

TABLE XVIII
Trends in employment in Public & Private Sectors

Year	SEXWISE Public Sector				(Figures in lakhs) Private Sector			
	Total	Males	Females	No. of females per 100 males	Total	Males	Females	No. of females per 100 males
1962	74.2 (59%)	69.4	4.8	6.9	51.6 (41%)	42.7	8.9	20.8
1963	79.5 (59.3%)	74.0	5.5	7.4	54.6 (40.7%)	45.2	9.4	20.8
1964	84.5 (59.4%)	78.7	5.8	7.3	57.8 (40.6%)	48.4	9.4	19.8
1965	89.6 (59.7%)	83.2	6.4	7.6	60.4 (40.3%)	50.0	10.4	20.8
1966	93.6 (60.5%)	86.4	7.2	8.3	61.0 (39.5%)	50.7	10.3	20.3
1967	96.3 (59.1%)	89.1	7.2	8.1	66.8 (40.9%)	55.8	11.0	19.7
1968	98.0 (60.0%)	90.5	7.5	8.2	65.3 (39.3%)	54.5	10.8	19.8
1969	100.9 (60.7%)	93.2	7.7	8.2	65.3 (39.3%)	54.6	10.7	19.6
1970	103.5 (60.7%)	95.4	8.1	8.4	66.9 (39.3%)	56.1	10.8	19.2
1971	107.1 (61.4%)	98.5	8.6	8.7	67.4 (38.6%)	56.7	10.7	18.8
1972	112.1 (62.3%)	103.0	9.1	8.8	67.7 (37.7%)	56.6	11.1	19.6
1973	122.7 (65.1%)	112.6	10.1	8.9	65.9 (34.9%)	54.6	11.3	20.6

NOTE : Figures in parentheses indicate of total employees.
Source : D. G. E. & T.

was expected that the expansion of the industrial base would provide direct as well as indirect employment opportunities through the expansion of all sectors of economy.¹

5.155 The three main sources of employment in organised industry are factories, mines and plantations. The following tables indicate the position of women in these three groups. In the factories group (Table XIX), the number of women employed rose steadily upto 1964, since when it has been declining with minor fluctuations. While total employment in factories has been generally increasing, though the rate of increase has slowed down in recent years, the number of women has not recovered the position of 1964, though it has fluctuated considerably between 1965 and 1971.

5.156 The percentage of women to total employees, however, presents a very unhappy trend. Between 1951 and 1971 the women's share of total employment in factories declined from 11.43% to 9.1%, i. e. a decline of 20.37%.

5.157 Table XX indicates the trend of women's employment in the mining industry. The total employment of women in mines has declined from 1.09 lakhs to .75 lakhs whereas total employment in mines has increased from 5.49 lakhs to 6.30 lakhs. The women's share of employment in mines has declined from 21.1% to 11.9%, i. e. a decline of 47.4%. The heaviest decline has been in coal mines—from .55 lakhs to .20 lakhs. While total employment in coal mines increased from 3.52 lakhs to 3.82 lakhs, the decline in the women's share is by 66.8%. In iron ore total employment increased from .20 lakhs to .52 lakhs. The number of women has increased from .07 lakhs to .12 lakhs. Their relative share of employment in iron ore mines has, however, declined by 36.2%. In mica both total employment as well as

1. Report of the Committee on Unemployment—1973 para 8.

TABLE XIX
Employment of women in factories

Year	Total Employees (1000)	No. of women employees (1000)	Percentage of women to total employees
1951	25,365.0	290.0	11.43
1955	2,690.4	295.1	10.96
1958	3,102.2	343.9	11.08
1960	3,367.8	367.3	10.91
1961	3,497.0	372.3	10.65
1962	3,648.6	394.1	10.80
1963	3,860.0	400.4	10.37
1964	4,024.0	409.1	10.16
1965	4,118.0	394.5	9.57
1966	4,069.0	364.7	9.96
1967	4,071.0	394.6	9.5
1968	4,067.0	346.1	9.0
1969	4,137.0	382.0	9.0
1970	4,264.0	394.0	9.0
1971	4,285.0	392.5	9.1

Source : Indian Labour Statistics and National Commission on Labour Report.

