

**Report of the High Level Committee on
the Status of Women in India**

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Gender and Environment

1. INTRODUCTION

India's rich and diverse environmental resources like land and soil, water, air, forests, biodiversity, ample sunlight and fossil fuels sustain a variety of livelihoods for both men and women and provide them with basic materials and services. What is often forgotten is that men and women use these resources differently and are impacted in dissimilar ways by environmental degradation. Men and women also build on their societal roles and responsibilities to respond to the changing environment in diverse and unique ways – it is seen that their natural resource management (NRM) approaches and frameworks are different. Policies and practice must reflect these gender-based differences to ensure both environmental protection and gender justice.

Women's empowerment is inextricably tied to natural resources and climate change but the two streams are rarely spoken about in one breath, leave alone addressed. In fact, women's work and quality of life are closely intertwined with environmental resources and services more than that of men but there is little recognition of this in planning and interventions related to NRM or women's empowerment. A higher proportion of women, compared to men, work in the climate-sensitive agriculture and allied sectors. They shoulder a higher proportion of farm-based tasks. Women and girls bear the main responsibility for providing water, food, fuelwood and fodder to their homes. Walks for firewood, water and fodder have already become longer in the wake of stressed resources. A well-endowed environmental setting is obviously more of a benefit to women.

A whopping 85% of homes use firewood, crop residue and dung for cooking and women are the ones more exposed to polluted indoor environs¹. These women are also exposed to environmental toxins in numerous ways including in agriculture, and are more vulnerable to such toxins. Women and girls in India are also more vulnerable than men during and after natural disasters in what is one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

Climate change is affecting women first and worst because of their greater vulnerability. Women have lesser wherewithal than men to deal with climate impacts. Even adaptive interventions are putting larger work burdens on women with little additional empowerment.²

Environment and climate change also affect a large number of women who work in India's secondary sector and export markets. Manufacturing of artisanal products, textiles, garments and food processing, for instance, depend heavily on natural resources as inputs and over one-fifth of India's export basket comprises of agri-exports and textiles products. The sector supports a large workforce of unorganized women workers. Khadi and village industries, for example, are one of the largest employers of women³. Gender-based discriminations in this sector mean that any crunch in business will put women at a higher risk than men to face wage cuts and lay-offs.

1.1. Women in Environmental Movements and Conservation in India

Historically, Indian women have been in the forefront of environmental conservation as well as struggles to ensure the same. The Chipko movement started in 1973 inspired environmentalists nationally and internationally. Backing Chandi Prasad Bhatt was Gaura Devi, an elderly woman who mobilized village women to hug trees when men came to cut the timber for commercial use. Gaura Devi was head of the village Mahila Mangal Dal in Gopeshwar, district Chamoli and her action was repeated across Uttarakhand (new state carved out of Himachal Pradesh). It was picked up as far away as the Vindhyas and by the Appiko movement in the Western Ghats. In 1980, a minor victory was the 15-year ban on felling in the Himalayas. The Chipko movement led to higher environmental awareness among forest communities and newer ways to 'farm' forests by afforesting and conserving them. It also put women in the forefront of struggles for environmental conservation, and leadership in environmental movements.

Women joined the Appiko (meaning 'hug' in Kannada) movement in the Western Ghats in Karnataka both spontaneously and in a more planned manner⁴. Begun by 30 women who surprised men labourers who had come to cut timber in Kalase forest, the movement spread to adjoining villages with women taking the lead to raise funds and protect the trees. Women would keep aside a handful of grain every day to feed activists and participants at meetings. They also devised drama and other creative forms of media to mobilize more women to leave their homes and save their forests.

The Narmada Bachao Andolan was led by social worker Medha Patkar and managed to convince the World Bank and large countries like China and India to re-assess building of large dams. The Andolan contributed to better assessments of dams, including environmental and social costs in addition to the economic cost-benefit assessment. It forced donors and governments to take up resettlement and rehabilitation in a more planned and lawful manner. The World Bank was forced to withdraw the loan for the Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada River following the peaceful 'satyagrah' protests against the height of the dam which would drown tribal forests, villages and land.

The role of women in various environmental movements has not been documented but one can find how they have been leaders in almost all environmental movements in India. For instance, women marchers were part of the Silent Valley movement against the hydro-electric plan in Kerala and which resulted in the shifting of the Forest Conservation Act from the Centre to the Concurrent List. And Sugatha Kumari was the literary activist and inspirational leader who motivated the movement through her iconic poem *Marathinu Stuthi* (Ode to a Tree) that was rendered throughout the movement to articulate the protest. Adivasi women also led the renewed protest in 1984 against the Koel Karo Hydel Project in Bihar, now Jharkhand, by blocking all access routes for the armed forces to access water, firewood and sanitary sites.

Several grassroots women's movements and peasant women's movements have emerged across the country to save land, forests and fishing rights. Some of these include the Stree Mukti Sangharsh (Women's Liberation Front) and the Shetkari Mahilla Aghadi (Farm Women's Front) in Maharashtra; and the Coastal Women's Association in Kerala. These struggles highlight women's interests in similar, larger struggles. For example the Stree Mukti Sangharsh (SMS) focuses on women's participation and knowledge in development as part of the Shoshit Shetkari Kashtakari Kamgar Mukti Sangharsh of peasants. The SMS became part of the development discourse when they were part of the team that built the small, eco-friendly Baliraja Memorial Dam with People's Science Movement (an urban-based NGO of professionals) to prevent droughts. Women were involved in all aspects of the dam, from planning upwards. Men and women shared the waters equally, including small peasants and landless labourers⁵. The SMS has also demanded and received land for single women. The Coastal Women's Association has been in the forefront with the National Fishermen's Forum in protesting against trawlers and mechanized fishing encroaching in

areas where they fish. In Bhopal, after the Union Carbide gas leak disaster, the fight for justice, based on the tenet of 'polluter pays' and also for the cleaning up of the toxic wastes lying in the factory premises has been led by two courageous women – Rashida Bi and Champadevi Shukla who have been given the Goldman Prize in recognition of their work⁶. The struggle against poisoning of the environment and human beings in the case of endosulfan spraying in Kasaragod in Kerala had Leela Kumari Amma, 'an ordinary woman', taking a bold lead⁷.

Agro-diversity conservation by women in 85 villages of Medak district of Telangana, supported by Deccan Development Society is noteworthy. Here, by the revival of such diversity and by taking up millets-based organic farming including on large plots of leased in land, women in the Deccan ensured that agro-diversity erosion is stemmed, natural resources conserved and livelihoods improved⁸. The Self-Employed Workers Association (SEWA) has many successes⁹ in women taking over repair, maintenance and distribution of water from piped water schemes and rejuvenating dead ponds, contaminated ponds and dried wells. Most grassroots NGOs too prefer working with women on conserving and rejuvenating environmental resources because women are too often more responsive than men to try ways in which they can improve the resources; and they are available to do the work that is involved.¹⁰

1.2. Women and Environment: Theoretical Perspectives

In the 1960s, environmental and women's rights movements had begun as separate movements - part of the uprising in the decade of civil rights protests. However, the impacts of economic development and environmental degradation on women became apparent in the 1970s and the 1980s. The Women, Environment and Development (WED) approach followed the 1973 oil crisis when feminists and the development discourse recognized women's 'special' relationship with environmental resources, especially forests from where women sourced wood for their energy needs. The WED approach saw women as efficient natural resource managers and recognized their special knowledge and values about the environment¹¹. The WED position was built on the understanding that roles and responsibilities of men and women are defined socially and not biologically. It provided the ideological underpinning to the given division of labour with regard to environmental resources, pointed to policies that failed to take into account this gender-based division of work and advocated greater participation of women in managing resources.

Eco-feminism as a term was coined in the 1970s, and gathered attention in the 80s and 90s. Eco-feminists emerged during the second wave of the feminist movement and the green movement in the 1970s and equated the exploitation and degradation of Nature with the subordination and oppression of women. Theirs was a radical political stand, equating women's biology with nature and an all-pervasive 'ethic of care.' They assumed that women were always altruistic towards Nature and that women's nature was to nurture. While WED adopted a gender-based division of labour approach while giving women the 'special' status with regard to environmental resources, eco-feminism had an essentialist approach to women and environment.

Ecofeminism found few supporters but the supporters did contribute to the environmental discourse on women's foremost role in struggles to preserve land, water and forests¹² and the belief that 'the personal is political'.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, a more critical analysis came to the fore¹³. Women and their needs for environmental resources were discussed within the larger framework of the political economy and socio-political forces. The Gender and Development (GAD) perspective was not based on an understanding of any 'special' relationship between women and the environment but brought to the environment and development discourse issues like power, authority and gender-based inequality within homes – the intra-household bargaining power of men and women, the division of labour and resources within homes, especially the 'particular significance' of landed property for women in India were all part of this school of thinking¹⁴. Feminist economists argued that while women were victims of environmental degradation and also had the wherewithal to protect and rejuvenate natural resources, their contributions and needs were undervalued¹⁵. This approach focused on both genders, analyzing how men and women were assigned gender-based roles, responsibilities and entitlements of all kinds, including ownership of resources and decision-making.

The needs assessment perspective¹⁶, looking at women's needs as 'practical' needs and 'strategic' needs has gained ground, especially to evaluate policy implications of seemingly 'gender-neutral' policies. It critiques the WID approach by saying that the world is also gender-blind in orientation and planning is often gender-biased. The categorization of gender-based needs leads planners to tune into gender-based outcomes. Thus, plans and policies that satisfy women's 'practical needs' often refer only to 'needs in the domestic arena, such as health care, nutrition and education, (and) also at the community level on requirements of

housing and basic services.' Strategic needs, on the other hand, 'confront gender inequality....(and) intend to reduce women's subordination.' These would include reduction of women's care and domestic work burden, thereby transforming the gender-based division of labour, roles and responsibilities¹⁷.

The 1990s saw activists, researchers and academics¹⁸ debate on liberalization and globalization and fresh challenges to the relationship between macro-economic processes and local level control and governance of natural resources, especially for women. India's innovative Joint Forest Management programme also emerged during this time, responding to the need to involve women in managing local forests. This was followed by other environmental programmes – programmes which saw women being included into new institutional structures.

The last few decades also saw several on-the-ground experiments in India where women took the lead to conserve and nurture natural resources through community-based afforestation, wasteland development, watershed development and management, biodiversity conservation, promotion of climate-friendly resilient organic agriculture and building grain banks for emergency times. Many of these served as models for subsequent policies and programmes.

2. WOMEN & ENVIRONMENT: INDIA'S INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AND DOMESTIC POLICIES

Globally, India agreed to 'improve the living conditions and quality of life for women, particularly rural and poor urban women' as early as at the 1975 UN Conference on Women, the first of its kind. In 1985, India supported the global women's meeting in Nairobi which incorporated women's need for environmental resources in its 'forward-looking strategies.' These strategies were taken as guidelines for domestic policies by participating member countries. Gender equity was part of the 1992 Earth Summit - the United National Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), held at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil where 108 nation-heads agreed to protect environmental resources for economic development and social progress of men and women. The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action included 'Women and Environment' as one of the 12 areas of concern for member-nations, including India, to act upon ("*Gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and in the*

safeguarding of the environment”).¹⁹ The 1996 Rome Summit which sought to deal with global hunger and food security issues with ambitious targets put women at the centre stage of its planned interventions²⁰. Indeed, issues related to ‘women, environment and climate change’ have been part of several global agreements and commitments through the past few decades.

“6. The continuing environmental degradation that affects all human lives has often a more direct impact on women. Women's health and their livelihood are threatened by pollution and toxic wastes, large-scale deforestation, desertification, drought and depletion of the soil and of coastal and marine resources, with a rising incidence of environmentally related health problems and even death reported among women and girls. Those most affected are rural and indigenous women, whose livelihood and daily subsistence depends directly on sustainable ecosystems”.

-Global framework of the Beijing Platform for Action

The landmark Rio meeting was particularly significant for including in all its agreements specific recommendations on strengthening women’s participation in decision-making processes related to environmental resources. Agenda 21, the final agreement, sought to do this by eliminating all barriers to their equal participation and equal decision-making in sustainable development. Member governments agreed to integrate women and gender at all levels and into ‘all policies, programmes and activities’ related to sustainable development.²¹

The Rio conference has subsequently been followed by Rio+10 and Rio+20 conferences but the Rio+20, held in 2012, turned out to be an opportunity lost because it failed to build effectively on Agenda 21. No assessment was made on how far nations had travelled on the gender provisions in Agenda 21. Instead, the outcome document proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to take forward the Millennium Development Goals. These SDGs do not address women and environment linkages in a comprehensive manner as Agenda 21 did. For instance, while SDG Goal 5 on gender equality speaks about giving women control over ‘land, other property and natural resources,’ women’s empowerment has not been mainstreamed in any of the other key Goals, especially those relating to energy, economic growth and productive employment, resilient cities, food production, climate change, marine resources, ecosystems (forests) and institution building. The implementation section of the SDGs is also weak on gender equality. Gender resource budgeting, for

instance, is not part of financing sustainable development. Other implementing arms such as capacity building, technology and trade also do not speak of gender-based differences and the need to address these for equitable sustainable development.

2.1. Women and Natural Resource Policies in India

An analysis of some key natural resource policies reveals two trends. One, progressive plans and policies with little teeth when it comes to implementation; and two, a half-hearted endeavour towards gender equality.

The National Policy for Farmers 2007, for instance, comes in the first category. It envisages 'to mainstream the human and gender dimension in all farm policies and programmes.' It also articulates clearly the urgency of giving land rights to women 'under the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act 2005 and joint pattas 'for both homestead and agricultural land' to enable women to access credit and other support services required for their empowerment. Indeed, one of the issues is the federal nature of India and the fact that agriculture falls in the State list and its reforms therefore require progressive State governments.

The Farmers' Policy also provides for a 'significant' role for women in access and management of water as well as expanding the number of women engaging with poultry. Training in fishing, especially for landless labour families, is sought to be imparted to both fishermen and fisherwomen. The policy promotes documentation of women's traditional knowledge through community registers on biodiversity and setting up of community-managed seed villages and seed technology training centres for women, especially tribal women. The policy's call for a 'pro-nature, pro-small farmer and 'gender-sensitive' agriculture research strategy and enhancement of 'integrated crop-livestock-fish production systems' using organic methods are indeed women-responsive. Yet, the extension workers have not been able to implement this policy, not even in its spirit of gender equality.

The National Environment Policy 2006 is again a forward-looking document, recognizing that women particularly face adverse impacts due to degradation but are 'rarely' in management positions. The policy articulates the trade-off that rural women face between time spent on collecting resources and care responsibilities as well as gender-based reasons that exposes them more to indoor pollution from unclean cooking fuels. The policy unequivocally states that 'it is essential that women play a greater role in management of

natural resources' and leaves the implementation to the framework provided by the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women. It also recognizes the traditional entitlements of forest-dependent communities and the need to secure these under PESA - the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996. Yet, the principle of equity flies in the face of local panchayats and municipalities not being given power to make environmental management plans to manage resources but only to monitor compliance with environment management plans made by other entities, and when resource grabbing and alienation is rampant despite PESA. Again, the Policy does not protect forest communities from eviction following clearance to development projects coupled with the weak implementation of PESA. The NEP has not been able to give traditional entitlements to forest communities or conserve the state of natural resources in its implementation.

The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women 2001, unfortunately, belongs to the second set of policies that do not address environmental concerns for women's empowerment. The National Policy 2001 is seen to be a watershed document but it stops short of ensuring ownership and control of environmental resources by women. The two main points of the Policy include women's participation to conserve environment and promotion of non-conventional energy programmes to wean women away from using biomass for cooking. The fact that a decade later, 85% of rural women (Census 2011) continue using biomass for cooking speaks of the ineffectiveness of the National Policy 2001. Again, the policy calls for extensive training of women across different aspects of agriculture to 'ensure that benefits of training, extension and various programmes will reach them in proportion to their numbers.' The result has been that the Ministry of Agriculture has focused largely on training women while an equal or more emphasis is required to provide appropriate inputs and support services.

One may also mention specific schemes like the National Horticulture Mission 2005 which again belongs to the second category of schemes. The Mission involves women but mostly for commercial farming, not to ensure household nutrition. The result is that most of the fruits and vegetables are produced by women in rural areas but rural consumption is of these is far below urban consumption²² and women and girls display maximum malnutrition.²³

An example of a more gender-responsive policy is the National Policy on Disaster Management 2009 which recognizes different impacts of disasters on men and women and different needs of women and men. Of course, clubbing women with other vulnerable groups

like the elderly, children and the differently-abled weakens the gender-based differences which are far deeper and not homogeneous across different ages, classes or ethnic backgrounds of women. However, the Policy must be commended for including women's interests at the recovery phase and not just for relief and response. Yet, the Disaster Management Act 2005 fails on account of gender-responsiveness. Except for a stray mention of 'widows and orphans' who are to be especially provided relief, the Act does not provide for gender-based vulnerability assessment or participation in the multi-level disaster management authorities and community-based task forces.

There is indeed a need to reconcile environmental protection with women's empowerment to ensure that women are resource-secure and therefore able to deal with degradation and climate change impacts better.

Despite the fact that women's well-being is closely connected to their control over, and to the state of natural resources, and despite their successful leadership and participation in environmental movements in India, public policy on women, as well as on environment failed to connect the dots; there is still no policy vision that fully and comprehensively acknowledges the significance of environmental resources in ensuring a decent quality of life for rural and poor urban women, or *vice versa* (the significant contributions of women to environmental conservation).

In agricultural and allied areas, women's contribution goes unrecognized. Ownership of resources is not in their hands, even though statutes have been created, according equal rights and even though progressive policy articulations exist. They are often kept out of decision-making too. Closely tied to the notion that farmers are land-owners is the inherent bias in favor of men, rendering women invisible and unsupported.

It is seen that agriculture-related programmes are inherently biased towards men farmers and a scale suitable to market forces in operation: favouring cash crops over food crops, farmland over kitchen gardens, large animals over small animals, large-scale fishing over inland fishing, timber markets over markets for non-timber forest products and larger markets over local *haats*.

Promotion of chemical-input agriculture over low-input/organic/subsistence farming also has a strong gender bias because women put in more labour and drudgery in low

input/organic/subsistence farming and are unable to practice large-scale chemical-input agriculture. This is because of lack of productive resources, negligible purchasing power and several socio-cultural barriers such as restrictions on mobility and censure on interacting with 'unknown' men - traders, retailers, money lenders, bankers and even government's agriculture extension workers. The lack of recognition of women's role and contribution in NRM applies to inland water bodies as well as forests too.

In sum, women remain on the margins as India tries to adopt a more sustainable and energy-efficient development pathway under the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture as well as the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and the State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs) being drafted by all States/Union Territories (UTs). Perhaps a significant reflection of this is the exclusion of the Ministry for Women and Child Development (MWCD) from steering committees of all State climate plans and the apex Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change which put together the NAPCC together. The Ministry itself has no official or section dealing with environmental resources. Gender budgeting, still in its nascent stage especially in the States, has not even begun to look at climate change adaptation²⁴.

Equitable and sustainable development needs to (a) use environmental resources wisely and (b) integrate gender concerns in the planning, resourcing and implementing of government policies, programmes and schemes that are to usher in sustainable development and reduce climate risks. This, in particular, includes agriculture and allied activities, food security, energy options, disaster preparedness and risk reduction, water and sanitation. Some of the key areas of concern here include equitable ownership, sustainable management and use of natural resources, the gender-differentiated impact of climate change on the users of these resources and how climate solutions can empower women and men equally. At another level, infrastructure development, health and education also need to factor in sustainability and climate risk reduction.

The ongoing gender bias in policies on environmental resources and sustainable development not only negates several international agreements to which India is party and is required to submit action-taken reports, it also goes against the provisions in the Indian Constitution, including the Right to Equality. Sustainable development and quality of life rests on the three pillars of environmental protection, economic development and social equity and aims to

'meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'²⁵

This will be possible only when women's needs for environmental resources are met adequately and both women and men are empowered to protect, nurture and rejuvenate these resources. This has to be an integral part of our policy formulation, implementation and monitoring/evaluation.

3. WOMEN'S WELL BEING TIED TO (CONTROL OVER, AND STATE OF) ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

"Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development"

(Principle 20, Rio Declaration)

In this section we discuss why a gender lens is required for all work related to environmental resources and climate change. Women depend directly on these resources to satisfy the basic needs of water, cooking fuel, fodder, minor-forest produce, wild-growing food items, etc for their homes. A large proportion of women workers live in rural areas and engage primarily in climate-sensitive agriculture and allied activities (Table 1). In fact, this proportion of women workers, in comparison to the share of male workers, has been growing in the agriculture sector since 1961.²⁶ In 2011-12 68th NSS Round, 75% of female workers and 59% of male workers were engaged in the agriculture sector.

Indian Census	Proportion of total female workers	Proportion of total male workers
1991	80.9	62.9
2001	87.6	72.4
2011	81.3	68.3

Source: Indian Census and Registrar General and Census Commissioner

Not just in terms of their numbers, women workers shoulder 60-70% of the farm-based tasks,²⁷ a substantial portion of the on-shore fishing activities, majority of the activities associated with livestock rearing, horticulture and collection of minor forest produce. Women, for instance, are responsible for cleaning, feeding and milking animals and in many places market poultry products in local *haats*, or local markets. Add to this, their role in providing firewood, water and edible roots, leaves, etc. for household consumption. So **women workers are also higher users of environmental resources.**

How men and women own, utilize, manage and control environmental

resources is determined by gender differences. The relationship between gender and environmental resources is influenced by the existing gender-based division of roles and responsibilities in the natural resource sector. This gender-based division shapes access and use, and the knowledge related to these resources. However, ownership usually vests in male hands, and so also, the authority to make decisions regarding these resources.

Thus, for instance, weeding, storing seeds, making and mending fishing nets are 'women's jobs' while ploughing and the actual act of fishing is to be done by men. Getting water and medicinal herbs from local forests for the home are clubbed with the household duties of women, especially in rural areas and among the urban poor. 'Providing' for the house is a 'man's job' so men are responsible for selling the agricultural produce though women put in majority of the labour on the farms. Women can sell fish in local markets but not in commercial markets. With regard to energy, commercial production of energy has mainly men working with it; providing biomass-based cooking fuel is considered a woman's domain.

Box 1: Women labour more with environmental resources

Women work extensively in production of major grains and millets, in land preparation, seed selection and seedling production, sowing, applying manure, fertilizer and pesticide, weeding, transplanting, threshing, winnowing and harvesting; in livestock production, fish processing, collection of non-timber forest produce (NTFP) etc. In animal husbandry, women have multiple roles ranging from animal care, grazing, fodder collection and cleaning of animal sheds to processing of milk and livestock products. Keeping milch animals, small ruminants and backyard poultry is an important source of income for poor farm families and agricultural labourers. Landless women agricultural labourers play a pivotal role as they are involved in most of the agricultural operations. Landless women also lease in land for cultivation. The majority of workers involved in collection of non-timber forest produce (NTFP) are women, particularly tribal women. Women also augment family resources through tasks such as collection of fuel, fodder, drinking water and water for family members and domestic animals.

Source: Report of the Sub-group on Gender and Agriculture for 11th Five-year Plan, Planning Commission 2007

Men generally play a larger role in using environmental resources for commercial gain while women bear the responsibility for domestic use of the resources. There is also a wide gender gap in ownership of assets such as land, poultry, kitchen garden and even leases on common property resources (CPRs) such as wastelands, pasture lands, degraded and green forests, canals and ponds. Gender roles also vary in different agro-climatic zones. In harsher agro-climatic zones, like the hills and arid regions where environmental resources are more stressed, women put in far more time and labour than men on farm-based work and to provide basic household necessities. The pressures of work-related quality of life here is worse than for women in agro-climatic zones where environmental resources are less stressed. Climate change impacts on environmental resources are directly affecting women's work and worsening their quality of life.

3.1. Women's Ownership, Control Over and Access to Environmental Resources

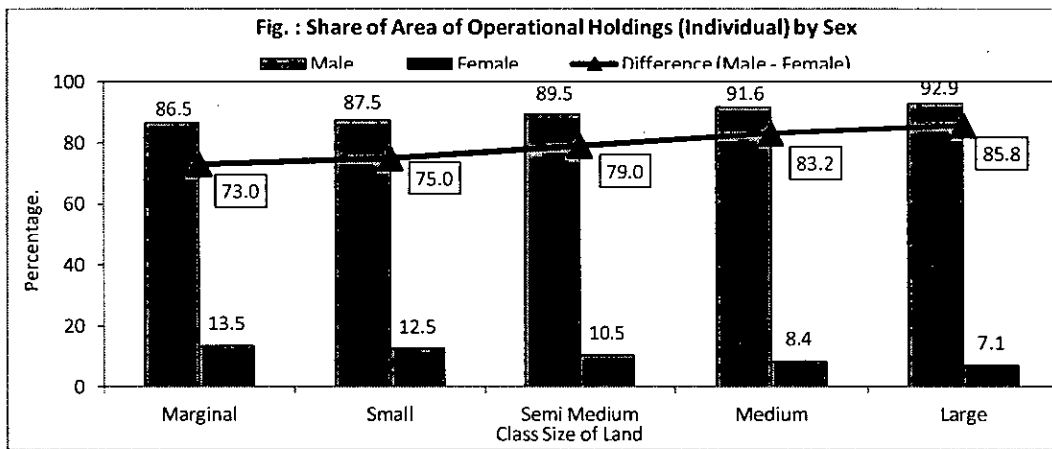
There is a strong, dynamic relationship between ownership of productive assets and the use, control and health of environmental resources. Weather uncertainties have made the link between health of environmental resources and ownership and control over assets even stronger. Ownership and control over resources is necessary to protect soil health, conserve groundwater and water bodies and safeguard forests when quick and timely decisions have to be taken in response to real-time weather uncertainties. Delayed rains or temperature fluctuations influence kinds of crops that can be grown and when they should be sowed or harvested – decisions that are usually taken by title holders, not women. Climate resilient activities also require decisions regarding building of infrastructure like water harvesting tanks, farm bunds, community grain banks or fodder banks, installation of rain gauges, greenhouses and soil nutrient measuring tools among other things. Where ownership is missing, as with most women farmers, the stress on environmental resources deepens and women are unable to take timely decisions to cope with, or adapt to, weather shocks.

Among landed rural people, women have less than 12% of the area under operational holdings and that too mostly in plots too tiny to generate much environmental resources. In fact, more men own larger landholdings and more women own smaller and marginal landholdings and this gender gap (shown by the upward horizontal line in below Fig.) widens as plot sizes become larger. Ownership of land is critical for women to access extension services; these services are biased towards larger landholdings which are mostly owned by men. So even landed women struggle to access, leave alone control, adequate environmental

resources like water, fodder and manure. They then depend on common property resources to bridge this gap.

The size and value of assets also influences the extent of control or user rights that women exercise. Women's control and user rights over environmental resources generally reduce with larger land holdings, ownership of more livestock, or leases on bigger fishing ponds or forest patches.

Over the last two decades, there has been a disproportionate increase in the proportion of women agricultural labourers compared to men while women cultivators have registered a sharper fall than men cultivators. Even among 'cultivators' many women 'cultivators' often do not own the land they cultivate and are 'unpaid' workers on family farms²⁸ or leased farms. Men also own much of the productive livestock and the land around homes - the 'kitchen gardens' where women grow a variety of food crops for the family. This 'feminisation of agriculture labour' has led to more resource-poor women and higher stress on environmental resources.



Source: compiled from Agricultural Census 2010-11



Ploughing her field in Uttarakhand because her spouse is ill.
Pic: Aarti Kapoor

Land ownership continues to be critical for empowerment. For instance, in district Kangra, Himachal Pradesh, women who had title to the land in the absence of their spouses made more decisions regarding their farms, including how to deal with

weather shocks, compared to women whose spouses had transferred the land title to their sons.²⁹ In the latter case, women were just workers on the farms of their absent spouses.

Large numbers of agricultural labourers are landless and belong to the scheduled castes³⁰ where women's access to education and employment are far more limited. India's has the world's largest number of landless people, with estimates³¹ varying from a third to 43% to two-thirds if people owning just 0.4 ha are added, and this number is growing. Many estimates are at the household level, ignoring women's needs to own resources. Women often have no access and control over resources, often not even a piece of land to build a house on. For women, their house is not just a resting place but is a productive asset where even the poorest women can keep poultry, keep a 'kitchen garden' for vegetables, fruits, spices, herbs and religious/cultural plants, do post-harvest work, make handicrafts, weave, embroider, etc. Thus, ownership of even a house in their own name is an economic necessity for women and contributes to their empowerment and better living.

However, no productive resource equals the power of productive land as an environmental resource. **Even a small plot of one's own can help women escape extreme poverty and deprivation,³² access government's farm-based programmes, provide their families with food and nutrition security and money to access education and health facilities.** Land ownership can help women overcome social problems like malnutrition, illiteracy and child marriage and help close the gender gap more effectively. In India, owning land is integral to the owner's social status and political power.³³ Yet, government programmes do not enable women to build an asset base, benefit from extension services or sit on decision-making tables as tillers of land. This disempowers women and forces them to fall back on ever-diminishing village commons.

3.2. Village commons, climate change and quality of life

A large number of women depend on common pasture lands, wastelands, forests, village water bodies and other CPRs to collect firewood, fodder, non-timber forest produce or even to catch fish to both enhance their livelihoods and to ensure their survival. In tribal areas especially, women depend almost exclusively on the commons for firewood, fodder and non-timber forest products. Common Property Resources are either privately owned or by panchayats or by various government departments, especially the forest and the revenue departments.

Women either have usufruct rights, mostly prevalent in tribal areas and parts of the Himalayan States, or de facto rights as is more usual in the flood plains and the arid zones, to collect and use these resources. Women's quality of life, self-dignity and empowerment are all dependent on the rights they have on village commons and the quantum and quality of the CPRs. For instance, a lot of the social forestry done on government common land prioritizes timber trees to trees for fodder, firewood or fruit which would have benefited women. The same has been true for forest land.

Over the last two decades, worsening demographic pressures, changing land-use patterns and weak institutional framework have all led to degradation of environmental resources and not prioritised women's basic needs for natural resources. Climate shocks are making this worse and poor women are desperately trying to cope with these uncertainties. Tribal women, especially those living in Fifth Schedule areas, have particularly lost their common areas due to a spate of State-owned development projects alienating them from their forests and common lands. Constituting just 9% of India's population, tribal communities have contributed over 40% of their private and common lands for development projects.³⁴

Women have been particularly vulnerable following large-scale displacement, often multiple displacements³⁵. They often have to struggle for resources such as drinking water³⁶. Worse, compensation in the form of land has been given to only a proportion of those displaced and often in the name of the eldest adult son (Box 2). Even women holding land titles have been discriminated against and not given land for land in development projects like building of dams.³⁷ Women have not only not been given land in their name but they also have

Box 2
Women, Land Acquisition and Displacement

Urbanization and infrastructure development is placing an increasing demand on rural agricultural land backed by land acquisition-related legislations. However, because women do not own land, they do not receive any compensation though they have labored on it during their most productive years. Even where landless are seen as beneficiaries, there is little evidence to show that the landless have actually received any compensation on being displaced. Displacement, besides breaking a woman's social support system, fails to give priority to resources that they want, including water, clean cooking energy, fodder or an industrial job. Women's dependence increases either on degraded common lands or casual wage labour.

to work harder on the new land because this has always been far inferior to their own land. Again, men have picked up new areas of work more easily than women whose literacy levels are just below 50% (Census 2011) compared to 79% among tribal men.

A study on displacement following the Tehri Dam project in Uttarakhand reveals how resettlement and rehabilitation policies are essentially biased towards men and blind to women's different needs³⁸. India's National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Policy 2007 provides for joint titles for spouses but land being a State subject, the actual guidelines and implementation is done differently by different States. With regard to the Tehri project, women who were managing most of the farm work before the displacement lost access to common property resources after resettlement and this led to a major loss of their survival strategies and supplementary incomes. Maina Devi from Mallideval said, "I used to make some extra money by selling wood and milk to the nearby hotels on the highway. The fodder for my cattle was free. Today, I have not only lost my land but also the extra household income for my kids." Women also lost their access to free-flowing Ganga river which also provided them with fish, water for irrigation and for drinking as well as firewood from the bank. After resettlement, the women faced water shortages for days, including bad water quality and no way to cool it without investing in a refrigerator. Worse, the design of the roads and houses is such that women find it difficult to carry water from the tanker uphill to their homes. Women have had to face changing farming practices with little training or access to inputs. Earlier, women grew a diverse lot of crops but resettlement has meant scarcity of water, less fertile land and moving from subsistence farming to consumer and market-based economy. Changed farming practices also means women are hiring more farm labour but taking less farm-related decisions as in the resettlement sites it is mostly men who negotiate hiring and supervision of farm hands. In most cases, land or cash was made in the name of the male head of the house despite women having a joint claim over it. With no access to environmental resources and shouldering the additional burden of providing for households needs in the face of food and water shortages, women's negotiating position also reduced. Worse, single women like widows and unmarried adult daughters were not considered separately for the compensation package.

Most tribal women are entirely dependent on environmental resources because forest-gathering, agriculture and allied activities are the mainstay of tribal economy. Even the handicrafts tribal women make, require natural resources, often from the common areas. Despite the enactment of Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA), 1996, in the nine States falling under Schedule V of the Constitution, tribal land is being taken fast for mining, industrial development and infrastructure projects with negative ecological consequences and alienation of traditional and *de jure* and *de facto* rights of women. PESA

confers upon the tribal community the right to govern their forests and is an opportunity for tribal women to improve their quality of life and their status in society.

Among farmers, the dependence of agricultural labourers on CPRs is the highest across all agro-climatic zones except in the Eastern Himalayas, the Hills and the West Coast Plains.³⁹ The reasons for the exceptions corroborate the fact that where there is more farm labour, dependence on CPRs is higher. In both the north eastern states of Eastern Himalayas and Hill states like Uttarakhand, women cultivators outnumber men cultivators, primarily due to high male migration. The West Coast Plains, on the other hand, are one of the more developed regions of India and less dependent directly on natural resources.

The other group of rural poor who rely heavily on CPRs are the landless, many of whom belong to scheduled castes. Landless women use pasture lands, wastelands, watersheds, forests, submerged fields and riverbeds, water bodies such as rivers, ponds, lakes and canals for fuelwood, fodder and a range of products that include manure, fruits, roots and tubers, vegetables, gum and resins, honey and wax, medicinal plants, fish, edible leaves and weeds.

A very high proportion of the dependence by the landless is for domestic energy – women and girls collect fuelwood and biomass to cook food and heat the house. About 60% of the landless families collect firewood and this proportion falls as land holding increases. The variation is highly stratified according to agro-climatic zones with landless households collecting about 80% of fuelwood in the Himalayas (where it is also used for heating) and 87% in the dry, arid and semi-arid agro-climatic region of Gujarat Coastal Plains and Hills. Other highly used CPRs where over 70% of the households collect fuelwood are in the Eastern Plains and Hills, the Southern Plateau and Hills, the Western Plateau and Hills and the Islands. Women in these regions are highly vulnerable because they are *de facto*, rather than *de jure*, users of many of the CPRs here. Depleting CPRs coupled with climate change-induced stresses is making it even more difficult for women to meet their basic needs. Overall, about 58% of the total collections⁴⁰ are fuelwood and about 25% is fodder. Approximately 17% constitutes the other products which include manure; fruits roots, tubers and vegetables; gums and resins; honey and wax; medical herbs; fish; leaves and weeds (Table 2).

Table 2: Percentage contribution of different CPR products across agro-climatic zones			
Agro-climatic zones	Fuelwood	Fodder	Others
Western Himalayas	59	39	2
Eastern Himalayas	53	8	39
Upper Gangetic Plains	48	5	47
Middle Gangetic Plains	52	39	9
Trans-Gangetic Plains	44	51	6
Upper Gangetic Plains	31	69	0
Eastern Plateau and Hills	64	4	31
Central Plateau and Hills	62	18	20
Western Plateau and Hills	68	25	7
Southern Plateau and Hills	72	18	10
East Coast Plains and Hills	65	18	17
West Coast Plains and Hills	49	13	38
Gujarat Coast Plains and Hills	61	30	9
Western Dry Region	71	29	0
All Islands	79	3	18
India	58	25	17

Source: Table T10, 54th Round, NSSO, 1999.

Landless households have risen by 40% over the past two decades – from 35% in 1987-88 to 49% in 2011-12⁴¹ even as CPRs, constituting about 21% of the land area, have been declining by two percent every five years.⁴² Maximum increase in landlessness has been among dalits and the Muslims who already own/control the least natural resources with very little land or livestock in the name of women. The lowest increase in landlessness is among the adivasis who have more *de jure* than *de facto* ownership and control over common land and especially forests. States hosting maximum landless households are Tamil Nadu (79%), Punjab (73.5), West Bengal (65%) and Andhra Pradesh (61.2%) and the reasons seem to be myriad and not easy to decipher⁴³. For instance, the large arid zone in Andhra Pradesh, the recurring cyclones and floods in West Bengal which wash away acres of land and the fertile but highly polluted soils of Punjab seem to put these three very different States together under the same category of high landlessness. Over the last two decades, rural-urban migration has increased. Most villagers migrate to other villages or small towns within the same State and in relatively lesser numbers to other States. Unviable agriculture and climate uncertainties have been one major cause for temporary migration of men for employment. Significantly, NSSO 2007-08 data on migration also shows that erratic rainfall and temperature patterns influence temporary migration while permanent migration is often due to temperature changes because

it has a transformational change on natural resources based livelihoods⁴⁴. Migration has led to breaking up of family and social support systems for women. It has also led to women becoming more mobile to access bigger markets and taking up activities like 'ploughing' that were hitherto prohibited due to the gender-based division of labour.

Wastelands, or degraded/unusable lands, are a substantial part of CPRs. These require to be conserved and reclaimed where possible. Land reforms, though not successful, have seen several State governments distribute barren land to poor and landless families among scheduled castes and tribes. With 86% of the arable land in private hands,⁴⁵ land has essentially been transferred to men though women have had to work very hard to make this distributed land productive.

For instance, leases on different kinds of wasteland were given to women in many States in the 1980s⁴⁶ mostly through initiatives of NGOs but the success was short-lived. Women have

Box No. 3: Draft Land Reforms Policy (July 2013)

A Draft Land Reforms Policy (July 2013), based on the recommendations of the 12th Plan Working Group on Disadvantaged Farmers, including Women, advocates prioritizing marginalised women for land distribution and group leases for using CPRs. It provides for land to be given in individual names rather than in joint names of the spouses, recognizing that women have little control over agricultural products in joint ownership. This is especially in case of domestic violence or marital break-up.

This is a welcome step and, if supported by a conducive policy framework, can that address the challenge of growing landlessness among marginalised communities and help them deal with climate change impacts.

not been able to make long-term assets, break gender barriers or find ways to deal with weather shocks that have subsequently been witnessed. One reason has been that no thought was given to the post-lease period by which women should have been able to create their own productive assets and become part of the mainstream economy and decision-making structures (Box 3). This would have given them the capacity and the knowledge to also cope better with the weather shocks.

3.3. Women in the Primary Sector

India's agriculture is characterized by subsistence farming on fragmented, small and marginal plots in non-irrigated lands with intensive work, time and labour input by women. Traditionally, India's resource-poor farmers have engaged in low-input, crop-livestock-horticulture-based agriculture, including organic agriculture. Low-input/organic agriculture is

estimated to require 15% more labour⁴⁷ than conventional agriculture but adapts better to changing climatic conditions and, as a co-benefit, emits less greenhouse gasses. India is home to half of the world's organic farmers⁴⁸ who cultivate the world's seventh largest land under organic cultivation. Organic agriculture is growing and there is a need to recognize women's contribution to this low emission agriculture development.

Low input and organic agriculture is traditionally preferred because it is (a) more suitable for local geo-climatic conditions; (b) supports a variety of food crops, including hardy and nutritious millets; and (c) yields a higher volume of mixed crop waste, dung and other biomass that can be used as fodder and fuel. Much of the indigenous knowledge and skills related to farm resources is also with women. Organic agriculture has been promoted both in practice among grassroots organisations and, more recently, as adaptive agriculture by different States and under the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture of the NAPCC. A recent global survey reveals that India has the world's largest number of organic producers.⁴⁹ Obviously, the need to include gender concerns in the climate plans at the national and state level is necessary to sustain organic and low-input agriculture because younger women are not willing to work on farms without adequate returns and a better quality of life.

India's agriculture policy promoting industrial and chemical agriculture has led to environmental degradation and loss of biomass resources and deepened the gender-divide in agriculture. It has ignored women's knowledge, skills and practices related to the hardy and nutritious millets and local food crops by promoting just three main food crops⁵⁰ - rice, wheat and maize – and relying heavily on irrigation and chemical fertilizers and pesticides to raise productivity to feed a growing population. The area under millets fell by 13.34% between 1970-71 and 2007-08⁵¹ leading to an erosion of related farm practices like multi-cropping and crop rotation at which women farmers excelled. The result has been mono-cropping, leading to a decline in soil fertility. Women have also lost the more dominant role they had in low-input/organic agriculture to men who dominate the State-supported market-based agriculture.

The need to bring in gender justice in agriculture is critical with feminization of agricultural labour and with the increase in the total area cultivated by small and marginal farmers – from 36% in 1995-96 to almost 45% in 2010-11.⁵² With declining per capita holding - from 1.33 in 2000-01 to 1.23 ha in 2005-06 and 1.16 ha in 2010-11, these resource poor farmers have only their labour to fall back on and women shoulder more than their fair share of this.

The revival of resilient, low-input agriculture is necessary because it adapts better to climate uncertainties and, contrary to popular belief, organic agriculture can feed the current population without increasing the cultivated area. Organic agriculture also helps in reducing the economic cost of cultivation and reverses the detrimental effects of conventional agriculture on soil fertility, water pollution and pesticide levels in farm products.⁵³ Women engaging in organic agriculture have to shoulder additional work burden compared to conventional farming⁵⁴ but are willing to do so because they are also ensured fodder and fuel from their farms. Thus, the revival of resilient agriculture must address women's additional work burden and recognise and value women farmers' role so that women become empowered farmers rather than remaining disempowered farm workers. This means equal access and control over productive resources, access and power over institutional credit, extension, insurance, farm inputs and markets⁵⁵ and informed participation in decision-making institutions.

3.3.1. Livestock

The livestock sector, one of the largest in the world and mostly in the hands of women, today faces shrinking and degrading pasture lands,⁵⁶ as well as a gross failure of extension services and inadequate investment. As per the total plan outlay, the share of animal husbandry and dairying has been declining – from 1.1% in the first 5-year Plan to 0.4% in the 6th 5-year Plan and further to 0.3% in the subsequent plans, though in absolute terms the outlay on this sector increased.

However, this sector's share of investment has never done justice to its contribution to the GDP or the agriculture GDP. Livestock contributes 25% of gross value added to the agriculture sector⁵⁷ and is expected to be the engine of growth in the primary sector. Institutional lending to dairy processing as a priority sector began as late as 2009 only. Over 70% of NABARD's support goes towards refinancing disbursement in dairy development but the share for poultry, small ruminants and piggery has been declining sharply – from 50% in the early 1990s to 32% in the late 1990s and to less than 22% in the triennium ending 2005-06⁵⁸. In other words, family nutrition, women's income and empowerment are not a priority in this sector, even as it envisages increases commercialization of dairy development.

While availability of fodder and feed did improve between 1998-86 and 2005-06, the deficit and stagnation in the availability of green fodder has been increasing over the years. The current deficit in dry fodder (10%), concentrates (33%) and green fodder (35%) is expected to deepen by 2020 and climate change impacts are projected to worsen availability of fodder, especially green fodder.⁵⁹ There is also a huge gap in the availability of forage crops, usually grown by poor women on degraded and marginal lands using their labour and minimal inputs. Only 12 of the 55 micro-regions have surplus forage; 43 are deficient even in this basic feed. Only 25% of the forage seeds remain available and these too are 15-20 years old⁶⁰ so production cannot be optimized. Women are increasingly struggling to get fodder from degraded wastelands and other commons.

The latest NSSO 70th Round data on Land and Livestock Holdings in India (released in December 2014, NSS KI 70/18.1) shows that about 1% to 1.8% of land is put for livestock farming over Kharif and Rabi seasons (setting aside land for fodder crops or grazing is not common); within this, expectably, the largest areas were to support dairy farming⁶¹. About 40% of household operational holdings reported farming of animals. It is very clear from the table below that bovine livestock are mainly the large landholders' preference while poultry is with smallholders.

Average number of principal livestock/poultry owned per 1000 households by category of operational holdings, 2012-13

Table 3

Livestock/Poultry	Landless	Margin al	Small	Semi-Medium	Mediu m	Large
Bovine (Cattle + Buffalo)	1586	1518	2575	3278	4409	7453
Sheet and Goat	527	815	909	992	3627	2271
Pig	0	47	92	69	26	15
Poultry	2357	2166	3397	2979	1878	570
Source: NSS KI (70/18.1): Key Indicators of Land and Livestock Holdings in India, December 2014						

The NSSO 70th round also shows that 23% of the income of marginal farmers owning less than 0.01ha and landless agricultural households comes from livestock while 56% comes

from wage labour/salary⁶². The changing humidity-temperature index due to climate uncertainties is, however, projected to affect milk production and livestock fertility.⁶³

Leaving the livestock needs of poor women unaddressed is a matter of utmost concern because livestock rearing is a poverty leveller and can give women ownership and control over some of the most productive and profitable resources. Even the poorest women farmers can often afford to keep some hens or a goat or some pigs to avail of farm manure, income and nutritious food for the family. Livestock is often the fall back mechanism for women during disasters when the cropland is washed away or drought cripples it. Yet, the government's scheme for fodder banks has been a non-starter and till it is not supported by a change in the agriculture and CPR policy, fodder cannot be made available to women.

3.3.2. Forests

Apart from plantations, women also play a dominant role in non-timber forestry, collecting and selling a wide range of non-timber forest products that constitute 68% of India's forest-based exports. Many of the poorest women and girls, substantially from the marginalised tribal belts, work in what is one of the largest unorganized sectors in India. Yet, they do not have *de jure* rights over the forests on which they depend for their survival and income. Forest resources are largely owned by panchayats or the forest department who use women's knowledge, skills and experience, often over generations, for their own profit while giving depressed wages to women and treating them as mere workers.

Collection of *tendu patta*, for instance, is endemic, is known as 'green gold' and is a nationalized tobacco product that is collected mostly by the poorest tribal populations for the forest department. However, women are wage labourers with low compensation whereas they should be operating in a benefit-sharing mode across India because they are the *de facto* owners of the forest resources. Some States have begun this in different modes but this needs to be reviewed, built upon and applied across India to ensure women gain in real terms from their forest-based activities.

Women also collect firewood, fodder, fibre, spices, medicinal herbs and food from the wild for their domestic use from forests. They use minor products to make baskets, brooms, ropes, mats, toothbrushes (*datoon*), leaf plates and *bidi* to use at home. Some of the poorest tribal women sell products like leaf plates, marula fruit, *datoon*, lac and char in the local *haat* to

earn small incomes. However, women lack decision-making rights over forests and men of the forest department or the panchayats usually decide which species they want planted in the forests.

On paper, JFM committees are supposed to decide the species they want in the community forests and forests where women have usufruct rights. JFM, however, has succeeded where some NGOs have mobilized and did 'hand holding' of JFM committees or where strong traditional *van panchayats* were functioning. Elsewhere, since women are not required in the quorum for JFM committee meetings, men have been taking decisions on their behalf. Women's participation in these combined groups has also been limited where traditionally they have been excluded from such fora.⁶⁴

Dominance of the forest department in forest management has given rise to monoculture, loss of broad leaf-based trees that provide women firewood, fodder and shade and loss of biodiversity. In the middle Himalayan ranges of Doodhatoli, for instance, planting of pine trees led to loss of habitat for birds who ate pests in the fields below the treeline. This led to crop losses for poor households who were farming small terraced plots⁶⁵. Women are the backbone of agriculture in hill societies and these losses had to be borne by women farmers, who had labored on their organic farms in vain.

Another major problem with JFM has been the disconnect with panchayats. Van Panchayat Samities and JFM committees are hosted and run by the forest departments with little interaction with gram panchayats. There is an urgent need for gram panchayats and van panchayats to together formulate converging government schemes to help village women own (through medium- to long-term leases), control, use and nurture the forests.

Climate change is leading to upward shift of the treeline, loss of fauna and of biodiversity from forest areas. India's Green Indian Mission under the NAPCC talks about afforestation but without ownership or *de jure* rights over forest land. Recent land use changes are threatening to erode rights of tribal communities too over their forest resources. Whether it is sustainable agriculture which stores carbon in the soils or afforestation, carbon credits and carbon trade cannot help women who actually make this possible but have no ownership rights over the resources which have made this possible. Even where communities are benefited, safeguards should be built in to ensure that these benefits also flow to women in proportion, at least, to the work they have put in.

Other issues related to women and forests have been discussed in the Rural Livelihoods section of the Economy chapter, including the lackadaisical implementation of the Forest Rights Act.

3.3.3. Fisheries

Fishing is part of the livelihoods basket, with women doing both on-shore and off-shore fishing activities on India's coastal wetlands and inland wetlands. Women constitute 72% of the workforce⁶⁶ and are responsible for exchanging fish for food and money.⁶⁷ Only 25% is marine



Catching prawns in Sunderbans.
Pic: Aditi Kapoor

fishing; the rest is inland fishing done in ponds, reservoirs, lakes, streams river basins and even water-logged fields and, in the north-east, paddy fields. Most inland fishing is done in favourable climatic environment while coastal fishing is vulnerable to sea storms.

Gender-based division of labour makes catching fish a 'male activity.' Women dominate on-shore activities like net-making, sorting, grading, curing/processing, product development and as petty traders. They also collect fish seed, mussels, edible oysters, and sea weeds for the family and to sell in local markets. They lead fish curing/processing and marketing activities – three-fourths of people engaged in these activities are women. State-wise, the largest numbers of fisherwomen marketing fish are in Maharashtra followed by Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. In curing/processing activities, a significant number of women undertake these in Andhra Pradesh followed by Orissa and Maharashtra⁶⁸. Fisherwomen are known for their net-making skills in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu and in coastal Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala. Fisherwomen have to deal not only with uncertainties of marketing but now, increasingly, with dwindling marine fish in the wake of climate change.

Similar to the 'bad luck' that women are supposed to bring by just touching a plough, women on fishing boats are also said to bring bad luck in most fishing communities⁶⁹. However, banned from boats, women use their bodies to catch high value prawns in the wetlands of Sunderbans and the backwaters of Kerala by standing for long hours in saline or brackish water – a strenuous and time-consuming task with health repercussions and threats from crocodiles and insects. Women fish in waterlogged fields and have perfected the indigenous

art of paddy-cum-fish cultivation in the floodplain wetlands of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, especially as an adaptive measure during the flood season. Women are also increasingly participating in aquaculture in coastal and inland waters to harvest shrimp, crab, carps etc., contributing to growing export markets.

Over the last three decades, modernization of fisheries through promotion of trawlers for deep-sea fishing, changing land-use for tourism, ports and industrial development and climate change and sea-level rise have all led to depletion of environmental resources – dwindling fish stock and loss of fish biodiversity. This has deepened the gender-divide. Traditionally, fisherwomen were poor but had more control over marketing, income and decision-making while the men were at sea. Now, with reduced catch or migration of men, women's incomes and livelihoods security are severely affected. Men have higher chances of being employed by trawler, tourism or industrial companies but women have less education and employment opportunities.

This has led to higher workloads for women who stay behind to work as wage labour on adjoining fields or in adjoining villages while shouldering care activities; or have to travel away from home to work with trawler companies. In both instances, new safety issues have come to the fore. Trawlers, land-use changes have also taken over on-shore space which women used for sorting, grading, drying and processing. Trawlers have displaced them from fish processing and fish vending and brought in net-making machines. With modernization, all income and decision-making rests with men and women have not been given any skills and the opportunities for alternative livelihoods. Some NGOs have tried to focus on specific products like mushrooms, medicinal herbs, fruit nurseries and sericulture for women; helped women take up vermicomposting or food processing as enterprises; and even engaged women in repair and maintenance of water pumps and ponds to ensure water for farms and homes.⁷⁰

Worsening sea-level rise, increasing water pollution from industrial waste and trawlers are further destructing habitats and biodiverse resources. Fisherfolk constitute one of the weakest sections of society. Mostly from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes with one of the lowest socio-economic indicators, they have been inadequately supported with infrastructure, finance or training and skill-building from the government. Fisherwomen thus bear the triple burden of their gender, caste and poverty. Few NGOs have advocated for some issues like the need for transport facilities or marketing space for fisherwomen, their membership in Fishermen's Societies or leases to women's groups. Bihar and Madhya Pradesh now give

pond leases to all-women fishermen societies and in MP fishermen cooperative societies are now mandated to have a third of their members as women.

However, there is **an urgent need for a national recognition of women's dominant role in livestock and fisheries** by equipping girls and young women with requisite skills, training, infrastructural support as well as place them in key technical and administrative decision-making positions. With regard to fishermen's societies, apart from the need for a more gender neutral name for the society, at least 50-70% of the membership should be for women. This is because women handle more than half of the work and being members of fisherfolk societies will be able to address all the areas related to fish catch to consumption.

There is also a need to make at least half the positions mandatory for women in governance and membership based institutions and processes. Having more women in all key governance, regulatory and operational institutions will also help in larger problems like bridging the huge disconnect between policies to modernize fisheries and those meant to conserve water resources. In a sector that is essentially run by small-scale fisherfolk, top-down planning and decision-making needs to be replaced by more participative and representative structures that reflect realistic concerns of both women and men.

3.3.4. Wetlands

There is very little research on gender and wetlands though wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems and critical for the survival and livelihoods of poor people, especially women. Wetlands include the entire coastal region, the Indo-Gangetic floodplains the high altitude Himalayan lakes and rivers and a large number of small and big reservoirs and water storage tanks in the villages of the Deccan region. They sustain crops, livestock, forests, fishing and support about a fifth of India's biodiversity and act as a shield against recurring disasters like cyclones (mangroves) droughts and floods. Wetlands, described as a sponge, absorb water during the wet season and make it available during the dry season. They also act as a sewage treatment system by absorbing and/or carrying away the pollutants to ensure clean water.

Wetlands are being degraded, over-exploited and encroached upon. They are also extremely vulnerable to anthropogenic changes. This increases the vulnerability of rural and urban poor women who depend upon, and work with, environmental resources much more closely than

men. Reduced or unavailable benefits from wetlands means increased workloads and a very poor quality of life for women. Climate change has made wetlands even more vulnerable and there is an urgent need to manage these through local panchayats (which now have 50% reservation for women), taking into account the natural contours of each ecosystem, not encumbered by administrative units. Decisions need to be taken through a participative stakeholder analysis in an inclusive process that appreciates differences of gender, caste, class, ethnicity and religion.

3.3.5. Kitchen Gardens

In addition to managing livestock and engaging in fisheries, women have traditionally grown vegetables, spices, herbs and fruits on farms and around their homes in 'kitchen gardens' both for home consumption and to sell in the local market. Much of the work done with vegetables, spices, herbs and fruits on home farms and kitchen gardens is strenuous work because there are multiple sowing and harvesting periods in a year.

Promotion of multiple cropping or inter-cropping or kitchen gardens, which promote women's interests, have never been a policy focus in horticulture. Policies do not focus on giving women ownership rights on horticulture land, include them into decision-making institutions and processes, promote them as horticulture scientists or extension workers or build their skills and provide them with an enabling environment for marketing and trading. Women remain workers in horticulture and use their indigenous knowledge regarding seed selection, planting, nursery management, harvesting, sorting, grading and packing of horticulture produce without being considered horticulture experts in the public eye or in public policy.

3.3.6. Plantations

A large number of women work on plantations of tea, coffee, rubber, nuts, etc though ownership, management and trade has always been in the hands of men. For instance, almost half of the tea workers are women and women do most of the work in cultivating, harvesting and processing rubber, largely on small holdings. However, gender-based care roles make women reluctant to take up tapping jobs in rubber plantations though they are better than men⁷¹ at tapping and are paid equal wages. Rubber tapping is best done early morning from 4

am but women have to take care of household task before and after the tapping session while men are seen relaxing after the session.

3.4. Women and urban environmental resources

It may not be very apparent but gender-based differences in urban India also influence the way men and women interact with urban environmental resources like land, water, green spaces, biodiversity and air. Paucity of land leads to over-crowding and unhygienic conditions leading to lack of privacy for women and hampering their work as many of them are home-based workers. Many of them use their public spaces outside their homes for sun-drying ingredients in processed food like pickles, papad and *dal vadi* but have no alternative space following the erratic rainfall patterns now. Women also face more indoor pollution from building materials, furnishings and use of poor cooking fuel like kerosene within the confined spaces.

Inadequate solid waste management affects women and girls more because they outnumber men and boys as ragpickers,⁷² facing safety issues. On the other hand, women and girls contribute more than men by keeping the city cleaner and by helping cities to emit less carbon. Using incinerators for solid waste causes emissions and reuse and recycling of material also reduces the need for new materials thereby conserving natural resources and energy needed to produce them.

Urban ecology is an emerging discipline and requires more research with a strong gender lens. Also, the links between gender and environmental resources in the urban setting are not as direct as they are in rural areas and require a multi-dimensional approach to unravel and address. To take another example, cities in India generally grow outwards with slum dwellers and manufacturing units shifted to the margins. This puts a greater burden on women to travel to places of work while it is easier for men to find alternative means of living. When women drop out of economic activity, it reduces family incomes and leads to a downward spiral of poverty. Women may shift to lower fuels for cooking and unsafe water sources.

On the other hand, a higher number of women than men are home-based workers,⁷³ engaged in manufacturing and trade industries. In fact, because women are resource poor and use their labour more than technology, electricity, transport, etc, they are said to contribute less to GHG emissions compared to men. Of course, this does not mean that women have to remain

resource poor. But it does mean that their sustainable ways of functioning have to be recognized and protected where they contribute to both economic welfare and sustainable development.

Biodiversity is also under threat in cities. Poor migrants in cities also practice agriculture and initial studies⁷⁴ show that women shoulder much of the work from growing to selling, combining it with their other tasks as usual. Land-use planning that allows larger green spaces for farming and under social forestry for useful trees that can give greenery to cities and products for poor people to sell can help raise groundwater tables, bring back some of the flora and fauna and give alternative livelihoods to poor urban dwellers, especially women.

3.5. Improved gender-based disaggregated data to sustain environmental resources

To this day, there are many gender data gaps which also means that planning cannot be focused and appropriate. What needs to be captured are also ownership details of assets to ensure that the gender gap here is bridged and women reap the benefit of their labour. Ownership of productive resources and assets gives women a stake to protect and rejuvenate their environmental resources as the innumerable experiments with collective land lease and cultivation, Joint Forest Management or wasteland leased by women's groups have proven. Yes, women's collective strength is important. But more important is the officially recognized ownership and control over these environmental resources. In the wake of climate change and its potential impacts on environmental resources, livelihoods, food and water security, this becomes non-negotiable.

Despite improvements in data collection by Indian Census, women's labour too remains under-reported for too many reasons. Self-perception of women as 'housewives' and under-valuation of their own work⁷⁵ is part of the problem - but this is also a fallout of the government consistently refusing to recognize women as farmers, livestock managers, fisherfolk or forest workers in their own right, despite progressive policy articulations. Several government documents recognize *on paper* that rural women are the 'backbone of Indian agricultural workforce'⁷⁶ or are 'the most productive workforce' in the Indian economy⁷⁷ but this is not reflected in practice where women in the farming and allied activities cannot directly access government programmes or lay claim to public resources despite gender budgeting being a mandate for all government departments at the Centre and in the States. This has led to a collective state of false consciousness within the government

where women's real economic roles and economic contribution are not recognized, nor addressed. This failure to recognize and address issues related to women's work and their role has led to greater dependence on the ecology and feminization of poverty.

Time-use studies (TUS) are particularly useful to show the gender-based degree of relationship with environmental resources in different agriculture-related activities (Table 4) over different times of the year. These studies can also reflect the changing dimensions of time – and with it labour and drudgery – following climate change impacts. These studies are yet to be scientifically framed and accepted but their usefulness in capturing a wider range of activities involved with environmental resources irrespective of whether these fall within the given definition of 'market' or 'non-market' economic activities are very important to guide policy making and public provisioning. The pilot TUS conducted in four rounds between July 1998 and June 1999 for 18,600 households in 52 districts across six States indicated that the Indian GDP would increase by 11% if women's non-market economic work is included⁷⁸. The 4 rounds covered different agricultural seasons and States: Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Orissa and Tamil Nadu. Variations were recorded seasonally and in different States.

Activity	Female	Male
Kitchen gardening – backyard cultivation	52	48
Milking tasks and processing of milk, collecting and storing of poultry products	57	43
Making dung cakes	96	4
Fetching of water	86	14
Collection of edible goods like fruits, vegetables, berries, mushrooms etc.	91	9
Collection of minor forest products, leaves, bamboo etc.	72	28
Collection of fuel, fuel wood etc.	81	19
Collection of raw material for crafts	78	22
Collection of fodder	53	47
Source : Report of the Time Use Survey, Central Statistical Organisation, 2000. Note : Figures based on the number of persons in the sample performing a particular activity		

4. WOMEN AND NATURAL RESOURCES' GOVERNANCE

Though there was enough evidence on the ground on women's role in natural resource management, India's Five Year Plans for a long time did not integrate women's empowerment efforts with natural resource governance. There is no national policy to promote women's equal ownership, control and use of natural resources - water, land, forests or clean energy. Even the National and State-level Action Plans on Climate Change do not promote gender-disaggregated vulnerability assessments and adaptive measures, including equal participation in disaster risk reduction planning and preparedness. The Women and Child Development Ministry and its State-level departments have no mandate to work on women and environmental resources. There is no post for this purpose.

The Sixth Plan 'Women and Development' chapter urged 'economic emancipation' and 'opening up' of opportunities for employment and income for women but the focus was to increase their access and control over material and social resources, not natural resources. The eighth plan (1992-97), following India's 1991 structural adjustment, went further by including 'empowerment of women' for the first time and the chapter on 'Environment and Forests' put forth the task of formulating a 'comprehensive national policy on nature and natural resources' that would also spell out the 'environmental needs...and rights of the weaker sections such as nomads, women and children, especially in terms of giving access to and control over natural resources.' This clubbing of women with children and nomads indicated the low importance the planners gave to women's roles and responsibilities with regard to natural resources.

The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) was more progressive. The chapter on 'Empowerment of women and development of children' had a small sub-section on environment which acknowledged women's agency in conserving the environment and the need to make

Box 4: New NRM-based Institutions for women

Women run the Mahila Umang Producers Company Ltd. as shareholders in Uttarakhand. Organised also as SHGs these women save about Rs.12.00 lakhs a year to provide small loans to members and extend the balance to the company as working capital. The interest rate they charge is slightly higher than the prevailing bank interest rate. The principle followed is Fair Trade where every rupee earned through sale of its products goes to the producer. Products are marketed under the brands Kumaoni and HimKhadya and include hand-knitted woolens, fruit preserves, pickles, honey, traditional spices, walnuts and an entire range of organic foodgrains. Producer-owners own all assets and run the business. Umang distributes an annual bonus to all its members in proportion to their individual contribution to the business. An interesting example is the the "Market of the Walk-Outs" or the Sangam Market of Deccan Development Society in Telangana.

'necessary provisions...to reflect women's perspectives in policies and programmes for management of eco-systems and natural resources.' The Plan proposed a 'women's component plan' with at least 30% funds marked for women-specific programmes. Yet, this budgetary component and women's empowerment in accessing and controlling natural resources was not made either on paper or on the ground. The gap has remained as gender budgeting has failed to take off in sectors which matter most to women's survival and livelihoods – agriculture and allied activities and disaster risk reduction.

In subsequent Plans, women's economic empowerment has been closely linked with self-help groups. The focus, however, has been more on thrift and credit, where success has come with substantial help from NGOs, than on using these groups as means to increase women's control over the natural resources on which they depend. Of course, as some critical studies⁷⁹ have shown, women's groups are successfully able to regenerate environmental resources and garner higher benefit from them. Yet, they remain outside the mainstream governance structures.

Following proposals and commitments in various Plans to involve women in managing natural resources, women are involved in managing water, agriculture, livestock, fisheries and forestry resources across government programmes through village-based and district-level institutions such as Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Board, watershed committees, forest committees and irrigation water users associations. On a positive note, there are mandated spaces for women in these decentralized natural resource management institutions. These institutions have been successful in the field where there has been hand-holding by local grassroots organizations - to both mobilize poor and marginalised women to participate meaningfully in these institutions; and to create a more conducive environment within these institutions.

There is a growing realization that forest conservation and protection efforts can only partially succeed if they do not involve women⁸⁰. There is an important role that women have played in governance of forests in a variety of institutional shapes it has taken whether it is social forestry, or JFM (Joint Forest Management) or CFM (Community Forest Management). Research has found that groups with a high proportion of women in their executive committee show significantly greater improvements in forest condition, mainly due to women's contributions to improved forest protection and rule compliance, in addition to women using their knowledge of plant species as well as greater cooperation amongst

women⁸¹. It has been documented that groups with more women in executive committees in forest governance and especially all-women ECs tend to make stricter rules which is attributable to these groups receiving smaller and more degraded forests⁸². Research in this area has covered not just women's relative exclusion but in the recent past, how their proportional strength being increased could make a difference. Here, research studies show that in community forestry institutions, the group's gender composition affects women's effective participation, with 'critical mass effects' seen with proportions of one quarter to one third. Apart from this, women's economic class also mattered when it comes to participation in governance of local forests ('women from disadvantaged households, especially if present in sufficient numbers or with prior exposure to women's empowerment programs can be more outspoken in public forums than women from well off households'). Facilitation by a gender-sensitive NGO or by the forest department also mattered⁸³.

