and services in the economy has remained gender neutral, thereby not paying much attention to the male/female division of labour in the economy and the specific requirements of female workers. It has, therefore, created an adverse effect on women's employment.

3.35 The licensing policy, like the industrial policy, needs to be examined from the point of view of employment generation for the masses of the poor, including poor women. It should also consciously incorporate the gender factor so that large scale

erosion of employment opportunities for women is prevented.

3.36 Whenever **large industries sub-contract work** to women, who do it in their own houses, it is necessary that the employer **does not evade his legal obligations to provide the benefits** which would have accrued had the women worked in his establishment. There is also use of water, space, electricity or other means of lighting, which should be compensated to the home based contract workers. In the villages, or where space is available in urban centres, common sheds may be built for and by women. **Women should be encouraged to work in common sheds to improve their work status and build up solidarity.**

Credit, Raw Material and Marketing

3.37 A fairly large portion of the female work force in the informal sector is engaged in activities of self-employed nature. There are numerous such activities in which the capital investment is not high and there is no recognised employer employee relationship. Such women usually work with their families on piece-rate work.

3.38 There are certain common problems faced by women in this portion of the self-employed and informal sector like lack of access to raw materials credit and marketing facilities and inadequate knowledge of the market demands. All too often, the end product does not have the finishing touch and the eye for detail is missing. Women are further handicapped by lack of child care facilities, inadequate work place with poor ventilation and lighting facilities, poor skills, and lack of training. They tend to get exploited by the middlemen and have to pay exorbitant rates of interest on the small loans that they manage to get. In such a situation, women doing their own account work get gradually weeded out and become casual labour or piece rate workers. Similar is the story of women who are working in the primary sector of agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy, sericulture, handlooms and handicrafts. Instead of strengthening their activities, and in certain cases supplementing their income by doing their own account work, they are forced to swell the ranks of the labour force which, in many cases, is in the nature of casual labour or piece rate workers leading to further to deterioration in their economic status.

3.39. One of the critical components of women's advancement in the economic field is the availability of credit. In the present system, the women do not have access to easy credit even if the amount is very small. In spite of the Reserve Bank's instructions that no security is

required for loans upto Rs. 5,000/-, collateral is generally asked for in the case of women. An analysis of the existing mainline credit schemes for the poor show that not only are poor women marginalised, but the poor as a class do not have easy access to credit. Instead, politicisation of these loans has managed to give the poor a bad name as defaulters.

3.40 Women are marginalised either because of class handicaps such as illiteracy, lack of information and low self-confidence, or gender handicaps, such as attitudinal discrimination, low mobility and lack of asset ownership. The money-lender is a very real part of their lives as a source for both consumption and production credit. They have a complex financial arrangement with him. Banks are still very much a taboo. IRDP, DRI and SEPUP do not even average a 20 per cent coverage of women loaness. In effect, the banks have remained totally off-limits. The only instances where the banks have been successfully tapped is when voluntary agencies such as Annapurna and Working Women's Forum have acted as intermediaries for women of this class.

A. Credit

3.41 The Commission recommends that the banking policy needs to be implemented in favour of women with **greater amount of flexibility**. It would assist women further if **banks have counters exclusively for women and extension workers to help them**. Banks managed by women have proved to be more advantageous and within the reach of women. **Opening of women's co-operative banks should be promoted.**

3.42 The Commission is of the opinion that it will be beneficial to women, if apart from giving individual loans, these are advanced to or **through agencies with which women have dealings like mahila mandals, women's groups, Anganwadi workers, State Advisory Boards and Women's Development Corporations**. These bodies can also be channelized for getting the paperwork completed. The entire loans should be given in the name of the **individuals through bank pass books**. These loans could be advanced from the banks according to the existing procedures.

3.43 The quantum of loans given to women **should be assessed realistically keeping in view their needs**. Giving loans of a lesser amount is self-defeating. For example, if a viable dairy project requires a minimum of two buffalows, and if a loan is given for only one buffalow the project will not be viable. The Commission, therefore, recommends that no blanket ceiling for loans for the poor should be

made, and the ceiling should have certain flexibility. Loans should be combined with a component of subsidy.

3.44 The Commission would like to mention that vendors normally want very small loans per day or per week to buy food, vegetable and other perishable items. For such loans, it is not possible for them to go to the banks. The Government should, therefore, **devise suitable channels through which such loans to petty vendors can be disbursed.** Women's banks, Cooperative banks and voluntary agencies, having experience in this field may be used as channels for disbursement. Other channels should be identified keeping in view the state variations relating to the existing infrastructures.

3.45 The Commission has noticed that **if the husband has been a defaulter, the woman is disqualified from getting loans. This needs to be reviewed as,** in many cases, the default by the husband may be due to factors like non-viability of the project and inadequate amount of loans. **In some cases, husbands may be genuine defaulters, misusing the amount thereby pushing the family in greater distress.** For this very reason, the woman may want to take loans. The project should be screened, and if it is seen that **the woman is not being used as a screen for a further loan by the husband, it would not be proper to deprive the wife from taking the loan because the husband is a defaulter.**

3.46 The Commission has also observed that when a person takes a loan for the first time, he or she may already be in debt and such loans taken are used for wiping out the existing debts, which may be amounts due to the money lender, rather than starting a new venture. The Commission strongly recommends that the economic status of a loanee should be taken into account and the amount sanctioned should be such that a portion of it may be used for wiping out the debt as only then can economic ventures be started. A realistic and human approach by the banking, financial and other institutions will help poorest of the poor women.

3.47 The National Commission recommends innovations in the credit mechanism to assist poor women who are unfamiliar with the complexities of institutional finance. The Commission strongly **recommends the need for setting up an exclusive credit body for poor and self-employed women, in recognition of their socio-economic realities. It is also a recognition of the inability of the existing institutionalised credit systems to cater for the needs of women workers.**

3.48 Poor women, in the rural and urban economies

cater for themselves. Their labour is exploited to sustain the national economy and yet, their productivity is not recorded or reflected anywhere. Taking note of the critical socio-economic contribution of this sub-group there is a need for the creation of an institution which can act as a two way catalyst. Even as this credit body facilitates growth for its participants, the clear aim should be that they are raised in national visibility as a powerful and productive group. Organisations such as SEWA (Ahmedabad), WWF (Madras), Samakhya (Hyderabad), Annapuran mahila mandal (Bombay) have designed scientific credit experiments for rural and urban women in this class.

3.49 **Since the voluntary sector has unequivocally proved its activeness in delivering credit to this target sector the proposed national credit body must aim to support such organisations. Rather than take on a bureaucratic size and a cumbersome operation of operating loaning windows all over the country, this body can support the voluntary organisations which can further loan to the target sector.**

3.50 The proposed credit body can, through loans and grants, improve the equity base of the voluntary organisations by providing loans to them on soft term basis. It can also be instrumental in initiating many more voluntary experiments all over the country. This would require a research and development cell in the body which can study all existing experiments and build a model for replication. Trainers can then help more organisations to adopt these credit schemes for which the seed capital and loan can come from the credit body.

3.51 This body can also support government credit bodies such as Women's Development and Finance Corporations. It can also act as an important forum for dialogue between the organised credit institutions and the voluntary agencies. Since it will be the most comprehensive credit effort for women of this class, this body can be a major influence on mainstreaming credit policies for poor women.

3.52 **Ownership and management of this institution should represent voluntary sector largely.** Poor women can directly be shareholders of this organisation which can be headed by a trust. Management can be entrusted to professionals while a board of directors oversees the legislative and policy aspects of the institution. Once again the directors must represent a cross section of persons who have direct experience in this area.

3.53 In Madhya Pradesh, the State Government has

levied a duty of one paise on every unit of electricity consumed, which will help it to raise about rupees nine crores annually. This is being used to support a Welfare and Development Fund for Women. More such experiments need to be taken up in the country.

B. Raw Materials

3.54 Raw material is the biggest problem of artisans and crafts-women. The raw material they need is usually in short supply and expensive. They buy the raw material from retailers at high prices and sell the finished goods to common people with low purchasing power. Hence, in spite of having marketable skill, the artisan's own margin of profit remains very low. It is common observation, that artisans earn less than vendors or even labourers.

3.56 Therefore, the Commission recommends a policy that, **the actual producers and artisans should have the first claim to the raw materials like yarn, bamboo, scrap, or tendu leaves and a quota should be reserved for them.**

3.57 Where raw materials are not easily accessible, alternative channels should be identified through which good quality raw material would be procured at reasonable prices.

C. Marketing

3.58 A large section of women doing their own work or family occupation face the problem of marketing their products. The same products which earlier had a home market now seem to be squeezed out as a result of mass production of consumer goods, competition, stagnation in designing and quality. Sometimes, women are forced to make distress sales. Their major marketing channels are in haats and weekly markets which are now being flushed by mass produced goods. Non-availability of a network of marketing facilities is one of the important, obstacles to the advancement of these women. To deal with this problem, several alternatives have to be worked out.

3.59 The Commission recommends the following agencies which can be used as marketing outlets and also assist, if necessary, in acquiring credit and raw materials:

1. Consumer societies, and consumer federations.
2. Co-operative Societies, and Co-operative Federations.
3. Super markets.
4. State Emporia.
5. Setting up of Government depots for a cluster of villages which could supply raw materials, if necessary,

and collect finished products from women to be supplied to agencies with whom marketing tie-ups have been made.

3.60 While the above are actual marketing outlets, other agencies should be identified which can assist the women in identifying markets. These agencies may be the State Advisory Boards, the Women's Development Corporations and voluntary agencies of known experience. In addition, regional marketing centres, having jurisdiction over a few districts, may be set up. At the State level, there should be a Marketing Federation which should have various channels supporting it as mentioned above.

3.61 The role of the Divisional Centres and State Federations should be a mixture of promotion and active intervention.

Promotional Role

- (1) Advise women to take up activities in the areas where there is a demand for them, such activities could be existing activities, adaptations of the existing activities, or new activities.
- (2) Guide women to get credit from banks and also to find a method for credit guarantee.
- (3) Advise women on designing and on the use of certain modern technologies which would improve the quality of the end product.
- (4) Advise women for starting their own co-operatives or any other form of marketing organisations.
- (5) Counsel women how to get loans for making use of their own houses as production centres or common work places.
- (6) Link up health insurance for the women with the concerned agencies and also be a watch-dog for implementation of health insurance schemes and other welfare schemes.
- (7) Advise women regarding the availability of the benefits for upgradation of educational and vocational skills.

Areas of Active Intervention

- (1) Provide a network of marketing outlets.

- (2) Provide expertise in finishing a product to be marketed.
- (3) Give training to peer leaders in managerial skills.
- (4) Give training to identified groups of women in the application of new technologies.

3.62 The **infrastructural facilities** as suggested above need to be professional with a lot of flexibility. The Regional Centres and State Federations should not be tied down to rigid procedures, rules and regulations. Preferably, the State Federation should be an autonomous body with persons having managerial skills and expertise in marketing, designing and training. Wherever there are voluntary agencies of repute, which are willing to take up this activity, they could be assisted to set up such centres. Alternatively, where there are professional business houses or departmental centres like the weavers centre, they could be identified. It will have to depend upon the work ethos of each State which will ultimately decide the type of body which should be set up. **The guiding principles should be professionalism and flexibility.** The persons who will man the centres, to begin with, will have to be hand picked and well trained.

3.63 In the beginning, such an infrastructural facility may be provided on an experimental basis in a few States and in a few districts with about 5 to 6 identified trades. If the experiment is successful, it may be replicated. A system will have to be evolved where they will become financially self-sustaining. For effective intervention in each area, **extension service at women's doorstep is the most essential component.** Therefore, we recommend a well designed effective extension service on the line of **T & V service in agriculture.** If services are provided free, they may not be taken seriously. A certain charge, should be levied on women who get the benefit of the services. However, it will have to be ensured that, with the help of the services provided, the emoluments of the women should become higher and from which they may contribute a small portion of this to the centre. This could be supplemented by either Government grants or supported by financial institutions to make the institutions financially self-sustaining.

Apex Body

3.64 At the State level, an Advisory Committee, having representatives of finance, professional management experts and consultants, representatives of the Government from the administrative department and finance department and representatives from voluntary agencies

may be constituted. The Committee should be a standing committee with a fixed term, to be renewed or changed by rotation. This body may lay down broad policy guidelines and also assist the Divisional Centres in getting cooperation from various agencies such as the Government, training institutes, professional institutes, and private marketing agencies. This body will also review the work of the Centres and advise if new trades are to be added or certain trades to be dropped. In short, it will decide on the functional role of the Divisional Centres, **leaving the Centres with a great deal of flexibility of autonomy.**

3.65 At the Central level, a similar Advisory Committee, as at the State level, should be set up to assist the Department of Women and Child Development. The body will review the work of the Divisional Centres, undertakes periodic evaluations, decide on the future growth of such Centres and replicate the models of successful Centres.

3.66 **The Government itself can provide marketing facilities to women as it makes extensive purchase of goods and services during the course of the year which could be supplied by women.** Goods may be supplied by mahila mandals, women's cooperatives or District Divisional Centre like uniforms, envelopes, file covers, brooms, baskets, chalks, exercise books, bandages, bed sheets and other simple equipment for hospitals, educational kits-even vegetables, fruits, eggs and fish and also render services like cleaning, washing, cooking, catering, printing, stitching, binding and the like. **These purchases could be done from women groups directly by the State Governments as is being done in Gujarat or through the Women's Development Corporations as is being done in Punjab.** In Gujarat, the State Government has also set up a pricing committee to fix prices for goods and services purchased from women. This committee meets periodically to review the prices. Such a support will strengthen the women's co-operatives and other groups.

Space and Transport

3.67 In addition to credit, raw-materials and marketing, two additional inputs need to be provided to improve the status of such workers, namely, space and transport facilities. The small producers both in the urban and rural areas normally lack space to serve as work places as well. Ventilation and lighting facilities are almost lacking in the market places. Vendors do not normally get licences for want of space and they are pushed and harassed by the police and municipal authorities, who, at times, demand bribes in cash or

kind. The National Commission recommends that the critical needs of women producers and vendors should be taken into account by the authorities. Common workplaces should be provided, both in the rural and urban areas, having space, ventilation, water and toilet facilities. This should be assisted under the NREP programme. In addition, a new allocation should also be made.

3.68 Similarly, for marketing their products, places should be earmarked (e.g. school compounds in the evening) and licences given. In Manipur, they have the women's traditional market, an experiment which is very successful and needs, to be widely emulated. In cities, certain areas, certain timings, and days should be earmarked where vehicles should not be allowed. This may give relief to the small vendors by providing market area, thus promoting them instead of treating them as objects of nuisance.

3.69 The producers usually carry their products on their heads to the weekly haats or from the village to the city. The strain of this work quickly tells on their health. The small amount of goods they produce makes it uneconomical for them to hire transport, so they have to use the public transport system. Usually, they are deprived of access to public buses or trains or have to pay a bribe to use them. In Kerala, women engaged in fisheries have to pay exorbitant hire charges for the taxis as any delay in transporting fish to their homes or market places would lead to the fish getting spoiled. Since they have no access to transportation, they buy fish from the middleman at a higher price. Similarly, there are other easily perishable commodities like flowers which cannot be retained for some time before they are marketed. The National Commission recommends that attention may be paid for providing adequate and specially designed transport facilities for these workers.

Women in Processing/Industrial Occupations Mining

3.70 In the mining industry, the employment of women has reduced with the banning of underground work and night work by them. However, with the nationalisation of coal mines, there has been a somewhat upward trend in their employment. These workers also face the problems of very low percentage of permanent workers; predominance of women workers as contract workers in unskilled areas; low wages; serious health hazards, bonded labour and flagrant violation of labour laws. The Voluntary Retirement Scheme has been devised solely to reduce the

presence of women in mining. It is not devised to reduce the number of manual workers, as it is offered to women only. This practice is in total violation of the right of equality guaranteed under the Constitution.

The Commission therefore, strongly recommends that—

- (1) The practise of Voluntary Retirement should be stopped forthwith.
- (2) In order to prevent the number of women declining in the mining industry, the Commission recommends that Women relatives should have claim on the women's job on her retirement, and not a male member of the family.
- (3) Regarding mechanisation in the mining, the Commission observes that mechanisation, even if brought in, should be done with proper understanding of financial vis a vis human cost. It is observed that certain process where mechanisation is brought in, has proved financially more costly. e.g. shale picking, in coals mines which is mainly done by women only. Therefore, the Commission recommends that such processes should be left to be done manually by women. This will increase their employment opportunities and also cut out the financial costs.
- (4) The number of women workers as permanent workers should be increased.
- (5) The interests of women workers in mines should be safeguarded and there should be strict enforcement of labour laws.
- (6) Skilled training should be imparted to women workers so that they could get higher wages.
- (7) Simple precautionary health saving devices like gloves, helmets, special shoes should be provided by the employers compulsarily to protect the head, eyes, hands and feet of women.
- (8) The Welfare programmes for women workers will get a fillip if increasing number of women are appointed as welfare officers.

Fisher Women

3.71 The National Commission, on its tours, met a large number of fisher women whose conditions are pitiable.

Women are traditionally indispensable members of the fishing community, involved in all fishing operations like processing, drying and curing, loading/unloading and net making. The basic problem arises from the perishable nature of fish, poor and costly transport facility which does not allow them to buy fish directly from the fish centres, and competition from fishing units. The Commission, therefore, recommends:

- (1) Protection and regeneration of fish resources.
- (2) Recognition of their status as workers and provision of licenses.
- (3) Protective legislation for better wages and working conditions, and social security, benefits (the importance of this may be associated from the fact that while infant mortality for Kerala State is 32 per 1,000 in the coastal belt it is 180 per 1,000).
- (4) Reversal of high-technology, export oriented trends, that erode their livelihood without providing alternatives other than marginalisation as highly exploited wage labour.
- (5) Access to credit facilities.

3.72 Similar recommendations will apply to women workers in the garment industry, tobacco processing, food processing, rag picking, sericulture, silk industry and factory workers. All these workers need to be made visible by the planners. Apart from strict enforcement of legislation, new legislation is also called for. They need to be organised and taken into fold of trade unions.

3.73 As some processing workers may be self-employed such as garment workers, and rag pickers, credit, raw materials and marketing facilities are required. Recommendations on such facilities have been given in the section under Credit, Raw Materials and Marketing

Food Processing

3.74 Women have traditionally been involved in food processing for family consumption. These skills are, therefore, easily tapped when the need for generation of additional family income is felt. Most often, however, due to the lack of capital and organisational skills, the scale of their business is too small to ensure adequate profits and most women in this industry are not own-account workers, but victims of sub-contracting and putting out

systems. Women labour is clearly preferred as they can be paid very little and are less prone to making demands than men, 40 to 50 per cent of the women do not get regular work, which results in economic hardship and insecurity further eroding women's ability to demand and fight for improvements. There are some women's organisations in this industry, but it is a pity that most of them are not commercially viable and therefore the benefit to the women workers is minimal.

3.75 The National Commission makes the following recommendations for improvements in the lives of women workers in food industry.

1. Proliferation of sub-contracting must be checked and application of labour laws assured.
2. Women should be encouraged to avail of credit facilities to set up production units on their own that are of a size and scale to allow for profits and, therefore, steady income for all.

3.76 For this, they should be reached by women extension workers from relevant, departments and given training, especially in organisational and managerial skills, like marketing and accounting, as well as in leadership and awareness building.

Forest Workers

3.77 The Forestry sector provides employment to 0.2 per cent of the rural population, about 80 per cent of them are estimated to be women, and children. They get employment in collection and process of minor forest produce, and afforestation. Besides employment, the minor forest produce also provides food and income during the lean season to the forest dwellers, mainly tribals. Though officially 'minor', as it earns less revenue, but for the forest dwellers, the minor forest produce is a major source of income in the months of starvation. About 60 per cent production of minor forest produce is utilised as food in Orissa, 13 per cent of the forest population depends exclusively on collection of minor produce, 17 per cent as wage labour in forestry. In Panchmahals, 35 per cent of the total earnings of tribals are from minor forest produce collection. Collection of tendu leaves provides 90 days employments to 75 lakhs women every year.

3.78 To ensure them better price, produce like tendu leaves, mahua seeds, flowers are nationalized in a number of States. The States have created Forest Development Corporations to remove middlemen, to take the task of

procurement and sale of the produce. But the Commission observed that none of the States are engaging themselves in collection, in the real sense of the term. The Forest Development Corporations only fix the collection rates and ask the purchaser agents to pay that rate to the collectors. There is rampant exploitation by the middlemen by paying low rates, delayed payments, rejection of collection, cheating, intimidation. The women remain totally at the mercy of the middlemen. The Forest officials are hardly in support of the collectors. The Commission, therefore, recommends that:

- (1) The forest produce collectors should be paid the rates in such a way that they do earn at least not less than the NREP rate, at the end of the day.
- (2) Serious efforts should be made by the Forest authorities to help these women form their own cooperatives to collect and sell the produce to the Forest Development Corporations.
- (3) The women of the cooperative should be trained in processing of the various minor forest produce.
- (4) A scheme should be developed to supply additional foodgrains in the months of unemployment during the year.

Garment Workers

3.79 The readymade garment industry is a highly profitable one for the manufacturer and trader or contractor, given that demand is high and labour available is docile and cheap. The trader buys fents, rags and substandard materials from mills and whole-sellers, this is cut by cutters, who may work on the traders' premises, then distributed to tailors. Mostly women do the stitching, generally in their own homes. Where production is modernised and fashions set up with the latest technology, men workers have a monopoly. Moreover, it is difficult to find a single women cutter.

3.80 Tailor women collect the cloth from the traders, stitch the material and then return the finished garments and collect the next batch of material. This is a regular process. It is the women who have to bear the entire cost of space, transportation, maintenance of their sewing machines, and thread. Wages may be paid weekly or monthly and flimsy, temporary records are kept. Piece-rate wages are arbitrarily fixed. Since these workers are scattered and unorganised, they are paid very little, with

no fear of protest. In fact, considering that they work at home and establishment cost is borne by them, their wages should be higher and not lower than the wages of those who work in large garment factories. As such the existing labour laws do not apply to them as they are not workers and even if applied, the laws are violated. **The workers have no protection, no rights, no recognition and no powers.**

3.81 In the light of this situation, the National Commission makes the following recommendations:

1. In areas where this industry is concentrated training centres should be set up in order to help women upgrade their skills, as well as to give them information about their rights and the schemes that they can benefit from in order to go into business on their own or as a group, such as a co-operative.
2. In order to reach the maximum number of women and help them in the most meaningful way, a large number of extension workers is necessary, who should be trained to impart the information that is relevant to these workers, to help them avail of schemes and services, and to press for legal redress.
3. These workers are especially vulnerable to health problems related to eyesight, poor ventilation, and postural problems. These need to be taken into account while planning any ameliorative measures for them.

Vendors/Hawkers

3.82 Vendors and hawkers perform a vital function in the commodity distribution system of towns and cities, yet they are regarded as anti-developmental and anti-social. City planners are biased in favour of the formal sector, and prefer to provide for expensive super-markets and shops rather than help vendors who only require a small space for squatting with their wares, and transportation facilities from the wholesale market to their vending sites.

3.83 It appears that the unorganised sector is expanding and the urban poverty is to stay for many years to come. Vendors, with their small capital needs therefore, should be encouraged and supported, and informal and formal sectors allowed to complement each other. While it is a fact that there are associated problems of congestion and hygiene, the solution cannot be to ban them, dislocate

them or fine and harass them, especially because most hawkers belong to the low income population, and 40 per cent of them are women, of whom 30 to 40 per cent are estimated by some micro studies to be the sole supporters of their families. Thus measures to help hawkers should be part of the broader structural policies designed to improve the standards of living and welfare of the low income population in the city.

3.84 Therefore, the National Commission makes the following recommendations:

1. The service performed by vendors should be recognized and the authorities should liberally issue licences to women vendors especially, considering their greater need and major contribution. The licence should carry a photograph of the vendor and therefore serve as an identity card as well.

2. There is a need for an integrated authority to be set up whose primary responsibilities would be to coordinate and increase the effectiveness of commodity distribution systems in towns and cities. This body should have provision for adequate consultation between the representatives of the distribution trade and the officials so that policy can be developed and all decisions are based on a two-way dialogue. Thus even when measures like relocation are unavoidable, the process will be saved from the usual arrogance and insensitivity to the vendors' economic needs.

3. Urban planners should recognise the space requirements of vendors and hawkers. A space for a women's market, such as the traditional women's market in Manipur, should be integral part of the plans for all newly developing areas.

4. Every market complex must have provision for squatting vendors and all related facilities like drinking water, washing, toilet, storage and creche be provided. Market committees should be formed to manage these facilities on which women vendors should be given due representation; furthermore, the vendors should organise to form their own association. Where street foods are sold, supply of water taps and garbage disposal should be taken care of by this association.

5. A mechanism should be evolved for creating a fund which would assist vendors in their cash requirements for expanding their business to viable proportions. With comparatively less investment there are some gains and consequent improvements in the lives of the workers. The fine

collected should be utilised for their welfare. Supportive services and social security schemes may be planned and set up.

6. Regular training courses should be organised for vendors at the market place itself, on sanitation and health, fair business practice and schemes of assistance and how to avail of them.

7. All existing legislation and municipal rules should be amended according to the above points and new legislation enacted wherever necessary.

Domestic Workers

3.85 Domestic workers are in the lowest rung of the ladder in the urban economy. The sexual division of labour, and its pattern of task allocation, has rendered domestic service to become a predominantly female occupation. The tasks performed by domestic workers are practically the same ones performed as unpaid work within the family such as cleaning, washing ironing, taking care of children. There are 1.06 million domestic workers according to the 1971 Census, out of whom more than 4 lakhs are women. This is one of the most vulnerable groups of workers since there is neither government regulation to cover this section of the labour force, nor is there any written contract for the work, so they are hired and fired at the will of the employer. In the absence of any formal contract, their working condition is often oppressive and the employer can always evade his responsibility. The traditional trade unions have also not taken any interest in organizing them till recently. The problems faced by them include deplorable wages, insecure service, no holidays or leave, no maternity or medical benefits and health problems.

3.86 The Commission recommends the following steps to improve the condition of domestic workers:

1) A system of registration for domestic workers should be introduced. Besides giving them visibility and taking account of the workers and their contribution, this registration body could also perform a role of looking into the problems and grievances of these workers. It could also, from time to time assess the local situation and fix wages/rates for the domestic workers. This body may be composed of the representatives of the State, the domestic workers and employers as a tripartite body.

2) Fixing a minimum wage is extremely important in view of the prevalent exploitative trends. Wage fixation

would need to take into account the hours of work, the spread over of work, the number of jobs to be performed, and the number of persons in the family, since that would determine the workload of the domestic workers. The rate fixed, however, should in no case, be less than the prescribed minimum wage.

3) **Legislation: There is need for a legislation to regulate the conditions of employment, social security and security of employment.** This lack of security in the job restricts the domestic workers bargaining power and demand for basic facilities like paid leave. A number of women's groups working with domestic workers have proposed "The Domestic Workers (conditions of service) Bill" to regulate working hours, holidays and leave, letter of appointment, application of certain existing laws like the minimum wages to domestic workers which the Commission endorses.

4) For the enforcement of the policy and legislation mentioned, it is essential that this vulnerable group of domestic workers be organized which can put them in a better position. They may be organized for economic benefits support services like education and child care, training better tools and equipments.

5) There is also need for all these organizing efforts to culminate into a stronger movement. For this, there should be a federation of domestic works where all the small groups working with domestic works come together and build collective strength. Government can also take a very positive and supportive role in this by organizing workshops of these groups and providing them support and knowhow.

6) The problems of domestic workers are linked to the problems of lack of alternatives and distress immigration from rural areas. Hence the depending of these migrant women on their employers (including shelter) is very high which makes them weak when it comes to bargaining for their rights. In such a situation, the provision of low cost hostels for such girls/women would help reduce their dependence and vulnerability.

7) There have been successful attempts of agencies in training girls to be domestic help who also look after their employment, settle their wages. Girls collect once a week at the agencies where they are provided training, literacy and entertainment. These agencies promote shelter and find alternate placement for girls thrown out by the employer. The Government should help and promote such agencies by assisting them financially.

Anti-poverty Programmes

3.87 Anti-proverty programmes were designed to directly benefit those below the poverty line as development benefits were not accruing to the poor. The experiences with antipoverty programmes have shown that there is a need to improve the policy, programme design and implementation in this area.

3.88 At the policy level, there is a need to accept that women's needs are not only for self-employment. In fact, poor women can be divided into three categories on the basis of their needs.

- (1) Destitutes, disabled and handicapped women who want social assistance rather than income/employment generating programmes;
- (2) Women (mainly belonging to the poorer sections) who are neither willing nor capable of taking up self-employment programmes and who want wage employment;
- (3) Women who have skill/education/literacy/enterprise to take up self-employment programmes.

The programmes should be designed on the basis of the needs of women at the micro level.

3.89 The Commission recommends that the self-employment programmes should be strengthened on the following lines:

- (1) Planning for self-employment for women needs a multi-pronged strategy. Apart from the measures to support self-employment as such, the planning should also incorporate measures like child care and child development, technology to reduce drudgery of women, organisation of women and overall development of women.
- (2) In order to improve the access of women to self-employment, it is necessary to be judicious by combining the household approach in planning with individual approach. Women should be treated as independent entities in the labour market and attempts should be made to provide equal access to self-employment to both men and women.
- (3) It is also necessary to give joint titles to women to improve their access to the credit market. The

present approach of giving them joint ownership of land only in the event of transfer of land is not enough. The joint ownership should be extended to all the types of productive assets and to the present status of ownership also.