TABLE XX
Employment of women in mines

Mines		1951	1956	1961	1966	1968	1969	1970	1971
		(Figures in thousands)							
Coal	T	352.0	352.4	411.3	425.5	395.4	396.4	391.5	382.2
	W	55.2 (15.7)	46.0 (13.0)	38.1 (17.0)	30.7 (7.2)	24.7 (6.2)	23.0 (5.8)	21.5 (5.5)	20.1 (5.2)
Iron Ore	T	20.2	37.3	54.5	60.3	52.2	48.6	51.8	52.8
	W	7.7 (38.2)	10.7 (28.8)	15.3 (28.8)	15.7 (25.9)	13.0 (24.9)	11.4 (23.4)	12.4 (23.9)	12.9 (24.4)
Mica	T	52.2	34.0	29.6	19.8	16.9	16.0	13.9	12.1
	W	7.2 (13.8)	2.7 (7.8)	2.4 (8.1)	1.2 (6.1)	1.7 (10.1)	1.5 (9.4)	1.3 (9.3)	1.1 (9.1)
Man-ganese	T	55.5	110.0	46.9	47.0	37.2	31.0	29.3	30.4
	W	24.4 (43.9)	44.3 (40.3)	17.7 (37.7)	19.1 (40.6)	15.0 (40.3)	12.3 (39.6)	11.6 (39.6)	12.2 (40.1)
Others	T	69.1	94.9	128.7	146.7	142.6	146.5	151.7	153.0
	W	15.1 (21.8)	22.0 (22.1)	32.8 (25.5)	33.9 (22.9)	29.9 (20.9)	29.9 (20.3)	30.4 (20.0)	28.9 (18.8)
Total	T	549.0	678.6	671.0	699.3	644.3	638.5	638.2	630.7
	W	109.6 (20.1)	125.8 (20.0)	106.3 (15.8)	100.7 (14.4)	84.3 (13.1)	78.0 (12.2)	77.2 (12.1)	75.2 (11.9)
T	=	Total average daily employment							
W	=	Women's employment							

Source : Indian Labour Statistics.

women's employment has registered a steady and sharp decline. The women's share, however, has declined still faster by 34%. In the manganese mines though the number of women has halved during these 20 years their relative share has not changed so much—declining from 43.9% to 40.1% i. e. by 8.65%. In all other mines total employment has increased from .69 lakhs to 1.53 lakhs. The number of women increased from .15 lakhs to .33 lakhs in 1966, but has been declining since then. Their relative share has changed from 21.8% to 18.8%—a decrease of over 13.7%.

5.158 It is unfortunate that no official agency maintains comprehensive data for plantations from which a trend analysis of employment over the years could be made for the industry as a whole. Data is maintained for separate regions and separate products. Table XXI and XXII present the trend of employment in the three major plantation industries. In coffee, the number of women workers in the total labour force increased from 40.4% in 1951 to 45.3% in 1961 and has declined to 44% in 1970. The number of women workers in coffee plantation in 1970 was 1.64 lakhs. In Rubber plantations their number increased from 22.1% in 1951 to 35% in 1970. The total number of women in that year was 8.9 lakhs.

TABLE XXI

Percentage of women workers to total labour force in coffee and rubber plantations

Year	Coffee	Rubber
1951	40.4	22.1
1956	42.9	24.5
1960	38.6	22.1
1961	45.3	21.4
1970	44.0	35.0
	(1,64,000)	(99,000)

Source : Women in employment p: 15-
For 1970 D. G. E. & T.