Usually, however, structural barriers related to gender discrimination and biases have stood in the way of these NRM institutions from delivering on women's effective involvement. The shortcomings of JFM with regard to women's meaningful participation have been outlined in an earlier section that discussed forests. With respect to water users associations/societies, membership is usually taken by those who own land. However, even where women become members, they hardly come to the meetings or participate in the decision-making process.⁸⁴ Often, meetings are held when women are out to work on the farms or busy with housework and the timing itself does not suit them.

With regard to ATMA, where 30% of the funds are also supposed to go towards women farmers, women do not participate in Board meetings. Indeed, men just go to their homes to get their thumb impressions.

The objective of watershed committees was mainly restricted, initially, to soil and water conservation but now a more integrated view of natural resource conservation has been taken. Committees comprise not just the landed but the landless, women and youth groups with representation to different social groups like SCs/OBCs etc. Watershed programmes have focused on common property resources too and this had a positive effect on women's practical needs, enabling them to save time in getting water and even fodder. However, there has been a qualitative positive difference where such work has happened with committed NGOs. However, watershed activities have also put additional burden on women and not

benefited them where land development has been the main focus because women do not own the land and are not part of the decisions.⁸⁵ For instance, women have had to turn to new grazing lands or reduce their livestock while afforestation 're-greens' a particular common resource. This has also impeded their collection of firewood. Again, majority of the budget is for land development and women own only a negligible proportion of agricultural land. Landless women often have to contribute their labour to watershed projects and the benefits are not in proportion to their contribution because they have no *de jure* rights over even the commons.

We present here an example of how women's needs often remain unaddressed as part of NRM governance structures, even where women are actively involved in successful environmental 'jobs.'

Canal irrigation is one of the most common means of providing water to farms and water users associations (WUAs) are encouraged to manage these schemes. A study in six villages in Gujarat showed how a canal irrigation project completely bypassed women's needs for water for drinking, cooking, bathing, washing clothes and utensils, homestead agriculture and animals⁸⁶. What came out sharply from the study was women's almost-complete lack of expectation for water from the canals for their needs. When asked about water sources, the canal was not even cited because that was associated only with farm irrigation. When quizzed further, the women said they would prefer to use water from the canal as it flowed closer to their village and would reduce their headloads of water pitchers. Lack of water deepened gender inequalities: in village Vadbar in Mehsana district, women carried water for their men to bathe in the seclusion of their homes; women took their bath in the public though! Worse, women were not part of the management structure for the canals in these villages.

In a more gender-responsive canal irrigation management system, the design of irrigation canals would take it closer to the village homes and incorporate platforms for women to wash and for animals to drink and bathe without damaging the quality of the water. Involvement of women in decision-making about crops to be watered is also essential because shortage of water means the canal authorities – all men – decide when to release how much water and at what frequency. This depends on men's views on what crops need to be planted – often cash crops and not food crops which are preferred by women. Another barrier that prevents

women from participating in the management of canal irrigation is night irrigation. This has been seen to pose a problem especially for women-headed households. While these are the challenges, the study also captured the difference that women's involvement makes: examples of how women manage cash flows better than men by, for example, collecting user fees in advance to avoid defaulters at a later stage. Women are also able to instill more discipline in water-sharing behavior and manage conflicts far better than men. The study recommends working with NGOs wherever possible as this raises efficiency and equity in water management as NGOs often invest in training women and ensuring gender-balanced WUAs.

Even in bodies that statutorily lay down a certain allocated number of posts for women in different institutions like the SDLC (Sub Divisional Level Committee), DLC (District Level Committee) and SLMC (State Level Monitoring Committee), and the Forest Rights Committee in the Forest Rights Act, in implementation, these are not being filled up nor are women empowered to participate, as reports from various states indicate⁸⁷. Similarly, the Biological Diversity Act of 2002 lays down that not less than one third of the Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) of every local body should be women. Till October 2013, 32,221 BMCs have been set up in India⁸⁸. However, there is no data on women's presence or participation available on this front.

Indeed, it appears that these NRM institutions have been able to empower women only where helped by NGOs and that too for a limited period of time. Even where women are members of user groups and various committees, their participation, especially informed and active participation, is limited. They are not effective in the planning and decision-making process of the committee. Landless women and socially marginalised women continue to be left out of these committees. What does work better is when gender-based tasks and responsibilities guide watershed planning and implementation.⁸⁹ In short, some of the structural barriers of gender discrimination continue to plague these NRM institutions. Women, for instance, also do not feel confident in interacting with officials or panchayat leaders. In all these institutions, where women are involved, they still do not enjoy equal sharing of benefits from natural resources.⁹⁰ Capacity building is also not core to these institutions though it is critical for better and more inclusive functioning.

Social mobilization and addressing the structural gender barriers will help improve gender-equitable governance of these committees. This includes building women's assets, expanding

their opportunities vis-à-vis markets, skill- and knowledge-building, and ensuring informed participation on authoritative platforms through mobilization and capacity building. The role of grassroots organizations as enablers and making the official machinery more accountable to women's participation are key to better governance in the natural resource sector. There are also some new age initiatives led by women's collectives that are emerging which re-define market spaces for sustainable NRM coupled with livelihood improvement.

At another level, environmental governance related to Environmental Planning, Environmental Impact Assessments as well as Biosafety Assessments at present do not integrate women's interests. During an EIA, for instance, the gender impact assessment projects is not mandatorily studied. Needs assessment and assessment of alternatives do not precede or get integrated into such impact an assessment, using a gender lens, for example. These are gaps in governance regimes which are gender-blind.

5. WOMEN, DISASTERS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

"A gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management and education and training."

Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015.

In this section we discuss why disasters are not gender neutral and how climate change is making the current situation worse for women. Rural and urban poor women are especially affected first and worst by disasters with reasons being more gender-based than biological. This is because women already have lesser education, opportunities, authority and resources than men to cope with disasters or even climate risks.

India is one of the world's most disaster-prone countries and has diverse geographical regions, biodiversity and sharp regional variances with regard to human development. Recurring and worsening floods, droughts and cyclones in rural and urban areas have been impacting people, property, biodiversity and environmental resources with little rehabilitation and restoration. The worsening flood situation in Assam and Eastern Uttar Pradesh, intense rain-induced floods in Uttarakhand and Mumbai and the recent cyclone Hudhud in the city of

Visakhapatnam are examples. Climate change is adding a new layer of vulnerability to sustainable development-impeding and eroding development gains in villages and cities alike. It may seem that disasters affect women and men equally but studies have shown that more women than men die and suffer during and after disasters⁹¹. Climate change is also worsening the gender divide as women, less resourceful and more dependent on environmental resources, do not have the wherewithal to deal with new climate risks.

India's environmental resources are under particular stress from natural disasters like droughts, desertification, floods, cyclones/sea surges, coastal flooding, forest fires, avalanches, erosion, landslides, tsunamis⁹² and earthquakes which affect about 85% of the country. The Himalayan region is prone to earthquakes and landslides while the alluvial plains on the foothills are flood-prone. The western parts of the country, and a section of the Deccan plateau, are affected by droughts. The coastal areas are prone to cyclones and sea storms. The same region can also be visited by multiple catastrophes. In sum, the extent of threats to the large number of women working with natural resources is very big indeed.

In recent times, climate change is influencing both the profile and the behaviour of disasters. This includes sea-level rises, cloud bursts and a rise in the unpredictability and intensity of extreme events including heat waves, cold waves and intense rainfall. For example, climate change-induced abnormal events include the unprecedented 2013 floods in Uttarakhand and the 2014 floods in Jammu and Kashmir. Both followed intense rains for 3-4 consecutive days among other factors. The 2013 Phailin and 2014 Hudhud 'severe' cyclones were also climate-induced events. New areas are getting flooded or becoming prone to droughts. And flood-prone areas are experiencing droughts and vice versa!⁹³ States and Union Territories face multiple hazards and climate uncertainties have led to bizarre events like downpour-induced floods in the arid district of Bikaner, Rajasthan and erratic rainfall patterns-induced droughts in the low-lying flood plains of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Assam. The unpredictability of events has made it even more difficult for resource-poor rural people, especially women, to deal with the climate risks.

There is also a direct correlation between poverty and multiple disasters. States visited by recurring floods, droughts or cyclones cannot support agrarian livelihoods and biomass-based basic needs because of the eroded resource base. Some of the poverty-stricken regions include the flood-prone areas of Eastern Uttar Pradesh, Northern Bihar, Northern Bengal, Assam and coastal flood areas in Orissa; the drought-prone areas in Rajasthan, Marathwada

region in Maharashtra, Northern Karnataka and Telangana; and the cyclone-prone areas in coastal Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Orissa. Climate change is expected to have severe impacts on the hydrological cycle, water resources, food security, health and other related areas, eroding India's developmental gains, deepening poverty, impoverishing the already resource-poor women and widening the gender gap.

5.1. Disasters and environmental resources

Climate projections say there has been a gradual increase in the frequency of hot days while the frequency of cold days have shown a 'significant' decreasing trend over the period 1970-2005. The spring snow cover of Western Himalayas has been declining and the snow has been melting faster from winter to spring after 1993.⁹⁴ This has affected temperature and availability of water and put extra stress on women.

The fact that India is the world's 10th most disaster-prone country and extremely vulnerable to climate change impacts makes it critical for the Central and the State governments to invest not just in saving lives – as was ably demonstrated in cyclones 2013 Phailin in Odisha and the 2014 Hudhud in the city of Vishakapatnam, Andhra Pradesh – but to also act to protect its key environmental resources – land, water, wetlands, biodiversity, forests, etc. – needed to ensure livelihoods, food and water security of survivors and the larger population, mostly women.

Effects on all environmental resources are not mapped as losses. Only life and commercially important property – built property and commercial environment resources like cropland, timber forests and livestock - are assessed as economic losses. Women engage more with the non-market economic resources like land under kitchen gardens, small ruminants, common property resources like wastelands, grazing lands degraded forests, ponds and biodiversity as well as beach spaces where they dry, grade and process the fish caught by their menfolk. These economically valuable environmental resources are not in the reckoning though women survivors more than men need these for their livelihoods, food and water security. So does India's larger agrarian economy.

5.2. Climate change and environmental resources

In an agrarian economy, the worst impacts of climate change are on agriculture. This is because most of India's agriculture is carried out in flood, drought or cyclone-prone regions

so the worsening disasters make agriculture even more vulnerable. Coupled with this are the changing, and unpredictable, climate change parameters like erratic rainfall and temperature patterns, wind profile and speeds and extreme events like downpours, wind gusts and temperature peaks. These play havoc with the agricultural cycles, livestock production, aquatic catch and the tree-line in the forests.

The whole farming community is affected, but women are more affected than men (Table 5). More women than men are engaged in most of the agrarian tasks including on tea and coffee plantations; undertaking up to 80% of activities associated with growing paddy, dominating livestock rearing and collection of non-timber forest produce, including medicinal herbs, and of course discharging the duty of supplying water, fodder and firewood to households. For instance, tribal women in India use almost 300 forest species for medicinal purposes.⁹⁵ As discussed elsewhere in the report, forests are also food-producing habitats and provide nutritious uncultivated foods of a great diversity to forest-dependent communities – women take the lead in gathering of such wild foods to this day. The knowledge associated with women’s work with natural resources is also under threat and is being eroded.

Table 5: Whose livelihoods are affected more?		
Eco-system Changes	Livelihoods Changes	Vulnerability Levels
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Soil moisture on farm land and vegetable gardens affected. ◆ Reduced water availability for agriculture, kitchen garden, livestock, domestic use ◆ Lower availability of firewood/other fuel ◆ Lower availability of grazing patches and fodder ◆ Lower availability of edible weeds, seeds, fruits and herbs in the wild - from forests and common areas. ◆ Lower availability of wild fishes, mussels, small crabs, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Grain production, vegetables and fruits production fall. ◆ Livestock rearing more difficult. ◆ Forest products – range reduces. ◆ Fish production/processing lower ◆ Lower availability of farm labour with lower productivity and lower incomes ◆ Lower non-farm labour as a result of lower agricultural products and income. ◆ Less inputs for food processing. ◆ Less inputs for artisanal crafts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Most women grow horticulture products. ◆ Women dominate livestock management. ◆ Women dominate collection of non-timber forest produce. ◆ Men dominate timber produce. ◆ Women work on all on-shore activities; men primarily on off-shore fishing. Women also catch fish on inland ponds and on farm ponds. ◆ More women work on food processing. ◆ Many women artisans.
<p>Source: Adapted from Stockholm Environment Institute’s analysis of vulnerability in Kapoor (2011).</p>		

Climate change has very specific impacts on different aspects of farming and this impacts women's socio-economic welfare. Women and girls get least to eat when food production is affected. In village after village across States like Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and arid Andhra Pradesh, women said they had learnt to go to bed hungry when things get really tough⁹⁶. Apart from food security and worsening malnutrition among girls and women, they also face higher domestic violence, trafficking and threats of HIV/AIDS when migrant men return to the villages. In Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh, for instance, women said successive droughts were the cause of distress migration and trafficking of girls from poor families. So much so that now there are NGOs working on trafficking in the district⁹⁷.

There is also a need to address future impacts of climate change that will happen even if adaptive measures have been taken. These are expected and unexpected impacts that cannot be stopped. These impacts may be permanent, referred to here as 'loss,' or repairable, referred as 'damage.' These can, for instance, be floods in new areas; consecutive drought seasons, destruction of infrastructure due to intense and continuous rains, acute water scarcity or complete crop loss due to sudden increase in temperature and/or heat waves. Loss and damage will also be non-economic, like a fall in food security or emergence of new diseases. There is a need to plan for loss and damage now but to do so taking into account gender vulnerabilities and capacities to deal with the impacts.

Women will be affected more by loss and damage because of current gender disparities and because men and women have different roles and responsibilities. Many of the non-economic losses will be felt by women more acutely. For instance, women will experience worsening of malnutrition, disruption of social relations due to higher migration, loss of cultural heritage and higher care duties.

5.3. Gender-based vulnerabilities

Disasters affect women's survival and dignity. Women's lives are threatened more than the lives of men.⁹⁸ For instance, better-fed and less anaemic men and boys have stronger survival rates, especially in the first 24-48 hours before outside relief arrives. Women and girls have far lesser opportunities to learn running, swimming, rowing boats or climbing trees – skills needed during floods, cyclones and tsunamis. Girls and women often can't run to safe places quickly because they have their infants, young ones or the elderly with them. Disasters lower women's life expectancy much more than men's, said a 141-country UNDP study of disasters

during 1981-2002. It said that women, girls and young boys are 14 times more likely to die during disasters than men, where the socio-economic status of women is low⁹⁹. The IPCC AR5 report¹⁰⁰ says that mental disorders and post-traumatic stress syndromes linked to age and gender have been observed in disaster-prone areas.

India's blueprint for climate change, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), notes that the impacts of climate change would prove 'particularly severe' for women. Increasing scarcity of water, reduction in yields of forest biomass and increased risks to human health would make children, women and the elderly in a household more vulnerable. With decline in foodgrains, malnutrition would increase. All these would add to the deprivations that women already encounter. Socially marginalised people, such as scheduled castes (SCs), who tend to have their habitation in low-lying flood-prone areas, will also be more vulnerable to climate vagaries. Lower caste women, facing the triple burden of poverty, caste and gender, and denied access to the village well, particularly during dry seasons, will have to walk further to collect water and fodder. Scheduled Tribes (STs), especially women from the communities, largely still dependent on incomes from forest products, agriculture and livestock and are expected to become more vulnerable due to climatic vagaries.

During disasters, women and men face very different problems. In flood-prone areas, women do not own boats and cannot always row boats. This is different in different regions. In the flood plains of northern Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Orissa this is truer than in Assam or Arunachal Pradesh where women are more self-reliant. Again, this varies according to their background. Tribal women in the northeast are more likely to row boats than non-tribal women in the other parts of the flood plains. Interestingly, a study of the floods in tribal parts of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh shows that these people have 'learnt to live with floods' by building their homes on stilts, raising fish in paddy fields, storing food and water for the rainy season and ensuring there is a flood shelter for their animals¹⁰¹.

In arid regions again, women in different states have different levels of vulnerability depending on socio-cultural norms. Rajasthan women, for instance, face greater strictures on mobility than women in Telangana even if this is to fetch drinking water from afar. There are some regional differences in how women in cyclonic areas are affected. In the Sunderbans, for instance, women engage more in agriculture with fishing restricted to ponds on their fields rather than the sea. In coastal Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, women are an active part of the fishing community. So women in the Sunderbans fall back on poultry for survival when

cyclones wash away their crops. In coastal Orissa and Andhra Pradesh, women have to rely on wage labour outside their villages¹⁰².

Shelter during disasters is another area for gross discrimination. In flood zones, women have to live in full public view on higher surface, usually roads or embankments. There are no toilets, no bathing spaces, no place to change or maintain hygiene. With no resources and with water all around, women are still responsible for getting fuelwood, cooking, bringing drinking water and fodder. In places like Eastern Uttar Pradesh and even Bihar, women are not 'permitted' to mix freely even with men of their own village. Women find it stressful, even traumatic, to live with 'other' men from their own village and with men from adjoining villages¹⁰³.

Caste, age, class, religion and ethnic background also make a difference to how women respond to disasters. For instance, higher caste women often wait till the last minute to rush to higher ground while the lower caste women, allowed greater mobility, move faster.¹⁰⁴ Women-headed families with adolescent girls often stay at home despite threats from rising waters and snakes so as not to expose their daughters to 'strange' men. 'Pregnant women, lactating mothers, young mothers and mothers with small children are especially vulnerable because they find it difficult to fulfill their basic needs and cannot avail the required nutrition food and clean water.

Women find it very difficult to deal with heat waves, droughts and high summer temperatures because they have to walk in the heat to get water, firewood and fodder, often for much longer distances. Women, compared to men, have fewer tools to help them do farm work so most of the work done is with hands and the hot soil leaves them with calloused hands. Women say they find it difficult to roll *ragi* morsels with their hands after they work with dry and hot soil for long hours. Women have to water their plants and give water to their animals more often. Workload either increases or, with long droughts, they face loss of income and food security because their animals die and water sources shrink¹⁰⁵.



Early warning information reaches men before it reaches women. The government is improving its early warning systems and evacuations but the first 48 hours, before food can

arrive from the outside, are very critical for children, pregnant and lactating mothers and the elderly.

5.4. Recovery from disasters

Given that gender remains on the margins of relief initiatives, interventions during rescue, relief, recovery and reconstruction phase are also gender-blind. A key reason for this is that disaster risk reduction has not yet been integrated into development policies and programmes, especially those that deal with overcoming social and economic vulnerabilities.¹⁰⁶ Another basic problem in the recovery stage is lack of identity documents, especially with women. In the case of the 2013 Uttarakhand floods, for instance, this was witnessed because of lack of proper documents. The third key point is lack of gender-disaggregated data, especially with regard to mortality and morbidity post a disaster. While this is not an easy task, it can be done as was done in the non-governmental studies of Tsunami by some humanitarian agencies¹⁰⁷. Significantly, women form a substantial proportion of the poor people and those in the informal sector, who comprise a larger proportion of those affected by disasters.¹⁰⁸

Shelter and livelihoods are two critical dimensions of the recovery phase. Land or houses are often in the name of men or at best in the joint name of spouses. Women's ornaments are not counted as part of the losses. Married women seldom receive a house in their name as part of a recovery programme. Single women and surviving daughters are not prioritized. Building homes that take into account women's needs is also important. For example, post tsunami, women's needs included a larger work place in the homes, more storage space, more safety provisions, a water tank and a toilet near the house. They also wanted a place for their cattle. Men, on the other hand, had no such requirements expressed¹⁰⁹.

In terms of livelihoods, there are four essential needs for women:

- One, training in new skills that they can use immediately. For example, NGOs trained women to be masons to build resilient homes after the 2001 Gujarat earthquake and this became a very successful programme.
- Two, women require money. The Tamil Nadu government promoted self-help groups and gave them credit and motivated them to form rescue teams and become part of the recovery process. An assessment of the programme showed that 62% of these women participated in the subsequent panchayat elections¹¹⁰.

- Three, micro-insurance to secure life, tools, livestock and other assets of women and girls. Disaster risk insurance of houses owned by women and their assets can help them recover faster and be more resilient to future disasters.
- Four, restoration of livelihoods. Post the tsunami, affected fishermen were helped by state government to get boats and nets and funds to re-start their work but women's livelihoods needs were not addressed. These included, for instance, tools for on-shore activities like kits to make nets, spaces to dry and sort out fish and local markets to sell the produce.

What is required is a clear integration of gender perspectives into India's disaster management policies and programmes, backed by sound disaster preparedness and realistic gender-disaggregated data related to livelihoods and assets, for the recovery phase.

6. WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order...to enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

Article 14, CEDAW

Providing adequate and reliable environmental services – safe drinking water, sanitation, safe waste disposal and clean energy – continues to be one of India's biggest challenges, with inadequate attention and public investment at present. While rural areas are worse off, rapidly urbanizing areas too have huge gaps between demand and supply, putting an extra burden on women whose gender-based tasks include providing homes with these basic services. It is also seen that their own safety is at risk when confronted with lack of such basic services like toilets, and when go for open defecation.

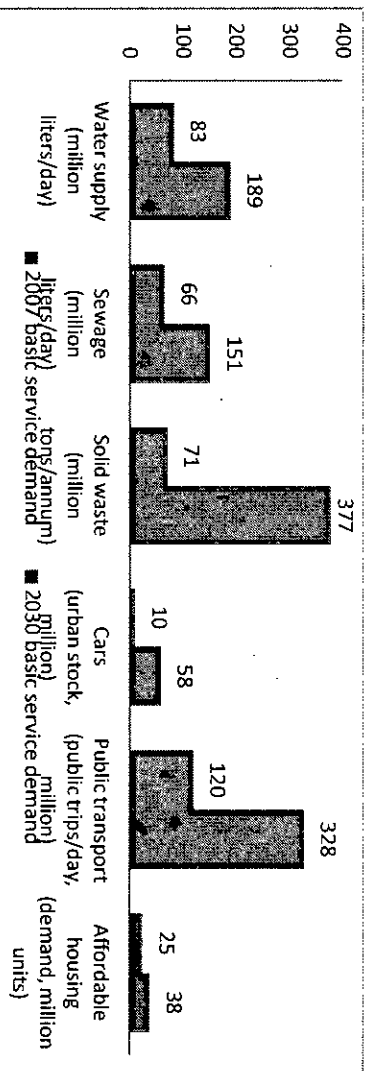
Fetching firewood and water is an additional work that women perform, subsidizing the government for its lack of performance on this front. It is laborious, a health hazard, full of drudgery and negates their quality of life. Among the urban poor too, whose numbers are consistently rising, poor women and girls have to bring firewood and water because municipalities are unable to meet the demand.

As India urbanises, it requires more environmental resources and better governance. However, much of the growth is expected to be in burgeoning rural areas and peri-urban areas which will be outside the structures of urban governance and urban infrastructures for water and sanitation¹¹¹ and where involving women in planning and decision-making will be very difficult.

Paucity of data is a challenge because it hinders realistic assessment of the problem. The NSSO conducts periodic surveys on housing conditions. Slum and urban development departments have some details and Census 2001 gathered data for the first time on access to clean water, toilets and sanitation and clean fuel in cities. However, there are large gaps in the data itself. Several areas like waste management are not covered though hygiene and waste disposal are the responsibility of women and girls. Data between agencies also varies. Some data¹¹² often exceeds official figures by over 100%, making it even more difficult to assess ground reality.

Addressing the crisis of environmental services requires real-time data because multiple factors influence provision of public services in cities and towns. For instance, residents range from daily migrants to higher income groups, each throwing up different challenges. While daily migrants, especially women, may not have any domicile documents with them to avail of water connections or piped gas connections, richer people drain groundwater by digging personal tubewells in their backyard and pollute the air by using generators. Given the estimate of the magnitude of environmental services that may be required just in urban India over the next decade-and-a-half (Fig 1), there is **an urgent need to increase public investment in these environmental services manifold**, explore cross-subsidies and build in the environmental costs to ensure sustainability of the resources. In sum, there is **a need for a legal framework for entitlements to environmental services and their regulation with women playing a central role in governance, including planning and operationalising the services backed by realistic gender budgets.**

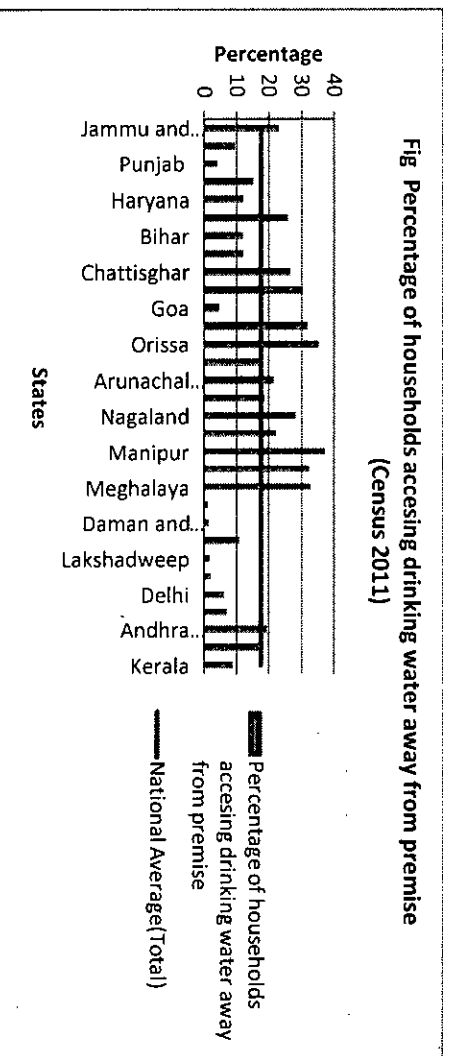
Fig. 1 : Projected urban demand for resources in 2030



Source: McKinsey Global Institute (2010) India's urban awakening: Building inclusive cities, sustaining economic growth. McKinsey & Company. April 2010.

6.1. Women's burden for basic services

Fig. 2

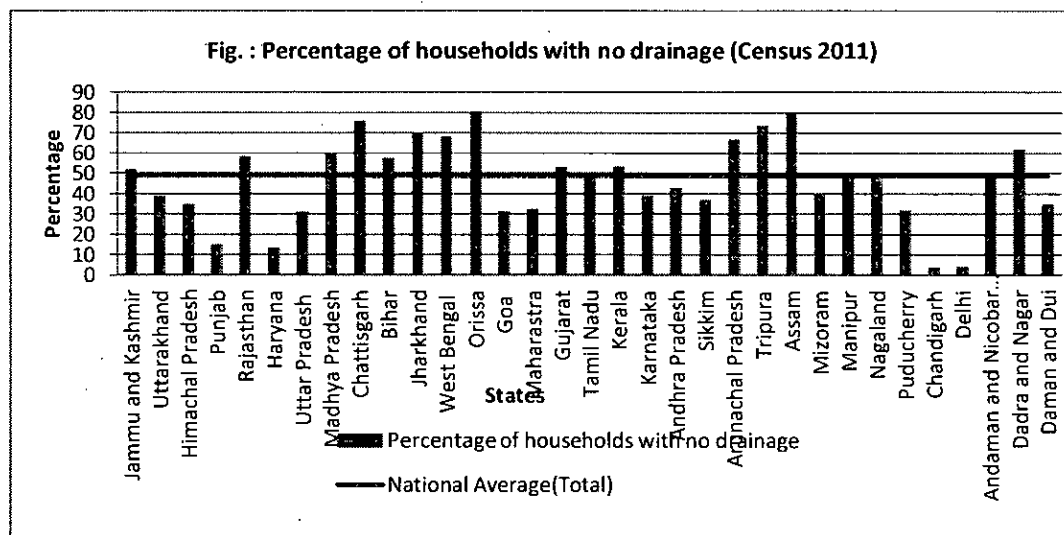


Census 2011 reveals that nearly half (49.2%) of all households still defecate in the open with Jharkhand topping the list with 77% households. Odisha follows with 76.6% and Bihar with 75.8% households. Even economically better-off States like Gujarat, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu have 40-50% open defecation. Sanitation facilities are a matter of concern with half of the households having no drainage connectivity and 80% of households having open drains. Over a third (36%) of the households have to fetch water from a distance - 500m in rural areas and 100m in urban areas. An overwhelming 85% of rural women still

use firewood, crop residue or cow dung as cooking fuel; 23% of urban women also rely on biomass.¹¹³ Use of LPG as clean energy saw a 61% hike between 2001-2011 but less than 30% of households use LPG.

Some of the State-level differences (see Fig 1 above and Fig 3 below) in accessing key environmental services are quite educative. For instance, women in North-eastern States are among those who have to get water from up to half-a-kilometer from their home, mostly in hilly areas, and face health hazards with open drainage. There is also high out-migration of men and boys from the north-east States, including the flood-prone and soil erosion-prone Assam, because of recurrent disasters, poor economy and ethnic conflicts. Most of the work with accessing environmental services is the responsibility of middle-aged to elderly women. Other States, with no drainage systems lie in the poorer central and eastern belt – West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh – with large tribal population.

Fig 3



Safe drinking water from the tap is available to only half of India's households, an increase over the past decade. However, many more households are using hand-pumps, tubewells/borewells, tanks, lakes and other such public sources than a decade earlier.

There are also fragile occupations linked with environmental resources. These include, for instance, rag-picking where a substantial number of women and girls work. Worse, dry

latrines –public and private - are still functioning, especially in low income slums and peri-urban areas, where women, mostly from scheduled castes constitute over 95% of the scavengers even though this is illegal under Indian law. Women scavengers face huge health hazards in this job and operate without any protective gear. Their work is



also undignifying and involves huge discrimination, including untouchability. With regard to sanitation and hygiene, where water is not available in the house, women have to often take a bath in public places. In a village in Bundelkhand, Madhya Pradesh, for instance, women have to sit at a handpump in the middle of a village square to wash clothes, bathe their children and themselves – in a society which is still fiercely feudal and where violence against women is still amongst the highest.

The issues of dignity, safety and sheer physical discomfort with an open defecation situation are numerous for women and girls.

With regard to firewood, women often have to carry up to 35kg on their heads for long distances. Before the rainy season and the northern winters, women have to work harder to store adequate fuelwood for use later. In poorer households, women use more cow dung – a trade-off since they cannot then use it as farm manure even for their vegetable plants. They also collect crop waste, twigs and leaves where firewood is more difficult to get. It means the fire will not burn for long so the quickest meal has to be cooked.

There is a need for women to ‘own’ water supply connections and LPG connections in their names, receive direct subsidies for building toilets and buying improved cook stoves because they are responsible for supplying these services at home. This will also give them economic control for these services as women are often responsible for managing household budgets for these services.

6.2. Climate change and environmental services

Environmental degradation, rise in pollution and the climate crisis have all been depleting the natural resources required for environmental services. The last few decades has seen a fall in

per capita availability of water in India. This is due to a rise in population, expansion of irrigated areas which use maximum water, over-use/depletion of water resources, degradation of water resources making them unfit for consumption and wastage of water. From 5177 cubic meters in 1951, the per capita availability declined to 1820 cubic meters in 2001 and fell sharply to 1545 cubic meters in 2011.

Add to this, river water pollution due to discharge of domestic and industrial effluents and fluoride and arsenic contamination in the groundwater across several States. The arid and semi-arid States of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu are fluoride-affected. Newer areas are now emerging in Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Maharashtra.¹¹⁴ Arsenic is found in the groundwater in West Bengal, Bihar and some parts of Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Chhattisgarh and newer areas now being mapped include the north-eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Tripura.¹¹⁵ Women are particularly susceptible to the pollution and contamination because their exposure routes are numerous and longer.

Climate risks become acute in urban settlements because of higher population densities and, in many places, high density of buildings. Environmental services become disrupted and damage to infrastructure makes it very hard to resume these services, as was recently evident in the city Vishakapatnam post cyclone Hudhud and in J&K when it was flooded. Poor planning also leads to dense settlements in high risk areas – like river-beds and other low-lying areas. Coupled with sea-level rises and extreme events, large-scale displacement become necessary but provision of environmental services becomes a serious problem with women and girls facing the brunt.

Extreme events like intense rains and subsequent floods also disrupt drainage and sewerage systems and contaminate drinking water. Heat waves can cause damage to electrical wiring and lead to fires. It can also lead to high demand for energy for air conditioners and cold chains. Cold waves can put cause pressure on energy sources as heating requirements increase. Studies on urban-based disasters elsewhere show that especially women in the lower income groups record higher impacts and their recovery is slower than men's recovery.¹¹⁶ The reasons for this include gender-blind relief and recovery policies to existing gender gaps.

Land use changes which do not take into account protection and sustenance of environmental resources and the ecology of the place also spell disaster in the wake of climate change. The 2014 floods in Srinagar, for instance, were caused by unplanned urbanization which overrode the water bodies needed for proper water discharge. A 2008 study¹¹⁷ used satellite imagery to compare lakes, wetlands and built-up land in 2004 with the archive topographical maps of 1911 to find that 50% of the water bodies had been lost during the last century, affecting the micro climate of the city and exposing it to flood threat. As early as the 6th five-year plan, it was acknowledged that coastal urban towns and cities, including Mumbai, Cochin and Kolkata have lost their 'ecological' guards with the 'ill-conceived' reclamation¹¹⁸ of water bodies and marsh lands. Un-regulated and uncontrolled mining in the Aravali range of hills in Rajasthan has led to lowering of the groundwater table, deforestation and land degradation among other adverse impacts.¹¹⁹

All this makes the case for involving women in planning and decision-making very strong. When women get their space in decision-making fora, their needs will get prioritised. Men tend to focus more on productivity and economic growth than on sustainability of resources for everyday life.

6.3. Women and Contamination/Environmental Health Effects from Environmental Toxins

Economic growth, through industrialisation, intensive agriculture and urbanisation, all lead to increase in pollutants in our environment, contaminating our air, water and land. India's industrialisation brought with it hazardous wastes, and the case of Bhopal shows how obsolete/discarded technologies are adopted by the industry in developing countries like India. On the other hand, lack of access to clean fuel has continued the dependence of the poor households on biomass as cooking fuel, which creates indoor pollution. All these together have severe health impacts on the entire population and more so on women, even as they cause environmental degradation. The environmental pollution is on account of industrial effluents from chemical plants/power plants/refineries/various kinds of factories etc., agro-chemicals, radioactive fallout, plastics, persistent organic pollutants, heavy metals, municipal landfills, vehicles, various hazardous "wastes", some biological agents and other such pollutants.

While there are social determinants that influence a differential exposure to toxins for men and women (occupational profiles, for example; or cooking with hazardous fuels, for instance), physiologically, a woman's body is more vulnerable to pollutants and toxins for a few reasons. They tend to be smaller, with thinner skin, higher percentage of body fat and a different hormonal make up than men¹²⁰. The de-toxification processes are relatively weaker. Further, because of the larger fat tissue presence in a woman's body compared to a man's, the phenomenon of bio-accumulation is higher in a woman's body. Many chemicals are lipophilic and settle in such fat tissues, affecting the woman's health. Several chemicals also mimic female hormones like oestrogen, causing disruption in hormonal balance and functioning. Where exposure to the contaminant is through the skin, it has been seen that a woman's skin is more vulnerable to absorption of the chemical, than a man's.

In an urban setting, or in a setting where women use cosmetics, fragrances, personal care products etc., their vulnerability to the harmful effects, if these chemicals are not safe, is higher just by this behaviour pattern. In a rural setting, many roles that women perform in agriculture bring them into direct exposure to agri-chemicals in the farms. Weeding in pesticide-sprayed fields brings them into multiple routes of exposure to toxic chemicals. Women are known to mix pesticides while helping male sprayers spray these toxins on the crop. This is often done in unsafe conditions with the women using bare hands, exposing themselves to the hazardous substance.

Women are more vulnerable to indoor pollution too, for example in the cooking spaces. For instance poor households live in very poorly ventilated homes. Due to forest degradation, often, the wood available is of poor quality. Women, who are predominantly responsible for social reproduction tasks are at risk of contracting chronic diseases due to indoor air pollution from open fires from cooking.

A woman's exposure to environmental toxins leads to a more direct possibility of inter-generational effects since the contaminants in her body could get transmitted to the foetus through the placenta. A foetus is more vulnerable to the toxins. One of the health impacts is on reproductive health of women, and therefore, their reproductive rights: this could take various forms.

- impact on the age of menarche¹²¹

- ability to conceive – fertility and time to pregnancy or TTP/fecundability (exposure of the male partner to certain toxins like pesticides might also affect a woman’s ability to conceive)¹²²
- ability to bear the foetus through the full term of pregnancy (or undergo spontaneous abortions or premature deliveries – male partner’s pesticide exposure could be one of the reasons)
- stillbirths at delivery¹²³
- low birth weight or congenital defects (including neural tube defects)¹²⁴

In fact, there are indications that changes in sex ratios could also be traced back to biological reasons, where there could be early natural elimination of male (mostly) as well as female embryo/pre-embryo either at the time of conception or during early pregnancy. This is a school of thinking that says that environmental, genetic as well as socio-cultural factors are at play when it comes to adverse sex ratios.

Women’s health is also tied to the workload and labour-related health impacts. Women and girls also face higher health hazards from occupations like solid waste management and scavenging.

Agro-chemicals are a serious set of pollutants that contaminate the soil, water and the food chain. Women, being a large proportion of farm labour, are more at risk with direct exposure than men.¹²⁵ Agenda 21 calls for more sustainable farming practices that include a reduction of pesticides through and enhancement of integrated pest management (IPM). In the Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA) programme in undivided Andhra Pradesh, it was women’s groups which have taken a lead to scale up a large NPM programme (Non Pesticidal Management of crops), after realizing the adverse impacts of pesticides on themselves and their families.

Apart from agri-chemicals in agriculture, a raging debate is underway worldover and in India too on the controversial technology of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) – here too, evidence exists of reproductive health problems with GM foods and the chemicals that accompany most GM crops. In this case too, alternatives that could support women farmers exist, but do not find adequate support.

When it comes to environmental impact assessment or biosafety assessment of chemicals and GMOs, impacts on women, their health and livelihoods do not figure as of now, and need to be woven into the regulatory regime.

As mentioned earlier, women are more vulnerable to water pollution because they handle it more for cleaning and washing. Added to the health hazards of posture, back pain and aching feet that they already face by ferrying up to 15 litres of water per trip, women and girls are more susceptible to diarrhea, hepatitis A and leptospirosis bacterial infections where the open source contains animal urine. In fluoride affected areas, there is a tendency to hide fluorosis in young girls so that their marriage prospects are not affected.¹²⁶ In arsenic areas, girls and women face double discrimination. There is more social stigma attached to girls and young women with arsenic lesions on their skins and yet, there is gender disparity in medical treatment.¹²⁷

Women, and small children, are also more susceptible to indoor pollution caused by cook-stoves using wood and other biomass because they are exposed to them for a long time. Among the effects of indoor smoke is dizziness, headache, nausea and feeling of weakness. Indoor pollution is responsible for 30% of the outside pollution— where young children may be playing.

In the hills, firewood is often used for cooking even when alternatives are available because it serves the dual purpose of heating. Women are exposed to the smoke more than men because of high male out-migration in the mountain States. Almost a third of the Indian households use kerosene for indoor lighting, especially in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Assam which consume half of the kerosene used for lighting in India. In urban India, kerosene is often used for cooking by the poorer households and especially in the slums. Kerosene causes burns and injuries and the fumes are toxic.

The effects¹²⁸ of indoor pollution from cook-stoves are fatal. Over 50% of premature deaths among children under 5 occur because they continuously inhale particulate matter (soot). Non-communicable diseases like stroke, ischaemic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD) and lung cancer are also correlated to indoor pollution from the combustion of these fuels. In poorly ventilated houses, particulate matter can be 100 times more than acceptable limits. Smoke can also exacerbate low-birth weight, tuberculosis, cataract, nasopharyngeal and laryngeal cancers. It then becomes a vicious circle because

unhealthy diet, underweight children or those who have not been breastfed adequately are even more vulnerable to the effects of indoor smoke.

Climate change is adding to health impacts of women because they are increasingly carrying heavier loads of water and firewood from further away even as these resources are dwindling. Risks of injury, insects and animal attacks as well as safety concerns are becoming higher. Fuel combustion in wood cook-stoves is highly inefficient and the high methane emissions are strong climate change pollutants. Among poorer households of landless women, those dependent on degraded wastelands or without *de jure* or *de facto* rights of CPRs often burn the even more inefficient and smoky cow dung, leaves and twigs. With more time and energy spent on meeting their basic needs, women have less time for productive on-farm or off-farm work. This leads to lower food security and worsens malnutrition among women and girls. .

The government has been well aware of the fatal effects of cook-stoves on women. Not prioritizing cleaner fuels like LPG, biomass and solar for cooking has meant higher emissions and loss of forested areas as carbon sinks. This has put additional burden on women so energy poverty and income poverty have become linked in a vicious circle for women, eroding her health, quality of life and status. There is not enough research on the mental stress that women go through because of lack of environmental services. For instance, the NFHS-3 (2005-06) survey reveals that 'neglect of house' was a reason enough for men to beat their wives with more women than men saying this was justified.

One of the reasons for the neglect of cooking fuel has been prioritizing of electricity by the government. Perhaps this has been easier as many villages just have some electric wires strung poles and they are included in the list of electrified villages. With cooking fuel, this would not have been possible. Even now, under the NAPCC, there is more emphasis on lighting and power for pumping water for irrigation than on giving clean energy on a large scale to women for better health and food security. There is an immediate need to convert to clean cooking fuels like LPG and renewable for this would transform their lives and free them from drudgery.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Women are leaders in environmental conservation (whether it be routine conservation-based management of resources or newly-initiated sustainable NRM efforts, or environmental movements spearheaded by women like in the case of Chipko), especially in the rural context. Their well-being also depends on the state of the environmental resources. All environmental conservation activities should therefore keep gendered concerns and women's participation at the centre of such efforts. Environmentally sustainable development would decrease women's drudgery in collecting fuel, fodder and food, as well as reduce environmental health issues for women, and by that improve women's health. Hence, there is a need to improve environmental resources at the local level, in the process of which, local enterprise and employment for women can be created.

Key to combining women's empowerment and environmental conservation objectives is the vesting of ownership and control over resources in the hands of women. Further, any institutional mechanism for governance of environmental resources whether it be forests or land or seed or water or common property resources, should have women at the helm. Appropriate institutions for ensuring equitable ownership and use of these improved natural resources by women should be promoted as this will strengthen the asset base of women and increase their participation in the development process. The knowledge associated with the resources that women carry with them has to be acknowledged and given its due place in any environmental planning and NRM programmes.

Some specific recommendations:

①
4/10/2010
MARD
DO Letter

1. Adopting an environment-centred growth model is an imperative: Environment-friendly growth tends to be employment intensive. Since more than half the population in India is in the primary sector—including an overwhelming majority of women—and directly depends on environmental resources for employment and livelihood, and since the primary sector provides food and nutrition security, it is apparent that these resources should be conserved. There is no other way that our basic development goals around poverty, food and nutrition security, women's empowerment etc., can be met. Therefore, there is a need for 'green growth', and the building of a truly 'green economy' especially in rural India, by greening the primary sector. In fact, large scale employment can be generated through proper

land, water and biodiversity conservation measures and agro-ecological farming technologies; this in turn will mean more incomes for the small and marginal producers and forest-gatherers where most of our women find their livelihood opportunities. Such a growth can also reduce the instability or year-to-year fluctuations in incomes, which, in turn, can reduce the poverty and indebtedness of the agrarian population. Rural Non Farm Sector, including construction and manufacturing, needs to be greened too, wherever such technologies and practices are available.

2. There is an urgent need to **integrate the discourse as well as practice on women's empowerment with the sustainable development and climate change debates** at the national and sub-national level. This requires mandating the Ministry for Women and Child Development to jointly address environmental and climate change issues along with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Panchayat Raj etc., through a new Inter-Ministerial Coordination Council. The MWCD should be able to influence the broad policy directions as well as decisions of MoEFCC, MoA etc., in the context of women's well-being being intimately linked to the state of environmental and productive resources in the field of agriculture, even as it works in coordination with the Panchayat Raj institutions too, from the Ministry downwards, for decentralized, sustainable management of all natural resources. Meanwhile, the National Rural Livelihoods Mission of the Rural Development Ministry also has a specific focus on involving women's collectives into NRM-based livelihood interventions; the MGNREGS also has an enormous potential for ecological regeneration. Given all of this, a joint mechanism in the form of an 'Inter-Ministerial Coordination Council for Engendering Environment Management' has to be evolved for all these ministries to work together, to put in place an Environment-centred, Women-led model of sustainable development and climate change mitigation and adaptation, with the help of all Ministries concerned. An action plan which works out convergence points has to be evolved and implemented through this machinery, with in-built monitoring mechanisms at all levels, all the way to the grassroots.

3. Flowing from the above, grassroots mechanisms also need to be put in place, to deal effectively with environmental degradation and climate change. In this paradigm shift, **issues of land-water-forests-biodiversity are addressed together** rather than in silos through **panchayat-level Equitable Local Action Plans on Natural Resource Management** where

(2)

WCD may

(a) Propose IMCC for engendering Env't Management

(b) Action Plan to be evolved

poor farm-based women are central and integral to sustainable NRM and climate solutions. Women, for instance, play an important role in preserving knowledge about local seed diversities and this is vital in local decision-making on adaptive varieties. Village disaster plans also need to be part of these local action plans, addressing the 3R's – response/rescue, relief and rehabilitation.

4. The need for equitable ownership, control and use of natural resources is critical to secure the asset base of poor and marginalised women and enable them to deal with sustainable NRM and to counter weather shocks and poverty. It is necessary for government programmes to enable women to own, control and access a variety of economically productive assets including land, livestock, forests, leases on common land and water bodies, as also enterprises based on food processing, production of low-input farm inputs, production of decentralized renewable energy and forest based produce.

5. Women need to occupy at least 50% seats in all rural and urban governance institutions – at decision-making, regulatory and implementation levels, with requisite budgets. In sectors where women shoulder larger gender-based responsibilities, as in livestock management, collection of non-timber forest produce, water supply and sanitation and domestic energy, women must occupy a higher proportion of seats in governance structures with proportional gender-based budgets. Much evidence exists of how this leads to better conservation as well as women's empowerment. The government should therefore make it mandatory that all institutions using environmental resources should have 50% membership as well as 50% governance roles to women. This applies to water user associations, forest management committees, forest rights committees, watershed management committees, agricultural cooperative societies, biodiversity management committees etc. etc. This gender-balance should also be maintained in the quorum for their meetings so that all decisions are taken in presence of both men and women. Activating women's presence and participation in the gram sabhas is also very important for actualizing this women-centric approach to NRM. Utilising NREGS funds for eco-restoration for instance, would need to involve women in planning the works that they want to take up.

6. **Promotion of Ecological Agriculture:** There should be reduced dependence on industrial and chemical (intensive, high-external-input) agriculture, which depends on fossil fuels, subsidies and targeted infrastructure such as irrigation. This leads to over use of water, chemicals etc., and makes our farming and food systems unsustainable. This in turn leads to

③ WCD's
DO Letter
to All Ministries
to ensure
increase
advocacy of
their schemes
for equitable
participation of
women.

④ Do Letter
Mo PR & Mo UD
for 50%
seats

greater riskiness in farming, increased unemployment with mechanisation and chemicals like herbicides, greater indebtedness etc. Chemical agriculture has increased pesticide and fertilizer residues in land, water and food chain leading to foetal loss, fertility loss and weak health of the children that are borne. This has a direct relation to women's reproductive rights. Some evidence related to transgenics also indicates the lack of safety of GMOs, and reproductive health-related issues. It is recommended that the main thrust of Indian agricultural policy should be to shift to organic farming, which is also more employment intensive and which has larger role for women than industrial agriculture. Knowledge about diversity of seeds is located with women, and that is very important for local livelihood security, and to build resilient farming systems in the era of climate change. Agro-diversity is the basis of such farming.

⑤ Do. Letter
To Mo. Agri
to promote
organic
farming
encouraging
women's
participation

7. To empower individual women farmers, the **agriculture and related ministries need to revise their approach to 'mainstreaming gender.'** The ministry has adopted what is called the 'Women in Development' approach in feminist literature. Here, women are 'added and stirred' but structures, institutions and mindsets remain unchanged. The current approach to gender mainstreaming - lowering of training costs, enhancing subsidies, earmarking (usually 10%, at best 30%) seats in training programmes and talking of 'small and marginal farmers, including women farmers'¹²⁹ in the same breath, all reflect the 'add and stir' approach. Thus, despite setting up a National Gender Resource Centre for Agriculture (NGRCA), collecting some gender-disaggregated data and rolling out 'gender sensitizing modules' to extension workers, women remain invisible and unaddressed in what is largely perceived as a 'male' occupation, mainly because land ownership rests with men. These initiatives will not result in a critical mass of empowered agrarian women who are able to withstand climate change impacts and take decisive actions. What is required is genuine decentralization of decision-making and control over productive resources, so that women can participate directly in planning and implementation.

8. Conservation of forest resources: Studies show that forest management groups with a higher proportion of women in their principal decision making bodies like Executive Committees show significantly higher improvements in forest conditions, even if such groups had received smaller and more degraded forests. The beneficial impact of women's presence in conservation outcomes has been attributed to their contribution to improved forest protection, rule compliance, more opportunity to women to use their knowledge of plant

species and methods of product extraction as well as greater cooperation amongst women. It has been seen that the nature of (forest governance) rules and the processes by which they are formulated (who participates) critically impact sustainability, equity and conservation outcomes and this has been studied specifically in the context of women's participation. It is important that our approaches to forest resources should acknowledge, appreciate and include the symbiotic relationship between forests and women, with both supporting and reinforcing each other. It should be ensured that forests be seen as food-producing and livelihood-supporting habitats, and not just sources of raw materials for big industry or only as locations which have huge mining potential if removed out of the way. If degraded forests are regenerated, open lands are afforested, village lands are converted into village forests, and saline wastelands are reclaimed by suitable vegetation, large number of women will improve their employment and income, which will have positive effect on the economy.

9. Universal Provision of Environmental Services: Provision of safe drinking water within premises and toilets for all households in the country should be top priority. There is also a need to supply clean energy for basic needs of households including cooking, and ensuring that indoor pollution is not being one of the major environmental health issues in the country.

10. Water Resources: Water resources for domestic use must be made available to all households in rural and urban areas so that it would reduce women's and girls' drudgery in collecting it. This will improve women's health and will increase girl students' participation in education. If land-water management is improved, rain water is harvested through small water harvesting structures, groundwater is recharged with such suitable small localised schemes, it will improve the asset base of a large number of smallholders – a majority of women cultivators are also concentrated in this category. The economic activities thus taken up are called first stage economic activities. Then will be economic activities in the second and third stages. Increase in income of the farmers will promote second stage activities such as self-employment of a significant number of people, which, in turn, will promote their incomes and asset base. Sum total is promotion of equitable development. At this stage, and rate of economic growth all households in rural and urban areas must have access to water supply and sanitation and it is the state's responsibility to provide the same.

11. Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation: The UNFCCC acknowledges the centrality of women in climate change action thus: "It is increasingly evident that women are at the

centre of the climate change challenge. Women are disproportionately affected by climate change impacts, such as droughts, floods and other extreme weather events, but they also have a critical role in combating climate change". Women must be central to all climate solutions because they have a higher interface with natural resources. The government, and specifically the NAPCC and the State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs), must **map gender-based vulnerabilities and capacities for climate solutions to succeed**. Adaptive interventions, as explained elsewhere, also put additional workload on women and this needs to be addressed through better policy interventions. The NAPCC has brought together ministries in-charge of physical resources like water and energy as well as the department of science and technology but finally the change has to be made by people who work with environmental resources on the ground in terms of planning and implementation frameworks. This then requires women to be in key governance posts related to natural resource management. Further, the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women must examine gender implications of the NAPCC and all the State climate plans (SAPCCs), and their implementation so far.

12. Mitigating environmental pollution by adopting correct environmental governance principles: Industrial and other pollution, including hazardous wastes and agricultural technologies, have severe health impacts and more so for women and children. Hence, the principles of 'precautionary approach' and 'polluter pays' needs to be put in practice at all levels including as core principles in regulating hazardous technologies and industries. There are a slew of environmental laws, many of which are weakly implemented, without liability and redressal apparent. The affected populations are forced to fall back on Constitutional provisions to seek legal recourse due to damage to their lives on account of pollution. Hence, 'polluter pays' principle may be effective when these legislative changes are effected. Moreover, the adoption of precautionary principle is important, keeping women's well-being in mind.

13. Mitigation and Management of natural disasters: Improved environmental status will also reduce risks to natural hazards, such as in Uttarakhand. Climate Change's impact on women is disproportionately higher than on men, given their existing vulnerabilities and disadvantages on numerous fronts. India's climate change mitigation and adaptation plans should have a gendered framework adopted. At all stages in a disaster situation (disaster

management beginning with prevention), there should be special policy and programmes for women.

14. Environmental Impact Assessments and Biosafety Assessments: All environmental planning and impact assessments should integrate gender issues. Gender Impact Assessment should therefore be part of EIAs. Biosafety assessments, whether it be related to agrochemicals or genetically modified organisms should also have specific gender analysis and assessment built in (socio-economic considerations are part of the impact assessment framework of the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol ratified by India). Environmental health assessment, specifically with regard to health impacts on women, should also be part of safety assessments in the regulatory regime.

✓ 15. The deployment of large scale **Time Use Surveys** on a regular, periodic basis to capture the relationship between women and environment, without the concepts and definitions around paid and unpaid, economic and non-economic work etc., muddling the picture. This would be a reflection of the state of environment resources, as well as women's well being. These have to be taken up by the government.

16. A moot point here is that the current female workforce in agriculture is aging. Given India's demographic dividend, the younger and progressively better educated women will farm only if it means secure rights over land and other productive resources, less of drudgery and labour, better incomes, access to modern technologies like ICTs and GIS resource-mapping and risk reduction, resource efficiency, climate-resilience, access to basic services, clean energy options and availability of some time for relaxation and recreation.

Annexure Table:	
Women, Environment, Climate Change in International Documents	
Convention/Conference	Description
First World Conference on Women Mexico City, 1975	The conference defined a World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the International Women's Year, which offered a comprehensive set of guidelines for the advancement of women through 1985 that focused on securing equal access for women to resources such as education, employment opportunities, political participation, health services, housing, nutrition and family planning. The CSWI (Committee on Status of Women in India) Report was in the context of the first world conference on women.
Second World Conference on Women Copenhagen, 1980	145 Member States gathered for the mid-decade World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women in Copenhagen to review progress in implementing the goals of the first world conference, focusing on employment, health and education. The Copenhagen Programme of Action also called for stronger national measures to ensure women's ownership and control of property, as well as improvements in women's rights to inheritance, child custody and loss of nationality. Delegates at the Conference also urged an end to stereotyped attitudes towards women. India incorporated a special chapter on 'Women Development' in the Sixth Five Year Plan which can be seen as an effect of the Second Conference.
Third World Conference on Women Nairobi, 1985	The World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the UN Decade for Women had a mandate of establishing concrete measures to overcome obstacles to achieving the Decade's goals. Governments adopted the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, which outlined measures for achieving gender equality at a much broader level covering a wide range of subjects including environment wherein women's role in environmental conservation and management was recognized. At the Third World Conference, UNEP organized a special event on women and the environment and nominating senior women advisers on sustainable development.
The World WIDE (World Women in Environment and Development) Global Assembly on Women and the Environment; Miami, 1991	'The World WIDE (World Women in Environment and Development) Global Assembly on Women and the Environment: Partners in Life' was held in Miami, Florida, United States of America and 218 success stories were presented.
United Nations Conference on Environment and Development Symposium Geneva, 1991	In Geneva, the secretariat for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development holds the symposium Women and Children First: The Impact of Poverty and Environmental Degradation on Women and Children.
First Women's World Congress for a healthy planet Miami, 1991	First Women's World Congress for a healthy planet, also in Miami, develops the Women's Action Agenda 21.

<p>UN Conference on Environment and Development (also known as the Earth Summit) Rio de Janeiro, 1992</p>	<p>The two-week Earth Summit was the climax of a process, begun in December 1989, of planning, education and negotiations among all Member States of the United Nations, leading to the adoption of Agenda 21, a wide-ranging blueprint for action to achieve sustainable development worldwide.</p> <p>Three Conventions adopted at the Summit were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change-UNFCCC • UN Convention on Biological Diversity • Convention to Combat Desertification. <p>Principle 20 (of the Rio Declaration) stated that <i>'Women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development.'</i></p> <p>The Agenda 21, Chapter 24 reflected 'Global Action for Women towards Sustainable Development' in 11 commitments and with specific recommendations to strengthen the role of women in sustainable and beneficial development. Agenda 21 had 145 other references, mentioning the necessary steps to be taken from a gender perspective.</p>
<p>The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Cairo, 1994</p>	<p>A total of 179 governments signed up to the ICPD Programme of Action which set out to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide universal access to family planning and sexual and reproductive health services and reproductive rights; • Deliver gender equality, empowerment of women and equal access to education for girls; • Address the individual, social and economic impact of urbanization and migration; • Support sustainable development and address environmental issues associated with population changes.
<p>Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing, 1995</p>	<p>The Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, adopted unanimously by 189 countries, is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality.</p> <p>This Platform for Action, identified the need to actively involve women in environmental decision-making at all levels, and to incorporate a gender perspective in all strategies for sustainable development, as one of the 12 critical areas of concern requiring action by states, the international community and civil society.</p> <p>The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women took up the issue of women and the environment for discussion during its forty-first session in 1997. The Commission proposed further action to be taken to promote women's active involvement in environmental management</p>

	<p>at all levels, including the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into all environmental policies and programmes.</p> <p>Among the agreed conclusions of the session were measures to encourage gender-sensitive research on the impact of environmental pollutants and other harmful substances, including their impact on the reproductive health of men and women, and the active involvement of women in the development and implementation of policies aimed at promoting and protecting the environmental aspects of human health, such as setting standards for drinking water.</p>
<p>The Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Kyoto, 1997</p>	<p>The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement linked to the UNFCCC. The major feature of the Kyoto Protocol is that it sets binding targets for 37 industrialized countries and the European community for reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. These reductions amount to an average of five per cent against 1990 levels over the five-year period 2008-2012.</p> <p>Gender equity is neither mentioned in the Framework Convention on Climate Change nor in the Kyoto Protocol. It is only recently that some parties, in particular those from Annex II countries, have got aware of the necessity to include gender equality into the debates.</p> <p>A breakthrough was reached at COP (Conference of the Parties to UNFCCC) COP13 in Bali, 2007. For the first time in UNFCCC history, a worldwide network of women was established to bring forth the linkages of gender and climate change/justice along with policy and adaptation issues.</p>

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Chapter 16

Media Representation of Women¹

Introduction

16.1 An independent media performs a certain fundamental role in the daily functioning of a democracy. With the nature of the economy, political structures, social organization as well as the state institutions changing in an evolving global paradigm, the media too has undergone a transformation. Carrying out an appraisal of the media and its engagement with women's issues in India over the past three decades entails a scrutiny of perhaps the most dramatic phase of its

evolution. Not only did the turn of the millennium witness fast-changing technology, but a new era unleashed new voices posing different and difficult questions.

16.2 The contents of communication reflect the values of society which in turn are nurtured and sustained through communication. The media universe is paradoxically both a site of conservative thinking and ideologies as well as a potential agent of social change. The crucial role it can play in determining the status of women has been long recognized by those concerned about ushering in a more gender equal society and state.

16.3 In 1974, the 'Towards Equality' Report expressed dismay that "concern for women and their problems, which received an impetus during the Freedom Movement, has suffered a decline in the previous two decades." It was felt that efforts are needed to be renewed to eradicate deeply entrenched age-old stereotypes and myths about women - *education and the mass media* were seen to be *two important channels to achieve such a transformation*.

16.4 In 1988, the Government of India's 'National Perspective Plan for Women' (NPP) revisiting the recommendations of the 'Towards Equality' Report, reiterated the close links

Chapter Highlights

Introduction

- Liberalisation Globalisation and the Media Boom
- The New Media
- Women's Presence in the Media
- Working Conditions of Women in the Media
- Portrayal and Representation of Women
- Women's Unequal Access to Media
- Engendering Media Spaces
- The Challenge of Regulation

Conclusion and Recommendations

between the media and any intervention aimed to empower women. It called for a “conscious strategic change” to achieve transformation of attitudes towards women and girls in the national media. It went on to recommend the setting up of an expert group that could evolve an engendered communication policy. In a period when the All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan were controlled by the government, the NPP advocated a thorough and ongoing process of monitoring and regulating media content.

16.5 Developments in the quarter century that followed the NPP were to render many of these recommendations irrelevant. With the privatization of the media space in the early nineties, government-controlled media no longer enjoyed complete monopoly of access to the Indian viewer. But it needs to be noted, nonetheless, that the NPP recognized three important aspects of the relationship between the media and women in India that continue to be important today: First, *the lack of sensitivity to women’s concerns that marked media coverage in general*; second, *the sharp difference in access to the media between men and women in the country, with women having far less media exposure*; third, *the need to include gender sensitization in media pedagogy*.

Liberalisation, Globalisation and the Media Boom

16.6 For the Indian media, the consequences of economic restructuring and the opening of the media markets were decisive, especially in terms of multiplying media presence and technologies. The first decade of liberalisation added \$200 billion to India’s GDP, the second, 1.2 trillion, and the third is expected to add 1 trillion – almost all of this coming via consumption. It is important to note here that the first 15 years of the post-liberalisation period was all about the penetration of markets, with the media – in particular advertising – coming to play a central role to assist this process.

16.7 Newspaper circulations nearly trebled in the decade of the nineties – from 21.9 million in 1990 to 58.3 million in 1999. According to the Registrar of Newspapers for India (RNI), the total number of registered publications in India stood at 99,660 as on 31st March 2014, with 13,761 in the newspaper category and 85,899 in the periodicals category. There were 5642 new publications registered in 2013-14 alone. The total circulation of publications during 2013-14 stood at 450.6 million². Such a mushrooming of media players would not have taken place without economic liberalisation.

16.8 A similar burgeoning marked the electronic media. In the late 1980s, most homes with TVs had access only to the state broadcaster, *Doordarshan*. As on 30th April 2014, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has permitted 795 private satellite TV channels, out of which 393 channels are in the category of 'news and current affairs', and the remaining are in 'non-news and current affairs' category³. The number touched 832 by 9th April 2015⁴. 406 of these are News and Current Affairs channels; 93 are foreign channels with uplinking facilities elsewhere. Simultaneously, the number of television set owning households grew rapidly— from 134 million in 2010 to 148 million in 2012, with 69 million urban owners and 79 million located in rural areas.

16.9 When it came to the radio, while the dissemination of news and current affairs remains a monopoly of the government's AIR with its 403 stations; there were 839 FM radio channels in 294 cities by April 2014⁵. The market size of the radio sector was around 14 billion rupees in 2012-13, with almost 40 radio broadcasters providing services.

16.10 By the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century, the impact of the convergence of telecommunications, satellite communication, and information technology in the form of the internet and the worldwide web, was rapidly being felt. This was the birth of *the new media*. If economic liberalisation had reshaped old media, it controlled the contours of new media from its inception, expediting a phenomenal growth. Take mobile telephony, for instance. By 31st January 2015, there were 78.66 million mobile device users (phones and dongles); 952.34 million wireless (mobile) phone subscribers in India. Out of this, 553.45 were urban Indians and the remaining are from rural India⁶.

16.11 In 2012, according to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), urban India had a mobile telephone subscriber base of 587.90 million, while that for rural India stood at 334.58 million. Mobile phones, in turn, have become an important point of internet access for rural India. This made India the third highest number of internet users in the world at over 200 million in October 2013, with about a third of them based in rural India. Yet the internet penetration rate in India is still one of the lowest at 8.4% of the population as compared to other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries where the average is over 50%. As the Internet began to be increasingly available, both transnational and national media content were available at a touch of a button. Additionally, new media dissolved the distinction between producers and consumers of content. Arguably, one of the first indications in India of the impacts that new media had on gender became

manifest when a sexually explicit multimedia message involving two Delhi students went viral in 2004, as did the 2015 state-banned documentary, “India’s Daughter”.

16.12 In terms of the number of films produced each year, Bollywood leads the world with 1,602 in 2012⁷, in comparison to America’s 476. Bollywood sold 2.6 billion tickets and earned a box office revenue of \$1.6 billion raked up by 2.7 billion movie-goers.

16.13 In Cinema, figures released by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) reveal that with 262 films produced in 2012, the Tamil film industry is number one, followed by the Telugu film industry with and Bollywood was relegated to the third slot with 221 films. Though Telugu had to be content with the second position, its record of 268 films in 2005 is yet to be broken⁸.

16.14 The changes were not limited to increase in newspapers, media channels and films produced. New technologies that came with economic liberalisation changed the media landscape. Offset printing swept away the old black and white newspapers printed off rotary presses on poor quality newsprint; and replaced them with publications in glossy colour. Television too was changing dramatically. There were radical shifts in media content and programming as well.

16.15 The demand to retain emerging readers and viewers, the pressure to accommodate advertisers, the need to fend off competition from other players and the pro-active agency of the public relations and advertising sectors, together shaped editorial content.