- (4) **Appropriate extension strategy** should be adopted to attack the specific socio-psychological constraint of women and to reach them ultimately, if necessary female extension officers-/staff should be appointed.
- (5) The designing of self-employment programmes (specially of DWCRA) for women should have an explicit planning component in the sense that each aspect of planning—training, marketing, management, should get enough attention. Group approach will be useful in this context.
- (6) **Special attention will have to be paid to the needs of female-headed families.** This could be done by giving them preferential treatment in self or wage employment programmes. Destitutes of these families should also be provided social assistance on a preferential basis through social security measures.
- (7) It is necessary to pay adequate attention to the support programmes like maternity benefits, creche, and technology for removing drudgery of women. It is important that these programmes are undertaken at a level that creates an impact and meets the needs of women. In this context, it is important to mention the urgency of the programmes pertaining to drinking water, energy and environment, as all the three are likely to reduce women's drudgery considerably.
- (8) Organisation of women for creating awareness, for production activities as well as for creating solidarity among women, will contribute considerably to eradication of women's poverty. **Reformulation of the mahila mandal scheme, and encouragement to women's cooperatives,** will be useful in this context.
- (9) **DWCRA could be improved by detailing of guidelines for the programmes; strengthening the training component of skill, entrepreneurship and management; supporting it in the areas of raw materials and marketing; and introducing continuous sympathetic evaluation of the programme.**

- (10) **Agencies like mahila mandals, voluntary agencies and cooperatives should be utilised for assisting women in completing formalities for getting credit.**

3.90 In the areas of wage employment programmes, the following steps are recommended:

- (1) It is necessary to increase the size of this programme considerably. EGS of Maharashtra has shown that poor women do participate in these programmes in large numbers.
- (2) There is a need to strengthen the planning component of these programmes so as to ensure continuous work to women workers on productive assets which are selected carefully keeping in mind the needs of the region.
- (3) Planning and designing of these programmes should be done keeping in mind the specific needs and preferences of poor women.
- (4) Arrangements such as drinking water and creches, and worksheds should be provided on work sites.
- (5) **Regular payment of wages** at the stipulated rates should be insisted upon. Better supervision by authorities can contribute substantially in this area.

3.91. The Commission is of the view that in order to diversify women's activities, it is necessary to impart them training to improve their skills. In the existing farmers training programmes, participation of women is very low. In TRYSEM, although the participation of women is reported to have achieved a target of 30 per cent, training has not been imparted in the areas in which women work, or in the allied areas. The emphasis of training has been knitting, sewing embroidery and possibly animal husbandry. This has not led to increase in the employment of women or enhanced their remuneration. **All training programmes must be linked to employment with the objective of increasing the remuneration and improving their living conditions.** The objective should also be to prevent the growth of unskilled workers and channelise them to take up skilled activities.

3.92 There is a need to train the government functionaries at the District and Block levels on the needs of women, especially the incidence of women headed households

and those where women's income constitute the major household expenditure. The Commission observed on its tours, that most government functionaries are quite unaware of the substantial proportion of such women among the women workers, because of a mistaken belief, based on middle class, cultural norms, that all women were attached to households and cared for by some male member. **There is also a need to train them on the type of projects the women can initiate** and that collaterals for taking loans are not required when the projects are less than Rs. 5,000/-

3.93. It is also true that for those below poverty line, poverty means half starvation. Among the hungry, women are hungrier. It has been very often observed that the credit facility given to them is consumed in buying foodgrains, for the family. The half starved and malnourished women can hardly be expected to have the psychological strength and mental will to participate in the development schemes meant for them.

3.94 Therefore, the Commission recommends that ways should be explored whereby additional foodgrains can be provided as subsidy for those who have a loan burden to discharge under the IRDP, and use on their way to relative progress. In such cases, there would be more likelihood of the credit being used entirely for productive purposes.

3.95 The Commission also recommends that the foodgrains supplied at subsidised rate to the private sector should be stopped and diverted to the rural poor.

3.96. The Commission recommends that a programme should be built up linking wage employment, development activities and the public distribution system, for women, especially the vulnerable groups like tribals, forest workers, IRDP loan beneficiaries. A wage programme through public distribution system can be designed for poor women. Supply of foodgrains serves as an insulation against price rise in the open market outside, particularly during the lean period of the year.

For women, food means better productivity and better motherhood.

Drought Relief Work

3.97 Unfortunately, drought has become a regular feature in our country causing severe distress to poor women workers who are pushed further into the areas of under employment and unemployment. Famine work

should not be seen as a charity to the poor but as a basic human right for those who need work. The Commission, therefore recommends:

(1) As per the Minimum wages Act and judgement of the Supreme Court and the guidelines laid down by various High Courts, **all relief works must pay minimum wages. Any notification of any State Government to exclude famine relief work from the jurisdiction of Minimum Wages Act should be treated as illegal and unconstitutional.**

(2) Effective maintenance of muster rolls and wage slip should be ensured. Where women are working, their own names should be extended in the muster roll and not their men's names. **The cash payment, also, should go actually in the women's hands.**

As it is observed that more than 50 per cent labour is female labour on relief worksites, the rule of law to provide creches, sheds and drinking water should be strictly observed. The creche can be managed by the combined efforts of the local village mahila mandal and the women on the worksite.

(3) **Famine relief work should include a variety of activities which help build future capital assets, and human capital in and around the villages where people live.** The assets created should be those having priority for women like work-sheds, creches and toilets, there should be decentralization in formulation of projects and diversification in the nature of activities which may include activities like improving the quality of land water resources, digging or deepening of wells, bunding. For this local level planning will have to be ensured National or State level blue prints cannot be implemented at local levels. In this context, involvement of local women and men, women's representatives, mahila mandals, voluntary organizations, unions must be considered.

Famine relief work should not be seen merely as a responsibility of one department or of one unit, but as a combined effort of all the concerned Departments of the Central and State Governments.

Urbanization and the Informal Sector

3.98 Cities have developed in India as commercial or trade centres or as administrative headquarters. They have been dominated by an urban elite class for whom they are designed and developed. Many of these elite belong to the formal sector. On the other hand, the condi-

tions of poverty in rural India has led to the migration of poor to urban centres for employment. However, they have no access to space and land use either for shelter or for pursuing their occupation, neither do they have access to the formal sector for employment. As a result, the dominance of the elite and the formal sector has marginalised a whole group of people in the city. These disadvantaged people solve their problems by hawking on the streets, squatting in public places, by making "unauthorised colonies" and "unplanned" settlements.

3.99 There is a strong case in our reconsidering the priorities and recognising the needs of the informal sector who contribute substantially to the income and services to the formal sector. Understanding of space itself, leads to many planning problems. Concepts of land values, returns from the land, and economic viability of functions of land lead to a situation where the formal sector dominates the land use planning process. In order to provide equal access and right to use of urban space for all citizens, special measures have to be taken in favour of the informal sector. The following points may provide a direction as to how to incorporate urban informal sector in urban planning.

1. Recognize the urban informal sector as an integral part of urban planning. All the master plans or development plans must have a special component in the plans and policies formulated to include the urban informal sector in planning.

2. Make landuse plan in such a way that it achieves maximum integration and complementality of informal and formal sector. New and liberal location policies must be adopted. To give an example, while allocating a plot of land for a shopping complex, enough space should be provided to accommodate and encourage the vendors and the retailers.

3. Change or modification of the existing land-use and land tenure policies so that variation in the use of urban space during the different days of the week and during the day and the night becomes possible. The central business districts of the towns, when closed on Sunday, can be used for weekly markets. Huge parking lots in the middle of the city can be put to productive use during the nights.

4. Recognize and support the services of the urban informal sector, so that their conflict with the formal sector can be resolved. Dumping yards for the waste-picker, segregated traffic lanes for pedal rickshaws, working yards for the home based producers are some examples.

5. Work places for women producers and workers doing their own accounts work, with facilities for lighting and ventilation, drinking water, toilets and creches, need to be provided. In shopping and office complexes, factories and institutions like schools, hospitals, universities, creches should be provided. In addition, space for small depots needs to be provided near places of work such as commercial centres and strategic points of communication, where milk, vegetables, fruits and provisions are available in order to reduce the work load of women whose responsibility it is normally to make such purchases after working hours.

6. Housing facilities for working women, especially for single women or women headed households, need to be planned. Similarly, the housing facilities for homebased workers should include adequate space provision for carrying out their work.

7. It is recommended that wherever possible separate transport facilities for women may be provided to women worker to and from their place of work so that they do not face any harassment at the hands of male passengers. Provision for transport of their goods should be made in such vehicles.

8. Encourage studies in the field of education and research of urban planning that help evolve planning processes and techniques which can ensure that the urban informal sector is not by-passed in planning. Special attention in the studies should be given to women workers in the informal sector. Studies on the space requirements, housing and movement characteristics, even planning and layout and of hawking grounds, can be carried out in relation to the poor, specially women.

Technology

3.99.1 Technology has treated women workers unfairly. A number of studies have documented that improvements in technology, in an industry has displaced women. There are therefore, some short-run measures which are recommended to protect women from this displacement.

- (1) Directives should be issued to all industrial units, specially in the public sector, that no further reduction in the level of employment of women will be permitted;**
- (2) A small planning group should be set up by the Technology Policy Cell to design a format, listing**

the criteria for evaluation of all proposals of technology transfer and automation in industries so that a view can be taken with reference to women's opportunities for employment.

- (3) Schemes should be formulated for retraining women released from sick industries or closed industrial units.

3.99.2 There is also a need to develop a long term perspective in technology for women.

This could be done on the following lines:

- (1) The Ministry of Labour should prepare a list of those sectors/industries which are presently labour intensive and provide employment to sizeable number of women who are likely to be affected by technology transfer jeopardising their employment opportunities. In such cases the pace and degree of mechanisation should be so regulated and phased out that women are trained on the job and be given inputs like credit and tools.
- (2) Projects which result in the displacement of women should not be issued business licences and/or funded or given concessions of subsidies by the Government, banks and corporations, unless the displaced women can be firmly rehabilitated in alternative employment. The displaced women should have the first priority in training for new jobs created by the new technology.
- (3) The Project Appraisal Division of the Planning Commission in collaboration with the Technology Policy Implementation Committee, should formulate clear guidelines for the approval of import of technology or automation in any given industry by listing out issues critical in technology assessment and valuation.
- (4) The Inter-Departmental Working Group set up by the Technology Policy Implementation Committee, to draw up guidelines for technology assessment and evaluation, and absorption of imported technology, has made a large number of recommendations (1985) which need to be implemented.
- (5) It should be incumbent on the employers to prepare a good feasibility report submitting their proposal for a loan to the government for the purpose of technology transfer to indicate existing capital-labour ratio and changes expected after introduc-

tion of technology in the present pattern of employment (sexwise) within the industry at the skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled levels, and the demand for different categories of labour after technology transfer.

- (6) All technologies which are likely to directly and indirectly increase women's workloads must be accompanied by other technologies or measures to ease or eliminate these side effects. In other words, a systems approach should be used to develop packages, rather than the current uni-dimensional approach. These multifaceted packages must be gender sensitive and women biased.
- (7) The development of new technologies for traditional or even modern occupations, must be prioritised, beginning with women's occupations. In other words technology development must be selective designed to impact positively on women's work, whether wage-work or non-wage work.
- (8) Development of simple or appropriate technology in the form of tools, implements, and protective devices to remove or reduce the work related hazards faced by women, must be given top priority and taken up on a war-footing. Mechanisms must be created for involving the women themselves in research and development process, so that the results are appropriate and useful to women.
- (9) An advisory committee, with some power of veto, must be set up at Central Government level to monitor the impact of technology on women. The committee should also actively identify and promote the areas for research and development of pro-women technologies.
- (10) Existing technologies, which are not appropriate to women, though they are almost exclusively utilised by women (e.g. sewing machines, handcart pulling, table heights cashew-nut sifters should be redesigned on a priority basis. The redesigning should be based on anthropometric measurements of Indian women.
- (11) Thirty-five per cent of all the research and development funds of national research and design institutes should be reserved for women's work, including occupational health studies, and working out changes in these for the convenience of women workers.

(12) An important requirement in this context is to introduce **an in-built system of evaluation**. The government agencies processing such proposals usually do not have adequate data on non-technical issues to give adequate weightage to them. Instead of doing a post-mortem analysis of the impact of production technologies on employment of women, there should be an inbuilt system of such evaluation. A multi-disciplinary group for technology evaluation may be set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour, drawing expertise of several organisations within the government (including Planning Commission, economic ministries, financial institutions entrusted with the responsibility for analysing technology choices, women's cell of the Department of Science and Technology, representative of TPIC, training institutions and research and development systems) and from non-governmental organisations. Pooling together data and information, the report prepared by the group should be given due weightage while considering proposals of technology transfer and should be disseminated widely.

Health

4.1 **Most of the health problems that women face are related to their general life situation. These aggravate the problems women face in their work situation as workers.** These problems include nutrition, accessibility to health services, water, housing, sanitation, maternity benefits, and child-care, control over their own bodies, opportunities for education and training, their status within the family, as well as situations that affect their mental and emotional health, that is, economic and job insecurity and helplessness due to harassment and discrimination. It is necessary to tackle these together with the health problems, women face, directly related to their work.

4.2 **Health is no longer seen as a service without an including a living wage, improved conditions of work, a women in the informal sector, will not be adequate without, at the same time, affecting their levels of living, including a living wage, improved conditions, of work a safe and hazard-free work-place as well as protective equipment, controlled hours, benefits such as for health, maternity, creches and old-age pensions, housing and potable water near to their homes, in quantities necessary for family health. Health must be understood in the context of this total scenario to affect the conditions of women in the informal sector.**

4.3 The National Commission makes the following suggestions with regard to women health and work.

1. Nutritious and sufficient food is a crying need of the women workers in the informal sector. Specific nutritional programmes which include calcium, proteins, iron and vitamin D, could be initiated through the government health care system. A nation-wide programme for the distribution of nutritious, subsidised food supplements which includes calcium for women should be organised on the lines of a similar programme of milk and egg powder in the 1950's. **Coarse grains like ragi as well as milk must be made widely available at subsidised rates.**

2. Mental health is an important element in the general well-being of women workers in the informal sector. **Physical insecurity and the anxiety due to it, often lead to physical ill-health.** Besides, a feeling of helplessness and vulnerability paralyses women workers still further. Hence, it is necessary that:

a. There should be stringent punishments for rape, sexual harassment, eve-teasing and other actions threatening women. **The Government should legislate a Prevention of Violence Against Women Act to cover harassment at work-sites, homes, streets, police stations, and prisons.**

War-site harassment also be included in labour laws and be included in the Industrial Disputes Act, where the burden of proof be on the man.

b. There is also the need for a **Prevention of Domestic Violence Act to cover specific wife-beating, child-battering, molestation, marital and domestic rape and mental cruelty.**

c. **The Law of Evidence must be changed, in view of the fact that many of the most serious crimes against women, are committed in situations without witnesses e.g. rape, dowry harassment, marital violence and sexual assault.**

d. There is a need for facilities for psychotherapy and the rehabilitation of victims of harassment, rape & exploitation. Sending them to a shelter is not adequate to overcome their shock, anger and shame. They need a trained staff, who understand their needs and can provide reactions, and facilities for medical care and psychotherapy.

3. Availability of and accessibility to health care facilities.

a. Increasing the availability of the accessibility to health care facilities, is important, in order that the recent positive advances against diseases, reach the mass of poor

women. Statistics on health facilities and their use indicate that women go to hospital and contact medical functionaries less often than men. Studies also indicate that, the amount of money spent by households for medical treatment is greater for men and boys than for women and girls. The result is higher morbidity and mortality among women, including a very high maternal mortality rate. The rates of maternal death, lack of accessibility for the care of pregnant mothers, deliveries conducted by trained attendants, coverage of women with immunisation against tetanus, are all well known and do not need to be reported. The need for trained dais, accessible primary health centres and sub-centres, and their linkages to referral and district hospitals is also known and has bearing on the health needs of the general population as much as women working. It is also important to States because a large proportion of the users of the service mentioned at (a) are women in poverty, all of whom are workers. **There should be Refresher/Orientation courses for the doctors on subjects of women's work and health. It is necessary that the medical education should recognise occupational health hazards especially in the informal sector. These should be a part of the regular courses in the curriculum.** It was especially evident that the Preventive and Social Medicine departments had not even considered the possible problems of health of this sector. In spite of letters to all the PSM Departments, hardly any response was received.

A few visits to PSM Departments by the Task Force and by the national commission also brought to the fore, this neglected area which required to be studied by both medical personnel, social scientists and professional social workers.

b. While ensuring better choices for women, including women's access to safe deliveries and safe and free abortions, it is necessary to stress the immediate abolition of the oppression that comes directly from the Government pressures on women both as promoters (ANMS, teachers, nurses) and as receptors of family planning methods like injectible contraceptives and amniocentesis. In fact, **the entire emphasis of 'Family Planning' to the detriment of access to other health care facilities, needs to be strongly opposed, not only because it is oppressive in itself and has caused misery to millions of poor women in the country, but also because it discredits the public health system and makes poor women workers dependent upon private, exploitative medical facilities, even when they desperately need these for abortions, deliveries and serious illnesses.** Since all poor women work, they are gravely affected.

4. Certain concrete steps need to be immediately taken

to facilitate the reaching of health-care to the poor, labouring women.

a. **The timings of the dispensaries and hospitals should be fixed in a way which would be convenient to working women who cannot forego their income for medical care.**

b. **Necessary medicines should be adequately stocked and the hospitals and PHCs should be operated in such a way as to keep the number of visits of the women to the minimum necessary, if they are to avail of the treatment, otherwise, they get discouraged and do not continue, because of the competing demands on their time as they carry multiple responsibilities.**

c. **There should be a 24 hours creche facility for women patients with children in every hospital and PHC.**

d. **Women should be allowed two free bus-rides to the nearest PHC every month.**

e. **Because they are already poorly nourished, illness complicates their condition further. As food is a significant component for effective recovery, hospitals should provide free food to poor women most of whom are daily wage, casual and piece rate earners whose income ceases on hospitalisation.**

f. **Dais who are the only source of help for the majority of women, should be taken seriously, as a vital source of rural health care. Their skills should be enhanced via on-going training and their regular involvement in public health work should be encouraged.**

g. **The Commission recommends that the community may be motivated to construct and maintain one clean and sterilized room in the village to be used for conducting deliveries by trained dais.**

h. **Women should be involved at the village level as community Health Guides if women's access to health care is to be improved. Teams comprising of one literate and one experienced older women, though not necessarily literate may be the most desirable, both in term of outreach and accessibility to women. Their training should include both preventive health education and curative care, mahila mandals should support these women, health workers and assist in the maintenance of linkage between the official health care system and village women.**

Occupation Related Recommendation

4.4 In the formal sector, workers are entitled to a break

after four hours of work as well as leave provisions and two paid weekly off. These are provisions the workers have won after decades of struggle, because it is physically absolutely necessary, if one's health is not to break down completely. These provisions need to be extended to the workers in the informal sector too.

4.5 Regulation of working hours is particularly necessary in the informal service and production centres where there is considerable exploitation of the poor with long hours and no over-time. **Piece-rates should be converted into daily wages, based on the normal quantum of work completed at a healthy pace. Only then, will women not have to work long hours to make a meagre living.**

4.6 **Health Insurance, including compensation for accidents, should be available to women workers. Health cards should be distributed to them, as is supposed to be done in the beedi-industry, but is not effectively implemented.** Through this, they would be entitled to receive health care of their choice at any public health facility (Primary Health Centres sub-centres, ESIS Hospitals, Municipal dispensaries, T.B. Hospitals, general Government Hospitals, etc.) and/or recognised private facility up to a certain stipulated limit. The latter is necessary because workers are often located far from any Government facility, have no transport, or money for any transport that is available, and often find the timings of the Government facilities, unsuitable. In addition, in medical emergencies (complications during child-birth, accidents, etc.), the nearest facility may be a private one.

Accident insurance for both temporary and permanent disabilities, monetary and health benefits, should be available through both public health and private facilities as mentioned above.

4.7 Provision of a safe work-place and safety equipment (including personal protective equipment) is necessary for women. Ideally, it should be insisted that **every workplace should assure safety to the workers.** This may imply mechanisation of processes which are hazardous. This in turn means loss of jobs/work for the women, which cannot be permitted until there is alternate safe work for women, and new training facilities for them. This is an important element in improving the health of women. Till then however, it is necessary to **provide safety equipment including powerful exhausts to remove harmful dust from the work environment and personal protective equipment like masks, feet protectors, eye glasses, ear muffs and gloves and strong contraptions for the safety of women workers.**

4.8 **Preventive health education both with respect to occupational and other health problems (anaemia, leucorrhoea etc.) should be initiated through the Workers' Education Board.**

4.9 Electricity should be made available on a priority basis to workers, particularly those whose trade adversely affects their eye-sight (this includes chikan and ready made garment workers, zari workers weavers and others). **Electricity should be supplied to home based women workers at non-industrial/non-commercial rates.**

4.10 A comprehensive Health and Safety Act should be evolved and enacted. This Act should give the workers:

1. Right to information about chemicals and work processes at the work-site,
2. Right to insect work-sites.
3. Right to demand guard for machinery, monitoring and controlling levels of dust fumes and fibers in the work atmosphere.
4. Right to demand personal protective equipment.
5. Right to stop work if the conditions are found unsafe.
6. Right to redress compensation etc. for damages.

This Act should be evolved in consultation with workers, trade unions and concerned voluntary agencies.

7. Maternity benefits, creches, old age benefits and pensions are mentioned elsewhere in the recommendations.
8. There is a need for a humane drug Policy and check on the pharmaceutical industry that at present operates on the profit principle like any other industry, even up to hoarding life-saving drugs to hike prices. The National Commission recommends the promotion of low cost medicines on the lines of the policy on minimum essential drugs of Bangladesh.

4.11. **Subsidized tools of trade which reduce occupational health problems should be made available to women workers.**

Priorities in research

4.12 **Indian Council of Medical Research, National**

Institute of Occupational Health, National Institute of Design, and such other organisations, should undertake occupational health studies of women's work. These should be done with a view to developing simple preventive and protective mechanisms and machines acceptable to workers which would reduce health problems.

4.13 Special emphasis must be placed on the ergonomic aspect of women's work, including postural problems. Innovation in the production processes which could reduce health problems should be examined, with workers' guiding and advising throughout, and such innovations be recognised and rewarded. To provide legislative protection and removal of restrictive legislation, there is need to be provided for voluntary agencies to play an effective role.

4.14 With respect to technology the commission recommends as follows:-

1. The development of new technologies for traditional, or even modern occupations must be prioritised, beginning with women's occupations. In other words **technology development must be selective, designed to impact positively on women's work, whether wage work or non-wage work.**
2. Development of simple or appropriate technology in the form of tools implements and protective devices to remove or reduce the work-related hazards faced by women, must be given top priority and taken up on a war-footing. **Mechanisms must be created for involving the women themselves in the research and development process,** so that the results are appropriate and useful to women.
3. In the specific area of **health technology—particularly contraceptives and sex-determination techniques—strong and immediate steps must be taken to withdraw or ban such technologies where they are actually damaging the health of already vulnerable poor women.** Measures for women's education and health promotion must be strengthened.
4. Multi-centered studies of health problems of workers in specific occupational groups should be undertaken by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on a priority basis. These studies should cover:
 - (i) The occupation related problems—direct and indirect.

- (ii) The general health problems of women workers.
- (iii) Special stress should be on the effects of the triple burden on women.

5. National Institutes like the ICMR, ICSSR and other bodies **should give a priority to research on health problems of the unorganised labouring women.** It is a pity that a leading institute like the ICMR does not even have a women's cell to look into the health problems of half the country's population. However, the present tendency of thrusting research related to women to a small cell is also questionable. That has implied in practice that the small cells conduct studies specifically on women, while the major portion of the personnel, research projects and finances of the institutes focus on men. In fact what should happen is that while the entire institute say the ICMR or the National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) should focus on workers, both, women and men, the women's cell should try to take up issues related more specifically to women

6. The ICMR, NIOH, National Institute of Design (NID) and such other organisations should undertake occupational health studies of women's work. These should be done **with a view to developing simple preventive and protective mechanisms and machines acceptable to workers, which would reduce their health problems.**

EDUCATION

5.1 Education is both an important instrument for increasing and bettering the chances of women's employability and for empowering women as they learn to think for themselves, become confident and also develop the capability of recognising more acutely the areas of exploitation. This fact has also been recognised and accepted in the National Policy on Education, 1986, by the Government, wherein, it has been mentioned that:

Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralise the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women, it will foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks the training and orientation of teachers, decision-makers and

administrators, and the active involvement of educational institutions.

5.2 However, although in principle the fact of empowering women through education has been recognised in the National Policy and the Programme of Action, the commission suggests the following steps be taken by which the working women themselves and their children, specially the girl child, may benefit.

1. Since one of the reasons for poor enrolment of a girl child and even poorer retention of their enrolment is their contribution in helping the working mothers in domestic work and looking after young children, and also contributing to the family economy as child labour, it is necessary that **there should be shifts for the girls at suitable times so that they can assist their mothers in work and go to school.** It should be possible for all the school going children in a family to attend the same shift, or else, the girl will be required to remain home to mind the younger children.

2. To encourage parents to send their girls to afternoon shifts, it should be desirable that **a women helper is provided on an honorarium basis for accompanying the children from the house and back to ensure their enrolment and safety.**

3. The same helper as mentioned above or another helper's services could be utilised for looking after the siblings below school age of the girls going to the school, in the premises of the school itself. It may be a room, a verandah or a temporary shed constructed for the purpose.

4. It would be preferable to have **a regular creche attached to the primary school where the younger children could be taken care of so that the older child can attend the school.**

5. **Incentives for sending the girls to school** will have to be given to promote their education. In many states like Haryana, cash per month and free uniform is given to scheduled caste girls. Similar facilities including midday meals, free textbooks and exercise books, could be extended to all girl students at least up to primary school level. If the girls are attracted to education, they are likely to move away eventually from the back breaking traditional occupations of their mothers to better employment.

6. The syllabii need to be made more relevant for the children of rural areas. Practical subjects like animal hus-

bandry, cattle care, soil conservation, agriculture, social forestry may be added and such options offered along with subject like history, geography, modern science and physics.

7. Under the Government Scheme of condensed courses being implemented by the Central Social Welfare Board, the adolescent girls and above, who acquire education in a non-formal manner, have to appear in the same examination for which children from public schools from metropolitan cities also appear. This needs to be changed. In certain situations, a good grounding in languages, mathematics, general knowledge and some subjects relevant to their life situation, should suffice to get them a school certificate for the purpose of getting jobs at certain levels.

8. It has been mentioned in the Programme of Action, issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, that women teacher should be preferably recruited at the school level to give greater confidence to the parents to send their girl children to the school. The Commission would like to add that it is possible to have more women teachers only if they are posted in their home villages, or nearby villages, to which they belong or into which they marry. Certain States have a policy not to post anyone within 20 km of their home town. Such a policy should be totally discouraged. Women employees, like teacher or extension workers, need the security of the home and they cannot stay away from their families because of the basic responsibility of looking after the children. And if married, the husband and wife should be posted in the same area or as close as geographically possible.

9. The Commission recognises the fact that in the rural areas there are not enough trained women who can be appointed as teachers. Urban based teachers posted in rural areas do not tend to stay in the villages to which they are posted, resulting in loss of school hours for the children. The Commission, therefore, recommends an innovation in the basic requirements of school teacher. **For primary schools, girls who have completed secondary school or have achieved even middle school level, may be given an intensive training for a period of one year or nine months in certain training colleges of the State Government. Their training, boarding and lodging should be free. After training, they should be posted in their home villages, or in the vicinity of their villages.** Only in this manner, will it be possible for the schools to have women teachers who will stay there and not absent themselves from school. We wish to reiterate again that increasing women teachers would have a direct bearing on the

recruitment of girls which would, eventually, improve their chances of employment or self-employment in the non-traditional sector.

10. The primers under the adult education programme do not have sufficient material related to women workers which will be of interest to the labouring workers. There are certain exceptions. For example, the Commission's studies reveal that the primers in Tamil Nadu were of a high quality in this respect.

11. The textbooks both in the formal and informal educational systems perpetuate labouring women's invisibility and stereotyped sex biased concept of women. The revision of the textbooks and primers needs to be carried out keeping the objective of bringing of women into greater focus.

12. Greater emphasis has to be given on the vocational aspects of education. More experiments need to be undertaken to combine general and vocational education, specially for the rural areas. For a country as large as ours and to cater to the needs of the vast majority of labouring women in poverty, there cannot be a single model of education. Various alternatives of education need to be developed. These alternatives may be developed in a decentralised manner, preferably with an area specific approach.

13. The vocational training, which is being imparted at present is also stereotyped and sex biased. Trades which are more remunerative, and involving modern technology, are by and large beyond the reach of girls, thereby restricting their options for employment. This needs serious attention.

14. For the vocational training of girls, there should be a revolving fund from which they may be given scholarships to bear the cost of training and hostel facilities and they should reimburse the amount after they get suitable jobs. This amount can be recycled again to help their equally deprived sisters. Experience of a private trust in this regard has been successful. After the girls get vocational training, they must be helped in job placement.

15. It is necessary to convince the parents of poor girls regarding the relevance of education to the lives of their daughters. This is possible if education and vocational training have a direct relation to their chances of employability and leading to enhancement in their remuneration. Further, if the parents can be convinced that by providing education, the girls would also have the option of alterna-

tive methods of employment, they may send their daughters for education more readily. One of the important reasons for women's submitting to exploitation is that they do not have a viable economic alternative.

16. The Commission does realise that literacy in itself is not a solution to the basic problems of poor women, viz. exploitation and hunger, and therefore, literacy has to be understood in the wider context of the social structure. Therefore, the Commission recommends that any attempt to eradicate poverty should lead the women to deal with the questions of equality, social justice and development. Therefore, it is crucial to have teaching materials and teachers who deliver the services with these objective. Ultimately the poor women should gain self-confidence to deal with her environment.

Communication Network Systems

The channels of communications do not generally portray the reality about labouring women in poverty. The fact that work for these women, who are at times the sole breadwinners, is a permanent necessity and not a transient phenomenon, is not brought out. Neither are the hard realities of their expectations, long hours of work, low and discriminatory wages and total lack of social support services is given much attention. If and when poverty is depicted specially in the cinema, it is shown as a stepping stone to a better and more glamorous lifestyle. The distortion of realities by the media has increased the gap of understanding between the different sections of society. Yet communication is one of the most important channels for the growth and development of women in the informal sector, as without information regarding services and benefits available through legislation, Government schemes, banks, and voluntary organisations, women can hardly take advantage of them. The Commission therefore recommends the following.

1. **The Media must project the working woman in the unorganized sector as worker and not merely as performing the duties of wife/daughter. They being major earners, they must be projected as producers and not merely consumers. Unless they are perceived as workers, their rights will not be recognized.**

2. It is necessary to formulate a national policy on communication clearly stating what it aims to do, how it plans to achieve its objectives, what is going to be the time period and institutional structures through which the objectives are to be realized.

3. All the groups which are concerned with the production of media and/or connected with planning and dissemination should structurally integrate the participation of socially aware persons. This will enable the planning groups to perceive the gender perspective, and neither become blind to women's issues or err too much in the opposite direction of joining the band' wagon. **Media monitoring units should try to help the media to orient themselves to the interests, concerns and development of women in the unorganized sector.**

4. **Frequent workshops of media persons may be organized to focus generally on problems of women, and specifically on problems of women in the unorganized sector.** Further, such workshops should also publicise the successful experiments carried out in the media, so as to help others in developing using such strategies. Such women workers should also be participants in the media workshops. This would further help in looking at the labouring women, not as mere objects to be acted upon, but as equal partners in creatively disseminating information.