5.159 Among all plantations tea require the maximum amount of female labour. In the tea estates in Assam which account for the major share of production of tea, the number of women workers increased from 2.55% lakhs in 1954 to 2.70 lakhs in 1952, their share of total employment increasing from 46.1% to 49.2% during the same years. In tea estates in South India women workers represented 47.2% of the total labour force in 1951 and 49% in 1961.

5.160 Table XXII indicates the position of women in the tea industry as a whole in 1961 and 1970. In absolute numbers, there is an increase from 3.68 lakhs to 3.76 lakhs. Their percentage has increased from 44% to 47%. During the same years total employment in these plantations has declined from 8.22 lakhs to 7.6 lakhs. Plantations thus represent the only sector where women's employment has remained practically constant. The reason lies in the labour intensive nature of this industry and the accepted special aptitude of women for particular jobs like plucking. The other two sectors present a grim picture of declining numbers and proportions.

TABLE XXII

(a) Women workers in tea plantations

Year	Total	Assam	Women	%age	Year	South India Percentage
1954	553,000		255,000	46.1	1951	47.2
1959	571,000		274,000	48.	1956	49.9
1963	551,000		271,000	49.2	1959	49.4
					1961	49.1

Source : Women in Employment

(b) All India

	Total	Women	Percentage
1961	822,000	368,000	44.7
1970	756,000	376,000	47.0

Source : Tea Board, Statistical Division.

5.161 The trend towards decline or stagnation in the number and Proportion of women employed in industries is generally attributed to the following cases :

- Impact of labour laws that aim to protect health and welfare of women workers :
- Impact of policies aiming at equalisation of wages between men and women; and
- Structural changes in industry through rationalisation and modernisation which leads to a general decline in employment.

1. Labour Laws

5.162 The beginning of legislative attempt to regulate relations between employers and labour in private industries began in the 19th century, but these attempts have been described as not true 'labour legislation' but at best 'legislation expressive of a foreign Government's concern with the maintenance of order and security.'² The main objective of these laws was to restrict labourers from leaving their jobs, by imposing penal consequences for breaches of contract.

5.163 The use of sweated and cheap Indian labour in factories, a large proportion of whom consisted of women and children, posed serious threats to the competitive production costs of the British textile industry, and under their pressure, the Factories Act of 1881 and 1891 placed limitations on employment and working hours of women and children. The Act of 1911 limited working day in textile factories to 12 hours.

5.164 A change of direction in the policy of regulating and improving employment and working conditions in industry began with the movement for organisation of labour which received an impetus and support with the establishment of the International Labour Organisation in 1919. The 1920's saw the enactment of a series of labour laws, namely, the Indian Factories Act 1922, the Indian Mines Act 1923, the Indian Workmen Compensation Act 1923, the Indian Trade Union Act 1926 and the Trade Dispute Act 1929.

5.165 The world wide publicity given to labour conditions by the ILO in different countries provided a forum for discussing labour problems and aroused a degree of awareness regarding labour questions in the country. The Royal Commission on Labour (Whitley Commission) appointed in 1929 to examine the problems of workers in factories, plantations and other places recommended a number of measures which led to the enactment of further laws. Until, 1946, the Whitley Commission's recommendations provided the framework of most labour legislations. Out of 24 labour enactments passed by the Central and Provincial legislatures during the years 1932-37, 19 were based on the Commission's suggestions. These recommendations had taken into consideration the various Conventions of the ILO in this regard.

5.166 With the emergence of provincial autonomy, the popular Ministries which came into power in 1937 undertook a series of labour legislation. Attempts to consolidate and co-ordinate these scattered efforts had to be undertaken by the Central Government. Immediately prior to Independence, the Interim National Government drew up a 17-point Five Year Programme for Labour. The Principles underlying this programme were incorporated in the Constitution under the Directive Principles of State Policy.

5.167 When labour legislation began in India, women constituted a sizeable proportion of workers in industry. Jute, textiles, mines plantations were the predominant industries in the modern sector, and each of them employed a substantial number of women. The conditions of women workers, therefore, called for special attention. The I.L.O.'s special concern for protection of women workers, indicated in its various Conventions, was supported by Indian labour representatives, and were reflected in the Indian labour laws.