16.16 This unprecedented proliferation of the media brought a decisive shift in the issues and concerns that the media reflected. The earlier conception of media platforms being instruments of nation building – a view that had gained currency during the national movement and remained in circulation until the 1970s – fell increasingly out of circulation as the nineties progressed. The 1982 Report of the P.C. Joshi Committee saw Doordarshan as a tool to promote education, social progress and a ‘scientific temper’. As private media houses began establishing themselves in the country, it was the rules of the market, rather than government regulations that came to shape the contours of media content.

16.17 The new era came wrapped in the promise of globalised prosperity, connectivity and empowerment but the reality was far more complex. Innovative marketing strategies that

undermined the normative framework of an earlier era now came to mark the functioning of media entities. Conventions which respected distinctions between the editorial and marketing functions of a media house, between audiences and consumers, began to get increasingly undermined.

16.18 There was a decided broadening of the definition of what constitutes News. It meant that the complete dominance of politics in terms of news selection of an earlier time made way for broader coverage on issues of general concern, including that of gender.

16.19 The paradigm shift that had taken place in the financing and control of the media also meant the emergence of the “advertising model” that sought to make strategic commercial use of specific media products -- whether they were colour supplements of newspapers or sponsored television shows – whereby specific target readerships and homogenous television audiences were created, and then were offered to potential advertisers. For some publications, the step from the “advertising model” to “paid content” was a small one. In 2003, a large newspaper house, the Bennett Coleman and Company Limited which brought out India’s largest circulating English newspaper, the Times Of India, began a “paid content” service which openly offered to cover product launches or personality-related events for a fee and placed them in city specific colour supplements. This practice soon became the norm, with the Times of India’s competitors following suit, providing advertisers and corporate sponsors with the platforms they wanted. Thus, a marriage between corporate and editorial became the norm rather than the exception, thereby irrevocably changing the media ground rules.

The New Media

16.20 Since the mid-1990s, the Internet has had a revolutionary impact on culture, commerce and communication including the rise of near-instant communication by electronic mail, instant messaging, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone calls, two-way interactive video calls, and the World Wide Web with its discussion forums, blogs, social networking and online shopping sites.

16.21 In the aftermath of the Delhi Rape Case of December 2012, social media was one of the most powerful tools for mobilisation. An online petition -“Stop Rape Now!”, by journalist Namita Bhandare, received more than 7 lakh digital signatures, and her

recommendations were accepted as a petition by the Justice Verma Commission. What is missing outside, because of distance and language barriers, is found on social networks, encouraging women to build support and to create a safe space for themselves.

16.22 The promise of the internet as a democratic space has certainly been realised – anyone can publish online without editorial censorship or control as espoused in the recent Supreme Court Judgement of 2015⁹.

16.23 Around the globe, social media tools have helped fuel social movements, strengthen social actors' ability to challenge and change power relations in society, providing platforms for debate, reflection, influencing and mobilising people.

16.24 With the growing presence of women in digital and new media, it is an important time to address issues that the new media otherwise ignores – access, abuse, advocacy and how women are making a difference in digital space.

16.25 While the Internet offers anonymity, it also grants the users a sense of freedom in terms of self-expression, choice of content, and the voicing of marginal concerns. And since the new media is not exactly new anymore, it combines all previously existing forms of media in a digital format and helps generate stories that are not restricted to a specific format.

16.26 Due to the high cost of space in the traditional media, certain issues find no space for discussion. For example, a lot of critical issues such as labour-relations, gender and development have come to be sidelined. These now find spaces to be discussed in this more democratic medium, which brings such issues back into focus and gives people a platform without any restrictions, to tell different stories. There are many initiatives that allow connection with marginal voices today.

Women's Presence in the Media

Employment of Women in the Media

16.27 The first countrywide statistics on women in media appeared in Margaret Gallagher's 1995 publication, *An Unfinished Story: Gender Patterns in Media Employment*¹⁰. The study covered the state/public radio and television networks as well as six newspapers (four in

English and two in Hindi). It found that women's share of media employment in India was only 12%.

16.28 Later, in May-June 2006, the Media Study Group (MSG) conducted a survey of the social background of 315 key decision-makers from 37 Delhi-based "national" media organisations (newspapers and TV channels in English and Hindi)¹¹. The findings of the study included:

- Women's representation among "key decision-makers" abysmally low at 17%
- The proportion of men and women in the Hindi media lower at 86:14 in the Hindi print media, and 89:11 in the Hindi electronic media
- Representation of women marginally better in the English media, at 84:16 in the English print media, and 68:32 in the English electronic media
- No women among the few OBC decision-makers
- Social groups with the "double disadvantage" of gender and class, caste or religion hardly represented in the higher echelons of the news media

16.29 The authors of the MSG study commented: "If sex, religion and caste are to be taken together, more than two-thirds of the top media professionals in the country come from less than 10% of the population. Hindu upper caste men, who are barely 8% of the country's population, have a majority share of 71% among top media professionals in the country." In the final analysis, "India's 'national' media lacks social diversity; it does not reflect the country's social profile."

16.30 A recent report called Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media covering 17 Indian news companies – 10 newspapers, 6 television stations and 1 radio station (AIR) found¹²:-

- Men outnumbered women in the surveyed companies by 4:1
- At the level of governance (company boards of directors), women's participation was approximately one-fifth (21%)
- At the top management level (publishers, CEOs and others in charge of running media companies), women's representation was less than 14% (13.8%)
- In senior management (news directors/editors-in-chief) women constituted approximately 1/4th (23.3%)

- In middle management (including chiefs of correspondents and other senior-level news administrators), women formed around one-fifth (18.3%)
- In junior and senior professional levels, which include the largest numbers of the journalistic workforce, women were just over a quarter (25.5%) and far less than a third (28.4%) respectively
- Women held only 7% of jobs in the technical production category (e.g. sound and camera specialists) and less than 5% (4.7%) of jobs in production and design
- Women held just over 10% (11.4%) of positions in sales, finance and administration

16.31 Ammu Joseph's study of Public Service Broadcasting indicated the following¹³:

In case of All India Radio (AIR) in 2012:

- Women constitute only 10% of the AIR's employees in news and non-news positions
- Of the 14 posts in senior programme management, only four (28%) are held by women
- Of the 19 senior management posts in engineering, none identified by name seem to be women
- Of the 47 senior administrative posts, 18 (38%) are held by women (one of them holding two posts)

In the case of Private news channels, specifically NDTV (2012):

- The executive co-chairperson (and co-founder) is a woman. There is only one other woman among eight corporate leaders – so a quarter of the board is female
- Of the nine "key personnel and anchors" listed on the media group's website for its English news channel (NDTV 24x7), women constitute five (55%)
- In the Hindi news channel (NDTV India), four out of 14 (21%) are women
- In the English business news channel (NDTV Profit), over 50% are women

In the case of Media Regulatory Bodies:

- Of the 27 members of the Press Council, besides the Chairperson, only one is a woman – and she is a Member of Parliament, not a media professional
- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has five members – all male

- The News Broadcasters Association has eight directors on the board— only one is a woman

16.32 Ammu Joseph points out that it is not surprising that women are not represented at leadership levels given that they are employed in very less numbers in the first instance. Women have not been prominent in decision-making positions. Few exceptions are Mrinal Pande and Barkha Dutt. Also, trends show more women enrolled in English mass media schools, like more number of women in English language media. 10.33 The little participation of women in media has been from certain classes and communities, and women from marginalised sections of society remain under-represented. The lack of diversity is evident. Mostly, women from urban and elite backgrounds are part of it, while dalits and other minorities, for instance, are not present in nearly the same proportions. It is apparent that certain biases need to be addressed and more glass ceilings need to be broken for the equitable representation of women in Indian media.

Print Media

16.34 The traditional media like newspapers had little space for women and the presence of women journalists was largely restricted to magazines such as *Eves Weekly* or *Femina*. There were a fewer than a handful of news journalists. Razia Ismail, (*Indian Express*), Usha Rai (*Times of India*) and Prabha Dutt (*Hindustan Times*) were among them. Being a woman journalist was not easy; it was a struggle to earn respect and journalistic assignments that were considered of national importance.

16.35 Over 1980s and 90s, a large number of women entered the profession at least in the English language media establishments. During the 1990s, almost half of the editorial staff in the Indian Express comprised women. Over the years, English language media beats became gender-neutral. Two instances of success stories are Chitra Subramaniam's expose of the Bofors controversy, and Sucheta Dalal's scoop on the Harshad Mehta scam.

16.36 Women journalists are hardly present at the rural district level. For instance, of the 80 reporters and photographers that Ananda Bazaar Patrika has in the districts, only one woman is a full-time professional journalist. In 2012, the Media Studies Group pieced together data obtained on 255 districts of 26 states through a series of Right to Information (RTI) applications. It concluded that women media professionals at the district level were just

2.7%, with barely 329 accredited women journalists in the country (the number of their male counterparts: 11,850)¹⁴. Similarly, few women have been accepted at top decision-making positions within their news organisations.

Advertising

16.37 Advertising was considered a woman-friendly profession. In the 1950s, advertising stars included Pearl Padamsee, Cora Pal, Liz Sinha, Nuru Swaminathan, Freny Talyarkhan and Josephine Tuor. Nargis Wadia was the first woman to run an agency when she started Interpub in 1963. According to a survey done by the Economic Times (Brand Equity) across national agencies, the ratio of women to men is 32 percent and below.

- J.Walter Thompson has 32 per cent of women employees with an equal number at senior levels.
- Ogilvy and Mather stands at 32 per cent while it dips at senior levels to 29%.
- Leo Burnett has 31% across employees, while at senior levels it improves to 36%.
- Contract has just 28% across employees and 14% at senior levels.
- Rediffusion has 25% and 17% respectively.
- McCann-Erickson stands at 27% and 16%.
- Mudra is 27% across the agency, and just 5% at senior levels.

Films

16.38 Through powerful images and various successful genres such as family and social dramas, romance, vendetta sagas, mythological stories etc., audio-visual entertainment is an integral part of popular culture and reflects the distorted mirror of modern society. Film has been a major point of reference for Indian culture in this century, particularly in the last 3 decades. It has shaped and expressed the changing scenarios of modern India to an extent that no preceding art form could ever achieve and has influenced the way in which people perceive various aspects of their own lives. It is an extremely potent medium since it influences the viewer at the subliminal level.

16.39 India nurtures one of the world's most prolific film industries. It is considered the single most powerful medium of communication in Indian society, enjoying a huge and growing international market. Meanwhile, the meaning of being an Indian changed in favour

of globalisation during the 1990s. Screens across India have repeatedly projected dichotomous images of women, primarily depicted in relationship to men, in the context of gradual transition from traditional to modern society.

16.40 According to a study in 2014 by Geena Davis Institute of Gender in Media, the prevalence of female directors, writers and producers in Indian films was also not very high¹⁵. India had 9.1% female directors, slightly above the global average of 7%, while its percentage of female writers was 12.1%, significantly lower than the 19.7% global average. Female producers in India were only 15.2%, way below the 22.7% global average. This data of gender prevalence behind the camera translated into a gender ratio of 6.2 males to every one female in the film industry in India.

16.41 In Film, actresses are paid far less and this has seen the likes of Kareena Kapoor openly voice her resentment. Actresses are expected to retire younger and are cast opposite actors much older than themselves. Lead actresses have to perform item numbers often unrelated to the plot of the film to increase box office profits.

16.42 The film industry is controlled by unions which are not necessarily gender-friendly; recently, a make-up artist had to approach the Supreme Court to direct the Make Up Artists Union to register women and remove the domicile requirement.

16.43 It is not out of place to point out that the level of participation and influence of women in the media also has implications for the content: female media professionals are more likely to reflect other women's needs and perspectives than their male colleagues. While it is not impossible for men to effectively cover gender issues, the presence of women media personnel is likely to gain the confidence of women as sources of information, as interviewees, and to attract female audience¹⁶.

Working Conditions of Women in the Media

16.44 Gender inequality is not just limited to presence of women in the media but also in the working conditions offered to them. These have not been favourable to female journalists. A 2004 Press Institute of India/National Commission for Women (PII/NCW) survey of women media professionals across the country in non-metro locations showed there was no such thing as permanent employment for most women professionals¹⁷. In addition to job

insecurity, risks associated with reporting cases of sexual harassment have come to the fore. Women have entered the Indian mass media in far greater numbers than ever before. In the metro cities, they comprise an estimated 20 percent of media personnel, if not more. Yet across various media, their stories are the same where they battle the glass ceiling with wage and opportunity disparities.

16.45 Working conditions in general vary considerably, given the range of ownership patterns, the different sizes of media establishments, etc. Salaries also vary greatly, depending on the grade the establishment falls into, according to the Wage Board scales or on the bargaining power of individuals. Another factor at play are the cost-cutting measures now increasingly undertaken by media managements in India. Journalism post-Independence has been an insecure profession, partly because the newspaper and magazine industry has not been a high return industry which is why they shut down easily. The only stability in the profession has been offered by a handful of large companies that run profitable ventures.

16.46 Another concern is large scale recruitment of journalists under the *contractual system of employment* which deprives them of Wage Board membership. The foremost concern with the contractual system is that journalists have to work under the fear of losing their job, non-renewal of contracts, and denial of job entitlements such as maternity leave and working hours. The contracts usually offer short-term employment from 6 months to 5 years. Today, more and more professionals are hired on short-term contracts or on a temporary basis with no benefits and extra entitlements apart from a low allowance/salary. A 2004 Press Institute of India study, 'Status of Women Journalists in India,' revealed how there was no such thing as permanent employment for most women professionals and even long-term contracts were elusive, with journalists often employed like daily-wage labour. In fact, the Mumbai photojournalist who went through the traumatic experience of a gang rape in 2013 was working as a freelancer with no legal entitlements.

16.47 Another disquieting trend to be noted is that the cost cutting exercises of newspaper managements have resulted in the homogenizing of conditions, with the special privileges that had once existed for the security of female staff, like night conveyance, being increasingly discontinued.

16.48 The 1955 Working Journalists & Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, together with the Wage Boards that were appointed by the

Government at periodic intervals, did offer relative security of employment and some financial stability to journalists covered by it. It ensured permanent employment at fixed wage scales, however low-paying. In the post 1991 phase of neo-liberalism with the market dictating development, the system of contract employment was firmly in place. Initially, far higher wages were offered to those who accepted contracts. Later, large numbers of permanent employees were coerced into signing short-term contracts. Today, the majority of journalists in the dailies and even the news agencies are contract employees and not necessarily well-paid. The contract journalist is insecure and dependent on the whims of bosses for increments and for renewal of the employment contract. Even those on contracts with national dailies are insecure. Under such circumstances, the first casualty that dealt a deadly blow to the female journalist was the scrapping of maternity leave.

16.49 Journalists also point out that the structure of the media houses has changed and most of them work more like corporate entities than the Fourth Estate. 'Journalists are routinely given business targets to achieve'. They are expected to get advertisements which means they work more as marketing personnel than journalists. In this scenario, women reporters point out that when they are given the responsibility to bring in advertisements, the message from the media house is 'by whatever means.' Women journalists, thus, feel that while they may have brushed their marketing skills in the process, 'they are lagging behind as journalists.'

16.50 There is a clear distinction between working conditions and facilities available in national dailies and the regional media. National dailies with multiple editions provide maternity leave, and have now set up committees against sexual harassment. Within the regional media, there is no uniformity on provision of maternity leave and a number of the regional media houses do not have grievance cells for women journalists.

16.51 Women form a major part of the freelance work force in the media, which adds another level of professional vulnerability in matters of negotiating and receiving payments. There is no forum where freelancers can take their professional complaints; no law that protects their rights as workers; and even the Wage Board does not recognise them, so they get no benefits, pensions, sick leave, or other such entitlements. It is also important to address the fact that freelancers are not issued Press/Identity cards, which takes away any documentation to support their professional identity.

16.52 *Sexual Harassment*: An issue of critical concern has been sexual harassment that women media persons have experienced, both in the course of their work and as well as in the workplace. Women journalists, actresses and those associated with the film industry and media professionals have long faced sexual harassment in the workplace but the issue has remained shrouded in silence. In fact, most media establishments in the country have no redressal mechanisms, including the legal requirement of an independent complaints committee (ICC). The crusading magazine, *Tehelka*, was no exception and the case of sexual assault filed against its editor-in-chief by a subordinate led to a national uproar and the arrest of the accused.

16.53 The 2004 Press Institute of India/ National Commission for Women survey on the status of women journalists, revealed that 22.7 per cent of respondents have had to face sexual harassment in their workplace (while another 8 per cent were not quite sure whether they had). Strikingly, many refused to comment indicating that they felt vulnerable about even articulating the issue. For perhaps the same reason, the overwhelming majority of the women who did face such harassment preferred not to file formal complaints, which is a prime reason why the issue has remained unaddressed and media houses could continue remaining impervious to the need to institute the redressal mechanisms mandated under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the Visakha guidelines.

16.54 Sexual harassment is an international phenomenon. In 2013, the International News Safety Institute and the International Women's Media Foundation conducted a small pilot study based on 958 responses, 875 of whom were women¹⁸. It revealed that the most common types of intimidation or abuse were the abuse of authority (22.5%); followed by verbal, written and/or physical intimidations (21.04%). In most cases (28.57%), it was the boss who was the main perpetrator, usually male. Some 13.02 per cent of respondents reported sexual violence in relation to their work, of which most of the incidents happened in the field (58.06%) with the next most likely locations for the violence being the office (35.48%) and the street (20.97%). What was important to note was the new forms of assault including telephone tapping, hacking, digital/online surveillance or digital/online hacking.

16.55 Whether internationally, or in India, what does come through clearly is that the media as a sector is largely unprepared to tackle an issue of this kind. Media freedom and gender-equal working conditions demands that female professionals who are more vulnerable to such

attack are allowed to do their job safely and effectively . This can only happen when the risks they face are taken into account by media owners and managements.

16.56 Women rarely complain about sexual harassment because they want to keep their jobs. However coping with sexual harassment at the workplace is difficult and puts the woman under undue stress. Instead of concentrating on her job she has to invent strategies to avoid open conflict with the harasser. A direct refusal leads to various punitive measures, complaints about her work, denial of important assignments, refusal of permission for work trips out of town, arbitrary assigning of night shifts, etc. In these situations, some women simply look for another job before they are fired or refused contract renewal. Hardly anyone files a complaint as they fear a loss of reputation and do not expect to get justice.

16.57 Over the years, some women did speak out and were challenged both professionally and personally in the process. In some cases women do fight for justice when they are dismissed from service but even here, they prefer to challenge the dismissal on professional grounds rather than fight a sexual harassment case.

In 2003, a woman sub-editor working for a popular Assamese daily, the Amar Asom, alleged that the editor had sexually assaulted her. When she approached the management, it took no notice of her charge and instead withheld her salary, forcing her to resign. She later summoned up the courage to file an FIR and lodge complaints with the National Human Rights Commission and the Press Council. While the management of the daily constituted a committee to look into her complaint, the editor – a publicly honoured and socially prominent individual – was never summoned before it. A decade later, not only had she lost out professionally, she still has not got justice. Actress Sushmita Sen accused the then CEO of PepsiCo of sexual harassment, and settled out-of-court with the company. Rina Mukherji, a senior reporter of The Statesman filed a sexual harassment case against her news editor, she was fired. She then approached journalist networks, the West Bengal Commission for Women and the Labour Commission, to little avail. The newspaper continued to refuse to address the issue. Over a decade, one labour case and two libel suits filed in Kolkata and Delhi, she finally got a judgment ordering her reinstatement with back wages. A woman employee with Sun TV complained of sexual harassment and was dismissed from her job. The working council of the Network of Women in Media, India, pointed out that the organization had no proper procedures or mechanisms in place for the resolution and settlement of sexual harassment cases.

16.58 Abuse on social media with sexual and sexist overtones has become yet another way to attack women journalists. It is becoming increasingly common. The Internet Democracy

Project looking at freedom of political speech by women and the reactions it instigated, found instances of verbal abuse directed at women ranging from the slightest misogynistic remarks to life threats. A senior anchor with a prominent television company recently revealed that she has been threatened regularly with gang rape, and stripping on Twitter. Film journalists are often threatened by fans of actors and actresses when they review their work critically.

16.59 The issue of sexual harassment at the workplace is clouded by another dimension - that of consensual relationships. These never get written about. It is true that 'office affairs' do happen between consenting adults but when the affair involves a senior and junior the underlying power equation cuts both ways.

16.60 As part of the Network of Women and Media, a survey is underway to map how many media houses had ICCs and initial findings are not encouraging.

16.61 *Working in Conflict Zones*: A great deal of journalism, by its very nature, requires its practitioners to visit difficult locations at all times of day or night or take unpopular public positions and face public wrath. Over the years, women media professionals from all over the world have undertaken many personal risks, and faced many situations of danger to gain the credibility of being true professionals. In 2011, a few months after a woman television correspondent was sexually assaulted during the tumultuous events at Cairo's Tahrir Square, the Committee to Protect Journalists spoke to four dozen women journalists who had undergone varying degrees of sexual violence¹⁹. They were either gang raped or subjected to aggressive groping, in retaliation for their work or during the course of their reporting. What was striking about their testimonies was the common thread that they chose not to speak about their assaults because they did not want to put their careers at risk, or be regarded by their employers as being unfit for challenging assignments.

16.62 On a positive note however, there have been striking developments in the Kashmiri media of late, especially relating to the visibility of women journalists. Participation of women in the media is increasing as more and more young women join media courses and start their careers in journalism. In fact the Kashmir Times is now edited by a woman. Two important issues flagged from conflict zones like Jammu and Kashmir include the concerns of journalists reporting from the area and the actual coverage of women's issues. The most defining images of women in the media in Jammu and Kashmir are that of sexual violence in

a highly militarized zone. When it comes to women, the media is handicapped by inherent societal prejudices and the lack of gender sensitivity.

The North East

In 2013, the South Asia Media Freedom and Solidarity Network held a round-table meeting in Assam to draw attention to the special problems faced by women journalists in the insurgency-ridden North East. It was a meeting to discuss the general neglect and lack of recognition of their struggles. Often caught in between various groups, the media is under constant attack.

In July 2012, there was an attack on Arunachal Times Associate Editor Tongham Rina who was shot at and grievously wounded on her way to office. Attacks on media women are not new in the Northeast, given the general climate of violence and conflict. In 2010, two women reporters, Appu Gopak and Nyapi Bomjen, of the Sentinel Arunachal, were attacked by the local police in Itanagar while on assignment. Despite strong evidence and a case being registered, the guilty are yet to be punished.

Journalist Theresa Rehman believes that the North Eastern states of India are often ghettoised as a monolith in the mainstream media. Weary of struggling to find space for her non-stereotypical stories about the North East in the 'national media', she started an online news magazine, titled *Thumbprint*, as an alternative space where fresh perspectives on the conflict-ridden region are encouraged. Attempts by Hasina Karabhi of Impulse Network to gender sensitize the NE Media have also been widely appreciated.

Portrayal and Representation of Women

16.63 The media is an integral part of the modern social fabric. In what ways has the media responded to, articulated and (re)constructed the idea of the 'Indian woman', and addressed issues of women? In what way has the media broken or created stereotypes of women and their role in society? How far has it been successful in challenging regressive (patriarchal) mindsets to promote the rights of women and girls?

16.64 A pointed critique of the media in the American context in the 1970s seems to hold equally true for the Indian media at that time. As women were barely represented in the audio-visual media, their gross underrepresentation was very appropriately termed "symbolic annihilation" and 'trivialization' by Gaye Tuchman in 1978²⁰. This primarily stemmed from the women's complete lack of say and authority in society.

16.65 In response to the trends in projection of women in television, advertising and cinema, feminists and others involved in the women's movement have brought the discourse surrounding politics within the family out into the public domain. Thus, the family is considered a site of domination, subordination and discrimination, whose attitude especially towards women, has been accentuated by popular culture – films, entertainment TV and advertisements.

16.66 Cinema, television serials and advertisements, most glorify the institution of family and its values with the ideal woman being the self-sacrificing mother/obedient and respectful wife/protection-seeking sister/ dutiful daughter. Media has done little to raise self-awareness of the girl and women viewers as rights-bearing persons. Urvashi Butalia has pointed out that women characters in media often “support, comfort and very seldom question their men”²¹. She noted that women’s ideals are “self-sacrifice” and “purity” and these are ideals that make up their 'strength'²². On the other hand, modernity is often equated with being bad; westernised is considered synonymous with being independent and aggressive²³. There are, of course, exceptions to the above stereotypes, but they remain exceptions.

In Films

16.67 Over the last two decades, a woman's body has been the “site for the construction of modernity and an upper-caste Hindu nation”²⁴. This may be due to increasing concentration of media ownership and a few elite gatekeepers who control distribution and relay. In Indian mainstream cinema, audience continue to see a patriarchal version of female sexuality, while masculinity is defined as the muscular body and physical aggression²⁵.

16.68 The “image of the woman” has also evolved. “The nationalist rhetoric of the pre-independence years produced films valorising the mother figure. A case in instance is Mehboob Khan's *Aurat*, a film from 1940s, which was remade in colour as *Mother India* in 1956. The making of the new nation, the projection of Indian culture to the world market, the first International Film Festival in Delhi - perhaps all these factors led to the tremendous reception of the film both at home and abroad. It was the immediate post-independence moment that led to the phenomenal iconisation and identification of the mother and nation in popular consciousness”²⁶. The use of nation as a family paradigm consistently located women in subordinate positions, confined to domestic and motherly roles.

16.69 Though contemporary and more modern situations/contexts are visible in the narratives of mass media, gender roles still adhere to stereotypes in portraying women. The traditional mythical female characters of the ideal women have continued as archetypes and are reinforced even today in characterisation. From Goddesses to dream girls to the "new" women, the heroines are still depicted to project patriarchal norms and values. The stereotypical image of an Indian woman is the site of binary opposition between Indian and Western values. This was best represented in the movie *Purab aur Paschim*. "The film glorifies the spiritual achievements of the "Hindu" Indian civilisation and pitted it against western materialism. The core of the film comprised the hero's love for the London-bred Indian heroine and his attempt to convert this woman into a proper Hindu 'naari'. The triumph of Indian values takes place in the film when she is finally domesticated and converted to the Indian way"²⁷.

16.70 The representation of women in cinema has been a major issue of debate among the western feminist scholars in communication. The feminist film theory has made a significant contribution to understand how the mass media construct definitions of femininity and masculinity²⁸. Semiotic analysis of films by feminists show that in cinema, a woman is presented as what she represents for men, not in terms of what she actually signifies²⁹. Thus, films reinforce myths about women that exist in society. In developing countries, there has been hardly any similar efforts to build a feminist film theory or examine the question of women in cinema through systematic research³⁰. In general, analysis is related too closely with specific film narratives. Nevertheless, a closer look at media images of women in Indian films will give us some insights in understanding how the powerful medium of films has attempted to redefine femininity and masculinity in the changing context of modernity³¹.

16.71 Apart from a few exceptions, in cinema too, the male is presented as the stronger sex exhibiting a muscular body and physical aggression, and portrays the role of provider and protector. In absolute contrast, the visual representation of women characters is such that it reinforces conservative beliefs regarding control of female sexuality articulated around the idea of purity and chastity as well as family honour. Though in some places the narrative may appear to be emancipatory, it often ends up valorizing the male and objectifying the female.

16.72 The Indian female sexuality has been continually described through her conversion from independent woman into a dutiful daughter-in-law dominating media content. "In many Hindi films, which seek to define Indian values, the site chosen for the clash of civilisations

is female sexuality. These films assert that controlling the female, through the institution of the Indian family, translates into better Indianness. The threat posed to Indian patriarchy by the urbanisation and westernisation of women is overcome by fortifying the patriarchal family³².

16.73 Film writer Mushtaq Shiekh believes that "Bollywood creates an artificial construct of a woman"³³. With the emergence of alternative cinema (often known as the "new" wave or art cinema) since the late 1960s, there has been some efforts to bring women to the centre of film narratives. The new wave or progressive cinema in the two decades of its existence has attempted to move away from the traditional stereotypes of an Indian woman and characterised her as a person with distinct identity by projecting her as a strong and often dominant character as seen in the 2014 national-award winning film, "Queen".

16.74 The redefinition of femininity produced and portrayed in cinema under the "new" wave cinema in India, in fact, highlights the tension between "modernity" and "tradition"³⁴. Women are often used in the new wave films as symbols of resistance and victims of exploitation. The emphasis in the new wave films is on replacing the "myth" in popular films by "reality". The recent 2015-released "Mardani" symbolises this new wave of cinema.

16.75 However, the characterisation of women in women-centred films is also ambivalent. Sometimes a heroine is portrayed in familiar plots as an avenging angel like a hero (for example, as a dacoit, a fearless police officer, etc.). In imitating the role of a macho-hero she neither appears credible nor powerful as the "strong" woman character as she continues to be depicted as submissive in her romantic relationships with men³⁵. Furthermore, women who protest against the institution of marriage and patriarchal oppression have been ossified into new stereotypes. They are either depicted as home-wreckers in the role of "other" women or as irrational and hysterical wives abandoning their villainous husbands. Even when a woman sets out to find herself as an individual, eventually she is shown as finding solace in a romantic relationship or motherhood.

16.76 Occasionally, she takes up a career as a consolation prize for a broken marriage or relationship and not for defining her identity. Deeply entrenched ideals of femininity are disguised in the glossy images of "liberated" women. Women are clubbed into submission, with the threat of eternal loneliness if they do not conform, in mainstream cinema. In

Cocktail, released recently, the male protagonist is shown picking the demure, traditional heroine over the free spirited, wild thing, living her life on her own terms.

16.77 The point is, women as a 'social issue' may have been present in popular Indian cinema but the concern has largely been superficial. Also of concern are recurring narratives suggesting that Indian women do not really mean what they say when they resist sexual overtures. 2014 saw the re-release in 3D of the Indian action-adventure classic, *Sholay*. There is one sequence in which a woman very strongly rebuffs the aggressive advances of a man. Eventually she succumbs and the impression is given that although she was saying 'no' what she meant was 'yes'³⁶. This fraught interaction between the sexes is often seen in Indian cinema. It is quite acceptable in many Bollywood films for a male character to stalk a woman.

16.78 A Twitter handle called @FrameHerRight came into being on 7 March, 2015 to exhort the Censor Board to take a stand against violence against women shown in Indian films³⁷. It had tweeted out a video compilation of scenes that depicted forms of physical violence perpetrated by men against women in films across the years. The roughly one and half minute long video is a stream of scenes from various mainstream Indian films where women are shown being hit, molested, beaten up by men.

16.79 India tops the chart in showing attractive women in its movies and as much as 35 per cent of these female characters are shown with some nudity, finds a first-ever UN sponsored global study of female characters in popular films across the world³⁸. Indian films, the study finds, have a significantly higher prevalence of sexualisation of female characters and the movies score low in depicting women in significant speaking roles and as engineers and scientists³⁹.

In Television

16.80 On the one hand, television played a key role in linking transnational business to the Indian middle classes, to the extent that "privately-owned satellite TV channels became the bulwark of a new consumerism," unlike Doordarshan, which – as a government-funded public service broadcaster – had until then propagated the ideology of the Indian state. On the other hand, the role of women was stereotyped to limited roles – a decorative or passive model adorning products; independent middle class career driven woman living in a metro; or

member of family as mother, daughter, sister and wife, who were often performing household chores and taking care of children in domestic space – showcased repeatedly in advertisements and serials.

16.81 An analysis of the phenomenon of mass-produced, long-running television soaps, in particular, points to the uncomfortable reality that these have in a big way translated into “ideological tools” employed to engage with the public on a daily basis in order to reinforce entrenched traditional notions. Often, behavioural standards that show evidence of prejudice to women gain legitimacy through these. In this respect, women’s rights activists demand a more progressive approach and a language and grammar free from the diktats of patriarchy. Barring a few TV programs that attempt to empower the woman, most have refrained from creating any disturbance in the status quo. Television soaps constantly reaffirm family norms and values in a way that “fuses modernity with tradition”, thus making even the highly prejudiced and misogynist content acceptable to urban middle class viewers who comprise bulk of the audience.

16.82 Women have constituted largest audiences of family soaps across the country. Television has entailed, for the most part, convoluted family dramas. The ‘monster mother-in-law’ became popular – whether it was in *Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi* (Hindi), *Anandam* (Tamil) or *Kumkumapoovu* (Malayalam) – all of them enjoying long runs of several years.

16.83 Women’s lives are central to a large majority of television serial plots and women are also the target audiences of television. The audiences are allured into the serials and delivered to the advertiser as potential customers.

16.84 The Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) has been consistently monitoring and analysing television content since 1995. In its monitoring study on prime time Hindi soaps it found that the core structure of the daily soap is built around a repackaged and larger-than-life Indian (read Hindu) family. According to CFAR (2003)⁴⁰ findings:

- Together, television and advertisers target women viewers, aggressively. And with reason. Ratings of some of the more recent prime time soaps indicate a very high percentage of women viewers. It has also been found that women are more ‘regular’ in TV viewing, that they are heavier consumers of cable television than men.

Programming chiefs of popular TV channels concede that they keep women in mind when they fill in prime time slots.

- Protagonists tend to be Hindu upper caste families with rigid gender characterisation reasserting that a woman's place is in the home with approximately 80 per cent of the female characters confined to the kitchen, living room, dining room, and bedrooms.
- Much of the popularity of these soaps comes from the manner in which the family is constructed. The family in TV fiction is shown at a crossroads: it is striving to maintain its traditional strengths within the strife of the post-modern era, where the only certainty is that everything is in a state of flux. In television drama serials, faith in the traditional values of the Indian family system has been renewed in a number of ways - from the dress codes to the central issues addressed by the serials. However, the process of reasserting the values of the traditional family through a series of conflicts, disagreements, exposes its inherent hypocrisies and gender biases against women. However, the dominant space is the collective. It is this collective force that is reinforced again and again as the family asserts itself over and above the individual. Family, is therefore, the key site of the narrative. It is critical to assess how, within the family structure, the conflicts, the marital discords and flare-ups between members of the family are treated and the manner in which the family intervenes to resolve them.
- *Across tele-series, Indianness hinges on the patriarchal definition of gender; crises created by the liberation of women inherent in modernisation are usually resolved by subordinating women to the joint family. Inter-caste and inter-religious encounters are judiciously avoided. This prevents other kinds of consciousness from intruding into guarded claustrophobic bourgeois homes. Women keep wearing skimpy clothes before marriage but the covered, caring, mothering, supporting and adjusting woman is ultimately preferred in teleserials. Culture, values, morality, 'parampara' (tradition) and Indianness endlessly promote patriarchy.*

16.85 The pivotal characters in most serials are females. The disagreements concern expanding and reclaiming the 'responsibilities' of the female character rather than her 'rights', so that the core values of patriarchy and male domination remain intact. Women are repositories of how 'Things Are Done' in the husband's family. Parvati's role in 'Kahani Ghar Ghar Ki' illustrates the point. She is the perfect wife, daughter-in-law, mother, sister-in-law, etc. She must look after the entire extended family and does so with astonishing elan. Again and again the women work to restore the core values of the family, which are threatened by

one or other member of the family. It has been broadly observed, in most serials, there has been a fairly rigid gender characterisation along the expected stereotypes of women and men. , in terms of distribution along geographical space the serials reassert that a woman's place is in the home. It is both her life and her domain.

16.86 The working woman character is mostly shown as working only when compelled by circumstances. Even educated middle-class women are often shown without an occupation. When they do work, they are stereotyped as secretaries and school teachers and occasionally as lawyers and doctors. The working middle-class woman, in general, is a young woman, a modern miss, who is doing a job while waiting to get married. But by and large women are shown to work only in the absence of a male breadwinner, a father, a brother or a husband. These women are presented as unfortunate victims sacrificing their own interests to support the family. It is only when she tries to rebel against her role as a wife and a mother or chooses to work to assert her independence, the hostility against a working woman surfaces.

16.87 A prominent stereotype of a woman is that of a crusader. Strong female protagonists in TV serials have been part of the trend. Starting with Priya Tendulkar in *Rajani*, few other examples from regional television are the Marathi serial, *Damini*, which showcased a corruption-exposing female investigative journalist as its lead; Kannada serials like *Parvati* and *Maya Mriga* went on to win critical approval and characters like the slim, svelte elderly protagonist with a business sense in Malayalam television's '*Paarijatham*'.

In Advertising

16.88 Television heralded a new development by offering the audiences as consumers to national and international corporation's advertisements. From the first experience of satellite television during the 1982 Asian Games to the 1992 coverage of the Gulf War beamed into millions of homes; increase in audience base was remarkable. Advertisements gradually began to dominate content, and control of television shifted from government to the markets.

16.89 A major target of advertisers was the "new woman", who is not so much an independent citizen as an independent consumer. By the early 2000s, magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle* and *Verve* focused on fashion with an aim to create segmented readerships designed for the advertising market.

16.90 In terms of the nature of portrayals in advertisements, men and women are characterised in very different fashions. Starting with their age, employment status, to the arguments used by them to persuade consumers, and the settings that they appear in, the pictorial depictions of the male and female is vastly different. In advertisements too, the imagery and pictorial representation of women reinforce deeply entrenched patriarchal norms on an everyday basis. Unlike men, women are more likely to be portrayed in dependent roles i.e. of a mother, spouse, or daughter than independent roles such as narrators, employees and/or celebrities. This, too, more often than not, is in the setting of a home rather than business spaces, outdoor or public settings. In addition, women's credibility in ads seems to originate from their role as users rather than as experts or authoritative figures. Kasturi (1995) has described this image as one of "powerless commodities or parasitical consumers"⁴¹.

16.91 On the other extreme lies the advertisement template of objectifying women's bodies whereby, often, the woman is shown to be independent and sexually liberated and yet confined to the desires of the male. On many occasions, commodities are advertised as something "to be had" by simply introducing a scantily-clad woman in the advertisement, and has been questioned by women's rights groups across the board.

16.92 The market research agency 'Pathfinders: India' carried out two detailed SNAP (Study of the Nation's Attitudes and Psychographics) polls. They covered 10,000 urban Indian housewives in 36 towns across classes and zones. The numbers of the "contemporary housewife", defined as "generally better educated, with a higher proportion of working women, a more active lifestyle, more into all types of media" showed an increase from 19.2% in 1987 to 22.1% in 1993⁴². This "purchase-prone attitudinal cluster" (particularly in relation to high value durables and personal products) registered a jump from 49.3% in 1987 to 53.6% in 1993⁴³.

16.93 Sharada J. Schaffter, after studying 2500 advertisements from 1994 to 2001, could identify distinct categories of such content⁴⁴. Three broad categories presented themselves: women as homemakers or mothers; women as sexual objects; women as a lower order of human beings, looking up to men. Interesting trends have emerged. For instance, the crowning of Sushmita Sen and Aishwarya Rai as Miss Universe and Miss World respectively in 1994 led to a significant spike in advertisements for grooming products, with the Indian cosmetic industry recording historical levels of growth. A dark complexion was consciously identified with negative prospects, whether for marriage or employment. A prominent

television advertisement for the fairness cream, Fair & Lovely, went as far as projecting a dark-skinned young woman failing to land a job as a flight attendant until she lightened her skin by using the product. By 2002, Fair & Lovely, emerged as the most trusted brand for young women in India – and right up to the present, the predominant image of glamour and success in Indian advertising are of fair complexioned women, men and children. Simultaneously there was an uninterrupted celebration of masculinity, exemplified by advertisements such as Raymond's The Complete Man series.

16.94 The “new woman” was projected in such advertising as someone who knows her mind and has great aspirations; someone who can negotiate her stances and choices within the context of the family. She was, above all, not so much an independent citizen as an independent consumer with her ‘womanhood’ constantly being celebrated, and catered to, by the market. Such representations posed no real threat to the status quo and were invariably internalized by the consumers of these messages who were subsumed within the larger framework of culture, power and commerce, adapting their behaviour and lives to the new paradigms being set. As one market analyst, commenting in the evolution of ‘women as consumers’ in the years since liberalisation, observed: “Self-denial defined women of the past, self-indulgence defines her today.”

16.95 The new trend of celebrating events like Valentine's Day and Karva Chauth indicated the power of the persistent drip-feed of messaging, whether it is conveyed through films, television serials, advertisements, or through a synergy of many different media projecting essentially similar material. A similar melding marked the tyranny of the perfectly toned body. When Kareena Kapoor joined western fashion icons like Kate Moss and Victoria Beckham in sporting Size Zero for her 2008 film *Tashan*, it became an instant rage.

16.96 Commodification and objectification of women's bodies is certainly one area of which a large section of women's rights activists have been critical of. However, equally damaging is the repeated and consistent portrayal of women only as users and buyers of products. The fully-clad woman who is asked to cook a nice meal for the family or has to ready the children for school on a daily basis — even as the male is depicted as the hard-working breadwinner deserving a hot cup of coffee as soon as he gets back from work — is as objectionable an image, and must be challenged.

16.97 Another concept very sacredly, yet subtly followed in the television advertisement world is that “*pink is for girls and blue is for boys*”. Gender identification by colour or sex appropriation of colours began in the early 20th century in the Western world. Starting from baby and toddlers clothes, it has now reached even to candies and chocolates. Kinder Joy chocolates lately introduced their new line of colour coded chocolates for boys and girls separately, with gender appropriated toys along with it! Might as well name it “*Gender Joy*”!! It is sad to see that these advertisements inject the gender stereotyping and diktats into young minds.

In Radio

16.98 Radio also reinforces gender biases with very few women Radio Jockeys (RJs) doing primetime radio shows. In their presentation, female RJs are still expected to sound sweet, sexy, naughty or cute. Gender biases are evident in radio time bands i.e. the afternoon slot is considered the ‘ladies’ time band, and features programmes about housework, husbands and children. The night hours feature ‘soft, romantic, and sexy’ female voices. On the other hand, the peak traffic time falls in the male domain. These stereotypes are reinforced on a daily basis, and must be challenged. Moreover, there is great disparity between the salaries of male and female employees in radio, which needs urgent attention.

16.99 *Sexuality*: In 1991, when the first Kamasutra advertisement appeared on television, the Minister of Social Welfare had to assure an agitated Parliament that the government would consider imposing a ban on the advertisement. To some extent, such images have become increasingly normalised. However, mainstream Indian cinema and its treatment of the female body over the last 25 years have invited a range of responses, including call for bans. There is an emerging consensus today however that projection of women in media is a human rights issue, not a moralistic one.

16.100 Film makers like Aparna Sen, Sai Paranjpe, Suhasini Mani Ratnam, Revathi, Meghna Gulzar, Kalpana Lajmi to name a few, have addressed issues like female sexuality with sensitivity. Mira Nair trained her camera on the impact of paedophilia on the life of a young woman in *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and Deepa Mehta, came up with the frankest portrayal of same sex love that the country had ever seen with *Fire* (1996). It was not just the women. Rituparno Ghosh attempted incisive, sensitive portrayals of women as sexual beings rather than sexual objects in films like *Bariwali* in 2000 and *Choker Bali* while Amol Palekar’s

Anahat in Marathi (2003) dwelt on women's rights to express their sexuality. By the end of the 2000s, films with female protagonist were conspicuous by their presence in films in all languages.

16.101 The idea of sexual objectification and commodification has been criticised in Nivedita Menon's book *Seeing like a Feminist*, which discusses the manner in which the term is used in relation to women's bodies⁴⁵. She questions that if all forms of labour demand commodification of some sort, why are certain forms of labours, like sex work or bar dancing, seen to be more problematic.

16.102 Shohini Ghosh questions why allegations of commodification are levelled at the item girl and not at the fully covered woman even when, ironically, she could be dressed from head to toe in expensive and branded clothes⁴⁶. This indicates that society continues to be bothered by the image of a sexually transgressive female body. Similarly, Ghosh has drawn attention to the fact that the word, degradation, was rarely attached to the bodies of men. Historically, degradation has been used as a stick to discipline women, especially those who step out of line, because it is connected with the conservative notions of female purity.

Lyrics

Filmmaker Onir commented on Twitter recently "Popular entertainment has to stop portraying sexual harassment as a cute boy thingy". A line from the Fevicol song of Salman Khan's recent release *'Dabangg 2'* had a women likening herself to a piece of tandoori chicken to be washed down with alcohol. The actual lyrics are "*Main toh tandoori murgi hoon yaar, gatkale saiyaan alcohol se*". In Ajay Devgan's *Son of Sardaar*, the Po Po Po song has a line "*Tu hai mind blowing maal, aaja nach le*". Both songs are hugely popular, sung by children also, without perhaps knowing the full implication of the words. One of India's popular rappers had to be booked by Punjab state police for violent lyrics in an openly misogynistic song called "I am a Rapist".

16.103 *Inadequate and Sensationalized coverage of Women*: News in all forms of media in India is dominated by men. When it comes to women, news media portrays women as a victim of crime, making sensational headlines. Studies indicate that social issues related to women get less than 9% space while sensational crime stories involving women account for over 52% space in newspapers⁴⁷. Even reportage on violence against women tends to be limited to the more overt incidents – rape, for instance – overshadowing the ongoing "low-intensity violence" such as dowry deaths or trafficking. Women constitute only about 13 per

cent of the subjects of news bulletins on radio. Indian print and television news had 24 and 20 per cent female subjects⁴⁸. An overwhelming proportion of experts/commentators (82%) and spokespersons (87%) featured in the news was male⁴⁹. Women featured in the news primarily as 'persons on the street' or as representatives of 'popular opinion' (54%)⁵⁰. Only 22 percent of news subjects who were also sources of information (news sources) were women. Nearly a third of the female news subjects in the Indian news media was identified by their family status while only 5 per cent of male news subjects were similarly identified⁵¹.

16.104 News media's interest in women-related issues and stories saw an upward, albeit conservative, drift. The shift from features on shopping, cooking, and home décor to reports concerning issues of livelihood, health, sanitation, sexual violence etc. has been rather slow. Incidentally, only about one-third (34%) of the news stories in the Indian broadcast media (radio and TV) were presented by women.

16.105 While a part of the media today may be more inclined towards underlining and debating concrete issues, there is a large section which still focuses on covering fashion trends and lifestyle as part of assigning news space and news value to women. Also, instead of pointing out the inter-linkages between the complex socio-cultural dynamics that play out within the larger patriarchal socio-political setup, there is a growing regressive tendency on the part of news media to trivialize women's issues and play up the entertainment quotient.

16.106 *Neglect of Women's Development and Empowerment Issues*: Global Media Monitoring Project 2010 in a survey of Indian media found that only 5% news stories highlighted gender inequality⁵². Women's issues are largely limited to those of violence against women. Other systemic issues that affect rural and urban women – such as land rights, access to loans, access to justice, rights of access to water, to cooking fuel and to forest produce – rarely get reported.

16.107 In Sonia Bathla's analysis (1998) of the media's coverage of women's issues and the women's movement within the broader socio-cultural and political scenario in Indian society, most of the issues facing women were missing in the media and those which were covered were event-oriented⁵³. According to her, event-oriented coverage does not question the structures that produce oppressive conditions for women; instead, they appear simply as 'accidents' or 'incidents'. "It (media) does not act as 'agenda-setter' for women's issues and the movement, thus also denying them participation in the democratic processes".

16.108 Women belonging to the marginalised communities including dalit, tribal and other religious minorities have also been consistently excluded from the mainstream media. A Centre for Alternative Dalit Media analyst has argued that the realities of dalit women cannot be subsumed under the general category of being female in India. "Rural women have a different struggle from the urban woman. Rural women are forever defending their reputation, and urban women their personality. Dalit women who were assertive have had to endure intolerance from an early age..."⁵⁴.

16.109 Muslim women too have remained generally outside the pale of the media, only to emerge occasionally as victims of riots and unfair personal laws, or as courageous trail-blazers taking on an obscurantist community. This was the approach that marked the coverage accorded to Shah Bano in the late 1980s, who sought to claim her legal right to maintenance after being divorced by her husband; Gudiya, forced by unfortunate circumstances to choose between two husbands; or Imrana, survivor of a sexual assault by her father-in-law in a Uttar Pradesh village in 2005. Such media constructions projected Muslim women as something of a mystique whose situation needs to be deconstructed and who should be treated as objects of charity, rather than as individual women like any other in the country fighting for their rights. Similarly, Muslims and other minorities were rarely presented as part of the social fabric in mainstream television serials.

16.110 This was noted in the first meeting of the Indian Association of Muslim Social Scientists. A general consensus seemed to prevail at the seminar that the Press in India on the whole represents the interests of the urban 'upper' caste elite for it is owned and manned largely by them. Consequently, it is not just the Muslims but, in fact, all marginalised groups such as women, dalits, tribals, backward castes, peasants and workers that the mass-media is biased against. In the final analysis, it was said that only a radical altering of the ownership structure of the Indian media in favour of marginalised and silenced social groups can firmly counter its communal, class and caste prejudices.

16.111 The media has also been hetero-normative with stereotyped portrayal of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities. Not only was the male-female binary privileged, the media often betrayed a homophobic targeting of LGBT communities. Voyeurism and stereotyping characterized much of the coverage through the 1990s and early 2000s; gay sexuality and culture were seen largely through the prism of HIV/AIDS, sexual abuse, paedophilia, crime and the like. The reading down by the Delhi High Court of Section

377 in 2009 led to treatment that was a little more empathetic. Taken as a whole, the media's treatment of the LGBT community continues to be insensitive. Special interest groups need to be served with special interest content, and radio has the potential to be a democratic medium that can reach out to these fringe communities. The reason why initiatives like *Q-Radio*⁵⁵ a UNDP-supported initiative that focuses on the LGBTQ community was facing resistance despite winning global recognition was because the platform should not be restrictive but inclusive to the mainstream and those outside of it, as well.

16.112 Media portrayal of women with disabilities negatively impacts public perception, often defeating the cause of the disabled. The media often emphasizes 'superhuman' stories about the disabled, instead of "normalising" them. The impact of the choice of words and language can be far more damaging than the actual physical condition. Oft-used descriptors like 'wheelchair-bound' implying confinement, whereas, in fact, for most disabled people a wheelchair is a liberating agent. Similarly, advertisements never show disabled people doing routine chores like buying detergent.

Women's Unequal Access to Media

16.113 While it can be said with certainty that the globalised media had impacted to some degree all Indian women, not all Indian women are equally impacted, given complexities of their location and agency. Women are not a homogeneous category. They are marked by regional, ethnic, religious, caste and language divides and characterised by differences in income levels, age and sexual orientation. While it may be tempting to conflate the experiences of middle-class urban women with that of all women in India, a more nuanced and accurate understanding requires the recognition that all women in the country do not participate equally in the media space.

16.114 Historically, women's exposure to the media has been much lower than that of men because they constituted a larger proportion of the poor, the illiterate and the barely literate. *The gender gap in media access is reflective of larger structural discrimination against the Indian woman.* Male-female differentials, not just in terms of literacy but employment which, in turn significantly impacts personal agency as well as disposable income are major reasons for the lag. There are other factors too that come into play, including domestic responsibilities and societal attitudes. We have seen how the perception that mobile phones

would encourage sexual licentiousness has led to families and khap panchayats proscribing women and girls from using these devices.

16.115 Data from NFHS-3 (2005-2006) has revealed that less than two-thirds of working women earned cash in comparison to 88 per cent of working men. Correspondingly, 88 per cent of men have at least a weekly exposure to the media compared to 70 per cent women. Also, only 27 per cent of young women read a newspaper or magazine regularly, compared to 57 per cent young men. Media exposure, unsurprisingly, increases with income and the majority of women with no education had no access to any kind of media.

16.116 These findings have been confirmed by other studies as well. A UGC study done in 2007 found that the proportion of female readers of online newspapers was considerably less than male readers⁵⁶. There is also a significant gender gap in terms of ownership of mobile phones.

16.117 The overwhelmingly male-centric composition of fan clubs that may have had their provenance in the film-politics melding that marked popular culture in the Tamil Nadu of the 1960s and 1970s, but which have manifested themselves in some form or the other all over the country, is another pointer to the skewed nature of gender access to cinema in India.

16.118 According to one estimate, there is only one woman for every four men accessing the web in India cutting across all types of websites including Google, Yahoo, Facebook and Twitter, because internet use in India is dominated by shared use in offices and internet cafes, and is highly correlated to education and income.

16.119 Women's participation in internet space is also thoroughly restricted in India. The gender imbalance is evident as a study project, Women and the Web, found a 33% gender gap between men and women's access and use of technology.⁵⁷ (Women's/girl's internet penetration was only 8%; in the study. 49% of the women users sought information on accessing government services; and 54% sought information on financial services and banking). Further, recent statistics show 75% of Facebook profiles in India are those of men. It was also seen that one in five women believe that the internet is not appropriate for them, not useful and that if they engaged online, their families would disapprove.

16.120 “How many girls get the same amount of time on computers as their brothers?” – this is one of the key reasons for the limited presence of women online, which gets further diminished in knowledge communities. The lack of access translates into a lack of contribution as well, which is why gendered perspectives are missing on forums like *Wikipedia*. Academic surveys on *Wikipedia* have shown that men try to push opinion as fact, whereas women back off even if they have facts. A 2011 survey of *Wikipedia* revealed that even in the knowledge-based community only 434 out of 6,500 respondents were women⁵⁸. Of these, 7 per cent said they were harassed and 6 per cent said they were approached with offers of sexual favours. Though a small figure, this is still gender imbalance, and this is of far more importance and urgency than the creation or construction of knowledge.

16.121 Due to the big gender gap in terms of access to technology, women in India are not shaping the environment of technology as men do. Traditional gender norms are among the biggest reasons for women being wary of technology.

16.122 Asymmetries of access and presence in media coverage have undermined the ability of many categories of people, including that of women, to participate as equal citizens in the public sphere. Consequently, their ability to gain information, to make informed choices, to express themselves and to uphold their own rights – each aspect crucial for democratic functioning – has stood compromised.

Engendering Media Spaces

Commitments of Twelfth Five Year Plan: “Engendering the Media”

The visual and audio media, including television, films and radio shows are important channels of information dissemination. The Twelfth Five Year Plan is committed to engendering the different channels of the media including local media like Nukkad Nataks (Street Plays), Community Radios, and so on. The Information and Broadcasting Ministry will encourage gender messaging in major programmes and shows across channels. This will entail substantive engagements with the executive producers, content writers, and editors of all channels on critical gender concerns and issues. Recognition will be accorded to the programmes that air messages critical to the empowerment of women.

16.123 The nature of mainstream media in India is highly hierarchical and patriarchal. It functions in a traditionally hetero-normative framework where few news organisations are willing to take a risk as far as challenging stereotypes on a consistent basis is concerned. In

the past few years, the nature as well as volume of reportage on women's issues has seen a marked rise. Despite the encouraging trend, the bulk of news featuring women revolves around specific incident-based outpour of anger against sexual violence or coverage of legal proceedings in well-known cases of injustices to women. There is less focus on issues of livelihood, employment, wage discrimination as well as violence within the family. In this context, it becomes absolutely necessary to support and aid alternate forums where more gender-sensitive ideas as well as related concerns and questions can be expressed and discussed. There is a gamut of news reports and stories of change as well as suffering and struggle which get 'killed' when faced with stiff opposition from spiced-up pieces that promise more visibility for a newspaper. It is precisely for this reason that alternate media should be seen as a necessary step.

16.124 *Developing and Supporting Alternate/Parallel Media*: The Charkha Development Communication Network was set up in 1994, with the objective of working towards the social and economic inclusion of marginalized categories of citizens through the creative use of media. It conducted a study in 2005 in the three newly formed states of Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand and found that the mainstream media there had systematically neglected to cover ten issues of crucial concern, including poverty, health and gender⁵⁹. There were just a few mainstream media newspapers which even engaged with such issues. *Prabhat Khabar* in central India calls itself a movement rather than a newspaper. Printed in Hindi and based in eastern India it was an early instance of a mainstream publication taking social and gender concerns seriously. Set up in 1984, it had a significant presence in the three states of Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. It was also one of the first Hindi newspapers to turn the light on women and have pages dedicated to gender perspectives. It was among the first mainstream Hindi publications to report the successes of female entrepreneurs and Self Help Groups (SH's), thus gaining a readership among educated Hindi-speaking women. The newspaper also recruited Adivasi women who were encouraged to become reporters and contribute stories, bringing to light, probably for the first time, information of the tribal community from within it.

India's first Campus Community Radio
Jameela, Radio Jockey of "Anna FM",

Anna University's Educational Multi Media Centre set up India's first campus community radio station called *Anna FM* in 2005. Here, the managing committee has 50% community representatives, and more than 80% of the programmes are produced by the community, for the community. This radio's signature programme is *Magalir Neram*, led by women in the community. Here, violence against women, women's health, livelihoods and environment are the dominant themes. Women RJs (Radio Jockeys) like Jameela not only produce programmes by selecting themes, interviewing community women as well as experts on a variety of themes, they also follow up in the community by seeking feedback as well as redressal from injustice, where women bring in their new found freedom and empowerment into the radio station. Jameela herself is a single woman with a daughter, who walked out of her abuse-and violence-laden marriage. Her Radio Jockeying role has empowered many women in her community to take pro-active steps to transform their own lives for the better, even as it gave more confidence and knowledge to Jameela on a variety of issues. Call-in format in the programmes allows women of the community to participate directly. Further, some programmes are preceded by surveys undertaken in the community, drawing from the needs of the community. The initiative also included giving away radio sets to some members of the community. Listening to the radio programmes in a group is encouraged and it is reported that the community receives the programmes very favourably. This community radio initiative came about because of support by Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.

Jameela shared her experiences in a consultation organized at the Women's Development Corporation in Chennai, during this HLC's state visit to Tamil Nadu (20th December 2014).

16.125 In the non-mainstream space, the best-known instance of an attempt in the Hindi language to carve a niche for a female readership with modest levels of literacy was the well-known *Khabar Lahariya*. It began as a newsletter in the late 1990s, brought out by women members of SHGs, many of whom were from marginalized Dalit and Muslim pockets in the villages of Chitrakoot and Banda districts of Uttar Pradesh (UP). Supported by a Delhi-based women's resource group, Nirantar, it went on to win the prestigious Chameli Devi Jain Award for Outstanding Journalism⁶⁰. Today *Khabar Lahariya* circulates in around 600 villages in seven districts of UP and Bihar, and reaches around 80,000 rural literate and semi-literate men, women and adolescents⁶¹. Its roving women reporters feed the publication with information that may not figure in the local newspapers but is of utmost importance to the well-being of the community.

16.126 South India too had instances of parallel, gender-centric media platforms. Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh witnessed another inspiring example of grassroots women-centric journalism. Launched on Independence Day in 2001, *Navodayam*, a government-initiative, was conceived as a quarterly newsletter in simple Telugu, easily comprehensible to its neo-literate readers. What was striking was that rural women, mostly dalits, handled all aspects of its production from reporting to photography and even circulation. In its heyday the magazine printed 20,000 copies and had a readership of more than 200,000. Its principal aim was to create general awareness among local women of the issues that impacted them like alcoholism, child labour, and government projects for poverty alleviation⁶².

16.127 Community Radio, which can vault over literacy barriers, emerged as an important media of change, despite the fact that government regulations meant that they could not broadcast news. Not only did they create a grassroots cadre of radio journalists as well as listener audiences, they helped in the sharing of crucial information and experiences. In 1995, the Supreme Court of India recognized the airwaves as public property⁶³. Even before the Milan Declaration on Communication and Human Rights of 1998, which called for “international recognition of the community broadcasting sector as an essential form of public service broadcasting and a vital contributor to media pluralism and freedom of expression and information”, the Bangalore Declaration on Radio of 1996 had noted that besides educating and entertaining people, community radio could connect people with people “through participatory or circular communication”. The Government of India began auctioning its FM radio frequencies in the year 2000.

16.128 Sangham FM Radio, set up by the NGO Deccan Development Society (DDS) in 2001 with UNESCO support, was an early example of how such an initiative could change the lives of women. Sangham was broadcast to women farmers in Medak, one of the most backward and semi-arid areas of Andhra Pradesh, and it focused on issues like food sovereignty, seed sovereignty, control over natural resources and organic farming⁶⁴. Further north, there was Lalit Lokvani, the first community radio station in the state of Uttar Pradesh⁶⁵. Set up with UNICEF’s support, today it is accessed by people in over 80 villages and its young female radio jockeys make it a point to focus on women and children in their programmes. In Uttarakhand, young men and women make and broadcast programmes that inform the public about developments such as Panchayat elections, and record the historical and folk literature of the hills. In Kutch (Gujarat), the Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan

(KMVS), supported by UNDP, began Radio Ujjas, a radio initiative focused on women's issues in the local dialect⁶⁶. These are just a few examples of the over 126 community radio stations in the country. Many of them cater to rural and tribal women, providing them with much-needed information and insights and helping them to overcome the limitations of poor literacy and being located in distant pockets of India's hinterland.

16.129 Video Volunteers, set up in 2003, trained the poor and disadvantaged through a program called *India Unheard*, to use their abilities to think critically and express their concerns in order to communicate with the larger world⁶⁷. Many of these "community media producers" were women. One of them was Sahu, a widow with an OBC background who studied only up to Class Eight. Among the stories she was able to break was one on how proper wages had not been paid to those working on a Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) job site in Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh. Her report caught the attention of mainstream national newspapers like 'The Hindu' and before long, more than 1,000 people who had been working on the MGNREGA work sites in the region were given their unpaid dues. Around the same time, Muzaffarpur district in Bihar saw another experiment, the all-female *Appan Samachar* (our news). This is an all-women village news network, most of whom are dalits, OBCs, Musahars and Muslims⁶⁸.

16.130 *Creating Gender-Just Spaces in Mainstream Media*: Women's magazines, the only publications that have dedicated media content for women within the mainstream media, have a long history in India. Over 140 years ago, there was a Moshodayani speaking for the women's "cause" through her magazine, 'Banga Mahila', while Rameshwari Nehru began a journal called *Stree Darpan* in the early years of the 20th century. But the early radicalism that marked some women's magazines of yore soon gave way to standardised publications catering largely to women as home makers, mothers and wives with their mix of recipes, fashion spreads, knitting patterns, and household tips. Since the costs entailed in producing them were considerable -- according to one estimate, a magazine's cover price accounted for, at best, 20 per cent of the revenue accruing to the publisher -- they were dependent to a great extent on the advertisements they attracted. After their survey of two popular women's magazines in the late 1980s-1990s, media commentators Ammu Joseph and Kalpana Sharma, concluded that the very nature and traditional format of commercial women's magazines inhibit the serious presentation of issues.

16.131 To a significant extent, commercial women's magazines subverted concepts like feminism and shaped them for their own purposes. 'Feminism' came to be understood often as the ability of the "new woman" to make consumer choices; International Women's Day became an occasion to showcase garments, cosmetics and other "women's products" that promised to "liberate" them from the drudgery of the kitchen and housekeeping. In 1989, the largest English language women's magazine, *Femina*, after studying market trends, concluded that it was time to shift focus from family and home to personal care. The move was justified on the basis that the magazine now wanted to cater to a "genre of super womanhood in India, so that nothing would stop ordinary women from achieving and acquiring extraordinary success"⁶⁹. By the early 2000s, while on the one hand publications like *Women's Era* continued to cater to the "home maker", on the other side there are now glossy and expensive magazines like *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle*, *Verve* focused on the three-in-one formula of glamour, fashion and sex. This was evidence yet again of the conscious creation of segmented readerships designed for the advertising market.

16.132 Regional publications were variations on the same theme. The popular Bengali women's magazine, *Sananda* – begun in 1986 – also catered to the "new woman", with the familiar formula of fashion, beauty, relationships, interiors, food, travel, and parenting. In the South, Tamil women's magazines took recourse to the narration of sensationalized "victim tales" – stories of women caught in difficult personal circumstance that were designed to provide readers with a certain vicarious thrill. But there were also examples like 'Miloon Saryajani' (women together), a Marathi journal founded in Pune by Vidya Bal in 1980, which aimed at providing a forum for those gender issues that were usually peripheral to mainstream journalism. Bal came up with the innovative measure of setting up *Sakhi Mandals*, or friendship clubs, attached to the journal, which allowed groups of women readers to get together and share their experiences and solve problems together.

16.133 Women's pages also became a fixture in many mainstream publications from the 90s, in an attempt to attract the growing number of women readers. While these initiatives did indicate that editors were now being forced to consider gender as a more important beat than they had done earlier, it also made for a ghettoisation of information that fitted well with the larger news matrix that separated 'hard news' or issues of power and economics, from the 'soft news' space featuring subjects like *gender*. Many of these 'women's pages' and 'women's supplements', especially in the regional press – going by titles like 'Mahila

Mangal' and 'For Our Sisters' –were in fact brought out by male sub-editors and were often instruction sheets for women on how to be “good” wives, mothers, daughters, and daughters-in-law. When these attempts failed to bring in advertising revenue, editors began to experiment with other approaches, coming out with pages devoted to the career woman, or combing gender with development.

16.134 There are fortunately examples of regular columns on women, some of which are of a significantly high quality. 'The Other Half' – Kalpana Sharma's long-running column in The Hindu – is an example of this. A noteworthy initiative was an exclusive feature service for women. Gender-centric content produced by the Women's Feature Service, set up in 1991, was placed in the mainstream media.

16.135 Mainstream television programming too saw some refreshing breaks. A talk show by Priya Tendulkar telecast on DD Metro in 1995, dealt with subjects earlier not considered as worthy of television articulation. The reality format proved popular, especially with new communications technology allowing viewers to participate directly in such shows. In 2002, the Tamil programme, Kathai Alla, Nijam (Truth, Not Fiction), anchored by award-winning film actress Lakshmi, took over 100 calls a day on personal problems like marriage breakdowns, domestic violence, bigamy, sexual abuse, and so on. The concerns were addressed empathetically by experts like psychiatrists, medical experts and advocates, and efforts were made to keep titillation out of the narrative and adopt a non-judgmental tone. In the east, there was the popular Bengali live phone-in gender programme, Ananya, which focused on women's and human rights. It began in 2002 and received tremendous feedback almost from the start. Its anchor, Ananya Chatterjee, later came up with Ek Muhurte (Just Now), which focused on socially relevant topics on the private Bengali TV channel, TARA. A more recent example of a socially concerned talk show was the Aamir Khan-anchored Satyamev Jayate (2013), which dealt with themes considered as “women's issues” like skewed sex ratios, child abuse and patriarchy, violence against women and so on, in a manner that was both educative and watchable.