5. **Innovative efforts to communicate should be encouraged.** If possible, some percentage of the financial allocation of the concerned Ministries may be reserved for such experiments so that more talents may emerge.

6. Considering the context of poverty and unemployment for large masses of the people and, therefore, a lack of access to electronic media its overuse should be discouraged. Instead, **other forms of interactions such as fairs, shibirs, health camps, jathas should be promoted.**

7. All the media channels, both in the public sector and the private sector, should take serious note of the Seventh Plan directive that themes which have pernicious consequences of conspicuous consumerism should not be projected. In this context, **advertisements displaying women as sex symbols and using them for sales promotion should be seriously dealt with.** It is not enough to control pornography through legislative enactment. It is equally necessary not to convey sex linked division of labour or women's predilection with feminine pursuit through conservation and traditional stereotypes. More vigorous action of policy implementation is called for.

8. The public sector media should make deliberate attempts to not only project the problems of women in poverty, but should monitor in such a way that conflicting role models are not depicted, nor derogatory references to their work are made.

To improve content and coverage, coordinated efforts for increased interaction between NGOs, women's social action groups, research organizations, institutes of mass communication, and the media personnel should be developed. **The Information and Broadcasting Ministry should evolve such network to monitor the projection of women, and evolve a code of ethics with regard to the presentation of women in all types of media.**

4Print Media

6.2 It is recommended that more coverage to women's lives and problems in poverty should be given. **Care must be taken to avoid sensationalism in the news coverage and more sensitive, sympathetic reporting should be done with regard to this category of women.**

6.3 There is a need for a well-defined and adequately funded programme in regional languages in readable style, to encourage the publication of data, schemes for women and also make them aware of their rights.

Radio and Doordarshan

6.4 While deploring the fact that television is resorting to sponsored programmes, commercial cinema songs and interviews and viewing of largely mainstream films, which reinforce stereotyped images and role of women as housewives and which has hardly any relevance to most women, it is recommended that more vigilance be applied in selecting programmes. Many a times, seemingly 'women oriented' programmes are in reality dubious interpretations of the women's issues. They create a myth that is women oriented.

6.5 It is recommended that **taking cue from the grassroots organizations, video be used as a consciousness raising tool by telecasting programmes which give information and guidelines in a visual manner.** Further, appreciating the power of songs sung in traditional tunes, but having feminist content which is very effective in mobilizing women, Doordarshan should collect such songs in collaboration with activist groups and prepare video cassettes to be played in the programmes of Ghar Bahar and Krishi Darshan.

6.6 **Women's programmes should not be treated as purdah hour, both on T.V and the radio. Awareness with regard to problems of women in unorganized sector is necessary for both men and women. Therefore the timings for the broadcast of such programmes should be flexible.**

6.7 The findings of the Commission during its tours

indicated that the radio is more popular with women and comparatively, they have more access to it. It is recommended that careful planning in the use of information dissemination be done. Further, it is very necessary to reschedule the timings of the programme. Only those women who are not working can listen to the radio in the afternoon. Most of the women workers prefer to have relevant programmes in the late evenings.

6.8 In view of the proposed expansion of television and radio, efforts must be made to include the component of poor women in planning. In order that these women get the benefit of reaching the media, more community sets be made available and more group viewings be facilitated.

6.9 Given the hierarchy of programmes in the present Doordarshan and radio structures, it is recommended that the depiction of the problems of a vast majority be given higher priority. Furthermore, facilities should be provided to make programmes which are not only studio bound but are also imaginative and meaningful to the context of women.

6.10 Producers normally have assessment of the target audience. Producers largely belonging to the middle and upper classes, have limited notions of the problems of the target audience. Hence, they need to be made aware of these women and their problems, so as to sensitively portray them in their work situation.

Cinema

6.11 It is very frustrating to note that the commercial cinema does not project the self-employed women in a realistic manner. On the contrary, it gives a false idea about their lives and never considers work as a necessity for women. Depiction of poverty is more used as a springboard to sentimentalize the role of the hero or the mother. Rape scenes are included for titillating the audience rather than depicting the vulnerability of these women. It is recommended that there be more strict control of production of such films. The dehumanizing portrayals must be condemned.

6.12 Regional language films, have on quite a few occasions, depicted the problems of poor women sympathetically and with understanding. Such films must be dubbed in Hindi and other regional languages so that the message may reach a wider audience.

6.13 Innovative film producers, and not very known

experimentalists, must be given special encouragement, not merely for producing, but also helping in distribution.

Department of Audio Visual Publicity (DAVP).

6.14 It is very sad to note the poor performance of DAVP. The posters, exhibitions, quickies in DAVP are not generally imaginative, and tend to be very directly didactic. They suggest that poor men and women are foolish and they have to be given advice from a pedestal. It is recommended that more sensitivity be exhibited in conveying the message whether it is of family planning, or of the use of mechanised equipment in agriculture, or of the age of marriage.

6.15 Field publicity devices have to be used judiciously in a society where the majority of the population is illiterate. Experience in legal literacy has shown that print material can be used by para-legal workers or extension workers, but not for the dissemination of information to the rural masses.

6.16 The development of information dissemination system, in order to be effective, should take the following steps: (i) A total training/orientation/re-training plan should be formulated for each development programme for women and, wherever possible, for a common cluster of development programmes for women, incorporating therein the hierarchy of functionaries, diverse groups of beneficiaries/participants, and training methodologies with the specific objective of developing knowledge, attitudes and practice of various development programmes for women. (ii) A network among governmental and non-governmental organizations and educational institutions should be made part of the training plan with a view to making optimum use of the existing resources. Combined training programmes at the block level can be developed comprising of local officials in the development programmes, representatives of non-governmental organizations, village level functionaries, and peoples' representatives at the village level who would be helpful in creating a climate for better utilization of the communication channels for development programmes. The training programmes should include, among other aspects, an element of desensitization of biases against the poor.

6.17 A well-coordinated communication strategy could be evolved by an integrated group comprising of block level extension officials, bank officials, health officials and District Rural Development Agency officials for use of oral, visual and audio-visual methods of communication for development programmes.

6.18 Use of communication media in aid of a process of raising community participation or for that matter, participation by self-employed women, in development programmes, could be viewed in terms wider than mere information dissemination exercises. **Most development programmes, which visualize the self-employed women as the potential beneficiary, or one of the intended target groups, would need to accord a broader orientation to communication support systems.** Communication support systems for the development programmes must reach the intended beneficiaries in terms of their own communication matrix and in a manner which provides a comprehensive effect. access to information, skills in using the information, and ability to articulate feedback which may ultimately make the policy formulation processes much more meaningful.

Education System, as instrument of communication

6.19 In order to implement the spirit of the new Education Policy, the textbooks and curricula will need complete overhauling. The invisibility of the women of the unorganized sector, in the textbooks, is a sad commentary on our education system. **It is strongly recommended that textbooks be rewritten so as to eliminate the invisibility of women and sexism in the portrayal of the life of women.**

6.20 Adult Education primers, which are meant to be utilized primarily by the women in poverty, need to be rewritten, as they do not in any way project the issues faced by these women nor make them self-confident or generate courage in them.

Government Functionaries

6.21 The findings of the commission point out that dissemination of information from the Government to the people is highly unsatisfactory. Not only the top down approach is counter-productive, but many a times the functionaries are unaware of the work and problems of women in the unorganized sector. **It is necessary to increase the effectiveness of the dissemination of information by government to the people and to increase the awareness of the functionaries regarding work and problems of women.**

6.22 Reaching out to women cannot be an automatic process. It has been found that whenever efforts have been made, the message does reach them. Implementation is always difficult and we recommend, therefore, that considering the social set up in rural areas, **efforts must be made to involve gram sevikas and mukhya sevikas to take up the task of reaching out to women.**

Recommendations for Grass Roots Organizations

6.23 Considering the effectiveness of the grass-roots organizations in reaching and mobilising the poor women, more support, both financial and in facilities should be given to these organizations.

6.24 Experiments on the lines of jatra, kriti, mahila mela should be encouraged; where women not only get exposure but a chance to express themselves.

6.25 It has been found that the use of multimedia has been functional. Hence, it is recommended that groups be encouraged to use both the folk and highly sophisticated electronic media. The creative use of puppets, story telling, songs with new content, role play and all other devices of participatory functioning should be used and also documented both in print and visual forms, so that other groups may learn from the experience. In a poor country like ours, it would be wasteful expenditure for every group to start on a clean state. Replication and emulation be encouraged. This is not to deny the role of regional specificities. The detailed write up of the processes involved in participatory training prepared, for instance, by the Institute of Development Studies, Rajasthan, are very useful. This should be provided in the regional languages so that more women could be reached.

6.26 Though alternative structures have been more effective in their understanding and in reaching out and getting participation of poor women, they are just a few drops in an ocean of invisibility. Hence, it is recommended that, wherever possible, mainstream media and organizations be used. This would not only be helpful in wider coverage, but hopefully in bridging the gap between the two.

6.27 To get more authentic picture of the exposure and use of the media, more research on audience, readers and viewers should be undertaken.

Legislative Protection

7.1 The poor labouring women work in a situation of deprivation and exploitation. The Government has passed series of legislations to protect their status as workers, their remuneration and to ensure them certain benefits. Of all the labour legislations that are on the statute book, and which are directed towards the amelioration of the workers. Minimum Wages Act, 1948, claims to be the most important and relevant to the workers in the self-employed and unorganized sectors of employ-

ment. A large number of employments, including those in which women account for a significant, if not a substantial, proportion of workers, have not been included in the schedule to the Act by both the Central and State Government. Even where the minimum rates of wages are fixed or revised, they are grossly inadequate. But even more unsatisfactory is that even these low rates of wages are not implemented by and large. The enforcement machinery is both inadequate and indifferent, particularly in women-related employments. That the defaults take place in those sectors where the Government, both Centre and States, is the employer, as for example, in construction, in relief works in forestry, in Railways, Demonstration Farms, Free Trade Zones, Ports, Mines, is deplorable. The Government which is the biggest employer, instead of setting an example to others, itself becomes a defaulter, and where the Government is the defaulter, it is no wonder that the enforcement machinery, inefficient and indifferent as it is totally apathetic.

7.2 The other important legislations enacted are Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970. The Interstate Migrant Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Services) Act, 1979 and the Maternity Benefits Act, 1961. Although the Government has progressive legislations in practice the poor working women have been denied the benefits under such legislations for various reasons. Apart from the implementation machinery being poor and ineffective, some employers have been resorting to retrenching women or not employing women to avoid their statutory responsibility. Being unorganized, individual working women are not in a position to exert pressure on the implementing agencies and being poor without having adequate work around the year they cannot afford to resort to legal remedies which are both cumbersome and expensive.

7.3 Moreover, the basic feature of all the labour legislations is the existence of employer-employee relationship and the consequent need to define an employer and the employee. However, the normal labour laws become inapplicable or unenforceable in the case of majority of women workers who are engaged in agriculture, construction work or home-based work and it becomes necessary to evolve patterns and systems by which, through some kind of self-regulating mechanism in which women have an empowering role, the desired results could be achieved. Seeing the complexities of the situation in which the poor labouring women work, the National Commission recommends the following:—

1. The major contributory cause for women being compelled to take up unremunerative and arduous occupations, is a total lack of choice. We, therefore, consider that the women as also the men, must have a right to employment. We also recommend that "the right to work", already a Directive Principle should be made a Fundamental Right.

2. Coupled with the right to employment is the women's right to a reasonable wage. The rates of minimum wage now prevailing are very low and will have to be increased keeping in view the requirements of the woman worker and her family. The rates of wages must be such as would enable a woman worker to earn at least Rs. 500/- per month. The production process must be so organized as to enable the woman get adequate employment and to earn Rs. 500/- per month from her labour. The wages should be paid in full and in time. In a majority of situations women workers' wages are fixed on a piece-rate basis. The present system of fixing piece-rate is neither scientific not equitable. We recommend that the piece-rate must be so fixed that it will enable women workers to earn for 8 hours work a wage equal to the time rated minimum wage. Where the work is carried out in the homes of the women workers, consequent on which the employer saves on installation, supervisory cost, equipment and sometimes even on raw-materials, an additional amount calculated at 25 per cent of the minimum rate of wages will have to be paid. There should be a system of fall-back wages being paid in situations where an employer is not able to provide a full day's employment. Exemption from payment of minimum wages under any circumstances should be prohibited. There should be, system of a national or regional minimum wage.

3. Despite the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 being on the statute book for over 12 years, discrimination in the matter of wages is widely prevalent. This must be corrected through better enforcement and also wide dissemination of the scope and content of the law. The tendency to classify tasks, generally done by women, to be of a slightly inferior nature, should be corrected. For this purpose, it is necessary to broad-band into one category those activities which are of the same or similar nature of work.

4. To ensure that employment of women does not get reduced, as it has been happening in the past, particularly in industries like cotton textiles, jute, coal-mining, we recommend that the retrenchment of women in any establishment (irrespective of the number of persons employed) must require the prior permission of a designated authority. Consistent with this, the provision of 'last come, first

go' in the matter of retrenchment should not be made applicable to women workers.

5. The National Commission also recommends the setting up of a Equal Opportunities Commission to be set up under a Central Law which must have wide powers of investigations, direction, advice and monitoring. It ought to have, like, the Monopolies and Restricted Trade Practices Commission, a separate wing for investigation which can take up investigation either on a complaint or a reference made, or suomoto. The Equal Opportunities Commission should, like in Britain undertake promotional and educational work, providing advice to employers and employees, to trade unions and professional bodies and the Central and the State Governments. It should also be empowered to make grants to other bodies and individuals for independent research projects or for educational activities or training programmes. It will also have its own research services. Such a Commission would be a watch-dog organisation, with teeth, to oversee the implementation of laws and policies in all areas involving women, including employment, conditions of work, provision of maternity and child care facilities, property rights including rights over matrimonial property, educational opportunities and training opportunities. The Equal Opportunity Commission may be required to present to Parliament each year a report on its activities and findings; this report must be enabled to be discussed in both houses of Parliament as well as in the various State Legislatures in adequate detail. This Commission, the existence of which must be widely made known, would be a forum whose doors would always be open to anyone, more particularly women who have not received a fair and equal deal at someones hands.

6. The Commission recommends establishment of Tripartite Boards, for the reason that no law, however, well conceived will be of benefit to women workers unless they have a major hand in the implementation of these laws and this should be achieved only at a Tripartite Board in which workers will have as many representatives as the Government and employers to give them knowledge. Women workers will be adequately represented, proportionately to their numerical strength. The Tripartite Boards will not only regulate the implementation of legislation, but also contribute in making women workers visible and to bring to focus the contribution they make to the family income and to the economy and above all in empowering them, to understand their rights and to demand them, not merely as beneficiaries under any paternalistic system but as partners and participants in a production process. Given the nature of shifting employer-employee relationship and even the denial of

such relationship and the consequent difficulty in even getting due wages paid in full and on time, the case for Tripartite Boards needs no argument. There is no other method by which employer-employee nexus can be established, the Tripartite Board arrangement providing for a corpus of employers and corpus of employees, instead of individual employer with his employees. In this type of arrangement, it will also be possible for the Board to take on palnning functions in respect of the activity concerned to encourage promotion of cooperatives where feasible with the Board helping the cooperative in the matter of supply of raw materials and marketing.

7. The Commission recommends the setting up of a Central Fund from which welfare and social security measures for women workers should be financed. Apart from a levy on individual employers, it would be desirable that levy is imposed on the major industries or substitute industries for the benefit of the small activities that the home based workers carry on. Even now, there is the practice of levying a cess on the organised cotton textile mill sector for helping the handloom sector. In the beedi-rolling industry, a levy is imposed on the bidies rolled for financing welfare activities for the workers. Similar arrangements could be thought of including a levy on exports for example on the garment export industry or gem cutting industry; likewise the plastic industry could be made to contribute for the welfare of workers in these sectors where the demand for their products are adversely affected by competition from the plastic goods. Sources of such additional funding can be explored.

8. All dues payable by the employer towards wages or levy must be made the first charge; their recovery where it becomes necessary, must be through a summary procedure. To ensure that no defaults occur, it would be necessary to have some hold on the activities of the employer, either through licensing authorities or tax authorities.

9. It is recommended that the Labour Department must be the nodal Department for enforcement of all Labour Laws. There should be a separate wing in the Labour Department for unorganised workers and there should be adequate number of women employees at various places.

10. The Commission recommends that women's organisations, trade unions, worker's representatives, Government's women functionaries and individual workers be vested with powers to inspect work sites and to file complaints on behalf of the workers.

11. It is recommended that penalties for infringement of

labour laws which effect women should be made more stringent and any further default be made a continuing offence.

12. It came to the notice of the Commission that cases in Labour Courts take unduly long to get disposed of. The Commission recommends that **Labour Courts and trade authorities be vested with ministerial powers and time limits for filing claims of objections be fixed and periodical review be made.**

13. The burden of proof of establishing that Labour Laws and rules have not been implemented to be wholly on the employer.

14. Free legal aid for women workers should be made available in practice.

15. The Commission recommends that wherever necessary the changes in labour laws should be brought about. In view of the Commission's recommendations, an omnibus legislation may be undertaken to amend the relevant laws suitably.

16. The Commission strongly recommends a **special drive for imparting legal literacy to women workers so as to enable them to be aware of the existing legislations and the methodologies through which they can take benefit under the legislation.**

17. A comprehensive Minor Forest Produce Workers Act may be enacted on the lines of Beedi and Cigar Workers Act so that the working condition is regulated and social security as well as accident compensation are provided and piece rate is fixed in consultation with labour representatives. This would imply, as it should in all fairness, that these women who collect minor forest produce are actually the workers under either the contractors or the Forest Department and not under sub-contractors. The cane and bamboo workers should be provided bamboo or cane on priority and at concessional rates while bamboo should not be given to paper industry. The workers must be able to get a licence in a quick and easy way on a mere payment of a fee.

18. Cooperative law exists at each State level except the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act. Most State laws with each other for being anti-cooperative. The laws have provided unlimited powers to Registrar for registration, bye laws, elections, appointment of staff, and investment of funds and thus interfere in the running of the society and can even supersede the elected committee and appoint

members, thus controlling the cooperative and killing the cooperative spirit. The corruption in the cooperative department and harassment methods adopted by the department are well-known. So, for the illiterate women labour to cooperate and improve their conditions, it is necessary to ensure that the Department facilitates the formation of cooperatives rather than exploit them. The Registrar could regulate the co-operatives and not manage them.

Keeping in view the delays experienced in getting Cooperatives registered under the relevant State Cooperative Societies Acts, it is for consideration whether a scheme of provisional registration within a month of the application being made, can be incorporated in the law. Such a provisional registration, apart from giving encouragement to the promoters that their application is not gathering dust, can also provide for certain minimum benefits such as access to raw materials to the members. This intermediate stage can be like a letter of intent under the industrial licencing procedure, with the full registration being compared to the grant of industrial licence.

19. Child Labour: With the provision of child care on the lines recommended in Chapter-4 earlier by us we believe that enrolment of children, particularly girls, in the school will improve. We are strongly of the view that with the provision of guaranteed employment and adequate wages to the mother, there will be no need for child labour and we recommend that child labour must be abolished by 2000 A.D., in a phased manner, starting from 1988. The child should certainly not be prevented from learning any of crafts and trades of the parents but this should be only as learner and not as a wage earner and should not in any event, be at the cost of her schooling.

Organising

8.1 The National Commission has observed that the lack of organisation in the informal sector is the root cause of exploitation of women workers. At present, the process of organisation for women workers is very limited and fragmented. Individually, women are not in a position to fight against low and discriminatory wages and exploitative working conditions as they lack bargaining power. Laws will also not be so flagrantly violated if workers are organised. At the same time attempts at organising are thwarted by vested interests resulting in further victimization.

8.2 The Commission recommends **evolving of a strategy to promote organising of women on a large scale. The**

government should play an active and positive role in this context. -All government projects, schemes and programmes for the poor should have a component of organising as this can become a direct investment in building the people's base. There should be a proper orientation of government functionaries to support organising while they are engaged in developmental and welfare activities. The National Commission further recommends active State support for formation of associations by simplification of rules, establishing of information centres and introduction of progressive legislation. Further, the approach of the State towards demand for a legal right should be a positive one, the state agencies such as the police should not look on such demands as law and order problem but rather protect the workers from oppressive vested interests. Apart from the government, voluntary agencies, mahila mandal, cooperatives and trade unions can play an effective role in organisation of women workers in the self-employed and the informal sector.

8.3 Organising being such a specialized activity, the need for proper training cannot be gainsaid. The National Commission recommends, that the state should provide resources for training in the area through Workers Education Boards and Social Welfare Boards at the Central and State level. Further centres for training should be established for this purpose.

Women's Voluntary Groups

8.4 At present, there are two types of voluntary groups working in the field of women. One is an organisation not necessarily of women, but working for women and secondly, an organisation of women, working for women. Although the number of women's own organisations need to be greatly increased, both types of organisations should be encouraged. The spread of these organisations is not uniform throughout the country; their numbers are small largely concentrated in townships, urban areas and district headquarters. The activities of these groups are also of a limited nature. Some of them take up welfare activities like child care, destitute women, short stay centres and crisis centres. Some of them have taken up developmental activities, but these are generally linked with the Government schemes under which grants are available.

8.5 Since the voluntary organisations have the advantage of community involvement, and help to promote voluntary action, the National Commission recommends that they should be actively assisted by providing finances training and managerial inputs.

The organisations, should be encouraged to enlarge their activities to:

- a) Create awareness.
- b) Mobilise and organise poor women.
- c) Carry out training programmes for creating awareness and leadership amongst women.
- d) Formulate and implement developmental and economic projects for women. Such projects should not be restricted to Government schemes only. They should carry out new projects which will meet the realistic needs of the women which have not been taken into account by developmental agencies.
- e) The creativity and innovativeness of the voluntary groups should be encouraged by providing flexibility in their programmes.

8.6 The Government should provide legislative support and removal of restrictive legislation, needs to be done, if voluntary agencies can play such a role:

Mahila Mandals

8.7 In many States, mahila mandals exist historically e.g. in the North East, they are playing a significant role in the community. In other States, village level mahila mandals have come up after Independence. Their role has not been effective, nor have they been able to involve a majority of the poor women in the village.

8.8 With the spread of development and poverty alleviation programmes, reaching the interior parts of the country, women in the villages have become aware, and are eager to do something to improve their situation. Many mahila mandals, so far dormant are today eager for action.

8.9 The Commission also observed that the mahila mandals have tremendous potential in actively involving village women in changing the rural scene. But this potential is still not utilised.

8.10 The Commission perceives the village mahila mandal as a suitable vehicle for change. Therefore, it strongly recommends the following:

1. The village mahila mandal should be vigorously utilised in the implementation of the poverty,

alleviation programmes of the Government. The village mahila mandal should be entrusted with the responsibility of identifying IRDP beneficiaries. The list submitted by the village mahila mandal should carry enough weightage at the decision making level. The village mahila mandal may also be entrusted to prepare a list of work-site and proposed programmes under NREP, TRYSEM, RLEGP, Social Forestry and the like.

2. The mahila mandal should be encouraged to initiate innovative programmes like smokeless chullah, sulabh laterines, income generating skill trainings, water management and biogas plants.
3. The Government should provide adequate support for the mahila mandal in the form of resources like funds, a pucca house, a battery transistor and a tape-recorder, electronically recorded songs, dramas, which carry effective messages, information.
4. The mahila mandal should be provided with guidance from the earlier proposed District Women's Development Officer, who under the proposed Development officers will be in charge of monitoring and liaising areas.

8.11 The Government must give recognition to the mahila mandals. There will be resistance from the local officials and vested interest groups against the mahila mandal getting active, so a strong sustained support will be absolutely necessary from the Government. The mahila mandals may make mistakes. They will take time to prepare themselves for this role, but once they become active, they will be in a position to energise the mass of women workers. The Commissions recognises that this is the only way to involve village women actively in the development process.

Cooperatives

8.12 The experience with cooperatives has been a mixed one. While it has been successful in certain sectors like dairying, and in certain states like Gujarat, and Maharashtra, it has not been successful in other enterprises and States. Yet, the importance of the cooperative as a whole in organising people, in enhancing productivity and employment, in equitable distribution of profits, is well recognised by the Government and by workers themselves. However, the participation of women in the cooperative movement is very limited. This is because of illiteracy,

cumbersome procedures of enrolment and registration of cooperatives, inadequate financial support and marketing facilities, and finally the lack of effective leadership. The Commission is convinced that without women workers being organized, there can be no substantial improvement in their employment status. The cooperative is an important forum which can meet the needs of self-employed women. In setting up the Cooperative, every caution should be exercised that they work in the interests of the poor women. To overcome these problems enumerated, the National Commission recommends that:

1. There should be an expansion of the coverage of the cooperative movement in new and important areas like farm labour, artisans, cereal processing, fodder and fuel development, fruit preservation and agro-based industries.

2. In most general cooperatives, we have seen that women are left out of the membership of the cooperative because they do not own any assets, like land, handloom, cattle for example, in the case of weavers, women do a lot of pre-weaving and post-weaving processes, but, since the loom is in the name of the man, women are not made members. The same is true of many artisans' trades. The Commission, therefore, recommends that when a particular kind of work is done jointly by men and women, in a family, both of them should be made members of the cooperative. Forming of women's cooperatives should be encouraged and even in mixed cooperatives, they should be inducted as office bearers.

3. A practical difficulty in forming a cooperative arises as many of the concerned persons for example in urban slums do not have any permanent address. It is suggested that the concerned authority should recognise that if the organization which is working for these people has a permanent address that can be considered adequate for the personal identity/security of the workers.

4. The common experience all over the country is that, due to the corruption and bureaucratic red tapism, the registration of a cooperative takes anywhere from one to four years and the procedures are too cumbersome. Therefore, a practical solution could be that, like the credit camps which are held at the district level at present, there should be camps organised for registration of cooperatives where the applicant cooperative should be invited with all the relevant papers, and the concerned official would also come with all the necessary documents and during the camp itself all the formalities could be finalised so that the cooperatives can be registered in a short period,

or provisional registration can be given To catalyse and mobilise women to enter the cooperatives, the Commission recommends:

8.13 A **spearhead team** of trained women and men should be formed to reach potential, members in the female-prone large employment sectors like agriculture, dairying, fisheries. In this context, it is essential to prescribe a pre-cooperative phase. Therefore, the Commission strongly recommends the government to:

1. **Recognise fully the need of pre-cooperative phase of one to three years;**

2. Provide the required training to women in development issues to build up the consciousness of the rural poor women.

3. Provide technical training to women producers to maximise outputs.

4. Build up all the credit/subsidy linkages to ensure poor women's access to finance for the inputs in their names.

5. Provide sufficient time for a strong group women producers to emerge, which can facilitate self-management of their cooperatives.

6. Develop their capability of dealing with government officials and local vested interests.

8.14 The Commission draws attention of the government to the fact that it is a long and painful process for poor women to rise to be partners in the cooperatives and be entrepreneurs, from the existing status of labourers. They need a strong and sympathetic constant support from the government at every level, particularly at the local level.

8.15 Adequate funds should be flowing in the form of loans from NABARD, other banks and financial institutions to make the cooperatives viable. The Commission also recommends to the Cooperative Banks that:

1. All efforts should be done to reach, at least 10 per cent of its lending to women engaged in homebased and small industries, and for building up assets like land, cattle, house, workshed, equipments and tools in the ownership of women.

2. To earmark soft loans and subsidies from the Bank's

own finances, and from the government's for women borrowers and fix targets accordingly, every year.

8.16 The experience of the women's Cooperative Bank is encouraging in helping women having control over their own economy. Therefore, the Commission recommends to the government to plan for a woman's Cooperative Bank in every district in the next decade, the rules and regulations should be accordingly modified to reach poor and rural women to the maximum.

8.17 Training in the formation of cooperatives, and running of cooperatives which include training in organization of skill, book-keeping and accounts and organization, should be imparted.

8.18 The cooperative should be in a position to supply to its members assistance, not only in the form of loans but assist in acquiring assets and raw materials. To the extent to what has been said earlier under the section on "Credit, Raw Materials and Marketing" if implemented, cooperatives will be successful.

8.19 The cooperatives should also be in a position to assist the members in procuring orders and developing markets.

8.20 The Departments of Women and Child Development/Social Welfare in the States should be entrusted with power to do registration of women's cooperatives and societies.

8.21 To increase representation of women in cooperatives, the Commission recommends that:

1. on the Management Committees/Boards of Management of all cooperatives and Federations, there should be at least two women. Necessary changes should be done in the related laws and bye-laws.

2. In various cooperatives, the government has its representatives sitting on Management Committees/Boards. These seats can be utilised to nominate women on them, by the government. This will make a beginning for the women to learn to manage the affairs of the cooperative.

3. In the newly formed cooperatives, a precondition should be laid out that 50 per cent of the membership should be of women, and thereby also in the Management Committees.

This rule should be strictly followed in cooperatives in female dominated employment sectors viz. agriculture.

dairying, fisheries, handloom-handicraft, sericulture and forestry.

Trade Unions

8.22 Large-scale industrialisation in India, which began roughly at the time of independence, was modelled on the developed nations. The direction of the labour movement, and the role of the State/Government in protecting the interest of the employees, were all based on the models of these highly industrialised countries. However, in spite of the impetus given to industrialisation, our economy is still largely agricultural and has not become industrialised as a whole. This has resulted in a situation where only 11 per cent of the working population (predominantly men) are engaged in regular jobs with the recognised employer-employee relationship. The remaining 89 per cent of the working population (more than half of whom are women) earn their livelihood through own self-employment. These workers lack security of service, and regularity of work and income. Since they rarely own their means of work, they are forced to work as piece-rate workers, contract labourers, farm labourers, and providers of services in their homes and outside. The labour movement has not yet touched the vast majority of workers in the self-employed and informal sectors. Barring a few local level unions in the country, the major labour unions are still engaged in the problems of the workers in the organised sector. In a country like ours, most of the goods and services are provided by the self-employed and informal sectors of the economy. **The Commission feels unless the workers in these sectors whose need for unionisation and protection is the greatest, are brought into the mainstream of the labour movement, the latter has very little relevance for them. It is high time the major labour unions took the labour of the unorganised sector in their fold and extended their trade union knowhow in bringing better income and social security to them.**

The National Commission recommends that—

1. All the major labour unions should be encouraged to **establish a separate wing for the unorganised labour.**
2. The women's wing of major labour unions should be given more resources and support by the Labour Ministry to unionise the unorganised women and integrate them in the main body of the union.
3. The major labour unions should be requested to take up surveys of the problems of contract labour, home based workers, out-workers in the major industries and

trades, bring out in-depth studies and influence the government in suitable changes in policy and law.