5.168 The Directive Principles of State Policy of the Indian Constitution provide for special protection of women workers through Articles 39³ and 42.⁴ Article 15 (3) gives the necessary protection for such special provisions for women and children within the framework of Fundamental Rights.⁵ Article 46, which directs the State to 'promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people' is also regarded as a directive to improve employment opportunities and conditions of women workers.⁶

5.169 In line with these directives, special clauses in various labour laws provide for the protection and welfare of women workers in factories, mines, plantations and shops, and commercial establishments. These protections mainly extend to the following areas :

2. Myers, C. A. *Industrial Relations in India*, 1958 p. 24

3. "The State shall in particular direct its policy towards securing that the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that the citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age and strength." (Article 39 (d).)

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

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

(a) *Regulating of Employment in Dangerous Occupations/Operations* :—The Factories Act 1948 prohibited women's employment in any part of a factory in which a cotton opener is at work. They are not allowed to clean, lubricate or adjust heavy machinery while it is in motion. They are not allowed to handle excessively heavy weights. Both the Factories and the Mines Act 1952, authorise the appropriate Government to fix the maximum load that can be lifted, carried or moved by women. The State Governments may also prohibit or restrict women's employment in any other operation which exposes them to a serious risk of bodily injury or disease. The Mines Act prohibits employment of women underground. The Central Government is authorised 'to prohibit, restrict or regulate the employment of women in any class of mines or particular kinds of labour which are accompanied by danger to the life, safety or health of women workers'.

(b) *Prohibition of Night Work* :—The Factories Act, the Plantations Labour Act 1951, the Mines Act and the Bidi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act 1966 prohibit employment of women between 7 p. m. and 6. a. m. In the case of mines and factories, the Central and the State governments respectively are authorised to relax this restriction upto 10 p. m. In the case of fish canning and fish-curing factories, the state governments are empowered to permit the employment of women during night for a period not exceeding three years at a time, if it is considered essential to prevent any damage to raw material. In plantations also they can be employed during the prohibited period with permission from the state governments. However, in both the cases, the hours of work should not exceed the prescribed period.⁶

(c) *Maternity Relief* :—"By far the most valued and significant of the protective measures relating to women workers are those dealing with maternity leave and the payment of maternity benefits. The clauses providing for the grant of maternity leave and the payment of cash benefits are included in all the above mentioned Acts as well as in the separate laws in the States⁷." In order to bring uniformity in scope, qualifying conditions and rates of benefits, the Maternity Benefit Act 1961, was passed which applies to factories, mines and plantations except those factories or establishments which are covered by the Employees State Insurance scheme. With the enforcement of this Act the earlier Acts stand revoked.

(d) *Welfare* :—

(i) Creches are to be provided under the relevant Acts for use of children of the working mothers in factories/plantations/industrial premises manufacturing bidis and cigars—employing more than 50 women workers. In the case of mines creches are to be provided even if a single woman is employed.

(ii) Separate latrines and urinals are to be provided under the relevant laws for women in every factory/mine/plantation.

5.170 It should be noted that the laws for maternity protection and prohibition of night and underground work are in line with the ILO Conventions No. 103, 89 and 45 which were ratified by the Government of India.

5.171 The National Commission on Labour had observed that legal prohibition of night and underground work and employment in hazardous occupations have obviously restricted women's employment. Employers mentioned to the Committee that the ban on night work has proved to be an obstacle to employment of women since the introduction of the multiple shift system in some organised industry, since the impossibility of rotating women between different shifts gives rise to some resentment among male workers.

5.172 There are two distinct points of view in this regard. A few persons whom we met, viz. employers, experts and the representatives of the INTUC⁸ were of the view that this provision was unduly restrictive. They feel that the permission to extend the period upto 10 p. m. should be available to all industries. This would enable their employment on two shifts, and remove the present excuse for retrenching them whenever a multiple shift system was introduced.