16.136 Even within the serial format, there were serious attempts to break the mould. Among them was the 2003 serial, 'Jassi Jaisi Koi Nahin' (There's no one like Jassi). It has an interesting protagonist – based possibly on the popular American sitcom, *Ugly Betty*, but Indianised as a plain, salwar kameez wearing Jane in every sense of the term, but who was bold, intelligent and animated, constituting a welcome change from the bejeweled beauties

who inhabited the mainstream serial space. Grappling with problems that real working women have had to face, whether it is poor pay, long hours or sexual harassment, Jassi quickly went on to become an unusual icon for Indian women, with the postal department even issuing a stamp to celebrate her!

Harnessing Digital Spaces and Information Society Opportunity for Promoting a Gender Justice Agenda

Digital technologies have the potential to transform contemporary politics, by being more diffuse, decentralised and adaptive. The ability of the internet to hone women's political voice is enormous and women's organisations have been trying to claim digital technology. Similarly, Information and Communications Technology (ICTs) bring about a qualitative, structural transformation in the economy by opening up new opportunities for flexible work, self employment and entrepreneurship. The IT BPO sector is an example with a steady increase in female employees albeit concentrated in lower level jobs. ICT businesses such as ICT kiosks in rural areas also provide opportunities for rural young women. Mobile money transfers are shown to be pathways for financial inclusion including of women. E-Governance and public services delivery also has huge potential for women's empowerment. National data systems can be improved enormously in favour of women using these technologies. ICT-enabled education and learning can also be deployed for massive transformation.

While the potential is obviously high in various arenas of a woman's life to be greatly improved using digital media, towards her empowerment, there is a lot of ground to be covered in reality given that grassroots experimentation in small projects is heavily circumscribed by very slow infrastructural development. Improving meaningful access of women to information society spaces requires digital literacy to be improved. Access to affordable broadband is an important citizen right.

To tackle gender-based violence in the context of ICTs, it is vital that gender equality advocates work with existing national women's machineries to a) initiate deliberations with women's groups for reviewing existing ICT laws and policies, from a gendered perspective; b) initiate debates on the need for a comprehensive regulatory framework that addresses VAW as a national priority, without sinking into 'paternalism' and 'moralism' as existing approaches tend to do; and c) influence digital literacy agenda for girls and women, to develop the capacity to understand and address VAW at the individual level.

For enabling women to take advantage of digital economy opportunities, while ICT skills training are a pre-requisite, this must be backed by an enabling policy environment for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Similarly, women's participation in local planning and community monitoring of service delivery is needed in E-governance efforts, which will then contribute to gender-responsive public administration.

From written inputs provided by IT for Change, Bangalore, titled "Digital Technologies and Gender Justice in India: An analysis of key policy and programming concerns", April 2014

16.137 *Feminist Footprint*: Over the years, activists critiqued media's projections of women as passive objects. They demanded a new grammar of cultural production that transcended patriarchal and monolithic creations of mainstream media in a language that stepped away from the earlier lazy stereotypical usage. Further, the issues of women do not get their due coverage, while entire groups of women are nearly totally invisible in media spaces.

16.138 Many of the above changes with regard to engendering media spaces came as a response to the arguments raised by women's activists. Over the years, they had critiqued the manner in which the media had commodified the female body and the violence directed at it. They found that much of the portrayals of women in the media were unthinking, reflecting the societal norms without breaking them, and pointed out images projecting women as passive objects was deeply offensive and violated their human rights. They called for a new grammar of cultural production that transcended the patriarchal and monolithic creations of mainstream cinema, television, and other media. They demanded a new use of language and semantics and the discarding of stereotypical usage. Every time the media employed the expression "eve teasing", they argued, it amounted to undermining the seriousness of sexual harassment; also, every time it was the male pronoun that was used to define the whole of humanity, thereby denying the existence of half the human race.

16.139 Some of the producers of new content within the mainstream space were women activists themselves. The sensitive black-and-white photography of Shebha Chachchi, shaped by the women's movement, captured with nuance the inner courtyards of women's existences. The work of documentary film maker Madhushree Datta, attached to Majlis, a Mumbai based legal aid centre, is another case in point. Her searing hard-hitting short film, 'I Live In Behrampada', was about the impact of the 1991-92 Mumbai riots on the female psyche. A few years later, she came up with 'Kya Apko Pata Hai', a series on the legal rights of women in animation. The attempt here was to be entertaining even as finer points of the law were conveyed. The series went on to win the Radio and Television Advertising

Practitioners' Association of India (RAPA) Award for Best Public Service Advertisement, 1998. The 1989 *Bharat ki Chaap*, a 13-part Doordarshan series, made by a woman filmmaker and activist, Chandita Mukherjee, focused on the history of science and technology in the subcontinent and brought women into the frame in a consistent way, unlike most programming of its kind. It also had, as its central story teller, a woman reporter.

16.140 Developments like the setting up of **networks and associations of media women** are noteworthy. For instance, the India Chapter of the International Association of Women in Radio and Television (IAWRT) in 2005 by Jai Chandiram, one of India's finest women broadcasters, helped bring focus to their work through programmes like annual film festivals and the like.

16.141 The work of many important **Indian women feature film makers**, working in different languages, shaped the last 25 years. Women film makers including Aparna Sen, Sai Paranjpe, Deepa Mehta, Suhasini Mani Ratnam, Revathi, Meghna Gulzar, Aruna Raje and Kalpana Lajmi also contributed by introducing "female gaze" and nuanced characters in Indian Cinema. For instance, Aparna Sen's *Yuganta* explored a woman's dilemma between her profession and her home. It is to Aparna Sen that the credit must go for consistently portraying the woman's condition over the course of three decades, from her debut film – *36, Chowringhee Lane* (1981) to *Iti Mrinalini* (2011). Her work, *Mr and Mrs Iyer* (2002), took on the violence of communalism frontally, and it inspired other women film makers in turn like Nandita Sen, who revisited the theme in her directorial debut, *Firaaq* (2009). NRI women film makers also expanded the lexicon of movie making. Mira Nair trained her camera on the impact of paedophilia on the life of a young woman in *Monsoon Wedding* (2001) and Deepa Mehta came up with the frankest portrayal of same sex love that the country had ever seen with *Fire* (1996). *Fire* was about a north Indian family that raised questions about the patriarchal controls in this household, and urgent issue of female identity and sexuality. Mehta's film explodes the uneasy alliance between family, state and market through an exploration of a lesbian relationship in an Indian context.

16.142 What is now called the **New Indian Cinema** has made several attempts at breaking away from stereotypical image of woman. Films made by independent film directors such as Shyam Benegal, Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen with low budgets and political subject matter contribute majority of such movies. Some movies also come out of the commercial cinema market commenting on various aspects of India social reality. According to Urvashi Butalia,

new Indian cinema has made a name for itself in the international marketplace but has had little impact at home. This is partly because it is hampered by a lack of finances and partly because it makes the mistake of not speaking a popular language and therefore not catering for the popular culture.

16.143 A very small number of films have explored the identity of women belonging to minority religion, lower caste or socio-economically excluded communities though cinema portraying the subaltern has not been popular. The reasons remain unknown because systematic study or surveys have not been conducted to find out. For instance, *Garam Hawaa* and *Nikaah* are two of the very few films exploring Muslim identities. Similarly, women, peasants, workers, migrant labourers, criminals, prostitutes, homosexuals and systemic exploitation have featured in the alternative cinema but this realistic cinema, with exceptions, has a limited appeal among the audiences.

16.144 It is not just the women film makers or New Indian Cinema who explored sensitive portrayal of women and their issues. Mainstream feature film makers like Govind Nihalani, dared to make a three-hour feature film on Panchayati Raj women, with his *Sanshodhan* (1996). Rituparno Ghosh attempted incisive, sensitive portrayals of women as sexual beings rather than sexual objects in films like *Bariwali* (2000) and *Chokher Bali* (2003). Amol Palekar's *Anahat in Marathi* (2003) dwelt on a woman's right to express her sexuality. A film like Chandan Arora's *Main Madhuri Dixit Banna Chahti Hoon* (2003) moved the Hindi mainstream cinema narrative away from the glitz and glamour of the big city to small town India even as it captured a young woman's attempts to make something of her life. By the end of the 2000s, films with female protagonists were conspicuous by their presence, many of which did well at the box office. Hindi films like *Chak De India* (2007), *No One Killed Jessica* (2011), *Ishqiya* (2010), *Dirty Picture* (2011) *Queen* (2014) characterized this trend, as indeed regional cinema like the recent Assamese film by Arun Manna, *Adhyay, A Chapter*, on the structured violence that marks the life of Assamese women.

16.145 By the mid-2000s, India had a considerable number of women documentary film makers bringing their own perspectives, talents, creativity, and topics to the public sphere. Feminist documentary filmmakers, unlike the fictional cinema, have explored gender identities and concerns with an analytical lens. Some of the filmmakers have won international accolades. For example, Sehjo Singh is a documentary filmmaker who has been awarded the Silver Lotus at the National Film Festival on three separate occasions. An

independent filmmaker, Sehjo is also a member of the jury for the national awards (non-feature films) in India. She has made many movies on social issues such as *The Women Betrayed*, *Who is Afraid of Little Child?*, *Dreams of Ghasi Bai*, and *Kol Tales*, among others. Some women documentary film makers, like Ananya Chatterjee, decided to capture grassroots politics after the Panchayati Raj legislation was passed in 1993. She made two important documentaries on women's grassroots empowerment, 'Daughters of the 73rd Amendment' (1999) and 'The Politics of Silence' (2000). As the years went by, documentary film making also reflected the activism of a new generation of feminist activists. Paromita Vohra's Q2P (2009) on women's lack of access to public toilets in Mumbai, was evidence of this trend. Toilets, for her, were a political issue.

16.146 Further, **feminist filmmakers** such as Madhushree Dutta (*Scribbles on Akka*), Pratibha Parmar (*Khush*), Shohini Ghosh (*Tales of the Night Fairies*) explore topics ranging from the female body as political and radical site to alternative sexualities. These films enfigure the body as a site of desire, longing and dissent. This enfiguring of the body also inscribes within it the renegotiations of the filmmakers for a politically engaged public sphere.

16.147 Even within the advertisement space, there have been many interesting ways of bringing serious gender concerns to the public. Notable among them was the 'Bell Bajao' ad campaign in 2008 – launched by the human rights organization, Breakthrough . It urged boys and men to raise their voices against domestic violence.

16.148 Stayfree, a sanitary towel brand, collaborated with UNICEF to address the health concerns of adolescent girls in rural India with its TV jingle, 'Mujhe pankh de do' (give me wings). The 'Soch Badlo' commercials, launched by Tata Tea similarly, celebrated a "new woman", projecting her as an epitome of positive thought and action. It was an extension of its earlier 'Jaago Re' (Wake up) campaign which celebrated the *aam aurat* or common woman, rising against corruption. Such portrayals with their social messages were refreshing attempts to portray women in completely new ways and roles from the usual stereotypes. But the fact that there were only a few interventions of this kind points to the challenges that lie in turning the time-honoured advertising model on its head, and speak up for the real woman.

16.149 What deserves mention is the massive mass awareness programme -"Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao"- launched in 2015 by the Government of India and spear-headed by the

Ministries of Women and Child Development and Information and Broadcasting. . This is the first time in independent India that a gender-related issue has been given national importance and treated on par with the polio-eradication and anti-terrorism national campaigns launched to spread awareness for change.

The Challenge of Regulation

- *Existing Regulatory Frameworks*

16.150 The Indian media comprises dynamic non-homogenous entities. Each segment of the media has evolved its own set of codes and regulations keeping in mind the specific requirements of different technologies, their reach and influence on consumers. There are commonalities in regulation across the media, especially with regard to the basic tenets of liberty and equality laid out in the Constitution and the Directive Principles. In order to carry out a complete appraisal of the regulatory mechanisms in place, it is imperative to separately address each section of the media with its distinct characteristics and functions while at the same time bring forward the inter-linkages between different aspects of the media and wider socio-economic processes that have been decisively shaping the 21st century.

16.151 There exists a large number of laws in India that are meant to check portrayals of women that are deemed to be offensive. They include the Cinematograph Act 1952, the Press Council Act 1978, the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act 1986 (IRWA 1986), the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act 1995, the Information Technology Act 2000, Sections 292, 293 and 294 of the Indian Penal Code, guidelines of the Central Board for Film Certification, Section 13 and 14 of the Press Council Act 1978 etc. among others.

16.152 Among the numerous regulatory bodies, the only statutory body, the Press Council of India (PCI), was established under the PCI Act of 1978 to preserve the freedom of the Press and maintain and improve the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India. The PCI is also required to help maintain "*high standards of public taste*" and foster responsibility among citizens.

16.153 Visual content like films, television documentaries and advertisements requires the sanction of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The Programme and

Advertisement Code, as followed by All India Radio, sets guidelines for all radio broadcasters, who require government licenses to operate within the country. Besides these, there are regulatory bodies which lay down codes for self-regulation and govern through agreements. The News Broadcasters Association (NBA) and the Broadcast Editors' Association (BEA), for instance, have evolved codes of ethics for private television channels, and the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) has drawn up guidelines on advertisement content.

- *The Print Media and the Press Council of India (PCI)*⁷⁰

16.153 Giving an address on National Press Day on November 16, 2009, former PCI Chairman Justice G. N. Ray had said: "*The newspapers today are compelled to delicately balance the twin challenges namely how best they can adapt to and gain from digital distribution and advertising revenue; and how to meet the role of fourth estate... In their anxiety to get more and more readers, and particularly more and more advertisers and corporate sector as client, the print media is by and large turning to be a commercial enterprise and the newspaper as a commodity.*"⁷¹

16.154 Lacking sufficient authority, the PCI has repeatedly failed to make news organisations comply with its guidelines. With few organisations willing to self-regulate and the Press Council lacking teeth, the situation has become damaging in an increasingly profit-driven, aggressive environment. The media frequently tends to cede its watchdog role. The practice of 'paid news' has become rampant. In the name of press freedom, there is repeated 'trial by media' including of women subjects, which is detrimental to both human rights and integrity of the press.

- *Advertising and the Advertising Standards Council of India*⁷²

16.155 Set up in 1985, the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) adopted a Code for Self-Regulation in advertising. Its stated objective is a commitment to honest advertising and fair competition in the market-place. It offers support and redressal, protection of the legitimate interests of consumers and all concerned with advertising — advertisers, media, advertising agencies and others who help in the creation or placement of advertisements.

16.156 Self-regulatory mechanisms so far have not been able to prevent the subtleties of misogynist portrayal nor projecting of age-old stereotypes. While men appear more often in ads for automobiles, financial services and electronic products, women appear more often for home and beauty products, food products for children as well as child-care items.

- *Television and the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) and The Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC)*

16.157 TV regulation is a highly contentious matter. Any law on the same has been difficult to pass and there is no basic Act or body in place. The Prasar Bharti Act, 1997 is yet to be notified by the government. While several attempts have been made to draft laws, they have been perceived as “draconian” and have caused a hue-and-cry in the industry.

16.158 The Indian television space works essentially on self-regulation as attempts at drafting laws have been met with vociferous resistance from the industry. As of now, two regulatory bodies — the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) and Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) — look into complaints from and against news channels. However, they do not even cover half the channels in the country. There is no single complaints council that can take grievances *across* channels.

16.159 There are **three broad areas in television that need regulation**: inappropriate depiction (including unsuitable film material); the invasion of privacy; and media trials. The BCCC, which was set up in June 2011, has received 15,000 complaints so far. Bulk of these complaints is deflected to other bodies (13,000) or simply dropped on account of being frivolous. Even grievous complaints concerning women’s rights and issues are let off easily. For example, in response to complaints against channels for showing graphic visuals of acid attacks, the channels are simply asked to carry an apology scroll. Clearly, this is not a deterrent; there is a need for stringent regulation to deal with this.

16.160 **Media trials** are another serious issue that the television industry is grappling with. Even from a gender perspective, there has to be room for court trials to take place. On some occasions, the BCCC has taken action. For instance, in one of its most important orders, it prohibited Sony TV from airing the recreation of the Nirbhaya incident, since the matter was *sub judice*. Additionally, the BCCC fined two channels for airing highly adult content. For instance, some television channels have excessively graphic content. Since advertising is

based on TRP, certain news channels broadcast porn content at night. This increases the overall ratings of the channels, and hence the revenue from advertising. Whether these channels come under the purview of the state regulators is not even known. This needs to be addressed.

16.161 There must be a proactive complaints council for TV. The reach of such a body must span the entire industry and must be populated by specialists who recognise public interest. When giving a ruling, the regulator must ensure that it has a potential for deterrence. Harsher fines must be imposed on offenders because simple apology scrolls will not be enough. Violent recreations in the name of 'crime serials' must be stopped. If the programme-makers feel they need to highlight a bitter truth of our society, they must deal with it sensitively. Making use of the subscription-based model for the digitisation of the television industry, adult content must be limited to niche spaces, so that children cannot access these without their parents' knowledge.

- *Cinema and the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC)*⁷³

16.162 While creative self-expression is crucial, cinematic material that unnecessarily and unjustifiably glorifies crime and violence must be refrained from. The biggest challenge for the Central Board of Film Certification is that it must be sensitive to the sub-textual issues that a film seeks to address, often through the use of these representations. Dealing with the representation of sexual violence, the primary question that needs to be addressed is whether the film's engagement with the material is serious. The legal framework that was envisaged in 1952 is obviously not equipped to deal with the challenges of the new millennium. Another concern is that the bulk of certification is done at the regional offices, where the advisory panel decides which certificate the film gets. The credentials of members of these panels are dubious. The government must ensure proper training of advisory board members. Gender sensitisation of people who watch and certify films must be made mandatory. Modules have been created for this purpose.

16.163 Introduction of a disclaimer on the body of the certificate is imperative. In addition to certification as 'U', 'U/A' or 'A', it is recommended that there has to be a qualifying line, which can serve multiple purposes. It will not only be good for filmmakers, it will also equip the viewer with a qualitative statement about the movie.

16.164 Today, filmmakers are pushed into making money out of television. In this scenario, there is a thin line differentiating 'U' content from 'U/A' content, which must be viewed by children with parental guidance. On television, viewing of 'U/A' content cannot be regulated. It is important to emphasise the criticality of pushing for an adult spot/time on television. If there is an adult spot, parents will know that during this time, parental guidance must be provided to their children. Since 'U', 'UA' and 'A' are English letters which are unlikely to be understood by all, these must be changed to animated symbols more easily understood by the masses. More categories of certification are needed so that serious films get a fair treatment for raising critical social concerns. An 'A+ 15' category of certification could be introduced.

- *Freedom of Expression vis-à-vis "Indecent Representation"*

16.165 With great diversity in the media and with the media boom that has taken place, there can be no single authority or institution to govern and oversee the audio, visual or print content being generated today. A few regulatory authorities do exist, as discussed in the above section. However, to encourage and facilitate voluntary self-regulation within the industry there are some codes of conduct and guidelines, in addition to regulatory bodies.

16.166 The representation of women has figured as a concern for all these bodies and they have intervened in this arena in the past. For instance, the CBFC had ordered the word 'sexy' to be removed from a lyric that went, "sexy, sexy, sexy, mujhe log bole", in the film Khuddar (1994). In the same year, the consumer complaints council of the ASCI had ruled with regard to the Kamasutra brand condom advertisements of 1994 that they were "offensive to generally accepted standards of moral decency".

16.167 However, over the last two and a half decades, the great majority of cases pertaining to the representation of women have come under the rubric of The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (IRWA). This law, enacted in 1986, defines "indecent representation" as *"the depiction in any manner of the figure of a woman; her form or body or any part thereof in such way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to, or denigrating women, or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals"*⁷⁴.

16.168 The application of the law in regulating content is indeed challenging. The problem is, there is a lack of clarity about the definition of “indecent representation” because perceptions of what constitutes “indecent”, or what can be considered as “derogatory” could vary greatly. Additionally, it is difficult to arrive at a fixed and standard definition of “public morality” or “morals”. Finally, there is the challenge of assessing accurately the possibility of such content “depraving”, “corrupting” or “injuring” something like “public morality”, especially given the reality that social mores in the country are in constant flux.

16.169 Over the years, hundreds of cases have been filed under the IRWA. 2009, 2010 and 2011 saw as many as 845, 895 and 453 cases respectively, filed under this law⁷⁵. These large numbers are themselves a reflection of the lack of clarity about what this law actually sets out to do. For instance, a women’s network protested the staging of a beauty contest in Bangalore in 1996 filing a case under IRWA (*Mahila Jagran Manch vs The State Of Karnataka And Ors*) and 14 years later, there were 23 cases booked under the same law against film personality S. Khushboo (*S. Khushboo vs Kanniammal & Anr.*, 2010), for her observations that there was social acceptance of pre-marital sex in the country, published in a leading English news magazine⁷⁶.

16.170 The question around whether it was possible to apply a law like IRWA fairly and effectively for all representations and portrayals of women in the country became a vexed one, made even more complicated by the fact that by the 2000s, there were a growing range of mobile and virtual media, websites and social media networks to contend with as well.

16.171 A Parliamentary Committee set up to examine the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Amendment Bill 2012 (a Bill seeking to broaden the scope of the original law to cover the audio-visual media and content in electronic form) prescribe new and stringent penalties that would act as deterrent to violation of the law, and also strengthen its enforcement mechanism. The Committee however realized the complexities involved in such legislation. The Committee recognized that expanding the scope of this law is ‘the need of the hour, especially in the backdrop of the present day Indian society and also due to the rapid technological advancements indirectly leading to opening of more avenues for cases of indecent portrayal of women. But it was seized by the reason of the fact that “obscenity was highly subjective and interpretation of it may lead to unnecessary harassment at the hands of the police”. The Committee agreed with the view that “obscenity and indecent representation of women would vary in different places or different cultural contexts”⁷⁷.

16.172 Even within the women's movement there have been varied responses to censorship and outright bans. There is an emerging consensus that emphasis must be on equality, dignity and rights so that women are not reduced to objects, rather than moralistic posturing around "indecentcy" or "outraging the modesty of a woman". A law against obscenity, it was felt, was too blunt an instrument to deal with the complexities of gender portrayals in the media. What is worse, it could contribute towards reinforcing values that ultimately discriminate against women. Some feminists have even argued that the creation of a censorious public culture could further shrink an already shrinking space for the expression of women's sexuality.

16.173 The Indian Constitution, under Article 19 (1), guarantees the right to free speech and expression. During the national struggle for independence, Mahatma Gandhi had exhorted that the roots of *swaraj* were in freedom of speech and civil liberty. These were incorporated in the Constitution of India and is of paramount importance, especially in the context of a thriving democratic republic. Not only individual citizens, but also institutions which constitute sections of the media i.e. print, cinema, television, radio, and cyber space - have this freedom. The media plays an instrumental role in modern society by engaging with the public, reflecting and shaping social change and processes of development. This freedom becomes imperative for the collection and dissemination of information, for questioning and investigating the socio-political realms of society. It challenges ideas and creates space for emerging thoughts. It offers room for constructive debate and national dialogue where everyone can hope for a chance to be freely heard, read or seen. It is the most important prerequisite in a democratic country in order to create awareness and spread knowledge in its endeavour to end inequalities.

16.174 The question is, can this freedom be absolute? The clause in the Indian Constitution that restricts freedom of speech and expression dwells on matters of state security, public order, and morality or decency. For one, these terms and their meanings are not just contextual, but also interpretative. Moreover, society continues to evolve with old ideas and perspectives giving way to new ones. While drawing the line is a difficult exercise, all rights enshrined in the Constitution come with words of caution and restraint. *In a country as diverse as India, the plurality of society necessitates plurality of sensitivity and sensibility — be it with respect to class, caste, religion or gender; this then has implications for regulation too.*

16.175 The freedom of expression cannot be exercised in the absence of an independent and free media. However, the nature and form of the 'free' media and the degree to which it can exercise its 'independence' has become contentious today. In the 21st century, the bulk of the media is largely corporatized and motivated by a profit-driven approach based on an advertisement-based revenue model. While the liberalisation of the media in the 1990s, and consequently the growth of pluralistic electronic media, offer possibilities of a public space for political debate, the gradual privatisation and take-over by transnational media empires or their Indian subsidiaries, threatens to undermine any nascent public sphere.

16.176 An analysis of the media and its engagement with women and women's issues becomes particularly complex in this context. Regressive stereotypes and ideas demeaning women and their role in society must be challenged especially in the wake of rising inequalities and growing violence against women and girls. The right to gender equality and the right to dignity of women are equally fundamental. There is, thus, a need to exercise 'reasonable restrictions'. It is in this light that regulatory mechanisms assume significance. While there is an unequivocal consensus that censorship of media and over-regulation are unacceptable, one cannot completely overlook the social accountability and recognition of the constitutional obligation of what is often called the "fourth estate".

16.177 It is apparent that the country needs a regulatory regime that goes beyond censorship. It is also apparent that some degree of regulation is needed for upholding women's rights without moralistic approaches coming into play. The question really is whether the Indian media should self-regulate or have regulations imposed upon it. In February 2014 this High Level Committee organised a national conference of stakeholders to discuss Women and Media. It was attended by the then I&B minister, former CBFC chairperson Leila Samson, among others. Here, it was pointed out that the debate really is about whether regulations have to be mandated or whether the industry can create a code of self-regulation that they can abide by, since the film certification body is caught in the strange situation of having to arbitrate between filmmakers and the public. Leila Samson also pointed out that film is the only media sector that has a statutory body attached to it, unlike its broadcast and print counterparts, which have no bodies regulating them. Without synergy, different rationales and different norms for different media sectors could cause greater damage and suspicion on intent. *The consensus that emerged in this Conference was in favour of evolving a 'statutory,*

mandatory self-regulation mechanism' with legal sanction and the power to punish, that was 'independent and autonomous'.

16.178 The challenge is in ensuring that self-regulation indeed becomes effective in the face of powerful media actors with considerable economic and political clout. It is also apparent that for such mandatory self-regulation to be effective, and empowering towards women, it has to be gender-representative and gender-sensitive (both of which require pro-active interventions in terms of reservation of space in the regulatory bodies, and gender sensitisation of all members).

Conclusion and Recommendations

16.179 The media in India has seen many metamorphoses over the quarter century since the National Perspective Plan for Women called for a "conscious strategic change" in the national media. Some of the changes have been positive, others less so. For one, an unprecedented number of women are now media professionals and media organizations across the country have women on their staff. But, working conditions of women pose concern. Globalisation brought in consumerism, where women are treated as consumers as well as objects to promote more consumerism.

16.180 Women as well as their issues do not get their due share of space in media content. And where they do, portrayal and treatment is not empowering. It continues to be stereotyped and derogatory, and also commodified. However, there are promising initiatives, mainly spurred by individual actions, and sometimes parallel, new media and community media taking on the mandate of using the potential of media to empower women. These initiatives span various media like print, documentary films, feature films, radio, internet etc.

16.181 Women's access to different kinds of media remains unequal when compared to men. Once again, this spans all media, whether it is of readership or mobile phone subscription or internet usage.

16.182 Gender justice and equality have hardly been the dominant themes for Indian media's content. Therefore, developmental needs of women, that too the most marginalised women, get grossly neglected. In a vicious cycle, this is also a function of the fact that media is controlled by upper caste, upper class men, financed by global capitalism.

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16.183 There are several regulatory issues that pose a great deal of challenge when it comes to the need for meaningful portrayal and representation of women, even as freedom of speech and expression are upheld within reasonable limits, with sensitivity towards the pluralistic nature of Indian society. India is nowhere near addressing these issues substantively and different media are at different levels of dealing with this need.

16.184 The Indian Government, being one of the signatories to the Beijing Platform for Action negotiated in 1995, had pledged to review its media policies with a view to integrate a gender perspective; to encourage media to increase the number of programmes for and by women; create and disseminate multicultural media; and to create appropriate legislation against the projection of violence against women and children in the media. In terms of how far has it been able to achieve these goals, the picture is clearly a very mixed one, both in terms of the presence of women in the media, and the representation of gender in the media.

Interventions Recommended

- Investing on Engendering Media Spaces: Supporting Women-Specific, Women-Controlled Media and Integrating Gender Perspectives and Spaces into Mainstream Media

16.185 The promise of the NPPW (National Policy Plan for Women) to create a policy for engendering the media in India is more relevant today than ever before. Such a policy must be formulated urgently with wide consultations with women's activists, women media professionals, and other stakeholders.

16.186 The Government's role as a grant-provider is crucial for supporting a whole lot of initiatives given that the mainstream media, with its big capital-ownership patterns and agendas set by such capital, is likely to ignore issues of social justice and equality. The following is proposed:

- i. Evolve a new scheme jointly by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) and Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MI&B), for encouraging and supporting community media, owned and controlled by women's collectives, across different media (radio, print, websites, mobile phone-based communication initiatives as well as television channels).

MWCD

- ii. Set up an independent Women's Media Resource Centre for constant research, watchdog mechanism and activation of regulatory action for deterrence, as well as capacity building on gender justice issues, for all stakeholders including regulators and senior management of media houses. Such a Centre can:
- a) take up gender sensitisation workshops in media houses.
 - b) administer Fellowships and grants for media professionals to effectively play the role of watchdog or social auditor of government schemes and programmes in empowering women by foregrounding emerging issues
 - c) support in-depth journalism that can translate academic discussions on censorship, portrayal and representation into a simple language for the masses. This is towards creating a discerning and aware citizenry when they encounter media content of various kinds.
 - d) Provide support to such media professionals needing resources to go in the field and write about social issues that are not covered by mainstream media: issues of caste, class, ethnicity and marginalised communities.
 - e) Take up rating of Media, using the UNESCO-developed Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media
 - f) Apart from content analysis, and qualitative analysis of portrayal and representation, the Centre can also put out annual reports on "State of Women in Media in India", including by conducting surveys to determine status of women journalists at all levels for empirical data.
- iii. Support independent initiatives like Women's Feature Service with generous grants for generating content that is relevant and meaningful for women's empowerment, to be placed in mainstream media. This applies to documentary film making, internet based content as well as feature films in addition to print media space.
- iv. At least in the state-controlled media institutions, allocate substantial space and time for women's issues, with sensitive portrayal emerging out of sensitization efforts of employees and guidelines issued for the same.
- v. Where needed, using market mechanisms of sponsorship, to ensure that media content on popular channels is engendered.

vi. Incentivising certain films to encourage greater variety (Tax cuts, based on model developed by Karnataka government, would be helpful).

vii. Give platform to showcase serious cinema ; promote (and incentivise) independent on government channels.

viii. Institute high profile awards for women-centric content; recognise and appreciate such initiatives.

ix. State support could be needed to strengthen women's media networks and collectives in order to improve working conditions.

- Creating Gender-Sensitive Media Creators and Audiences (Education including Media Pedagogy)

16.187 In the long term, the potential of media to transform society in a gender-just way lies in investing in the future generations. The two major areas that influence children's development are home and school environments. Governments can reach out to homes by way of mass media such as radio and television advertisements aimed at gender sensitisation. In schools, universities and colleges, the government can bring in compulsory gender sensitisation (like environmental education is now mandatory at a certain level).

16.188 Media education can begin right from school, for children to learn to process images early on. Teaching them how to look at images will help them understand the world they live. National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) has been working over the last few years on building an institutionalised film clubs mechanism where NFDC collaborates with schools. Such efforts must be replicated and supported.

MWCD ✓ 16.189 MWCD, MHRD (Ministry of Human Resources Department) and MI&B can establish collaborations and enter into partnerships to work through organisations like CBSE which has already put emphasis on various arts and media related elective subjects. Gender sensitisation could be introduced and become part of day-to-day classroom interaction.

16.190 Mandatory gender sensitization course in all communication and journalism degree courses, with a view to ensure that the next generation of reporters in the country are trained

to report on Gender, also with an understanding of intersectionality of caste, religion, ethnicity and class.

- Self-Regulation Matters

16.191 Develop a Code to guide the portrayal of women in various forms of media so that their demeaning portrayal is stopped within a self-regulation mode. Evolve such a code in consultation with gender experts and women media professionals. The government must facilitate democratic processes for formulation of such a Code.

16.192 Media organizations to mandatorily devote an allocated percentage of space for social development issues, including women-related ones, in such a Code. Media houses to also consider setting the gold standard in gender parity, committing themselves to filling 50% vacancies with women.

16.193 Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media that UNESCO had developed provide a tool for media houses to evaluate themselves in terms of content and human resources.

16.194 Regulatory bodies across media must ensure rulings have a potential for deterrence. Harsher fines must be imposed on offenders because apology scrolls are not enough.

- Media Houses must Improve Work Conditions and Comply With Laws

16.195 Have affirmative policies for recruitment of women in large numbers. Such an affirmative policy must be adopted at the governance and senior management levels as well.

MWED
16.196 Address poor working conditions: guidelines to be issued to all media houses to make the work place more women-friendly. Some important benefits for improving women's working conditions in a media house include maternity leave, crèche facilities, flexible working hours and separate toilets.

16.197 Bringing in structural/policy change in wages and job security is necessary.

16.198 Address sexual harassment issues with all sincerity, and in compliance with law.

16.199 Fellowships and grants for women journalists, particularly from marginalised communities, to report on gender related issues have to be instituted, in addition to more women employees including from marginalized communities at all levels of the media institution.

16.200 Across media houses, with contribution from all organisations, introduce forum for independent women journalists to take their professional complaints and protect their rights as workers.

16.201 Provide extra support and protection in whichever form required to women reporting from conflict zones and other dangerous settings

16.202 Specifically, address issues of women employees in the district level bureaus up to the stringer level.

- Other State Interventions that are an Imperative: Regulation, Incentivisation, Oversight on Compliance

16.203 Adequate representation of women has to be brought into the composition of regulatory bodies immediately. Unless that happens, the discussion around safeguarding women's rights and concerns will not translate into reality on the ground.

16.204 Put out findings of a carefully evolved Media Gender Sensitivity Index, after conducting reviews of portrayal of women in entertainment avenues, advertisements and in cinema via empirical studies.

16.205 Speedy implementation of Justice Mudgal Committee recommendations by bringing into force amended Cinematographic Act will help handle current issues/problems being faced by CBFC.

16.206 In the context of digital technologies' vulnerability of falling prey to misogyny and sexism, regulation of online spaces does become important. However, such regulation has to balance the right to privacy with the right to freedom of expression.

16.207 There is a need for a review of whether all the media houses are following the Vishakha guidelines passed in 1997 by the Supreme Court of India against sexual harassment

at workplace, and have begun implementing the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013.

16.208 Issue Press cards to freelance journalists, remove professional vulnerability in matters of obtaining commissions and negotiating and receiving payments.

16.209 Regulate film trailers and posters/hoardings as they often show graphic sex and violence.

16.210 The government must allocate a dedicated theatre for screening independent films and support other 'alternate' media spaces for marginalised communities such as tribals, Dalits, the differently-abled, LGBTQ and other communities on the periphery.

16.211 The government must ensure that national award-winning films and documentaries be screened on national media, and explore digital media to maximise reach of serious and socially relevant cinema. A Watershed Hour must be introduced on TV in which documentaries which have won national awards, for instance, could be shown.

- Indecent Representation of Women Act and Amendments Proposed

16.212 There is an urgent need to analyse through deliberative democratic processes, the amendments proposed for the Indecent Representation of Women Act. There is a need for a greater discussion on the proposed amendments given that it is proposed to extend the scope to the Internet. The proposed amendments, relating to obscenity, indecency and outraging modesty, appear to attempt to pigeonhole the issue of representation into boxes. There is a need to look at larger issues relating to misogyny and the kind of expressions this hatred assumes.

¹ This Chapter has greatly benefited from a National Conference on *Women and Media*, organized by this High Level Committee in February 2014 in New Delhi. It has also drawn upon heavily from the insights provided by Ms Pamela Philipose and Ms Usha Rai, Senior Journalists in India.

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Chapter -17

Women-Centric Programmes and Schemes in India

I. BACKGROUND

“Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Development Process:

4.1 Policies, programmes and systems will be established to ensure mainstreaming of women's perspectives in all developmental processes, as catalysts, participants and recipients. Wherever there are gaps in policies and programmes, women specific interventions would be undertaken to bridge these. Coordinating and monitoring mechanisms will also be devised to assess from time to time the progress of such mainstreaming mechanisms. Women's issues and concerns as a result will specially be addressed and reflected in all concerned laws, sectoral policies, plans and programmes of action.”

From the National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001,
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It is obvious that when the State has to intervene on behalf of women to adhere to its constitutional obligations and to improve women's overall status on par with men, it is either in the form of (a) policies, or (b) laws, or (c) schemes and programmes. It is also apparent that in implementation, policies and legislations have to be backed up by schemes and programmes for certain objectives to be actualised. This is all the more important in the context of pervasive, persistent and vexatious issues around gender discrimination. It therefore appears that the effectiveness in implementation of policies and laws would also boil down to a large extent on effectiveness of schemes and programmes as well as to a question on whether schemes and programmes on a particular theme have been evolved and implemented or not in the first instance. The HLC believes, therefore, that an analysis of schemes and programmes is indeed a reflection of the seriousness with which the government wants to intervene towards empowerment of women on all fronts: socio-cultural, political, economic and legal.

Over the decades, there have been a slew of women-centric schemes with good intent and with objectives of transforming women's lives for the better. These span various dimensions related to women's lives like economic development, education and health. Entire institutions

have been built for facilitating implementation of interventions – Central Social Welfare Board is an example. However, design and implementation-related matters, resource allocations, delivery mechanisms and institutions, proper outreach, and monitoring and evaluation are all issues that plague these schemes and their potential impact.

It is seen that in the latest budget for 2015-16, there have been sharp cuts, reasoned out as cuts that will be supplemented/evened out by state governments' contribution. Several women-centric schemes are also affected by these cuts. Further, while the 12th Five Year Plan, in its working group reports and its final Plan document has many progressive articulations and financial outlays penned in, the picture right now is unclear around what NITI Ayog is likely to do with the process-based outcomes that got translated into the 12th Plan proposals and commitments. While greater devolution of resources to the states is envisaged, the transition may not be overnight and smooth; it remains to be seen whether all state governments will deal with women's schemes and programmes with the sensitivity and importance that they deserve. It is also unclear what the overall mechanism for overseeing for effective implementation would be. Meanwhile, the Union Government cannot absolve itself of the responsibility to ensure that various interventions for women's empowerment continue smoothly.

In this section, the HLC chose three areas of women's empowerment that we deem as burning issues of our times: *economic empowerment, removal of discrimination against the girl child and creating zero tolerance for violence against women*. Analysis of schemes and programmes in the areas of education, health, political empowerment etc., have been presented in various other chapters of this report.

The Committee would have liked to have primary surveys for impact assessment of chosen schemes, ideally; however, given the time and resource constraints on this Committee as well as the fact that several credible agencies have studied various schemes in depth at different points of time; we chose to rely mainly on such literature as well as our field visits and interactions with numerous stakeholders. We focus mainly on Government of India's schemes, that too ones currently being implemented.

II. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT THROUGH GENDER EQUALITY

INVESTMENTS

It is well-established by now that *gender equality investments have a causal relationship with realization of other development goals* (including economic growth), even as it is understood that *gender equality does not need economic justification* (gender equality is a Constitutional commitment and women's rights towards equality and in the framework of human rights are to be upheld for their own sake)¹. More and more, the thrust is on gender-responsive budgeting and mainstreaming gender equality issues in all development work (not just the 'soft, social' issues) of the state.

Tracing back the history of interventions for improving the status of women in the form of schemes and programmes, one can see an impressive and steady progress in discourse, including in the Plan documents, but slow progress in practice. However, this cannot be said to be adequate and commensurate with the requirements of women's empowerment and development needs, in terms of attaining what has been promised in the Indian Constitution more than six decades ago. The initial development approaches were of welfare and charity, which only treated women as targets and subjects of state's munificence and benevolence. This was a top-down model which was found to be inadequate in bringing about lasting social transformation based on change in power relations, and removing discrimination.

These initial welfare programmes and schemes implemented mainly through the Central Social Welfare Board focused on Balwadis, maternity services and general medical aid, social education and craft training for women. "Welfare Extension Projects" (WEPs) were run in more than 2000 Centres serving ten contiguous villages per Centre in the First and Second Five Year Plans. These were converted into Community Development programmes and handed over to the agency of women themselves in the form of Mahila Mandals. The thrust shifted to enabling women to organize themselves and to develop their own leadership and increase their active participation in the schemes and programmes (CSWI report "Towards Equality, 1974").

"Towards Equality" report in 1974 noted that many state governments were neither putting aside resources nor having the capabilities of planning and implementing welfare services for women. The lack of any machinery for collection of data was noted. The lack of cooption of women into Panchayats also meant that women's needs were not emphasized and this meant

that they had no effective voice in policy-making or allocation of resources, the Committee mentioned. Standardisation of programmes (rather than a local-need-based approach), bureaucratization, delays, lack of coordination, the procedures and difficulties faced by field agencies etc., have all been noted by the report. *“While most programmes for women have emphasized acquisition of knowledge and skills to improve their efficiency as housewives and mothers, and to improve their earning power, they have neglected the dissemination of information, particularly regarding their rights and duties which could increase women’s awareness and improve their participation as citizens. The objective of improving their earning power has also not been adequately fulfilled”*, said the Committee remarking on “Deficiencies of the Programme” (8.171, pp. 343). The Committee also recommended that *“any programme for women’s welfare and development must have an integrated approach”* (Under ‘Welfare and Development’, 8.178.1., pp. 345).

The discourse now places a thrust on Rights-Based Approach to Development (which can be broadly defined as a paradigm where citizens are made into rights-holders - especially the poor and marginalized - and the State as the duty-bearer wherein development is viewed as all those strategies and processes which will help the poor and marginalized realize their rights by overcoming various structural and institutional barriers). When it comes to empowering women and bringing about their equality with men, the discourse also moved on to realizing that speaking and acting on/with women is not enough (that too mostly in an economic development paradigm) and that all interventions have to encompass both men and women in their relative positions, even as women were kept at the centre. The understanding shifted to the need to address structural and institutional barriers as well as initiating and strengthening gender mainstreaming.

Gender Mainstreaming is a concept well-acknowledged and appreciated today – this is a concept that makes it imperative on the State (amongst other actors) to assess the differential implications on men and women of any public policy action and intervention (including legislations and programmes) in all areas, at all levels, so that it brings about an equitable focus on women’s empowerment and development needs. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

Accordingly, the Twelfth Five Year Plan expands the definition of women’s empowerment by looking at it *as a process that enables women to have a notion of dignity and self worth, bodily integrity, freedom from coercion and control over resources. It affirms that*

empowerment is achieved, when along with the condition of women, their position improves and their freedoms and choices are enlarged economically, socially and politically. Further, in the context of economic empowerment, poverty and development, in keeping with the framework of contemporary discourse, the Plan promises that it 'would work towards making a transition from viewing women as 'victims' of poverty to empowering them to change the contexts in which they live. The issue of 'capability poverty' is a critical imperative in this. Poverty is not only a lack of material resources but also lack of power and choice'.

The Twelfth Plan outlines around seven key elements for addressing gender equity which includes "Mainstreaming gender through Gender Budgeting". For the first time ever in planning discourse, the Plan promises "engendering of flagship programmes". The Plan document promises that a gender analysis of all flagship programmes will be undertaken at the design stage; that systems will be put in place to ensure that women are consulted at the time of designing the project; that there will be provisions put in place to undertake a social and gender audit of flagship programmes. This, the HLC believes, is good progress in the understanding and proposals around Gender Budgeting and Mainstreaming.

The process of Gender Budgeting, accompanied by Gender-based Outcome Budgets and Gender Audits is indeed a powerful strategy and tool to get all Ministries/Departments to incorporate gender concerns and objectives in their plans, implementation and reviews. Over the years, the number of Ministries/Departments joining this process is undoubtedly growing and this is a positive sign. To that extent, there is progress, unlike in the case of the Women's Component Plan, a mechanism that was tried out briefly. Despite the fact that 30 departments/ministries including the ones that have a more or less direct impact on women's condition and position in India (including Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, School Education and Literacy, Higher Education, Rural Development, Agriculture, Food and Public Distribution, Labour, Panchayati Raj, Social Justice and Empowerment) have reflected allocations that are "women-specific" (100% for women) and "pro-women" (at least 30% provision for women) in Statement 20, it is worthwhile noting that this is still a meager 5.8% of the overall Budget.

Data on annual allocations in the Gender Budget Statement of the Union Government over the Eleventh Five Year Plan period shows that while the annual budgetary allocations for women have increased by around 250 percent over the plan period in absolute terms, the percentage of gender budget to total budget has remained more or less around 4% to 6%.

Further segmentation of the total XI Plan gender budget allocations of 3,12,835 crores on broad objectives shows that the maximum allocations have been for promoting economic growth or income generation activities (34%), followed by education and awareness (26%) and then health and nutrition (25%), with other objectives constituting remaining 15%. Further probing shows that within this, the majority allocations have been by the Ministry of Rural Development (32%) mainly through its two schemes Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS); followed by Department of School Education and Literacy (18%) whose main scheme is the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA). The other major allocation was under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS). These are the only four programmes/schemes which have reported around 10,000 crore annual budgetary allocations in the GBS.

Our Committee also sought to put together an overall picture of the kind of schemes and programmes that exist for empowerment of women to understand which aspects of women's empowerment (that too in a life cycle approach) have not been addressed through interventions, to make a statement on which aspects of empowerment of women have been neglected. *The picture that emerged from this exercise, of various schemes along some major areas of empowerment, is attached as an annexure.*

What comes out clearly is that there have not been enough number of interventions to empower women on the political front. In fact, a scheme that had a strong focus on capacity building of elected women's representatives got subsumed under a general scheme in the recent past, in the Ministry of Panchayat Raj (*the same has been discussed in the Governance Chapter of this report*).

Similarly, not enough has been taken up for legal empowerment of women, in the form of schemes that facilitate better implementation of various statutes. While the PWDV Act has an accompanying scheme now, many other statutes languish for want of financial outlays supported by schemes to make the statutes effective in implementation.

Further, to challenge existing patriarchal structures, large-scale awareness and motivation campaigns are needed which appear to be sorely lacking to the extent needed - there is of course a fairly new initiative on this front in the form of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Campaign now. What is also seen is that express schemes to focus on girl child nutrition (there are general child nutrition schemes of course), and to empower elderly women are missing, while

several schemes target the 6-59 years' segment: for the childhood (education and adolescent age skill-building, nutrition programmes including for the girl child), economic (mainly focused on poor, socially marginalized women) and reproductive age windows of girls and women (much of the women-centric healthcare schemes are around maternal healthcare).

To empower girls and women on the education front, numerous schemes have been formulated and implemented over the years. Similarly, for the economic empowerment of women too. There are also various schemes for improving the health and nutritional status of girls and women, though not many exclusively for them except in the context of reproductive health.

The same cannot be said for addressing the issue of violence against women, for instance. Large scale campaigns that seek to creatively provoke gender consciousness and sensitivity are missing. Schemes that tackle the issue of son preference and to support the girl child do not exist at present at the Centre after Dhanalakshmi has been discontinued. In this context, improvements proposed in ICDS through MCP Cards or through the Nutrition Mission do not seem to be making special efforts or initiating focused strands of work to address the health and nutritional neglect that girl children face, one of the main reasons for the adverse child sex ratio in the country.

The reality of several schemes is that they still exist in a welfarist approach and do not adopt a rights-based approach. It is also seen that feminist perspectives are often missing in the formulation or implementation of the schemes; women are seen as instrumentalities for reaching other objectives, or 'beneficiaries' that need to be targeted. This is especially so in various schemes that adopt an "SHG approach" for achieving poverty alleviation and other objectives – the same has been discussed in detail subsequently in this chapter.

There are also schemes which are gender-neutral and gender-blind in their approach even though they might be having a large impact on women's overall status. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, for instance, is a city-modernisation scheme launched under Ministry of Urban Development in 2005 to improve the quality of life and infrastructure in cities. JNNURM aims at creating 'economically productive, efficient, equitable and responsive cities' by a strategy of upgrading the social and economic infrastructure in cities, provision of basic services to urban poor and wide ranging urban sector reforms. There are studies that indicate that this programme is not just gender-blind but

is impacting poor women adversely, especially on the livelihoods front, wherever large scale slum relocation efforts have been undertakenⁱⁱ.

It is also worth noting that in a federal setup like India's, only the Union government's attempts to engender budgets would not result in tangible gains unless complemented by similar efforts at state level. This is closely linked to the fact that states incur huge "developmental expenditure"—expenditure on social services such as education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, and economic services such as agriculture, irrigation, rural development and transport. A substantial share of total fiscal transfers to institutions of local self-governance, municipalities and panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) is also provided for by the state governments through their budgets (almost half of total public expenditure in India is through state budgets)ⁱⁱⁱ. However, not enough information is available on the impact of these schemes, while micro-studies give some idea about such interventions.

In the next section, we focus on three key areas of concern for women's equality in India: (a) economic (dis)empowerment of women, (b) violence against women and (c) girl child discrimination, in the context of schemes and programmes that have been run specifically on these dimensions of women's lives, and the apparent impact of the same.

III. SOME SECTOR WISE SCHEMES & PROGRAMMES AND THEIR IMPACT

While it appears that specific gender equality investments, carefully designed and implemented, are indeed related to positive effects, we analyse in the following pages the schematic and programmatic interventions in 3 areas which the HLC chooses to flag as areas of concern: Economic Empowerment, Eradication of Socio-cultural Discrimination against Girl Child and Violence against Women.

III.1. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

There is both an instrumental and intrinsic value in focusing on women's empowerment, given that there is a clear relationship between gender equality and economic growth. While economic growth does not necessarily lead to gender equality, there is strong empirical support for the claim that gender equality has a positive impact on economic growth. Such

empowerment can be on several fronts including education and employment^{iv}. Findings suggest a strong instrumental rationale for ensuring women's participation in processes of growth – it will contribute to the inclusiveness of growth not merely because women constitute 50% of the population, but also because women's access to economic resources improves distributional dynamics within the household (ensuring the gender equity of growth outcomes. It is clear that under-investing on women is not smart economics – it does not lead to faster growth nor does it address poverty^v. According to scholars like Kabeer, when it comes to conceptualizing women's economic empowerment, there are differing views on whether purely market-generated growth could generate outcomes related to recognition, dignity and transformative agency of women. There is recognition now that market forces could be perpetuating inequalities rather than mitigating it (market inequalities here are seen as manifestations of underlying inequalities of power). Such inequalities in turn influence growth outcomes.

India, like other countries, has made international commitments when it comes to promoting women's economic independence, equal access for all women to productive resources, full and productive employment and decent work and so on (CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, Millenium Development Goals etc.). The Ministry of Women and Child Development as well as other Ministries like Rural Development, in addition to other ministries, have schemes for women's economic empowerment and to strengthen their access to employment and livelihoods/enterprise. We list out here some major schemes that have been run for women's economic empowerment and an analysis of their impact as reviewed and evaluated by others.

III.1.1. Some Major Schemes/Programmes for Economic Empowerment of Women

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Ministry of Women and Child Development	Established in 1993 as a Society with an initial corpus of Rs. 31 crores, which has been raised to Rs. 100 crores by additions to the corpus between 2006-07 and 2011-12, RMK extends micro-credit to poor and underprivileged women through a collateral-free, quasi formal delivery mechanism where NGOs, women cooperatives, federations etc., act as intermediaries. In terms of its financial viability, RMK model has established itself as self-sustaining at the current scale. In 2015-16, no fresh funds have been infused in the latest Budget for RMK.
Support to Training and Employment	The scheme seeks to provide updated skills and new knowledge to poor and asset-less women in traditional sectors such as agriculture,

Program (STEP), <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, handlooms, handicraft, khadi & village industries, sericulture, waste land development and social forestry for enhancing their productivity and income generation. The scope and coverage of the scheme has been broadened over the years with the introduction of locally appropriate sectors. 27 crore rupees have been allocated in 2015-16 for this scheme.
Working Women's Hostels, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	A long running scheme of the Government of India, this scheme envisages provision of safe and affordable accommodation to working women, women being trained for employment and girl students studying in post-school professional courses. This scheme is implemented through NGOs and other agencies engaged in the field of women/social welfare, public sector undertakings, Women's Development Corporations, local bodies, universities, etc. 27 crore rupees have been allocated in 2015-16 for this scheme.
Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	The scheme aims to provide day care services for children in the age group of 0-6 years, belonging to economically weaker sections of society (whose family income does not exceed Rs. 12000/month). The crèches running under the scheme provide healthcare, supplementary nutrition, medical check-up and immunization etc. In 2015-16, budgetary provision of Rs. 188.44 crores has been allocated.
Priyadarshini, Ministry of Women and Child Development	As a women's empowerment and livelihood programme, the project aims at the holistic empowerment of poor rural women and adolescent girls, supported by sustainable and improved livelihood opportunities and strengthening of local institutions. This was introduced in 4 districts of UP and 2 districts of Bihar with external assistance of IFAD. <i>In 2015-16, the Government made an announcement that the scheme has been discontinued.</i>
Swayamsiddha, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	This scheme is supposed to have evolved from two earlier schemes: Indira Mahila Yojana (IMY) that was launched in 1995-96, with Mahila Samridhi Yojana merged with it subsequently. Described as a flagship programme of the MWCD, this was an integrated development project for the empowerment of women, based on formation of women's Self Help Groups, with emphasis on converging services, developing access to micro-credit and promoting micro-enterprises. This was started in 2001, with Phase I ending in 2008. A Phase II was proposed to cover all blocks and districts of the country, starting from 2011. The scheme was sought to be implemented through the ICDS setup, with no additional human resources or no extra remuneration for existing human resources. <i>No financial resources have been devoted for this scheme from 2011-12 onwards.</i>
Mahatma Gandhi	This is a job guarantee scheme for poor rural Indians, with a legal

National Employment Guarantee Scheme, Ministry of Rural Development	Rural	guarantee for at least 100 days of paid employment every financial year to adult members of any household willing to do unskilled manual work related to designated works, at statutory minimum wages with unemployment payment tied to lack of provision of demanded work. Rs. 33713 crore rupees is the budget allocation in 2015-16 for MGNREGS.
National Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)/ Swarnjayanti Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)/ Aajeevika, Ministry of Rural Development	Rural Mission Gram Yojana	This was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development to create efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. In its strategy to include poor into self help groups and their federations, the focus of this Mission is on women. NRLM would promote SHGs with exclusive women membership, as women are seen as "agents of change" in this Mission. Rs.1077.70 crores has been allocated for NRLM in 2015-16 in addition to 1305 crores in the State Plan.
Mahila Sashaktikaran Pariyojana, Ministry of Rural Development	Kisan (MKSP)	This programme envisages empowering women in agriculture by making systematic interventions to enhance their participation and productivity, as also create and sustain agriculture based livelihoods of rural women. The project also aims at creating a wide pool of community resource persons for scaling up livelihood interventions in the entire country. Apart from Sustainable Agriculture, MKSP also focuses on Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP). This is a part of NRLM.
Mahila Yojana (Different Ministries)	Samridhi (Different)	This is a scheme launched in 1993, with the Department of Women and Child Development, as a thrift and credit scheme through post offices, which was later merged with Swayamsidha, after adverse evaluation reports about the scheme being high on its costs. At present, schemes with the same name are implemented by ministries like Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and Ministry of Minority Affairs through their Development and Finance Corporations (NSCFDC/NMDFC). Under the NSCFDC Scheme, loan up to Rs 50000, subject to 90% of the project cost can be availed at an interest rate of 4% per annum, with a repayment period of three years. This is in addition to a Nari Aarthik Sashaktikaran Yojana of NSFDC. In the case of the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation, a maximum loan limit of Rs. 50000/- per beneficiary has been fixed and this is implemented through SCAs in rural and urban areas to women entrepreneurs either directly or through SHGs.
Swarnjayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana or the National	Urban	Started in 1997 after subsuming 3 schemes into itself, this scheme's main objective is to provide gainful employment to the urban unemployed or under-employed through the setting up of self

Livelihoods Mission, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation	employment ventures or provision of wage employment. Skill development and training programmes are an integral part of the scheme. One of the five major components of the scheme is Urban Women Self-help Programme, aimed at a group of at least 5 urban poor women (subsidy of upto Rs. 300000/- or 35% of project cost and remaining arranged as bank loan and margin money). Lumpsum grants of revolving fund are also provided. In 2015-16 budget, a sum of 510 crore rupees has been allocated for NULM.
Improvement in working conditions of child/ women labour	Ministry of Labour and Employment's scheme: This provides for the formulation, coordination and implementation of policies and programmes concerning the welfare of child/women labour. It includes the funds allocated for SCSP and TSP. From a Budget of 157.50 crore rupees in 2014-15 (revised to 102.85 crores), in 2015-16, this scheme had a budgetary allocation of 219.73 crore rupees.
Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme, Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises	Credit-linked subsidy programme, started in 2008-09 for generating self employment and setting up micro-enterprises in non-farm sector, to be implemented through KVIC. The maximum project cost supported is upto Rs. 25 lakhs in the manufacturing sector and Rs. 10 lakhs in the service sector.
Various Market Development Assistance schemes	TREAD (Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development) scheme of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, for instance, for self employment ventures of women for non-farm activity

There are also some technology development and upgradation schemes, in addition to some credit access improvement and financing schemes across ministries. For instance, a Mahila Kissan Yojana runs as a credit scheme within the National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment). Realising the increasing trend of feminisation of agriculture, National Scheduled Caste Finance and Development Corporation started this scheme in 2008, to provide term loans of upto Rs. 50,000/- at an interest rate of 5% per annum, exclusively to women beneficiaries for taking up income generating ventures in agriculture and/or mixed farming activities. Within this, BPL beneficiaries are eligible for subsidy of upto Rs. 10000/-. In 2013-14, 1.05 crore rupees were disbursed in this credit scheme to 245 beneficiaries.

In the following sub-section, we pick up a few large programmes centred around women's economic empowerment (with express components focusing on women), some long-standing ones and some recent ones, some from the WCD ministry and some from others, to look at these schemes and their impact.

III.1.2. STEP – Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women

This programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development was launched in 1986-87 with the following main objectives:

- Mobilise women in viable groups and make facilities available through training, access to credit, arrangement for productive assets and other inputs
- Provide training for skill up-gradation
- Enable groups of women to take up employment or income generation programmes of their own, or to access wage employment, and
- Provide support services for further improving employment conditions of women and access to health care, literacy, legal literacy, nutrition education and other information.

This was initiated in response to Shramshakti, the findings of the National Commission for Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector.

Interventions are typically in sectors like Agriculture, Dairying, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Handloom, Handicrafts, Khadi & Village Industries, Sericulture, Social Forestry & Forest based activities, Wasteland Development, Food Processing and Services sector and other locally appropriate sector too and the scheme is meant for marginalized assetless rural and urban women, wage labourers, female headed households, migrant labourers, tribals and other dispossessed groups.

In terms of its coverage, there are 127 projects already completed and 165 on-going projects under STEP Scheme. The number of beneficiaries in 127 completed projects are 485,520 and from on-going projects 398,852. From data of the Ministry, it is understood that these 292 Projects under STEP Scheme cover 32 types of projects^{vi}. Among all the STEP projects approved till March 2010, 40.25% were in the dairy sector, followed by animal husbandry (19.5%), followed by handicrafts trades and handloom sector (16% and 8% respectively)^{vii}. Agriculture, social forestry, khadi, sericulture, fisheries and wasteland development did not receive much support from STEP. It is also reported that more than 8.30 lakh women were trained in STEP projects across sectors by 2010, with most trainees being in the dairying sector.

STEP projects offered support for training and upgradation of skills in the existing areas of activity, along with providing linkages for marketing of products. A 1994-95 evaluation by the Programme evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission found that a vast majority of self employed as well as wage-employed women were earning their monthly income in the lower range of Rs. 500 and below and concluded that 'the programme has not made much dent on making the economic activities of the women more viable in view of the rising inflation'. Only about a half of the beneficiaries received facilities for getting raw materials and marketing.

A meta-evaluation of 20 evaluation reports of STEP by Institute of Social Studies Trust (2013) using feminist principles of evaluation notes that the concentration of STEP projects (and therefore, trainings too) in the dairy sector could be because the existence of state milk federation pre-dated the STEP interventions (a ready developed infrastructure and a well established marketing strategy already in place)^{viii}. Incidentally, an earlier evaluation in 2007 by ISST (of projects in seven states) has confirmed that consumption of milk has gone down in poor households that supply milk to the coops. It also found that while STEP has benefited poor women, it has not been able to reach the poorest women. It is seen that the margin money provided under the scheme is only a small part of the required sum for enterprises like dairying. In terms of earnings and income, it was seen in a dairy project in Uttarakhand that it ranged from Rs. 120 to Rs. 1200 per month in the hills; in the plains, it ranged from Rs. 3000/- to Rs. 10,000/-. The average additional income generated from the dairy was found to range from Rs.7000/- to Rs.10,000/- in Uttar Pradesh. In a carpet weaving project in UP, income was estimated to be Rs. 300/- to Rs. 400/- a month. In a handloom weaving project in Assam, the project is reported to have fetched a regular income of Rs. 1500/- to Rs. 2000/- per woman. A coir based project in Karnataka was deemed a failure and had to be closed down and one of the reasons cited is that it is a non-traditional activity. A goat-rearing project in Karnataka gave an increased income of only Rs. 25 per month to Rs. 200 per month. These findings show a high variability in earnings from the project, and also shows that income enhancement from the project was not very significant^{ix}. Amongst the project implementing agencies, some of the recipients have not shown integrity in the use of funds, and some large government organisations have not shown commitment to follow up or create linkages for the beneficiaries, as noted by the evaluation. Many grassroots institutions created in the project (women's dairy cooperative societies) became defunct raising questions of sustainability. This evaluation pointed out that some measure of flexibility in the use of funds needs to be

permitted, along with mid-course correction if required. It also concluded that the grant period of 3 years for a project appears too short to make any impact. Delays in fund release need to be minimized by commissioning technical reviews by external organisations. This evaluation also recommended the setting up of a project unit within Ministry of Women and Child Development, with dedicated staff, to ensure backstopping for the programme.

An evaluation by NIAR in 8 states covering 20 implementing organizations and 893 beneficiaries to assess whether the projects funded under STEP have contributed significantly to the objectives of the Scheme revealed that (i) no special efforts have been made to increase the number of beneficiaries belonging to marginalized sections (dalits, adivasis, Muslims etc.); similar was the case with women-headed households. It was seen that many beneficiaries (35.3%) were not even from BPL families; (ii) while mobilization of beneficiaries into SHGs has been high, there is lack of clarity about the goals of the women's groups. Further, there is an overlap with other schemes which are also engaged in SHG formation; (iii) like in the case of several other schemes, there is very little awareness about the scheme; (iv) while less than half reported that they are happy with a rise in income, 9% said they have an asset; only 24% have received help under STEP to acquire and purchase assets required for their livelihood; (v) a large majority did not receive any marketing linkages with the help of the scheme; (vi) only around half of the respondents said they received training that built skills that helped in earning; 30.91% reported that they were able to get wage employment due this training and 16.57% reported that they were able to set up a micro enterprise due to the training they received under STEP; (vii) 23% of the respondents did not report any income from STEP, while the others spent the income realized on food, education and healthcare. (viii) importantly, 77% reported that they had a voice in decision-making within their family post-STEP. While the overall conclusion is that STEP provides additional income for some women but there is no significant evidence of households being run solely on income from STEP (it is not providing secure livelihood). It is also seen that gender stereotypes are reinforced, and there is no strategic shift seen.

An earlier impact evaluation of STEP in five states (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and Orissa) by the Andhra Pradesh Industrial and Technical Consultancy Organization in 2004 revealed that most projects do take up an approach of creating women's self help groups and that dairying was the single largest income generating activity pursued by the beneficiaries. It is interesting to note that selection of the income generating activities

was based predominantly on the implementing agency's experience and convenience. This study concluded that STEP made a definite impact on the socio-economic empowerment of poor women, with the vocational base skills of the beneficiaries improving considerably across activities, with 76.9% of the beneficiaries earning incremental incomes of up to Rs. 1000 per month, with 38.4% of the respondents feeling that the programme has had a positive impact on their children's education, with a larger percentage saying that the programme made them health-conscious etc. One of the recommendations of this study was around improvement of MIS, which is a recurring theme across women-centric schemes and programmes incidentally.

The 11th Five Year Plan's Mid Term Appraisal by the Planning Commission suggested a revision in cost norms along with greater flexibility in implementation. It also brought the focus onto market linkages^x. Meanwhile, the 12th Plan Steering Group had the following to note about STEP^{xi}:

“Based on the evaluation conducted in 2007, the scheme has been revised in 2009 to include training in accordance with market demand, enhancement of beneficiary norms and establishment of credit linkages with the RMK, NABARD, CAPART and other financial institutions. It is proposed to link the STEP Scheme with vocational courses under National Skill Development Programme in order to increase employability of the trained SHG members under STEP. This would be a gradual process and the same would depend upon availability of vocational courses and facilities in the STEP project areas and the sectors covered under STEP”.