4. The major trade unions should be supported in their efforts in building up solidarity between the workers of the formal sector and the informal sector within a particular trade/industry/plant/unit. For example, in the textile industry, right from the cotton pickers in the fields to the spinners in the homes to the screen printers in the textile mills, all labour engaged, whether on regular salaried job or as contract labourers, may be made members of one union.

5. The major labour unions, apart from resorting to collective bargaining activities, should be encouraged in the government to take up various constructive programmes to augment the economic and social life of the workers in the self-employed and informal sectors.

Training

9.1 Training for the women workers themselves, and for extension workers in the different departments: dealing with these women, is necessary to change the social thinking and attitudes which are detrimental to women. In so far as the women themselves are concerned, even if they are literate, they do not have the training which will help them to expand their existing ventures or start new ones for which they need skills in marketing, in acquiring credit, maintenance of accounts and procedures in project formulation. Packages of programmes should be prepared which will give training to women through various channels and encourage the growth of entrepreneurship, organizing, general awareness and knowledge of legal matters. The Central/State Social Welfare Boards, Women Development Corporations, Anganwadi training centres, schools of social work, may be used in addition to other training centres, for imparting training for all programmes under which training is given to women by various agencies, this component should be added.

9.2 The National Commission recommends that voluntary agencies be sanctioned **grants for implementation of programmes for women in areas of health, communication and welfare.** In the sanction letter **a condition should be placed maintaining that a certain number of hours per week should be devoted to impart training in areas of building leadership, organising, accounting and general awareness.**

9.3 The extension workers are expected to play the role of catalysts. Therefore, it is necessary that they are periodically trained. Short orientation courses should be held by

which they are sensitised to the problems of women, and implement the programmes in a manner which would assist women. They have to be trained to help women or groups of women to take advantage of various types of facilities available under government, semi-government and banking and financial institutions, and to organize themselves in cooperatives, mahila mandals and other types of organisations.

9.4 The third category of personnel to be trained at the grassroots level are the representatives of the voluntary agencies. There are very few voluntary agencies which impart the skills in organising women in acquiring skills relating to credit, raw-materials, marketing and how to prepare projects and apply for loans, and subsidies. A larger number of voluntary agencies need to take up this work and they have to be trained in this respect.

9.5 As far as the infrastructure for training is concerned, it has to be development at the district, divisional, state and national level. At the national level, an Institute of Training should be set up which, apart from carrying out training programmes will also formulate guidelines and help the other constituent units at the State, divisional and district level to carry out training programmes.

9.6 Vocational training institutes, industrial technical institutes, polytechnics etc. should hold regular meetings with local industrialists to know their general and specific demands, and organize training programmes accordingly. **Especially for women and young girls in rural areas, setting up of a large number of polytechnics with dormitory and creche facilities is essential, in order to provide them with skills that have a real value in their own environment, and which will provide them a steady income.** Examples are, repair and maintenance of charkhas, handlooms, waterpumps, biogas plants and training in poultry, cattle care, veterinary service, testing of milk, simple accountancy, making smokeless chullahs, sulabh shauchalayas, sockpits and such other useful trades and services.

9.7 Follow-up guidance should be provided to trainee to enable her to get a job or to start her own enterprise.

9.8 Although the Commission is not in favour of recommending reservation in jobs, it strongly recommends reservation of seats in vocational training institutes. **At least 30 per cent of the seats should be reserved for women. In order to give priority to poor women, the Commission recommends that reservation should not be**

only on the basis of academic qualifications, but also on income levels. The entry in the trades should be such that women's employment opportunities are diversified and do not remain stereotyped and sex based.

9.9 The extension service provided in this field should be strengthened, and **the number of women extension workers should be increased.** They should help women by not only imparting information of Government's schemes under which benefits can be availed of, but should actively assist women in taking advantage of these schemes and training programmes assisting them to form cooperatives and societies like mahila mandals. The mahila mandals should be energised to promote more economic activities and assist women groups to get subsidies, fertilisers, etc.

9.10 The Commission has also observed that the number of women cultivators is declining. The distribution of surplus land has not benefited the poor women. **Such distribution should be followed with concrete steps of providing assistance in improving land and bringing them into cultivation.**

9.11 Women's cooperatives should be encouraged to involve women in management decision making.

9.12 Women should be mentioned as specific target groups for all agricultural development programmes and efforts should be made to involve them in decision making at all the levels.

9.13 Continuous monitoring should be done of women's programmes so as to improve the programme designing and implementation.

Supportive Services and other Programmes:

10.1 In line with our approach that all women are 'workers', the distinguishing feature of a women worker is her responsibility for bearing and rearing children. In addition, the responsibility of doing all household chores and looking after the aged and sick have traditionally been her responsibility. It is for these reasons that the woman worker in the informal sector has to go through her life of drudgery, jolting long hours of arduous work with no respite. It is, therefore, necessary that social support services should be provided to women workers for assisting them to do their work at home and outside, better and with less worry.

Maternity Benefits and Child Care Facilities

10.2 The Commission is of the considered opinion that

no solution to the problems of women at work will be complete without taking into account her reproductive functions. This can be effectively tackled through maternity benefits and child care. The maternity benefits, on the scale provided under the Maternity Benefits Act, should be universally available to all women. The responsibility for this should be borne by all employers, irrespective of whether or not they employ women through a levy calculated as a percentage of the wage bill and placed in a separate fund from which the maternity benefits can be provided. In respect of a large number of women, like home-based workers and others, where the employer is not identifiable, the responsibility for providing maternity benefits must lie with the State Governments. We do not consider it necessary to restrict the benefit to two or three confinements because we are satisfied that the universal availability of maternity benefit and child care will, in the long run, lead to smaller families.

10.3 Child care facilities are provided in various labour laws. However, it is distressing to note that the provisions of the Labour Law are not being implemented in favour of women and at times it has led to retrenchment of women workers because the employers would like to evade their statutory responsibility. It is, therefore, necessary to ensure an extended system of child care throughout the country. This will directly help in reducing the burden on women and in the all round development of the child. The National Commission recommends the following:

1. All child care services should meet the intersecting needs of women and girls. They should provide for the healthy development and welfare for the young child, meeting the needs, of the working mothers, for healthy and convenient places for the children while she is at work, to eliminate the burden of child care for older children especially girls so as to enable them to attend schools.

2. Better and effective implementation of the Labour Laws which provide for child care facilities. The implementation machinery should be strengthened.

3. A substantial increase in the number of creches all over the country with improved facilities, better infrastructure and flexible timings so that mothers are encouraged to send their children to the centres.

4. The existing anganwadi centres under the ICDS need to be upgraded with proper day care centres so that the full working hours of the mother are taken care of.

5. The setting up of family based day care centres with support from voluntary agencies. This centre will be set up by suitably trained individual local workers, preferably in their own homes, to take care of a certain number of children.

6. The setting up of social based day care centres under the auspices of the local primary schools. This will help in relieving the older girl child of the care of siblings and serve the dual purpose of encouraging enrolment of girls in school and the care of primary children.

7. Setting up of women's organisation-based day care centres supported by cooperatives, mahila mandals and unions. This will enable women who are associated with these organisations to utilize the facilities provided by these centres and expertise available at these organisations could be useful in running these centres.

8. Setting up of mobile day care units for migrant/shifting workers to be run by an independent agency but funded by the employer. This will be seen on the line of mobile creches which have proved quite successful in Bombay and Delhi.

9. New approaches and diverse programmes for working groups including home based workers and seasonal agricultural workers. Since child care is essentially an individual oriented programme, innovations will have to be made to cater to the needs of various groups. Such innovations should be promoted by the Government in consultation with women workers voluntary agencies and experts in the field of child care.

10. Child care, by its very nature is a small scale and localised operation, which has to respond to the needs of women, children and girls. For this, a three tier structure is recommended. The actual running of the service should be at the local level entrusted to organizations like halwadis and anganwadis, mahila mandals, panchayats, cooperatives and unions. The supervision, funding, training and monitoring should be at an intermediary level entrusted to organisations like voluntary agencies, district authorities, municipal authorities, charitables trusts and public sector undertakings. At the apex level, there should be an umbrella organisation functioning as an autonomous body similar to the Labour Welfare Board under the joint auspices of the Ministries/Departments of Women and Child Development, Education, and Labour.

11. It is recommended that funds from such a service should be drawn from the budgetary provisions made in

the budgets of Ministry/Department of Labour, Women and Child Development and Education, from employers in the form of a welfare cess to be uniformly applied to all employers/producers regardless of the number of employees and the sex of the worker employed, from worker parents in the form of contributions from trade unions and in other cases through individual contributions made directly at the local level.

Support for Destitute Women

10.4 The incidence of destitution is quite high amongst the labouring women in poverty. This situation may arise as a result of widowhood, migration, illness of the husband or as a result of his addictive habits like alcoholism or taking of drugs. In this context, the National Commission recommends—

1. Labelling of such vulnerable women as 'destitutes', 'distressed', 'helpless' is counter productive and does not help them in the long run. Their worth as workers should be recognised and the entire approach should be from that angle.

2. The number of short stay homes and crises homes are very meagre, their numbers are required to be substantially augmented.

3. The running of the homes also needs to be monitored closely to ensure the well-being of the inmates and prevent them from becoming victims of corruption and mismanagement. They need a well trained staff who can understand their needs as also provide counselling services.

4. Inputs of vocational training and medical health should be inbuilt in the running of the homes.

5. Training and upgradation of skills should be followed up by placements in jobs and services as a top most priority so that such women can become self-reliant and independent.

6. Voluntary agencies are already working in the field of helping destitute women. They need to be encouraged through financial assistance. The quantum of assistance should take into view that some of the workers are required to be professionals and well-paid. Representatives of voluntary agencies need regular orientation courses to keep them abreast with new techniques and development. Some of these agencies are being operated as in the nineteenth century.

Old Age Pension

10.5 The State as well as society owes a debt to those people who because of their advanced age are no longer in a position to work but have contributed their due share all their working lives. The plight of old women who in a majority of cases are widows, is pathetic as they have no social security, and no savings, and are reduced to a state of beggary. A scheme of old age pension and pension for widows is there in many of the States but the amount given (like Rs. 60/- P.M.) is very meagre. It is often delayed because of late sanction of budget and those whose adult sons are employed are not eligible for the pension. The National Commission recommends the following measures to alleviate their condition—

1. The meagre amount of pension should be enhanced and supplemented with some monthly provisions of food-grains and supply of a saree every six months through fair price shops and priority in getting free medical treatment.

2. The delay in getting pension should be totally eliminated and the amounts, both in cash and kind, should be disbursed regularly on the stipulated dates.

3. The linkage with the income of sons cuts at the very root of self dependence. She is left at the mercy of her son who in such circumstances of poverty and deprivation is in any case not inclined to help. Pension should be given irrespective of the employment of the son and based on the rights of the woman alone, who has contributed in her life time as producer and reproducer.

4. In case of younger widows, the thrust should be to provide her with suitable training and employment opportunities. She should be given preference in training, in asset building and in getting loans.

Prostitutes/Devdasis

10.6 In India, like in other developing countries, women get into the profession of prostitution due to poverty and lack of employment opportunities. In some parts of the country, there is a practice of Devdasis. Although the practice of Devdasis is carried under the name of religion—a girl at a very young age is dedicated to goddess by the parents, the root cause is poverty. The conservative and male dominated society gives social acceptance to the practice by giving it a religious sanction. These women live in poverty and earn as long as they are young. They do not have any social and emotional security nor any public sympathy and support.

10.7 Prostitutes/Devdasis suffer from a number of health problems particularly from sexually transmitted diseases. The prostitutes with whom the Commission member talked to also said that they are sick for 10 to 15 days in a month. During this period, they cannot even earn any income. At the Municipal/Government hospitals they are looked down upon and not given proper medical treatment, and the private doctors charge exorbitantly for medicines.

10.8 The Commission recommends that there should be regular health check up and clinics for these women. They should be located preferably in the neighbourhoods where they live.

10.9 The prostitutes have to live a secluded life due to their low-status in the society. Their children become victims of this social ostracism. These women try their best to give better life to their children, but they cannot overcome the social attitudes which always make their children aware that their mother is 'bad woman' and they can never be accepted as 'normal' by the society. They find it very humiliating when their children are denied admission in good schools because they cannot give their father's name at the time of admission. The Commission recommends that father's name should not be required for admission in a school.

10.10 It is also recommended that there should be more openings for residential schools for different income-groups and children of prostitutes should be given admission in residential schools on priority.

10.11 These women, due to the socially unacceptable life they are leading, are generally cut-off from family relationships and are not married. So, in their old age, they do not have anyone to depend on. Many of them have to resort to begging. The Commission strongly recommends for an old age pension scheme which will help them take care of their basic necessities and children's education.

10.12 Alternate employment: Most of the women get into this occupation when there are no other alternatives for survival, in the condition of poverty. If there is an alternative available, many women would like to leave the dehumanising occupation and lead a dignified life. In Nipani, some societies have tried to rehabilitate Devdasis and provide training for self-employment. There is a need for more effort to provide training and employment to these women, to offer them a better way of life. And the alternative provided should be attractive enough, so that the women are not driven back to their earlier profession.

10.13 The women who try to run away from the brothels and take shelter find it extremely difficult to get support/shelter. The homes for destitute women, 'Nari Niketans' should be more flexible so that the woman has an assurance of getting a shelter.

10.14 In IRDP, female headed households are assisted with loans. But in the case of Devdasis who invariably are the sole earners, they are not accepted as IRDP beneficiaries. In this regard, the Commission recommends that in all anti-poverty programmes, their economic status should be considered.

10.15 The situation of these women should be regarded with sympathy by all those who are trying to help these women instead of taking a moralistic stand. Also, a more integrated approach towards their rehabilitation including shelter, employment, and education for their children, should be adopted by the helping agencies.

Drug Addiction

10.16 The drug menace is not only limited to the urban elite but has also spread to urban slums and rural areas. The problem has taken the form of a serious crisis in the border States like Manipur and Nagaland in the North-east. Women are the worst sufferers of the drug problem in their family. Due to addiction, the male members, particularly the young and able-bodied, do not provide any economic contribution.

10.17 On the contrary, they become a burden to the family and take away whatever little earnings the women bring in the house after working for 12-14 hours per day. The Commission's recommendations are towards reducing the plight of these women:

1. There should be strict enforcement of laws to prevent drug trafficking and exemplary penalties in case of violation of the law.
2. The women, whose husbands/sons are known to be addicts, should be given priority for anti-poverty/development programmes instead of considering only families where the male member is absent.
3. A more community based approach should be adopted in the treatment and rehabilitation of addicts. The deaddiction centres and curative services should not only be limited to urban areas but should spread to remote rural areas.

4. Local women's groups, like the Mothers' Club in Nagaland, should be involved in identification of cases, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts.
5. These local centres can be provided training by an expert who can also design and implement the plan for awareness building about drug addiction and measures to be taken by the family of the addicts. The Government, at all levels, should support this activity.

Alcoholism

10.18 All over the country, the Commission met many women who were agitated over one common issue that was ruining their life—alcoholism amongst the men in their family and in the community.

10.19 Women are directly affected by this problem. A large number of women are the sole supporters of their families due to alcoholism amongst their husbands. The men not only do not contribute, but even take away whatever income the wives bring into the family. Harassment including wife-beating and violence in the family are closely related to the problem of alcoholism. Their children are also affected by this.

10.20 At the community level, the women find that their safety is at stake due to increasing incidence of alcoholism. Particularly in hilly areas, women are scared of sending their daughters to school or coming back late in the evening after work due to the increasing incidence of alcoholism. They do not even find support or security from the police or other powerful men in the community. The Commission recommends:

1. Although in a number of places during the tour women recommended total prohibition, the Commission feels that total prohibition may not be a realistic solution. But steps should be taken to discourage opening of new liquor shops.

The Governmental approach needs to be altered. It should not just view liquor as a source of income to the revenue department but also consider the social implications before taking any policy decisions. The women in H.P. said "We have been asking for schools since the last 20 years but we have not got any, yet, we have not asked for a theka (liquor shop) but still every few months new thekas are coming up". The Government should have a policy about the

number of shops permissible depending on the population of the region. Beyond that, no new licences should be issued. The policy and the rules laid down should be strictly enforced."

2. All the unauthorised liquor dens should be evicted and the Government at the local level (police, municipality) should not support these activities.
3. Strict action should be taken by the State Government against the offenders and the local officials who are involved in supporting these activities.
4. Before opening any new liquor-shop in a village, the Panchayat/Government should take public opinion and a new shop should be sanctioned only if a majority (2/3) of the population give their opinion in favour of opening of new liquor shops.
5. No liquor shops should be opened within 3 kms. from schools, colleges or bus stop.
6. There should be proper regulation about the number, location and timings of the liquor shop and strict enforcement of these regulations have to be done.
7. **Mahila Mandals should be given powers, parallel to the Panchayat, so that their opinion can influence the local power structure. The experience of many grassroots organisations like AMM, Bombay and SUTRA, HP has demonstrated that in our country, specially amongst poor women, the problem of alcoholism can be tackled better by organizing (community approach) the women rather than the individual counselling approach. It is essential to see this problem as social rather than individual or personal problem of the family of the alcoholics.**
8. In many parts of the country brewing liquor is very common. It is generally observed that illicit brewing amongst the poor is carried out more for subsistence in the agricultural economy. There is no regular employment throughout the year. Therefore, provisions of alternate source of employment and regulation of employment conditions would considerably reduce the incidence of illicit brewing of liquor.

9. There should be a policy that in the case of women whose alcoholic husbands are in regular jobs, the major part of the men's salaries should directly go to the wives. Then they will have some control over the family incomes.
10. Special efforts should be made to include the wives of alcoholics in all anti-poverty programmes and particularly to give them assets in their names. This will give the women some security, because the man would not be able to sell off the assets as easily as he can take away the cash/money from the wife.

Housing and Toilet Facilities

10.21 Housing for the poor has been recognised as one of the basic requirements of human life. Housing for women has an added dimension since traditionally they barely own land or house. Moreover it involves more than a roof over one's head: it includes social and community facilities and is connected with employment and earnings. For women who are more home-based and often use their homes as workplaces this is of crucial importance for them. The provision of housing has to be considered in the urban and the rural context separately, since the situation in both is quite different.

10.22 The problem in urban areas concerns the slum dwellers who face terrible overcrowding, lack of essential services, terrorisation by local thugs and finally the constant threat of eviction and demolition.

10.23 The problem in rural areas relates to the progressive destruction of natural resources which has led to a crisis in the accessibility of land and local construction materials. Besides, the houses themselves are poorly designed with no ventilation or outlet for smoke.

10.24 In this context and keeping the priorities of women in view the National Commission recommends:

1. An integrated development plan for the country which must be eco-system based and linked with other programmes like employment and income generation, education and provision of credit which fall under the purview of different Ministries.
2. Involvement in the planning stage itself, of people for whom the houses are being planned, besides involvement of civic authorities who

would be in charge of not only building but also development of the infrastructure.

3. On going research on building technologies with the aim of reducing cost, simplifying designs, providing low cost sanitation and such provisions like smokeless chulas to improve the environment so that planners can make informed choices. Housing plans should take into account the needs of women, specially home based workers whose work place is the home.
4. Decentralised implementation of housing schemes with the participation of the local community. This will not only increase the involvement of the people but provide employment under various public and civic works of the PWD, CPWD and other state authorities.
5. Funds to be made available at affordable interest rates and in the joint names of the couple and in case of single women without discrimination. Funds to the very poor should come in the form of building materials so that they are not tempted to diversify liquid cash.
6. The needs of special groups like destitute women, those living in disaster prone areas and migrant workers should be considered separately by providing destitute homes, and community shelters.
7. A complete review of existing laws and legislation to provide for joint ownership of property, stricter tenurial rights and regulation of evictions and demolitions which in case of the poor should be only with the provision of alternative homes.

10.25 The common problems faced by the majority of labouring women are the lack of toilet facilities. Open plots of land for the use of women to ease themselves are no more available in urban centres and even in the villages now.

10.26 The system of bucket privies for the disposal of night-soil in urban areas is nasty and hazardous to health.

10.27 Due to bad conditions of the roads, they find it easier to carry the night-soil on their heads rather than push the trollies. The containers of bucket privies also

develop holes, so the night soil gets scattered around the dwelling houses and creates a problem both for the dwellers and cleaners.

10.28 The Commission recommends:

1. Simple suitable toilet facilities should be provided in every village and urban slum. Common toilet facilities near their places of work and public places like markets should also be provided.
2. Looking at the condition of water, cement and other resources, we recommend low-cost circular 2 pit water seal latrine to be provided for each family, in their houses on loan-cum-subsidy basis. We learn from experts that the cost of community or private latrines comes to the same.
3. The local mahila mandals should be entrusted with the entire programme. The mahila mandal should identify the homes, receive funds mason the material needed for the latrine like footrests, platform, drain, pits, keep maintenance, train the women technicians, motivate local women and men, hold awareness camps in the beginning and occasionally. The displaced scavenger women can be rehabilitated in production of the sanitary wares, soap and maintenance.
4. The Government should provide for the assets, maintenance and training. It is learnt that the cost of two pit water-seal latrine is about Rs. 500. Sulabh Shauchalaya model or some such suitable model consumes space of 7'x4'x5' (depth) and needs little water.
5. The human waste thus accumulated can be utilised for fuel through bio-gas plant, to be managed by mahila mandals.
6. All the housing schemes provided for the poor by the Government should have low-cost latrines.

Administrative Machinery

11.1 Although at the planning level, there is consciousness about women's low status and the need to focus on women's needs in development, but at the implementation level, this awareness percolates very slowly. The delivery system is based on a stereotyped concept of women's development where women are object of pity or welfare

and are given some benefits in a sporadic and haphazard manner. In their urgency to meet their targets, the developmental agencies are not enough concerned whether there is an adequate coverage of women or not. In fixing targets, there is generally no consideration of women as a separate disadvantageous group. The implementation machinery is largely insensitive to the basic needs of women in poverty. The experience of IRDP where there is a constant pressure from the centre to fulfill the 30% target of women beneficiaries, has been though slow but positive and encouraging.

11.2 Under the headings of Planning, Monitoring and Training, suggestions have been made on how to improve the functioning of the administrative system vis-a-vis women in poverty. Apart from the straight line, bureaucratic channels of Government, Ministries and Departments at the State level, the Commission recommends **active involvement of State Social Welfare Advisory Boards and State Women's Development Corporations in reaching out to the poor women.**

11.3 From its studies, the Commission has reached the conclusion that there should be an infrastructure in every State for helping women in economic ventures. Although a new infrastructure may be desirable, the Commission would not like to recommend a proposal which would lead to infructuous expenditures. The Commission, therefore, would like to recommend that the existing State Advisory Boards should be strengthened. They have a great potential for helping the rural poor women in the informal sector. However, the functioning of the State Advisory Boards at present is not quite effective. Programmes are added without corresponding increase in the manpower. Hence, if women's programmes are to be undertaken, they need manpower support and preparatory training as well as access to consultancy. There is limited delegation of powers at times delays of 9 to 12 months take place for sanctioning of grants. The Board's procedure for sanctioning of loans needs to be reassessed and they should be revitalised to help women in poverty. In addition, adequate linkages with the State Government need to be built up. They should also promote starting of more voluntary agencies. When the Board was constituted in 1953, in the initial years it assisted around 3000 voluntary agencies and in 1988 it assists approx. 10,000 voluntary agencies. Since the voluntary agencies work far and in between, and not always in the interior, it is necessary that the number of such agencies should be expanded, to reach out to a large number of rural poor women at a faster rate. However, a cautious approach should be adopted so that there is no mushroom growth of bogus organizations which exist only on paper. Apart

from social workers, the State Advisory Boards should have more professional expertise available in marketing, project formulation and training as these should be important functions of the Board to assist poor women and help in the growth of women's organisations.

11.4 The State Advisory Boards should also have more active links with the banking institutions. One of the bottlenecks which poor women are faced with is coping with the banking procedures and this work could be tackled by the State Advisory Boards who can act as effective go-between to get loans for poor women. At present, there are programmes in the State Advisory Boards in which there is a tie up of the components of loan and subsidy that needs to be more effective. The constraints should be studied and removed and the programmes be redesigned more realistically.

11.5 During its tours, the Commission was able to study the work of the Departments of Social Welfare and Women's Development Corporations in the States. The Commission is of the opinion that the Women's Development Corporation have a better potential to reach out to the poor women in a more effective way than the State Departments. However, these Development Corporations are only in five states, so far, and have their limitations in terms of resources and the context in which they work. Their approach in certain cases is restricted only to a few activities grant of loan or subsidy. Some of the Corporations, with the assistance of NORAD, a Central scheme, have set up some production units. **The Commission feels that such Corporation should be set up in every State. The terms of reference should be expanded and they should play an effective promotional role emphasising on poor women.** The poor women, who come under our purview for generations have known only employer and employee relationship, They are not familiar with the concept of entrepreneurship cooperatives and credit institutions. The Corporations should take care of these needs and also perform on their behalf feasibility and marketing studies so that activities which have a market are promoted. In other cases, the same activity having less demand can be promoted with better designing to capture new markets. Still in other cases, the activities which have no possibility of getting a market need to be discouraged and women motivated to start new activities.

11.6 The National Commission has observed that, under various developmental schemes, there is variation in the component of loans and subsidies. Similarly, the quantum of stipend also differs as also the training programmes, leading to imbalances. For instance, pro-

grammes which will not be very viable and useful tend to get more response because of the quantum of stipend being paid. Therefore, the matter of standardisation of the stipend needs to be undertaken.

11.7 In the development programmes, specially anti-poverty programmes, although care is taken to identify the beneficiaries the Commission has observed that single women and women headed households, get left out and the poorest of the poor at times are not selected. **For identification of women beneficiaries, mahila mandals and women's organisations may be actively associated.**

11.8 At the field level, where there should be convergence of services, however different departments tend to work in a compartmentalised manner. It is recommended that **field functionaries should be imparted information, regarding programmes of the related departments. This is necessary as women in poverty are normally involved in more than one activity and if one functionary reaches them, he or she should be able to impart information on other activities as well.**

11.9 The Commission is of the opinion that women workers are in a better position to reach out to women and have a greater understanding of women's problems. It is, therefore, recommended that in all departments, there should be at least 30 per cent women workers. This should include department, like Agriculture, Animal husbandry, Forestry, Labour, Excise and Taxation and Industry.

11.10 Women's representation should be at all decision making levels, right from the lowest rung of the hierarchy to the highest. The decision making bodies may be government or local bodies like panchayats or municipalities.

11.11 The National Commission has observed that, inspite of special programmes for SC/ST, the women in these groups lag far behind than men in taking advantage of such programmes. The Scheduled Caste corporations in the State Governments also have not been laying emphasis on the coverage of women. Even in the Tribal Plans and the SC Component Plan, separate targets for women should be fixed.

11.12 The plight of poor women amongst the minorities is even more pitiable. Their problem are poverty and isolation. The levels of literacy and health are poor. The Muslim women in particular are more confined within their home which are situated in high density areas. The artisans and home based producers cannot venture to get out

of their homes because of purdah and social inhibitions. The entire marketing of the products is done by the menfolk, the result being that the cash does not flow into their women's hands. The Commission strongly recommends that **the needs and interests of poor women among the minorities should be reflected in the Plan allocations and channeling of resources including the State Minority Boards. With spread of education, Muslim women are becoming keener to avail of the new opportunities. Therefore, special efforts should be made to bring them into the mainstream with other women, through, planning common worksheds and community centres and enrolling their membership in women's groups. This is the surest way of increasing communal integration.**

11.13 Similarly women in the North-Eastern States deserve special attention. They tend to remain outside the national mainstream. Communication facilities are very poor. Prevalence of higher levels of alcoholism and use of drugs by the men has led to further deterioration in the economic status of the family besides causing mental tension to women. **Special steps should be taken to check alcoholism and the use of drugs.** Women of this region face the additional problem of harassment from the armed personnel patrolling certain areas. Further, the benefits of the Central Schemes, and the Central sponsored schemes, do not percolate down to the far flung areas of the country. At times, even Government orders/circulars do not reach the sub-divisional levels. The Commission recommends that it is not enough to give plain allocations to these States, but also ensure their proper utilisation. There should be better communication between the Centre and the States Governments. Monitoring and evaluation of programmes under Central and Centrally sponsored Schemes should be made more effective.

11.14 The Commission recommends that all poor women should be safeguarded by conscious and deliberate policy against exploitation by the middlemen and harassment from petty official like the inspectors, police, municipal authorities and other local bodies.

11.15 Fair price shops should be well stocked. The poor women do not get all the items due to them as per the ration cards. A matter for greater concern and worry is that poor women, specially seasonal and migratory labour, do not get even the ration cards. They have to make purchase of essential commodities at open market rates which they can ill afford. The Commission recommends effective implementation and supervision of the distribution system of essential commodities. It also

recommends that janta sarees should be available at all fair price shops. **Each women should be entitled to two janta sarees annually at controlled rates.** This will be a great relief to the poor women who normally have to spend about Rs. 50/- for one saree and blouse, which at controlled rates will be available for Rs. 13 to 15. In all consumer cooperatives running fair price shops, the women should constitute 50 per cent of membership.

11.16 The Commission recognises the negative impact of the attitude of the petty police officials to the poor women's working conditions. The Commission would, however, like to mention that the poor women specially adivasi and harijan women, need to be protected from the atrocities of the police. Although at the higher levels, there are indications of a sympathetic attitude towards women by and large, the attitude of the police is unsympathetic. When police joins hands with the local thugs, then there is no end to the harassment faced by the poor women. The Commission recommends that the police being an important arm of the administration should function as an instrument of development. They should protect the poor vulnerable women from exploitative elements. Special measures should be taken up for sensitisation of police to women's issues and their problems. This may be done through periodical training programmes, giving awards and increasing the number of women personnel at the lower and middle levels.

11.17 The Commission recognises that the administrative machinery has an important role to play in alleviating the condition of the poor, specially women. It recommends that **the administrative machinery needs to be entrusted with values of integrity, honesty and concern for the poor.** This may be done through periodic refresher courses and also by developing mechanisms by which officers at all levels should be entrusted for a sufficient length of time, with the responsibility of planning and implementation of project for the poor.