6. Women in Employment—Labour Bureau, page 25.

7. Ibid—p. 26

8. Convenor INTUC Women's wing who is also a member of Rashtriya Mill Mazdoor Sangh and the organising Secretary of the Colliery Mazdoor Sangh.

5.173 The other point of view, expressed by other trade union representatives and some labour official and experts was against the removal of the restriction. In their opinion, the employers' plea was only an excuse, since operations in which women are engaged, particularly in the textile industry, are performed during the day.

5.174 In pursuance of a decision of the Industrial Committee on Jute in 1958, a Tripartite Committee set up in West Bengal to study the decline of women in employment, observed that limitation on the load that could be carried by women was the main reason for the decline. The jute industry, which was one of the largest employers of women has been most affected by this measure. According to the present rule, women can lift a maximum weight of 65 lbs. whereas jute rolls weigh 80 to 100 lbs. The total number of labourers employed by jute mills in 1944 was 2,89,000 out of which 38,957 were women, roughly constituting almost 14% of the total labour force. In 1952 i.e. 4 years after the passing of the Factories Act, the total employees in the jute industry numbered 2,92,000, out of which 32,900 (11.2%) were women. By 1962 the total employees in this industry numbered 2.4 lakhs of which only 9,400 were women (3.9%). In 1972 there were only 6,642 women left in the whole jute industry and these are being gradually eliminated through a process of natural wastage. One jute mill in Andhra Pradesh visited by the Committee had over 500 women workers as late as 1960. In 1973 we found only 74 engaged in hand sewing, most of whom were elderly women. Their services were being retained because they were permanent workers. In another mill in West Bengal the management was clearly opposed to any further recruitment of women and observed that their services could only be utilised in sweeping, baling and hand sewing.

5.175 Coal mines employ the largest number of women. In the past they were engaged in both underground and surface work. In 1919 women formed 38.1% of the colliery labour force and for every 10 men employed underground, there were 7 women for the same job. In 1929 Government of India ordered a gradual reduction in the number of women working underground. A total ban was promulgated in 1939. The number of women consequently dropped to 11.4%. The ban was lifted during the Second World War because of the need to increase production, but was reimposed in 1946. While this ban eliminated underground women workers, the subsequent decline of women in the coal mines is the result of introduction of new methods of surface screening and coal handling. In 1947 women constituted about 21% of the colliery labour force. By 1951 this had come down to 16%. It declined further to 9.3% in 1961 and 5.5% in 1970.

5.176 Apart from these provisions that aim to protect the health of women workers, the general welfare provisions regarding sanitation and health services, canteens, social insurance etc. apply to all workers. The specific welfare measures for women in organised industry are maternity benefits and provision of creches in establishments employing 50 or more women except in mines where the provisions are obligatory irrespective of the number of women workers.

5.177 The theory that provision of maternity benefits has proved to be a deterrent to women's employment cannot be substantiated as the total expenditure on maternity benefits under the Maternity Benefits Act between 1961 and 1970 is negligible. For factories this expenditure declined from 8.2 lakhs in 1961 to 5.4 lakhs in 1969, for plantations from 62 lakhs to 55.3 lakhs, but for mines the amount increased from 5.8 lakhs to 16.2 lakhs. In areas covered by the Employees State Insurance maternity benefits no longer represent a burden on employers. During 1969-70, the ESI paid out a total of 61 lakhs on this head. The following tables indicate that as compared to the number benefited by the ESI, only a small number of women employees received this benefit, under the Maternity Benefits Act. The average amount of maternity benefits ranges from Rs. 46 to 117, since it is calculated on the basis of the daily wage, which is low for the large majority of women workers.⁹

5.178 As for the other welfare provisions e.g. creches and sanitary facilities, the expenditure involved is negligible and this cannot explain the declining trend in women's employment in organising industry. Many employers still do not provide separate toilets or rest rooms. Where they do exist, the arrangements are inadequate, without proper service and maintenance. Creches are very often only a room without proper arrangements.