III.1.3. Women Empowerment and Livelihood Programme in Mid-Gangetic Plains (WELP-MG)–‘PRIYADARSHINI’

This scheme, an IFAD-assisted project administered by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, was launched in December 2009 in its current phase and the 11th Five Year Plan had 95 crore rupees set aside for this from 2007 onwards. However, for various reasons, the scheme could not take off until 2011. While this was being implemented in a small manner, in just 13 blocks spread over 5 districts of Uttar Pradesh and 2 districts of Bihar, *the latest Budget announcements showed that it has been discontinued from 2015-16.*

The programme aimed at holistic empowerment of vulnerable groups of women and adolescent girls in the project area through formation of women's Self Help Groups and promotion of improved livelihood opportunities. The purpose of the programme was to strengthen community level institutions to access productive resources, social services and to build a sustainable livelihood base integrated with the wider economy. Over 100,000 households were to be covered under the project and 7,200 SHGs formed during the project period ending 2016-17. NABARD is the Lead Programme Agency for implementation of this programme. The Joint Review/Supervision Mission of IFAD (October-November 2012) termed the performance of the programme as 'moderately unsatisfactory'. This was related to targets achieved, bank accounts opened, seed capital provided etc., and had asked for activities related to livelihood up-scaling and micro-enterprise development will have to be fast tracked.

III.1.4. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act/Scheme (MGNREGA/S):

MGNREGA, implemented by the Ministry for Rural Development was launched on 5th September 2005. It aims at enhancing livelihood security by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. We focus in some detail on MGNREGS since it is the largest scheme for creating rural employment while addressing rural female labour force participation is an immediate area of intervention to be taken up.

MGNREGS provides a rights-based framework for wage employment, supported by the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005. The legal mandate of providing employment in a time bound manner is underpinned by the provision of Unemployment Allowance. It is seen as a demand-driven programme and not an allocation-based programme. As per Section 16 of the Act, Gram Panchayats have been assigned a pivotal role in the implementation process. They are responsible for planning of works, registering households, issuing job cards, allocating employment, executing 50% of the works in terms of cost and monitoring the implementation of the scheme at the village level. The Gram Sabha has been vested with the responsibility to monitor the execution of works within the Gram Panchayat and to conduct regular social audits of all the projects under the Scheme taken up within the Gram Panchayat.

NREGS is expected to provide several benefits to workers including: provision of employment within a radius of 5 kms; payment of additional 10% wage rate for meeting transportation and living expenses in case distance is more than 5 kms; free medical treatment for injury; expenses of hospitalization met, if required; payment of ex-gratia in cases of death or permanent disability; facility of safe drinking water at the site; provision for a crèche for children, free medical treatment to children also in case of injury if accompanying workers at the site etc. NREGS began with around nine permissible works listed initially, which subsequently got expanded to include several more activities, with Gram Sabhas and Ward Sabhas given power to determine priority of works.

Some important points to note about MGNREGS so far, as per the Ministry of Rural Development's "MGNREGA 2005-Report to the People 2014":

- Started in 200 districts in 2006; extended to 130 more districts in 2007-08. From 1st April 2008, all remaining rural areas of India covered. At present, being implemented in all rural districts of the country.
- By December 2013, it is reported that NREGA has generated 1575 crore person-days of employment. On an average, employment is provided to around 5 crore households every year, which is almost one-fourth of total rural households in the country. From financial year 2006-07 up to financial year 2013-14 (upto December 2013) over 155,000 crore Indian rupees have been spent on wage payments under this programme. The expenditure against available funds, across the years turns out to be in the range of 73% to 88%.
- While 81.51 crore job cards have been issued cumulatively from 2006-07 till December 2013, 34.60 crore households have been provided employment under the scheme.
- The average employment created per household works out to be within a range of 42 to 54 person-days per year.
- The share of women's employment within this worked out to be in the range of 40% to 54% (steadily increasing). This is higher than the statutory minimum requirement of 33 per cent at the national level.
- Around 9.3 crore bank or post office accounts of rural people have been opened under MGNREGA and around 80 per cent of payments are made through this route. However, it is not clear how many are in the name of women.

Recent decisions pertaining more specifically to women include:

- Opening individual bank/post office accounts for all women workers;
- Identifying and providing job cards specifically to widowed, deserted and destitute women;
- Organising workers into labour groups so that registration of wage demand can be facilitated;
- Works creating individual assets will now be prioritized on land or homestead owned by households which are women headed (not clear about the mechanisms that will facilitate the implementation);
- Schedule of Rates to be fixed such that work for 8 hours including one hour of rest will be equal to stipulated wage rate, and separate schedule of rates to be finalized for women so as to improve their participation through productive work;
- If the job seeker is a single woman, a special job card of a distinct color will be given to ensure them a special protection in providing work;
- Construction of anganwadi workers to bring about convergence with ICDS; registration of work demand of workers through Anwanwadi Sahayikas;
- Category C works now consist of “Common infrastructure for NRLM Compliant Self Help Groups” – this includes works for promoting agricultural productivity by creating durable infrastructure required for biofertilisers and post-harvest facilities including pucca storage facilities for agricultural produce and common worksheds for livelihood activities of self help groups;

Further, Rashtriya Bima Yojana and Janashree Bima Yojana are to be extended to all participants of NREGS who have put in at least 15 days of work in the preceding year.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN NREGS

NREGA has provisions that specifically ensure women’s participation. Para 6, Schedule II of NREGA provides that priority should be given to women in such a way that at least 1/3rd of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under the Act. Not less than 1/3rd of the non-official members of Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC) shall be women. In case the number of children below the age of 6 years accompanying the women working at any site are 5 or more, provision shall be made to depute one of such women workers to look after such children. NREGS mandates that equal wages be provided to both men and women. If some applicants have to be directed to report

for work beyond 5 kms of their residence, women (especially single women) and older persons should be given preference to work on the worksites nearer to their residence. A system of Mates, whereby one person is designated for supervision of work and recording of attendance exists. It is the Mate who also has to ensure provision of worksite facilities. Mates are supposed to be selected through a fair, transparent and participatory process with adequate representation of women amongst mates so selected. Revised guidelines of NREGA recommend priority to be given to female-mates. The following are details about women's participation in NREGS.

Year	Women-days employment in crores (total person-days employment in brackets)	In percentage
2006-07	36.40 (90.50)	40.20
2007-08	61.15 (143.59)	42.58
2008-09	103.57 (216.32)	47.88
2009-10	136.40 (283.59)	48.69
2010-11	122.74 (257.15)	47.73
2011-12	105.27 (218.76)	48.12
2012-13 (prov.)	117.93 (229.86)	51.31
2013-14 (till Dec.13)	73.33 (134.80)	54.40

Source: Mahatma Gandhi NREGA: Report to the People, 2014, Ministry of Rural Development

Overall, employment for women in NREGS has exceeded the minimum limit prescribed in the law (more than 40% on an average at the national level). It was seen however that there is significant variation in performance of states in terms of women's participation in NREGS. Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have shown less participation of women than national average; further, Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have not even met the statutory requirement (1/3rd employment to women). Women's participation in terms of percentage of total person-days generated varied quite significantly, from 15-22% only in a state like Uttar Pradesh over the years or 17-30% in Bihar or 17-34% in West Bengal, to 66-93% in Kerala, 74-83% in Tamil Nadu and 67-69% in Rajasthan. It is important that NREGS works be enhanced for women so that the statutory requirements are met; more importantly, this platform can be used for specifically reaching out to women in those states where their socio-economic indicators are low. It has also been argued that thought must be given as to how MGNREGA in conjunction with NRLM programme can help the artisanal communities obtain a decent living while at the same time conserving the base of craftsmanship which India's cultural heritage (12th Plan Approach Paper pg 82).

Some state governments such as Tamil Nadu have tried to address gaps in women's participation by providing child-care services through extended timings of ICDS centres. This has been a critical enabling factor for the better participation of women workers in NREGA^{xiii}. Through this measure, TN has achieved 76% participation of women in NREGA^{xiii}. Other states like Uttar Pradesh have adopted affirmative measures to recognise and account for women's time and work burden by revising for revising their Schedule of Rates (SoR)^{xiv}. The Chhattisgarh government has pioneered the provisioning of paid maternity leave for women NREGA workers, by paying a full month's wage compensation at minimum wages (total of Rs.4380 as of June 2013), for women who have worked under NREGA for at least 15 days in the previous financial year.

The 14th Report of the Committee on Empowerment of Women in the 15th Lok Sabha, in its report on "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and Empowerment of Women in Rural Areas" (May, 2012) takes note of several micro-studies that indicate that a slew of benefits are accruing to women from NREGS^{xv}. This includes more income/increase in earning potential, easier access to credit, improvement in household level food security, increase in decision-making power within household and so on. A multi-state study by NIRD (National Institute for Rural Development, Hyderabad) found that NREGS acted as a social security measure to the aged women, widows, divorced/deserted women. The study further stated that female dependency level has declined after the execution of MGNREGS. NREGS is reported to have become the primary source of income in one third of the sample households. A study of "NREGA process and practices in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh: Appraisal cum research study", by Centre for Educational Research & Development found that NREGA helps the women in general and lactating women in particular, to meet their basic needs, like food by ensuring regular income. Some studies are showing that MGNREGS has emerged as a preferred option and not just as an alternative employment opportunity, especially for women. Assured employment at minimum wage, with relatively decent and safe working conditions, free from caste & community biases and with fixed hours of work are some important reasons for the higher and increasing participation of women in MGNREGS^{xvi}.

On the other hand, there is an argument that MGNREGS, given that there is zero incentive for skill acquisition, could cause dampening of incentive for skill acquisition amongst unskilled rural workers. It is reported that within the rural sector, the traditionally skilled,

informally trained worker also gets provoked towards MGNREGS. Some have expressed fears in this context that the projected additional workforce for other sectors in India is likely to be held back in unskilled MGNREGS work^{xvii}. This school of thinking recommends that MGNREGS resources should be used to enhance the skills of workers, as per the capacities of worker, so that they could be gradually shifted to formal sector. There is a suggestion that NREGS could be reinvented to lay thrust on skill development which could lead to self-employment or employment with an enterprise.

Several recommendations have been given in the Economy Chapter, specifically in the Rural Livelihoods section, on making NREGS work for women's empowerment. We repeat them here. MGNREGS has the potential to combine rural farm and non-farm livelihoods/employment somewhat seamlessly, ensuring that there is a basket of livelihood sources strengthened for each woman in rural India. In this context, it is important that NREGS focuses on not just increasing women's participation, but aims also at empowerment of women, by using the institutions and resources that are part of NREGS to create assets and services that focus on women and girls. The following measures would be important for the same^{xviii}:

1. A more comprehensive study on the constraints to greater participation of women in MGNREGS, for different categories of women and different regions/states, might be needed. though micro-studies and experience from the ground point to the broad constraints to be addressed.
2. Increasing awareness about MGNREGS, especially through the medium of women's self help groups, whereby women are encouraged to participate more in Gram Sabhas and in selecting works to be implemented to meet both their practical and strategic needs.
3. Providing greater role to women's SHGs, like in the case of (undivided) Andhra Pradesh, in the implementation of NREGS so that women benefit directly from the scheme, starting from demand for work. Women's participation will understandably be low if work selection happens in a top-down fashion, with their priorities not addressed.
4. Revision of Schedule of Rates wherever it has not happened yet so that at least minimum wages are earned by women.
5. Improving work site facilities is an urgent requirement – state governments should be encouraged to ensure this.
6. The role of mates is important here and increasing the number of female-mates is

essential. This then will have to be preceded by identification and capacity building of such mates.

7. NREGS resources should be utilized for meeting the practical and strategic needs of women – this includes Shelters/Homes for women in distress, as well as capacity building of women on various fronts, including in terms of legal literacy, planning for local development etc. During the tenure of this Committee, revised Schedule I and II of MGNREGS were notified - here, apart from NREGS funds being utilized for common infrastructure for NRLM-compliant groups including worksheds for livelihoods activities of SHGs, construction of buildings for women's SHG federations has been included.
8. Special focus should be created on female elected leaders in PRIs so that women-centric works can be taken up in NREGS and their participation improved. This requires coordinated work with Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
9. Job cards issued in the name of the man, as the "head of the household" might be a constraint in truly empowering women in this Scheme. Further, it has also been found that women have been left out of being registered on some job cards. Both these issues need to be addressed.
10. Improving the system of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees with effective participation of women would help.
11. Adequate representation of women within the MGNREGA staff is a must – it is unclear at this point of time how many women are represented in this structure.
12. Studies indicate that when limited work is 'supplied' under NREGS, women are expected to make way for men. It is therefore important that employment opportunities should be enhanced as per full demand and demand itself should be created by facilitated processes through women's groups and gram sabhas with priority given to women's preferences and needs.
13. It is found that removal of contractors might be important wherever it is still continuing, since this situation lends itself to exploitation and harassment, particularly of women.
14. Works that could inadvertently keep out women (like well-digging in private lands, which are seen to keep out women after a certain depth of digging) should be avoided or de-prioritised.
15. Delayed wage payments are a major deterrent to women's participation, especially in the case of women-headed households and single women. It is seen on the ground that delays in wage payments run not just into weeks but months and in some cases, years.
16. Special works should definitely be planned for women in special/difficult circumstances

and implemented. This should take their special needs and vulnerabilities on board in planning the works (single women, elderly widows, pregnant women, differently abled women etc.).

There appears to be an immense potential in engendering NREGS to extend universal childcare services, so that women could be freed up from this gendered role and utilize opportunities for livelihoods enhancement for themselves even as the child care support also addresses health and nutritional issues. For this, it is recommended that childcare services be definitely set up at all worksites as mandated by the statute; further, these may be set up in the habitations where there is a high concentration of women workers. The support may be extended to cater to special demand of collectives of single women, caregivers to other needy persons etc., in their choice of location in the village. This can be done in convergence with ICDS, with the responsibility of ensuring the effective functioning lying with the NREGA implementation agency and district program coordinator. This convergence (wherein NREGS already includes anganwadi construction in its schedule of permissible works; construction of childcare centres should be added) should allow for flexible location as well as extended timings. Payment of wages for childcare service provider must come from NREGS budget.

The HLC also welcomes the 12th Five Year Plan's declarations on engendering MGNREGS, with the following proposals articulated therein:

- A day per month will be allocated as sensitisation day, devoted to sessions on raising awareness about the various components and rights under MGNREGS and on socially relevant legislations like Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, PC-PNDT Act, and Dowry Prohibition Act. Wages will be paid as on normal work days to those present in order to encourage attendance.
- The list of permissible work under MGNREGA will be expanded to allow for greater diversity of activities.
- Women's Groups will be included as implementing agencies of MGNREGS works.
- The existing provision for crèches at the work site will be implemented on a priority basis. The possibility of setting up crèches in collaboration with ICDS Anganwadis will be explored.
- The wages under MGNREGS will not be calculated on a piece-rate basis which often works to the detriment of women.

The HLC recommends that these be taken up on a priority basis immediately. A matter of concern is the reports that MGNREGS will see a cutback from the government. The Budget announcements of 2015-16 do not give an indication of this however. This HLC sees the high potential

III.1.5. National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)

This was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development to create efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. Self-managed Self Help Groups and their federations, with exclusive membership of women form the primary institutional space for rolling out the NRLM. NRLM would promote SHGs with exclusive women membership as women are seen as “agents of change” in this Mission (“social mobilization and institution building is best managed and owned by transformed and empowered women”). By November 2014, 197 lakh households have been organized into 16.01 lakh SHGs across the country.

This programme was known by another name earlier, called Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). Now, NRLM or Aajeevika is one of the most ambitious rural livelihoods projects in India, under the Ministry of Rural Development. SGSY has been restructured as Aajeevika (National Rural Livelihoods Mission) to implement it in a Mission mode in a phased manner for better targeting and time-bound delivery of results. Launched formally in June 2011, there are three main schemes of Aajeevika:

- (i) Aajeevika Skill Development Programme (ASDP) with the objective of catering to the occupational aspirations of rural youth who are poor, and to diversify incomes of the rural poor;
- (ii) Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) with the objective to enhance the productive participation of women in agriculture; to create sustainable agricultural livelihood opportunities for women in agriculture; to improve the skills and capabilities of women in agriculture to support farm and non-farm-based activities; to ensure food and nutrition security at the household and the community level; to enable women to have better access to inputs and services of the government and other agencies; to enhance the managerial capacities of women in agriculture for better management of bio-diversity; to

improve the capacities of women in agriculture to access the resources of other institutions and schemes within a convergence framework.

- (iii) Himayat: This is a scheme to provide options and opportunities to all youth in J&K, ranging from school dropouts to college educated, to select training programmes for salaried or self-employment as per their interest. The placements will be in the private sector, both within and outside J & K.

During the implementation of SGSY (which also primarily targeted women by either mobilizing them into groups or providing assistance to individual beneficiaries), there were several issues that monitoring reports brought out: SHGs, despite being formed, not taking up economic activities, not enough skill upgradation efforts being put in, not all groups having bank accounts, not all the poor being covered in a saturation approach etc.

SGSY itself evolved out of the IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) scheme that ran for years in India, which while aiming for 30% coverage of women among total scheme beneficiaries had less than 5% which prompted the launch of DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) in 1982. SGSY was launched in April 1999 after restructuring the Integrated Rural Development Programme and allied programmes, designed as a self-employment programme for the rural poor. The objective of SGSY was to bring assisted swarozgaris above the poverty line by providing them income-generating assets through bank credit and government subsidy. An important change from the IRDP approach was the shift away from supporting individuals towards the formation of self-help groups and organizations of the poor at the grassroots through a process of social mobilization, using a cluster activity approach at the block level and by involving the rural development administration, commercial banks and the panchayat structure collaboratively to undertake comprehensive planning to ensure the viability of the enterprise initiated. Community action and group dynamics were expected to transform outcomes and also make banks recognize the rural poor as credit worthy and financially accountable units. The SGSY package is a mix of bank credit and government subsidy.

The allocation of SGSY was on the basis of existing BPL families in the districts. The scheme was implemented on a cost-sharing basis of 75:25 between the Centre and the States (other than NE where the cost sharing is on a 90:10 basis). Up to December 2009, 36.78 lakh SHGs had been formed and 132.81 lakh swarozgaris assisted with a total outlay of Rs. 30,896

crores. 50% of benefits are reserved for SC/STs, 15% for minorities and 3% for differently abled people. 50% of the SHGs formed in each block are expected to be exclusively for women who will account for at least 40% of the swarozgaris. The percentage of women among those assisted increased from 45 per cent in 1999 to 66% in 2009. However, the attrition rate among SHGs was found to be very high. Only 65% SHGs graduated to Grade I based on well-defined parameters of performance, such as quality of functioning, repayment of loans and maintenance of proper records. On the other hand, a number of studies document the positive economic impact of SHGs on indicators such as average value of assets per household, average net income per household, employment and borrowing for income generation activities^{xix}. SHGs also helped inculcate banking habit in rural women. Running of an SHG is also a great lesson in governance, and there are reports of office bearers being elected to panchayats and becoming more effective leaders in PRIs. Good SHGs can become effective instruments of empowerment.

However, studies also indicate that the impressive figures of fast growth of SBL model (SHG-Bank Linkage, the basis for the self-employment opportunities being created in this programme) hide a lot of poor quality work and mortality of the groups^{xx xxj}. It is seen that where there are federations of SHGs created (comprising of 150-200 SHGs each), the economies of scale work better, and here, the SBL model is able to provide larger loans for housing and health facilities to their members by tying up with large service or loan providers. A study of 4 large SHG federations with over 18000 members in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu shows that federations help make SHGs financially viable by reducing transaction and promotional costs as also default rates, provide them economies of scale, create value-added services and build local human capital^{xxii}.

Since most SHGs are women's groups, the potential for women's empowerment is huge. There is overwhelming evidence that women-run SHGs are the best managed with women showing much greater sense of responsibility as also a commitment to human development objectives such as health and education of their families. However, much depends on the orientation and capacity of the agency facilitating the formation of groups – where groups are mere conduits for the lending and recovery of money or when lending is to individuals, empowerment impacts are the least.

Field level studies also show that women re-engineer project protocols, or instrumentally reshape the package of financial assistance in ways that enabled them to shore up and

diversify household assets that could be drawn upon in times of need. It was also seen that the external agencies are not always equipped to meaningfully engage with a range of issues that women in the SHGs raise, that pertain to their material conditions^{xxiii}. This study from Tamil Nadu also documented the nexus between SHGs, banks and the block development office in creating make-believe enterprises.

A major problem identified by the Radhakrishna Committee is that most SHGs remain crowded in low productivity primary sector activities. The success of the programme depends on raising their abilities to diversify into other high productive activities. Even in the better performance state of AP, the income gain to a swarozgari from enterprise activities under SGSY was a mere Rs. 1228 per month. The Committee pointed out that nearly 2/3rds (65.4%) of total funds were given out as subsidy and only 6% of the total SGSY funds were utilized for training and capacity building during 1999-2009. It was noted that training is vital for managing SHGs/federations as well as improving livelihood options.

An interesting feature of SGSY is the very uneven distribution of SHGs across regions, with the southern states which account for 11 percent of the poor having 33 per cent of SHGs and the northern/NE states which account for more than 60 percent of rural BPL population having only about 39 per cent SHGs. It is reported that the performance of SGSY was unsatisfactory in states with high incidence of poverty such as Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, West Bengal and Bihar. The constraints mostly relate to the delivery system, as per the Radhakrishna Committee. Line departments were not involved and banks had little interest. AP, Kerala and TN show successful implementation largely because of existence of umbrella organizations at the state level and federating SHGs into effective self-governing organizations with a hierarchy of appropriate functions. The differences in regional and state wise performances can also be attributed to the relative strength of banking institutions:

SGSY Financial & Physical Performance : 1999-Oct 2009	
SHGs formed, in lakhs	35
Grade I SHGs, in lakhs	23
SHGs economically assisted, in lakhs	08
Total Swarozgaris assisted, in lakhs	127 (82 lakh SHGs and 45 lakh individual Swarozgaris)
Total credit mobilized, in Rs. Crores	19,600
Total subsidy disbursed, in Rs. crores	9,500

Per capita investment in 1999, in Rupees	17,000
Per capita investment in 2009, in Rupees	31,500

This scheme also had a 15% minorities component included. An evaluation study in 2009 by NIRD on impact of SGSY on minorities in 7 states (Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal) reported that 80.14% of the swarozgaris belonging to minority community felt the positive impact of SGSY on their economic development; 36% reported that family incomes have increased; 43% reported that they were spending more money on their children's education. 21% perceived an increase in their social status. Though there has been a marginal increase from 10.78% to 11.62% in terms of coverage of the minority group SHGs between 2007-08 and 2008-09, it has not yet reached the desired level of 15%. Similar trend may also be noticed with regard to providing economic assistance to the individual swarozgaris belonging to the minority groups as it increased from 7.78% during the year 2007-08 to 10.85% during 2008-09^{xxiv}.

The National Rural Livelihoods Mission was rolled out in 2010, from restructuring SGSY. NRLM's implementation is supposed to be in a mission mode with greater emphasis on federations of SHGs. Induction of professionals at various levels of implementation machinery and facilitators-animators at the frontline was another component incorporated. Upward revision of financial support, with greater focus on training and capacity-building efforts including setting up of dedicated skill training institutes in each district; special projects component with greater focus on skilled wage employment, other than self employment; facilitating market linkages; platforms that enable industries and their associations to better integrate micro-enterprises and so on are all express features of NRLM^{xxv}.

NRLM is aided in part through investment support by the World Bank and its key features are supposed to be: social mobilization, institution building, financial inclusion, livelihoods promotion, convergence, skill building and NRLP (covering 13 high poverty states accounting for about 90 percent of the rural poor in India; coverage here includes 107 districts, 422 blocks in Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu).

NRLM has set out with an agenda to cover 7 crore rural poor households, across 600 districts, 6000 blocks, 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats and 6 lakh villages in the country through self-managed Self Help Groups (SHGs) and federated institutions and support them for livelihoods in a period of 8-10 years. In addition, the poor would be facilitated to achieve increased access to their rights, entitlements and public services, diversified risk and better social indicators of empowerment. NRLM seeks to harness the innate capabilities of the poor and complements them with capacities (information, knowledge, skills, tools, finance and collectivization) to participate in the growing economy of the country^{xxvi}.

Geographical coverage under NRLM	
Number of States transited to NRLM (27 States + 1 U.T.)	28
Number of Districts with intensive blocks in NRLM States	344
Number of Blocks identified for intensive approach in NRLM States	2631
Number of Blocks where intensive implementation has commenced	2449
Number of Grampanchayat in which intensive implementation has started	41908
Number of villages in which intensive implementation has started	136610
Progress in Intensive Blocks (includes NRLM-EAP/ State Projects)	
Number of households mobilized into SHGs (in Lakh)	124.5
Number of SHGs promoted (in Lakh)	13.2
Number of Village Organizations promoted	46026
Number of SHGs provided Revolving Fund	245999
Amount of Revolving Fund disbursed to SHGs (in Lakh)	35,322.8
Number of SHGs provided Community Investment Fund (CIF)	162757
Community Investment Fund given to SHGs/ Village Organizations (in Rs. Lakh)	84,458.3
Number of Community Resource Persons developed	3654994
Amount of credit mobilized through banks (in Rs. Lakh during FY 2013-14)	319,958
Number of youth provided self-employment training (RSETI) during 2013-14 (in Lakh)	2.27
Number of Mahila Kisans supported under MKSP (in Lakh)	24.50
Number of Producer Groups promoted	1485
Net cropped area brought under sustainable agriculture (in Lakh Acres)	36

Source:

<http://nrlm.gov.in/nrlmlive/outerReportAction.do?jsessionId=38BF03EFF239E41178ED4FF831F1618F.node1?methodName=showIndex>

III.1.5.1. Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) is a distinct programme within NRLM that envisages empowering women in agriculture by making systematic interventions to enhance their participation and productivity, as also create and sustain agriculture based livelihoods of rural women. The project also aims at creating a wide pool of community

resource persons for scaling up livelihood interventions in the entire country. Apart from Sustainable Agriculture, MKSP also focuses on Non Timber Forest Produce (NTFP). Specific objectives of MKSP are as under:

- To enhance the productive participation of women in agriculture;
- To create sustainable agricultural livelihood opportunities for women in agriculture;
- To improve the skills and capabilities of women in agriculture to support farm and non-farm-based activities;
- To ensure food and nutrition security at the household and the community level;
- To enable women to have better access to inputs and services of the government and other agencies;
- To enhance the managerial capacities of women in agriculture for better management of bio-diversity;
- To improve the capacities of women in agriculture to access the resources of other institutions and schemes within a convergence framework.

12 projects of about 575 crores have been sanctioned under MKSP. The project period under MKSP is for three years. An impact assessment study is possible only after completion/conclusion of projects sanctioned in the initial phase at the end of the project period of three years.

Parvaaz is a special pilot program on "Comprehensive Skills and Education Program for Rural BPL Minority Youth. The main objective of this programme is to mainstream the minority BPL youth of the country by empowering them with education, skills & employment.

Kudumbashree was launched by the Government of Kerala in 1998 for wiping out absolute poverty through concerted community action, and rests on capacitating women to understand and exercise their rights as a basic requirement for poverty eradication. Kudumbashree has a multi-pronged design that rests on economic empowerment and social development strategies. Key to Kudumbashree's effort to empower women is a special project called the Gender Self Learning Programme (GSLP) started in 2007. A three-tiered federated community structure, which works under the leadership of local self governments, Kudumbashree has Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs), Area Development Societies (the middle layer, ward level federation) and the Community Development Societies (CDSs, which are the Panchayat/Municipal level federation of all ADSs) which take up various activities. Kudumbashree has 41 lakh members and covers more than 50% of the households in Kerala.

Micro-credit, Entrepreneurship and Empowerment are the three critical components of the programme. The economic empowerment programme draws its support from members' thrift which touched around 1690 crore rupees in the first 12 years of Kudumbashree's existence. Through bank linkages, 1140 crore rupees were mobilized as credit and loans amounting to Rs.4195 crore rupees were disbursed to NHG members (by 2010)^{xxvii}. In the Kudumbashree Mission, micro-Enterprises are those having an investment ranging from Rs. 5000/- to Rs. 2.5 lakh, owned, run and managed by the entrepreneurs themselves, run as an individual enterprise or group enterprise. Apart from enterprises that are begun by NHG members through loans that they take, and the local self governments with support of various government departments and schemes, Kudumbashree also has enterprises that are assisted through its Rural Micro Enterprises (RME) and 50K/Yuvasree schemes. In RME, a group will be given a subsidy of Rs.10,000/- per member or 50% of the total project cost, whichever is less. In Yuvasree, which seeks to provide employment opportunities to educated youth (both men and women in the age group of 18-35 years), individual enterprises are given Rs. 7500 as subsidy or 1/3rd of the total project cost which ever is less. Group enterprises are given a subsidy of Rs. 10,000/- per member or 50% of the total project cost, whoever is less. Upto 2012, 12390 group enterprises and 3323 individual enterprises were supported under RME and 616 group, and 3903 individual enterprises were supported under Yuvasree. After a large Micro Enterprise survey in 2006, wherein issues of scale, inadequate working capital to keep the enterprise afloat, low end technology, weak pricing and marketing strategies as well as big gaps in trainings were identified, Kudumbashree Mission took a clear strategic direction towards Local Economic Development (LED) as the lead concept. Monthly markets were initiated as a main avenue to support the enterprises in all districts from 2007 and by 2012, Rs. 390 lakhs was the turnover realized, up from 53 lakh rupees in 2007-08. Community marketing networks in the brand name of Home Shop were also started. Apart from a variety of enterprises, collective farming was taken up in a big way through Joint Liability Groups (2.23 lakh women farmers, came together as 50,100 Joint Liability Groups to undertake agricultural activities in more than 1.25 lakh acres with the help of 972 FFCs which are institutions for community managed extension services, as well as machinery support); similarly, Women's Labour Collectives were initiated. In the collective farming enterprises, the focus is on agro-ecological approaches (non-chemical) in production, with value addition and agri-processing for income enhancement^{xxviii}.

III.1.6. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

This was launched in 1993. RMK was established to provide micro-credit in a quasi-formal manner to poor women for income generation, production, skill development and housing activities in order to make them economically independent. It was started with an initial corpus of Rs.31 crore, which has been recycled to reach cumulative sanctions of Rs.188 crores of loans. RMK is described as the nodal agency/apex body for micro-credit for women. This was envisaged as a source of accessing credit for women SHGs instead of banks, to be used by all Ministries and agencies that are promoting and implementing

subsidy-linked SHG programmes. RMK mainly channelises its support through NGOs, Voluntary agencies, States Women Development Corporations, Cooperative Societies, State Government agencies, Urban Women Co-op Banks etc. to the women SHGs. RMK aims at the following:

- To provide or promote the provision of micro-credit to poor women for income generation activities or for asset creation.
- To adopt a quasi-informal delivery system, which is client friendly, uses simple and minimal procedures, disburses quickly and repeatedly, has flexibility of approach, links thrift and savings with credit and has low transaction costs both for the borrower and for the lender.
- To demonstrate and replicate participatory approaches in the organization of women's groups for thrift and savings and effective utilization of credit.
- To use the group concept and the provision of credit as an instrument of women's empowerment, socio economic change and development.
- To cooperate with and secure the cooperation of the government of India, State Governments, Union Territory administrations, credit institutions, industrial and commercial organizations, NGOs and others in promoting the objectives of the Kosh.
- To disseminate information and experience among all these above agencies in the Government and non government sectors in the area of microfinance for poor women.
- To receive grants, donations, loans, etc., for the furtherance of the aims and objective of the Kosh.

The 11th Plan suggested a revamping of RMK based on an evaluation in 2002 which said:

- i. Bring in a special focus for inclusion of the 'real' poor and most marginalized – SC, ST and Muslim women
- ii. Interest rates determined should not become exorbitant and exploitative for the women.
- iii. RMK should find a place in the regulatory framework for the micro finance sector.
- iv. Modify and strengthen its capacity building agenda to include gender inputs to enable its partner NGOs to help the women have access to and ownership of resources – private and public – to truly become empowered, enhance their negotiation skills and come into decision making roles at all levels.
- v. Promote enterprises and income generation activities that help women to move away

from the traditional sexual division of labour that typically result in their subordination in households and in the economy— whether in productive or reproductive roles.

- vi. Establish systems for concurrent monitoring and evaluation which would include identifying gender and equity indicators, in addition to financial aspects.
- vii. Make adequate and appropriate financial and social investment in all of the above processes.

The 11th Plan envisaged that the credit programme of RMK will have to be extended from 20 crores to Rs. 100 crores per annum, that it has to expand its operations to all states and UTs, and should upscale its operations to cover about 20 lakh SHG members.

The Mid Term Appraisal of the 11th FYP of the Planning Commission noted the following: The RMK provides Intermediate Microfinance Organisations (IMOs) loans at an interest rate of 8 per cent for 3-5 years; however, after onward lending, the women borrowers are charged much higher rates of interest which goes up to 18 per cent per annum. The recovery percentage from 1993 to 2009 was 90.73%. In this context, the MTA recommended^{xxix}:

- Lower the interest rate to the final borrowers and increase duration of loans to correspond with the period of loans given by RMK to Intermediate Microfinance Organisation.
- Evaluate structure, role and functioning of RMK; explore restructuring as a bank or NBFC with adequate human resources.
- Generate greater awareness, ensure better transparency and monitoring.

Subsequently, the report of the Working Group on Women's Agency and Empowerment of the 12th Five Year Plan noted that the restructuring decision of the RMK into a systemically important NBFC with an enhanced corpus of Rs. 500 crores was a landmark decision. It is projected that this will facilitate the financial inclusion of more than 2 lakh disadvantaged women on an annual basis, towards the fifth year of its working.

It is worth noting that the initial corpus of RMK was Rs 31 crore, which was increased with additional allocation of Rs.10 crore in 2006-07, Rs.12 crore in 2007-08, Rs.31 crore in 2008-09 and Rs.16 crore in 2009-10, taking the principal corpus to Rs.100 crore. From inception till March 2014, RMK sanctioned loans amounting to Rs. 360.24 crores, disbursed Rs. 299.04 crores and reached to 735,239 women beneficiaries in 73,516 SHGs as per the RMK official website (www.rmk.nic.in).

In 2013, the loan amount against Loan Promotion Schemes was enhanced from Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh. Similarly, loan limit under Main Loan Scheme has been increased from Rs. 300 lakh to Rs. 600 lakh. Loan limit under Housing Loan Scheme was increased from Rs 50 thousand to Rs. 1 lakh. Interest Rate from 8 % reduced to 6 % on reducing balance for NGO/Vos. Similarly the interest charged by NGOs/Vos for the SHG members reduced from 18 % to 14 %.

In 2012-13, an assessment study of beneficiaries of RMK by Indian Society for Agri-business Professionals (ISAP) in nine states (which included in depth interaction with 15 intermediary organisations and covered 1500 beneficiaries from 500 women's SHGs) found the following^{xxx}:

- 57% of the members of the groups were from BPL families;
- There is active involvement of beneficiaries in different kinds of self employment generating micro enterprise;
- The average savings per member per annum before joining the SHG was Rs. 1961 which increased to Rs. 2993 after becoming member of the SHG;
- 95% of the beneficiaries had improved their usage of medical facilities after seeking RMK loan;
- There was noticeable change in the consumption pattern and better household nutrition through SHG activities.

III.1.7. Scheme for Working Women's Hostels (WWH)

This scheme was launched way back in 1972-73, with the following objectives:

- (a) To provide accommodation for single working women, unmarried, widows, divorced, separated, married when husband is out of town;
- (b) To provide accommodation for women who are being trained for employment provided the training period does not exceed one year. The number of working women falling in this category should not be more than 30% of the total number of women in the hostel;
- (c) To provide accommodation to the girl students for a period of five years on the condition that first preference will be given to working women only. After that if there are any

vacancies, accommodation will be provided to the students also but amongst them, preference will be given to those studying in post-school professionals courses. The category of women who are being trained for employment and the girl students together should not be more than 30% of the total number of women in the hostel.

Since its inception in 1972-73, 911 hostels have been sanctioned under the scheme all over the country benefitting about 68,196 working women^{xxxii}.

The scheme is implemented through voluntary agencies, public trusts working in the field of women's welfare, social welfare, women's education; women's development corporations; universities and schools/colleges of social work; local bodies or cooperative institutions. The scheme understandably saw many revisions and modifications over the years. For instance, limits with regard to the scheme being applicable only in cities and towns having more than 10 lakh population, or income limits for the women eligible for hostel accommodation, financial assistance norms for construction of hostels, provision for day care centres for children in the hostel etc.

A dated evaluation study (1997) by TISS found that only 53.1% of the working women's hostels were functional at the time of the conduct of the study.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Empowerment of Women, took up the subject of "hostel accommodation for working women" for its study in the 14th Lok Sabha (10th Report of 2006-07, December 2006). It has been seen that there is always lower release of allocated budget under this scheme: the Ministry says that the shortfall in expenditure is due to lack of good proposals meeting the schematic norms and requirements. As per the Ministry, activating the state governments to take up proper monitoring of the implementation scheme has been difficult. It is felt that this is because the fund is directly going to the NGOs, and not routed through the state government, though sanctions are given only after state level screening and recommendation processes.

An Evaluation Study Report On "Evaluation of Working Women's Hostels in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra" has been carried out by Tirpude College of Social Work, Nagpur involving mainly interviews with office bearers of the management of the hostel^{xxxiii}. This study found a positive impact of the stay in the hostel on the inmates. With regard to impact on physical, psychological, economic and social aspects,

it is found that in almost all the cases the women hostellers have perceived that their staying in the hostel has enriched their physical life by providing them physical security, fulfilling their basic physical needs, and improvement in their health status. In most of the cases (over 64 per cent) the women hostellers were 'pulled' by the desire for 'economic independence' while remaining were 'pushed' by the necessity of 'fulfilling the basic needs' or 'earning source for livelihood'.

The Mid Term Appraisal of the 11th Five Year Plan recommended that the scheme incorporate flexibility and timely release of funds, steps to improve security, sanitation and hygiene and extend itself to towns^{xxxiii}. In the 12th Plan, based on an evaluation and suggestions received from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Empowerment of Women, the scheme has been revised. Under the revised scheme, apart from the provision of extending financial assistance for the construction of hostel building on public land, new components of grants-in-aid for maintenance, furnishing of hostel and cost of rent of the hostels running in rented buildings have also been envisaged. Financial assistance can be availed of by the State Government agencies including Women Development Corporations, Women Finance Corporation etc., Urban Municipal Bodies, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Self Help Groups etc^{xxxiv}.

An evaluation of the scheme by IGNOU found that the scheme was serving the purpose for which it was formulated and recommended continuation of the scheme. A parliamentary standing committee report of April 2015 noted that a lot more can be done for improving the performance of the scheme with respect to construction of more hostels for working women^{xxxv}.

III.1.8. Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers (RGNCS)

2002-03 saw the launch of this scheme for children of working mothers. While this is mostly seen as a children's scheme with day care and nutrition support, given that there is a key component related to women's empowerment embedded in this scheme (care services being run by public support with women freed up to take up other activities including livelihoods related activities), we choose to classify it as a women's economic empowerment scheme. The scheme's stated objective is not women-centric, and aims to provide the basic minimum facilities to ensure that the children in the crèche have a hygienic, healthy and child friendly

environment for their proper growth and care. This scheme is open to all sections of society, and runs all over the country – however, it is noted that 87 districts are uncovered (do not have even one crèche), and it has been decided that these districts will be given highest priority. Under the scheme, assistance is provided to NGOs for running these crèches for infants (0-6 years) and assistance is provided to ensure sleeping facilities, health-care, supplementary nutrition, immunization etc., for running a creche for 25 infants for eight hours i.e. from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Evaluations of the scheme have kept in mind this child-centrism in the scheme as is apparent from below. The Planning Commission's MTA of the 11th Five Year Plan recommended the following with regard to this scheme:

- Evaluating the scheme including examination its relevance and need in view of the universalisation of ICDS.
- Exploring the possibility of upgrading some of the AWCs to full time crèches.
- If the scheme is to continue, considering the desirability of converting it into a CSS and revising user charges and cost norms to bring them at par with those of ICDS. The current charges of the scheme are Rs. 2.08 per child per day.

It is seen that during the year 2012-13, 17,893 creches were sanctioned benefiting 447,325 children and a sum of Rs. 7277.07 lakhs was sanctioned and Rs. 8112.94 lakhs was released under Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme including BAJSS-Creches^{xxxvi}.

One important critique around this scheme, which needs to be addressed urgently is the absolutely inadequate cost norms budgeted for the scheme, whether it is related to food per child per day, or rent on premises and so on. It is apparent that cost norms across schemes, especially ones that are focusing on nutrition and childcare have to be standardized and made uniform.

III.1.9. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT SCHEMES AND SELF HELP GROUP APPROACH:

Nearly all economic empowerment schemes meant for women in India have taken to adopting an “SHG approach”, where groups of 12-15 women are created, to be further

federated at higher levels, to leverage on the 'social capital' so created, for poverty alleviation.

Scholarly work around women's empowerment, quite early on, focused on the 'power within' (women's subjectivity and consciousness), the 'power to' (with a focus on valued resources for greater control of women over key aspects of their lives) and the 'power with' (acting collectively beyond the capacity of uncoordinated individual action). It would seem that the last dimension of empowerment was embedded into various schemes from the 1990s onwards, when the SHG approach became the dominant approach. However, it appears that schematic interventions have neglected the 'power to' and the 'power within' dimensions to a large extent (this is often the critique of the women's "SHG movement" also, given that women's SHGs were not allowed to explore the power within, but were rather used as instrumentalities for other objectives like poverty eradication or spread of micro-finance markets, for instance) even though the 'power with' approach provides highly potential opportunities for the former two too.

While collectivization of women into Sanghas/Sangams and creating women's unions and cooperatives began from the 1980s mainly through civil society efforts, in 1989, Mahila Samakhyas Scheme was launched, which aimed to translate the National Education Policy goals into empowering education for rural, marginalised women. By 2005, it had expanded to 13247 villages of 9 states, where women's collectives were trying to address those issues which were inhibiting the participation of women and girls in the education sphere. By March 2014, this programme had spread to 42938 villages in 126 districts of 10 states^{xxxvii}.

Meanwhile, variants of this model which was predominantly used by NGOs for some years, mainly for poverty alleviation in the late 1990s, started by UN agencies as well as other agencies like NABARD, started having ambitious targets around scaling up. This was further picked up by Rural Livelihood Missions and Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana, even as various other departments and agencies also took to the "SHG model" (Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana in the recent past, for instance; tribal development departments in different states etc.). The DWCRA version of women's collectives got morphed into SHG-Bank Linkage programme over the years (started with RBI recommendations in 1992; earlier to this, Tamil Nadu setting up Tamil Nadu Women's Development Corporation signaled the first project which was state-sponsored, on a large scale, around women's SHGs). By the end of March 2010, 69.53 lakh SHGs had been covered under NABARD's SHG-Bank Linkage

programme including those formed under SGSY, out of which 76% were exclusive all-women SHGs. From an initial thrust on thrift and credit, these SHGs started taking on large agendas around livelihoods as well as other social issues.

However, it is to be noted that despite all of this, outstanding loan to women's SHGs was less than 1% of the total outstanding credit from scheduled commercial banks by 2010, indicating the small magnitude of micro-credit in the overall scheme of things^{xxxviii}. It was also noted that there is a regional skew towards southern states in terms of such collectives.

In several programmes, the focus on formation and promotion of self help groups is 'to enable women to have access to micro credit and micro-finance and by providing training and skill upgradation to promote self employment opportunities and create livelihood options for women'. Financial inclusion through various micro-finance initiatives also meant that micro finance institutions (MFIs) which were mainly commercial with little social drive also started taking the SHG route for running their business, since this was seen as an innovative approach that will 'unite growth and poverty agendas'. The excessive concern around efficiency, sustainability and viability (including profits, mainly by maximizing scale and reducing service delivery costs) started affecting the social empowerment objectives of the SHG movement as initiated in the 1980s. Here, women started being seen as a viable market.

In terms of disabling factors in the context of even economic empowerment, it is seen that long gestation periods for SHGs to be graded and to access loans is an impediment; weak forward linkages for marketing support, low level of convergence, lack of motivation amongst banks, missing professional assistance in terms of livelihood opportunities, continuous monitoring systems not put into place, skill building and knowledge-building being weak and so on have been identified as the other lacunae^{xxxix}. It was clearly acknowledged that there is a need for strong gender sensitive approaches. This then requires clearer perspectives and understanding on women's productive and reproductive roles, capabilities and constraints, time poverty, factors that contribute to empowerment and change in socio-cultural norms and practices etc. at all levels of such a project.

The scepticism around the excessive focus on micro-credit-centred SHG approach to actually impact either poverty or achieve women's empowerment started gaining strength in the recent past, with emerging conceptual and empirical arguments questioning this approach. The 12th Five Year Plan's Working Group on Women's Agency and Empowerment points

out that the micro credit movement's out to the poorest and most vulnerable populations-like SC/STs, single women and other socially excluded communities is a challenge; that SHG groups have low levels of credit absorption, low skill base and low asset base and find it hard to create economic enterprise; that the need for appropriate institutional mechanisms to address illiteracy, lack of investment, poor credit-worthiness, poor mobilization and other structural exclusions will need to be addressed. It is repeatedly shown that micro-credit is a limited approach when other financial products are also not included, when skill-building and importantly, market linkages are not provided. All of this is clearly pertinent in a debate that is framed in the context of gender and poverty/development. Meanwhile, if this is taken further to a debate on whether these approaches lead to women's autonomy and empowerment (changing the intra-household dynamics in favor of women, giving greater control over resources to women, changing institutional mindsets on a variety of fronts towards gender justice etc.), it is clearly a different picture that is emerging. The assumption that greater credit and incomes in the hands of women will lead to broader social and political empowerment was questioned by empirical evidence. Such evidence was drawn at the individual, collective/group as well as wider, societal levels. It was seen that there was little difference between members and non-members with regard to male preference in distribution of food, gender bias in access to clothing etc. nor in matters like acquisition of land or access to equal wages or nature of work that women do and so on. Further, increase in women's workload without greater say in decision-making, men withholding their contribution to the household budget etc., are documented, adding to the stress on women^{xi xli}. This is not to say that household food security or income improvements, and decline in distress migration or indebtedness at high interest rates do not happen.

While the minimal poverty alleviation and micro-finance agendas through women's SHGs are showing some limitations even within an economic empowerment approach unless the interventions take an express understanding around social exclusion and discrimination, it is also clear that those approaches where SHGs combine objectives for women to explore "power within" (power derived from self awareness, confidence and assertiveness), "power to" (power of individuals to survive, control their labour, resources, body, fertility and have a say in decision-making processes in the household and in public), and "power with" (power that derives from collectivizing with a common understanding and common goals) dimensions where gender explorations in a conscientisation framework are taken up, there

has been positive impact of a sustainable nature. This is borne out in the Mahila Samakhya evaluation findings.

A recent national review of Mahila Samakhya by Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad shows that by November 2014, there were 55402 sanghas covered under Mahila Samakhya. Nearly 90% of the sangha membership is drawn from disadvantaged sections, with SCs/STs constituting 56% of the sangha membership. Mahila Samakhya is mainly a volunteer-driven programme. Mahila Shikshan Kendras, Alternative Learning Centres of various kinds are also run in different states under this programme. Further, there are kishori sanghas with more than 5 lakh members. There are 481 Nari Adalats that have been set up which have dealt with around 30,000 cases cumulatively. It was found that inter-generational shift in favour of girls' education is strong. This study shows that while it is not possible to attribute this to Mahila Samakhya alone, there is little doubt that sangha women have developed empowered identities and voices in most MS communities, and this is mainly in the contestation of spaces from which women have been historically excluded and the challenges to discriminatory practices (including visibility in the public sphere). There appears to be high levels of participation in institutionalized democratic spaces by MS sangha women including in gram sabhas. It is seen that sanghas often take up issues such as violence against women as a matter of responsibility. There are examples of MS's challenges to discrimination also extending to caste discrimination. A large number of sanghas have received capacity building for political awareness, which is a point worth noting. There are however questions on the ability of the sanghas to function autonomously especially in the realm of negotiating with formal institutional structures (given the clear exit policy and strategy in Mahila Samakhya programme after ten years of work) and also on the process of disengagement, given the concern around the financial viability of the federations. The scheme is currently being implemented in 11 States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

III.1.10. TO SUM UP ON SCHEMES MEANT FOR ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN:

- It is apparent that the scale at which the schemes are operating is much lower than the scale needed (NREGS covers 5 crore households annually in rural India and within that only 54% of the employment generated under the programme went to women; STEP has covered only 9.8 lakh beneficiaries over nearly three decades; Working Women's Hostels reached out to only 68 thousand women in spite of the scheme running for decades now; SGSY covered 132.81 lakh swarozgaris over a decade, within which women were only around a half or so. These coverage figures are from some main, flagship schemes. Contrast this with the presence of 33.13 crore economically active females in 2011-12, with WPR being only 21 per cent urban and 37 per cent rural females in the aforementioned number) – in fact, the declining work force participation rates are in themselves a great statement on the impact (or lack of it) of these schemes. It is safe to surmise that even if the schemes have the ability to economically empower women to an extent, the overall growth and development trajectory in India, as well as the socio-cultural norms that women are steeped in might be pulling down the positive potential of these schemes with their inadequate coverage.
- Most schemes meant for women's economic empowerment use an SHG approach to support women's small scale enterprises. However, these SHGs are very often seen as instrumentalities and are not used as transformative mechanisms for true empowerment of women on all fronts. Within an economic empowerment framework, while there are positive results of income increases for the household, there are also many limitations seen in the coverage and effectiveness of the existing economic empowerment schemes including focus on the most marginalized women, on enhancing women's ability to participate equally in decision-making processes etc.. It is also noted that uniform strategies have been adopted in many schemes for all women despite their intersectional vulnerabilities evident in the case of some women.
- For many schemes, household is the unit wherein women's individual entitlements get subsumed under the household. This is the case with NREGS, NRLM as well as schemes like Priyadarshini. Therefore, while a household's income and employment might improve, it is not guaranteed that the woman's income and resource control by her will increase.

- Not many of the schemes run at a scale that are employment-generating; most focus on self-employment and enterprise at a very small scale. This lack of (economies of) scale is noted in the case of large programmes like SGSY.
- Marketing support and capacity building does not always receive adequate focus in such economic empowerment schemes creating sub-optimal results.
- Impact assessments have found lack of focus on the most marginalized; further, incremental increase in income is only around Rs. 1000/ to Rs. 1500/ per month in different schemes, with NREGS delivering even lesser than this in its employment generation efforts. It is not clear whether decision-making with regard to that income and changes with regard to overall decision making in household is in the hands of women too, even where some positive impact in terms of increase in incomes is seen.
- Concentration in certain states is noticed with some schemes, which may not be the needy places. When it comes to women's economic empowerment, the performance of large schemes like SGSY and MGNREGS in states with high incidence of poverty is unsatisfactory. Incidentally, these are also states that score low on gender empowerment dimensions too.
- Given that most schemes take an SHG approach assuming that group collateral will ensure greater financial services in an economic empowerment context, the lack of full-fledged support of bankers is specifically noted.
- Our analysis on the decline in women's rural employment shows that contraction in agriculture/cultivation has been one of the main factors for the decline. It is important that women in agriculture are supported in their own right as farmers in numerous ways, as outlined in the Rural Livelihoods section of this HLC report. Further, Rural Non Farm Sector's potential has not been fully explored and MGNREGS allocations can be used for women's role in RNFS to be strengthened. For instance, female wage employment in women-run enterprises in RNFS can be subsidized through NREGS.
- There is a need for greater conceptual clarity governing the design of employment and enterprise schemes for women. Expanding the livelihoods discourse to include dignity, security and freedom from violence; to women's control over resources and access to social protection entitlements; to recognize, reduce and redistribute women's unpaid work burden and access to high quality public services; to strengthening their agency as economic actors etc., is critical for future since it is apparent that narrow economic empowerment frameworks focused on households alone will not yield the required

transformation in favor of women and uphold their rights. This requires capacity building in institutions built for economic empowerment, to include gender sensitization at all levels.

Recent literature is pointing to how transformative and comprehensive social protection schemes are needed, which cover^{xlii}:

- Protective measures which are narrowly targeted safety nets for income and consumption smoothing in periods of crisis or stress (e.g. social assistance programmes for the chronically poor women).
- Preventive measures that seek to avert deprivation (e.g. social insurance such as pensions and maternity benefits).
- Promotive measures that aim to enhance real incomes and capabilities, and provide springboards and opportunity ladders out of poverty.
- Transformative measures which seek to address concerns of social equity and exclusion through social empowerment (e.g. collective action for workers' rights, building voice and authority in decision-making for women).

Ideally, interventions should be able to cover all these measures comprehensively: This is not always the case with economic empowerment schemes in India, except where large livelihood interventions are being taken up in a mission mode. The Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) and Kudumbashree's interventions in Andhra Pradesh/Telangana and Kerala respectively, where women have been collectivized and federated at an impressive scale, capacity-building has been invested upon, feminist approaches have been used in dealing with at least a few issues (like the Jagrutha Samithis and Social Action Committees in these interventions), where convergence with local self governments and other agencies has been achieved, where focus has been on building an asset base for women and better control over natural resources, where linkages with banks have been well established and where forward linkages for value addition and marketing have been forged, it is seen that potential for transformation can indeed be realized.

III.2. SCHEMES IN THE CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: PREVENTION, PROTECTION/SHELTER, REHABILITATION, RESTORATIVE JUSTICE SCHEMES FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE

Ujjwala, Ministry of Women and Child Development	Called as a comprehensive scheme to combat trafficking, Ujjwala was introduced in 2007 with an aim to prevent trafficking and to provide support for rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and repatriation of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. The scheme is implemented mainly through NGOs. 18 crore rupees have been allocated for this scheme in 2015-16.
Swadhaar (Greh), Ministry of Women and Child Development	Recognising the need for a project-based approach to address the requirements of women in difficult circumstances, this scheme was introduced in 2001-02. The objective of the scheme is to comprehensively rehabilitate widows, victims of trafficking, victims of natural calamities, mentally challenged and destitute women. The scheme provides for support like food and shelter, counselling, medical facilities and vocational training to women. The scheme also envisages setting up help-lines for women in distress. This scheme is now merged with Short Stay Homes and renamed as Swadhar Greh. Swadhar Greh, now part of the Centrally Sponsored Umbrella Scheme for Protection and Development of women received an allocation of 50 crore rupees in 2015-16, and funding shall be through Nirbhaya Fund.
Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls, Ministry of Women and Child Development	This scheme is to provide shelter for women and girls in difficult circumstances. For meeting the situation, institutional services where counselling and guidance, medical and psychiatric check-up and treatment, facilities of development of skills and relationships are provided could prove useful and the Short Stay Home effort is to be to help the women to rehabilitate themselves within a short period of time. This scheme has been subsumed under Swadhar Greh scheme described above.
Women's Helpline, Ministry of Women and Child Development	"Recognizing that women in distress and difficult circumstances require immediate access to assistance and may not have recourse to or information about the availability of such support services, it is proposed to work towards creation of a universalised women helpline. In the XII plan, it was proposed to set up a 24 hour Woman Helpline, preferably on an All India basis, with a toll free single number and with an effective back office social legal support system whereby assistance to victims of domestic violence, rape and other atrocities against women will be available at just a phone call away". One crore rupees have been allocated for this, under SAAHAS in 2015-16.
One Stop (Crisis) Center under Nirbhaya	"In order to deal with a situation of violence, women require support at various levels that address their multiple needs. Recognising this, the Ministry would examine the possibility of developing a pilot of One Stop

Fund, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	Crisis Centre for women which would serve as an integrated facility where various needs of victims of violence, such as medical aid, legal assistance, assistance in filing a police case, counselling and emotional support, temporary shelter for herself and her children and basic necessities for the period of stay can be met, at a single place. Victims of rape and sexual assault will also be able to benefit from these where they will be provided with immediate medical help to deal with her injuries and trauma and where her statement can be recorded in a conducive and sensitive atmosphere. These centres are proposed to be established in cities with a population of more than 2.5 million". <i>Guidelines for One Stop Centre Scheme were issued by MWCD, GoI in April 2015 and in Budget 2015-16, two crore rupees have been allocated.</i>
Implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act came into force on 26 th October, 2006. Under the provisions of the Act, the State Governments are required to appoint Protection Officers, register Service Providers and notify medical facilities. To support state governments in better implementation of the Act, the GoI has started this scheme. This scheme is now part of SAAHAS for which around 9300 crore rupees has been allocated.
Relief to and rehabilitation of rape victims, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	The Scheme seeks to provide restorative justice to victims of rape through financial assistance as well as support services such as medical, shelter, counseling, etc.

(Note: Most descriptions of the schemes in the table above are from Notes on Demand For Grants, Budget Expenditure Statements)

While Indira Awas Yojana may not have been visualized as a women-centric housing scheme, in the context of violence against women, it at least acts as an insurance against the women being evicted out of the house, given that house titles are given mostly in the name of women under this scheme and therefore, deserves a mention here.

III.2.1. Swadhar (Greh) - A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances

In 2012-13, two schemes (Swadhar and Short Stay Home) were merged into a new scheme called Swadhar Greh, with revised financial norms in order to reach out to those women who are victims of unfortunate circumstances and are in need of institutional support for

rehabilitation so that they could lead their life with dignity. The envisaged coverage of the proposed scheme is all the districts of the country^{xliii}.

III.2.1.1. Swadhar

This is a shelter-based scheme for the holistic rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances, launched in 2001-02. It is reported that the scheme was initiated by the Government for the rehabilitation of widows in Mathura, Vrindavan and Kashi, as these destitute women were seen concentrated near religious places in large numbers. The scheme objectives include:

- To provide primary need of shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances who are without any social and economic support;
- To provide emotional support and counselling to such women;
- To rehabilitate them socially and economically through education, awareness, skill upgradation and personality development through behavioural training etc.;
- To arrange for specific clinical, legal and other support for women/girls in need of those interventions by linking and networking with other organisations in both Government and Non-Government sector on case to case basis; and
- To provide for help line or other facilities that will be required for the support and rehabilitation to such women in distress

In terms of target groups, the Ministry of Women and Child Development in its presentation to a Parliamentary Standing Committee said that the scheme targets the following categories of distressed women: widows deserted by families; released women prisoners without family support; women survivors of natural disasters rendered homeless; trafficked women/girls rescued; women victims of terrorist/extremist violence; mentally challenged women; women with HIV-AIDS, similarly placed women. It appears from the data collected by CSWB that the most number of inmates are rescued from trafficking, are mentally challenged and riot-affected, in that order.

This scheme was envisaged differently from the Short Stay Home scheme that was already in place in that more number of women were expected to be accommodated with building

construction cost thrown into the scheme. There is also a time limit for stay in Short Stay Homes (3 years) whereas it may be more than 3 years in Swadhar. Children upto 18 are allowed to stay with their mother in Swadhar.

In 2006, the Government assured that there will be at least one Swadhar Home per district in the country^{xliv}. It has been noted that the implementing agencies were facing various problems in the implementation of the scheme: delay in release of full funds by the government, delay in obtaining survey report from revenue department, clearance certificate by Municipal Commissioner as also in the rehabilitation of destitute women due to social taboos and stigma. It was felt that involving people's representatives, local NGOs and others is important in the task of rehabilitation of women and that the salient features of this scheme should be disseminated through the print and electronic media to generate awareness amongst targeted women.

The Mid Term Appraisal of the 11th Five Year Plan recommended that the Swadhar scheme and the Short Stay Home scheme should be merged. It also recommended that adequate funds should be provided under the scheme, and utilisation be tracked through an online database. Online database of residents with photos was also recommended, to ensure genuineness of residents but with a system of limited access so that the privacy of the women be safeguarded. Further, for monitoring, it was suggested that state governments be involved in addition to third party monitoring by civil society organisations.

HLC VISIT TO SWADHAR HOME, SITAPUR, UTTAR PRADESH

This HLC visited a Swadhar Home in Sitapur, during its state visit to Uttar Pradesh. The condition of the Home was pathetic, with more than 20 women and children packed into a small space. With no infrastructure, this shelter home had toilets with doors broken and wide open while the kitchen looked filthy and most unhygienic. There were no records that we could see to verify even a simple question like how many are the occupants. This query could not be answered with any sense of clarity. Run by one NGO, clearly there was no monitoring and accountability. On the other hand, funds reportedly do not reach the organisation on time and whatever was given was woefully inadequate.

III.2.1.2. Short Stay Home for Women and Girls

This was a scheme that was launched way back in 1969 with an objective to help women and girls in difficult circumstance to rehabilitate themselves within a short period of time and to help girls and women facing crisis in their lives.

The Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO), Planning Commission, undertook the evaluation of the scheme of Short Stay Homes for women and girls in 1999 to assess if the implementation of the scheme, the functioning of the Homes and the quality of services being rendered are in accordance with the guidelines and objectives of the scheme. A stratified random sample design was adopted to select 36 Short Stay Homes, 177 beneficiaries and 105 ex-beneficiaries from 13 States for the study. The following were some of the major findings of the study:

- Some of the selected Short Stay Homes were found non-functional on the date of visit of the survey teams and had to be substituted by other Homes.
- The sample Homes were found to be spending a disproportionately large part of their annual budget on establishment. Even though the staff are not adequately compensated, nearly 50% of the total expenditure is on salaries of staff.
- The delays of longer duration were found to have been caused because of the failure of the Short Stay Homes in submitting the relevant documents.
- In some cases, the inmates comprised destitute children and old women who are not eligible for admission.
- Some Homes were found to be running as vocational training institutes for women or as hostels for working girls and women.
- The inmates were not provided with proper medical facilities by the Homes.
- The majority of the Homes, the Home Committee was not functional.

This scheme was handed over for implementation to the Central Social Welfare Board during 1999-2000. The Scheme is implemented through registered voluntary organizations having experience of handling the issues related to women and girls. The budget under the scheme varies as per the categorization of cities. Enhancement of grant @ 10% for "Maintenance of inmates" every year and 15% for "Rent" provision after completion of every three years, is provided in the budget plan of the scheme. The period of stay of inmates normally extends from 6 months to 3 years.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Empowerment of Women in its 19th Report in the fifteenth Lok Sabha studied the subject of “Victims of Sexual Abuse and Trafficking, and their Rehabilitation” (May 2013). On Swadhar and Short Stay Homes Schemes and the merger proposal, this Standing Committee Report expressed its ‘concern that various social welfare schemes/programmes are initially formulated by the Ministry and soon thereafter, without making any realistic assessment of the attainment of the objectives, the schemes/programmes are merged/renamed in the pretext of improving financial norms. This sort of mechanism becomes all the more serious when the earlier schemes have not even reached to the District level within the country. The Committee is constrained to observe that various schemes are merged to camouflage their failure. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommends while integrating the Swadhar and Short Stay Home schemes into a new scheme Swadhar Greh, the Ministry should ensure that the scheme reaches each and every district of the country and adequate funds are made available so that the intended benefits reach women and girls in distress’ (Recommendation 12, Para 2.12).

III.2.2. Ujjawala – A Scheme for Combating Trafficking

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is implementing “Ujjawala” – a Comprehensive Scheme for Prevention of Trafficking and Rescue, Rehabilitation, Reintegration and Repatriation of Victims of Trafficking for Commercial Sexual Exploitation. Since its inception in 2007, 289 projects have been sanctioned with 260 having prevention component, 142 with Rescue, 165 with Rehabilitation, 78 with Reintegration and 14 with Repatriation component^{xiv}.

The rehabilitation centres are given financial support for providing shelter and basic amenities such as food, clothing, medical care, legal aid; education in the case the victims are children, as well as for undertaking vocational training and income generation activities to provide the victims with alternate livelihood option. The scheme was launched in December 2007 with the following objectives:

- To prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation, through social mobilization and involvement of local communities, awareness generation programmes, generate public discourse through workshops/seminars and such events and any other innovative activity.

- To facilitate rescue of victims from the place of their exploitation and place them in safe custody.
- To provide rehabilitation services both immediate and long-term to the victims by providing basic amenities/needs such as shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment including counselling, legal aid and guidance and vocational training.
- To facilitate reintegration of the victims into the family and society at large.
- To facilitate repatriation of cross-border victims to their country of origin.

By February 2014, 6350 women could be provided shelter at any point of time through the facilities of this scheme^{xlvi}. Karnataka, Assam, Odisha, Manipur and Andhra Pradesh had the highest number of beneficiaries who were provided shelter under the scheme amongst various states covered in the scheme. This reflects in the funds sanctioned and utilized too except in the case of Maharashtra and Odisha.

The scheme was evaluated recently by Department of Social Work (Delhi School of Social Work), University of Delhi. As per the evaluation report, the scheme has been very well conceptualized with effective five components and ‘the scheme should definitely be continued in future as it aims at dealing with trafficking from the grassroots through prevention’^{xlvii}.

The MTA of the 11th Five Year Plan had the following recommendations to make:

- NGOs to be encouraged and sensitized to take up the scheme.
- Procedures streamlined to enable safe and quick repatriation of the victims.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Empowerment of Women in its 19th Report in the fifteenth Lok Sabha studied the subject of “Victims of Sexual Abuse and Trafficking, and their Rehabilitation” (May 2013). In the Ministry’s report to the Committee, it is stated that MWCD has supported 201 projects in 21 states, with 186 projects having a preventive component, 95 for rescue, 101 for rehabilitation, 66 projects for reintegration and 14 for repatriation. It is seen that the scheme is not spread over the entire country. The Report of the Standing Committee notes that the rehabilitation component receives the maximum support under the scheme. Further, the Committee states that ‘this is an utterly unsatisfactory situation, and a futile attempt to window dressing, especially when there is a sudden spurt in crimes against women. The Ministry have attributed the non-existence of projects under

Ujjawala in all states/UTs to reasons like inability of the State Governments to proactively identify or recommend good proposals etc. The Committee are pained to mention that none of these reasons appears to be so insurmountable as to block the pan-India coverage of such an important endeavour'. The Committee recommended that more and more NGOs may be coopted for making this scheme visible throughout the country (Recommendation 11, Para No. 2.11).