Political and Social Will

12.1 From the study of the existing systems, the prevailing social attitudes and cultural ethos, the National Commission has come to the conclusion that **the presence or absence of a political will is a very crucial factor in determining the success or failure of a programme.** Where anti-women traditions are perpetuated, and the various mechanisms, specially the delivery mechanism, is consciously and unconsciously working against women, the presence of a strong political will, perhaps, becomes the single most important factor to bring about a change in the status of unprotected labouring women.

12.2 Ideally, the social will for changing women's status should precede the political will. However, in a situation where a vast majority of women working in the informal unorganized and self-employed sectors, live a life of deprivation an exploitation, the creation of strong social will by a minority of people does not seem to be likely. It will take a long time for women to develop the power to resist exploitation and organize themselves for this purpose.

12.3 In such a situation, the role of political leadership is very crucial. It should not reflect an elitist image but should crusade for the majority who are the exploited, and who have voted them into power. This is specially necessary when women's own representation in the political system is very low. In the General Elections of 1984, there were 59 per cent of women voters as against 68 per cent. As women do not constitute a lobby, the political parties have neither utilised the lobby nor included them in their manifestation, as they go to the other minority/backward groups. They leave the men to influence the women. All political parties are guilty of not seriously tackling the women's issues and taking them up in their party manifestoes. All political parties appear reluctant to field women candidates. If the political leadership decides that women's problems have to be tackled on a priority basis, the entire planning processes, implementing mechanisms and monitoring system will be geared in no time. The National Commission, **therefore places major responsibility on the political leadership for improving the status of the unprotected women and giving them political visibility which is lacking at present.**

12.4 The implications of a strong political will are that it will have a direct effect on the planning process and on the system of implementation. The Government, machinery through which development resources are channelised, has proved to be often indifferent and ineffective in reaching the poor labouring women. And for this, the responsibility has to be shared between the political and administrative leadership.

12.5 Since women in poverty are victims of the existing social systems, attitudes and prejudices one of the factors which can bring an improvement in the status is the creation of the social will. Social will has to be created in the community, a work which has been started by voluntary action but needs to be accelerated by efforts of the government through the instruments of education, communication and research. The measures have already been suggested under the appropriate headings mentioned above. The responsibility of the society in this con-

text cannot be underrated. If the society and women themselves, do not become aware and act as watchdogs of their rights, guaranteed in the Constitution and various legislations, they cannot legitimately expect the existing systems, which tend to favour the vested interest, to benefit them. **Women's organizations have the responsibility of acting as pressure group on the system and also becoming repositories through which development resources can be channelized.**

12.6 There is another type of gap which is existing between women with resources and women without resources. **Women who have skills of education, knowledge, and leadership, and are entrepreneurs and professionals, should assist their impoverished sisters in articulating their demands, bring them into greater visibility and help them to resist exploitation and to rise above the present status of poverty and deprivation.** It is only when women can get together as a homogenous group, irrespective of caste, class, community and activity differences, will their collective voice be heard and yield result.

Ela R. Bhatt
Chairman

Dr. Armaity S. Desai
Member

Dr. R. Thamarajakshi
Member

Minal Pande
Member

Jaya Arunachalam
Member

Veena Kohli
Member Secretary

National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 A.D.

The Perspective Plan for Women is an effort at a long term overall policy for Indian women, guided by those constitutional principles and directives relevant to the development process. It is linked to the national targets determined for the end of the century in respect of certain basic indicators especially of health, education and employment. The Plan views women not as the weaker segment of society or as passive beneficiaries of the development process, but as a source of unique strength for reaching national goals.

2. The Plan aims at :

- Economic development and integration of women into the mainstream of the economy;
- Equity and social justice for all women.

These are critical goals for the all round development of women not merely as producers and providers, but also as individuals with a right to human dignity in a society where 'culture', 'caste' and 'class' tend to discriminate against gender.

3. The overall purpose of this plan is to find the highest common denominator for all national endeavour, cutting across the spectrum of class and religion; functions, sectors and disciplines; to harness the resource represented by the people—both the women as well as the men. This renewal of effort, from the fifth decade of political independence, will have meaning only if the full potential of the silent half—comprising the 331 million women and girls of India, (about 150 million of them in material poverty and many more close to it) is harnessed. The direction and design, priorities and pace of national development, must have direct relevance to their lives and future. Every dimension

of development—political economic and cultural, not just social — has to assist and hasten their generation.

4. If the results and lessons of the past are any guide, a larger allocation of resources for women within the prevailing patterns and structures of development, does not promise a reversal of trends. A parallel substream of women's development even if possible, will only perpetuate discrimination and subordination. An alternative strategy of national development which will provide not just some additional space for women, but create a democratic, egalitarian, secular, cooperative social structure has to be defined and tried. In such a scheme, it will be necessary to accelerate the women's component of composite programmes, to ensure the integrity of the enterprise as well as a measure of compensatory justice. The goals of holistic human development must not be at the expense of one another and the ascent to equality must be collective.

Situational Review

5. For outlining a development perspective, a review of the existing situation of the Indian woman is an essential pre-requisite. Both, positive indicators as well as negative indices that are a growing cause of concern to policy makers, planners, administrators and activists are projected to present her overall status. A brief review of the five Year Plans and the programmes for women launched in the last few decades, is also included.

6. Among the positive developments affecting women are:

- The expectation of life at birth has improved from 44.7 years in 1961—71 to 52.9 years in 1971—81

The sex ratio has registered a slight rise—from 930 women per thousand men in 1971 to 933 per thousand men in 1981.

The average age at marriage for girls has reached 18.3 years in 1981 as against 17.2 years in 1971, achieving for the first time an average higher than the minimum prescribed age for marriage.

The focus in the programmes for women has shifted from welfare to development. This shift can be perceived in the creation of a separate department for the development of women.

- The Programme of Action of the National policy on Education (1986) lays stress on women's equality and has identified for the first time three areas for special attention viz. (i) review of school text books to remove sexist bias and developing approaches to promotion of the value of equality through school curricula; (ii) re-orientation of teachers to promote gender equality through their teaching and (iii) increasing the coverage of women and women's issues in the research and teaching activities of higher education.
- Women's Studies and Development Centres have been set up in constituent colleges of several universities with the objective of using students and teachers as resource groups for creating social awareness and bringing about attitudinal changes in society.
- There is an effort to sensitise administration to the women's perspective in development programmes, through
 - the introduction of a women's component in training programmes for senior administrators conducted by the Department of personnel in the Government of India.
 - There is a special effort launched to involve women at all levels in the planning and implementation processes of programmes for women.
 - There is an increasing emphasis on professionalising women's programmes by providing technical expertise for their implementation.
 - For the first time since Independence the elected representation of women in Parliament has gone up to almost 10 per cent of its total membership.
 - The Prime Minister's office has now identified 27 beneficiary oriented schemes exclusively for women. These schemes though falling under various Ministries are monitored by the Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development.
 - A National Advisory Committee on Women has been set up with the Prime Minister as Chairman.
 - Several legislative enactments/amendments have come into force to protect the interests of women.
- 7. Overshadowing the positive indicators, there are certain distressing negative indices as follows:

- Though a marginal improvement has been registered in the sex ratio, the projected ratio for 2000 A.D. is depressing with 500 million males to 480 million females.
 - Amniocentesis tests are being misused to determine the sex of the child in the womb, resulting in the female foetus being aborted.
 - Age specific death rates indicate higher rates for female children and women upto 35 years of age.
 - As per the 1981 Census, 75 per cent of women are illiterate. This is compounded by the high drop out rate for girls which is estimated at 55.5 per cent at the primary stage and 77.7 per cent at the middle school stage. Enrolment of girls in higher education has been almost static from 1975 to 1985. There are also substantial disparities in the enrolment of girls and boys at the university stage, and in technical and professional colleges.
 - The work participation rate for females declined in the census decades upto 1981. In 1981, it recorded a marginal improvement.
 - The fertility rates in 1981 showed only a very marginal decline—average number of children born to a woman during her lifetime being 4.6. There are in addition many incomplete pregnancies. Over 50 per cent of women suffer from anaemia in pregnancy, which accounts directly for 15-20 per cent of all maternal deaths.
- Approximately 90 per cent of the women workers are engaged in the unorganized sector. Of these over 80 per cent are in agriculture and allied occupations. In the organised sector women constitute only 13.3 per cent of all employees. In the public sector, they account for 11 per cent of total employment and in the private sector for 17.8 per cent.
- The number of female job seekers through employment exchanges increased from 11.2 lakhs in 1975 to 51 lakhs in 1986. After showing an increase between 1975 and 1982, the percentage of placements declined in the subsequent years i.e., 1983-86.
 - Studies show that modernisation and mechanisation is tending to marginalize women in many sectors. They are either pushed down or out of the workforce. There are also indications that agricultural modernisation/industrial growth policies have tended to widen gender disparities.
 - Estimates of the average hours of unpaid work done by women outside their homes vary from 6.1 to 7.5 hours per day, with some women working upto 10 hours and more. Apart from their domestic duties, women are engaged in agricultural operations for an average of 12 hours a day. Despite this, their access to ownership of land, credit and other productive resources remains negligible.
 - Recent surveys indicate that, 30—35% of rural households are headed by

women due to male migration, neglect, abandonment.

- Only 994 women hold senior management/administrative posts as against 15, 993 men in similar jobs in the All India Services, constituting only 5.8 per cent. There are only 21 women officers in the Indian Police Service as against 2418 men (0.9%). In the Indian Administrative Service, there are 339 women against 4209 men (7.5%).
- Women comprise only 7.5 per cent of the membership of registered trade unions and approximately one per cent of the office bearers and executive committee members.
- Proportional representation of women in elected offices either remained stagnant or declined in the last decade. This is notwithstanding their increased voting turnout in the general elections.
- Crimes against women continue unabated, There were 6668 reported victims of rape in 1987 and 1517 dowry deaths including by burning (provisional figures).

WOMEN IN THE FIVE YEAR PLANS

8. The First Five Year Plan (1951—56) envisaged welfare measures for women. To spearhead welfare measures, the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) was established in 1953 which symbolized the welfare approach to women's problems. The CSWB was also reflective of the community development approach, which envisaged for the first time, the need for organising women into Mahila Mandals or Women's Clubs. A

number of studies have shown that the community development (CD) worker, perceived more as a harmonizer of interests rather than a stimulator of awareness, worked closely with the rural elite. Moreover, although rural women came within the purview of the CD programmes, they were not specifically catered to as a target population based on economic or other specific class related criteria. A large majority of poor rural women thus remained untouched.

9. The Second Five Year Plan (1956-1961) was closely linked with the overall approach of intensive agricultural development. The welfare approach to women's issues persisted. The plan recognised the need for the organisation of women as workers. It also perceived the social prejudices/disabilities they suffered. The Plan stated that women should be protected against injurious work, should receive maternity benefits and creches for children. It also suggested speedy implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work and provision for training to enable women to compete for higher jobs.

10. The Third Five Year Plan (1961-1966) pinpointed female education as a major welfare strategy. In social welfare, the largest share was provided for expanding rural welfare services and condensed courses of education. The health programme concentrated mainly on the provision of services for maternal and child welfare, health education, nutrition and family planning.

11. The Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-1974) continued the emphasis on women's education. The basic policy was to promote women's welfare within the family as the base of operation. The outlay on Family Planning

was stepped up to reduce the birth rate from 40 to 25 per thousand through mass education. High priority was accorded to immunization of pre-school children and supplementary feeding for children, expectant and nursing mothers.

12. The Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-1979) emphasized the need to train women in need of income and protection. It also recommended a programme of functional literacy to equip women with skills and knowledge to perform the functions of a housewife (including child care, nutrition, health care, home economics etc.)

13. This Plan coincided with the International Women's Decade and the submission of the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI). The overall task of the CSWI was to undertake a comprehensive examination of all the questions relating to the rights and status of women in the context of changing social and economic conditions in the country and problems relating to the advancement of women. The report stressed that the dynamics of social change and development had adversely affected a large section of women and had created new imbalances and disparities such as:

- * The declining sex ratio;
- * Lower expectancy of life;
- * Higher infant and maternal mortality;
- * Declining work participation;
- * Illiteracy; and
- * Rising migration.

14. The CSWI Report led to a debate in Parliament and the emergence of new consciousness of women as critical inputs for national development rather than as targets for welfare policies. A second significant out-

come was the recognition of women as a group adversely affected by the processes of economic transformation. It was realised that constitutional guarantees of equality would be meaningless and unrealistic unless women's right to economic independence is acknowledged and their training in skills as contributors to the family and the national economy is improved. A major outcome of the CSWI report was the *National Plan of Action* (1976) that provided the guidelines based on the UN's World Plan of Action for Women. The National Plan of Action (1976) identified areas of health, family planning, nutrition, education, employment, legislation and social welfare for formulating and implementing action programmes for women and called for planned interventions to improve the conditions of women in India.

15. An immediate outcome of the National Plan of Action was the setting up of the Women's Welfare and Development Bureau in 1976 under the Ministry of Social Welfare, to act as a nodal point within the Government of India to coordinate policies and programmes and initiate measures for women's development. The Women's Welfare and Development Bureau was charged with the nodal responsibility of—

- (a) Co-ordinating, and collaborating with multifarious programmes in other Central Government Ministries;
- (b) Initiating necessary policies, programmes and measures;
- (c) Collecting data to serve as a clearinghouse;
- (d) Monitoring programmes for women's welfare;
- (e) Servicing the National Committee on Women;

- (f) Following up on the recommendations of the CSWI by formulating proposals and providing guidelines;
- (g) Working out financial and physical targets;
- (h) Liaising with multi-national/UN agencies in the field of women's welfare;
- (i) Legal issues and problems concerning women; and
- (j) Implementing programmes and schemes.

16. In 1977-78 as an exercise for the Sixth Plan, the Government appointed the Working Group on Employment of women. Two other critical reports on village level organisations and participation of women in agriculture and rural development were prepared as part of the exercise. This Plan was undoubtedly influenced by the CSWI Report of 1975. It devoted a whole chapter to Women and Development. For the first time a shift was perceived from welfare to development approaches for women. Influenced by the era that heralded concepts of social justice, the Sixth Plan recognised women's lack of access to resources as a critical factor impeding their development and, among others, the programme providing joint pattas (titles) to men and women was initiated. However, though the plan defined the magnitude of women's problems and suggested development strategies, the 'Family' rather than the 'women' remained the basic unit of development programming.

17. The Seventh Five Year Plan operationalised the concern for equity and empowerment articulated by the International Decade for Women. For the first time, the emphasis was qualitative, focussing on inculcating confidence among women; generating awareness

about their rights and privileges; and training them for economic activity and employment. In keeping with the spirit of the Decade which aimed at integrating women into mainstream national development, the Plan emphasized the need to open new avenues of work for women and perceive them as a crucial resource for the development of the country.

18. The access of women to critical inputs and productive resources such as land (joint title or patta scheme initiated in the Sixth Plan period) were expanded in the Seventh Plan period to include support through credit (or small scale capital), marketing, training in skills/management and technology. At the same time, it was emphasized that technology that causes unemployment or displacement of women must be resisted. Another salient and crucial recognition was the need for organisation of women workers and unionization that could:

- (a) Make demands for improving legal services to safeguard rights;
- (b) Reduce occupational and health hazards.

19. The Plan acknowledged the long hours spent by women in activities within the household especially in the collection of fuel, fodder, water etc., as well as their labour on the family farm or in family business. While the Seventh Plan did not call for the computation of women's work in these two areas as part of women's contribution to the G.N.P., the identification of these hitherto invisible areas was a significant beginning. Complementing the productive endeavour were the supportive services offered to women, especially maternal and child care facilities as part of the total package of services for women.

Existing Programmes

20. Currently, the Government of India has over twenty seven schemes for women, some women specific and others both for the male and female population. These schemes are located in different departments and ministries of the Government of India such as Rural Development, Labour, Education, Health, Science & Technology, Welfare, Women and Child Development, etc. The total outlay on the women-specific schemes in the Seventh Plan is 2.4 percent of the total while a gender break-up of beneficiaries or targets is not available for general schemes (RLEGP, NREP, etc.).

21. In 1985 the Government of India constituted a separate Department in the Ministry of Human Resource Development, for the development of women and children. This Department funds the Central Social Welfare Board that has developmental and welfare programmes for women. The Department also plans and executes programmes for women besides monitoring programmes for women in other Ministries/Departments. A number of these programmes were envisaged in the Sixth/Seventh Plan periods—viz., Women's Development Corporations, Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP), Training-cum-Production Centres for Women, Awareness Generation Camps for Rural and Poor Women, Women's Training Centres or Institutes for Rehabilitation of Women in Distress, Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls, Voluntary Action Bureau and Family Counselling Centres, Free Legal Aid & Para Legal Training, Working Women's Hostels etc.

22. Women specific programmes implemented by the Department of Women and Child Development include:—

- * Strengthening and improvement of women's work and employment in agriculture, small animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, handlooms, handicrafts, khadi and village industries, and sericulture;
- * Economic rehabilitation of women from weaker sections of society in the form of training and employment on a sustained basis;
- * Better employment avenues for women to bring them into mainstream national development;
- * Providing Short Stay Homes for women and girls in moral danger together with counselling, medical care, psychiatric guidance and treatment and services, and development of skills; and
- * Preventive and rehabilitative services to women and children who are victims of atrocities and exploitation.

23. The thrust of these various programmes is to provide five principal categories of services:

- (a) Employment & Income Generation Services;
- (b) Education & Training Services;
- (c) Support Services;
- (d) General Awareness Services; and
- (e) Legal Support Services.

A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN

24. Poverty is a consequence as well as a cause of several factors that limit life. The obstinacy of this self-perpetuating cycle needs to be broken before its grip can be loosened and overcome in the measurable future. The poverty-induced cycle affects all the people but impinges hardest on girls and women. Material poverty starts a chain of consequences, namely infections, nutritional deficiencies, ill-health, growth retardation, slow learning, small body size, low productivity, repeated child bearing, excess of unpaid and unrecognised work, low earning capacity, unemployment and perpetuation of poverty. The strategic response need not tax the nation's resources and can yield decisive social benefits if it spans the spectrum of needs through the life cycle; the girl's education, food, security, safer environment in the home and neighbourhood, vocational training, support services to save time and energy, income and employment opportunity, safe motherhood, breast feeding and proper weaning, immunity against childhood diseases, management of common illnesses like diarrhoea and respiratory infection, growth promotion and early childhood stimulation as educational foundation leading to full and equal participation

in socio-economic life. The process of inter-generational (and now intragender,) improvement, which is what development planning is about, has to ascend these steps in an unbroken sequence.

25. These may not necessarily cover women in specially difficult circumstances such as refugees and migrants, prostitutes and victims of atrocities, the mentally and physically handicapped etc. as these would require separate and detailed studies as has been done in the case of women in custody. However, for the majority of women, especially the rural poor, an integrated and decentralized approach to planning is envisaged. While the plan perceives mainstreaming as a long-term goal, it also realizes that some sector-specific measures will have to be undertaken to elicit higher participation of women in the development process during the interim period.

26. Recognizing the need for a holistic approach, the Perspective Plan offers sectoral reviews of the situation of women in rural development, employment, supportive services, education, health, legislation, political participation, media and communication and voluntary action, while suggesting inter-linked and converging strategies towards a holistic development of women by 2000 A.D.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In the preceding chapters recommendations have been made sectorally with a view to strengthening women's roles therein. Certain important issues, however, impinge on all spheres of women's lives and work. With a view to enhancing women's status and capacities to participate in the process of nation building, the following general recommendations are made:—

1. The overall approach of this National Perspective Plan is to perceive women in a holistic manner. While the programmes for women will continue to be implemented by different ministries as part of their department plans, it is essential to have a strong inter-ministerial coordination and monitoring body along with its own supportive facilities service by the Department of Women and Child Development. (Proposed infrastructure at Annexure I)

2. All ministries must reflect the concern for the all round development of women. The concerned ministries must all have a women's cell which currently only exists in the Ministries of Labour, Small Scale Industry Science and Technology and Rural Development. It is essential that the new policy thrust for women's development should be reflected in the Planning Commission as well as the State Planning Boards. The National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector, has also independently concluded that the Planning Commission and State Planning Boards need to focus their attention sharply on the realistic situation of (labouring) women.

3. An essential pre-requisite for the imple-

mentation of these new policy directives would be a women's unit in the Planning Commission, to redefine categories of data collection for women, modify existing terminology and identify gaps in data collection relating to women and to give direction to plans and programmes for women's development. It is also essential to analyse the impact of the different macro policies on women while planning new endeavours.

4. Financial and fiscal resources should be apportioned and preferential allocations for women's employment in mainstream programmes and projects should be made. This would imply the rationalization of resource allocation within mainstream programmes so as to benefit women, rather than only seeking separate allocations for women. Critical emphasis must be placed on rate of investment in women preferred industries and occupations.

5. At the state level, the Departments/Directorates of Women's Development should be initiated. Currently, there is no separate department for women in many States. Social welfare, handicapped, Scheduled Castes and tribes are subjects that are bracketed together with the development of women at the State level. This new department could also be the State level implementation body for the programmes/policies of the Department of Women and Child Development of the Government of India.

6. In terms of programme implementation, the two major implementing bodies envisaged, are the Social Welfare Boards and the Women's Development Corporations. There

can be a rationalization of service provision between these two bodies. The State Social Welfare Advisory Boards could eventually concentrate on implementing welfare/supportive programmes for women (homes for women in distress, working women's hostels, counselling centres for legal aid and para-legal training, condensed courses etc.); Womens Development Corporations would be responsible for the implementation of economic programmes through non-governmental and governmental agencies/departments wherever necessary, concentrating on technical inputs like credit, marketing, design development etc. and reaching out to women at the district and village level.

7. Women should be entitled to a package of services at the block level created by the convergence of schemes such as Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Integrated Child Development Schemes (ICDS), Adult Education, Health Care etc. at the grass roots administrative level. Every district should have a coordinator to assist in the integration of these programmes aimed at the development of women. The coordinator will also be responsible for motivating local planning of programmes and assist in their implementation and provide feed back for effective planning and evaluation. Since decentralization of planning monitoring and implementation of development programmes for women is suggested as also devolution of finance at district level, appointment of District coordinators for women's programmes would facilitate this process, and control over finance would empower them. The National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector has also recommended the appointment of District coordination officers

to be responsible for planning, monitoring, coordination and evaluation of the programmes affecting women. Rationalization of functionaries at the block and village level to ensure coordination of programmes affecting women at the grass roots level also needs to be undertaken.

8. There are today sufficient number of programmes in the Government of India as well as innovative programmes in many States and sectors. What is needed is not merely larger resource allocation but technical inputs for greater effectiveness of these programmes, to guarantee better resource utilization. Emphasis has to be placed on more effective planning monitoring and evaluation of existing programmes through a result oriented mechanism operating at different levels.

9. Recognizing that a critical input for women's development would be a new thrust to training and wider dissemination of information backed by research data and documentation, it is proposed to set up a National Resource Centre for Women. This resource centre would translate national developmental needs of women into a systematic grid of programmes and schemes for training at different levels in skills/knowledge/attitudes. The centre would identify and if necessary, strengthen existing governmental and non-governmental agencies including women's universities/women's centres and colleges through which the training, research/dissemination could be carried out. The National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Woman in Informal Sector has also recommended the need for a National Institute to cater to womens training as well as formulate guidelines and help the other constituent

units at the state level, divisional level and district level to carry out training programmes.

10. Reorientation and sensitization of the administrative machinery at all levels in the Government of India, the States, as well as specialized technical agencies (both Government and Voluntary) to the issues of women in development is essential. Three levels of orientation are necessary, i.e. at the policy and planning level at the district or intermediary level, and at the block and village level. The training of functionaries and their orientation to women's issues must also be in the right perspective, i.e. women should be perceived as producers and participants, not clients for welfare. The dynamic role of women's contribution to the national economy as partners and equal citizens must be reiterated and translated into programmes and projects. The National Resource Centre would be responsible for revamping the existing content/methodology and monitoring of training at all levels.

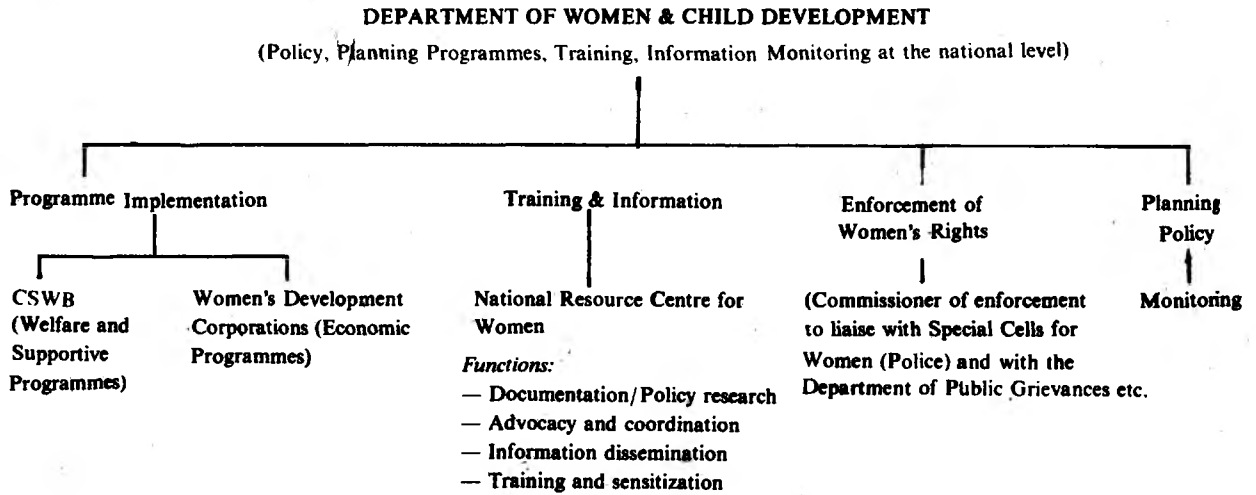
11. A special division should be created in the Department of Women and Child Devel-

opment for the enforcement of law for women. The officer in charge may be designated Commissioner for Women's Rights and must liaise with the various Special Cells for women created by the police, the CBI as well as with the Departments of Public Grievances at Centre and State levels as also the Women's Cell in the Home Ministry. This division will be concerned with the enforcement of law to ensure women's rights, to facilitate action oriented research in fields such as discrimination against women, protection at work etc.

12. This Plan recommends that the Census in future must take into account women's unpaid work in the household and outside as well as the value added in performing her many survival tasks for the family. A greater conceptual clarity has to emerge on 'work' and 'non-work' as well as a distinction between work that produces economic value and other activities that are consumption oriented. Data relating to women, especially in the unorganized sector should be reflected in the data of the National Sample Survey and the Central Statistical Organization.

ANNEXURE-I

- National Committee on Women
- Inter-ministerial Coordination & Monitoring (Department of Women & Child Development)
- Cells in Mainline Ministries
- State Departments for Women
- District Employment Committees for women
- District Coordinator for Women's Programmes



SECTORAL RECOMMENDATION

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

1.1 In view of the interlinkages of the economic and the social sectors and their supportive role in strengthening each other, the rural development agencies should function in the direction of convergence of the services of education, health, child care, technology and other developmental measures. For maximising impact wherever possible programmes must adopt the group approach to mobilization of women.

1.2 The Minimum Needs Programmes should be strengthened and expanded. Efforts should be made to achieve the objective of water for all by 2000 A.D. Increasing involvement of women in the selection of sites for the installation of water sources, maintenance, utilization etc., should be aimed at. Fuel, fodder, creche, sanitation should also be included in the Minimum Needs Programme.

1.3 Emphasis should be given to higher growth rate of industry in rural areas and expansion of housing programmes to generate a larger volume of employment in the non-agricultural sector.

1.4 Land reform and redistribution are basic prerequisites for increased economic outputs and gains. Women's access to productive resources such as land for cultivation and credit inputs must be ensured.

1.5 Regarding access of women to land, the land records do not incorporate the rights of women in the landed property shown in the name of the husband or the father. Only where a woman is a widow and happens to be

the kartha of the family, her name may figure in the record of rights as the owner of property. Therefore, in order to give the women genuine economic power through access to land, the following steps are necessary:

- (a) Where a woman has brought some property to the family through marriage, this property must be exclusively recorded in her name.
- (b) Property which is acquired during the subsistence of marriage should be recorded in their joint names.

1.6 Regarding women as co-owners of property should not merely be confined to land but also to other productive assets like trees, animals, house, family wealth, shops or any other income generating establishment or asset. This would instill confidence in women to participate in and influence the decision concerning the use and disposal of such properties.

1.7 Wherever share-holders in land and other assets are recorded in the record of rights, the share-holding must necessarily record the shares of female right holders also as per their entitlement. Existing records need to be reviewed and methods to revise entries to indicate joint ownership evolved.

1.8 Wherever other interests in land like cultivating possession, share-cropping, tenancy rights, rights in common property resources, rights of collection of minor forest produce, grazing and usufructuary rights, etc. are recorded, such rights must be recorded in respect of both male as well as female spouse.

1.9 The allotment of Government wastelands, village common land, developed house-sites, allotment of Indira Awas Tenements should invariably be done in the joint names of the husband and wife or single title of ownership given to women heads of households, tribal women and Scheduled Caste, particularly those who are widows, unmarried or victims of harassment.

1.10 There is no reason why land, house sites, dwelling units should not be allotted exclusively to 'women' as eligible categories. This will give greater strength and confidence to women and will prevent men from disposing of the land without her consent. In future, as a matter of policy in the allotment of Government land and surplus ceiling land and house sites, atleast 40% women members of the eligible categories may be given pattas.

1.11. Apart from ownership, certain interests in land are heritable, as for example rights of share-cropping and cultivation on certain lands. This heritability does not usually devolve on the female spouse after the death of the husband but gets shifted to the male agnates of the family. The recording of joint interests should ensure that the female co-owner of such holdings inherits the interest after her husband dies.

1.12 Personal laws of many communities discriminate against female members, particularly married daughters in regard to share in the father's property. A review of property laws is essential to extend the principles of inheritance to women as they are applicable to men.

1.13 In customary laws of many tribal communities, women do not have any right of

inheritance in father's or husband's property, although they are entitled to maintenance during their life time. This discrimination should be ended and safeguards should be provided that this process should not lead to non-tribals usurping tribal landed property.

1.14 Tree 'pattas' should be issued in the name of women as a matter of preference. Social forestry schemes on Government or village common and forest lands should be allotted exclusively to women's groups. This is particularly applicable to tribal women, and Scheduled Caste women.

1.15 Productive assets under Integrated Rural Development Programme such as ploughs, bullocks, hand pumps, etc., should be issued in the name of husband and wife and, in the case of women headed households, to the women exclusively.

1.16 In dairy cooperatives or similar activities, the name of the female spouse should also be recorded as a share-holder along with her husband.