9. Vimal Ranadive—Women Workers and the Trade Unions—Centre of Indian Trade Unions' Conference, Cochin, 18th to 22nd April 1973.

TABLE XXIII

Maternity Benefit Paid under Maternity Benefit Act

<i>Year</i>	<i>Average No. of women employed</i>	<i>No. of women who claimed maternity benefit</i>	<i>No. of women who were paid maternity benefit</i>	<i>Total amount paid (Rs in lakhs)</i>
Factories				
1961	309,904	12,584	11,489	8.29
1964	358,675	18,705	14,347	11.77
1967	277,615	6,573	6,132	7.07
1970*	262,290	5,502	4,931	7.27
1971**	112,165	1,995	1,931	4.46
Plantations				
1961	302,650	74,300	70,114	62.07
1964	319,703	64,855	63,650	74.70
1967	281,687	37,724	35,337	6.60
1970	260,814	39,496	38,337	48.45
1971**	301,855	43,952	43,346	598.63
Mines				
1961	66,250	7,299	7,462	5.88
1964	43,400	7,609	7,326	14.20
1967	41,800	6,748	6,648	14.89
1970	30,424	4,444	4,420	14.01
1971**	2,631	487	495	2.47

* Including some cases pending from previous year(s)

* Incomplete Excluding Chandigarh.

** Incomplete Excludes Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Mysore, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Chandigarh, Manipur and Mines other than coal. Besides in Factories the figures are also exclusive of Assam.

Source : Indian Labour Statistics, 1973 Labour Bureau.

TABLE XXIV

Progress of ESI Scheme As on March

	1952	1956	1961	1966	1967	1968	1972	1973
States	2	8	14	15	16	16	18	18
Centre	2	31	120	259	273	300	318	339
Insured	NA	NA	1,20,750	2,13,650	2,30,750	2,51,900	2,59,650	2,75,000
Women								
Total	1,20,000	12,90,000	38,93,000	1,21,42,650	1,30,16,600	1,37,62,550	1,67,14,550	1,75,31,700
Beneficiaries								

5.179 The general view that these measures have made women workers more costly for the employers is not borne out by facts. A study conducted by the I.L.O (India branch) also refuted the theory. The National Commission on Labour noted that "benefits or no benefits, where women are more useful they continue to be employed. Plantations is an instance in point¹⁰."

2. Wages

5.180 It is often claimed that equalisation of wages leads to retrenchment of women workers who are usually employed because of their cheapness. The National Commission on Labour offers standardisation of wages as one of the reasons for the retrenchment of workers in the textile industry. Official agencies admit however, that, "it has not been possible to make

10. Para 27.17

an assessment of the extent to which the equal pay principle has really resulted in the displacement of women workers¹¹”.

5.181 An often-quoted example is the Mazumdar Award of 1954 for West Bengal Mining Industry which equalised wages for men and women workers. The Survey of labour conditions in Coal Mining Industry in 1966 agreed that this award ‘may also be a contributory factor’, to the reduction in the number of women in coal mines. According to the survey’s findings however, the decline in the number of women workers in the coal industry started well before the Mazumdar Award. In 1944 “out of every four workers in the coal mines one was a woman. However, since then there has been a steady decline in the number of women workers in the industry¹².” This makes it clear that the declining trend in women’s employment in the coal mines could not have been precipitated by the equalisation of wages, since the rate of decline did not increase after the award.