Visit of the HLC to Ujjawala Shelters in Baripada, Odisha and in Chennai, Tamil Nadu:

On the 19th of September 2014, the HLC, during its State Visit to Odisha, got an opportunity to visit and interact with the inmates and staff of an Ujjawala home in Baripada town, Mayurbhanj district, Odisha. Here, we found that the home was being run from a rundown, unventilated, dank building with the cots placed at 4 per room in very small, cramped rooms. It is obvious that the organisation was not in any position to take up any preventive work, and the inmates of the home were mostly referred to them by the local police and administration. It appeared that several were women whose parents brought them after they married against the parents' wishes and before the age of 18 years. One woman has been staying in the Ujjawala home for more than three years now. While she has indeed acquired new skills of tailoring and reported some earnings from the same, it is also clear that many of them do not have the ability to survive on their own – they do not have any valid identity cards, for instance, that will allow them to access other support systems. Education, including literacy, was also low. Further, the NGO running the home reported that at Rs.20 per day per inmate, providing adequate and nutritious food was a huge challenge. The NGO also pointed to the need for regularising the services of counsellors and the like. It was seen during the interactions that the staff are not equipped to deal with the inmates sensitively and at least one woman was mentally disturbed. It is felt that such Homes have to be made more cheerful, with more outlays if required for better infrastructure, and that the women be engaged in more activities, including life skills being imparted.

The Committee also had an opportunity to visit one such Home in Chennai on 18th December 2014, run by MCCSS. This was a cheerful place, where the inmates were being provided with education and skill-building trainings. Many were absorbed into jobs within the NGO activities including in a restaurant and enterprise run by the organisation. The NGO has also repatriated women from other countries like Bangladesh and Nepal successfully where they so wished. Children of inmates were also being provided educational opportunities and it is seen that all mainstream facilities were being accessed. The women have been able to access Aadhar cards and also maintain their bank accounts. The coordination between the authorities and the organisation was very much apparent. The high quality work in this Home was possible because the organisation put in efforts to raise more financial resources than provided for in the scheme. The organisation also pointed out that survivors of human trafficking require sustained counselling for attitudinal and behavioural change, alternative livelihood options, protection from traffickers, legal assistance etc. It is seen that larger

budgets for greater awareness generation in the preventive component, for rescue and rehabilitation (including for recreation and outings), for re-integration, repatriation etc., are an urgent need. The current cost norms do not allow for good quality support services. Further, frequent upward revision of cost norms, at least once in three years, is needed. NGOs also complain that funds are not released on time, and since they cannot manage upfront payments on occasion, it also results in under-utilisation of fund, setting off a vicious cycle. Staff salaries are found to be meagre in addition to administrative support. The HLC feels that all these components need an upward revision. It is also important, as pointed out by NGOs, to have an annual review meeting of all the scheme implementation agencies to take into account the changing scenario of trafficking and addressing the same more effectively through such schemes.

III.2.3. Financial Assistance and Support to Victims of Rape: A Scheme for Restorative Justice

This scheme, launched in 1995, seeks to provide restorative justice to victims of rape through financial assistance as well as support services such as medical aid, shelter, legal assistance, counselling, education and vocational training depending on the needs of the victim etc.

An affected woman, under the scheme will be entitled to:

- ✓ Interim financial assistance of Rs. 20,000/-
- ✓ Restorative support services of up to Rs. 50,000/-. The support services include legal, medical, psychological assistance, shelter, education or vocational training depending upon her needs.
- ✓ Final (financial) assistance of Rs. 1.30 lakh (within a period of one month from the date on which the affected woman gives her evidence in the criminal trial or within one year from the date of receipt of the application in cases where the recording of evidence has been unduly delayed for reasons beyond her control, whichever is earlier).
- ✓ Support in the form of education, wherever necessary.

Under the scheme an affected woman will be entitled to Financial Assistance and Restorative services for a maximum amount of Rs. 2.0 Lakhs in respect of cases where FIR is registered on or after the date of launching of the scheme (1/8/2011). The financial assistance can be enhanced from Rs. 2 lakhs subject to a maximum of Rs. 3 lakhs.

This scheme came about because of the Supreme Court's directions to the National Commission for Women to 'evolve a scheme so as to wipe out the tears of unfortunate victims of rape' (CRL No. 362/93). An institutional mechanism consisting of District Criminal Injuries Relief and Rehabilitation Board, State Criminal Injuries Relief and Rehabilitation Board and finally a National Board have been envisaged as the responsible authorities for implementation of the scheme. This scheme was to be implemented as a component of the Centrally Sponsored umbrella scheme on Women Empowerment during the 12th Plan. *However, it is learnt that the scheme is yet to be cleared and launched, even though Budget Statements reflect it.* In its place, a Victim Compensation Scheme is in place in 17 States and 7 Union Territories, as per Section 357A of the CrPC, where the state governments have to formulate a Victim Compensation Scheme (VCS) in consultation with the Central Government. The government claims that the Financial Assistance Scheme as formulated by the NCW on SC directions is being complied with in spirit, through other measures like the VCS^{xlviii}.

III.2.4. Ahimsa Messengers

This was a recent Scheme of the MWCD where women Panchayati Raj members, youth, NGOs etc., are drawn in to work for prevention of violence against women, dowry etc. These Messengers are also expected to help the victim file FIRs, visit police stations, seek legal aid and so on. The latest guidelines under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme also envisage a role for Ahimsa Messengers in the campaign to protect the girl child.

III.2.5. Nirbhaya Fund and One Stop Centres

The 12th Plan Working Group on Women's Agency and Empowerment had recommended the setting up of One Stop Crisis Centres on a pilot basis for providing shelter, police desk, legal, medical and counseling services to survivors of violence under one roof, integrated with a 24-hour helpline. Justice Usha Mehra Commission also reiterated this recommendation in February 2013. The HLC, during its visit to Kerala got to see one such Centre running in a Municipal Corporation General Hospital in Ernakulam City, running incidentally under the name of Nirbhaya Centre, from 2010 onwards.

One Stop Crisis Centres have been under discussion and planning for several years now (2012 onwards). A Nirbhaya Fund has been set up with a corpus of Rs. 1000 crores in the

Ministry of Finance in 2013-14 budget. In 2015-16 budget also, this has been set aside and one stop crisis centres were discussed as a proposal within this. However, what was initially announced in June 2014 as an ambitious plan of one centre (one stop centre) per district in the country, adding up to 660 Nirbhaya Centres (one each in 640 districts and 20 more in six metros) got severely trimmed down to just 36 now, and the budget has also been reportedly slashed to just 18 crore rupees.

The MWCD has recently formulated a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme for setting up of One Stop Centres, under the umbrella scheme for National Mission for Empowerment of Women including the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana. These Centres are expected to provide integrated support under one roof, for women affected by violence in the public or private spaces. Under this, a suitable and adequate accommodation within or close to a hospital premises will be prioritized. Girls under 18 years of age are also supposed to be served in these Centres, in coordination with institutions established under JJ (Care and protection of children) Act 2000 and POCSO Act 2012. Emergency response and rescue, medical assistance (referral to a hospital, pressing into service an ambulance etc.), police assistance (filing an FIR/NCR/DIR), psycho-social support and counseling, legal aid/counseling, shelter with food and clothing, as well as referral to shelter homes for prolonged stay if needed, and video conferencing facilities for facilitating police and court proceedings are all the services to be included in the One Stop Centre. The overall management of the Centre is supposed to be in the hands of a Management Committee headed by the District Collector/Deputy Commissioner of the respective district while the day to day operations of the Centres are to be entrusted to a designated Implementing Agency to be decided by the Management Committee.

STATE PROTECTIVE HOME, PUNJAB

This HLC, during its state visit to Punjab visited a Government Protective Home in Jalandhar on 15th January 2015 and was quite disturbed to see the sorry state of affairs in this institution. Here, young women undertrials, mostly connected to trafficking cases, and sent through courts are housed. There were 51 girls/young women and 7 children at the time of our visit and 23 of them were cases of elopement with men that they liked (“love marriage cases”), while some were victims of trafficking, from distant Nepal, West Bengal and Bihar, some of whom ended up in sex trade, while yet others ran away from imprisoned domestic work. Some were seen to have been kept in the Home for more than 3 years as the cases drag on. These women are not being provided with any skill training or educational opportunities and do not even have any recreational facilities. There are no books to read, and in the middle

of winter, it was seen that there is no hot water to bathe. Only one thousand rupees per person per month is budgeting for food and clothing needs of the inmates. Spiritual Counselling is however provided as though the matter is not of justice but of morality. The HLC came across inmates who are mentally disturbed and there was nothing in the Home that was encouraging, that would provide a brighter future to the inmates. Incidentally, in April 2015, the Punjab and Haryana High Court in a judgement pronounced that girls who had performed marriage without parental consent cannot be confined to protection homes against their wishes, and that the girls' individual liberties were being abused and curtailed. The one judge Bench said that 'they were languishing in protection homes for the sole offence of being in conflict with the societal norms mandating matrimony only with parental consent'^{xlix}.

III.2.6. To sum up on the Schemes meant to address VAW:-

The schemes that address violence against women can be broadly categorized under the theme of "Prevention of Violence Against Women" and "Provision of Support Services to Women Survivors".

While prevention of violence requires numerous immediate, medium and long term interventions including large scale campaigns to sensitise and educate men and women on VAW, support services to women in distress is provided today mainly through the Swadhar Greh scheme and the Ujjwala scheme in the case of trafficking. At the state level, variants of Short Stay Home scheme exist.

Most schemes are very much dependent on putting up of proposals by civil society groups. These are not necessarily need-based and there are no plans apparent to scale up schemes to all blocks or districts, except for the recent announcements initially with the new NDA government towards setting up Nirbhaya Centres in all districts of the country, which was subsequently scaled down drastically in FY 2015-16.

This then means very small outreach, compared to the need. It is also seen that some schemes have never taken off, despite a dire need for such schemes (this includes the proposed helpline, for example; or work with adolescent boys in the form of Saksham scheme).

Like in the case of other aspects related to women's empowerment, schemes here undergo frequent changes. There are also not enough schemes or campaigns to prevent violence; similarly, not enough work apparent in restorative justice and rehabilitation, especially compared to the magnitude of the problem. There are many implementation- and cost-norms-related problems for the implementing organizations. -This also includes nutritious food

supply to the inmates of shelter homes which is not possible with the current cost norms. In many cases, it is seen that support services schemes are run without the involvement of various local organizations, including community based women's organisations. Most importantly, convergence and coordination are glaringly lacking.

The Committee did not come across any micro-studies that have noted any impact of these schemes in preventing violence or trafficking. There are only analyses and reports available on shortcomings in some schemes (both their design and implementation) and what needs to improve.

III.2.7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

The HLC would like to present glimpses of various good practices that the Committee came across, especially during field visits in various states. These good practices fall in the realm of government interventions, civil society interventions as well as Public Private Partnerships, covering prevention, protection/rescue and rehabilitation, relief and restorative justice.

III.2.7.1. Good Practices captured during the HLC State Visits¹

III.2.7.1.a. PREVENTION: In the immediate and medium term, there are two striking examples that the HLC came across, worth mentioning here. In Punjab, in Jalandhar city, a police force by the name of WASPS (Women Armed Special Protection Squad) of 30 women constables, armed and with motorcycles equipped with wireless sets, on a patrol duty from morning till evening around schools, colleges and areas where women are supposed to be more in workplaces etc. The vehicles of these police personnel have a helpline flashed prominently. This experiment has been underway for around an year now, and its impact in terms of bringing down incidents of VAW is not yet documented – however, it is believed that providing such an overt patrolling squad could indeed prove to be a deterrent, especially if the patrolling is along the right routes and places. Having a women's force for this job might encourage women survivors of violence to feel more comfortable about approaching them for help rather than the regular male police force.

A more interesting and empowering experience which is already showing results is underway in Kerala, where special initiatives around “women friendly Grama Panchayat”, centred

around a detailed crime-mapping exercise was undertaken in Panchayats like Mararikulam in Allapuzha district. Here, in 2012, the Panchayat took up an elaborate process to reach out to all the 15,600 families in the Panchayat to first do some “crime-mapping”, facilitated by Kudumbashree. Here, women and girls were encouraged to step forward to share their experiences of violence including so-called “eve-teasing” and safe and unsafe places of the panchayat were sought to be mapped out. The mapping exercise pointed out that both public and private spaces were unsafe for women, and most women experienced abuse before the age of 18 years. Just the process of mapping out the “red spots” (locations with high abuse and assault reported) started acting as a deterrent, according to the local men and women. It was also empowering for the women who participated in the survey, and the processes were run sensitively to ensure that there was no backlash after such reportage. A state level workshop with many experts from outside the Panchayat was organized as a follow up to the survey to discuss the findings. Right after the survey, 40% of the Panchayat’s budget was allocated to women and child development. Street lighting in the panchayat with automatic lighting system was ensured everywhere. 2400 girls were given martial arts training. Separate halls were built for women in the panchayat, to come and present their complaints and discuss their issues. Toilets were built including in all schools. Special educators and counsellors were appointed for all schools to interact with both boys and girls and take up gender sensitization. Twelve different life skills started to be imparted to all teenagers in the panchayat to engage them in productive and constructive activities. A Gender Resource Centre was set up in the Panchayat with a special reference library and a Jagrutha Samiti set up (a sub-committee within the Panchayat to deal specifically with issues of abuse and violence against women which not only has women gram sabha members, elected members but also ASHA, ANM and Anganwadi workers in addition to some members drawn from the local medical college and police personnel). The Jagrutha Samiti has regular meetings and has a small budget for the same. This Samiti has the mandate of providing physical, financial and psychological support to women in difficult circumstances. A legal aid cell has been set up apart from counseling, yoga and other support for women. Special efforts were put in to treat alcoholics in de-addiction centres. Special skill building programmes and enterprise support programmes were set up for women who were interested in the same. A separate helpline has been announced and flashed, with the helpline calls handled by senior members of the panchayat. Prominent boards have been set up in all the areas marked red during the crime-mapping exercise announcing that the area is under surveillance by the Jagrutha Samiti. While a systematic survey is yet to be taken up as a follow up to all the efforts that

succeeded the 2012 crime mapping effort, all anecdotal evidence points to the fact that such processes themselves in addition to the numerous immediate, medium and long term interventions put into place in this Panchayat have been a major deterrent in terms of violence against women. It is apparent that such grassroots action is needed in all Panchayats of the country.

III.2.7.1.b. HELP & RESCUE: One of the better examples of professional and reliable counseling and rescue service was in Gujarat, through the *Abhayam Helpline* in a public private partnership between the state government and GVK Foundation, as part of the Emergency Management and Research Institute (EMRI). Here, back-end state of the art technology (hardware as well as software) deployed in a central helpline centre, supported by dedicated rescue vans with one woman counsellor and one woman police constable for each van. The effort is a PPP with the women and child welfare department as well as the home department of the Government of Gujarat involved along with a private entity. The standard operating protocols were developed by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and the software that supports the calls and the information-dissemination/counselling/rescue support on this helpline throws up data analytics that are very useful for more focused interventions including prevention in future. It is seen that the technology at the front end is such that women in distress are unlikely to have their call unanswered. The deployment of professionally trained and properly oriented counsellors to receive the calls is also an important aspect to note, in a situation where 'counselling' often ends up being an effort at reconciliation irrespective of the real need and desire of the woman in question. After piloting this in two districts quite successfully, the government of Gujarat is now planning to scale this up to all the districts of the state. What is also noteworthy is the process of follow up that is undertaken with a woman in distress even after an immediate resolution with her case is found. The Helpline also works with the help of a well-mapped out resource directory in terms of legal aid, short stay homes, rehabilitation centres and so on. The state level Gender Resource Centre is also part of the effort, especially where certain particularly complicated cases emerge. Where needed, the State Women's Commission has also been known to have stepped in.

III.2.7.1.c. PROTECTION, REHABILITATION & RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: While it is not always the case, some states have managed to put into place a system of updated resource directories being in place with all agencies concerned with protection, rehabilitation and

restorative justice, whether it is posters put up in police stations or at Helpline Desks. A good model of a one-stop crisis centre, incidentally named as Nirbhaya much before the December 2012 brutal gangrape incident took place in Delhi, was seen in Ernakulam city in Kerala attached to the Municipal General Hospital. Here, two trained counsellors work with survivors walking up to them directly as well as referrals from the OPD doctors in the hospital who have been trained to watch out for victims of violence. This Centre also works in close coordination with the police department.

In many cases, starting from Nari Adalats at the grassroots level to State Women's Commission, there are several avenues for redressal available for women in distress and survivors of violence. In states like Kerala, separate Protection Officers have been appointed under PWDVA. The key here seems to be coordination between agencies, and preceding that, adequate capacity building of all service providers, that too in feminist frameworks. Needless to say, adequate publicity and awareness generation amongst women in general is very critical for these services to be utilized effectively. Where such orientation is not present, it is seen very often, the efforts of various redressal and justice mechanisms are oriented towards reconciliation between the survivor and her family and somehow holding the family as a unit together. It is also seen that shelter homes as well as rehabilitation efforts need adequate financial and human resources allocated which is not the case with various schemes right now. Where NGOs like MCSSS in Chennai have managed to mobilise additional resources to supplement scheme outlays, so that women survivors can live in cheerful conditions, not crowded in, with proper hygiene and comfortable living conditions maintained, in addition to good food and clothing provided, the women find quicker ways of healing and moving on with their lives. The Ujjawala home visited in Chennai is also an example where each woman inmate was allowed various opportunities at higher education, skill building and employment. Further, financial inclusion and citizenship identities were secured for these women to ensure faster self reliance. It was also seen that in Trivandrum, some of the shelter homes were physically kept right under the nose of the concerned departments which also ensured proper running of the homes. Scheme outlays being improved dramatically, with convergence actively brought about by top officials of the district and state administration are key to these components in a survivors' journey to justice.

III.2.7.2. GENERAL GOOD PRACTICES TO BE REPLICATED

The HLC recommends that a comprehensive national survey on VAW be conducted annually and the report put out in the public domain – such a survey should capture the nature and extent of prevalence of various forms of violence against women, across different geographical regions/states and with different groups of women. This would not only help in monitoring the efficacy of interventions but also promote more effective, need-based interventions. Such a survey would also assist the government to plan prevention activities better, including in the medium and long term.

III.2.7.2.a. PREVENTION: Every scheme of the MWCD, whatever its broad objective might be (economic, health and nutrition, education etc.), should have preventive aspects related to VAW built in. In the immediate term, this would happen if the frontline workers in all schemes are first sensitized to gender issues, made aware about laws that uphold women's rights and are provided with materials (like posters, booklets on laws and manuals) that they can make use of when working with women.

Apart from MWCD schemes, all other “women-centric” schemes of other ministries and departments should also adopt this approach of including prevention of VAW component into the scheme, whatever else the primary objective of the scheme.

Involvement of PRI and municipal local bodies, especially of their women elected representatives, in addition to involvement of women's SHGs should be enhanced in all schemes, after including a preventive component therein. These local bodies should be given the task of monitoring for violations of women's legal rights and alerting various relevant bodies for addressal of the same.

Additionally, MWCD should start a massive campaign using all possible media, to creatively and innovatively reach out to the general public (men, women, boys and girls) on the issue of VAW, and to highlight the laws against VAW. Schools and colleges should be roped in into such a campaign.

Sensitisation of police and local administration is an integral part of not just restorative justice, rescue and rehabilitation processes but even prevention.

SHE Teams of Telangana

In October 2014, Telangana state government launched SHE teams to curb eve teasing and to provide safety and security to women in public spaces, to facilitate women's mobility. Each SHE team has one Sub Inspector, one ASI or Head Constable, 2 PCs and 1 WPC. These teams use civil clothes, and use discreet cameras in their work. Hot spots like bus stops, railway stations, colleges, women's hostels, shopping malls, parks and cinema theatres are covered by these teams where they identify offenders and record eve teasing instances for producing as evidence in courts. Uptil February 2015, more than 100 offenders were caught, 45 Minors counselled, 46 accused were produced in court and 38 had fines imposed on them. The government is now preparing enact an Anti-Eve Teasing Act.

Source: Presentation in National Thematic Workshop on Best Practices for Women and Child Development by Principal Secretary, Dept of Women Development & Child Welfare, Government of Telangana during Beti Bachao Beti Padhao launch, Panipat, January 20th and 21st, 2015

III.2.7.2.b. SUPPORT SERVICES: One of the important things to be noted here is that it is not a welfare or charity approach that is to be taken when it comes to provision of support services to women in distress. As per the General Recommendation 24 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), "State parties should ensure that adequate protection and health services, including trauma treatment and counseling, are provided for women in especially difficult circumstances".

Several analyses of schemes that provide support services (Short Stay Homes, Swadhar, Swadhar Greh, Ujjawala etc.) pointed out the severe shortage of such Shelters all over the country. It is imperative that such Shelters (physical infrastructure with basic human resources for running the Shelters) are set up immediately all over the country, with at least one Shelter in each district and additionally, a Shelter each at least in select blocks based on needs assessment. Building of such shelters can be made a priority through convergence with NREGS and other schemes.

A resource directory should be built for rescue and rehabilitation of women in difficult circumstances and the same should be publicized widely, and kept available in strategic locations after mapping upwards from block level all over the country.

Oversight and monitoring mechanisms at all levels, including by involving local communities, elected women representatives, women's SHGs etc., are important to be set up. This is important for preventive aspects of this work too.

Admission norms should be hassle-free/prompt, flexible and broad enough that no single needy woman is kept out of such Shelters. This includes re-admission of a woman into a Home. Apart from district level committees as set up in some ongoing schemes, other credible organizations and even individuals should be empanelled for recommending admission into such Shelters. There should be proactive, wide publicisation of the facilities available. All cases that come to police stations for lodging a complaint, and all cases that have been admitted to a hospital with regard to violence perpetrated against a woman should be proactively informed that such women could make use of the Shelter. There should not be any norms of having a minimum number of inmates for any of these Shelters, since it may not always be the case that such a minimum number of victims seek shelter. Such a norm should not prevent the running of these Homes nor encourage dishonesty in the institutions running such a Shelter out of the pressure to adhere to guidelines. Similarly, no time period should be imposed for the inmate to leave the Home and this should be based on needs assessment taken up within one week of any new inmate's admission. Women with children should also be allowed and in case there are adolescent boys with them, special provision for the stay of such boys be made either in this shelter or through an associated shelter including Juvenile Homes. A variety of services have to be provisioned for, given that such Shelters might house women with different needs and vulnerabilities (disabled, HIV-AIDS affected, women going through severe trauma, women needing medical support etc.). Physical infrastructure should also be adequately planned for such needs. The infrastructure should be bright and cheerful and should not be of a quality that further distresses the survivors of violence. There should be libraries provided, and interactions with courageous women survivors and others to draw motivation and inspiration from.

Rehabilitation effort might require a more long-term intervention and where needed, planning should be for more than three years. Inclusion of women admitted into the Shelters into the local SHG is recommended. Wherever interest and opportunity exists, further/higher education opportunities for inmates should be explored. They should have the freedom to integrate themselves with the world outside the shelter. Similarly such inclusion should be facilitated in the location that the woman returns to, as part of rehabilitation. NREGS job card should be made in her name for at least unskilled work to be taken up, even as skill-building through the Home takes place. Similarly, RSBY insurance cover should be made available to every inmate admitted into such Shelters/Homes. Further, special funds might have to be set

aside, or convergence ensured with other schemes, for women to start their own enterprises when they leave the Shelter.

The Shelter should be able to tie up with legal aid services wherever legal recourse is taken up for/by the victim. Counseling as well as medical care should be an integral part of the services provided by the Home (they are indeed included in the allocations for shelters right now). Staff recruitment and costing guidelines should have enough flexibility to include realities across different regions of India (urban vs rural, for instance). Budgets should be able to meet both practical and strategic needs of inmates. Staff capacity building is an important component to be budgeted for. At present, all of these are found to be woefully inadequate, across schemes.

The most important issue for effective work through such Shelter Services in empowering women in distress would be by issuance of guidelines to all relevant departments and authorities, to ensure convergence. It is not enough to expect NGOs running such Shelter services to bring about convergence in the absence of cooperation from relevant departments and ministries.

The state is also responsible for ensuring justice for the survivor of violence, and to that extent, any support systems after an incident of violence occurs, should also be geared towards delivering justice.

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SUPPORT SERVICES

Working from a gender analysis perspective	Advocacy and Support
Safety, Security and Human Dignity	Specialist Services
Diversity and Fair Access	Empowerment
Participation and Consultation	Confidentiality
Coordinated Response	Governance and Accountability
Holding Perpetrators Accountable	Challenging Tolerance

Source: Council of Europe (2008), reproduced from "Shelter Services for Women: Identifying Critical Gender Concerns", UN Women, 2012

III.3. DEEP-SEATED SOCIO-CULTURAL DISCRIMINATION:

GIRL CHILD PROTECTION SCHEMES

While declining sex ratio (especially Child Sex Ratio) and son preference are reflections of very deep-seated socio-cultural discrimination against girls, and therefore, require multi-pronged approaches in dealing with the issues involved, there have been a few schemes that attempted to address the issue and ensure 'girl child protection'.

III.3.1. SCHEMES TO DEAL WITH SON PREFERENCE & GIRL CHILD DISCRIMINATION

Dhanalakshmi, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	This is a conditional cash transfer scheme for the girl-child with insurance cover. Scheme launched in 2008 and running on a pilot basis in 11 blocks of 7 states (Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh). The scheme is aimed at eliminating discrimination against girl child. Cash transfer is provided to the family of the girl child (preferably the mother), on fulfilling certain conditions for the girl child – viz., birth and registration of the girl child, immunization, enrolment to school and retention in school. An allocation of Rs. 10 crores for 2013-14 has been made, with an actual spending of 2.57 crores, with Budget 2014-15 not having the scheme in the revised estimate after an initial allocation of 5 crores. <i>This scheme no longer exists with the Centre feeling that it is not needed, given that several state level schemes are running.</i>
Girl Child Specific District Plan of Action, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	This intervention has emerged with an understanding that an integrated approach focusing on the Girl Child is needed. Entry point, it was thought, could be through focus on low CSR and high Child Marriage Districts and Blocks through launch of Girl Child Specific District Plan of Action as a pilot in about 100 non-SABLA Districts. Action Plan from the perspective of advancing rights of the Girl Child with measurable outcomes on increased CSR and age at marriage could be developed through partnership between civil society organisations and the local administrative machinery. The 2015-16 budget makes no allocation for this scheme. Several elements have been morphed into a new scheme called Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign.
SABLA, <i>Ministry of Women and Child Development</i>	The scheme was launched in 2010. The scheme is being implemented in 205 districts across the country on pilot basis. This is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for adolescent girls from 11 to 18 Years. It is being implemented using the platform of Integrated Child Development Services Scheme. The scheme has two major components namely

	<p>nutrition and non-nutrition component. Nutrition is being given in the form of Take Home Ration or Hot Cooked Meal for 11 to 14 years out of school girls and 14 to 18 years to All AGs, out of school and in school girls. In the Non Nutrition component, the out of school Adolescent Girls 11 to 18 years are being provided IFA supplementation, Health check-up and Referral services, Nutrition and Health Education, Counseling and guidance on family welfare, Adolescent Reproductive Sexual Health (ARSH), child care practices and Life Skill Education and vocational training. In 2015-16, funding for this scheme was downsized in the MWCD drastically and the budgetary notes indicate that funds will come from Nirbhaya Fund kept with the Ministry of Finance.</p>
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III.3.2. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme: After the NDA government came to power in 2014, a new scheme called Beti Bachao Beti Padhao was launched, keeping the commitment made in the ruling party's election manifesto. As per Budget 2015-16 of Government of India, "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign initiative of Government aims to address the issue of declining in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) through a mass campaign across the country and focussed intervention and multi sectoral action in 100 selected districts low on CSR. The overall Goal of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme is to celebrate the birth of Girl Child and enable her education. The specific objectives of the Scheme are (i) prevent gender biased sex-selective elimination (ii) ensure survival (iii) protection of the girl child and (iv) to ensure education and participation of the girl child. BBBP programme is a joint initiative of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Development. The District collectors/Deputy Commissioners are the nodal officers at the district level for implementation of the scheme". The overall goal of the new initiative is to improve the child sex ratio in the chosen 100 gender-critical districts, and 97 crore rupees have been allocated for the same.

The 12th Five Year Plan's Steering Group on Women's Agency and Child Rights discusses the issue of the Girl Child and makes four concrete recommendations to address the underlying, root causes (4.4.2.6). These are: (i) Protection and advancement of rights of the Girl Child; (ii) Gender equality; (iii) Empowerment and enhancement of Self Esteem; and (iv) Institutional arrangements. A Girl Child Specific District Plan of Action, with an integrated approach was proposed with a focus on low CSR districts and high child marriage districts. This was also proposed for 100 non-Sabla districts. Decentralised planning processes with involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions, partnerships with civil society

organizations and local administrative system were mooted, with 100 crores per annum (one crore per district) and 500 crore rupees for the entire 12th Plan period.

Before the new scheme of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao was launched, in the 12th Plan document, it can be seen that elements of this new scheme (BBBP) are proposed, to deal with the issue of valuing the girl child (20.141. behavior change communication under the health interventions; 20.185 health research on low child sex ratio and discrimination against the girl child as a national health priority; 23.75. Developing a gender sensitive educational system including providing a safe and secure environment for the girl child under SSA/KGBV, RTE Act etc.; 23.131. focused interventions to improve the Child Sex Ratio within an overall National Strategy for Care and Protection of the Girl Child, in addition to a specific section on 'ending discrimination against the girl child' which makes reference to the aforementioned Girl Child Specific District Plan of Action with Task Forces, and specific decentralized plans including tying up with Panchayat Raj agencies).

Additionally, other proposals included: Increasing a girl child's years in schools, mainly through residential hostels, on proper implementation of child marriage and dowry prohibition laws through larger IEC messages and promotion of positive role models, tackling son preference by ensuring enforcement of relevant laws like Hindu Succession Amendment Act and the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents Act 2007 (as well as provide preferential access to parents of girls to resources such as bank loan, house allotment), stringent implementation of PCPNDT Act, community protection models and vigilance groups, evolving a Girl Development Index, investing in vocational training and life skills and so on.

While this may be so, the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Andolan seems to have put into place much more tangible and monitorable targets as part of the scheme: improving the sex ratio at birth by 10 points annually; reducing gender differentials in Under Five Child Mortality Rate by half by 2017, improving the nutritional status of girls by reducing number of underweight and anaemic girls under 5 years of age, ensuring universalization of ICDS, monitoring girls' attendance and equal care using joint ICDS-NRHM Mother Child Protection Cards, increasing girls' enrolment in secondary education to 79% by 2017, providing girls' toilets in all schools in the chosen districts by 2017, protecting girl children through implementation of POCSO Act 2012 and training elected representatives and grassroots functionaries as

Community Champions to mobilise communities to improve CSR and promote girls' education.

The BBBP scheme spells out its strategies clearly too: Evolving a sustained social mobilization and communication campaign, positioning improvement in the CSR as a lead indicator for good governance, focusing on gender critical districts and cities for accelerated impact, mobilizing and empowering frontline worker teams (Ahimsa Messengers), developing capacities of local bodies to create community support for making panchayats and urban wards girl child friendly, engendering development and essential services, and enabling inter-ministerial and inter-institutional convergence.

The Beti Bachao Beti Padhao also lays stress on convergence and coordination, which has been a serious lacuna hitherto. Further, there is a social audit mechanism proposed, to be taken up by civil society groups. The scheme as has been evolved so far sounds quite promising and the government has to commit all the resources required to show that it means serious business.

While this is a more comprehensive approach towards tackling son preference and girl child discrimination, the usual response from the state has been to run girl child protection schemes, which usually involve conditional cash transfers to deal with individual girl children, case by case. While Dhanalakshmi used to be the MWCD's scheme, there are many state-level variations of Girl Child Protection Schemes. We now turn our attention to such schemes and their impact.

III.3.3. DHANALAKSHMI: CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER FOR GIRL CHILDREN

This scheme was launched in March 2008 with the following objectives:

- Providing a set of staggered financial incentives for families to encourage them to retain the girl child and educate her.
- Changing the attitudinal mindset of the family towards the girl, by looking upon the girl as an asset rather than a liability, since her very existence has led to cash inflow to the family.

- Cash transfers are made under the Scheme to the family of the girl child (preferably the mother) on fulfilling the following conditions:
 - Birth registration of the girl child
 - Progress of immunization
 - Full immunization
 - Enrolment in school and retention in school.

“Dhanalakshmi” was created to be implemented in 11 Blocks across seven States, by the State Governments through the District Authorities. The number of beneficiaries in 11 identified blocks were 16,799 against the target of 131,127 in 2010-11 and nil against the target of 135,061 in 2011-12. In 2012-13, the reported target was 161,062 and the achievement was only 61,225 beneficiaries. The utilization of Dhanalakshmi scheme presents a very discouraging picture (2009-10: BE 10 crores and Actual Expenditure: 5 crore rupees; 2010-11: BE 10 crores and Actual: 1.83 crore rupees; 2011-12: BE 10 crores and Actual: 0.00 crores).

It was reported by the MWCD that no proposals have been received from some states, and some other states had more attractive schemes in terms of their features than Dhanalakshmi, as the justification in this regard.

The 11th FYP’s Mid Term Appraisal recommended that the Scheme should be reviewed and revised to make it worthwhile and less cumbersome. It asked for reduction in conditions and installments and ensure adequate infrastructure for fulfillment and disbursement. The MTA also recommended that the scheme’s geographical coverage be expanded to make it viable, and of interest to state.

A Parliamentary Standing Committee noted that the scheme failed to take off successfully even on a pilot basis in 11 states and pointed out that a study of the on-going schemes with the same objective of the state governments as well as other Ministries should have been taken up before launching this scheme^{li}.

“Inputs from the schemes administered by other Ministries and State Governments should have been taken and a way of convergence of such schemes could have been found out. This would have helped in strengthening the on-going schemes for welfare of the girl child and also avoided over-lapping and duplication. The Committee, therefore, recommends to the

Ministry to expedite the evaluation of the scheme with special emphasis on the convergence of schemes with similar objectives and also look into the other problem-areas encountered in its implementation”, said this Report.

A study taken up for the Planning Commission on various Girl Child schemes, at the Centre as well as the states, had the following main findings^{lii}:

Year-wise coverage/number of beneficiaries in different Girl Child Schemes

Name of the Scheme	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
Dhanalakshmi, Govt of India	-	79,555	42,077
Bhagyalakshmi, Govt of Karnataka	123,789	297,764	144,749
Ladli Lakshmi, Govt of Madhya Pradesh	214,134	209,848	40,854
Girl Child Protection, Govt of Andhra Pradesh	96,487	72,046	70,302
Ladli, Govt of Delhi	-	135,645	140,006
Balika Samridhi Yojana, Govt of Gujarat	26,031	30,263	132,684
Balika Samridhi Yojana, Govt of Himachal	7,955	13,031	17,038
Ladli, Govt of Haryana	49,558	72,624	105,113
Balri Rakshak Yojana, Govt of Punjab	62	53	62
Mukhya Mantri Kanya Suraksha Yojana, Govt of Bihar	472,220 since inception		
Kunwarbainu Mameru, Govt of Gujarat	8,762	6,775	7,628
Mukhya Mantri Kanyadan Yojana, Govt of MP	32,621	43,297	19,579
Mukhya Mantri Kanya Vivah Yojana, Govt of Bihar	157,256 since inception		
Indira Gandhi Balika Suraksha Yojana, Govt of Himachal	152	318	233

Source: *TV Sekher (2012): Ladlis and Lakshmis – financial incentive schemes for the girl child. Economic and Political Weekly, April 28, 2012. Vol. XLVII No. 17 Review of Women's Studies. Pp. 58-65*

This study found that ‘clearly, the intention behind some of the schemes is also to ensure smaller families and promote family planning alongside ensuring the birth of girls’. It is also seen that there are various conditions and eligibility criteria for inclusion in the scheme and drawing benefits, which involves a lot of paperwork. While the target groups are the poorest (BPL households) in most of the schemes, the CSR trends show that it is adverse amongst the educated and the affluent, which raises questions on targeting in these girl child schemes. It is felt that the incentives which will accrue after the daughter attains 18 years of age may not outweigh the perceived disadvantage of having a girl child. Meanwhile, apart from targeting issues, and problems for the beneficiary families as described above, there seem to be several implementation problems for the government too: lack of coordination from other

departments, or problems with financial agencies etc. are examples here. It is seen that involvement of Panchayats, NGOs and women's groups is very limited. Further, proper monitoring mechanisms are missing in many of these schemes, as are procedures for addressing grievances. Some of the components were indirectly encouraging dowry practice, with goods being given away at the time of marriage. It is felt that there is a need to minimize the number of cash transactions (some corruption has also been documented).

A closer look at the Bhagyalakshmi scheme in Karnataka would also be useful here since it is a flagship programme for the state government in Karnataka and has the largest coverage of beneficiaries for any such state level scheme. The stated objectives of this Scheme are: to correct declining sex ratio and give moral courage to BPL families and also to eradicate social evils such as child labour, female foeticide, child marriage, child trafficking and to promote the overall development of the girl child in the fields of health, education, nutrition, care etc. This was launched during 2006-07 as an umbrella programme for child development, for providing financial assistance of Rs.10,000 which will be deposited with the selected financial partner in the name of the girl child born in the BPL family and the maturity value will be given at the age of 18 years along with accrued interest. The scheme was partially modified during August 2008. The revised scheme is applicable to all children born on or after 01/08/2008. The features of modified scheme are (i) An amount of Rs.19,300 in the name of the first beneficiary of family and an amount of Rs.18,350 in the name of the second beneficiary of the same family will be deposited. On attaining 18 years of age, an amount of Rs.1,00,097 and Rs.1,00,052 together with interest accrued will be made available to the first and second beneficiary respectively. (ii) The beneficiary who attains 15 years of age and willing to continue further studies after passing SSLC has the option of mortgaging the bond issued by the selected partner financial institution in recognized banks to avail of a loan of upto Rs.50,000. The benefit under the scheme is limited to two girls in each BPL family. Benefits will be given to about 2.00 lakh girl children every year (Economic Survey, Government of Karnataka, 2010).

A study taken up by ISEC in Bangalore on 'improving coordination in the delivery of social security benefits in Karnataka' covered Bhagyalakshmi scheme also^{liii}. Data from sample households covered experience in accessing social security schemes, and transaction costs (amount, and time) incurred in gaining access (this included accessing application, support documents and submission). It is seen that information collected through application forms,

for instance, has information fields that are not used for taking sanctioning decision. It has been seen that online submission of applications in a common portal means that applications cannot be submitted manually at the village level. Travel and other costs involved were reported, in addition to delays in implementation given that departments rely on external agencies for computerization. There are also issues that crop up due to mistakes made by these external agencies, for example. When it comes to support documents asked for, it was noted that district level variations exist. This study also found that about 320 rupees on an average is spent by the beneficiary households on arranging for support documents.

A CAG report noted that the scheme has too many terms and conditions which are not capable of being tracked on a continuous basis. Because of this, the scheme's implementation is bound to have lots of lacunae such as delays and deficiencies in processing applications and inclusion of ineligible beneficiaries. It also pointed out due to lack of adequate awareness programmes, the scheme is difficult to comprehend for the parents/beneficiaries, and that this would lead to red tapism^{iv}.

However, a study taken up in Dharwad district in Karnataka on Bhagyalakshmi scheme shows that a majority of beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the programme (76.7%). 80% of the respondents felt that the scheme was helpful^{iv}.

It has been proposed in the case of the Bhagyalakshmi scheme that a Child Tracking System be developed to know the status of the beneficiaries with regard to health, education, migration from one place to another and other benefits availed from other departments in different schemes and so on. This could also be used to know the status of payouts to the beneficiaries from time to time and downloadable from the centre and taluk level database by authorized personnel of Department of Women & Child Development and other concerned departments. Such a system would in fact be useful in identified districts when it comes to girl child protection, across the country and not just within a scheme or two.

The other schemes worth making a mention of in the context of girl child protection at the state level, are Tamil Nadu's Girl Child Protection Scheme and earlier to that, the Cradle Baby Scheme to address female infanticide. Here, in Dharmapuri district, a special behavioural change campaign was used to create awareness mainly through street plays. The TN Girl Child Protection scheme was the forerunner for many other such schemes across the country – introduced in 1992, the scheme underwent a restructuring in 2001 with more

financial assistance given to girl children. In 14 years, Rs. 865.39 crores has been incurred on this scheme, with 5.36 lakh girl children covered.

It is seen through various rounds of Vital Events Surveys which are unique to Tamil Nadu covering a sample of about 9 million individuals with information on male and female live births and infant deaths collected, that between 1996 and 2003, the incidence of “daughter elimination” which was recorded to be widely prevalent in various districts, declined sharply from a deficit of about 4485 girls every year between 1996 and 1999 to about 2000 in 2003, a decline of 46% between the two periods^{lvi}. In this scheme, after a revision in the norms, which included the inclusion of monthly payments of small amounts from the interest accruing from bonds, it was seen that enrolment in the scheme increased.

While the GCPS targets families below the poverty line, framing daughter elimination as a problem amongst the poor is inappropriate - it is seen through regression analysis of village level data from Salem district that the probability of daughter elimination is not affected by income, wealth, education and caste. Analysts have also pointed out that given the sterilization condition, families with a strong son preference who have only daughters are unlikely to be attracted to the scheme. Importantly, however, it was seen that very few beneficiaries were from the districts with high daughter elimination. There was a very weak correlation between the extent of daughter deficit in 1996-99 and the number of GCPS beneficiaries, raising questions on non-targeting towards districts with a high prevalence of daughter elimination^{lvii}. While field studies have confirmed the durability of the reduction in the daughter elimination phenomenon, given the poor targeting of the scheme, it does not explain the decline (in daughter elimination).

Tamil Nadu government also runs five different “Marriage Assistance Schemes” for daughters of poor parents, for inter-caste marriages, for orphan girls’ marriages, for poor widows’ daughters’ marriages and for widow remarriage assistance. In this scheme, gold and cash support is given in “assistance”. While this scheme does not question one of the reasons a girl child is seen as a burden on a family (costs incurred during the wedding, even if not linked to dowry), by incentivizing greater support to graduates and diploma holders compared to non-graduates, the government claims to have encouraged greater female literacy and education. Data presented by the Tamil Nadu government during this HLC’s state visit showed that over the years, more graduates/diploma holders are getting supported in this scheme, while non-graduates’ number is declining. On an average, more than 500

crore rupees are being spent on these schemes by the state government, covering more than one lakh beneficiaries each year^{lviii}.

A special mention has to be made of “Cradle Babies” while discussing these schemes^{lix}. Women’s rights activists have been pointing out that schemes like the Cradle Baby Scheme in Tamil Nadu and now in other states like Telangana only reinforce gender-based discrimination against girl children. While such schemes ostensibly provide a solution to female infanticide or girl baby trafficking as has happened in undivided Andhra Pradesh, it is seen that very often, there is no information and follow up about the welfare of the babies put into the cradles. In Tamil Nadu, after the launch of the scheme in 1992, till October 2014, 4000 children have been received, with 812 boys and 3788 girls. These babies are then put up for adoption through 15 licensed adoption agencies. A report indicates that IMR amongst cradle babies has been found to be five times higher than the state average.

Foreign adoptions were seen to be the reason for girl baby trafficking amongst the lambada community in Telangana. In a cradle baby scheme being run in Telangana, girl baby sales being conducted from a government-run home in Nalgonda district was exposed by a national TV channel’s sting operation recently. Here, in the Sishu Gruha, abandoned babies are up for sale, in a well-established network that incidentally had shown, that a woman Deputy Sarpanch in a village was the main broker. In anecdotal reports from the field, NGO Gramya Resource Centre for Women reported that even anganwadi workers have acted as brokers in some cases. The danger of the frontline government machinery getting into these girl baby trafficking rackets is that they can also manipulate records to ensure that no pregnancy or girl baby birth is even on the records.

Coming to another state and another such scheme, a recent study from Haryana which used a mixed methods approach for evaluating conditional cash transfer schemes to improve girl children’s status, noted the following, based on a survey of 200 randomly selected respondents from one block^{lx}:

The cohort analysis showed that while there has been an improvement in the indicators studied, these were similar to those seen among the control groups. Qualitative analysis identified a “conspiracy of silence” - an underplaying of the pervasiveness of the problem coupled with a passive implementation of the program and a clash between political culture of giving subsidies and a bureaucratic approach that imposed many conditionalities and documentary needs for availing of benefits.

This study concluded that the apparent lack of impact on the societal mindset calls for a revision in the current approach of addressing a social issue by a purely conditional cash transfer program.

One more recent research effort at evaluating the impact of such schemes on girls' education and on marriage by studying Apni Beti Apna Dhan (ABAD) scheme in Haryana attempted to measure three main outcomes: enhanced education attainment, delayed marriage and enhanced value^{ixi}. The study found that girls in ABAD program are more likely to stay in school and this was true for girls in elder as well as younger cohorts in the study. The proportion of girls who dropped out of school and those who had never been to school was higher among non-beneficiary girls in comparison to beneficiary girls. However, it was also seen that irrespective of beneficiary status, a higher proportion of male siblings, born with 4-6 years of the girls, go to private schools than government schools in the study districts.

Meanwhile, the study also found that there was no significant difference in the proportion of girls with high self-efficacy between beneficiary and non-beneficiary groups in both elder and younger cohorts. It was seen that parental aspirations determine the girls' aspirations significantly.

Girl Child Protection Schemes' benefits not reaching the beneficiaries

A recent report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) on Punjab government revealed that the benefits of various state and central government schemes for the girl child are not reaching the beneficiaries and *neither is there any method to evaluate the impact of the schemes*. The audit report showed that the benefits of Shagun scheme for girls are reaching the beneficiaries much later (delay of one to four years was noted), thereby defeating the very purpose of the scheme related to girl child marriage. The report found that Rs. 3 crore under the Kanya Jyoti Jagriti Scheme meant to incentivize girl children for secondary education were not even disbursed whereas an amount of Rs. 3.11 crore was illegally retained by the District Programme Officers. Despite central assistance under SABLA, more than 12 crore rupees were not utilized resulting in short coverage under the scheme. Under Balri Rakshak Yojana of the Health Department meant to improve the skewed sex ratio, against a sum of Rs. 3.33 crores released by the state government, only 94 lakhs was utilized due to non-clearance of bills by the district treasuries. When it comes to the Bebe Nanki Ladli Beti Kalyan Scheme, it was seen that despite Rs. 62.50 crores released by the Union Government in 2012-14, the department of social security and welfare of women and child released only Rs. 55.16 crore and given the unutilized balance, no further installments were released by the Union Government. In the *Mai Bhago* Scheme that gives away free bicycles to all girl students of Class XI and Class XII in government schools, not all enrolled girls were covered, as a result of which 29280 girls could not avail the facility in 2011-14.

Source: "Schemes for Girl Child Not Reaching Beneficiaries: CAG", *Indian Express*, March 23, 2015

III.3.4. Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls – Sabla

This scheme was launched in 2010, with the following objectives:

- Enable self-development and empowerment of adolescent girls;
- Improve their nutrition and health status;
- Spread awareness among them about health, hygiene, nutrition, Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual Health (ARSH), and family and child care;
- Upgrade their home based-skills, life skills and vocational skills;
- Mainstream out-of-school adolescent girls into formal /non formal-education; and
- Inform and guide them about existing public services, such as Public health centre (PHC), CHC, Post Office, Bank Police Station, etc.

The scheme has two major components Nutrition and Non Nutrition Component. Nutrition component has Grant-in aid for nutrition released @ `2.5 per beneficiary per day to States (50% cost of nutrition) under *Sabla* and Non nutrition component, where the funds are released to States/UTs @ `3.8 lakh per project per annum.

Monitoring framework as designed under Sabla Scheme is as under:-

- The monitoring and supervision mechanism set up under the ICDS Scheme at the National level, the State level and the Community level will be used for this Scheme as well, since it is to be implemented using the ICDS platform.
- Monitoring committees at all levels (National, State, District, block and village level) are to be set up. The Committees will meet as specified and take stock of the progress of the Scheme as also strengthen the coordination and convergence between concerned departments.
- Review meetings/Field visits will be undertaken by the senior officers of the Ministry.
- Report generation at the central level on the basis of the Progress Report given by the States/UTs to identify gaps and for follow up action.
- The scheme has a provision of social audit by Panchayati Raj Institutions.

No evaluation/impact study has been carried out for the scheme as it is being implemented only since 2010-11. Sabla has replaced the Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls

(NPAG) and Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) in 205 districts and nutritional portion of the programme has been incorporated in this new programme.

The Nutrition Foundation of India has carried out the evaluation of National Programme for Adolescent Girls^{lxiii}. Of the 51 districts where the programme was being implemented, ten districts in ten States were chosen for evaluation. The major findings of this evaluation:

- The majority of women stated that they had faced problems in accessing the food grains through PDS.
- It was found that women from poorer segments of population will not have the time to come to anganwadi every day to collect food.
- The majority of younger adolescent girls were categorised as undernourished by using a single cut-off weight and very few of the adolescent girls crossed the cut-off point even after several months of supplements.
- For pregnant women it is recommended that cut off point used may be 45 kg and they should receive the food grain supplements of 6 kg/month for remaining period of pregnancy. For lactating women the cut-off point should be 40 kg and they should receive food grain supplements for the remaining period of first year of lactation.
- Majority of women do not benefit from the food supplementation.
- District Level Household Survey (2002-04) has shown that prevalence of anaemia in adolescent girls is very high. In view of this a programme of iron and folic acid supplementation once a week to begin within these 51 districts and later extended to all districts should be considered. Popularizing use of double fortified salt and dietary diversification through nutrition education can be universally implemented in all AWs.

The 249th Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD (26th February 2013) had the following to note on *Sabla*: “As per the feedback received from States/Uts, the progress of the scheme has been quite satisfactory as far as nutrition component is concerned. It is the non-nutrition component where the implementation pace is quite slow, where it involves convergence with various line ministries in addition to limited financial resources provisioned for the various non-nutrition components. Vocational training had been a non-starter in many places as it was to be linked with the National Skill Development Initiative of the Ministry of Labour”.

MWCD reports that efforts for effective convergence of services under *Sabla* are being made

at national level also. Monitoring committees set up at National level meets to take stock of the progress of the Scheme as also to strengthen the coordination and convergence between concerned departments. The representatives of the line Ministries of Health, Education, Youth Affairs, Labour, Panchayati Raj are members of the committee.

The 12th Five Year Plan proposed a revision of nutritional norms, a revision of financial norms for non-nutrition component, strengthening of vocational training, provision for performance-linked incentive to AWWs & AWHs involved in implementation of SABLA and evaluation and studies.

Performance of the scheme (numbers in lakhs):

Performance Parameter	No. of beneficiaries for Nutrition	No. of beneficiaries for Non-Nutrition
2010-11 Target	100	No target fixed
2010-11 Achievement	44.42	0.37
2011-12 Target	100	49.16
2011-12 Achievement	100	37.81
2012-13 Target	100.77	69.02
2012-13 Achievement (uptil Dec.)	87.23	33.19

Source: 254th Report of Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD noted that given the large amount of unspent balances, 'it can be said that the proper implementation of the scheme is yet to take off'. It appears that the Committee has been stressing on preparatory work be completed as early as possible so that the implementation of the scheme does not suffer.

The Committee wondered if the space in the Anganwadi Centre (AWC) would be enough for delivery of services, especially the non-nutrition component of the scheme (many AWCs which have no building or only kutch building, or being run from a school etc.). It was also recorded that the Anganwadi Workers and Helpers (AWWs and AWHs) already perform various tasks under the ICDS programme and get a meager honorarium – it felt that these workers should be given additional duties only if their honorarium is increased in proportion to the tasks assigned. The Committee, therefore, reiterates that honorarium of the AWWs and AWHs should be increased and focus of the Ministry should be on the development of infrastructure of the AWCs as these would be the agencies for the implementation of not just

ICDS Scheme but also the SABLA Scheme (Recommendation 7.8). A separate provision be built in for giving honorarium to the workers under the Scheme so as to motivate these functionaries through such incentives, so that they become more committed to fulfilling the objectives of the Scheme for its effective implementation, the Committee recommended. It also noted the high vacancy position with respect to all the ICDS functionaries. It is noted that shortage of human power is ultimately leading to less utilization of earmarked funds. It was also reiterated that such schemes cannot be left as self-selecting schemes given that there are many hurdles that are encountered by the beneficiaries, and therefore, it becomes the duty of the government to reach out to the needy person in a timely and effective manner. Noting that cost norms have been revised for Supplementary Nutrition Program (SNP) in September 2012, the Standing Committee says that a lot remains to be done – generating awareness and timely availability of quality SNP are stressed upon.

In Sabla, revision of nutritional norms (600 calories and 18-20 gms of protein and micronutrients @ Rs. 5/beneficiary per day for 300 days in a year), revision of financial norms for non-nutrition, incentives to anganwadi workers and anganwadi helpers, convergence with counseling centres in urban areas (health and education ministries'), convergence with adolescent reproductive and sexual health programme of MoHFW, convergence with the scheme for promotion of menstrual hygiene of MoHFW in 153 districts of the country by MoHFW wherein low cost sanitary napkins are being supplied on a pilot basis, strengthening vocational training including outside National Skill Development Initiative which does not have full coverage, training and proper allocations for the same for ICDS functionaries, publicity and IEC related to Sabla, having additional human resources and costs for the same without over-straining the ICDS platform, opening Adolescent Resource Centres at the block or village cluster level and having evaluations were all the recommendations.

III.3.5. ISSUES WITH THE DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE SCHEMES:

When it comes to schemes meant to tackle son preference, and improve girl child protection, the evaluations, reviews and impact assessment studies point to:

- lack of proper targeting;
- lack of coordinated approach along with the state governments;

- heavy procedures in conditional cash transfers;
- some schemes having some components that are not in line with women's empowerment;
- design unwittingly promoting son preference with some of the conditions laid down;
- weak focus on building life skills of girls in Sabla – nutrition component receiving more focus;
- ICDS platform overly burdened and may lead to non-delivery of results/objectives;
- The fact that at the state government level, these are high profile schemes; not so at the Centre.
- Such schemes not having better involvement of panchayats, civil society groups etc.
- No specific schemes or projects for implementing PCPNDT Act more effectively;
- Very low coverage;
- No MIS and tracking systems in place to capture impact.

While there are very few impact studies, there seem to be mixed results from the few micro-studies that exist. Several schemes are also recent initiatives, like BBBP and would need to be implemented in their true spirit first, before being put up for reviews/evaluation.

IV. SOME OVERALL OBSERVATIONS ON VARIOUS SCHEMES/PROGRAMMES

After having looked at some specific schemes in the earlier sections in some chosen domains, in this section, we make some overall observations and recommendations on various issues that cut across several schemes.

It is noted that where large livelihood interventions are being taken up in a mission mode, like in the case of Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) in Andhra Pradesh/Telangana, and Kudumbashree's interventions in Kerala, where women have been collectivized and federated at an impressive scale, capacity-building has been invested upon, feminist approaches have been used in dealing with at least a few issues (like the Jagrutha Samithis and Social Action Committees in these interventions), where convergence with local self governments and other agencies has been achieved, where focus has been on building an asset base for women and better control over natural resources, where linkages with banks have been well established and where forward linkages for value addition and marketing have

been forged, it is seen that potential for transformation can indeed be realized in economic empowerment programmes.

In the case of VAW, it is noted that primary and secondary preventive measures including large scale awareness and motivation, in addition to exercises like Crime-Mapping as seen in a Panchayat in Kerala, are indeed useful. The state of support services to survivors of violence is dismal everywhere in the country however.

Girl Child Protection schemes are ridden with procedural and design related problems and the impact is mixed on the ground. This is an issue which cannot obviously be dealt with through isolated schemes but requires comprehensive immediate, medium and long term measures.

Despite various schemes and programmes being run to improve the status of women, it appears that these have fallen short of the large need for empowering women on various fronts. This is both in terms of their outreach as well as the visible impact. Even the 'monitorable targets' of the Eleventh Plan (i. Raise the sex ratio for the age group 0-6 years from 927 in 2001 to 935 by 2011-12 and to 950 by 2016-17; ii. Ensure that at least 33 per cent of the direct and indirect beneficiaries of all government schemes are women and girl children) have not been met despite the elaborate processes of planning that went into setting the targets. The 11th Plan Mid Term Appraisal, discussing the introduction of new schemes and path-breaking legislations says, *"while these steps are important and signify progress, there has been little visible change in the living realities of women and children. At the same time, many important schemes that were suggested in the Plan document have not taken off. For instance, a comprehensive scheme on single women, a national task force for women in conflict areas, a scheme for internally displaced women, and a high level committee to review SHG politics and programmes have not taken off. This delay will further slow down the already long drawn process of ensuring that women's development is truly inclusive"*.

The fact that women's status vis-à-vis men has not improved is starkly obvious when it comes to declining sex ratios – this then means that the variety of schemes to improve girl child preference or stop gender-based sex selection have obviously not addressed the challenge faced adequately (as analysed in an earlier section, there are several design as well as implementation level issues). In the case of certain schemes meant for women's economic empowerment, it also appears that the little positive impact that some livelihoods schemes here and there have been able to create, do not match up to the overall trend of women's

declining work participation rates, and the very insignificant shift in the sectoral distribution of women's work force. The shocking incidents and reports of violence against women all over the country are a statement on how prevention of such VAW has not been addressed adequately by state interventions.

One can only conclude that the women-centric schemes have fallen far short of the need to make meaningful impact in a bleak scenario for women on many fronts.

The largest number of women-centric schemes are predictably run by the Ministry for Women and Child Development. However, the HLC would not be the first body to point out that the largest chunk of resources from the Ministry of Women and Child Development are meant for Child Rights and Development and not much for Women's Empowerment and Development. The 11th Plan Mid Term Appraisal (MTA) notes that it is a matter of concern that ICDS alone takes up nearly 90% of the allocations, and that 'it is a matter of concern that the 10 per cent allocated for the rest results in underfunding of other schemes which are essential for women, and without which even the goals set out for ICDS cannot be achieved. Most of the schemes related to women have unrealistic cost norms'.

In the 12th Plan, for instance, the total outlay for WCD is Rs. 117,707 crores, out of which the single flagship programme of ICDS gets Rs. 108,503 crores (92%); admittedly, the ICDS platform is used for benefits and outreach to women and girls too but more in an incidental fashion, while addressing children in general. It is a matter of serious concern that 2015-16 Budget saw sharp declines in allocations, with the expectation that state governments will pitch in. This may however not materialize.

IV.1. Streamlining maintenance of data on schemes and programmes of WCD Ministry:

The HLC, when it attempted to put together a picture of allocations, sanctions, releases and utilization of funds under various schemes as well as the actual coverage achieved under different schemes (from annual reports, from replies in both Houses of the Parliament to various questions, from CAG reports, from Parliamentary Standing Committee reports etc.), found that there is no ready and consistent data that is used to monitor these various schemes. Inconsistencies in data became apparent. While utilization picture often emerges depending on the utilization certificates provided by the implementation agencies, the picture with even sanctions and released funds is sometimes inconsistent. Whether these are genuine mistakes or time delays that cause such gaps and variances in data, it only underscores the need for

more real-time data collection and analysis for better monitoring and evaluation of various schemes. Coming to monitoring and evaluation, it is important to evolve and adopt feminist principles of evaluation, which may not always be the case.

WCD **RECOMMENDATION:** The Ministry should put into place mechanisms for real time, accurate data collection and analysis for better monitoring and evaluation of schemes. Evaluation frameworks should have feminist principles adopted.

IV.2. Need to increase outlays: The outlays for the Ministry of Women and Child Development for 2015-16 is approximately only 50% of the earlier year 2014-15 (down from around 21000 crores rupees in 2014-15 to around 10,287 crore rupees). It is being explained that in accordance with the 14th Finance Commission recommendations, there will be significant increase in devolution of resources to the States and local bodies, and that states are expected to bear an increased and substantial share of expenditure under Centrally Sponsored Schemes^{lxiii}. Only 678 crores is meant for women's development schemes in 2015-16, as against 9527 crores for child development schemes. However, the current outlays are not commensurate with the need to empower women on all fronts in India, to ensure an equal status with men.

RECOMMENDATION: There should be a significant increase in gender equality investments in India, across Ministries and Departments. A comprehensive need mapping, district upwards, could be the basis for planning for future. A life cycle approach, social equity approach and an approach that covers all dimensions of empowerment should be used so that no group of women are left out, and no aspect of a woman's life.

Within the MWCD budgets also, there should be increased investments on women's empowerment, even as the Ministry strengthens its capacities to plan, design and implement schemes more effectively. Rigorous impact evaluation of schemes can be taken up before increasing budgetary allocations, and the learnings published. Similarly, ranking state governments in terms of quality of implementation and impact created should be taken up. The government can also think of consortium projects with the CSR fund of corporations to enhance outlays under the government schemes.

IV.3. Improving on the utilization of funds allocated: In 2014-15, the budgetary allocation for women's development schemes was 909 crores, while the Revised Estimates put it at

507.8 crores and the actual expenditure being around 453 crore rupees. 2013-14 was no different. The BE was 1184 crore rupees for women's schemes, with RE pegged down to 504 crore rupees and expenditure being only 414 crore rupees. The 254th Report of the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development (April 2013), notes that only 40% (about 1.17 lakh crores of rupees) of the projected requirement of the Ministry (2.84 lakh crores) was firmly committed for the Twelfth Plan. Further, even though there has been a talk of improving the ratio of women-centred schemes vis-à-vis the ICDS programme which constitutes nearly 90% of the overall plan outlay of MWCD, this has not happened in the 12th plan either.

In 2012-13, the total allocation for 'women welfare' schemes was reduced from 858.68 crores in BE to 250.84 crores at the RE stage. In IGMSY, for instance, budget in 2012-13 was 468 crore rupees; but revised estimate was only 75.60 crores. For Swadhar Greh scheme, the budget allocated was 90 crore rupees in 2012-13, but the revised estimate was brought down to 49.50 crores. The PWDVA implementation scheme (20 crores), Scheme for Restorative Justice (19 crores), HelpLine (1 crore) and One Stop Crisis Centres (5 crores) were mooted in the budget in 2012-13, but the revised estimate had nothing allocated. RMK had Rs. 90 crores allocated in BE, but none in RE.

It has been seen consistently in the past that the allocation for child-related schemes not only gets enhanced at the RE stage, but there is excess utilization, whereas for women-related schemes, not only is there a reduction in allocation by the RE stage, but utilization is even lesser. In the Eleventh Plan period (2007-12), the BE for women-related schemes was Rs. 1295.10 crores, which was brought down to Rs. 968.45 crores and ultimately, the expenditure was only Rs. 620.07 crores.

Such under-utilisation also implies under-achievement of physical targets. For instance, under IGMSY, targets were under-achieved in 2013-14 and 2014-15, by half or even less. It is worth noting that under-utilisation is a problem that seems to be plaguing various schemes at different levels: in the case of Rashtriya Mahila Kosh for instance, the amount of loan disbursed to poor women was less than the sanctioned amount indicating that funds are lying unutilized with IMOs in the states (intermediary financial organisations). Here, major discrepancy between loans disbursed and number of beneficiaries was noted by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD^{lxiv}

Reasons mentioned by the Ministry for such an unfortunate state with several schemes include:

- "The scheme could not take off"; "The scheme could not be finalized"
- "The scheme is being conceptualized with pending approvals and preparatory activities";
- "Due to non-receipt of complete and viable proposals from state governments"
- "Necessary approval could not be got and could not be implemented"; "Absence of necessary approvals"
- "Due to savings from previous year, the allocation has been reduced"

In this context, the Parliamentary Standing Committee recommended that a review of procedural formalities should be taken up so that unnecessary bottlenecks can be eliminated and the approval process for a new scheme be expedited. The HLC reiterates this recommendation.

Further, given that many schemes are not designed to be implemented in a top-down manner with the machinery of the department/line department already in place like in the case of ICDS, but depend on proposals to be received from NGOs and state governments, it becomes important that the Ministry gets pro-active in publicizing the schemes, facilitating the process of applications and subsequent appraisals so that fund utilization is full.

Pending Utilisation Certificates (in turn holding up further releases) is another major reason for under-utilisation. Pending UCs in many cases are long-pending and the Ministry has to evolve a system of liquidating all such UCs on an urgent basis. In schemes like SABLA, it is seen that in the non-nutrition component of the scheme, majority of the states reported under-utilisation with many states/UTs had zero utilization of funds. Some states do not submit information about their utilization status. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on HRD also notes the lack of internal audit of the Ministry since 2007 as a matter of concern in its April 2015 report.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Review of procedural formalities should be taken up so that unnecessary bottlenecks can be eliminated and the approval process for a new scheme expedited; Creation of flexible designs for the schemes, depending on local needs and region-specific issues – this should further bring down under utilization and delays; More pro-active processes in publicizing the schemes, facilitating the process of applications, rapid appraisals

and processing of applications for schemes so that fund utilization is full. Internal audit systems should be in place and active in the Ministry.

IV.4. Improving on the outreach in schemes: The very small outreach of schemes like Swadhar and Working Women's Hostels has been noted by other committees, like the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women. The number of shelter homes set up are also very few, not even one per district in the country, when the need for at least one such home per block is expressed time and again by various groups working on the ground.