1.17 An effective support mechanism is a watchdog committee at village/panchayat-/tehsil level to ensure that rights admissible to women are not deprived to them by members of the family and other vested interests should be developed so that their assistance can be taken by women in distress.

1.18 In implementation of land reform measures, potential women beneficiaries should be associated with any committee or representative groups set up to aid and advice the implementation machinery. The enforcement machinery for implementing land reforms needs to be made more effective.

1.19 In some communities, there are customs whereby if a tribal woman is raped by a non-tribal or lives with a non-tribal, she becomes automatically outcast from the tribal society and even deprived of the minimal usufructuary rights in land available to other women. It is necessary to make appropriate changes wherever such practices exist, and provisions under the customary law for their maintenance should be made available to them.

1.20 Tribal women who are accused of witch craft should be given legal, social and economic protection.

1.21 The rights of collection of minor forest produce by tribal women should be specifically recorded in the record of rights, along with their rights to collect fuel-wood, fodder and raw material for their employment from the forest.

1.22 The migration of women labour needs to be regulated to protect their interests by effective enforcement of existing legislation and other administrative measures wherever possible, rural development programmes for women must recognize seasonal migrant labourers as a special category.

1.23 Mining leases for such activities as brick-kilns, stone crushing, contracts for road construction etc. where women are employed in large numbers, should be issued in the name of women applicants.

1.24 Programmes of creating awareness, organising of labour camps, helping tribal women to organise themselves into collective groups for better bargaining and improving their skills should be the key to the future

strategy of their development and physical and social protection. This training should also teach them how to cope with various exploitative situations including those of the marketing. Support systems should be built up with the help of traditional tribal community organisations. Legal aid, para legal training to educate tribal women and spread of legal literacy, among tribal women in general and migrant labourers in particular, should be important components of the support structure.

1.25 Women members of households should be entitled to credit, independent of the male head of the family or without his endorsement, where no mortgage of his property or joint property is required.

1.26 Since women constitute a substantial proportion of the self-employed categories, requiring, credit assistance, credit societies exclusively for women members need to be organised.

1.27 In terms of credit as a development input, the banking system is not sufficiently responsive to social banking needs and has not been able to deal with barriers that hinder women from using or gaining access to credit. Priority sector lending of banks must be extended to women as a group. Special counters for women in banks may also be initiated. Particular emphasis should be placed on institutional credit mechanisms at differential rates of interest for women in the unorganised sector.

1.28 Women's Development Corporations should be established in all States. They should obtain banking support to provide credit at national and local levels. The

National Commission on Self Employed Women has in its recommendations also suggested that the terms of reference of Women's Development Corporations be expanded to play an effective role.

1.29 A number of existing models in the voluntary sector provide examples of alternate strategies for providing credit to women in the unorganised sector coupled with effective interventions required to utilize the credit, which can be replicated on a large scale. In this context, it is recommended that the DWCRA programme that has been modelled on voluntary approaches should be extended to all districts. It should also be expanded during implementation to encompass adolescent girls.

1.30 In selection of income generating activities, both under IRDP and TRYSEM, the banks and the rural development agencies should have committed involvement in helping and guiding the women in the selection of viable activities with local markets.

1.31 National Waste Land Development programmes of social and agro-forestry must become more women oriented in their priorities and implementing strategies. Social forestry Schemes formulated by the Women's Development Corporations should have a built-in provision for employing and training women extension workers.

1.32 The training of women members of panchayats should be undertaken to enable them to understand their role and responsibilities and to equip them with information on their rights. Women's concerns should be included in the training programmes for male panchayat members as well. A committee including the district coordinator for women's programmes (proposed) should be

formed to look into the training needs of men and women panchayat members, and to help in designing the training programmes. The proposed Resource Centre could assist in evolving suitable training modules.

1.33 Provisions and infrastructures created under NREP and RLEGP should be closely linked so as to optimize their impact on rural women's development. The linkages with the funds and other infrastructural facilities available for the line departments is to be ensured in this regard. The plans for the creation of infrastructural facilities should be devised locally, in consultation with the women, instead of waiting for a centrally prepared blue print. The appointment of district coordinators for women's programmes would expedite this process.

1.34 The Agricultural Extension System (T&V) should include women that work on family farm within its purview. Food production, nutrition, population education etc. should form the extension service package for women. Simultaneously, agriculture extension programmes for women must be initiated in all States.

1.35 An impact study of the Farmers' Training Programmes and Krishi Vigyan Kendras should be routinely made. The syllabi of these institutions should be geared to the productivity role of women. They should collect area specific information on women's activities, assess the training and information needs of women, as well as provide feed back to the media for dissemination of information on women's role in agriculture and allied activities. The Kendras need to be extended to all districts.

1.36 Women's role in animal husbandry should be approached in a more pragmatic way. They should be trained in the management of cattle, veterinary care and fodder production. Production of fodder, collectively or individually, by women is to be included as a must in self employment projects in animal husbandry. A cadre of para-veterinarians from among the beneficiaries should be created.

1.37 Efforts for increasing the membership of women in existing dairy cooperatives, training of women for taking up managerial responsibilities, and separate cooperatives for women should be aimed at.

1.38 Voluntary organisations and educational institutions should be increasingly

motivated to take up micro studies and action programmes in mobilizing and organizing women, and encouraging them to avail of the provisions of various programmes.

1.39 There is need to organise and conscientize the women under DWCRA, TRYSEM, STEP, etc. in order to get higher benefits from these schemes. The TRYSEM schemes should recognise literacy as a skill since it is an essential input for participation in various schemes. The 30 per cent target stipulated for women in various schemes should be strictly met by the officials.

1.40 There should be proper publicity about various programmes meant for rural women. Awareness camps should be organised in order to make rural women aware about the various schemes and programmes by voluntary and government organisations.

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

2.1 It will be necessary to formulate a well articulated employment generation and training policy aimed at more productive participation by women, at the same time assuring them greater employment benefits, social security and better working conditions.

2.2 The formulation of a National Labour Policy must receive immediate attention. The National Commission on Rural Labour set up by the Department of Labour must include in its terms of reference issues pertaining to women workers in rural areas including those in the unorganised workforce. The analysis and recommendations of the National Commission on Self Employed Women must also be given due consideration in the formulation of such a policy.

2.3 The agricultural extension system currently reaches only a minimal number of women in agriculture. Special extension programmes must be evolved to create awareness and skills among women in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry and other related employment sectors.

2.4 Rural employment programmes and employment guarantee schemes like that in Maharashtra state should be strengthened and expanded by public works programme alongwith the provision of social inputs such as creches, drinking water, and covered shelters at work sites.

2.5 The nine major rural employment sectors have high participation of women i.e. agriculture, animal husbandary, khadi and village industries, handicrafts, handlooms,

sericulture, fisheries, forestry etc., and have large resource allocations. The mainstream sectors must integrate a women's component into the sectoral programmes. This would need 'earmarking' programmes for the development of women alongwith support measures and training in these sectors.

2.6 Though preferential emphasis should be in favour of the unprotected women workers in the unorganized sector, keeping in view the quantum of female labour force in this sector as well as the problems and constraints, wherever possible women's employability should be increased by diversification or provision of skill training in new or non-traditional employment in the organized sector.

2.7 It is expected that the next two development plans would be expanding the provision of basic services. Women should be enabled to take advantage of these opportunities for gainful employment arising from provision of basic services and to work as anganwadi workers/group organisers/ANMs/LHVS etc. The critical enabling mechanism will be requisite training and upgradation of skills.

2.8 While planning employment programmes, it is essential to keep in view the demand projections of employment, expansion and production projections created by different government programmes. It should, therefore, be possible to monitor the needs of the various ministries as regards women's employment and plan potential personnel

needs. Similarly, income generation skills could be related to the demand created by Government programmes for specific goods. For instance, the NPE in its "Operation Blackboard" has visualized the need for teaching aids. This would be a continuous requirement for more than two decades. Similarly the supplementary nutrition needs of the primary schools and anganwadis could be interlinked and provide jobs to local women that could prepare the nutrition supplement. One of the functions of the District Employment Committee will be to match demand with supply and link potential areas of employment with women needing employment.

2.9 Employment for women should also mean household self-sufficiency with reference to nutritional and economic needs of the household as in the instance of backyard poultry, social forestry, small animal husbandry etc. For example, in the social forestry programmes, certain basic types of trees rich in nutrition (such as papaya, banana, drumstick, curry patta, etc.) should be promoted. Depletion of local food resources due to food processing for export purposes must be checked at all costs.

2.10 Displacement of women from traditional sectors due to modernization and technology is well-known, particularly in the agriculture, fisheries, textile and handloom sectors. It is essential to provide alternate skills for women displaced by new technologies. Qualitative studies of every new technology and its adverse impact on women must be undertaken before introduction of technology and formulation of policy thereof.

2.11 Promotion of petty trading/manufacturing/processive small industry, employment among women should be encouraged by

ensuring a reasonable share of credit and other inputs. These micro-entrepreneurs should be organized into cooperatives and other types of specialised collective agencies.

2.12 In the sector of wage employment, women's participation in trade union activities should be encouraged. Creation of organisations for increasing their bargaining power could be stimulated through specific programmes and schemes. In this context the recommendations of the report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and women in the unorganized sector must receive serious attention.

2.13 Organization and mobilization are critical for women to perceive themselves as 'workers' and productive contributors, not merely as 'house-wives'. Special programmes for non-formal education and awareness generation of women workers should be strengthened and expanded on a national scale. For instance, the Nehru Yuvak Kendras (NYKs) provide an existing avenue to support awareness and employment generation programmes. It is urged that at least one women NSS Volunteer be employed by every NYK to assist this process. Special attention may be paid to raising employability of adolescent girls so as to provide them with alternative options to early marriage. A national programme of legal awareness for both girls and women be initiated.

2.14 In the organized sector, the maximum age of entry of women in employment should be increased to 35 years, with provision for job sharing, part time work and re-entry into the employment stream at a later stage. Relaxation of educational qualifications for women in specific areas of employment may be considered.

2.15 In the organized sector emphasis will

have to be placed on the expansion of insurance cover, maternity and other benefits.

2.15 A Central maternity benefit fund should be set up out of the contribution made by the employers, workers and Government in order to reduce the burden on the individual employers in respect of women workers.

2.17 Extending paternity leave benefits require serious consideration.

2.18 Special incentives should be given to entrepreneurs who employ more than a certain percentage of women particularly in labour intensive industries. Recognition and incentives should also be offered to employers who appreciably increase the employment of women and take up programmes for imparting functional education.

2.19 Avenues for part-time employment should be explored, to improve women's earning capacities; additional employment throughout the year must be available by targeting a percentage of employment in rural works for women.

2.20 Women should be adequately represented on all decision making bodies concerned with personnel planning and economic development like the Planning Commission, State Planning Boards and Financial institutions such as IDBI, IFC, LIC and NDDB, KVIC, Silk Board, etc. Mahila Mandals and other local women's organisations should be strengthened and sensitized. The local level organisations should be involved in designing suitable income generating projects depending on local resources and skills. They should be represented on the

District Employment Committees recommended at 2.29.

2.21 The Ministry of labour should set up a standing committee especially for unorganized labour to promote and develop a strong organizational base to improve their working conditions.

2.22 In the formulation of the employment strategy, a key role has to be given to agriculture through expansion of irrigation, cropping intensity and extension of new technologies. Though the rate of industrial growth must be accelerated, it must be recognized that even a higher rate cannot guarantee a larger volume of employment for women. Therefore, massive programmes of rural development will be needed to provide larger employment. In this context, the nine major rural employment sectors which have a high participation of women must incorporate a specific women's component into their sectoral programmes. This does not necessarily imply seeking higher outlays but earmarking funds and ensuring a special component for employment generation programmes for women as well as support measures, and skill training in these sectors.

2.23 Women should have access to productive resources such as land, buildings credit, housing and skill training. The existing loopholes in the property laws which deny women access to ownership of land should be removed.

2.24 Special interventions are needed to provide credit to women for production and marketing activities. Women's development banks should be encouraged at the national

and local levels to provide credit, marketing and other supportive services to women's groups. Marketing is a major problem for women producers. Local producers' organizations should seek to protect their interests. In addition, marketing support for home based producers should be provided. Women's Development Corporations must play an active role in this area and the Government departments should make provision to purchase goods from organizations of women producers on a preferential basis.

2.25 Separate machineries at the National and State levels should be set up which can play a coordinating and catalytic role in the framing of employment policies and programmes for women. Special reinforcing cells or units in sectoral Ministries should be created to enforce and monitor the policies. Annual reports of the ministries and agencies at the Central and State levels should document and review the achievements concerning the employment status of women. A special focus of such monitoring should be the enforcement of equal pay for equal work, job security and fair working conditions for women workers. These aspects should be studied in depth by the National Commission on Rural Labour.

2.26 Employment Exchanges must maintain separate lists for women. Every list sent to organizations/employers by the Employment Exchange should have at least 30% women candidates.

2.27 The largest number of women work as casual labourers. They are both underpaid and underemployed. Information on employment opportunities should be widely disseminated among these groups. Avenues for part

time employment should be explored to improve the earning capacities. Additional employment through-out the year must be made available to them by reserving a certain percentage of employment in rural works.

2.28 Every selection board must have women in it.

2.29 District level Employment Committees be set up to plan, coordinate the demand/potential of employment programs. Line agencies, women's groups, small scale industries be given sufficient representation. These committees should ensure 30 per cent employment for women, monitor employment opportunities, and rural training schemes, and their accessibility for women. These should become part of the agenda for the committees.

2.30 The National Commission on Self Employed Women has also recommended that an advisory committee with some power of veto must be set up at the Central Government level to monitor the impact of technology on women and to identify and promote areas for research and development of pro-women technologies.

2.31 A small group may be set up by the Technology Policy Cell to design a format for evaluation of all proposals of technology transfer and automation in industries so that a view can be taken with reference to women's opportunities for employment.

2.32 It has been observed that after marriage a large number of women are forced to drop out of employment, inspite of their high qualifications and engage in household chores only. Such "post marriage brain-drain" should be stopped. Appropriate alternative measures such as part-time

employment, job sharing etc. should be accessible to these women.

2.33 Women workers employed in free trade zones comprise a particularly vulnerable group due to the differentials in application of labour legislation in these zones. Hence women's interests need to be protected in this area and support services provided.

Training

2.34 Recognition of the critical role of training in increasing and strengthening women's productive employment is essential.

2.35 A National Resource Centre for Women to provide a new thrust to training and dissemination of information backed by research, data and documentation is an urgent need. It would coordinate training efforts and identify and strengthen existing governmental and non-governmental agencies and academic institutions with resource and technical support.

2.36 Women must be given increased access to training in skills, management, entrepreneurship, particularly in non-traditional trades. Care should be taken to ensure that women are not pushed into low paying, monotonous and hazardous jobs where mobility is also limited.

2.37 Training in the nine sectors of women's employment viz. agriculture, dairying, fisheries, small animal husbandry, khadi and village industries, forestry, handlooms handicrafts, sericulture must receive priority attention.

2.38 Special training programmes to promote rural entrepreneurship should be designed. New areas of employment should be

explored for training and absorption of women workers in these rural small scale industrial ventures.

2.39 Training personnel must be sensitized to local women's issues, employment needs and trades.

2.40 Women displaced by introduction of modern technologies must be equipped with alternative skills and employment possibilities at the same level.

2.41 Facilities and incentives must be provided and increased for the enrolment of women in all training institutes, polytechnics etc.

2.42 Special, condensed, job-oriented training courses must be organised for women through ITIs, polytechnics etc., utilizing existing infrastructures. Hostels for girls should be provided in existing polytechnics/ITIs so that girls can avail of training.

2.43 There should be a separate quota for women's apprenticeship training in non-traditional skills which should be non-transferable so that women are assured entry into such programmes.

2.44 Planning of training programmes for women must keep in view the demands of new Governmental programmes and maximise opportunities for women e.g., the demand for physical education instructors, expansion of social forestry programmes, etc.

2.45 Training of trainers must lay special emphasis on group mobilization/skills inter-personal and managerial skills etc. as well as sensitization to local women's issues, employment needs and trades.

2.46 Training for management of co-operatives organizing and mobilizing women's

groups is essential. Training women for participation in trade unions is also critical.

2.47 Schemes for diversification and expansion of education and skill training opportunities for women should be given highest priority. Special training programmes should be designed to train displaced women due to modernization or introduction of technologies.

2.48 One diversified vocational training institution for every four or five blocks should be set up for imparting sectoral and other skills to rural women.

2.49 Special programmes for education (entailing functional and legal literacy and family life education) of women workers have to be evolved.

2.50 A nodal point should be identified to design and impart paralegal training to women workers. Legal literacy particularly in respect of labour laws and employment benefits must be engendered widely. In this effort, CILAS (Committee for Implementation of Legal Aid Services) and similar structures should be closely involved.

2.51 The training programmes for rural women should be created taking into consideration their educational and literacy levels and local demands. Rural women's need for vocational training should not result in hasty attempts to extend training in a limited range of crafts, sectors and occupations considered 'suitable' for women, that have seldom resulted in providing an adequate livelihood for rural women in the past. Vocational training must cover managerial and organizational as well as productive skills.

2.52 The agricultural extension system (T & V) should take the women of farm families in its purview to provide the necessary information and training support. Food production, nutrition and population education should be included the package of extension services for women. Agriculture extension for women must be expanded as a concept to truly encompass other allied fields. The system should be strengthened with adequate number of personnel at least at the rate of five per block with corresponding strengthening at the supervisory and planning levels.

2.53 Women's role in animal husbandry should be approached in a more pragmatic way. They should be trained in management of cattle, veterinary care and fodder production. Production of fodder collectively or individually by women is to be included as an essential ingredient in employment projects and animal husbandry. Creation of a cadre of para veterinarians from the beneficiaries themselves should be aimed at.

2.54 Efforts for increasing the membership of women in existing dairy cooperatives and training and other provisions to enable women to take up managerial responsibilities must be a priority. Separate cooperatives for women should be aimed at. Cooperative training institutions must provide special inputs for women.

2.55 Training institutions in the sectors of sericulture, KVIC, handicrafts, etc. should recognize the contribution of women to these sectors and incorporate training needs of women beneficiaries and functionaries.

2.56 Special efforts should be made for improving the in-service training facilities for women.

2.57 In case of apprenticeship, incentives should be given to employers for training of women.

Supportive Services

2.58 The vital role of supportive services in enhancing productive employment should be recognised. It is essential to ensure that the drudgery of the rural women on tedious chores such as fodder/fuel and water collection, cooking, child care etc., be alleviated.

2.59 Appropriate technology for reducing drudgery and enhancing productivity should be designed in close consultation with the local women. The possibility of harnessing non-conventional sources of energy such as solar, bio-gas, wind, etc., to decrease possibilities of environmental degradation and at the same time, ensure women easier access to fuel and other efficient systems of energy should be explored and pursued.

2.60 Besides the overall trends of economic development it will also be necessary to devise supplementary programmes to promote and strengthen employment among women in specific backward groups.

2.61 Greater emphasis should be placed on the provision of creche/day care centre facilities as a support service. It is, therefore, recommended that it be made mandatory for every work site employing over 30 persons to provide for a creche facility.

2.62 Maternity leave benefits and family planning incentives should also be available uniformly to all sectors.

2.63 A maternity benefit fund should be set up, out of the contributions made by the

employers, workers and Government in respect of women workers. The present obligation of employers in the formal sector to provide creche/day-care centre facilities should be replaced by a contribution of employers to a common fund to be operated at the State level.

2.64 Women should also have access to infrastructural facilities like transport, storage, raw material and other productive material such as land, worksheds, technology, etc.

2.65 Supportive services like creches, child-care centres, supply of firewood etc., which indirectly increase women's employability should be developed jointly by the Government, the private sector and the voluntary sector.

2.66 In the organized sector, emphasis will have to be placed on the expansion of insurance cover, maternity and other benefits such as, creches. Universalization of creche services to reach all work sites with over 30 working people is critical.

Enforcement and Legal Safeguards

2.67 Special cells/mechanisms must be created to cater to women's needs and enforce legislation on equal work, job security and working conditions.

2.68 Criteria for fixation and revision of minimum wages should be evolved without impinging on the right of parties to negotiate wage agreements.

2.69 Legal safeguards/facilities available under various existing laws, such as the Minimum Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act,

Employees State Insurance Act, Provident Fund Act, and Maternity Benefits Act are not extended to the unorganized sectors. The possibility of extending these laws to cover the unorganized sector must be examined. The National Commission on Self Employed Women has made specific recommendations in this regard. Trade unions and other organizations should emerge to undertake the development of consciousness among women workers about these legislative provisions. Legal aid centres, Lok Adalats should also help workers in sorting out their problems in this context.

2.70 There is a strong need to eliminate all forms of discriminations in employment through legislative measures, especially to eliminate wage differentials between women and men. Review of the relative evaluation of various operations in any job is called for to redefine equal remuneration for work of equal value.

2.71 Working conditions should be improved in both formal and informal sectors. Protective measures against work-related health hazards should be effectively implemented. Employment of women in hazardous jobs should be forbidden and suitable steps should be taken through legislative measures.

2.72 The Government of India is the largest employer of women. It should ensure that regulations regarding maternity benefits, provision of creches at its work sites and wage fixations are adhered to.

2.73 Policies should be framed to encourage women to enter managerial levels.

Awareness and Conscientisation

2.74 Conscientisation is an integral part of organization. Presently, there is near total ignorance among women particularly at the grass roots about the various labour laws and their entitlements as well as discriminatory provisions perpetuated under these laws. Nor are they aware of the productive and social worth of their labour. Legal literacy particularly in respect of labour legislation should be widely generated. Both the Government and the voluntary as well as the private sector should come forward for setting up legal aid centres at local levels so as to develop an informed and aware female labour force. In this endeavour, effective networking with existing structures such as CILAS (Committee for Implementing Legal Aid Service) is recommended.

2.75 There is a need for collective action, for which purpose, organizations of women need to be promoted and funded especially in the unorganized sector. Such organizations should be capable for exercising the required pressure for furthering and protecting the interest of members.

2.76 Although the Government has limitations in direct involvement in unionizing or organizing the female labourers, it can facilitate voluntary organizations in this task. Organization of trade unions in both the organized and unorganized sectors where such organizations do not exist at present is critical. Further to look after the problems of women workers and to improve women's participation in trade union activities, the formation of women's wings in all trade unions should be made essential.

2.76 Voluntary organizations, should be encouraged by Government to undertake

programmes for creating awareness about the existing exploitative structures and procedures in employment concerning women.

2.78 Mechanisms for conscientizing producers' and workers' groups on a regular basis should be thought of.

2.79 Wide publicity should be given to training programmes and training materials focusing on women. Brochures listing crafts and other cottage and small-scale industries with potential for expanding women's participation and productivity should be prepared and made available at each district headquarters and to lead institutions for training. These brochures should also contain information on the skills and knowledge to be acquired, availability of credit, marketing facilities, raw materials, etc. The All India Handicrafts Board, Silk Board, and other agencies should have special units for dissemination of this information at various levels. They should also utilize mass media for dissemination of information, apart from conducting intensive publicity campaigns.

Data Requirements and Suggested Areas of Research

2.80 The existing information on women's employment is inadequate. Nor is it available on a regular basis. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the coverage, flow and analysis of existing statistical data. There is a need to have particularly better coverage of the unorganized sector which employs large numbers of women. It is also vital to take a fresh look at the concept and definition of 'Work'. Often, statisticians and planners have ignored the 'invisible' contribution of women to the family farm or business, and to domestic chores including collection of fuel, fodder

and water. The jobs performed within the home or outside as an employee or as her own account should be included.

2.81 The Women's Cell in the Ministry of Labour should collect and collate available information on the employment situation of women and bring out a periodic report.

2.82 The annual employment review brought out of the direction of Employment and Training should furnish information of education levels, placement, and registration of women job seekers. (The survey conducted by the Directorate General of Employment and Training (DGE & T) in 1972 of graduates of 1968 gave useful information on women. There is a need to take up periodic surveys of this type).

2.83 There is also the need to collate, collect and disseminate information on studies on issues concerning employment policies and programmes and their implications for women.

Information on the impact and benefits of development programming on women, in view of benefits envisaged e.g. empowerment or employment opportunities or managerial skills should also be collected.

2.84 The implementation of the Equal Remuneration Act and of other labour and welfare legislation should be routinely evaluated and reported and the findings disseminated.

2.85 Some of the areas which require research and analysis and which could be carried out by Governmental or non-Governmental agencies are listed below:

* Re-examination of the concept of

- work, and methodologies of assessing the nature and extent of employment discrimination are essential.
- * Assessment of the extent of mechanization in selected women oriented industries and the impact of technological changes on female employment in various sectors, especially in the areas of post-harvest technology, fisheries, handlooms, sericulture and cottage industries.
 - * Studies on the nine rural employment sectors employing women.
 - * Research at the macro and micro level on the impact on women must be conducted before the introduction of new technologies associated with modernization so that women displaced by it can be retrained or absorbed in other avenues of employment.
 - * The nature and type of work performed by women in the urban informal sector and its inter-linkages with the informal-formal sector continuum.
 - * Modes and levels of wage payment for women workers with a view to identify the areas where further labour legislation could be needed and enforcement strengthened.
 - * Assessment of the existing system of hiring in both agricultural and non-agricultural works with particular reference to extra economic obligations imposed on women as conditions of employment.
 - * Evaluation of the impact of different kinds of occupations and sectors on women's economic independence, their access to employment information, their job satisfaction, and the impact of specific occupations on their health.
 - * Identification of factors responsible for the decline in women's work participation rate in the urban areas.
 - * Evaluation of the impact and attitude of women working towards the family and the community.
 - * Review of the existing criteria of selection for candidates for jobs in order to identify the in-built discriminatory clauses if any against them, such as, age limit, physical characteristics, marital status, etc.
 - * Study of part-time employment to analyse whether women are engaged in full-time jobs for part-time wages.
 - * Study of the impact of supportive services, such as, health, education child care, maternity benefits, etc., on women's work both in the home and outside.
 - * Study of the feasibility of introducing low-cost gadgets for reducing household drudgery.
 - * Identification of contradictions in law arising from conflict between family law, constitutional guarantees of

- women's rights, and protection of workers through labour legislation.
- * Investigative studies to identify the areas of decline in employment with a view to assess their nature and magnitude.
- * Identification of new areas suitable for promotion of women's employment.
- * The impact of national rural development programmes like SFDA, TRYSEM, EGS, Food for Work and other programmes on women's employment.
- * The effects of young women's employment on household relations and on fertility.
- * Development of curriculum for agricultural universities to take account of women's roles and needs in agriculture.
- * Credit as a crucial input for promoting women's employment. Analysis of the flow of credit to women, especially to low income group women.
- * Research studies should be promoted to analyse women's multifarious roles in agriculture from production to processing and marketing, and the impact of agricultural development on women.
- * An inventory of available technologies in agriculture should be made. Promotion of access of women to appropriate science and technology should be aimed and research should be directed to the development of women's needs for specific technologies.
- * A major area of research that has to be provided impetus, is the study of economic viability of projects, both on-going and newly planned, particularly socio-economic benefits/costing.
- * It is also essential to study the impact of macro-policy on women, particularly the impact of agricultural policy, industrial policy, taxation, urbanization, institutional money flow as well as impact of technology policies.
- * Research ought to be initiated on the impact of structural adjustment on women i.e. analysing the relationship between women, market and the state. particularly, attention has to be given to the impact on women of changes in incomes, prices of consumer goods, levels and composition of public expenditure, and working conditions.
- * Gender specific statistical inputs on development programmes e.g. number of beneficiaries, allocations etc. also need to be collected and made available.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: FUEL, FODDER, WATER, CRECHE/DAY CARE, HOUSING

Fuel, Fodder, Water

3.1 Problems specific to women have to be highlighted in considering issues like fodder, fuel and drinking water. Since these directly concern women, their involvement in all programmes related to such issues must be given prominence. The interlinkages between fuel, fodder and drinking water with other aspects of the development of women such as education, employment, food and nutrition, health and sanitation must be recognized and integrated programmes worked out on a holistic basis for optimal utilization of personnel and financial inputs.

3.2 As has been stressed by the Seventh Plan, the government must ensure public participation and draw upon the resources of voluntary agencies educational (especially Science and Technology) institutions, industries and financial organizations in implementing various programmes for the development of women. Various funding agencies may consider sponsoring All India or regional projects on a coordinated basis wherein, Science and Technology experts could collaborate with the NGOs and the people in designing and implementing programmes based on micro-level surveys.

3.3 Women must be specifically organized by involving the NGOs wherever necessary to participate in the implementation of social forestry programmes, water sharing projects and in the maintenance of various gadgets and devices. The necessary formal and non-formal education has to be appropriately matched with their time schedules, seasonal occupations and socio-cultural constraints.

3.4 In-training programmes, in addition to NGOs, educational institutions could play an important role. Agricultural extension centres, home science colleges, and youth forum like N.S.S. should be purposefully involved. Science and Technology institutions can take up the task of training and provide the technical back up in technology transfer as well as monitoring and evaluation.

3.5 A data bank may be set up with such resource centres where information may be made available not only on technologies but also on manufacturing availability of training facilities, etc. These centres must have working models readily available for demonstrations, and requisite resource persons. Interaction among the centres will enable them to serve as a national network.

3.6 Research must be undertaken both in improving and developing hardware and software systems. All the necessary technologies on collection, processing, storage and utilization of fodder, fuel and drinking water may be carefully analysed and gaps identified. Many issues are regional and location specific and tackled best at the micro level. For example carrying water is more problematic in hills than in plains; fuel problem is more acute in arid zones. The choice of fuel and fodder generating plants would depend on the agroclimate and terrains. The type of improved chulha required depends on the food and cooking practices. Perhaps an area based approach can be taken combining locations with similar type of problems into groups or clusters.

3.7 The necessary industrial support in the manufacturing of various small equipments should be created, e.g., manufacture of small water storage systems, forage harvesting systems, etc. Women and small entrepreneurs should be involved in such ventures with suitable subsidies.

3.8 The decision makers both at the bureaucratic and political levels should be sensitized to the importance of programmes specifically targeted for women in the context of national development.

3.9 The socio-cultural and traditional practices must be suitably modified for conservation of various resources and more efficient utilization of time, energy and capital. For example, cooking recipes which require more fuel and time in cooking have to be pointed out and corrected. Where possible, community kitchens should be encouraged. Especially in the periphery of towns, the food prepared in neighbouring areas can be brought in packages. This would reduce the load on fuel, provide employment to women in the surrounding areas while benefiting many working women.