5.182 In our view, these types of conclusions which ignore previous trends in particular industries, and the influence of other factors are not only unscientific but also indicate a desire to arrest the movement towards equalisation of wages. In reality the principle of equalisation has not been seriously applied in most industries and cannot be regarded as a contributory factor to the decline of women’s employment in any industry. The present wage structure in most industries, indicate that in spite of the attempts to bring about equalisation of wages between men and women, most industries continue to maintain the pattern of differentials by indirect methods. The two Occupational Wage Surveys conducted in 1958-59 and 1963-65 reported differences in the minimum, maximum and average earnings of men and women in most industries. As a result of the differences the Survey found the average daily earnings of men to be higher than those of women in all the industries except fine chemicals, whether they were in the manufacturing, mining or plantation sectors. In a few industries viz. jute and silk textile, textile machinery, cigarette industry and tea plantations, earnings of men and women were quite close to each other but in the remaining industry “the differences were quite substantial.” The survey reported that the principle of equalisation is evaded by individual establishments by not employing both men and women for the same jobs.

5.183 It will be observed that differences in wage rates between men and women were present in both minimum and maximum rates for most occupations in different industries. There are, however, a few instances where the gaps have narrowed considerably or even become favourable to women at the level of minimum rates (Jute-residual occupations, Wool-darners, Electrical machinery-industries, examiners grade II, Machine Tools-machinists Grade I). Even in such cases the maximum rates for women are lower, leading to lower average earnings. The difference in wage rates of unskilled labourers or mazdoors and semi-skilled worker like packers, loaders, unloaders, etc., support our view that prejudices, rather than skill or productivity differentials determine wage-differences between the sexes. In the plantations, the margin of difference is much smaller than in the factories and there are cases where the average earnings of women exceed that of men. These are, however, exceptions. The other significant trend is in the case of electrical and engineering industry where women are found in a few operations of highly skilled type.

5.184 The Committee’s investigations confirm the continuation of these differentials in wages and daily earnings between men and women in the same industry. We cannot altogether support the findings of the Second Occupational Wage Survey that such differences do not exist within the same establishments. We have found such differentials among men and women pluckers in the same plantation. In one garden in North Bengal the daily wage for a man plucker is Rs. 3.15 and that for a woman only Rs 3.00. The plantation management explained this by slight difference in the required minimum output. Since we also found that the majority of the women were qualifying for the incentive scheme by giving a higher output than the fixed minimum, we failed to appreciate the reasons for continuing this discrepancy. Since the plantation industry, being highly female intensive, is the one which can ill-afford to dispense with the services of women, it seems to us that this unnecessary differential in minimum output and wages has been maintained purely out of deference to social prejudice. We found similar differentials in other plantations.

11. *Women in Employment* — Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment—Government of India, 1964—p. 30.

12. *Report on Survey of Labour Conditions in Coal Mining Industry in India*, Ministry of Labour & Employment and Rehabilitation, Government of India 1966—p.10 Vide para 2.2 for decline between 1947-71.