It is apparent that lack of funds alone cannot be blamed for this, given the very low utilization of allocated funds, and the downscaling of allocations at the RE stage year after year. The procedural issues as well as design of schemes appear to be the main reason for this situation. It is indeed an imperative that schemes' outreach has to match the scale of the need for women's empowerment.

RECOMMENDATION: Each scheme has to be scaled up to its optimal size (one stop centres have to be taken to the district and block level, after the state level pilots, for instance); further, publicizing the scheme and increasing awareness about the existence and access to schemes is important. There is a need to re-look at the design of schemes and incorporate all necessary flexibilities. In schemes meant for livelihood enhancement for women, budget components for inclusive and holistic empowerment of women should be attempted to prevent lost opportunities and ineffective outcomes.

IV.5. Reducing Frequent Changes in Schemes: It is also felt that there are frequent changes in some schemes over the years. While some schemes have been initiated as time-bound projects with external assistance of bilateral and other agencies and can therefore be expected to be terminated, several others have been started and stopped very quickly, based on evaluation reports and suggestions therein. While this rationalization of schemes based on reviews is indeed welcome, as has happened with Short Stay Homes, Swadhar and Swadhar Greh or with Kishori Shakti Yojana and Sabla, it also creates confusion amongst NGOs and others that would like to apply for schemes.

RECOMMENDATION: The change in schemes, in trying to make them more comprehensive and attempting to remove duplication of efforts under different schemes, have to be accompanied by wide pro-active publicizing of the scheme for effective utilization of

the same. Further, if the schemes are initiated after a good deal of planning, these changes may be avoided.

IV.6. Removing problems with design in schemes: It is found that some of these schemes come with inherent design-related problems. For instance, shelter schemes for women in distress prescribing a minimum number of inmates – this is unrealistic and even a few women who need such shelter services deserve that right to be fulfilled. NGOs expected to bring about convergence across departments and schemes, while running such Shelters may not be realistic in the absence of express directions/guidance for related departments for such convergence. As another example, release of funds in a particular installment pattern built into several schemes is apparently causing cash flow problems for implementing organizations, jeopardizing the scheme implementation. Cost norms in various schemes are very unrealistic and the quality of services will obviously depend on these norms being revised upwards. Timely release of funds is also an important requirement. In schemes that are meant for economic empowerment, if the design of the scheme including its objectives do not appreciate comprehensive and inclusive empowerment of women, and budget components related to all aspects of empowerment not included, this might result in lost opportunities and ineffective results. Piecemeal approach to schemes is an ineffective use of public finances. Most importantly, schemes that make the household as a unit to be targeted, rather than the woman, ignore the intra-household inequities and dynamics at play.

RECOMMENDATION: There is a need to revisit the design and assumptions behind various schemes, even as evaluation frameworks are also changed. Cost norms have to be realistic, which will provide women beneficiaries a fair and decent opportunity at empowering themselves. Further, schemes have to be grounded in a statutory framework so that they become entitlements of women, even as every statute has to be backed up by a scheme for ensuring implementation on the ground. It is apparent that one of the prerequisites of good implementation of women's laws is legal literacy and awareness and pro-active efforts for this will need schematic outlays.

IV.7. Schemes that are grounded in a statutory framework: In India today, we have development interventions in the form of schemes that now have a legal backing. Food Security schemes, for instance; or rural employment guarantee; or universal education. This makes these interventions more firmly grounded as clear entitlements of the marginalized. It is seen in the case of women's issues, however, that this is not always the case. Here,

entitlements as legal rights are not always backed up by schemes/programmes and *vice versa*. In the case of the Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act, the Government of India realized that without a scheme that expressly allocates resources for the institutional mechanisms that would make the legislation effective, its implementation cannot be ensured. It is seen that required financial allocations in the form of some scheme or the other are not always put aside in the case of various legislations.

RECOMMENDATION: Schemes need to be embedded in laws to make the interventions effective as entitlements of women (MGNREGS is an example). Further, to make legislations effective, financial allocation has to be made for the schemes that actualize all women's rights-related legislations.

IV.8. Equity/Need-based, or Efficiency/First-come-first-served based?: Schemes run through NGOs have the inherent disadvantage of having to wait for proposals to be submitted by interested organizations. It is clear that several schemes of the Ministry are concentrated in states where the civil society organizations have been active in accessing such schemes and not necessarily in states and regions where they are needed. For instance, 71.6% of Short Stay Homes located in just 8 states; out of 188 Swadhar homes, 7 states have 75% of total homes across the country. It is also seen that the quality of implementation depends very much on the implementing organisation's commitment to the cause, capabilities and focus of the PIA. Some organizations have managed to mobilize additional resources if required to fulfill the objectives. It is also often stated that state governments are not fulfilling their role completely in the implementation of central schemes, when questioned about under-utilisation or unsatisfactory performance. However, this needs to be addressed more systemically, by better coordination between the Centre and States.

RECOMMENDATION: While there is no denying that partnering women's and other non-governmental organizations has immense advantages in terms of intense ground level work, (including for setting up of community institutions for preventive aspects related to various issues), the Ministry has to create better awareness about schemes, systems of more rapid appraisals and processing for applications for schemes, flexible designs for the schemes depending on the local needs and region-specific issues and hassle-free procedures for processes of accessing and implementing schemes. This will require the Ministry to reach out state governments and the women's movement in India in pro-active ways. An in-depth study by the Ministry is necessary to earmark region-wise budgetary allocations, based on specific

needs and issues. The findings should dictate the need and the positioning of projects. Pro-active publicisation of schemes in needy areas is important, so also creation of simple, local language materials to explain to the intended beneficiaries the full details and ways of accessing various schemes. It is also important that better coordination mechanisms be created to ensure that no scheme suffers due to Centre-State dynamics or lack of coordination. Greater devolution of schemes will ensure that women will be able to participate more directly in different schemes. Further, all schemes should have specific norms laid down for specific orientation towards the most marginalized women (minorities, dalits, adivasis, differently abled, single women and others). These schemes should also be audited specially for their focus on the marginalized, through social impact assessment.

IV.9. Women centric schemes should stop perpetrating gender stereotypes: As discussed in the section on Gender Budgets as reflected in Statements 20 of Indian Budget, it is clear that women-centric schemes do not necessarily imply gender sensitivity. For example, Contraception directed at women. Girl children in Sabla scheme being prepared for “home skills” (this is admittedly in addition to vocational and life skills being imparted). Even Shelter services for women are sometimes approached only in a welfarist mode and not in a rights-based approach. Livelihoods schemes for women focused on papad- or pickle-making. It is important therefore to ensure that so-called “women-centric” schemes have the right approach towards Gender Justice and Equality.

RECOMMENDATION: It is important to ensure that so-called ‘women-centric’ schemes have the right approach towards gender justice and equality and are shorn of gender biases that are embedded everywhere.

IV.10. Investing on ‘soft interventions’: It is seen that very often, schemes are not created to have a component of prevention, when it comes to discriminatory practices or violence against women (the notable exception to this is Ujjwala scheme and the life skills education under Sabla scheme, which includes awareness building amongst adolescent girls on various laws, or the Mahila Samakhya programme). This country had witnessed large scale awareness-driven transformation processes when it comes to polio vaccination, for instance. Similarly, the drive for cleanliness in the form of Swacch Bharat as a recent initiative is receiving great attention and support from the highest quarters in the country. It is for the first time that a campaign like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao has been initiated by the Government of India when it comes to women and girls. This is welcome, and was missing over the decades.

Most schemes are centred around delivery of services and products (like supplemental nutrition in Sabla or maternity benefit in IGMSY, or finances infused in economic empowerment schemes) – however, institutions created in these schemes do not make good use of the opportunity to take up awareness campaigns, sensitization on gender issues, capacity building for preventive work etc.

RECOMMENDATION: Large scale awareness campaigns on discriminatory practices against women or violence against women, or to publicise the legal rights of women, have to be taken up by the government in a massive fashion. The HLC believes that such “soft interventions” are as important as schemes that deliver services and products. Further, all opportunities across schemes, including those for collectivizing women for livelihoods, have to have a component of gender sensitization and legal literacy included.

IV.11. SHGs’ potential to address position of women (not just condition) to be optimally utilized: Numerous micro-studies show that the creation of women’s grassroots institutions in the form of Self Help Groups and their federations has not always been utilized for empowering women, and to improve their position, even though these interventions have been used to improve their condition. It is seen that gender relations have not been an area of intervention, even as household income levels were improved and women’s groups were made the medium for implementation of projects. Even the National Rural Livelihoods Mission, which is embarking on this ambitious mission of universal inclusion of all poor women in the country into SHGs and building their institutions speaks about building this social capital in an instrumental fashion – it is only in the recent past that the Mission is expressly talking about women’s empowerment being key to sustainable livelihoods.

In the XI Five Year Plan, there is a clear acknowledgement of the need to look at SHGs from a different perspective. The plan document said, “while strengthening SHG initiatives, policies and schemes, the Eleventh Plan will simultaneously increase women’s awareness, bargaining power, literacy, health, vocational and entrepreneurial skills. It will prioritise training, capacity building inputs and the creation of backward-forward linkages, which are essential to generate sustainable livelihood opportunities”. However, the promised High Level Committee to conduct a review of SHG related policies and programmes did not materialize. It is important that feminist concepts around ‘power within’ and ‘power to’ have to be explored at work in various schemes, even as ‘power with’ is the basis for SHG-based work.

RECOMMENDATION: While feminist organizing of women based on a needed “entry point” that local women themselves prioritise (it could be enterprise, health, childcare, pension, housing, insurance and so on as different civil society experiences show, and not a uniform thrift and credit centred strategy) is what the women’s movement wants for the creation of SHGs in the country, it is apparent that the following concerns need to be expressly addressed, whatever the form of organizing of women in various livelihood interventions:

- Look at an individual woman as a unit too, and not just a household. The women need to be empowered for themselves and not just as a way to reaching the household. Very often, this is lacking in the design and implementation of the planned intervention.
- Exclusion of the poorest, most vulnerable and marginalized - the micro-finance centred organizing creating self-exclusion processes which keep out such women.
- Lack of creation of assets and securing of ownership over resources for women;
- Limited scope of capacity building – very often, it is found that capacity building is not adequately invested upon – it neither builds on women’s existing skills, nor gives them skills for better employment or enterprises and also does not utilize the opportunity of building the social capital for building legal literacy for empowering women.
- Using the women’s collectives for better convergence of a variety of schemes, for development planning including works to be undertaken in NREGS, for land and resource use planning becomes important.

It is seen that the State itself can very often be a big ready market to begin with for the women’s enterprises. However, in several economic empowerment schemes, it is seen that market linkages are not created. On the other hand, it is poor SHGs and their members who become ready targets for marketing of products that might not be needed by these women. It is also seen that self-employment is stressed upon, rather than some enterprise that works at a group level, which provides more employment to others too.

There is a real need for the State to invest on the resources that are required to collectivise and organize women in a variety of ways and it would be ideal to set up proposal screening processes at the district level to allow civil society groups, in partnership with resource agencies specializing in gender issues, to access such fund and collectivise women at a pace and shape that is suitable to the women themselves.

IV.12. Increase thrust on ensuring Convergence and Coordination: Lack of convergence and coordination seems to be an affliction plaguing the implementation of several schemes. It is in this context that the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)'s focus on convergence appeared to be an important and hitherto-neglected strategy. However, it appears that the government is revisiting the very need for NMEW.

RECOMMENDATION: This Committee feels that it is indeed very important to have professional services supporting the Ministry and various other line departments in implementing gender equality and gender justice related schemes. Further, such support services should also focus on better convergence and coordination for better impact.

IV.13. Create realistic cost norms: It is seen that there is no uniformity in norms across districts/states etc., or uniformity across schemes which is raising questions of discrimination as well as rationale for norms laid down. For example, per child food cost across ICDS and RG crèche scheme are different, for instance. Different agencies which are overseeing implementation of these schemes have raised this with the HLC as a pertinent point to be addressed. Cost norms should be rationalized even as they are standardized depending on metro, non-metro situation, and rural and urban.

IV.14. Improve capabilities at all levels: Evaluations, especially around economic empowerment schemes have shown that enterprises are selected based on the implementing agencies' existing capacities, rather than the possibilities and opportunities that exist for women's enterprises or employment. It is further seen that appropriate gender orientation and sensitization that has to be a pre-requisite in all schemes with implementing organisations and others at all levels, is also often missing. In terms of counseling services, whether independently run or placed in police stations, it is often seen that professionalism is missing and that counseling is often equated with reconciliation efforts (for instance, across states and schemes, whether it is Nari Adalats or police-station based counseling or even SCW counseling, it is seen that feminist perspectives do not always govern the resolution of cases; further, professionalism in counseling services is missing).

RECOMMENDATION: This requires suitable partnerships with Gender Resource Centres that are being set up in various states, in addition to tying up with other gender experts/organisations.

IV. 15. Bottom up planning and Equitable Allocations: In cases where participants of a scheme were not consulted and involved in planning, it has been seen that they could find ways of subverting a scheme to suit their purposes, in addition to the fact that the scheme might not turn out to be need-based and participatory (and therefore, the intervention being sustainable). It is important to take up bottom up planning so that unsuitable, one-size-fits-all approaches are not taken. Further, it is also important to make sure that equitable investments on the most marginalized women, including single, differently abled, dalit, Adivasi and Muslim women are given a priority.

RECOMMENDATION: Ideally, schemes should evolve at the local level, based on district level planning at least, after mapping out the issues and needs related to women in a particular district. This would allow for more direct participation of affected women. Further, this must also involve elected representatives including Parliamentarians, legislators as well as elected women representatives in PRIs. At this level, convergence with MPLADS/MLALADS is also possible, who can set aside 50% of these funds for women-centric interventions. SHG involvement is also possible. CEDAW and Constitutional commitments can be the frameworks within which such schemes are evolved. Further, it is also important to make sure that equitable investments on the most marginalized women, including single, differently abled, dalit, Adivasi and Muslim women are given a priority.

IV.16. The Planning Commission had proposed an assessment of gender concerns/impacts on the same lines as is mandated for environmental clearance, for all proposals submitted for any new policy, legislation, programme or scheme. The HLC welcomes this and emphasizes the need to show progress on the actualization of such a proposal, in the new institutional framework of NITI AYOOG. In the past few Plan periods, participatory, insightful processes around gender mainstreaming have resulted in progressive articulations in the Plan documents and NITI Ayog should carry forward the commitments made.

As in the case of other interventions by State like enabling legislations, it is important that implementation of all schemes and programmes have an in-built accountability mechanism on the nodal department and agency with concurrent reviews and monitoring, and personnel responsible for lack of effective implementation held responsible for the same. Each scheme should have built-in mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation which is not always the case now.

At this point of time, the One Stop Centres, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Andolan, SABLA, NRLM and MGNREGS hold a great deal of promise, especially if convergence is made a thrust at all levels, and the HLC hopes for a serious and committed implementation of these initiatives, including with adequate financial allocations. Similarly, social security schemes are essential and should be enhanced as well as universalized.

The HLC, while pointing out the enormous challenge involved in impact assessment of schemes given the lack of consistent data with regard to either financial outlays, or scheme coverage etc. as well as the fact that schemes themselves are frequently being changed, would however like to conclude that these schemes have fallen woefully short of the current need, since in certain areas of a woman's life, rather than move towards equality, there seem to be some steps backwards in India. For instance, declining sex ratio continues to be a serious concern; violence against women continues unabated and in newer forms, and women's economic empowerment and their overall empowerment through the current economic models appears distant. This Chapter focused on a critical commentary on design and implementation of schemes in these areas, trying to draw from micro-studies where possible for understanding any impact.

We believe that a broad statement can be made that certain facets of empowerment of women are on the downslide, despite some schemes/programmes - this in itself is a statement either on lack of appropriate schemes, or on the schemes' lack of efficacy, or that the potential positive impact of some schemes is being 'cancelled out' by other forces unleashed and through deeply embedded patriarchal values/norms/practices.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:

ONGOING:

STEP or Support to Training & Employment Program for Women: The Scheme intends to strengthen and improve women's work and employment in the traditional sectors such as agriculture, animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, handlooms, handicrafts, khadi and village industries and sericulture by improving and strengthening women's participation in these sectors, by enhancing productivity and income generation. The scope and coverage of the scheme has been broadened with introduction of the locally appropriate sectors.

Hostels for Working Women: One of the longest running schemes of this Ministry, here, assistance is given to voluntary organisations, certain eligible N.G.Os, Universities and State Governments for the construction of Working Women's Hostels to provide suitable and economical accommodation to working women and for the purchase of ready-built hostels for the purpose. This scheme envisages provision for safe and affordable accommodation to working women and women being trained for employment and girl students studying in post-school professional courses. This scheme is implemented through non-governmental organisations and other agencies engaged in the field of women/social welfare, public sector undertakings, Women's Development Corporations, local bodies, universities, etc.

Rashtriya Mahila Kosh: Rashtriya Mahila Kosh was established in 1993 as a Society with an initial corpus of ₹.31 crore, which has been raised to ₹.100 crore by additions to the corpus made between 2006-07 to 2009-10. It extends micro-credit to poor and underprivileged women through a collateral-free, quasi-formal delivery mechanism where NGOs, women co-operatives, federations etc. act as intermediaries. There was a plan to raise the corpus of RMK 500 crore rupees, as recommended by the Planning Commission over the next few years by restructuring it to Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) mode.

Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for the Children of Working Mothers: This scheme is not listed or considered as a women-centric programme, though it has the potential to lead to women's economic empowerment by freeing them up from childcare roles. The scheme aims to provide day care services for children in the age group of 0 to 6 years, belonging to economically weaker sections of society, whose family income does not exceed Rs 12,000 per month. The creches running under the scheme provide health care, supplementary nutrition, medical check-up and immunization, etc. Initially, this scheme was known simply as "Creches/Day Care Centres". The scheme is implemented through the Central Social Welfare Board and two other national level voluntary organisations throughout the country.

Earlier Schemes

Priyadarshini Scheme: As a women's empowerment and livelihood programme, the project aims at the holistic empowerment of poor rural women and adolescent girls, supported by sustainable and improved livelihood opportunities and strengthening of local institutions.

This runs in four districts of Uttar Pradesh and two districts of Bihar with external assistance of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Mahila Samridhi Yojana: This was a Central Sector Plan Scheme implemented through the network of Post Offices in rural areas. Under this scheme, rural adult women were encouraged to have an MSY account of their own in the Post Office into which they may deposit whatever amount of money each woman can save. For an amount of upto Rs. 300/- in a year with a one year lock-in-period, Government contributes 25 percent. The scheme was subsequently merged with **Indira Mahila Yojana**, which was run for a short while and then closed down. Indira Mahila Yojana was launched in 1995-96 on pilot basis in 200 blocks of the country. The progress in these pilot blocks was evaluated jointly with Planning Commission and based on the findings, it was even decided to expand the programme in more blocks during IX Five Year Plan and to strengthen the scheme in existing blocks. In 2002-03, however, Indira Mahila Yojana was "recast and replaced by a new scheme called Swayamsidha".

Swayamsidha: Swayamsidha was created as a six year, centrally sponsored scheme, with a country-wide integrated project for development and empowerment of women based on the formation of self-help groups with an emphasis on convergence of various schemes and access to micro credit and promotion of micro enterprise. This Scheme's Phase II was expected to be initiated in 2011-12 for holistic empowerment of women through formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs), awareness generation, economic empowerment and convergence of various schemes keeping in view the lessons learnt from Swayamsidha Phase I, which was implemented in 650 blocks across the 33 States / UTs. However, no budget outlays are seen for this scheme in the recent past.

Socio-economic Programme: Under this programme, financial assistance is extended to voluntary institutions to take up a wide variety of income-generating activities like small industry, handloom, handicraft, dairy, animal husbandry etc. on a 'work & wage basis' with the object of providing opportunities of full time or part time work to needy women, destitutes, widows and deserted women. In 2002-03 budget, it was announced that this scheme has been dropped under the 'Zero Based Budgeting' exercise.

Training-cum-Production Centres: The scheme was for training of women belonging to weaker sections in the traditional and non-traditional trades and then employing them on

sustained basis; this has been supported by external assistance from NORAD (Norwegian Agency for International Development Cooperation). This was later renamed as **Swawlamban**.

Swashakti project: This project, aims at development and empowerment of women, particularly those engaged in “on- farm” activities, in rural areas. The project is an externally aided one and is implemented through Women’s Development Corporations in the respective states.

FOR PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, AND PROTECTION, REHABILITATION & ENSURING JUSTICE TO VICTIMS:

Swadhar Greh: The Swadhar scheme and the Scheme 'Short Stay Homes' have been brought together as a new Scheme 'Swadhar Greh' as a sub-component of SAAHAS, which is under the Umbrella Scheme for Protection and Development of women.

Ujjawala, as a Comprehensive Scheme for Combating Trafficking: This scheme which was introduced in December 2007 aims at prevention of trafficking and at providing support for rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and repatriation of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. The Scheme is being implemented mainly through NGOs.

Scheme for Implementation of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act: The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act came into force on 26th October, 2006. Under the provisions of the Act, the State Governments are required to appoint Protection Officers, register Service Providers and notify medical facilities.

Women’s Helpline: Recognizing that women in distress and difficult circumstances require immediate access to assistance and may not have recourse to or information about the availability of such support services, the creation of a universalized women’s helpline has been proposed. In the XII plan, it was proposed to set up a 24 hour Woman Helpline, preferably on an All India basis, with a toll free single number and with an effective back office social legal support system whereby assistance to victims of domestic violence, rape and other atrocities against women will be available at just a phone call away. However, this scheme did not take off as proposed.

One Stop Centres: In order to deal with a situation of violence, women require support at various levels that address their multiple needs. Recognising this, the Ministry proposed to examine the possibility of developing a pilot of One Stop Crisis Centre for women which would serve as an integrated facility where various needs of victims of violence, such as medical aid, legal assistance, assistance in filing a police case, counselling and emotional support, temporary shelter for herself and her children and basic necessities for the period of stay can be met, at a single place. Victims of rape and sexual assault will also be able to benefit from these where they will be provided with immediate medical help to deal with her injuries and trauma and where her statement can be recorded in a conducive and sensitive atmosphere. These centres are proposed to be established in cities with a population of more than 2.5 million and in all districts of India.

Earlier Schemes

Short Stay Homes: The scheme seeks to protect and rehabilitate women and girls who are facing social and moral danger due to family problems, mental strains, social ostracism, exploitation or other causes. The scheme provides services like medical care, psychiatric treatment, case work services, occupational therapy, education, vocational and recreational activities and social facilities of adjustments. This scheme has now been subsumed under Swadhar Greh scheme.

Swadhar: Recognising the need for a project-based approach to address the requirements of women in difficult circumstances, a scheme called Swadhar has been introduced in 2001-02. The objective of the scheme is to comprehensively rehabilitate widows, victims of trafficking, victims of natural calamities, mentally challenged and destitute women. The scheme provides for support like food and shelter, counseling, medical facilities and vocational training. The scheme also envisages setting up help-lines for women in distress. Projects of counseling and help-lines sanctioned under the scheme were visualized as complementing efforts at implementing provisions of the Domestic Violence Act. However, this scheme also was subsumed under Swadhar Greh.

Financial Assistance and Support Services to Victims of Rape: A Scheme for Restorative Justice: The Scheme seeks to provide restorative justice to victims of rape through financial assistance as well as support services such as medical, shelter, counselling, etc.

Assistance for construction of Shelter Homes for single women/ destitute and widows:

This was announced in 2014-15 Budget, to address the concerns of women belonging to the most vulnerable groups including single women and widows. This scheme has been formulated for construction of integrated Shelter Homes as support hubs wherein assistance ranging from immediate attention to long term rehabilitation can be provided to women in crisis or in need. The scheme is proposed as a Central Sector Scheme with 100% central funding.

FOR PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE GIRL CHILD:

Ongoing:

Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls (RGSEAG)/Sabla: This is a recent Centrally Sponsored Scheme for adolescent girls (11-18 Years) also known as SABLA, launched in 2010. It is being implemented using the platform of Integrated Child Development Services Scheme in 205 districts across the country on a pilot basis. Anganwadi Centres are the focal point for the delivery of the services. The scheme has two major components namely nutrition and non- nutrition component. Nutrition is being given in the form of Take Home Ration or Hot Cooked Meal for 11 to 14 years out-of-school girls and 14 to 18 years to All AGs (out of school and in-school girls). In the Non Nutrition component, the out of school Adolescent Girls 11 to 18 years are being provided IFA supplementation, Health check-up and Referral services, Nutrition and Health Education, Counselling and guidance on family welfare, Adolescent Reproductive Sexual Health (ARSH), child care practices and Life Skill Education and vocational training.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign: It is a New Scheme for welfare of Girl Child, envisioned as mainly an awareness and sensitization campaign.

Earlier Schemes:

Balika Samriddhi Yojana: The scheme was launched in 1997 with the aim of raising the status of girl children. Under this scheme, as revised in 1999, the Government gave a grant of Rs. 500/- each up to two girls born in any family living below the poverty line. The amount of Rs. 500 was deposited in a bank/post office interest-bearing-account till the girl child attains the age of 18 years. These girls would also get scholarships when they started going to

school which would also be deposited in the bank account. In the Tenth Plan, it has been decided to transfer the Scheme to the State Governments. Hence no budget provision has been made starting from the budget estimates for 2002- 2003.

Conditional Cash Transfer Scheme for the Girl Child with Insurance cover (Dhanlakshmi): This is a Central Sector scheme being implemented on a pilot basis in 11 blocks of 7 States viz, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Chattisgarh and Odissa. The scheme is aimed at eliminating discrimination against girl child which is there at every step of her life in terms of foeticide, infanticide, little or no access to education, health and other services as well as violence and abuse. Cash transfer will be provided to the family of the girl child (preferably the mother) on fulfilling certain conditionalities for the girl child viz. birth and registration of the girl child, immunisation, enrolment to school and retention in school. It has been decided to discontinue this scheme given that many such popular schemes are implemented by state governments.

Girl Child Specific District Plan of Action: An integrated approach focusing on the Girl Child was sought to be adopted in this scheme, where the entry point was a greater focus on low CSR and high Child Marriage Districts and Blocks through launch of Girl Child Specific District Plan of Action as a pilot in about 100 non-SABLA Districts in 2011-12. This scheme aims to develop and implement an Action Plan from the perspective of advancing rights of the Girls Child with measurable outcome on increased CSR and age at marriage through partnership between civil society organisations and the local Administrative machinery.

FOR SOCIO-CULTURAL EMPOWERMENT:

Condensed Courses for Women's Education: This is a very long-running scheme of the MWCD. The objective is to enable women to complete their education, acquire training and later on employment. Under this programme, voluntary organisations are given grants to conduct courses for primary/ middle/higher school level examinations. The Scheme was started by the Central Social Welfare Board in 1958 with the objective of providing education to those women who for various social and economic reasons are unable to complete their education.

Awareness Generation Programme (AGP): This programme is aimed at inculcating a spirit of organised activity among the rural women for identifying their needs/problems and for

chalking out plans of action to meet the various challenges that come their way, through Central Social Welfare Board. A small fixed amount which is being revised periodically is provided per camp.

SAKSHAM: Saksham (the self-reliant individual) is a new scheme started recently, proposed for holistic development of Adolescent Boys. The scheme aims at the all-round development of Adolescent Boys to make them self-reliant, gender sensitive and aware citizens, when they grow up. The scheme will primarily focus on all out-of-school adolescent boys (ABs) in selected districts across the country.

FOR IMPROVING THE HEALTH STATUS OF WOMEN:

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY): It is a recently-launched Centrally Sponsored Scheme, which envisages providing cash directly to pregnant and lactating women (P & L Women) from the end of 2nd trimester of pregnancy up to 6 months after delivery. Rs. 4000 is provided to the pregnant and lactating women in three installments in response to fulfilling specific conditions related to health & nutrition of mother and child. The scheme seeks to address short term income support objectives with long term objective of behaviour and attitudinal change. The scheme is being implemented in 52 districts across the country on a pilot basis, to begin with.

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Chapter - 18

Institutional Mechanisms for Women

Introduction

18.1 Institutional Mechanisms/ National Machineries are imperative for the advancement of women. It was so recognised and emphasised upon in all the Reports of the four United Nations World Conferences on Women, from Mexico to Beijing. The Mexico World Plan of Action 1976, stressed on the “*establishment of interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral machinery within the Government for accelerating the achievement of equal opportunities for women and their full integration into national life.*”¹ The Copenhagen Conference (1980) in its Programme of Action at the National Level further elaborated that “*national machinery should be understood to be not only the establishment of central institutions at the national level but the establishment of a comprehensive network of extensions in the form of commissions, offices or posts at different levels, including the local administrative level because of its better capacity for dealing with specific local situations.*”²

18.2 The Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) lists Institutional Mechanisms as one of the 12 Critical Areas of Concerns. In the three strategic objectives, it calls upon Governments to

- create or strengthen national machineries,
- integrate gender perspectives in legislation, public policies, programmes and projects and
- generate and disseminate gender-disaggregated data and information for planning and evaluation³

18.3 The BPfA sets out the role of national machineries in gender mainstreaming as follows:

*“A national machinery for the advancement of women is the central policy coordinating unit inside the government. Its main task is to support government wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality prospective in all policy areas.”*⁴

18.4 It is significant to note that it calls for the involvement of non-governmental and community organisations as necessary conditions for an effective functioning of national machineries. It further emphasises on the need for the national machinery “to *promote and establish cooperative relationships with relevant branches of government, centres for women's studies and research, academic and educational institutions, the private sector, the media, non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, and all other actors of civil society*”.⁵

18.5 Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women thus comprise all the institutions, organisations, departments as well as instruments such as commissions, committees, treaties, legislations and policies that help in or usher the advancement of women.

National Scenario

18.6 In India, national machinery primarily in place is an outcome of the International Women's Decade and the need to have counterparts of Bureau for Women's Advancement, initiated by the United Nations, in its member countries⁶. However, it must be recognised that the Government of India set up a machinery in the name of Central Social Welfare Board and State Boards as early as 1953, much before the talk of National Mechanisms at the International Level. India has experimented with various mechanisms since independence for the advancement of women, however it continues to be a critical area of concern.

18.7 The Country Report of the Government of India (1995) prepared for the Fourth World Conference on Women conceded the “inadequacy of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women”.⁷ In a diagram, it depicted the national machinery in concentric circles with the Department of Women and Child in the centre. Women's groups however felt that “it smacked of central periphery paradigm” with the innermost circle being at the heart of power.⁸

18.8 The later Country Reports produced as a part of the five year and ten year review processes for the implementation of the BPfA avoided that configuration. It is interesting to note that the last Country Report drew a very broad canvas of institutional mechanisms to include under it the Department of Women and Child, National Commission for Women, the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh,

Central Social Welfare Board, Stree Shakti Puraskar (Women Power Award), State Departments, State Commissions and State Social Welfare Boards, Panchayat Raj Institutions, Urban Local Self-Government, Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women, Planning Commission, partnerships with voluntary sector, women's movement, gender mainstreaming and gender sensitization.⁹

18.9 An analysis of the functioning of some of the listed institutions calls for changes in both their structural and operational terms. This chapter will thus focus on the mechanisms that have been set up since 1985 and reflect on the experiences of the functioning of the national machinery since the time the Department of Women and Child came into being. It will also attempt to analyse the extent national machineries and policy initiatives have effectively been able to address the issues for which they had been created and to what extent are they able to bring in changes in the culture and practices of bureaucratic structures of the state.

Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD)

18.10 The Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal Ministry for the advancement of women in India. Earlier, the issues relating to women at the Ministerial level were handled by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare. It was in 1976, in line with the Mexico World Plan of Action that the National Plan of Action was developed, as part of which the Women's Welfare and Development Bureau was set up in the Department of Social Welfare (Ministry of Education and Social Welfare). Women then were broadly categorised under the jurisdiction of the Social Welfare Department, and as targets, they were clubbed under SC/ST, handicapped and others.¹⁰ In 1985, the Department of Women and Child was created with a Minister in charge but it remained a part of the Ministry of Human Resource Development. In 2006, it became an independent Ministry with a Minister of State with Independent Charge. It was only in 2014, that the Ministry has been upgraded and the Minister has been given a Cabinet rank. The present Committee in its Preliminary Report had recommended the same.

18.11 The broad mandate of the Ministry is to work towards the holistic development of Women and Children. The Ministry formulates plans, policies & programmes; enacts/amends legislations and guides & coordinates the efforts of both Governmental and non-governmental organisations working in the field of Women and Child Development.

18.12 The Ministry continues to be under-staffed and under-resourced. A look at the annual budget for women over the past years shows that the allocations for women as a proportion of the total budget have remained constant at approximately 5.5%. The allocations to the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), show a marginal increase over the last three years — from Rs. 18,584 crore in 2012-13 to Rs. 21,193 crore in 2014-15. In 2015-16, there was a drastic reduction of the budget outlays of the Ministry, however. Irrespective of this, the allocations for ‘Women Welfare,’ actually show a downward trend (approximately Rs. 930 crore in 2011-12 to around Rs. 920 crore in 2014-15).¹¹ The major share of the allocations to the Ministry goes to the kitty of children; almost 87 per cent of the 2014-15 budget of MWCD was allocated for the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme, leaving only five per cent for schemes exclusively meant for women¹².

18.13 This clearly demonstrates the fact that ‘Advancement of Women’ has perpetually remained a low priority area, from the very beginning of the planning and budgetary processes of the country till date. For instance, neither the National Plan of Action (1976), nor the National Perspective Plan for Women (1988) had provision for funding. Indeed, the Minister, in her Preface to the NPPW stated, *“This Plan does not seek more investments or more resources. It seeks to give a thrust and responsiveness to development programmes at all levels, and recommends certain special interventions for women as transitory measure to ensure that they catch up with the mainstream by 2000 AD”*¹³ Inadequacy of resources (financial as well as human) has always been the bane of the Ministry. Vision and perspective building without proper investment, fail to garner the envisaged results. It rather remains rhetoric than being a reality.

18.14 In the recent budget (2015-16), the Ministry was allotted an amount of Rs. 10,286.73 crore as compared to Rs. 21,000 in the 2014-15, which is a straight decrease of 50 percent.¹⁴ The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women also took note of it and advised the Ministry to seek rise in allocation. At the time of writing this report, the Minister, Smt. Maneka Gandhi, has raised the issue with the Finance Minister, writing him to restore the Ministry’s budget to original fund.¹⁵ Without adequate financial resources, gender equality and advancement of women shall remain a distant goal.

18.15 There are different forms and shapes that the state level machinery takes, when it comes to women; neither the structure nor the allocation remain uniform. Out of 29 states, only 14 have a separate Department of Women and Child Development. Another 13 states

are having women and child development section under the Department of Social Welfare. In the remaining two states (Kerala and Sikkim), women and child development section is with the Department of Social Justice¹⁶. The situation of these state departments is also not very different and they are also constrained by inadequacy of financial and human resources. However, in certain states convergence between some related departments is created by the same Minister holding different portfolios (as in case of Kerala). In the case of Tamil Nadu, though there is no exclusive department for Women's Development, the general administrative culture of coordination and convergence ends up creating a positive environment for women-centric interventions to take off.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

18.16 The Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI), nearly two decades ago, recommended setting up of a National Commission for Women and State Commissions to fulfil the surveillance functions to facilitate redressal of grievances and to accelerate the socio-economic development of women.¹⁷ In January 1992, the National Commission for Women (NCW), was set up as a statutory body under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 (Act No. 20 of 1990 of Govt. of India).¹⁸ It is the Ombudsman institution for the Rights of Women in India.

18.17 The mandate of the Commission includes, amongst others, to investigate and examine all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution, make recommendations for the effective implementation of the Constitution and other laws affecting women and recommend amendments, take up cases of violation of the provisions of the Constitution and of other laws relating to women. The Commission can also look into complaints and take *suo moto* notice of matters relating to deprivation of women's rights; non-implementation of laws enacted to provide protection to women and also to achieve the objective of equality and development and non-compliance of policy decisions, guidelines or instructions aimed at mitigating hardships and ensuring welfare and providing relief to women.

18.18 Few issues, which are critical to the functioning of the Commission are its process and jurisdiction that have been raised since its inception, by the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women (PCEW), various Women's Groups, the Commission itself and now by the Ministry as well. This High Level Committee had organised an interface with the

former Chairpersons and Members of the Commission in January 2014, along with civil society representatives. They shared the same concerns¹⁹. The Commission under its own initiative had constituted a committee twice, to recommend amendments to the Act and redress the issues. One was under the Chairpersonship of Smt Vibha Parthasarathy and the second during Smt Mamta Sharma's tenure. However, those initiatives remained in the pipeline. The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women in its 12th Report had looked into the working and functioning of the National Commission and the State Commissions for Women²⁰. The issues dealt by them were primarily related to the functions of the Commission, additional powers to the Commission, accountability to the Parliament, mandatory consultations by the Ministries/Departments, budget allocation to the Commission and its staff strength.

18.19 The Commission also has the mandate to make recommendations to the Government for the effective implementation of laws affecting women. When these recommendations are submitted to the nodal Ministry, the normal pattern is to refer several of these recommendations to the State Governments as matters falling under "State jurisdiction" and set aside many others as matters "under consideration" with various Ministries and Departments. These reports and recommendations are never placed in the Parliament nor with the Parliamentary Committee. The PCEW in their report observed that the Commission does not get apprised of the status of recommendations submitted by them and that the manner in which the recommendations are handled reflects that the Ministry/Department of WCD does not take this apex body seriously.²¹

18.20 Further, under Section 16 of the Act, the Central Government is supposed to consult the Commission in all its policies affecting women. However, as a matter of practice, most cases are discussed by an inter-ministerial group and representative of the Commission is a member of that group. Moreover, other Departments do not necessarily consult the Commission regarding major policy decisions which pertain to women.²²

18.21 Recently, in order to give teeth to the Commission and bring it on par with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the Ministry of Women and Child Development had proposed amendments to the NCW Act. Some of the key amendments proposed are given below.

- The Prime Minister should select the Chairperson of the Commission rather than leaving it entirely to the discretion of the Minister of WCD;
- Only a retired judge of the Supreme Court or a retired Chief Justice of the High Court should be appointed as Chairpersons of the NCW;
- The NCW should be elevated to the status of a civil court and that its jurisdiction should also cover Jammu and Kashmir;
- The Commission should be given the power to order arrest and if a person who has been summoned fails to turn up, it should be able to impose a penalty of up to Rs. 5,000 for every incidence of default.

18.22 It has been reported that this proposal was struck down by the Law Ministry on the grounds that the proposal to vest punitive powers must lie only with the police and the judiciary, and cannot be vested with a Commission. Further, women's activists have also argued that a retired judge might not necessarily have the sensitivity to deal with women's issues.²³ However, the issue that the Commission (National and State) merely remains as a recommendatory body as it doesn't have the powers of a Civil Court..²⁴

18.23 The National Commission for Women, as an apex body is responsible for and answerable to 50% of the Indian population. The women's groups have also been vocal on selection and composition of the members of the Commission. The selection of the Chair and Members must be through a rigorous and transparent process. The Committee feels a High Powered Search Panel comprising experts and practitioners must be given the task of searching, identifying and recommending the names to the Government of such members who have proven expertise and knowledge of women issues and have been part of the Women's Movement. Appointments must be made keeping professional capability in mind and not political affiliations and a minimum number of 11 members should be there. Similarly, State Commissions are autonomous bodies and their constitution is the prerogative of the State.

18.24 Dr Mohini Giri, former Chairperson of the National Commission for Women (1994-98) who deposed before the Committee (January 2014), highlighted another important fact that under clause 3 of sub-section 3 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 (PHRA), the Chairperson of NCW with other such Commissions are deemed to be members of the National Human Rights Commission for discharging 9 out of 10 functions to be performed by

NHRC, under section 12 of the PHRA²⁵. This is unique in the world, as no other NHRI across the globe has that vantage position. The advantage of this mechanism according to Dr Giri was that the association, consultation and engagement with the NHRC brings the work of the NCW within the purview of the definition of Human Rights under the PHRA, 1993²⁶. However, the meetings now a days are far and few!

18.25 Furthermore, the NHRC is a member of the International Coordination Committee of the NHRIs but NCW has never been involved by the NHRC in these activities of ICC; the deemed members are treated as second class and ornamental members of the NHRC. This is further established by the fact that in 2013, the ICC organized its 11th International Conference in Jordan on “The Human Rights of Women and Girls, Gender Equality: The Role of National Human Rights Institutions”.²⁷ The delegation from India had only men and NCW Chair was nowhere on the scene. Such institutional lapses need to be looked at by the Parliament and the PHRA amended, if necessary.

18.26 The PCEW had observed that in many States, the Commissions are not functioning properly, some do not have a Chairperson or members and many are not reconstituted due to political reasons.²⁸ Further, the status and powers of the Chairperson and Members in State Commissions across the States are not uniform. While in some States they hold the rank of a Minister in some they are equivalent to the rank of a Secretary. During the State visit to Uttar Pradesh, the members of the HLC were informed that even though the term of the Chairperson of the UP Women’s Commission is supposed to be seven years, in practice the term is extended on a yearly basis. There is a need to understand that for Commissions such as these, a certain degree of stability and freedom from political influences are crucial for them to carry out their functions in an effective manner.²⁹ Further, keeping in mind the large number of complaints received by the National Commission, if the State Commissions are strengthened, then individual cases can be dealt with at the state level and the NCW can get more involved in policy making decisions/roles.

18.27 During its interface with HLCSW, the members of the Commission also shared another important aspect that the Member Secretary should be the choice of the Chairperson, as it is very important for having consensus for the day-to-day functioning of the committee³⁰. During the interactions of HLC members with the representatives from State Women’s Commissions, some of the key problems faced by them across the States were:

- Absence of the parties during the case hearing, even after them being summoned by the Commission
- Non adherence to the Commission's recommendations by relevant institutions

These they said were practical obstacles faced by them in carrying out their duties in an effective manner.³¹

18.28 Lastly, during our interactions with SCW Chairs and members across states, it was felt that feminist approaches have not yet been adopted into the work of the Commissions. Cases are sought to be resolved mainly through the route of reconciliation, and what passes off as counselling requires a relook given the lack of professionalism or feminist approaches to such counselling.

18.29 Another issue highlighted during the Consultation and the State visits was the lack of coordination and communication between the State Commissions for Women and the National Commission for Women. State Commissions are constituted by the State Acts and there is no linkage in principle between the National and the State Commissions. It was felt that an annual meeting should be organized by the National Commission where representatives from various State Commissions could come together and discuss issues and future plans. The PCEW report states that the NCW had informed that they regularly interact with the State Commission by holding periodic meetings; however these meetings are not mandatory and no funds are allocated for such meetings.³²

18.30 Finally the Committee feels that the role of the Commissions, be it National or State Commissions, must go beyond the reactive interventions, to fulfil the proactive mandate of studying, recommending and influencing policies, laws, programmes and budgets to ensure full benefits to the stake holders.

National Mission on Empowerment for Women (NMEW)

18.31 NMEW is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) from the 11th Five Year Plan and approved for continuation in the 12th Plan with modifications. Launched with much fanfare on International Women's Day in 2010, the mandate of the Mission was to strengthen the inter-sectoral convergence and facilitate the process of coordinating all the women's welfare and socio-economic development programmes across ministries and departments. Its aim

was to provide a single window service for all programmes run by the Government for Women under the aegis of various Central Ministries. It was to comprise a National Mission Authority headed by the Prime Minister, a National Resource Centre for Women (NRCW) and a Central Monitoring Committee.

18.32 The Mission is now being implemented as part of Umbrella Scheme for Protection and Development of Women and comprises of the National Resource Centre for Women (NRCW) which is supposed to function as a domain-based knowledge centre on women's issues, the State Resource Centres for Women (SRCW), Pilot Convergence-cum-Facilitation Centre (PSK) at District, Tehsil/Block, Village/GP level (in select districts) – Poorna Shakti Kendra (PSK) and Village Convergence & Facilitation Service (VCFS) which will cover districts under BBBP Scheme of MWCD.

18.33 Though visualised in a Mission mode to address women's empowerment issues, NMEW never got operationalised in the Mission Mode. There was no autonomy accorded to the Mission nor were there any specific financial allocations given at the scale that other Missions in other Ministries are provided (NFSM, NRLM etc.). This, despite the fact that the constitution of NMEW was also accompanied by setting up of the National Mission Authority at the highest level, putting out the right message around the government's intention and firm will to secure gender equality.

18.34 While it is seen that the importance and criticality of convergence was put firmly at the centre stage when NMEW was conceived, in practice, apart from taking up Poorna Shakti Kendras (PSK) as pilots for achieving this convergence, NMEW got involved in implementation of various other projects and the day to day work of the Ministry. While the PSK model did show a great deal of promise, not enough effort was apparent in replicating the model and remained only at its experimental stage.

18.35 The concept of setting up a National Resource Centre for Women was ambitiously conceived way back in 1995. It was envisaged to be more in the form of a knowledge centre for gender issues, comprising of experts and holding an advisory position within the Government. This then got shifted in the NIPCCD office where it was reduced to a mere documentation centre. It was during this time that letters were sent to various Women's Studies Centre located throughout the country requesting for research studies to be sent to the NRCW so as to build up its documentation centre. While women's groups tried to revive the

discussion on setting up of the NRCW, the National Commission for Women requested it to be housed within the Commission. Hoping that the Centre would finally live up to its objectives, it was shifted to the NCW but even there it remained reduced to a documentation centre. The NRCW is now with the NMEW but even today it is struggling to find its position.

18.36 The Mission through the establishment of State level Gender Resource Centres had sought to improve the technical capabilities and perspectives from national level downwards, to be integrated into various agencies and programmes. This HLC, during its state visits, did come across commendable work being taken up by some GRCs even though they are lean in their set up. While it is indeed healthy that in the long run, such state level resource centres are supported by the State Governments, NMEW's squeezing on the financial front meant that they were not in turn able to set up the state level mechanisms adequately. This was therefore an under-utilised opportunity.

Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women (PCEW)

18.37 An important monitoring machinery to oversee women's empowerment in India was set up by the Parliament in the form of a Standing Committee on the Empowerment of Women in March, 1997. The Committee consists of 30 members, 20 from amongst the members of Lok Sabha, nominated by the Speaker and 10 nominated amongst the members of the Rajya Sabha, nominated by the Chairperson of Rajya Sabha. The term of the Committee is of one year.³³

18.38 The Committee has been primarily mandated with the task of reviewing and monitoring the measures taken by the Union Government in the direction of securing equality, status and dignity of women in all matters. The Committee also suggests necessary correctives for improving the status/condition of women in respect of matters within the purview of the Union Government and also considers the reports of the National Commission for Women and examines such other matters as may deem fit to them or are specifically referred to them by the Lok Sabha or Speaker and the Rajya Sabha or the Chairman.

18.39 The Committee since its inception - that is, from 13th Lok Sabha - has come out with a large number of Reports including the Action Taken Reports on a wide range of issues³⁴. To mention a few: Assessment of Educational Status of Women with Special Reference to the Girl Child (15 & 16 LS), Victims of Sexual Abuse and Trafficking and Their Rehabilitation

(15 LS), Working of NCW and State Commissions (15 LS), Women in Armed Forces (15 LS), MGNREGA and Empowerment of Women in Rural Areas (14 LS), Women Victims of HIV/AIDS (15 LS), Training and Empowerment of Women in Local Bodies (13 LS), Functioning of SHGs for Economic Empowerment of Women (14 LS), Functioning of Family Courts (13 LS) Working Conditions of Women in Handloom and Handicraft Sector (both 15 LS).

18.40 However, even after the Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women has been set up, it is seen that it is still the Department-Related Standing Committee on Human Resource Development (housed in the Rajya Sabha, with members from both Houses), which studies the Demand for Grants from the Ministry of Women and Child Development. While this was justified during that time period when the Ministry of Women and Child Development was not a full-fledged Ministry but only a Department in the MHRD, it is no longer justified that the Committee on Empowerment of Women is not being visualised as a department-related standing committee for MWCD. The rationale behind this is, the fact that this Committee which continuously picks up various subjects that pertains to women for detailed study, would be well conversant with issues pertaining to women in general and would be in a position to assess the Demand for Grants in a better fashion than the Standing Committee on HRD.

18.41 As this is a very important mechanism, the Parliamentary Committee on the Empowerment of Women must examine the gender implications of all proposed legislations. The Committee Members do interact with Stakeholders during their field visits, but its meetings are not open to civil society and women's groups. There is a need for the Committee to meet more often, and its meetings should be open to civil society groups as observers. This could be a 'Window' of opportunity for both the parties for exchanging views and inputs towards strengthening the processes related to women's empowerment.

Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB)

18.42 The Central Social Welfare Board came into being at a time when there was no Ministry for Social Welfare or Women and Child Development. The Board was then a network of the women's groups scattered all over the country engaged in what could be called services specifically to women.³⁵ While the issues relating to women at the Ministerial level were handled by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, the Board in initial

years played a critical role for social and economic activities for women, by linking with various Ministries and working through a large network of voluntary organisations and NGOs. Incidentally, the first Chairperson of the Board (Durgabai Deshmukh) was also a member of the Planning Commission of India and that made a great deal of difference. The Board as of date can be said to have lost that distinctive position.

18.43 As of today the Board is the apex structure at the national level and acts as an umbrella organisation networking through State Social Welfare Boards and thousands of voluntary organisations through them. Most of them addressed simple needs such as crèche for the children of women workers, family counselling centres and aid to various organizations that are working for the aged, handicapped and other such groups.³⁶ Apart from this, the Board also organizes programmes of training in social work and carried out pilot projects.

18.44 However, this institution, which was a major tool for administering various interventions related to women's development over the years, is said to have become insignificant and almost irrelevant now. It is given the task of channelizing and administering neglected schemes that have faulty design which will obviously lead to no impact or ineffective interventions. Short Stay Homes and the Creche Scheme, for instance, have very unrealistic cost norms that implementing agencies will obviously fail in delivering any effective results. These schemes are small in outreach, and have no visibility or political backing. In the year 1985-86 the board used to implement 17 programmes, this was reduced to less than 8 projects in the year 2012-13.

18.45 At this point one needs to realise that the Board has almost 6 decades of experience in promoting, coordinating and strengthening voluntary efforts in the country. It has a nationwide network of more than 10,000 voluntary organization capable of delivering several development services and has infrastructure in all States/UTs with a country wide monitoring machinery and staff with all State Boards. However, there is a need to ensure that appointments of the Chairperson and the Members of the Boards are based on their experience and expertise in relevant areas and not merely on political affiliations. At present, the position of the Chairperson of the CSWB has remained vacant for the past one year. During the State visits carried out by this Committee it was felt that in some states the positions held by various officers in the State Social Welfare Boards remained only in paper.

18.46 There is thus a need to revamp and restructure this body so as to ensure its utmost effectiveness. One needs to assess whether such a mammoth institution in terms and infrastructure and human resources is at all required to carry out its mandate which of course has been reduced since the time of its inception. If it is to be retained it then it could be aligned with the NMEW so as to broaden its reach. The Board could then take the role of an executing body while the latter provides technical support. On the other hand, if one wants to cut down on the structure then similar to the NIPCCD it could be limited to having regional centres.

National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD)

18.47 NIPCCD assists the Ministry of WCD in the areas of training and research. Objectives of the institute include the development and promotion of voluntary action in social development through training & capacity building of Government and Non-Government functionaries, taking a comprehensive view of child development through research and develop tools/design for supporting implementation of Government schemes and programmes and coordinate Meetings of MWCD with Stakeholders under different Schemes/Programmes and Policies for furthering the objectives and provide feedback.³⁷ It has regional centres in Lucknow, Bangalore and Guwahati and the new one is coming up in Mohali.

National Policy on Empowerment of Women, 2001 (NPEW)

18.48 In 1995, at Beijing the Government of India committed itself to frame a National Policy on Women. It took six years to fulfil that commitment and in 2001, the National Policy on Empowerment of Women was announced. This was the first and last policy on women as of date. This policy had a well-conceived section on institutional mechanisms.

National Policy on Empowerment of Women, 2001

11.1 Institutional mechanisms, to promote the advancement of women, which exist at the Central and State levels, will be strengthened. These will be through interventions as may be appropriate and will relate to, among others, provision of adequate resources, training and advocacy skills to effectively influence macro-policies, legislation, programmes etc. to achieve the empowerment of women.

11.2 National and State Councils will be formed to oversee the operationalisation of the Policy on a regular basis.

11.3 National and State Resource Centres on women will be established with mandates for collection and dissemination of information, undertaking research work, conducting surveys, implementing training and awareness generation programmes, etc. These Centres will link up with Women's Studies Centres and other research and academic institutions through suitable information networking systems".

18.49 Under the NPEW, National and State Councils were to be set up to oversee the operationalisation of the policy on a regular basis. The National Council was to be headed by the Prime Minister and the State Councils by the Chief Minister. The Councils were to comprise of representatives from various stakeholders including representatives of the concerned departments and Ministries, National and State Women's Commission, Central and State Social Welfare Boards, women's organisations, corporate bodies, trade unions, financial institutions, academic experts and social activists. The Councils were to meet twice a year and more importantly a National Developmental Council, a constitutional body of the erstwhile Planning Commission was also to be informed of their progress periodically.

18.50 However, neither the policy got operationalised nor the Councils were set up. Having the Prime Minister as the head of such bodies has been a trend in this country and the premise is that there is weight of the highest authority of the Government behind such bodies and decisions emanating from them. But, the fact remains and that has also been the experience of the earlier such bodies, that, due to other engagements, it has not been possible for the Prime Minister to attend the meetings. Such bodies thus have only "symbolic significance". For instance, the 1976 National Plan of Action had first envisaged the formation of a National Committee on Women to be headed by the Prime Minister. This body never met during its

first term. This Committee was reconstituted again and met only once (April 1978) and on being reconstituted, it again met once only in May 1988.³⁸ The National Mission Authority of the NMEW set up in 2010, to be headed by the Prime Minister, met with the same fate. Such has been the disappointing track record of these institutional bodies calling for empowerment of women.

Development Planning: Gender Budgeting & Gender Mainstreaming

18.51 The issues of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting have been addressed at length in the Chapter on 'Gendering Macro Policy: Gender Mainstreaming through Gender Responsive Budgeting'. It may however not be out of place to reiterate the need to strengthen the institutional mechanisms of gender responsive budgeting (GRB). India is amongst the first few countries in which the Ministry of Finance has played a critical role in institutionalising GRB. Not only has it been bringing out the gender budget statement every year, as stated earlier, but it has also provided a Charter for Gender Budget Cells formed in several Line Ministries and Departments. But of late, this role has been diminishing as the agenda of GRB and taking it forward has largely been relegated to the Ministry of Women and Child Development. It is therefore crucial that the Ministry of Finance plays a lead role and that there is coordination between the drivers of GRB.

Conclusions

18.52 When it comes to institutional mechanisms for women, various approaches have been adopted in terms of Welfare, Defence, Justice and Development starting from the way the departments have been named. In certain states, convergence between some related departments is created by the same Minister holding different portfolios (as in the case of Kerala, with the Social Justice and Panchayati Raj portfolios with the same Minister). In the case of Tamil Nadu, though there is no exclusive department for Women's Development, the general administrative culture of coordination and convergence ends up creating a positive environment for women-centric interventions to take off. However, while these institutional mechanisms have been established, a range of systemic and financial constraints seem to limit their effectiveness. Therefore, concerted efforts and innovative long term/integrated approaches to strengthen women's machineries are crucial and there is a need to ensure that accountability, adequate investments, and autonomy for these institutions, and that their partnerships/engagements with civil society organisations are maintained. It is also important

to ensure that decentralisation is sought as much as possible till the grassroots level: the real empowerment of female citizens of India would take place if women's machineries have a sensitive outreach and coverage in all development processes starting with planning, from the Palli Sabha upwards. This is what will allow majority of women in the country to directly partake in development.

18.53 A review of the existing institutional mechanisms could be carried out at the following four levels with the goal of making it more effective:

- Overall role, mandate and functioning
- Review of financial and human resource and infrastructure
- Institutional capacity for mainstreaming gender across government agencies/mechanisms.
- Partnerships/linkages with other stakeholders including civil society and women's organisations.

18.54 Finally, given that the role of the State has changed in the current development paradigm, it is important to re-visualise the kind of institutions and mechanisms that should now be devised in the present political economy. This aspect has received little attention. It is high time that this issue receives priority in the women's agenda.³⁹

Recommendations

18.55 Ministry of Women and Child Development

- ✓ Currently, a large amount of resources continue to be directed towards child development under the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Increased resources would enable prioritization of gender concerns as well.
- A balanced allocation in terms of infrastructure and human resources for both the Women and Child wing of the Ministry.
- ✓ Assessment of the status of women should be a regular feature. It took 25 years for India to have its First Status Report on Women and after that, it took almost 40 years to constitute the present High Level Committee, to come out with the Second Status Report. There should be a regular mechanism for continuous examination and assessment of the status of women and reporting back publically to the nation and

Seeking increased allocation for women

women of India on a bi-annual basis. This should also form the basis for informed and focused interventions.

18.56 National Commission for Women

- The Prime Minister should select the Chairperson of the Commission rather than leaving it entirely to the discretion of the minister of WCD and in a similar way, the Chairpersons of State Commissions to be appointed by the respective Chief Ministers.
- A High powered Search Panel comprising experts and practitioners of women's issues must be given the task of identifying and recommending such members who are professionals or are from the women's movement and have track of proven expertise of women's issues or movement.
- A minimum number of 11 members should be there in the National Commission of Women.
- The role of the National Commission for Women must go beyond reactive interventions to fulfil the proactive mandate of studying, recommending and influencing policies, laws, programmes and budgets to ensure full benefits to the stake holders.
- The Commissions (National and State) should not remain merely a recommendatory body and should be given more powers. The NCW should have power and status of that of the Civil Court and its jurisdiction should also cover Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Commissions (National and State) need to take up the role of an advisory body to the Ministry of Women and Child Development at the Central and WCD departments at the State level respectively and they should work in consultation with each other.
- There should be regular interaction between the National and State Women's Commission. The State Commissions should be mandated to report to the National Commission on a periodic basis.
- The State Commissions should also be strengthened and be given more financial and human resources.
- The performance assessment of the NCW may be done by the Government/Parliamentary Committee on an yearly basis.⁴⁰

NCW & SB
streamline
proceeding
selection for
Chairman
to permit its mandate

18.57 National Mission on Empowerment of Women

- NMEW, through its convergence mission, is very well-g geared towards playing a critical interventionist role in reaching the schemes across the last mile to the intended participants and therefore, this mechanism has to be used fully.
- The Mission should be the face of the Ministry and link with other Ministries to work towards achieving convergence on all women-related issues.
- Should work towards developing a pool of experts (full/part time) on various women-related themes so that their/its services could be utilized.
- Should be responsible for developing and maintaining relevant knowledge products and function as a repository of knowledge products on various women related themes.
- ✓ Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee is generally constituted sporadically; this should be institutionalized and should be made mandatory on the Committee to have regular and periodic meetings.

18.58 Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women

- The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women must examine the gender implications of all proposed legislations, policies and programmes.
- The Committee should also *suo moto* take up issues relevant for the development of women and children and take a proactive role in giving inputs towards policies and programmes through a gender lens.
- The Committee needs to meet more often (periodically on a regular basis), and its meetings should be open to civil society groups as observers.
- The Committee should be responsible for reviewing the work of the Ministry as a whole entity.
- This Committee should also study Demand for Grants and other related aspects of the Ministry's functioning.

18.59 Central Social Welfare Board

- There is a need to revamp and restructure the Central Social Welfare Board to ensure that it works more effectively on its mandate.

- Even though the Social Welfare Boards do consist of eminent social workers as Chairperson and non-official members, there is a need to ensure that appointments of the Chairperson and Members of the Boards are based on their level of experience and expertise in relevant area and not merely on political affiliations.
- Need to assess whether such a mammoth institution in terms of infrastructure and human resources is at all required to carry out the current mandate. It could be merged with a budding institute such as the NMEW so as to broaden its reach, wherein the Board could take the role of an executing body given its administrative capabilities, while the Mission takes forward its convergence agenda, research work and thematic agendas, given its technical expertise. On the other hand, if one wants to cut down on the structure then, similar to that of NIPCCD, it could be limited to having regional centres.
- Given the expertise of the CSWB in grant-making and interacting with grassroots level organisations, the grant making process of the Ministry to carry out various activities at State level could be entrusted to the Board through its State counterparts. It can be transformed into an umbrella body, through which a proper channel and check and balance system can be set up to give out grants for various schemes such as Swadhar/Short Stay Homes, Ujjwala, Working Women's Hostels etc.

18.60 National Institute on Public Cooperation and Child Development

- Given their expertise in the field of training and capacity development, NIPCCD could be identified and developed into an apex body to carry out all the trainings & capacity building activities, including the awareness generation programmes, on issues related to women and children.
- Trainings should not only be restricted to the in-house staff such as CDPOs, anganwadi workers etc; but should also include regular staff of the Ministry and other bodies under it (NCW, NMEW, RMK and others).
- Should work towards developing a pool of expert trainers (full/part time) and training kits/manuals on various women related themes.
- The reach and efficiency of NIPCCD should be extended and augmented beyond those organisations working for the development of women and children; but also to cater to educational institutions, corporate houses etc.

18.61 Gender Planning, Budgeting and Mainstreaming

- Gender Responsive Budgeting coupled with Gender Audits should be taken more seriously to reflect purposive Gender Planning and Gender Mainstreaming.
- Gender Mainstreaming of these institutions and mechanisms in itself is important.
- It is crucial that there is coordination between the drivers of GRB, ie., Ministry of Finance and Ministry of WCD.

The Pinnacle

The Committee strongly feels the need to revisit the ~~gender-architecture~~.

18.62 The Ministry of Women and Child Development has come of age from being a part of Social Welfare and Human Resource departments to a Ministry with Independent Charge and now a full-fledged Ministry with Cabinet Rank Minister. It is time now that the Ministry should revision its role in the National Processes for the advancement of Women. There is need to **redefine** and **reclaim** spaces in the overall Governance Structures from National to Local.

18.63 Inter-ministerial Coordination process needs to be institutionalised as much as the effective coordination between different sections of the Ministry itself. There is a need to review overall role, mandate and functioning of National Women Machineries (NWM), especially with respect to their role in policy, influence, coordination, mapping areas of overlapping and monitoring of gender equality commitments and investments across ministries / departments, looking at convergence across institutions and strengthening institutional capacities for mainstreaming gender across government agencies and mechanisms. There is as much need to review financial and human resources and infrastructure.

18.64 The Committee also feels, quiet strongly, that there is a need of a body, it may be given any name, with experts from different fields, who have an understanding of the development sector and gender issues, who can serve as the Think Tank for the Ministry and other mechanisms on issues of Policy, Legislations, analysing the policies of various Ministries and their impact, through a Gender Lens and advise the Ministry from time-to-time. It could help in framing the **Bill of Rights, National Policy on Anti-discrimination** and also a **Plan of**

Action for its roll out and operation. There should be a unit exclusively to monitor the implementation of this Policy. It is imperative that such a body has autonomy and adequate resources. It should collect and disseminate information on gender mainstreaming at the national, sub-national and local levels. It should link with the experts and the civil society groups. It could also be a platform for interaction amongst the Government, experts, academics, women study centres and other agencies that work for the advancement of Women and Girl Child; for free flow and exchange of ideas. Most important is that such a body should have complete autonomy. This body indeed, could be the backstopping space for the Ministry for Perspectives and Analysis, Information, Research and Knowledge Management.

18.65 It is not necessary that a new structure be created by the Ministry; bodies like the proposed NRCW or the National Institute of Women Affairs envisaged in the current budget (2015-16), could be strengthened and augmented along the perspectives stated above in order to realise the **Vision** and **Mission** of the Ministry.

¹ United Nations (1976), Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year, 19 June-2 July 1975, Mexico City (CONF.66/34, 76/IV.1), para. 46(n) available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/otherconferences/Mexico/Mexico%20conference%20report%20opimized.pdf>.

² United Nations (1980), Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, 14 to 30 July 1980, Copenhagen (A/CONF.94/35), para. 52 available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/otherconferences/Mexico/Mexico%20conference%20report%20opimized.pdf>.

³ United Nations (1995), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. (A/CONF.177/20), New York, UN Division for the Advancement of Women, paras 201, 203, 204 and 207 available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/otherconferences/Mexico/Mexico%20conference%20report%20opimized.pdf>.

⁴ Ibid; para 201

⁵ Ibid; para 205

⁶ Sadhna Arya, The National Commission for Women: A study in performance at page 1, available at file:///C:/Users/UNDP/Downloads/NCWreport.pdf on 15th May 2015.

⁷ Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, Country report, Government of India, Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development at page 2.

⁸ Vina Mazumdar, Kumud Sharma, Nirmala Buch and C P Sujaya, Gender and Governance: A Country Paper, India, 2001, Centre for Women's Development Studies at page 69.

⁹ Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing (1995); op.cite at page 56.

¹⁰ Devaki Jain, Indian Perspective – Final Manuscript; Institutional Mechanisms for Women's Advancement; April 1999, Division of studies for Development (Paris, UNESCO) at page 23.

¹¹ Yamini Mishra, A budget for women, 25th February 2015, available at <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-budget-for-women/article6929819.ece> accessed on 17th May 2015

¹² The Hindu, Budget 2015: A Budget for Women; February 25, 2015 09:29 IST, available at <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/a-budget-for-women/article6929819.ece>

¹³ National Perspective Plan for Women (1988-2000); Report of the Core Group set up by the Department of WCD, Ministry of HRD, Government of India; 1988 at page (ii)

¹⁴ Reduced budgetary allocations will affect programs for nutrition, women and child welfare: Maneka Gandhi to Niti Aayog, 20th May 2015, available at <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-postpone-decision-on-funding-pattern-maneka-gandhi-to-niti-aayog-2087383> as on 21st May 2015.