3.10 Many of the local hardware and software problems especially with respect to fuel and drinking water are not easily solved at the household level. The right level of scaling has to be planned, keeping in view both the economic viability and the consumer's convenience. For instance, in a biogas system, a 80m³ community biogas plant is more economical than a 2m³ household plant but the former calls for a more elaborate management system. Perhaps a sub-community biogas plant of 15-20m³ for 15-10 families could be a solution. Thus for each problem, a suitable community or sub-community system has to be worked out.

3.11 Some of the above recommendations have been noted both in the 'Country Report of 1985' presented at Nairobi and "Forward Looking Strategies for the Year 2000". However, at the level of implementation, the programmes of various governmental departments tend to get superimposed. Hence it is important to identify one of the Ministries as the 'Nodal Ministry' for coordination and keeping abreast of all programmes related to women. The Ministry of Human Resource Development could perhaps take this up so that a Master Table could be prepared of all action/projects having a bearing on women, noting the time schedules for implementation, and the agencies involved in planning and action at the central, state, regional local levels. This "Nodal Ministry" for women may constitute sub-committee with members drawn not only from government but also from other participating agencies to discuss the various issues and evolve strategies.

Creche/Daycare

3.12 Creche services must be universally provided to all women, especially in the poverty sector. This would enable some of them to augment their family income and, at the same time, ensure proper care of their children. The children's health, sanitation, nutrition and early stimulation would get attention... Increasing the number of creches would also generate more employment opportunities for women. In view of the above, it is recommended that in rural areas, wherever ICDS infrastructure already exists, creches should be opened attached to the Anganwadis. These creches should make provision for babies below 3 years age. The timing of aanganwadis which provide pre-school services for children of 3-6 years, should be

adjusted according to the working hours of rural women. These creches will help in containing morbidity and mortality rates and malnutrition of infants and small children. They will also relieve the children in the school going age group from child care responsibilities, and give an opportunity to them to utilize the ICDS pre school services.

3.13 The existing law that stipulates provision of a creche for employment of thirty or more women should be changed to thirty persons (men and women). This would ensure that employers do not use loopholes in the law to their advantage and would extend creche facilities to children of men workers whose wives, if they are not in the organised sector do not otherwise have access to such facilities.

3.14 The Government of India, being an employer of a large number of women, must provide creche facilities in or near all workplaces.

3.15 Creche service must follow an integrated approach to childcare.

3.16 Creche workers should preferably be local women to whom appropriate skill-oriented, on the job training should be imparted.

3.17 Technical institutions and home-science colleges should be utilized to train creche workers as also provide inputs for systematic monitoring and supervision of the creche programmes.

3.18 Organizations running creches should be given flexibility to adopt timings suitable to the needs of the working mothers.

3.19 Local women's groups and mothers of the children attending creches must be given training in preparation of toys, play materials out of low cost/no cost indigenous material. Employment for women can be generated by employing local women to prepare the mid-day meals, etc.

3.20 Action research projects, such as, a study of the impact of day care services on the education of girls should be initiated.

Housing

Traditionally, women have had a significant role in resource management including housing management. It is important to recognize this role and provide for women's participation in development programmes, and for incorporating their needs in schemes for improvement of housing and environmental conditions in the following manner:

3.21 Identify the needs of women in relation to housing and community facilities and build them in an integrated manner into housing development programmes.

3.22 Integrate environmental factors into development planning for women as well their requirements in settlement planning.

3.23 Involve women at all levels of decision making and bring about their participation in programme implementation so as to ensure that the benefits of housing, essential services, and community facilities are directed to women in general and to the poor and vulnerable among them in particular.

3.24 The special needs of women should be identified and adequately catered to while formulating minimum housing standards.

3.25 Necessary facilities in homes should be provided to lessen the burden and drudgery of women in performing productive and reproductive roles.

3.26 Priority investment in infrastructure such as water supply, sanitation, energy, transportation, working women's hostels, public distribution of basic needs etc., should take into consideration the needs of women.

3.27 Provision of housing for working and/or single women is recommended on priority basis. In addition, women in difficult circumstances such as widows, refugees, destitutes, victims of social oppression, seasonal migrant workers, victims of natural disasters etc. must be provided shelter as part of an integrated rehabilitation programme .

3.28 The National Housing Policy which has been formulated, must pay adequate attention to the special needs and roles of women in the implementation of housing programme.

3.29 The social and economic constraints which come in the way of women's participation should be removed and their active involvement in housing should be promoted by :

- **Alloting house-sites in the joint name of wife and husband;**
- **Mobilizing savings of women for housing;**
- **Organizing self-help in undertaking house construction work;**
- **Imparting training so that women could become skilled labour (including masons and other skilled labour); and**
- **Ensuring access for women to institutional credit at low rates of interest without collateral.**

EDUCATION

- 4.1 Awareness needs to be generated among the masses regarding the necessity of educating girls so as to prepare them to effectively contribute to the socio-economic development of the country, to strengthen their role in society and to realize their own capacities. The media and various forms of communication have to be geared to this end.
- 4.2 A fruitful rapport has to be established between the community at large and the teachers and other education personnel. As per the Programme of Action under National Policy on Education-1986, every educational institution should actively participate in bringing about such awareness.
- 4.3 Involvement of local leaders, voluntary agencies and women's groups is also necessary. Mahila mandals need to be *revitalized* and re-oriented to provide an effective forum for the purpose. One measure to achieve this could be to assign the responsibility to mahila mandals for ensuring that all children in a community attend school. An incentive scheme should be introduced to motivate panchayats to ensure 100 per cent enrolment of girls in their respective villages.
- 4.4 Early childhood care and education introduces children into the school system gradually and smoothly. When children get used to attending schools, it ensures in some measure retention of children, including girls, at elementary stages also. Hence there is need to have a comprehensive and effective programme of early childhood care and education linked to an integrated package of learning for women. The most comprehensive example of this is the Integrated Child Development Services Programme which needs to be universalized.
- 4.5 For improving enrolment and minimising drop-outs and wastage in case of girl students, it would be helpful if learning is made more attractive by providing adequate teaching materials in schools.
- 4.6 The number of teachers should also be increased so that the interaction between the teacher and the taught, which is so essential for good education, also increases. This would help in the retention of girls in schools and would be more effective if teachers from the area are employed. In single teacher schools, the teacher must be a woman. In the case of two-teacher schools, at least one teacher must be a woman. In Orissa all jobs of primary teachers have been reserved for women.
- 4.7 School curricula should be imaginatively developed to stimulate creativity largely through play rather than overburdening children with formal or rote learning. Regional language

should normally be the medium of instruction.

- 4.8 School timings should be flexible and fixed to suit local conditions and the needs of the working girl and must be available within the walking distance of the child. A substantial increase is required in the number of schools for girls.
- 4.9 In addition to incentives like free textbooks, free supply of uniforms, award of attendance scholarships and mid-day meals, facilities such as proper school building, safe drinking water, and toilets, etc. need to be provided to encourage school enrolment and retention of girls especially girls from educationally deprived social groups and from hilly, tribal, desert and remote rural areas and urban slums.
- 4.10 Local talent must be developed in order to meet the need for recruiting women teachers at the primary and elementary levels especially in rural and tribal areas. In this endeavour national agencies like CAPART and CSWB, voluntary agencies, mahila mandals and local self-government agencies can make a significant contribution. They can also play a useful watchdog function to ensure that educational and other programmes are run efficiently and effectively.
- 4.11 There should be a reservation of 50 per cent posts for women teachers in elementary schools. Women teachers working in the rural areas should be provided suitable accommodation.
- 4.12 Multi-entry system for girls who cannot attend schools continuously should be adopted.
- 4.13 Wherever necessary, schools meant exclusively for girls may be set up. The recommended distance of 3 kilometres for locating a middle school is a handicap for many girls. To ensure participation of girls in middle schools, it is necessary to provide hostel facilities.
- 4.14 The Savitribai Phule Foster Parent Scheme of Maharashtra could be adopted in other States/ Union Territories to help girls of poorer families to at least complete primary school. Under the scheme, well to do persons and organizations are persuaded to adopt one or more out of school girls and contribute in cash or kind or both @Rs. 25/- per month for her education. The money can be spent on uniforms, stationery or anything else, needed by the girl or also partly used to alleviate the economic distress of the parents. The Zila Parishad, Block Education Officer and headmasters play a pivotal role in implementing the scheme, which is purely voluntary and if district level officers for coordination of programmes for women are appointed they could also actively take it up.
- 4.15 Condensed courses of education at elementary and middle school levels for girls must be started in all the rural areas and for weaker sections of the urban community.
- 4.16 Many girls in the 11-14 years age group would first have to be brought

into the primary stage through non-formal education. By devising alternative education approaches non-formal schooling and through like intelligent use of technology, the pace of middle school education can be accelerated. If retention upto 75 per cent is achieved upto class V, universal elementary education may be possible in some parts of the country by 2000 A.D. Other backward areas would have to be given much more attention in professional as well as financial terms to enable them even to universalize primary education for girls by 1995. The National Literacy Mission will need to address these issues on a priority basis.

- 4.17 Special efforts are necessary for bringing tribal children particularly, girls into the school system. Tribal dialects, extreme poverty, problems of commuting, rigidity of formal education and its irrelevance to the tribal culture and the tribals' distrust of the ways of the mainstream society, must be borne in mind in formulating strategies.
- 4.18 The educational forecasts, may look more achievable if the system is opened up for flexible non-formal education which 'the below average states' should be persuaded to adopt in a large measure. The existing educational infrastructure particularly, in tribal and rural areas should be made effective and responsible.
- 4.19 Non-formal education is an alternative to the formal system which has the potentiality of becoming the major programme of education for girls who

cannot attend school during normal school hours due to various reasons. The Central Government is already implementing a centrally sponsored scheme under which grants to the extent of 90 per cent are provided towards maintenance of non-formal education centres exclusively for girls in nine educationally backward states. This programme should be strengthened further and extended to other states where education of girls is lagging behind. It should at least cover all the pockets of low enrolment of girls and areas of high dropout rate. Besides literacy, it must also provide relevant information on skill development and inculcation of positive self-image among girls.

4.20 Secondary education for girls should entail:—

(i) A ten year course in general education learning and diversified higher secondary education which may be either terminal or lead to further professional preparation; and (ii) Diversified courses after Grade VIII in technical subjects viz., agricultural technology, health services, food production activities such as, dairy and poultry and non-traditional areas need to be untroubled. A legal literacy component is also recommended at this stage.

- 4.21 Diversified courses leading to occupational preparation should be of parallel duration to the general secondary courses. In addition, there should be a variety of short and long term, whole time, part-time and

apprentice courses. The trend of thinking is now to place emphasis on the last. Keeping in view the rapid modernization and advancement in technology for agriculture, there is an urgent need for skilled artisanship for promoting productive activities on the one hand, and a variety of learning programmes for adjustment of the rural society to socio-economic change, on the other. Efforts should be made to ensure that girls have every opportunity to enter into apprenticeship in areas that are non-conventional, and incentives be provided for the same. Further, at least 30 per cent seats should be reserved for girls in apprenticeship training courses on a non-transferable basis.

4.22 General and vocational training courses should be combined so that prospects of a career immediately on completion of schooling may attract girls from weaker sections. While designing the vocational courses, available occupational opportunities as well as the need to overcome market stereotypes should be kept in view.

4.23 Since secondary education has remained almost beyond the reach of weaker sections, liberal incentives and other facilities to release the girls from household chores appear to be essential. It would also help to locate the institutions in the areas of their habitation.

4.24 Multiple entry system should be introduced in the secondary classes. Part-time education facilities should also be made available.

4.25 Condensed courses should be organised in cooperation with local vocational training institutions to cover all rural areas and areas inhabited by weaker sections in urban areas. Such courses may be organized for small groups of girls, and combined with job training. Efforts should be made to cover at least 215 lakhs women in the age group 15-30 years under the condensed courses programme wherever possible the condensed courses of the CSWB should be expanded and strengthened. New programmes that are to be initiated must avoid duplication in the areas where the CSWB's programmes exist.

4.26 Correspondence courses and self study programme can be especially useful for girls desirous of continuing education but are unable to do so because of circumstances. Apart from imparting elementary education and knowledge about farming techniques, the curriculum for non student girls should include courses of training in occupational skills. Similar programmes should also be designed for girls in the urban areas.

4.27 The open school system should be expanded extending the facility to all the girls in rural and backward areas.

4.28 Science education for girls has been neglected so far. Secondary schools for girls must be helped to build good science programmes over the Eighth Five Year Plan. Special scholarships for girls opting for science courses need to be instituted at the secondary and higher education levels.

- 4.29 Special scholarships may also be offered to rural women, who opt for teachers' training, especially those who complete the condensed courses at the secondary stage.
- 4.30 There is a need to open more colleges and polytechnics for girls, especially in rural areas.
- 4.31 Incentives like scholarships, freeships, etc., should be provided to enable girls from rural areas to pursue higher education for girls belonging to weaker sections. In addition to freeships and scholarships bursaries should also be provided to meet their requirements for food and lodging.
- 4.32 Girls should be encouraged to enter professional courses. Reservation of seats for girls in such courses may be considered to level out the existing bias in access to certain professional streams.
- 4.33 Vocational counselling and guidance service should be organized exclusively in a more meaningful way to help girls in colleges and universities opt for suitable courses relevant to their talents and interests, and free of traditional bias.
- 4.34 Vocational and technical education for women, both formal and nonformal, should be a major feature of the programmes of rural universities. The women's wings of the universities could undertake large scale extension programmes in order to activate girls and women in the surrounding areas to take advantage of educational and occupational facilities of various types, particularly those leading to meaningful employment, essential for reducing women's marginalization.
- 4.35 In order to increase the representation of rural girls in higher education courses, 30 percent seats, may be reserved for girls to begin with.
- 4.36 All agencies involved with preparation of curricula prescription of textbooks and organization of educational processes will have to evince awareness towards women's issues. University/College Departments of Women's Studies, appropriate voluntary agencies, women's groups, etc. should be involved in giving a new perspective to the various issues of content and processes of education. Women's universities and women's centres in colleges need to take an active role in women's development and in influencing the attitudes of future generations.
- 4.37 Facilities for part-time self study and correspondence courses should be provided on a large scale to enable girls who are not in a position to join higher educational institutions on a regular basis, to continue their studies.
- 4.38 In addition to courses leading to degree/diploma, short courses in specific subjects through summer school sessions, and ad hoc programmes like seminars, workshops etc., should be organized for working women with a view to upgrading their knowledge and skills, not necessarily leading to degrees.

4.39 Integrated learning programmes for women are recommended which will not only lay emphasis on literacy but on empowering women through awareness building on social issues, bringing about attitudinal change, promoting skill training for employment, providing information on health care, nutrition and hygiene as well as on legal rights. Such programmes are beginning and must continue to be designed and structured so as to be relevant for the vast majority of rural women. The revised scheme linked to ICDS known as the 'Women's Integrated Learning for Life', should be introduced as an integral part of the non-formal education system.

4.40 Entrepreneurship development programmes should be organized separately for education of women in the age group 18-30 years, with a minimum of matriculation level of education. The objective of such training should be to (i) Make them aware of the various opportunities for self-employment; (ii) Motivate them to take up self-employment; (iii) Impart needed skills and training; (iv) Promote motivation for achievement among them; and (v) Create access to resources such as capital credit etc.

4.41 A large number of girls cannot participate in whole-day education programmes. Provision of non-formal and part-time programmes, with flexible school hours and sensitivity to the agricultural cycle are, of particular importance. In addition to the primary and upper primary stage, distance learning opportunities need to be provided at secondary and higher secondary level.

4.42 Adult education will have to be composed of three inter-related stands aimed at:

- (i) Continuous flow of new information especially to rural and tribal areas, particularly to inculcate positive attitudes towards women
- (ii) Continuous training of the people in the use of modern tools and methods of production and
- (iii) Acquisition of permanent reading and computation skills

Following from the above, three types of programmes may be offered to the learner:

- (i) Information and literacy
- (ii) Information and training in new technology and literacy
- (iii) Information and training in new technology with or without literacy. Continuous information flows relating to human affairs, gender relations and the use of science and technology for betterment of life would be the common factor in all the three programmes.

4.43 The growing availability of communication media should be directed towards keeping up information flows and portraying positive images of women in non-conventional roles. Audio-visual materials, combined with non-formal training arrangements, could impart to various population groups the kind of instruction they need in the use of new technologies. Involvement of mass media in motivating women to attend literacy classes is most essential.

4.44 Rapid strides in the development of technologies and tools for the reduction in women's drudgery and easy access to work places, water and fuel supply, child care, health services and population control can contribute significantly to the success of learning programmes for women. Women's literacy programmes would succeed better if they centre around women's concerns and also provide opportunities of recreation and sharing of experiences.

4.45 District plans should be prepared keeping in view literacy requirements of the learners, identifying agencies which can take up such programmes in districts.

4.46 All women working in industries or employed elsewhere should be made literate by the employers by allotting time from the working hours for their education. Place of teaching, teachers and teaching material should be arranged by them. Necessary legislation to this effect may be enacted.

4.47 At least 50 per cent seats in pre-service courses in all teachers training institutions should be reserved for women. Spatial planning to ensure that women from rural areas are selected as teachers is essential.

4.48 Provision of composite teacher training courses for women who have had insufficient education to improve their educational qualifications along with their training, should be made.

4.49 The existing Integrated Rural Development programme, National Rural Employment Programme, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, Training of Youth in Self-Employment Pro-

gramme, Integrated Child Development Programme etc. should have a component of literacy for their women beneficiaries. Training should be provided to the functionaries of various development departments by the Directorate of Education in the States.

4.50 The State Resources Centres should produce suitable learning material for women on a priority basis. Literature for neo-literates should be suitably devised by experts, keeping in view the needs of different groups of learners.

4.51 Decentralisation is the key to the successful application of the strategies outlined above. In this decentralised approach, the village cluster or the block level is seen as most appropriate for the delivery of programmes. It is, therefore, necessary that the block is allocated a flexible budget so as to make funds available to village clusters/villages for innovative educational activities and for equalisation of educational opportunity.

4.52 An overall coordination of health, welfare and educational inputs would be most desirable. This would entail (a) Convergent policies in these sectors; (b) Coordination of delivery mechanisms, and (c) Pooling of allocations.

4.53 The strategies spelt out in the National Policy of Education, 1986, the Programme of Action for its implementation and the National Literacy Mission and the successful achievement of the goals imposed in these documents, would be important for improvement in the status of women.

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

Infancy & Early Childhood

5.1 Using amniocentesis for sex determination tests should be banned as in Maharashtra. Practitioners indulging in and abetting such acts should be punished severely and their medical licenses should be revoked.

5.2 Incentives should be considered to encourage parents to have female children. A couple who opts to limit their family to one female child may be given a regular monthly cash subsidy to attend to the girl child's needs. The amount must be given to the family over a period of time and not in a lumpsum, as this might result in misuse of the female child as an instrument for getting easy money and later to neglect of the child.

5.3 Infants' and small children's growth and development should be monitored by recording their weights and heights at regular intervals. Proper corrective interventions should be made wherever necessary.

5.4 Universal immunization should be enforced to encompass all children.

5.5 Oral rehydration therapy (ORT) should be widely disseminated. ORT salts in packed form should be made available at a large scale in order to reduce the mortality from diarrheal diseases.

5.6 The ICDS should be strengthened and priority access should be provided to the girl child. Higher participation of women would also result from expansion of the programme.

5.7 Efforts should be made to bring a qualitative change in the attitudes against girl children. Media should be used for this purpose aiming to get the girl child to be accepted in the family and the society as an equal to the male child.

5.8 Focus is needed on the adolescent girl (12-18 years), so that she attains her maximum physical and mental capacities. It is necessary to provide alternative options to early marriage. This can be ensured by a mix of education and employment opportunities, and enforcement of the law on minimum age of marriage. (18 years). The younger girl child needs to utilize health and education programmes more fully. It has been proposed that the ICDS will also address this issue in specific areas.

5.9 Adequate nutrition should be ensured for adolescent girls during the pre-puberty and pubertal growth phase to ensure 'catch up' on physical development by providing supplements to deprived groups.

5.10 Health and nutrition education should be promoted to ensure that preventive and promotive measures are adopted. The necessity of safe water, sanitation and personal hygiene also should be advocated.

5.11 Immunization against tetanus and rubella should be introduced for this age group.

5.12 Linkages with basic health care must be developed at the village level in view of the special problems of mobility faced by young girls.

5.13 A massive communication campaign to create widespread awareness of the law prohibiting the marriage of the girl before 18 years and boys before 21 years and generate consciousness on the severe health implications in children and women of such early marriages must be launched.

5.14 The aim should be to implement the present legal minimum age of marriage effectively by creating a social consciousness for the desirability of marriage for girls only after 20 and for boys at 25. Preferential employment for unmarried males and females and priority in other development schemes for such youth, need to be seriously examined.

5.15 The comprehensive school health scheme which is being formulated, should be speedily implemented. Special efforts must be made for the health services to reach girls of the school-going age who are out of school. Each child should be examined and screened at least three times—at primary school entry, before leaving primary school and at completion of high school. Similarly, a girl child out of school should be examined and screened three times—at around 6, 10 and 15 years of age. Screening kits and medicines should be made available. School teachers and non-formal education functionaries should be trained in the required areas of health care. The health programme for school and non-formal education systems should be integrally linked with the general health services.

5.16 It is necessary to impart information about reproductive processes, ways to prevent conception, need for spacing between children, optimum age of child bearing, necessary care for pregnant women and lactating mothers and small family norm etc.

This may be introduced as a part of the regular curriculum in school, colleges and universities. For girls/boys who are not in school, anganwadi workers/female CHWs may impart this knowledge.

5.17 To improve women's health status, there is no doubt that the general health services have to be made to respond to women's specific problems. A strategy for improving the health of women in the reproductive age group would be to reduce the risk of death and illness associated with pregnancy as well as to reduce the exposure to pregnancy itself. Comprehensive minimal care during pregnancy, childbirth and thereafter, steps to ameliorate malnutrition as well as decrease the workload of women, and improved access to health services, particularly family planning services, should be the salient instruments for improving the health of women.

5.18 Since women are severely restricted in their mobility, basic health care services must be made available to them as close as possible to their homes. Therefore, resources should be allocated as a priority to health services at the village, as well as at the first level of referral. The services would be provided by the female health workers, supported by the functionaries and the community from the village, as well as supervisory echelons within the health sector. Measures should be taken to reduce the incidence of low birth weight babies.

5.19 A minimum package of services should be available for pregnant women at village level. This should include at least

—Facilities for early detection of pregnancy, with low-cost pregnancy detection kits,

- Antenatal registration
- Minimum of three antenatal check-ups in the second and third trimester
- Screening of high-risk cases
- Anaemia prophylaxis with iron and folic acid tablets;
- Tetanus toxoid coverage;
- Prophylaxis against malaria in high endemic areas;
- Advocacy of adequate rest;
- Health and nutrition education;
- Priority attention to locally endemic diseases affecting women; and
- Adequate safe drugs for her illness.

5.20 ANMs should be trained to assess pelvic proportions of pregnant women to identify the high risk cases and refer them to competent institutions. This will help in saving women from maternal deaths and also to reduce the incidence of still births.

5.21 The emphasis will have to be on providing better care to the pregnant woman in her home, as well as to ensure that adequate facilities are available at the first level of referral to deal with obstetric emergencies such as toximias, sepsis, obstructed labour and haemorrhage. In order to improve village level care during childbirth, the following are suggested:

- Continuous training, supervision and support for better mid-wifery practices to the TBA and female health workers;
- Provision of sterile delivery kits to the TBA, health workers and even to mothers
- Stocking adequate drugs and supplies with the health workers, and providing a restricted number to the TBA; and

- Pre-arranged transport (or reimbursement of transport costs) for any emergency, when a woman has been registered for ante-natal care.

5.22 Post-natal services should be available as close to the homes of mothers as possible. In rural areas in several parts of India, women do not leave their homes for 40 days after delivery. Post-natal care should include:

- A minimum of three contacts with the mother by the TBA and/or female health worker within the first 10 days after child birth
- One massive dose of vitamin A within one month after delivery to all mothers*
- Iron and folic acid for 50 per cent of mothers
- Adequate drugs to deal with puerperal sepsis
- Education for the mother's nutrition and contraception as well as for infant feeding and health care, particularly immunization.

Women's Health Care

5.23 The health of women who are not pregnant or nursing, is an area which has received inadequate attention so far. Interventions thus made can cause a significant difference to women's health status not only between pregnancies, but also improve the outcome of future pregnancies. Moreover, the woman's right to health care as an individual must be promoted.

5.24 Women with chronic or serious illnesses, such as tuberculosis, leprosy, viral hepatitis, anaemia, sexually transmitted dis-

* Recommended also by WHO, in "Strategies for the Prevention of Blindness in National Programmes. A Primary Health Care Approach" 1984.

cases, etc; should be promptly treated and advised to postpone their pregnancy for a suitable safe period.

5.25 High priority should be given to women for treatment/control of all endemic diseases, specially those which have a harmful effect on the next generation (for example, goitre, sexually transmitted diseases, etc.).

5.26 Doctors of the Primary Health Centres be given in-service training to handle the cases of possessive syndrome and neurosis. Mass education programme be taken up to change the negative attitudes prevalent against mental illness.

5.27 Nutritious foods produced in the villages should be primarily utilized to cater to the nutrition needs of the rural poor. Only the surplus should be allowed for export to urban areas. A wide spread public distribution system would be essential to make basic foods available at affordable costs.

5.28 Emphasis should be placed on Science and Technology research pertaining to sex linked diseases, occupational hazards, and indigenous methods of family planning as affecting women. Undergraduate level programs should introduce courses relevant to women i.e.:

- (i) Work physiology (ergonomics) as related to health, and occupational hazards.
- (ii) Basic tenets of genetics, related to family studies, genetic disorders and environmental effects.
- (iii) At the post-graduate level and above, research needs to be conducted on ergonomic abnormalities in women such as spinal strain after carrying loads. Also,

work is needed on sex-linked, genetic disorders like muscular dystrophy and haemophilia, where women are the carriers.

5.29 More Primary Health Centres should be set up in the rural areas to achieve the target of having one Primary Health Centre for each 30,000 population as recommended by the Bhore Committee in 1946.

5.30 The timings of the dispensaries and hospitals should be fixed in a way which would be convenient to working women.

5.31 There should be a 24 hours creche facility for women patients with children in every hospital and PHC.

5.32 There is a need for a humane Drug Policy and check on the pharmaceutical industry that at present operates on the profit principle like any other industry.

5.33 It is necessary to provide safety equipment including powerful exhausts to remove harmful dust from the work environment and personal protective equipment like masks, feet protectors, eye glasses, ear muffs and gloves and strong contraceptions for the safety of women workers.

5.34 There should be Refreshers/Orientation courses for the doctors on the subjects of women's work and health.

Family Welfare

5.35 Family planning policy should be such that it will help women have greater control over their bodies and enable them to make conscious choices on having or not hav-

ing children and deciding the number of children they want.

5.36 Injectable contraceptives as well as other contraceptives banned in developed countries should not be permitted in the country.

5.37 More research needs to be carried out to develop contraceptives that can be used by men and they should be propagated more widely.

5.38 Family Planning counselling needs to involve married and older women, selected from local surroundings for effective transmission of the concept and its urgency.

5.39 Laproscopic operations should be followed up.

5.40 Disseminating information about

temporary methods of spacing should be accorded high priority.

5.41 Male sterilizations (vasectomies) need to be encouraged.

5.42 Recommended measures in the non-health sectors that critically influence health are as follows:

- Drinking water supply is a prime essential;
- Fuel should be made available within easy reach to all;
- Progressively more latrines should be made available, and their use encouraged by special education efforts aimed at women;
- Energy-saving devices for household work should be actively promoted for conserving women's energy.

LEGISLATION

- 6.1 Constitutional guarantees and various laws have, upto a point provided but have not entirely extended equality and justice to women. To change this situation, law drafting technologies, and enforcement mechanisms including police, judiciary and other components need to be reviewed, sensitized and strengthened. There is also the need to create a multidisciplinary group to monitor draft legislation, judicial decisions and other procedural matters affecting women at Central and State levels.
- 6.2 State Governments and the Department of Public Grievances in the Government of India should set up special cells for the enforcement of laws to ensure women's rights and protection. A special division under a Commissioner for women's rights may be created in the nodal department to liaise with such special cells.
- 6.3 Women's guidance centres in every district should be organized by voluntary organisations with qualified social workers, lawyers, doctors and family counsellors. Free legal aid services should be initiated wherever possible.
- 6.4 Larger numbers of women judges must be appointed to the judiciary and more so in the family courts.
- 6.5 A large number of women police stations or women's cells in police stations should be set up and wider recruitment of women police officers made, women constabulary etc. The approach of these cells should be redressal of grievances on the merit of each case and not merely 'return to the family approach'.
- 6.6 Police stations should maintain a list of social workers to assist in cases related to women. Identity cards may be issued to such persons.
- 6.7 Since the Court culture so far has, by and large, been technical rather than imbued by concern for women or societal good (except in the case of certain landmark judgments), a massive programme for educating women on their legal rights as well as to create awareness, understanding and sensitivity in the personnel concerned with the investigation and judicial process needs to be undertaken. Para-legal training programmes for social workers, voluntary agencies are also essential. This may be taken up by the proposed Resource Centre.
- 6.8 A Uniform Civil Code for all citizens should be adopted by the year 2000 A.D.
- 6.9 Both spouses should have joint title to all property acquired by either spouse during the subsistence of a marriage and they should hold such properties as tenants in common, in equal shares. But properties acquired by either

spouse by means of gift or testamentary or interstate succession, should be excluded from this principle.

- 6.10 It should be mandatory by law that daughters/widows have equal share in the properties of their parents/husband and the sons and daughters should have an equal share in property. The right by birth of the son as coparcener should be abolished and all heirs should be treated as equal as in the case of self acquired property of the father.
- 6.11. Further, it should be provided that no one shall have the right to will away more than 25 per cent of the property. The Hindu Succession Act or similar Acts should be amended to provide that no partition of a dwelling house should be affected without the consent in writing of the widow and widowed daughter-in-law if any, and they shall have right of residence in the dwelling house.
- 6.12 Demand for dowry should be made a ground for divorce.
- 6.13 Steps to ensure the legal validity of a dying declaration in cases of suspected murder of a woman are needed.
- 6.14 Legal measures to deter husband and inlaws from falsely certifying a woman as a lunatic and placing her in an asylum should be initiated.
- 6.15 State protection shall be offered by law to women battered in their own homes and employers given authority to pay, at least the salary of the

employee in cases of drunkenness, negligence of family etc.

- 6.16 All matrimonial suits against women should be filed in the district courts where women are residing. In the meanwhile, family courts scheme should be extended to all States.

Maintenance etc.

- 6.17 Necessary amendments in procedure must be brought about for maintenance to be paid through courts or arrangements made by the courts to ensure timely and correct payment.
- 6.18 The minimum amount of maintenance should be calculated on the basis of basic needs of the woman and on the basis of the earnings of the spouse.
- 6.19 Government/employers should have the power to order maintenance to aggrieved wives/dependents of employees on an application by the woman and following an enquiry, the amount may be paid directly to the wife/dependents.
- 6.20 In case of irretrievable breakdown of marriage for causes other than enumerated, divorce should be granted with a provision for maintenance for the wife (No fault divorce).
- 6.21 Adultery should not be a penal offence but a ground for divorce.
- 6.22 In the case of an unmarried man and woman residing together irrespective of their religion and claiming mar-

riage, marriage should be presumed for all purposes including the rights of children.

6.23 Laws should ensure women's rights to motherhood and maternity benefits, irrespective of their marital status.

6.24. The exclusion of the wife and dependents from Provident Fund benefits should be prohibited.

6.25 A uniform central legislation along the lines of the Maharashtra Regulation of Use of Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1988 is called for.

6.26. Religion should not be made a criterion for adoption of children. A secular act to enable all to adopt without reference to religion is desirable.

6.27. State Governments should pay special attention to the improvement of protective homes and corrective institutions. Social workers should be actively involved as visitors.

6.28 The available services of counselling, legal help, homes etc. should be widely published through the mass media, so that all women in crisis are made aware of their availability.

Rules and Procedures

6.29 Furnishing the name of the father should not be insisted upon by schools, institutions and banks. If identification is necessary, either parent's name should be acceptable.

Mothers should have equal rights to operate minor children's accounts.

Labour:

6.30 Criteria for fixation and revision of minimum wages should be evolved without impinging on the right of parties to negotiate wage agreements.

6.31 Legal safeguards/facilities available under various existing laws, such as the Minimum Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act, Employees State Insurance Act, Provident Fund Act, and Maternity Benefits Act are not extended to the unorganised sectors. **Particular attention must be paid to providing decent working and living conditions to home-based and piece-rate workers.** It should be examined to what extent and how these can be extended to these sectors. In this context, the recommendations of the National Commission on Self Employed Women may be studied.

6.32 Trade unions and other organisations should undertake the responsibility of developing consciousness among women workers about these legislative provisions. Legal aid centres, lok adalats should also help workers in sorting out their problems in this and other contexts.

6.33 Efforts should be made to bring together the dispersed and unorganised sections of the labour force into an organised entity so as to provide them with necessary bargaining strength. The trade unions have a critical role in this regard.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND DECISION MAKING

7.1 It has been observed through various studies, that education of citizens not only builds up knowledge and information but also helps the citizen understand the complexities of the political process. It is, therefore, recommended that the programme of free universal education upto the age of 14 should be vigorously implemented. Further, serious attention needs to be paid to the content of education. The courses of studies and the text books should inculcate values of gender equality, self-respect, courage, independence etc., which would help develop the personalities of women.

7.2 In order that women are able to participate fully, it is necessary to spread legal literacy not only among the general community, but also among elected representatives. Modules can be included in existing non-formal educational programmes for this purpose.

7.3 The working of international events, the inter-relationship of various systems of society, implications of political actions and policies, economic and other such issues need to be highlighted to women.

7.4 Men and women in positions of power should be sensitized to women's issues.

7.5 Government should effectively secure participation of women in decision making processes at National, State and local levels. This would imply use of special measures for recruitment of women candidates:

* More women need to be inducted in min-

istries at the centre and in state governments and they must be allowed to function in areas suitable to their capacities and not be restricted to 'soft' sectors.

* The Planning Commission and all ministries and government departments must have a Women's Cell.

* All government delegations to international meetings must include at least one or more women members.

* Wherever a Committee or Commission is set up by Government for any purpose, 30 per cent of its representation must be of women.

* The Union and all State level Public Service Commissions must have women representatives.

* The Planning Commission and State Planning Boards must have adequate representation of women.

* 50 per cent of all grassroots functionaries must be women. To facilitate its implementation, relaxation of minimum educational qualifications is needed, which can be supplemented by short training courses for women.

* Reservation should be made of 30 per cent seats at panchayat to zilla parishad level and local municipal bodies for women. Wherever possible, higher representation of dalits/tribals, women of weaker sections should be ensured.

* 30 per cent of executive heads of all

bodies from village panchayat to district level and a certain percentage of chief executives of panchayati raj bodies at lower, middle and higher levels must be reserved for women.

* A more effective step would be to declare a certain percentage of constituencies in the lower tier of panchayati raj as exclusively women's constituencies and all executive positions in a certain number of territorial jurisdictions reserved for women candidates.

7.6 All women members of panchayats and other executive bodies must be trained and empowered to exercise their authority. Both men and women members must be sensitized to women's issues. A committee should be formed to look into the training needs of women panchayat members and to help in designing modules separate allocations may be made for this purpose. Particular attention must be paid to the development of interpersonal communication skills amongst the trainees/community leaders.

7.7 Conscious efforts are needed to elicit participation of women through establishing links between the elected representatives and the development functionaries as being experimented in Rajasthan through the Women's Development Programmes (WDP). The whole experiment is based on a decentralized administrative structure. Plans of action should be formulated through frequent meetings and discussions. Further the prime need is to see that the representatives have to be made answerable to the electorate. WDPs in other States must also be linked with panchayat/local functionaries for more effective participation of women in development.

7.8 Standing Advisory Committee at Cen-

tral, State, District, Block and wherever possible at village level should be formed consisting of representatives of important women's organizations.

7.9 Executive bodies of trade unions must include more women.

7.10 One of the greatest hurdles in contesting elections is the exorbitant expenditure. This factor not only makes it difficult for women, who have very limited independent resources to participate, but completely eliminates women in the poverty sector from entering the arena. This situation leads to prominence of upper castes, upper classes, urban women in the political sphere. To counteract this inequitous situation, serious steps must be taken to reduce election expenditure. Further, enormous amounts needed for election, lead to corruption and various nefarious practices. If steps are taken to decentralize the political machinery, then unnecessary expenditure in reaching out to a very large electorate could be avoided.

7.11 A major step needed to facilitate women's participation both in formal and informal political processes is provision of support services. In all kinds of public participation as well as in seeking opportunities for self-development, the primary responsibilities of women for looking after home and children always come in the way. Unless arrangements are made for child care and other domestic responsibilities, sustained participation of women in the public sphere is not possible without the integration of men in the private sphere. This not only means that men share the familial responsibilities but a new value needs to be given to this joint sharing both in public and private spheres which

would ultimately lead to a better quality of life.

7.12 In a democracy, political parties have a very significant role to play. The parties should take such measures which would facilitate participation of women. All political parties must be urged to ensure that at least 30 per cent of the candidates fielded for election are women till such time as women can stake their claim to nomination as equals. It should be examined if the Election Commission can be empowered to enforce this.

7.13 It is the bounded duty of political parties to provide political education to the people. They should organize study circles in which not only political understanding of the complex situations is provided, but controversial issues having implications on gender relations is also analysed.

7.14 Women members of the political groups should be vigilant about their rights and contributions. Whenever sexist attitudes are exhibited or sex discrimination is practised, women members should build up solidarity and oppose such practices. They should also press for implementing whatever has been promised to women; whether the question is of allocation of seats or of providing a creche or taking a stand in Parliament.

7.15 In generating a participatory political system, the role of voluntary organizations or non-governmental organizations is very crucial. There is evidence that when NGOs are active and play the role of pressure groups, the representatives also become alert. Through raising the awareness of the com-

munity, NGOs can help in fielding candidates who are responsible to the people. They can focus the attention of the people on crucial issues facing women and elect members who understand those issues and are working towards it. Organizations and Grassroots women's groups have in fact effectively drawn the attention of the government to atrocities perpetrated on women, to custodial rape, to harassments for dowry, to plight of the women in the unorganized sector, and so on. NGOs can also provide training for future women leaders. They can organize legal literacy programmes and study circles for political education as well as develop participatory methods of working, and thus serve as a practical training centre for effective political participation by women. They should not adopt a beneficiary or 'welfare' approach while working with their target groups. Even if a few NGOs play their role adequately and with courage, a new climate of commitment and responsibility could be generated.

7.16 NGOs should work as pressure groups or political action groups to press for the fulfilment of promises. They should also provide support to the elected women representatives, when they are presenting women's cases in the deliberative bodies. In short, there should be a very strong link between women representatives and those organizations working with the community.

7.17 Media should play a productive role in enhancing women's participation. It should give wider coverage to various activities and measures taken by women, and should highlight the problems of women. In order to project women's issues and achievements, perhaps mainstream media may not be adequate and, therefore, it is necessary to

develop an alternate media system that could portray women's struggles and experiences, help generate values which encourage gender equality and justice, and build up a positive image of women participating in public life.

7.18 For politicization of women, network-

ing and creation of pressure groups representing genuine issues and felt needs are essential.

7.19 A massive awareness campaign aimed at eliciting the support of electors (both male and female) around causes will have to be undertaken.

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

- 8.1 In order to change the attitudes towards women and girls and raise the social consciousness of the country, a conscious strategic change is required in national media and communication efforts.
- 8.2 Setting up of an Expert Group on women's issues for radio, television and other Government media, including print media is urged. This group will work towards operationalizing a Communication Policy for Women particularly, on drawing up a framework on roles/images projected of women. They should also examine media strategies for combating revivalism and obscuritism that denies women constitutional equality. The group may also consider the possibility of a national voluntary code to govern the projection of women in advertisements.
- 8.3 The communication policy for women and girls needs constant monitoring and reappraisal as the question of communication and image portrayal of women and girls is a sensitive and complex one. For this purpose, a 'Media Advisory Committee' consisting of eminent social workers, writers, social scientists and media practitioners may be constituted. The committee besides operationalizing the communication policy will keep constant vigil on media contents and contents of other social communications. The committee may also approach research organizations and individuals to undertake relevant studies and analysis including feedback about the new media inputs.
- 8.4 A balance must be struck between the nation building and revenue earning potential of at least TV and Radio services. The proposal to inject 'Vividh Bharati' channels with public interest education and information packages must be pursued in a professional manner, with high quality content and entertainment value that will compete with the best commercial standards. It is recommended that serious consideration be given to scrutinization of the Chitrahaar and Chitramala programmes and their content must be firmly vetted.
- 8.5 Media personnel, including originators of information in all media forms including AIR, Doordarshan, Print Media etc. must be sensitized to women's issues particularly to the projection of positive images of women. More sensitized women need to be inducted for producing information programmes, films etc. in the national media. Positive role models of women as cultivators, producers, managers, etc. must be forcefully projected.
- 8.6 A scrutiny of all existing Censor Board rules regarding indecent representation of women in the media must be made and re-defined. Particular attention must be paid to the distinction between 'pornography' and 'obscenity'. Women could comprise at least half

the membership of all Censor Boards and media monitoring cells, and all persons selected for membership should have awareness of the issue involved.

- 8.7 Alternative media forms such as folk theatre, puppetry, etc. need to be widely encouraged, especially where existing electronic and print media have no/ or limited outreach. Already as suggested by the National Commission on self-employed women, fairs/shibir-s/healthcamps/jathas can also be organized to reach poor women.
- 8.8 The lyrics of songs broadcast on the radio and scripts of radio plays must be scrutinized. The existing guidelines of AIR should be consciously applied and reviewed where necessary. It is recommended that the Government's media channels should not be used to perpetuate counter-productive messages couched in these entertainment items. Special programming on women on specific subjects should not stop but should be complemented with a planned increase in family programmes. Suitable timings for putting these across on TV and radio should be determined through field studies.
- 8.9 Initiatives for quality control must be taken in respect of commercial and popular films and serials. Guidelines should be developed for their evaluation. A short discussion should precede the screening of films which endorse traditional stereotypes. Advertisements which are either degrading to women or endorse the stereotypes should be banned.
- 8.10 Text books in use in the formal and non-formal education system and at other levels of education and training should be carefully assessed for removing negative images and references to women.
- 8.11 Research and analysis should be undertaken to assess the ways in which the various communication channels reach and affect women and girls.
- 8.12 The outreach of different media by age, sex and occupation should be assessed.
- 8.13 Reasons for the very low exposure of women to mass-media must be identified.
- 8.14 Reaction of the target group must be much more extensively researched and analysed. Feed-back, not only be about communication programmes and activities, feedback monitoring studies should accompany the transmission of communication programmes in all media channels. The competing or complementary influence of other social and commercial media should also be closely watched and assessed.
- 8.15 Feedback information should be actively encouraged in universities and other research institutions. Besides, it should be a compulsory component of the syllabi of mass communication and journalism training institutions.

VOLUNTARY ACTION

9.1 The increase in the number, expansion and diversification of activities of the voluntary agencies has not necessarily equalized the disparities between them. There are not only regional imbalances in the growth of the voluntary sector but within a particular state, the growth of this sector has not been even. It is also well known that a majority of voluntary agencies are urban based and that relatively few have taken up the issues of women. It is recommended that the focus of voluntary agencies move from urban to rural areas, as the situation of rural women warrants immediate support. There is also need for the Government to encourage voluntary action for the development of women by provision of adequate financial and structural support.

9.2 There is an urgent need to improve the effectiveness of voluntary action. Improvement will have to be brought about both in the organizational structures as also in the quality of services offered. Voluntary workers need to be professionals, equipped with appropriate skills for managing women's projects and sensitivity towards women's issues. National and State level institutions and training organizations should provide adequate facilities for research and training relating to women's issues. They should take up activities guided by the felt needs of women and those that can make a qualitative difference to women's lives, rather than be confined to traditional areas of support and action. Their work should be related to contemporary issues and thinking on women. As a caution, they should resist the temptation of initiating more work than they can effectively manage.

9.3 Voluntary action should be directed particularly towards preventive rather than purely curative measures. Efforts of voluntary agencies should also be geared towards generating self-reliance rather than to create dependencies. To improve their capabilities in planning and implementation of programmes, voluntary agencies are in need of expertise and technical guidance as much as financial assistance. Unfortunately, in the existing system of grants-in-aid, financial assistance to them assumes over-riding importance vis-a-vis other forms of assistance such as technical guidance in the area of programme planning, project formulation, financial planning, administration, monitoring and evaluation. The proposed Resource Centre at the national level could also facilitate in the training needs of functionaries and in providing necessary managerial and technical assistance to voluntary agencies.

9.4 The process of grant-seeking and receiving is considered by a number of voluntary agencies as a frustrating experience. There is an urgent need to review the working of the grants-in-aid system. Wherever needed, modifications should be introduced to ensure that rules are simplified, grants released on time and the amount provided is commensurate and proportionate to the needs of a particular programme. While a system of accountability for Government funds is unavoidable, it need not be painful. Further, it should be ensured that financial assistance from the Government does not seriously affect the basic character of voluntarism, its flexibility and innovativeness.

9.5 A number of programmes implemented by conventional voluntary agencies have emphasized imparting skills to improve the efficiency of women as house-wives and mothers, and or to improve their earning capacities. Voluntary agencies have, tended to neglect the participative potential of women in the development process as well as conscientizing women on their rights and roles. There is the need for such efforts that could increase the awareness of women and improve their participation as equal citizens in national development. Further, voluntary agencies should play a surveillance role and observe, explore and analyse the extent to which social legislations implemented for women have actually benefitted them. They should also act as pressure groups to better enforcement of laws for women.

9.6 At present, there is no proper mechanism of coordination among different voluntary agencies working for the development of women. An effective mechanism for coordination between the government and the voluntary agencies is also to be ensured. CAPART and CSWB are appropriately situated to make efforts for more effective coordination and implementation of various programmes for women through voluntary organizations. For them to perform this role effectively, there should be a proper representation of grass roots women's organizations in CAPART and CSWB, that can serve as pressure groups. There is also the need for a continuous flow of information from government to voluntary agencies and vice-versa through such mechanisms as a clearinghouse for information.

9.7 A focal point is desirable in the rural areas to encourage women's voluntary activities. Mahila mandals and a women's groups at the village or community level should be

organized or revived and encouraged to register and function as women's institutions for undertaking socio-economic programmes. These institutions should be effectively linked with the various development and service agencies, offering training facilities for income generations as well as enhanced awareness among women. This linkage will enable women to absorb institutional finance for the development of viable economic activities. Particular attention will need to be given to the training of the mahila mandal functionaries and women's group organizers and provide them an orientation to development perspective rather than purely welfare approaches.

9.8 The CSWB which has been the coordinating agency for voluntary action for women and children, must respond to the new thrust of Government policy meant for women and recast its own programmes.

9.9 Greater coordination and cooperation among NGOs is called for to avoid duplication of services. Greater funding for net working among N.G.O's must be provided. This will ensure more efficient utilization of funds and greater coverage of programmes, Government support to voluntary agencies for providing assistance to women in distress, including the running of crisis centres and short stay homes must be expanded. Para legal training must be an integral part of such efforts.

9.10 Voluntary agencies must be increasingly involved in the provision of employment and supportive services for women.

9.11 The National Literacy Mission must involve women's organisations in a big way.

9.12. The voluntary sector should increas-

ingly be involved to act as a catalyst/intermediary in organising women for collective action.

9.13 There is the need to document the success stories of major N.G.O's in India and learn from their success and failures. Further, it is necessary to analyse the cost-benefit of N.G.O. projects versus governmental projects i.e. both economic and social costs. It would also be critical to total the overall number of women reached by N.G.O's in India. The areas of activities and fields of success would also highlight their strengths and limitations.

9.14 In order to ensure that the security and integrity of the nation are preserved, there is a need to adopt suitable policies to ensure that voluntary agencies abide by the rules governing the receipt and utilisation of foreign grants and submit audited accounts, returns and reports periodically.

9.15 Identity cards should be issued to workers of voluntary agencies who are dealing with cases of atrocities against women, as is already being done in some districts.

9.16 In order to have sufficient infrastructure and facilities, there is need to mobilize more resources for voluntary agencies who are engaged in welfare and development of women.

9.17 There is a need to decentralise the planning process to stimulate local people's participation in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development projects. A suitable mechanism should be evolved to involve voluntary agencies and other people's institutions at various stages of developmental programmes/projects. Voluntary agencies should further ensure the participation of poor women in the development process.

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

Declaration of Mexico Plans of Action. World Conference of the International Women's Year, 19 June—2 July, 1975. United Nations, December, 1975.

In order to eliminate all obstacles that stand in the way of enjoyment by women of equal status with men, the Mexico plans of Action decided to promulgate 30 principles on the equality of women and their contribution to national development and international peace. For implementation purposes, the objectives of the Mexico Plans of Action were divided into two categories—the World Plan of Action and the Regional Plans of Action. The main purpose was to stimulate national, international and regional action to solve the problems of underdevelopment and of the socio-economic structure which place women in an inferior position.

The major highlights of the Mexico Plans of Action were the 14 minimum objectives to be achieved by member countries by the end of the first five year period (1975-1980) of the UN decade for Women. These objectives were:

1. Marked increase in literacy and civic education of women, especially rural areas;
2. The extension of co-educational, technical and vocational training in basic skills to women and men in the industrial and agricultural sectors;
3. Equal access at every level of education, compulsory primary school education and the measures necessary to prevent school drop-outs;
4. Increased employment opportunities for women, reduction of unemployment and increased efforts to eliminate discrimination in the terms and conditions of employment;
5. The establishment and increase in the infrastructural services, required in both rural and urban areas;
6. The enactment of legislation on voting and eligibility for election on equal terms with men, equal opportunity and conditions of employment including remuneration, and on equality in legal capacity and the exercise thereof;
7. Encouragement of a greater participation of women in policy making positions at the local, national and international levels;
8. Increased provision for comprehensive measures for health education and services, sanitation, nutrition, family education, family planning and other welfare services;
9. Provision for parity in the exercise of civil, social and political rights such as those pertaining to marriage, citizenship and commerce;
10. Recognition of the economic value of women's work in the home, in domestic food production and marketing of voluntary activities not remunerated;
11. The direction of formal, non-formal and life-long education towards the re-evaluation of the men and women, in order to ensure their full realization as individuals in the families and in society;
12. The promotion of women's organizations as an interim measure within workers' organizations and educational, economic and professional institutions;
13. The development of modern rural technology, cottage industry, pre-school day centres, time-and-energy-saving devices so as to help reduce the heavy work load of women, particularly those living in rural sectors and for the urban poor and thus facilitate the full participation of

women in community, national and international affairs:

14. The establishment of interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery within the Government for accelerating the achievement of equal opportunities for women and their full integration into national life.

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women.
United Nations 1975

The 30 article Convention calls for equal rights for women, regardless of their marital status, in all fields—political, economic, social, cultural and civil. It calls for national legislation to ban discrimination; recommends temporary special measure to speed equality between men and women; and action to modify social and cultural patterns that perpetuate discrimination.

Other measures provide for equal rights for women in political and public life; equal access to education and same choice of curricula; nondiscrimination in employment and pay; and guarantees of job security in the event of marriage and maternity. The convention underlines the equal responsibilities of men and women in the context of family life. It also stresses the social services needed—especially child care facilities, for combining family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women (CEDAW), monitors progress made in implementation of the Convention.

By 31 May 1987, 93 countries had consented to be bound by the provisions of the Convention, either through ratification or accession. India has signed the convention but has not ratified it.

Programme of Action for the Second Half of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. World Conference, Copenhagen, 14-30 July 1980, Government of India, Ministry of Social Welfare, Women's Welfare and Development Bureau, New Delhi.

The General Assembly resolution of 1975 decided that in 1980, at the mid-point of the Decade, a world conference of the UN Decade for Women would be convened. The purposes were two fold: (i) to review and evaluate progress made by member countries in implementing the recommendations of the World Conference of the International Women's Year held in 1975, and (ii) to readjust

programmes for the second half of the Decade in the light of new data and research. This report, prepared by the Government of India, consists of three parts.

Part one outlines the historical background and conceptual framework of the Programme of Action. Part two consists of Programme of Action at the National level. These include national strategies for accelerating the full participation of women in economic and social development; objectives and priority areas for action taken in connection with the subtheme of the world conference. Part three consists of the Programmes of Action at the International and Regional Levels.

Some priority areas requiring special attention were identified. There included food production, problems of rural women, provision of child care services, problems of migrant women, unemployed women, young women and women who alone are responsible for their families.

India - A Status Paper. World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women 14-30 July, 1980. Government of India, Ministry of Social Welfare, 1980.

Para 46 of the World Plan of Action adopted by the World Conference of the International Women's Year, outlined 14 minimum objectives to be achieved by the end of the first half of the U.N. Decade for Women, i.e. 1975—1980. This paper was prepared in 1980 by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of India in an attempt to review India's progress in attaining those minimum objectives. Various initiatives undertaken by the Government of India were highlighted.

The review also indicated the constraints and problems faced in promoting participation of women in development and in improving their status. The document pointed to the fact it had been possible to provide for de jure equality, services and facilities for education, health care and training of women. But due to the effect of traditional constraints and attitudes, increasing affirmative action was required in favour of women to convert de jure equality into de facto equality.

Report of the Regional Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace United Nations Economics and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Tokyo, 26-30 March, 1984.

Representatives from member countries and various organizations met in 1984 to review and appraise the

achievements of the subtheme of United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. It was noted that due to a growing recognition of the critical importance of integrating women into national socio-economic policies and plans, there had been some progress. But due to compartmentalization of women's issues the progress has been unsatisfactory-being unequally distributed, isolated and fragmentary¹ in nature. Impediments to effective planning and plan implementation included the lack of an adequate resource base in terms of trained personnel, finance and inappropriate data. Forward looking strategies were designed. It was suggested that these strategies, should address these continuing concerns in a more effective manner so that women are recognised as productive contributions to development and its beneficiaries. To achieve these goals, it was also suggested to mobilize national and legislative machineries as well as promote a high degree of public awareness of women's contribution to national development. The other major obstacle highlighted was pervasiveness of social attitudes deep-rooted in tradition and history.

New Delhi Document on Women in Development. Conference of Non-Aligned and other Developing Countries on the Role of Women in Development, New Delhi, 10-11 April, 1985.

The delegates examined in depth the role of women in developing countries, areas of cooperation exchange of expertise and shared experiences, in light of preparations for the World Conference. The intention was to approach the World Conference with full knowledge of their achievements and failures, and to evolve a strategy to tackle the problems confronting the world.

The current status of women was reviewed and appraised in the context of various sectors such as agriculture, food production, rural development, industrialization, education, mass media, science and technology, population, housing and environmental issues. Problem areas and obstacles in attaining the objectives of the UN Decade for Women were identified. One of the basic obstacles in achieving women's equality was the non-recognition of women's pivotal role in society. Lack of concerted and determined efforts to remove gender-bias was recognised as the second important obstacle. Thirdly project planning seemed to pay scant attention to the linkages between women's productive and reproductive work. Usually, programmes or projects focussed on only one or the other aspect. Hence the need for a more "holistic" view of women's work and contribution was emphasized. New approaches and forward looking strate-

gies to achieve the objectives of the UN Decade were designed.

Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace. Nairobi (Kenya), 15-26 July, 1985. Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women's Welfare, New Delhi.

The Forward Looking Strategies (FLS) for the Advancement of Women from 1986 to the year 2000 was adopted at the UN Decade for Women World Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 1985. They were built on the earlier world conference on women, on the work of the UN Commission on the status of women and on the activities and ideas of the worldwide women's movement. These strategies were designed to serve as guidelines for creating a new world order based on equality, development and peace. Some of the measures were intended to affect women directly. Others were designed to make the societal context less obstructive and more supportive of their progress such as the elimination of sex-based stereotypes.

Women in India Country Paper 1985. Government of India, Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare, New Delhi.

At the end of the UN Decade for Women, a country paper was prepared by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of India. The purpose was to identify areas in which work has been done to improve the status of women. The paper highlighted the developments with regard to demography, law, employment, health, education, political participation, family, science and technology and institutional arrangements. It also outlined the obstacles and bottlenecks in each area and suggested modifications and strategies to improve the situation.

Women in Development : Report of SAARC Ministerial Meeting. Shillong, May 6-8, 1986. Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development, New Delhi.

In pursuance of the decision taken at the first Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation held at Dhaka in December 1985, two meetings took place. The first Ministerial meeting on Women in Development was held at Shillong on May 6-8, 1986 at the invitation of the Govern-

ment of India. The second official level meeting on Women in Development was held in New Delhi on April 8-10, 1986. The basic objectives were to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve their quality of life. This meeting reflected their conviction that no meaningful progress could be achieved without the active participation of women and the enhancement of the status of women who form half the population in this region.

At the Ministerial Meeting the ministers reviewed the overall situation of women in the South Asian countries and noted that considerable progress has been achieved in several social sectors affecting women. However, greater attention was still required to be focussed on critical areas. Some of these were the low level of literacy, poor enrolment in schools coupled with high drop out rates; lack of vocational and technical training, marketing and credit facilities; the low level of political participation and involvement in policy making and its implementation. It was

felt that special efforts were also required to disseminate appropriate technologies to eliminate drudgery and thus improve the quality of life of women particularly in the rural areas.

At the Official Level Meeting, delegates from each member country presented General Statements on the issues pertaining to Women in Development and highlighted major achievements as also major problems being faced by them. The basic categories included women's access to basic needs, women and environment, family welfare, access to employment, their participation in the development process and cooperation among NGOs. It was suggested that the exchange of training and consultancy services and personnel in the countries of the region be initiated. Basic information, data and documentation on women's issues in the countries of the region was found to be inadequate and steps were needed to compile such information.

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WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, NIPCCD

Seminars/Workshop/Training Programmes

1. National Workshop on Problems of Women Construction Workers (12-14 Nov.1986)
2. Seminar on Employment Opportunities for Women in Electronics, Computers and Communication (13th Dec.'86)
3. Preparatory Workshop on Training for Senior Personnel for the Development of Rural Women.
 - (i) 19-21 March 1987 (Anand), Gujarat
 - (ii) 10th June 1987 (NIPCCD)
 - (iii) 31st July to 1st August (NIPCCD)
4. The SAARC Workshop on Training of Senior Personnel for the Development of Rural Women (12-18 Oct.'87), (Anand), Gujarat
5. Refresher Course for IAS Officers in Women and Child Development (16-21 Nov.1987)
6. National Workshop on the Girl Child (27-29 Dec.1987)
7. Refresher Course for IAS Officers in Women and Child Development (4-9 Jan. 1988)
8. Seminar on the Role of Rural Women in Development (28-29 Jan. 1988)
9. Workshop on Enforcement Machinery and Women (19-20 Feb.1988)
10. Workshop to Identify Training Needs for Women in Rural Development (13-15 April 1988)
11. Modules on Crimes Against Women (for Institute of Criminology and Forensic Science Courses)
 - (i) 21-22 July 1988
 - (ii) 28th Sept. 1988
 - (iii) 8-9 Dec. 1988
12. Workshop on Gender Analysis in Project Planning for Policy Makers and Project Managers (9-12 Aug.' 88), Puri
13. SAARC Workshop on the Girl Child (19-23 Sep.'88)



Regional Workshop on Enforcement Machinery and Women (25-26 Nov.'88), Calcutta

15. National Consultation on Conceptual Clarifications of Data Relating to Women's Work (15-17 Dec.'88)
16. National Consultation on the Role of Women Development Corporation (11-12 Jan.1989)
17. Media Consultation on Women in Development, (21-22 Feb.1989)
18. National Workshop on Women and Custodial Justice (9-10 March 1989)
19. National Workshop on Eliciting Women's Participation in ICDS (29-30, March 1989)
20. Regional Workshop on Enforcement Machinery and Women, (5-7 April 1989), Chandigarh
21. Regional Workshop on Enforcement Machinery and Women, (July 1989), Madras.

Research & Documentation - 1988

1. Directory of Institutions/Agencies and Universities dealing with Women's Training.
2. Preparation of training manuals in various sectors of Women's Employment. (dairying/sericulture)
3. Training programmes for Women in Government of India.
4. The Adolescent Girl: A strategical priority for nutrition, health and education.
5. Appraisal of the existing schemes of Welfare and Development of Women. (Dept of Women & Child Development and (SWB)
6. An analysis of needs in management training for Women in Development.
7. Preparation of Statistical handbook on various issues of Women in Development.
8. SAARC Guide book on various issues of Women in Development: India
9. National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000 A.D. (Secretariat).
10. Bibliography on the Female Child.
11. Bulletin-Indian Women in Development (National Clearinghouse for information on Women, Womens Development Division, NIPCCD)
12. Handbook of Policy and Related Documents on Women in India.