¹⁵ Union Cabinet Ministers Maneka Gandhi and Birender Singh protest against cuts in budget allocation, 30th April 2015, available at <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics> as on 15th May 2015.

¹⁶ This information is gathered from the official web-sites of the respective State Governments and Departments of Social Welfare and Social Justice of the concerned states

¹⁷ Sadhna Arya (2015); op.cite at page 113.

¹⁸ NCW, About Us, available at <http://ncw.nic.in/firmAboutUS.aspx>, as on 17th May 2015.

¹⁹ Report on the Consultation on Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms to Actualize Women's Rights, Organised by HLCSW, January 28, 2014

²⁰ Report of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2011-12), op.cite at page 20

²¹ Ibid; at page 25.

²² Ibid at page 32.

²³ Law Ministry thwarts changes to the NCW Act, Indian Express, 13th October 2014 available at <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-law-ministry-thwarts-changes-to-ncw-act-2025495> as on 17th may 2015.

²⁴ Sadhna Arya, The National Commission for Women: An Overview of its performance, May 4, 2013 Vol XIVili no 112 18, Economic & Political Weekly at page 114.

²⁵ Consultation on Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms to Actualize Women's Rights organised by HLCSW (2014); op.cite.

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ 12th Report of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2011-12); op.cite; at page 53.

²⁹ Report of the state visit Uttar Pradesh, 6th April 2015.

³⁰ Consultation on Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms to Actualize Women's Rights (2014); op.cite

³¹ Reports on Interaction with the Members, Tamil Nadu Commission for Women, 28th – 30th December 2014 and Chairperson, Gujarat Commission for Women, 7th – 9th December 2014.

³² Report of the interaction with the Members, Tamil Nadu Commission for Women (2014); op.cite; page 41.

³³ http://parliamentofindia.nic.in/ls/intro/committee_on_empowerment.htm on 15th May 2015.

³⁴ In 13th Lok Sabha it came out with 18 Reports, 14th Lok Sabha – 22 Reports, 15th Lok Sabha – 22 Reports and in 16th Lok Sabha – 3 Reports; May 2015

³⁵ Devaki Jain, Indian Perspective – Final Manuscript; Institutional Mechanisms for Women's Advancement; April 1999, Division of studies for Development (Paris, UNESCO) at page 12.

³⁶ Central Social Welfare Board, About Us, available at <http://www.cswb.gov.in/index1.asp?linkid=230&langid=1>. as on 5th May 2015.

³⁷ NIPCCD, Effect of NIPCCD Training on functioning and programme implementation of NGOs, <http://nipccd.nic.in/reports/efftrg.pdf> as on 5th May 2015.

³⁸ C.P Sujaya, Institutional mechanisms for Women: A Critical Review, Indian experience, In the Indian Women's watch NGO Country Report: Beijing +10, From Shadow to Self, 2005 at page 128.

³⁹ C.P Sujaya (2005); op.cite at page 136.

⁴⁰ 12th Report of the Committee on Empowerment of Women (2011-12), op.cite at page 54.

Epilogue

'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' is a mantra by Prime Minister Modi which has generated a lot of hope in particular among those who are marginalized, poor and hopeless. Half of this constituency is women -- especially those from the communities of dalits, adivasis, minorities and those living in difficult situations due to destitutions and deprivations of all sorts and evidenced in this report. While undeniably there are women who demonstrate tremendous resilience and rise above the challenges, their number is miniscule. A very large number remains woefully incapable and feeble to become parts of the mainstream development paradigm and access what rightfully belongs to them. In the absence of proactive structural support embedded in inadequately resourced policy and legislative interventions and women sensitive program outreach, they are more often than not struggling to fend for whatever meagre they have rather than engaging in efforts to gain and enhance literacy, education, and entrepreneurial skills. A deeper analysis of the life situations in which girls grow up and women learn to live in India presented in this report suggests that change is not only painfully slow, it is ambivalent and in desperate need for clear directions.

There are multiple needs and aspirations of a woman at different life stages and in various life situations and also there are multiple constraints. The economic empowerment programs, opening of savings bank accounts, financial literacy, micro-credit programs and so on, must be developed within an overall framework of personal empowerment and with an aim to create agency and social capital to help them not only overcome the constraints but also to move forward with positive aspirations.

Our analysis suggests that comprehensive programming should have the ability to recognize and address needs and aspirations of women differentiated along the lines of caste, class, age and life stages/situation and other diversities. They should include measures to address overall health needs including sexual and reproductive health, need for literacy and education, and need for safety and violence free spaces.

The programming should also address and fulfill aspirations for personal and political growth, networking, social capital and life skills to access and utilize resources for entrepreneurial skills and growth. The programming should be determined by the perspective

that a woman is a rightful citizen with firm and clear commitments made by the Constitution of India sixty long years ago, and should be addressed holistically rather than in piece-meal manner,

How important is this perspective of recognizing and addressing multiple needs and aspirations couldn't have been more evident than in the case of a young adolescent girl whom we met during one of our field visits. She was aspiring to do computer course and wanted to be economically independent ("Kamaana Chahti hoon taki jo chahun wo kar sakoon – I want to earn so that I can do whatever I want to do) was dropped out of school just before she had her Board exam and was committed into an early marriage by her parents. In a conversation with us she was not sure if she wanted to marry and if after marriage her in-laws and husband would allow her to continue education and let her meet her aspirations. She was aware that there would be pressure to have children which she didn't want and the very thought of having a child when she herself was a child was overwhelming. She narrated her anxiety about marriage and certainly sounded fearful.

Studies have shown decreasing enrolment for girls in schools as they grow older. A mother told us that while she wanted her daughter to attend school but there were no facilities to take her to school and that there are no nearby schools. According to her; "I would rather have her married". In shelter homes and short stay homes we often met girls who were sent to the shelter homes by parents because they feared sexual violence from the men and boys in the community since the girl was approaching a 'vulnerable age' and said they can't take care of her. This was certainly pathetic and sad commentary and clearly highlighted how critical it is to address multiple needs!

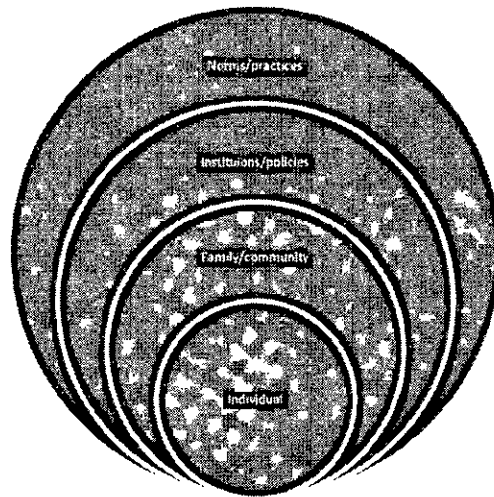


Figure: Eco-System perspective to explain the multilevel impact of the factors

Evidently, gender architecture of development programs embedded in budgeting and siloed, isolated, disjointed structures and programs should essentially take an eco-system perspective addressing needs, aspirations, and constraints of women and girls holistically. We have pictorially presented this perspective in figure above.

The eco-system framework posits that poor status of women is an outcome of interaction among many factors operating at various levels – the individual, the family/community, the policy/ institutions and the gender norms.

- At the individual level, caste, religion, ethnicity, age, education, occupation, income, and also attributes like self-esteem, confidence and aspirations determine the vulnerability and influence how one individual is going to be treated differently than the other. For example, in case of violence, according to the WHO¹ these factors increase the likelihood of an individual becoming a victim or a perpetrator of violence.
- At the family and community levels, strength and type of personal relationships, social capital and peer and network strength influence sustenance of inequitable norms or may challenge them or change them. For example, collectives of women if well-organized can empower women. In the absence of such collectives an individual woman may become vulnerable and may not have adequate support.

- The policy environment and institutional contexts either legitimize status quo of inequality or help in changing and challenging them. In last last few decades there have been several progressive policy and legislative initiatives – discussed in the report -- to provide greater equality and improve status of women and girls. However these legislations are not accompanied by commensurate changes in the culture of institutions. School and educational settings continue to practice hierarchical and inequitable practices. So are the various work settings including health and other institutions.
- Norms in particular inequitable gender norms operate across communities and institutions. They are responsible for programmatic ambiguities and less than convincing responses to address gender injustice and inequity. They also influence economic and social policies that maintain socioeconomic inequalities between people.

The indexing exercise that this Committee undertook to rank states along different dimensions of equality and discrimination, conditions and position of women demonstrates very clearly the point we are emphasizing – that the nation's interventions towards empowerment of women have to be multi-dimensional and comprehensive. States that have fared well enough on the political front have not been able to break the social shackles on women, or been able to improve the status of women on the health front, for instance.

Today's "Gender Architecture" of having a women's machinery fails in creating that favourable eco-system for women and girls because while the 'hardware' exists, the 'software' is not yet geared towards gender justice outcomes. This would come about if processes of gender sensitization at all levels (– frontline workers to judges in the judicial system), services of support of numerous kinds on various fronts to lakhs of women as individuals and collectives can be assured, and if direct participation and leadership of women in their development is facilitated. Immediate measures like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Abhiyan, as well as long term measures based in schools and education are all needed, for instance. Processes of empowerment thus unleashed should permeate all our institutions especially ones which hold the key to massive transformation, including religion as practised, family, marriage, educational, law and order, judicial, media and so on. We are convinced that the expectation that 'things will change and will change for better' will become a reality only if a woman and her realities are addressed with full appreciation and understanding of

multiplicity and interlinked factors operating within her eco-system. As we kept emphasizing throughout the report, amalgamating in the right way economic development, social justice with gender justice lent its primacy, and environmental sustainability holds the key to a bright future.

It took almost 25 years for the first High Level Committee to be set up and thereafter now four decades later the current committee came into existence. Rapidly changing situation of women with increasing vulnerabilities, there is an urgent need to periodically review the situation of women and suggest measures. We strongly believe that this kind of review should be an ongoing exercise. It is in this spirit and the felt need that we recommended in the chapter on institutional mechanism to set up a national body/institution that would ensure periodical reviews.

In the chapter on institutional mechanism we have recommended creation of an autonomous apex body which can help mainstream gender into policy making and its implementation through evidence based Gender Lens. It could help in framing the National Policy on Anti-discrimination and also a Plan of Action for its roll out and operation. It should collect, analyse and disseminate information on gender mainstreaming at the national, sub-national and local levels. It should link with the experts and the civil society groups. It could also be a platform for interaction amongst the Government, experts, academics, women study centres and other agencies that work for the advancement of Women and Girl Child; for free flow and exchange of ideas. Most important is that such a body should have complete autonomy. Such a body, indeed, could be the backstopping space for the Ministry for Perspectives and Analysis, Information, Research and Knowledge Management.

This report is a culmination of two years of poring over data and reports, widespread consultations, intense and insightful meetings, independent research and more importantly many hours of listening to women in the field. Putting together a comprehensive report drawing from the enormous amount of work that was undertaken by the civil society, various government agencies, academia and others in the last few decades and what we ourselves gathered during the course of this committee turned out to be a humongous task. Each of the Committee Members feels highly enriched by the process, and feels happy for having fulfilled our mandate to the best of our abilities.

We now urge the numerous stakeholders in the arena of women's empowerment and gender justice, mainly Union and State Governments to take the agenda of setting up this comprehensive 'empowering eco-system for gender justice' forward with utmost seriousness and commitment. The women and girls of India deserve no less.

¹ WHO; "The Ecological Framework" ;<http://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/ecology/en/> retrieved on May 29 2015

To be Published in the Gazette of India
(Part I Section 1)

No.4-5/2009-WW
Government of India
Ministry of Women & Child Development

Shastri Bhavan, New Delhi,
Dated the 27th February, 2012.

RESOLUTION

The Government of India constituted a Committee on the status of women in 1971 to assess the impact of the constitutional, legal & administrative provisions on the social and economic status of women in India. This Committee submitted its report titled "Towards Equality" in December, 1974. Since submission of the Report, a number of initiatives have been taken both by Government and the Civil Society Organisations to improve the socio-economic and legal status of women. These efforts have led to a change in the perception of society towards identity of women and acceptance of their rights to opportunities and resources.

2. The Committee of Governors constituted to 'Study and Recommend Strategies for Speedy Socio-Economic Development and Empowerment of Women', in its report dated 3rd February, 2009 recommended setting up of a National Commission on Status of Women to look into the current status of women and the outcome of various development programmes relating to women's empowerment. The Group of Ministers which examined the recommendations of the Committee of Governors endorsed this proposal and recommended setting up of a High Level Committee with an eminent expert as a Chairperson.

3. Keeping in view the above development, the Government of India has approved setting up of a High Level Committee on the status of women to undertake another comprehensive study to understand the status of women since 1989 as well as to evolve appropriate policy interventions based on a contemporary assessment of women's needs.

4. The composition of the Committee shall be as under:-

i.	Justice Ruma Pal	Chairperson
ii.	Prof Bina Agarwal.	Member
iii.	Dr Amita Singh.	Member
iv.	Dr Pam Rajput.	Member
v.	Ms Rita Sarin.	Member
vi.	Dr Manorma Singh.	Member


vii.	Dr Shantha Krishnan.	Member
viii.	Dr Minnala Devi.	Member
ix.	Ms Manira A Pinto.	Member
x.	Smt Vijayluxmi Kol.	Member
xi.	Ms Pratima Thami.	Member
xii.	Mrs Suman Kumar.	Member
xiii.	Mrs Anusuiya Sharma.	Member
xiv.	Dr Simrit Kaur.	Member
xv.	Smt Deepa Jain Singh.	Member Secretary

5. The Terms of Reference of the above High Level Committee (HLC) are as follows:-

- a) The HLC will conduct an intensive literature survey to take stock of published data, reports, articles and research from about 1989 onwards, on the status of women in India.
- b) The HLC will prepare a Report on the current socio- economic, political and legal status of women in India. The Report will also bring out the interconnectedness of these aspects in terms of their impact on women and recommend measures for holistic empowerment of women.
- c) The HLC will examine the overall status of women including, inter-alia, the socio-economic, health and nutritional, legal and political status, disaggregated by rural/urban, economic and social position (e.g. APL/BPL, SC/ST, single women, disabled women, migrant women) and wherever possible by minority status (e.g. muslims/others). The analysis would take account of cross-regional differences and focus on inequalities both within and outside the household. It would also assess the impact made by existing policies and legislative changes on equality, security and holistic empowerment of women, and will identify inequalities in policy and legislation as well as gaps in implementation.
- d) The HLC will, inter-alia, examine:
 - i. women's access to and participation in formal and informal paid employment; emerging areas of participation, geographical pattern of their economic activity, unpaid work/ care economy, etc
 - ii. their asset base and income levels, access to and control over property, land and other productive resources.

- iii. access to micro-finance, bank credit, training and skill upgradation, marketing etc and constraints on increase in productivity.
 - iv. societal attitude to women and changes therein- discrimination as reflected in declining sex ratio in different age groups, age at marriage, involvement in decision making; and changes in the extent and nature of violence and abuse of women, both within and outside the house; and other forms of discrimination on account of customary practices.
 - v. level of socio-economic development in terms of relevant indicators of health, nutrition and education.
 - vi. impact of laws on women and gaps in respect of laws which are directly focused on women as well as those which affect women indirectly. While doing so, the Committee would also look into women's awareness of the laws, access to law, women's inability to use laws effectively, sensitivity of law enforcement agencies as well as the judiciary, role of caste panchayats and other customary practices, condition of women in prisons and other custodial institutions.
 - vii. change in women's political status with respect to their participation in Panchayats, State Legislature and Parliament, the nature and extent of participation, challenges and impact of change in women's political status on their socio-economic empowerment.
 - viii. Assess the impact of major women centric programmes and schemes on improving the overall status of women including, inter-alia, socio-economic, health, and nutritional, legal and political.
 - ix. Any other issue that the Committee may think is of relevance, within the above framework, for determining the status of women.
- e) The Committee would identify areas of intervention and recommend measures for affirmative action by the Government for the holistic empowerment of women.
 - f) The Committee will complete its assignment and present its report to the Ministry of Women and Child Development within two years.
 - g) During its tenure and prior to submission of the final Report, the HLC may bring out working papers/background papers.
 - h) The Committee will devise its own procedure to conduct the study.
6. The above High Level Committee will be provided all possible assistance by all Ministries/ Departments and other bodies under the Government to ensure timely collection of data and information to facilitate their task.

7. The HLC may invite such person(s) as it deems appropriate, to participate in any of its meetings as special invitee(s).
8. The Committee will be located under the Ministry of Women and Child Development and will be provided required office space cum equipment and secretarial/ other staff.
9. The other terms and conditions including entitlements of Chairperson and Members/ Member Secretary will be issued separately.
10. The expenditure involved will be borne by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

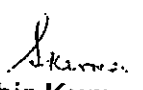

(Sudhir Kumar)
Additional Secretary to the Government of India

ORDER

Ordered that a copy of the Resolution be communicated to

- i) The Chairperson, Members and Member Secretary of the High Level Committee.
- ii) All the Ministries/ Departments of the Government of India and to all State Governments/ UT Administrations.

Ordered also that the Resolution be published in the Gazette of India (Extraordinary) for general information.


(Sudhir Kumar)
Additional Secretary to the Government of India

To
The Manager
Government of India Press
Mayapuri, New Delhi.

(To be Published in the Gazette of India Part I Section 1)

No. 4-5/2009-WW(HLC)
Government of India
Ministry of Women & Child Development

Shastri Bhavan, A Wing,
Dr. R.P Road, New Delhi-110001,
Dated the 21st May, 2013

NOTIFICATION

The Government of India had set up a High Level Committee on the Status of Women to undertake comprehensive study to understand the status of Women since 1989 as well as to evolve appropriate policy interventions based on a contemporary assessment of women's needs vide this Ministry's Resolutions No. 4-5/2009-WW dated the 27th February, 2012 and 29th June, 2012 comprising of Chairperson, Member Secretary and seventeen Members.

2. Consequent upon the resignation of the Chairperson, Member Secretary and three Members of the Committee, the High Level Committee is reconstituted as under:-

1	Dr. Pam Rajput	Chairperson
2	Dr. Simrit Kaur	Member
3	Ms. Razia A.R Patel	Member
4	Dr. Mridul Eapen	Member
5	Ms. Manira Pinto	Member
6	Ms. Monisha Behal	Member
7	Ms. Kavita Kuruganti	Member
8	Prof. Darshini Mahadevia	Member
9	Dr. Amita Baviskar	Member
10	Ms. Bindu Ananth	Member
11	Ms. Rita Sarin	Member
12	Dr. Ravi Verma	Member
13	Dr. R Govinda	Member
14	Secretary(WCD)	Member Secretary

3. The terms of Reference of the above High Level Committee shall remain as follows:-

a) The HLC will conduct an intensive literature survey to take stock of published data, reports, articles and research from about 1989 onwards, on the status of Women in India.

b) The HLC will prepare a report on the current socio-economic, political and legal status of Women in India. The Report will also bring out the interconnectedness of these aspects in terms of their impact on women and recommend measures for holistic empowerment of women.

c) The HLC will examine the overall status of women including, inter- alia, the socio-economic, health and nutritional, legal and political status, disaggregated by rural/urban, economic and social position (e.g. APL/BPL, SC/ST, single women, disabled women, migrant women) and wherever possible by minority status e.g muslims/others). The analysis would take account of cross-regional differences and focus on inequalities both within and outside the household. It would also assess the impact made by existing policies and legislative changes on equality in policy and legislation as well gaps in implementation.

d) The HLC will, inter-alia, examine:

i) Women's access to and participation in formal and informal paid employment, emerging areas of participation, geographical pattern of their economic activity, unpaid work/ care economy, etc.

ii) Their asset base and income levels, access to and control over property, land and other productive resources.

iii) Access to micro- finance, bank credit training and skill up gradation, marketing etc. and constraints on increase in productivity.

iv) Social attitude to women and changes therein, discrimination as reflected in declining sex ratio in different age groups, age at marriage, involvement in decision making and changes in the extent and nature of violence and abuse of women, both within and outside the house and other forms of discrimination on account of customary practices.

v) Level of socio-economic development in terms of relevant indicators of health, nutrition and education.

vi) Impact of laws on women and gaps in respect of laws which are directly focused on women as well as those which affect women indirectly. While doing so, the Committee would also look into women's awareness of the laws, access to law, women's inability to use laws effectively, sensitivity of law enforcement agencies as well as the judiciary, role of caste panchayats and other customary practice, condition of women in prisons and other custodial institutions.

vii) Change in women's political status with respect to their participation in panchayats, states legislature and parliament, the nature and extent of participation, challenges and impact of change in women's political status on their socio- economic empowerment.

viii) Assess the impact of major women centric programmes and schemes on improving the overall status of women including, inter- alia, socio-economic, health, and nutritional, legal and political.

ix) Any other issue that the Committee may think is of relevance, within the above framework, for the status of women.

e) The Committee would identify areas of intervention and recommend measures for affirmative action by the Government for the holistic empowerment of women.

f) The reconstituted Committee will complete its assignment and present its report to the Ministry of Women and Child Development within two years.

- g) During its tenure and prior to submission of the final Report, the HLC may bring out working papers/ background papers.
- h) The Committee will devise its own procedure to conduct the study.
4. The High Level Committee will be provided all possible assistance by all Ministries/ Department and other bodies under the Government to ensure timely collection of data and information to facilitate their task.
5. The HLC may invite such person (s) as it deems appropriate, to participate in any of its meetings as special invitee(s).
6. The office of the Committee is located at 4th floor, Crescent Tower, office of the Central Social Welfare Board, 12, Qutub Institutional Area, Satsang Vihar, New Delhi-110067.
7. The terms and conditions in respect of reconstituted High Level Committee, including entitlements of Chairperson, Member Secretary and Members will be issued separately.
8. The expenditure involved is being borne by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.


(Amit Ray)
Director

ORDER

Ordered that a copy of the Notification be communicated to:-

- i) The Chairperson, Members and Member Secretary of the High Level Committee.
- ii) All the Ministers/ Department of the Government of India and to all State Government /UT Administrations.
- iii) Executive Director, Central Social Welfare Board, Crescent Tower, office of the Central Social Welfare Board, 12, Qutub Institutional Area, Satsang Vihar, New Delhi-110067

Ordered also that the Notification be published in the Gazette of India (Extraordinary) for general information.


(Amit Ray)
Director

To

The Manager
Government of India Press
Mayapuri, New Delhi.

Note:

Dr. Amita Baviskar never joined the Committee.

Dr. R. Govinda, Dr. Darshini Mahadevia and Ms. Monisha Behal resigned from the Committee for Personal Reasons

Ms. Manjula Krishnan was Member Secretary for a period

Appendix B

Members of Task Forces

Economic:

1. Dr. Jayati Ghosh
2. Dr. Nirmala Banerjee
3. Dr. Saraswati Raju
4. Dr. Asha Kapoor Mehta

Law:

1. Justice Prabha Sridevan
2. Prof. Mool Chand Sharma
3. Ms. Kirti Singh
4. Ms. Flavia Agnes
5. Ms. Geeta Devi Pappanna

Socio-Cultural:

1. Prof. Poonam Dhawan
2. Dr. Indu Agnihotri
3. Dr. Malika Basu
4. Prof. Veena Poonacha

Governance:

1. Dr. Rekha Choudhury
2. Dr. Usha Thakar
3. Dr. Manvinder Kaur
4. Dr. Pallanithurai
5. Dr. Bhim Raskar

Media:

1. Ms. Pamela Philipose
2. Ms. Usha Rai

Education:

1. Prof. Karuna Chanana
2. Prof. Mary John

Appendix C

Resource Persons and Experts Invited for Interaction

1. Dr. Wajahat Hbibullah, Chair Person, National Commission for Minorities, Government of India
2. Dr. C. Chandramouli, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, Government of India
3. Dr. Sukhdeo Thorat, Former Chair Person, India Council of Social Science Research, Government of India
4. Dr. Ravinder Kaur, Professor, Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi
5. Dr. Neelam Grewal, Director, National Research Centre for Women in Agriculture, Bhubaneswar, Odisha
6. Dr. Mary E. John, Senior Fellow and Professor, Centre for Women Development Studies, New Delhi
7. Dr. Rashmi Singh, Former Executive Director, National Mission for Empowerment of Women, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India
8. Dr. Priya Nanda, Group Director, Reproductive Health and Economic Development, International Centre for Research on Women, Asia Regional Office, New Delhi
9. Delegation of Chinese Feminist Economists, People's Republic of China that visited HLCSW on 13 November 2013

Appendix D

Background Papers / Studies

1. Dr. Veena Poonacha: Violence Against Women: A Question of Equality and Justice
2. Indu Agnihotri: Addressing Poverty Amidst Growth and Democracy without Equality: The Challenge for the Women's Movement in India
3. Dr. Mohini Giri: Elderly Women and Widows
4. Aniths Gurumurthy and Nandini Chami: Digital Technologies and Gender Justice in India – An Analysis of Key Policy and Program Concerns
5. Dr. Subrat Das and CBGA Team: Fiscal Policy Regime and Gender Responsive Budgeting
6. Ms. Dharmistha Chauhan: Women in Organised Sector
 - : Women Friendly Infrastructure
 - : Gender Equality Investments in Chosen Dimensions of Empowerment
7. Ms. Indrani Mjumdar: Migration
8. Dr. Asha Kapoor Mehta: Women and Poverty
9. Dr. Shankar Datta:
10. Ms. Usha Rai: Working Conditions of Women in India Media
11. Ms. Pamela Philipose: Women and Indian Media
12. Ms. Aditi Kapoor: Women, Environment and Climate Change
13. Prof. Karuna Chanana: Gendered Socialisation and Education
 - : Women in Higher Education
14. Ms. Gauri Srivastava: Gender, Education and Policy
 - : Gender Concerns in Curriculum
15. Ms. Gauri Srivastava: Schemes and Programmes for Girls in Education
16. Prof. Janaki Rajan: School Education of Girls
17. Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal: Role of Open Schooling in Girls' Education
18. Dr. Anitha Kurup: Women in Science
19. Prof. Debal Singha Roy: Open and Distance Higher Education
20. Dr. Aarti Shrivastava: Gender, Education and Employment
21. Ms. Venita Kaul: Early Childhood Care and Education
22. Prof. Sudesh Mukhopadhyay and Ms. Lilly Vishwanathan: Girls and Women with Disabilities

23. Ms. Shalini Joshi: Women and Literacy
24. Dr. Ameer Sultana: Women in Decision Making
25. Ms. Rasalika Singhania, Ms. Surabhi Mall and Dhivya.S; IFMR Trust

: Women in Rural Cooperatives
: Women and Trade
: Women in Corporate Sector

- Dr. Nizamuddin Khan, Mr. Abhishek Gautam, Ms. Roshni Rai and Ms. Ketaki Nagaraju from ICRW, New Delhi helped in the Chapter, India Demographic Profile: Gender Composition.
- Balakrishna Padhi and Mr. Thomas Mathew from CDS, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala helped in data collection for chapters on Economy and Women.
- Many Women's Studies Centres across the country shared their Research Studies with the Committee.
- Special Thanks to Dr. Vikas Rawal and Dr. Partha Saha for sharing a yet to be published paper

Reviewers

1. Dr. Bina Agarwal
2. Dr. V Rukmini Rao
3. Dr. Manvinder Kaur
4. Ms. Kamal Singh

Appendix E

Deposition by Dr. V Mohini Giri, Former Chairperson, NCW My Observations on the National Commission for Women

I wish to congratulate the Chairman and the organizers of the High Level Committee on the status of women, for its very timely intervention, coming as it is after 20 years of passing of the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 and the establishment of the Commissioner.

I have been requested to depose as a former chairperson of the National Commission For Women which post I held from 1994 to 1998. The PHRA 1993 under Section 3 clause 3 provides for the chairpersons of the National Commission for Women, the National Commission for Minorities, The National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes to function as “deemed to be members of the NHRC”, for discharging 9 out of 10 functions to be performed by the NHRC under section 12 of the PHRA, 1993. I therefore had the privilege of serving the NHRC in this capacity under the first chairmanship of Justice Ranganath Mishra as well as thereafter under the chairmanship of Justice Venkatachailaih.

The provision of PHRA, 1993, providing for deemed chairman of Women’s Commission is unique in the world and no other NHRI across the globe today is in this vantage position of benefitting from the expertise, experience and institutional history and learning of 4 thematic NHRIs that were in existence prior to the establishment of the NHRC. It is therefore my duty now as a member of the civil society in India continuing to work for the protection and promotion of human rights, from particularly my engagement with women and the elderly,

- To pinpoint the strengths of such a mechanism;
- Indicate what used to be the practice;
- Evaluate what has actually taken place in the past ten years after my demitting office and
- The proposed changes that urgently need to be carried.

During my tenure as a deemed member, particularly during the chairmanship of Justice MN Venkatachalaiah, these meetings used to be held on a regular basis. I remember that association, consultation and engagement with the NHRC since it contributed greatly to the

work I led with the NCW and brought our work in the NCW within the purview of the definition of Human Rights under the PHRA, 1993.

However, I am appalled to see thereafter, that between January 1998 to April 2008 that the meetings of the full commission including the deemed members during this ten year period taken place on 26 occasions only. Five of them in the year 1998, 4 of them in the year 1999, once in the year 2000, four times in the year 2001, four times in the year 2002, twice in the year 2003, once in 2004, twice in 2005 and one each in the years 2006, 2007 and 2008. This alone will speak of the importance given by NHRC to the meetings of the deemed commission for women.

The NHRC has always been and even now continues to be an A grade member of the International Coordination Committee of NHRIs with its headquarters located in the office of the high commissioner for human rights in Geneva. It is by virtue of this position, that NHRC as an A grade member, participated, prior to 2006 in the annual meetings of the United Nations Human Rights Commission and thereafter in almost all meetings of the UN Human Rights Council. The NHRC was also a founding member of the Asia Pacific forum of National Human Rights Institutions with its headquarters in Sydney. The NHRC has chaired the ICC as well as the APF on several occasions, but sadly so in the past 20 years, the deemed members of the NHRC have never had an opportunity- not even once- to attend a business meeting of the ICC, any of the UN human rights commission, bar UN human rights council meetings, any of the international conferences organized by the ICC, any of the 18 annual conferences of the APF or benefit from the capacity building programmes conducted by the APF for its constituent members and its staff. Clearly, therefore, the leadership of the NHRC has not treated its deemed members of the NCW with the statutory responsibility to do so at its command and we the deemed members have from this track record only seen to have been treated as second class ornamental deemed members of the NHRC! Hence, the existing thematic National Human Rights Institutions in India, namely the NCW, NCM, NCSC, NCST, NCPCR, the CIC, CPWD and the National commission for Safai Karamcharis, all technically deserve to be invited by the NHRC to the ICC for membership, although the NHRC could be the speaking, voting member.

I am pained to say that it has been over a year of the now known Delhi rape incident. Sadly these incidents have multiplied several folds in the past one year. It is sad for people like me who had led the women's commission in this country to note that when

the government decides to constitute a committee, to propose changes to laws governing violence against women in the country, neither the NCW, nor the NHRC nor any of the deemed members of the NHRC were considered by the government for this honourous task that late Justice Verma so efficiently and meticulously performed with esteem. That goes to show in what esteem the NCW is held today!

Even the world Conference against Racism that took place in Durban in the year 2001, was not a venue where the NCW was thought fit to be invited. Leave alone going to Durban, where I was present, as a representative of civil society(I had by then demitted my office in NCW) and where the issue of caste discrimination was loudly and clearly debated and where the NHRC rightfully took a positive stand, the deemed members of the NHRC, in particular, the chair of the SC commission was not even part of the consultations that the NHRC organized across the country.

Last year, the ICC organized its eleventh international conference in Amaan, Jordan titled **'The Human Rights of women and girls, gender and equality- the role of National Human Rights Institutions'**. The chairperson of the women's commission was not to be seen and the entire delegation that went to this conference were men it is pertinent to mention that for the past ten years, the commission, does not have a single women member as a full member of the NHRC. That goes to show how the government is treating women! During my tenure as chairperson we had a close link and we worked together on many such issues.

The above two are just examples of many an opportunity where the deemed members could have played a role.

Domestically, I am very happy to see that NCW has been organizing a series of public hearings on atrocities against dalits and women in different parts of the country for the past 2 years. It is pertinent to note, that on all these exercises, it's deemed members, namely the chairpersons of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, have not only been conspicuously absent, but perhaps were not even invited.

However, I'm sad to note that after the recommendations are submitted to the government, no 'action taken report' comes from the government and it's quite pointless to even spend money on these conferences.

The above therefore, calls for a very urgent introspection from within the full members of the NCW as well as an assertion by the deemed members of the NHRC to ensure that this historic opportunity of working collectively for protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms is not lost. We have this unique institution globally to showcase. Let us protect what exists and develop it further to ensure better implementation of the 9 put of 10 functions mandated to be carried out by the NCW in India.

It is time, parliament's scrutiny over such institutional lapse is improved and further amendments are made to the PHRA, 1993 for its effective function.

The government has to remember that Section 3 now needs to be amended, since newer NHRIs have been created, namely, NCPCR, the CIC, National Commission for Safai Karamcharis and the Central Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. This is urgent and the rules and the regulations of the NHRC have to be amended to pave the way for the meticulous details for this delicate institutional creation of full and deemed members to blossom and function as state funded institutional human rights defenders in India.

I am not mentioning the selection process of the NCW chair and members, not mentioning the changes required in the Act as all these points were discussed at the meeting.

Appendix F

Letter to the Chief Secretary of States:

Dear

I am sure you are aware that the Govt. of India has constituted a High Level Committee (HLCSW) as per the Terms of Reference of the HLCSW (copy enclosed), the Committee will attempt to assess the current status and impact of existing policy and legislative changes on equality and rights of entitlements of women, gaps in implementation, and emerging challenges in the following broad sectors

Health (*women's right and access to health, morbidity, mortality, life cycle approach, food and nutritional security etc*)

Violence against women (*particularly conceptualisation and definition of violence, evidence generation, primary prevention, data availability*) etc.

Economic (*land and property entitlements, changes in economic structure and employment and livelihood option, invisibility of women in educated employed, unpaid care work, skilling levels etc*)

Socio cultural (*social attitudes, patriarchy, customary practices, etc*)

Legal (*women specific legislations, implementation mechanisms, law and justice response system, etc*)

Education (*role of State and markets, accessing the still excluded groups, etc*)

Environment (*vulnerability of women and climate change, impact of privatisation of natural resources etc*)

Media (*stereotyping and commoditization of women, sensitivity in reporting*)

The general principles that underline the above are inter-sectoral connectedness, inclusiveness, (minorities, SC/ST) and capturing regional variations.

The Committee will be visiting different States with a view to secure a more representative opinion regarding the current status of women in different categories of life and trends of changes that have taken place in the last few decades. In this context, we are visiting the State of Uttar Pradesh by last week of February 2015. About 5 to 6 members of committee including Chairperson will visit the state. The exact programme of committee will be sent to you shortly.

It would be greatly appreciated, if the State Government can draw up a suitable program for the Committee to meet and interact with representative categories including government officers of various Departments (*particularly Home, Education, Social /Tribal/ Rural development, Labour, Industry, Agriculture, local self government, Health, Planning etc*) non government organisations, Institutes of excellence, as well men and women from varied backgrounds, including those from marginalised and vulnerable communities.

I would also request that the Committee be assisted in identifying suitable districts for prospective visits based on following criteria- declining child sex ratio, high maternal and infant mortality rate, female literacy, high concentration of SC/ STs, female headed households, access to drinking water and sanitation. During the district visits, the Committee would like to interact with ground level functionaries and local community leaders and more importantly different categories of women such as:

- *Women's groups*
- *Urban working women*
- *Women farmers and agricultural labourers*
- *Home based workers*
- *Self help groups*
- *Women entrepreneurs*
- *Women in shelter homes*
- *Women in public life women from marginalised communities*

The Members of the Committee would also like to have a series of meetings with the various Stake Holders as follows during their visit:

1. State Level Meeting with different Departments and Agencies. (Home, Education, Social/Tribal/Rural development, Labour, Industry, Agriculture, local self-government, Health, Planning and Non-Government Organisations etc.)
2. Meeting with Women Development Corporation, State Social Welfare Board, State Commission for Women, State Human Rights Commission, State Mission for Empowerment etc.
3. Meeting with Civil Society Groups, Activists working on gender issues, Academicians and Educationists working on Women issues, NGOs, members of medical profession etc.
4. Members of Municipal bodies, Panchayats and its elected representatives.

In order that the Committee members are duly acquainted with gender developments in the State, it is requested that gender profile of the state, any evaluation or assessment studies undertaken for the programs of the government or on sectoral or thematic issues related to the welfare of women could also be sent in advance to the Committee's Secretariat.

I would also be grateful if the Members of Committee could be accorded **State Guest status** during their visit to Uttar Pradesh and appropriate arrangement for hospitality, travel etc is organised. The Committee would also like to call upon the Governor and the Chief Minister of the State during their visit. May I request that requisite arrangements for this be organised by the State authorities.

An early reply on the above is requested as it will enable us to undertake necessary preparations for the State visit in right earnest.

Appendix G

Statement showing the States visited by the Committee and the period of tour in each State:

Sr. No.	Name of State	Period of Tour
1	Odisha	September 18-19, 2014
2	Gujarat	December 8-10, 2014
3	Tamil Nadu	December 18-20, 2014
4	Punjab	January 14-16, 2015
5	Kerala	January 28-30, 2015
6	Nagaland	February 5-7, 2015
7	Uttar Pradesh	March 6-8, 2015

Eastern Regional Consultation on Adivasi Women at Bhubaneswar Date: September 16 to 17, 2014

This regional consultation covered the six States of Eastern Region comprising **Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.**

State Level Organisations that Organised and Hosted Consultations during HLCW's State Visits

1. NAWO, Odisha
 2. Women's Study Centre, Anna University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu
 3. Mahila Samakhya, Uttar Pradesh
 4. Chetna, Ahmedabad, Gujarat
 5. Centre for Women's Studies, Punjab University, Chandigarh
- Dr. Amit Shovam Ray, Director, CDS, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala facilitated an interaction with a committee of experts during Kerala State Visit
 - State Women's Development Corporations in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and Gender Resource Centres in Gujarat and Odisha facilitated visit to their offices and interaction with their team.

Appendix H

1st National Consultation:

Women in India – Articulating a Vision for 2030 at Vigyan Bhavan – 21st -22nd March 2013

Name of Participants:

S. No.	Name	Organisation
Speaker/Chair		
1	Dr. Indira Rajaraman	
2	Vimala Ramachandran	
3	Subhash Mendhapurkar	
4	Arjun Sheoran	Advocate, Punjab and Haryana High Court
5	Patricia Mukhim	
6	Poornima Chikarmane	
7	Chetna Sinha	
8	Nirmala Buch	
9	Meena Kandasamy	
10	Mobina Khan	
11	Mirai Chatterjee	SEWA
12	Madhu Sarin	
13	Dr. Lakshmi Lingam	
14	Meera Shenoy	Youth4Jobs
Participants		
15	Dr. Ritu Dewan	Centre for Women's Studies/Gender Economics
16	Dr. Sayed Tanveer Nasreen	
17	Sunitha Krishnan	
18	Dr Rosemary	
19	Angela Ralte	
20	Anand Pawar	SAMYAK
21	Sophia Khan	SAFAR
22	Bondita Acharya	
23	Indrani Bhattacharya	
24	Ginny Shrivastava	ASTHA
25	Ms Swarna Rajagopalan	
26	Ms Arundhati Dhuru	
27	Ms Amba Salelkar	
28	Ms Vasundhara	Vasundhara
29	Dr. Priya Balasubramaniam	Public Health Foundation of India

	(Balu) Kakkar	(PHFI), 4, Institutional Area, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110 070
30	Ms Shobhna Boyle	
31	Prof. Ruchira Gupta	40 Max Mueller, India International Centre, Library Block, 3rd Floor, Entrance: Gate Number 4, New Delhi, India
32	Navsharan Singh Ph D	Senior Programme Specialist, International Development Research Centre, 208, Jor Bagh, New Delhi 110003, India
33	Renu Wadehra	Senior Advisor Royal Norwegian Embassy New Delhi-110021 www.norwayemb.org.in
34	Professor Aasha Kapur Mehta	Indian Institute of Public Administration Indraprastha Estate Ring Road New Delhi – 110002
35	Sarojini NB	
36	Nandita Saikia	
37	Anja Kobacs	
38	Sanjay Srivastava	
39	Mrs. Padmaja Mehta	Senior Economic Adviser, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi- 110001
40	Ms. Rugmini S Parmar	Economic Adviser, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi- 110001
41	Ms. Sarita Mittal	JS&FA, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi- 110001
42	Dr. Dinesh Paul	Director, NIPCCD, 5, Siri Institutional Area, Hauz khas New Delhi 110016
43	Ms. Sarita Mittal	JS&FA Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi- 110001
44	Dr. Dinesh Paul	Director, NIPCCD, 5, Siri Institutional Area, Hauz khas New

		Delhi 110016
45	Shri. Parthapratim Mitra,	Chief Economic Adviser, Monitoring Wing, Ministry of Rural Development, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi - 110001
46	Dr. Mahi Pal, Director (P&P)	Ministry of Rural Development, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi – 110001
47	Dr. C. Chandramouli, I.A.S.	Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India
48	Dr. Vivek Joshi	Executive Director, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, New Delhi - 110 001
49	Prof. Jayanta. K. Das	National Institute of Health and Family Welfare,
50	Director, NIHFV	Baba Gangnath Marg, Munirka, New Delhi-110067
51	Dr. (Smt.) Indu Patnaik	Jt. Adv. (MLP/SP-OR/WGS), Planning Commission, Yojana Bhavan, Sansad Marg, New Delhi - 110 001
52	Dr. T. C. A. Anant	Secretary and Chief Statistician of India, M/o Statistics and Programme Implementation, Sardar Patel Bhawan, New Delhi – 110 001
53	Purnendu Banerjee	DDG
54	Smt. B. Bhamathi, Additional Secretary & FA	Ministry of Rural Development, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi – 110001
55	Suchetna Ghosh	Department of Social Work, University of Delhi, Delhi-110007
56	P M Nair.	Directorate General , National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Sector-1 R K Puram, New Delhi - 66
57	Mirai Chatterjee	SEWA
58	Roma Debarata	STOP
59	Ms Gayathri Sriram	Managing Director, Ucal Auto Pvt Ltd.
60	Ms Rajani Seshadri	Vice president, Tata Consultancy Services
61	Ms Rani Muralidharan	Executive Director, GK Sons Engineering Enterprises Pvt Ltd

62	Ms Latha Rajan	Director, Ma Foi Strategic Consultants
63	Ms Sushila Ravindranath	Consulting Editor, Financial Express
64	Seema Ajwani	Chairperson, IBM India, Women Leadership Council
65	Paroma Roy Chowdhury	Country Head Corporate Communications & Public Affairs, Google India
66	Kiran Mazumdar Shaw	The founder and chairperson of Biocon
67	Neelam Dhawan	Managing Director of Hewlett-Packard India
68	Priya Paul	Chairperson, Park Hotels
69	Preetha Reddy	MD Apollo Hospitals
70	Mallika Srinivasan	Director of TAFE- Tractors and Farm Equipment, India
HLCSW Members		
71	Dr. Pam Rajput, Member	
72	Ms. Rita Sarin, Member	THE HUNGER PROJECT
73	Dr. Manorma Singh	
74	Dr. Shantha Krishnan	
75	Ms. Manira A Pinto	
76	Smt. Vijayluxmi Kol	
77	Ms Pratima Thami	
78	Mrs. Suman Kumar	
79	Mrs. Anusuiya Sharma	
80	Dr. Simrit Kaur	
81	Smt. Deepa Jain Singh	
82	Dr. V.S.Elizabeth	
83	Razia Abdul Rahim Patel	
84	Dr. Naheed Soz	
85	Nandini Thockchom	
Participants from WCD Ministry		
86	Mrs. Padmaja Mehta	Senior Economic Adviser, Ministry of Women and Child Development
87	Ms. Rugmini S Parmar	Economic Adviser, Ministry of Women and Child Development
88	Ms. Sarita Mittal	JS&FA, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi- 110001
89	Dr. Dinesh Paul	Director, NIPCCD

90	Ms. Mamta Sharma	Chairperson, National Commission for Women
91	Prema Cariappa	Chairperson, Central Social Welfare Board
92	Smt.K. Ratna Prabha	Additional Secretary & Mission Director , National Mission For Empowerment of Women

2nd National Consultation on

Women and the Judicial System Organised on December 14 - 15, 2013

Venue: Hotel Taj Mahal, Mansingh Road, New Delhi

Name of Participants:

S. No.	Name	Organisation
Judges from Supreme Court and High Courts		
1	Hon'ble Justice Gyan Sudha Mishra	Supreme Court of India
2	Hon'ble Ms.Justice Harsha Devani	High Court of Gujarat, Ahmedabad
3	Hon'ble Smt. Justice Abhilasha Kumari	High Court of Gujarat, Ahmedabad
4	Hon'ble Ms.Justice Jayashree Tiwari	High Court of Allahabad
5	Hon'ble Justice Smt. B. Venkataramiah Nagarathna	High Court of Karnataka, Bangalore
6	Hon'ble Justice Smt. B. Shamachar Indrakala	High Court of Karnataka, Bangalore
7	Hon'ble Justice Smt. S. Vimla	High Court of Madras, Chennai
8	Hon'ble Justice Smt. Anjana Prakash	High Court of Patna, Patna
9	Hon'ble Justice Kumari Sanju Panda	Odisha High Court Bhuwneshwar
10	Hon'ble Smt. Justice Rekha P. Sondurbaldota	Bombay High Court
11	Hon'ble Justice Samapti	High Court, Calcutta

	Chatterjee	
12	Hon'ble Justice S. Vimala	Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court
13	Hon'ble Justice Indira Banerjee	High Court, Calcutta
14	Hon'ble Justice Kumari Geeta Mittal	Delhi High Court
15	Hon'ble Justice S. Muralidhar	Delhi High Court
16	Hon'ble Justice Mr. K. Kannan	Punjab and Haryana High Court
17	Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Sabina	Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh
	Hon'ble Mrs. Justice Daya Chaudhary	Punjab and Haryana High Court, Chandigarh
Participation by the Lower Judiciary		
1	Justice Ms D.R. Kharbteng,	Asstt. District and Sessions Judge, East Khasi Hills, District Shillong
2	Justice Ms P. N. Dave,	4th Addl. Sr. C J & Additional CJM, District Court Gandhinagar, Ahmedabad
3	Justice Chaitali Chatterjee	1st ADJ Burdwan West Bengal
4	Justice Ms. Jyotsna Yagnik	Principal Judge, Ahmedabad
5	Justice Smt. Pratibha	Civil Judge, Gaya, Bihar
6	Justice Smt. V. Jayashree	District & Sessions Judge, Balasore, Odisha
7	Justice Smt. Jotirmayee Acharya	Chief Judicial Magistrate, Phulbani, Odisha
8	Justice Smt. Mary Joseph	District & Sessions Judge, Palakkad, Kerala
9	Justice Smt. V. Shircy	District & Sessions Judge, Thalassery, Kerala
10	Justice Ms Susan V Pinto	Judge (CBI) City Civil Court Ahmedabad Gujarat
11	Justice Ms S.K. Bakshi	2nd Additional District Judge, Junagadh, Gujarat
12	Justice Mrs R A Ghoghari	2nd Additional District Judge, Vadodara, Gujarat
13	Justice Mrs. Mamta K. Chauhan,	Addl. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Ahmedabad
14	Justice Ms Babita Prasad	District & Addl. Sessions Judge,

		Bokaro
15	Justice Ms Kumari Ranjana Asthana	Deputy Secretary, JHALSA, Ranchi
16	Justice Ms Jyoti Kumari	J.M.-I- cum A.M.; Presently Officer on Special Duty (Computerization), Patna High Court, Patna
17	Justice Namita Singh	Civil Judge (J.D), Arrah, Bihar
18	Justice Rekha Bhargava	Additional District and Sessions Judge, Rajsamand, Rajasthan
19	Justice Smt. Indu Pareek	Civil Judge (SD)- Chief Judicial Magistrate, Churu, Rajasthan
20	Justice Ms Poonam Durgan	Deputy Secretary, Rajasthan State Legal Services Authority, Jodhpur, Rajasthan
21	Justice Ms Anuradha Shukla	Sessions Judge at Rewa, Madhya Pradesh
22	Justice Ms Sunita Yadav	Judicial Officer from Madhya Pradesh posted at Delhi
23	Justice Vibha Dwivedi	Civil Judge Junior Division on Probation, Buxar, Bihar
24	Justice Ms Shalini Singh Nagpal	Additional District and Sessions Judge Chandigarh
25	Justice Ranjula Bharti	Muzaffarpur, Bihar
26	Justice H S Dave	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
27	Justice Smt. Rajani Kumari	Judicial Magistrate Ist Class-cum-Additional Munsif VII-cum-Principal Magistrate Juvenile Justice Board, Munger
28	Justice Ms Sushma Cashyap	Sub-Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Lakhisarai
29	Tmt. Meena Satheesh	Sessions Judge, Mahalir Neethimandram, Chennai
30	Justice Smt. H.B. Muktha	I Addl. Prl. Judge, Family Court, Bangalore
31	Justice Smt. Shubha Gowder	L Addl. City Civil and Sessions Judge, Bangalore
32	Justice Smt. K. Kathyayani	XIII Addl. Judge, Court of Small Causes, Bangalore
33	Justice Ms Manjot Kaur	Additional District & Sessions Judge, Mohali

34	Justice Ms Reena Singh	Judge, Family Court, Patiala House Court, New Delhi
35	Justice Ms Madhu Jain	Judge, Family Court, South & South-East, Saket, Delhi
Participation as Experts		
1	Prof. (Dr.) Ranbir Singh	Vice-Chancellor, National Law University, Delhi Vice-President, SAARC Law (India) Chapter
2	Mr. Mrinal Satish	Associate Professor National Law University, Delhi
3	Prof. M P Singh	Chairperson of Delhi Judicial Academy, Delhi
4	Ms Sheila Jayaprakash	
5	Prof. Dr. T.V. Subba Rao	Director, Research and Development Chairperson, U.G. Council National Law School of India University, Bangalore 560 072
6	Prof. Asha Bajpai	TISS, Mumbai
7	Prof. Balram Gupta	Director, National Judicial Academy Bhopal
8	Ms Geetha Devi M. Papanna	Advocate
9	Ms Indu Agnihotri	CWDS, Delhi
10	Mr. Jawahar Raja	Advocate, Delhi
11	Prof. Poonam Saxena	Vice Chancellor, NLU Jodhpur
12	Ms Kirti Singh	Advocate, Delhi
13	Ms Safia Zameer	Lucknow
14	Ms Flavia Agnes	Majlis, Mumbai
15	Ms Seema Thakur	
HLCSW Members		
1	Prof. Pam Rajput	Chairperson
2	Ms Manira Pinto	Member
3	Ms Razia Patel	Member
4	Ms Rita Sarin	Member
5	Dr. Ravi Verma	Member
6	Dr. R. Govinda	Member

3rd National Consultation on Women and Media on *February 4-5, 2014 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi*

Name of Participants:

S. No.	Name
1	A. K. Jain
2	Akhila Sivadas
3	Ammu Joseph
4	Anika Gupta
5	Anil Srivatsa
6	Anita Joshua
7	Anna Vetticad
8	Anubha Bhonsle
9	Anuradha Bhasin
10	Asha Kotwal
11	B R Swarup
12	Bhasha Singh
13	C Vanaja
14	Dayamani Barla
15	Pam Rajput
16	Gajra Kottary
17	Gargi Sen
18	Geeta Seshu
19	Harini Calamur
20	Ira Bhaskar
21	Lakshmi Murthy
22	Leela Samson
23	Lize Grande
24	Lora Prabhu
25	Madhavi Ravikumar
26	Madhu Jain
27	Manipadma Jena

28	Manira Pinto
29	Mannika Chopra
30	Manoj Mitta
31	Meera K
32	Mira K Desai
33	Namita Bhandare
34	Nandita Shah
35	Neerja Choudhury
36	Nina Lath
37	Nisha Susan
38	Nivedita Menon
39	Niveditha Jha
40	Nupur Basu
41	Padmaja Shaw
42	Pamela Phillipose
43	Paranjoy Guha Thakurta
44	Prakash Belawadi
45	Preeti Monga
46	R Akhileshwari
47	R Poornima
48	Radhika Bordia
49	Rahi Gaekwad
50	Rami Chhabra
51	Rana Ayyub
52	Rasheeda Bhagat
53	Rita Sarin
54	Rithambara Shastri
55	Rohini Lakshane
56	Sagarika Ghose
57	Sameera Khan
58	Sapana Shahani

59	Sarada Lahangir
60	Seema Mustafa
61	Sehjo Singh
62	Sevanti Ninan
63	Shayda
64	Shivani Gupta
65	Shobha SV
66	Shohini Ghosh
67	Shree Venkatram
68	Manish Tewari
69	Neelam gupta
70	Shubha Singh
71	Shubhra Gupta
72	Simran Kohli
73	Krishna Tirath
74	Sonia Singh
75	Sudha Pillai
76	Sujatha Madhok
77	Suprita Das
78	Swapna Majumdar
79	Swati Bhattacharjee
80	Swati Bhattacharya
81	Syeda Afshana
82	Teresa Rehman
83	Usha Bhasin
84	Usha Rai
85	Ahana Bhatnagar
86	Alok Kumar Singh
87	Amit Ranjan
88	Amita Sahaya
89	Anubhuti Yadav

90	Anuradha M Chenoy
91	Avantika Singh
92	Barnali Das
93	Bijaylaxmi Nanda
94	Bulbul Dhar
95	Charu Singh
96	Chitrallekha Dhamija
97	Divya Arya
98	Ena Singh
99	Geeta Shree
100	Gita Bamezai
101	Irfan Ahmad
102	Ishleen Kaur Lamba
103	Jyoti Ranjan Sahoo
104	Kamala Bhasin
105	Kiran Arora
106	M.P Singh
107	Madhavi Shree
108	Madhulika Sharma
109	Nidhi
110	Neeraj Kumar
111	Nischay Chaudhary
112	Pooja Lenka
113	Pradeep Nair
114	Pragati Bhalla
115	Prakash Kumar
116	Pratyush Kumar
117	Preeti Mehra
118	Prem Kumar
119	Preyam Bhasin
120	Priya Paul

121	Priyanka Ghosh
122	Priyanka Manjari
123	R. Nivedita
124	Rajani Khanna
125	Ranjana Narayan
126	Reena Kausar
127	Richa Singh
128	Rohan
129	Rukmini Anandani
130	Sabina Inderjeet
131	Sabina Kidwai
132	Sabrina Sidhu
134	Sagari Chhabra
135	Samina Ali
136	Sandeep Kumar
137	Sangeeta
138	Shalini Abasthi
139	Shashi Khurana
140	Shashwati Goswami
141	Sheela Raval
142	Shelly Tara
143	Shobhana Boyle
144	Simran Kohli
145	Sundram Anand
146	Sunita Kaistha
147	Sunita Kaistha
148	Susan Thomas
149	Sushmita Malviya
150	Swatantra Mishra
151	Sweta Singh
152	Usha Bhashin

153	Usha Mahajan
154	Vandana Kanwar
155	Vartika Nanda
156	Vimal Thorat
157	Amita Sahaya
158	Dr Smita Mishra
159	Prof Amrendra Behra
160	Umesh Gupta
161	Vidya Krishnamurthy
162	Vivek Dubey
163	Zeenat Siddiqi
164	Aasha Khosa
165	Aditi Bhaduri
166	Anindita Das
167	Daljit Ami
168	Gayatree Sharma
169	Jyotsana Sinha
170	Mamita Panda
171	Manoj Kaushik
172	Pradeep Nair
173	Priyanka Kaushal
174	Rajeshwari Kalyanam
175	S. Bageshree
176	Sabina
177	Santosh Mehta
178	Shalini Singh
179	Sheba George
180	Sucharita Mohanty
181	Sugandha Munshi
182	Sukhdeep Kaur
183	Suman Krishna Kant

184	Sunil Kumar
185	Kamal Singh
186	Nilofer Khan
187	Student Participants
188	Ajay Saini
189	Akshay Dubey
190	Amit
191	Bhawana Gupta
192	Hemant Kumar
193	Jyoti Rai
194	Manvi Agraval
195	Mukesh Jha
196	Nishant Rai
197	Rohit Kumar
198	Sameer Yusuf
199	Shiv Sandilya
200	Shivani
201	Sneha
202	Sneha Kumari
203	Sumit
204	Surabhi Singh
205	Survi
206	Uzma Hanif
207	Vanson Soral
208	Vishal Kumar
209	Vishnu
210	Yogesh Paswan
	HLCW Members
211	Simrit Kaur
212	Mridul Eapen

213	Manira Pinto
214	Monisha Behal
215	Kavitha Kuruganti
216	Darshini Mahadevia
217	Bindu Ananth
218	Rita Sarin
219	Ravi Verma
220	R Govinda
221	Simrit Kaur
222	Mridul Eapen

Meeting with UN and other Donor Agencies

Date: October 18, 2013

Sr. No.	Name
1	Prof. Pam Rajput
2	Rita Sarin
3	Simrit Kaur
4	Mridul Eapen
5	Monisha Behal
6	Kavitha Kuruganti
7	Dr. Ravi Verma
8	Mamta Kohli
9	Vanita Nayak Mukherjee
10	Janette Sunita
11	Sandeep Chachra
12	Sathyasree Goswami
13	Anisha Chugh

14	Meera Chatterji
15	Tanul Tewari
16	Shobhana Boyle
17	Ena Singh
18	Tine Staermose
19	Louis Georges Arsenault
20	Nisha Agrawal
21	Sushma Kapoor
22	Huma Masood
23	Alka Narang
24	Sushil Chaudhary
25	Renu Wadehra

Meeting on – ‘Verma Committee Recommendations and Thereafter’

with legal experts

Date: October 19, 2013

Sr. No.	Name
1	Prof. Pam Rajput
2	Rita Sarin
3	Monisha Behal
4	Mridul Eapen
5	Dr. Simrit Kaur
6	Darshini Mahadevia
7	Kavitha Kuruganti
8	Ravi Verma
9	Manira A Pinto
10	Padmaja Mehta
11	Suneeta Dhan

12	Enakshi Ganguly
13	A.K. Singh
14	Amod Kr. Kanth
15	Jyotika Kalra
16	Bina Jain
17	Majadaruwala
18	Prof. Kulwant Singh
19	Prof Veena Pooncha
20	P.S. Kushwah
21	Dipa Dixit
22	Nilakshi Rajkhowa
23	Dr. Pawan Sharma
24	Karuna Nundy
25	Chakshu Roy
26	Aparna Bhat
27	Priyanka Rao
28	Mandira Kale
29	Shalu Nigam
30	Geeta Devi
31	Renu Addlakha
32	Geetha Namisan
33	Asha Kowtal
34	Suman Walwa
35	Radhika Chitkara
36	Naina Kapur
37	Kirti Singh
38	Usha Rai
39	Vrinda Grover

Meeting with Chinese Delegation

Date: November 13, 2013

Sr. No.	Name
1	Prof. Pam Rajput
2	Dr. R. Govinda
3	Mridul Eapen
4	Manjula Krishnan
5	Xiaopeng Pang
6	Jin Feng
7	Yuhao GE
8	Tueping Song
9	Liqun Jhang
10	Xiao Yuan Dong
11	QI Liangshu
12	Jing Liu
13	Junxia Zeng
14	Honguei YI
15	Wang Zhen
16	Feng Yuan
17	Deepanwita Dutta
18	Malini Chakravarty
19	Prof. Vibhuti Patel

Meeting on Dalit Women

Date: November 18, 2013

Sr. No.	Name
1	Prof. Pam Rajput
2	Rita Sarin
3	Asha Kowtal
4	Ruth Manorma
5	P Sivakami
6	M Grace Nirmala
7	Bimla Vishwapremi
8	Manjula Pradeep
9	Vimal Thorat
10	Dr. Wandana Sonalakar
11	Dr. Uma Kant
12	Indu Agnihotri
13	Annie Namala
14	Kiran Moghe
15	Prof. Ashalata Kamble
16	Nidhi Sadana Sabharwal
17	Cynthia Stephen
18	Namita Daniel
19	Sanghapati

Consultation on Strengthening Institutional Mechanisms to Actualize Women's Rights

At CSWB Conference Hall on January 28, 2014

Name of Participants:

S. No.	Name	Designation & Organisation
1	V. Mohini Giri	Ex-Chairperson, NCW Chair, WWA Guild of Services
2	Jayanti Patnaik	Ex-Chairperson, NCW
3	Upma Rai	Chair, M.P. State Women Commission
4	Ms L. Sailo	Member, NCW
5	Durag Basu	Programme Secretary, YWCA of Delhi
6	Nafisa Hussain	State Women Commission, Assam Dristi Foundation
7	N. Hamsa	GB Member, Women Power Connect (WPC)
8	Radhika Khajuria	Senior Programme Coordinator, Women Power Connect (WPC)
9	Subhasini Ali	Vice President, AIDWA Former Member, NCW
10	Dr. Manorma Singh	Practising Advocate of SC, Delhi
11	Reva Nayyar	Retired Secretary, Women and Child Development, GOI Member Secretary, NCW
12	Vibha Parthasarthy	Ex-Chairperson, NCW
13	Women Power Connect (WPC)eena Kohli	President, All India Women's Conference
14	Bina Jain	Patron, AIWC
15	Shamina Shafiq	Member, NCW
16	Dr. Charu Wali Khanna	Member, NCW
17	Indu Agnihotri	Director, CWDS
18	Kirti Singh	Lawyer, Delhi

Appendix I

S. No.	Number and Date of Meeting
	1 st meeting of HLCW on 24 th June, 2013
	2 nd meeting of HLCW on 8 th and 9 th July, 2013
	3 rd meeting of HLCW on 30 th and 31 st July, 2013
	4 th meeting of HLCW on 26 th and 27 th August, 2013
	5 th meeting of HLCW on 24 th and 25 th September, 2013
	6 th Meeting of HLCW on 18 th and 19 th October, 2013
	7 th Meeting of HLCW on 25 th and 26 th November, 2013
	8 th Meeting of HLCW on 26 th and 27 th December, 2013
	9 th Meeting of HLCW on 14 th and 15 th January, 2014
	10 th Meeting of HLCW on 21 st and 22 nd January, 2014
	11 th Meeting of HLCW on 3 rd February, 2014
	12 th Meeting of HLCW on 27 th and 28 th February, 2014
	13 th Meeting of HLCW On 31 st March and 1 st April, 2014
	14 th Meeting of HLCW On 29 th April and 30 th April, 2014
	15 th Meeting of HLCW On 10 th June and 11 th June, 2014
	16 th Meeting of HLCW On 1 st July and 2 nd July, 2014
	17 th Meeting of HLCW On 13 th August and 14 th August, 2014
	18 th Meeting of HLCW On 27 th August and 28 th August, 2014
	19 th Meeting of HLCW On 8 th & 9 th October, 2014
	20 th Meeting of HLCW On 3 th , 4 th & 5 th November, 2014
	21 st Meeting of HLCW On 15 th & 16 th December, 2014
	22 nd Meeting of HLCSW On 3 rd February, 2015

	23 rd Meeting of HLCSW On 12 th , 13 th , & 14 th February, 2015
	24 th Meeting of HLCSW On 23 rd & 24 th March, 2015
	25 th Meeting of HLCSW On 15 th to 18 th April, 2015
	26 th Meeting of HLCSW on 28 th April to 1 st May, 2015
	27 th Meeting of HLCSW on 6 th to 9 th May, 2015
	28 th Meeting of HLCSW on 22 nd to 23 rd May, 2015

Appendix J

List Showing the Names, Designation and Period of Service of Researchers and Staffs in the Committee

S.No.	Name	Designation	Tenure
1	Ms. Manjula Krishnan	Member Secretary	
2	Sh. Pallav Kumar	Research Associate cum Coordination Officer	Feb-2013 to June-2015
3	Sh. Ashutosh Saraswat	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to May-2014
4	Sh. Mohd. Asad	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to Nov-2015
5	Sh. Aquil Ahmad	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to May-2015
6	Ms. Supinder Kaur	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to June-2015
7	Sh. V. K. Gupta	Chief Administrative Consultant	Dec-2012 to Dec-2014
8	Sh. Munshi Ram	Senior Administrative Consultant	Dec-2012 to Dec-2013 & March-2015 to June-2015
9	Sh. Jitender Singh	Administrative Consultant	April-2013 to June-2015
10	Sh. Jiten Bora	Assistant	July-2013 to June-2015
11	Sh. Pallav Kumar	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to June-2015
12	Sh. Ashutosh Saraswat	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to May-2014
13	Sh. Mohd. Asad	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to Nov-2015
14	Sh. Aquil Ahmad	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to May-2015
15	Ms. Supinder Kaur	Research Associate	Feb-2013 to June-2015
16	Sh. Abhinav Goel	D.E.O	Feb-2013 to May-2015
17	Ms. Abhinandani	D.E.O	Feb-2013 to Nov-2014
18	Sh. Anil Kumar	MTS	Feb-2013 to May-2015
19	Sh. Rohit	MTs	Feb-2014 to May-2015

Interns with HLC

1. Nikita Chakravorty, SNDT University, Mumbai
2. Rudranee Gosami, SNDT University, Mumbai
3. Sakshi Chaudhary, TISS, Mumbai