TABLE XXV
Average daily wage rates for Men and Women in Selected Occupations

Industry	Minimum		Maximum		Average daily earnings	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
I	II		III		IV	
A. Cotton Textiles :—						
Head jobber	9.08	6.18	28.41	6.18	15.13	6.67
Jobber	6.60	5.11	9.59	5.39	7.97	3.30
Weaver	5.10	1.84	6.32	1.84	7.59	1.50
Drawing Tenter	5.15	4.86	5.65	5.25	5.35	4.44
Residual occupations	4.54	3.96	9.33	5.38	6.34	4.51
All occupations	4.93	4.36	7.01	5.06	6.06	4.76
B. Jute Textiles :—						
Warp winder	3.17	3.08	4.17	4.60	4.77	3.97
Softner feeder	3.05	2.91	3.05	2.91	3.67	2.60
Mazdoor	3.05	2.85	3.08	2.88	3.15	2.89
Residual occupations	3.04	3.05	5.78	3.05	3.79	3.08
All occupations	3.17	3.17	4.47	4.09	3.79	3.61
C. Silk Textiles :—						
Healed & Reed repairer	3.81	4.15	4.33	4.15	4.24	3.36
Warper	4.31	2.62	5.08	2.62	4.88	2.94
Asstt. Warper	3.42	1.01	3.75	1.01	3.61	1.00
Cut looker	4.38	3.84	4.55	4.11	4.51	4.00
Stentering machineman	3.96	2.39	4.71	3.46	4.33	3.04
Mazdoor	3.78	2.72	4.15	3.05	3.75	2.99
Weavers	4.08	2.08	6.69	2.95	5.42	2.50
Creel boy	3.60	1.59	3.73	1.63	3.76	1.60
Picker	1.20	1.08	1.75	1.11	2.82	1.11
Silk examiner	2.89	2.03	3.55	2.14	3.22	2.08
Cooker	2.87	1.87	2.87	1.93	4.07	1.90
Sorter	1.81	1.96	2.48	1.97	2.10	1.96
Doubler	2.09	1.28	2.48	1.38	2.31	1.62
Residual occupations	3.65	2.59	7.08	3.33	4.63	2.92
All occupations	3.90	2.11	5.87	2.34	4.84	2.38
D. Woollen Textiles :—						
Darner	4.71	4.87	6.07	5.89	5.76	5.12
Mazdoor	4.25	1.19	4.86	1.43	4.45	1.25
Bobbin setter	3.98	1.01	4.59	1.01	4.12	1.00
Weaver/handloom	3.97	2.45	8.09	3.20	5.56	2.75
Reeler	4.07	3.32	5.25	3.63	4.41	3.65
Mule minder	4.51	0.98	5.47	0.98	4.74	1.00
Residual occupations	4.37	2.92	9.95	4.30	5.15	3.41
All occupations	4.30	4.03	6.70	5.21	4.89	4.37
E. Metal Extracting and Refining :—						
Mazdoor	3.12	2.73	3.69	3.04	4.66	3.76
F. Rough Casting & Forging :—						
Moulder and core maker	2.61	1.62	7.75	2.37	4.82	1.86
Mazdoor	2.35	1.55	3.25	1.88	3.02	1.63
G. Bolts & Nuts Manufacturing :—						
Sharper	2.89	1.50	6.28	1.50	9.12	1.50
Packer	2.54	1.65	3.67	2.40	2.87	1.75
Mazdoor	2.70	2.22	2.88	2.22	4.24	2.10
Hand machine operator	2.81	2.26	4.45	2.26	5.46	2.00
H. Machine Tools :—						
Machinist grade I	5.22	5.93	9.69	5.93	6.00	5.00

I	II		III		IV	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
I. Electrical Machinery Appliances :—						
Meter mechanic grade II	8.96	4.55	15.88	5.72	14.32	5.15
Mistry	6.28	6.75	11.52	10.11	10.29	8.66
Examiner grade I	5.34	4.35	7.41	5.31	6.99	4.82
Examiner grade II	4.79	5.31	7.47	5.65	7.94	5.45
Coil winder grade I	3.92	3.45	11.29	4.86	6.70	4.18
Coil winder grade II	3.58	2.94	5.32	3.65	9.20	2.29
Machine operator	4.46	3.36	8.03	5.47	8.32	4.07
Packer	4.01	2.18	5.62	2.18	6.20	1.83
Assembler	3.84	3.41	6.88	4.90	6.96	3.91
Residual occupations	3.39	2.33	8.53	5.06	9.78	2.03
All occupations	3.99	2.95	6.71	4.28	6.54	3.37
J. Paper & Paper Products :—						
Finisher	4.85	3.30	7.31	3.92	6.71	3.82
Unskilled helper	2.71	1.48	3.18	1.69	3.18	1.99
Digestor operator	3.46	1.43	4.42	1.68	4.45	2.88
K. Glass :—						
Cutter	2.60	1.07	4.60	1.15	3.39	1.12
Finished wheel grinding	2.04	1.41	2.93	1.83	2.68	1.72
L. Petroleum Refining :—						
General workmen	5.07	4.69	6.37	5.88	6.27	4.96
M. Tea Plantations :—						
Plucker	2.16	1.31	2.30	1.67	2.39	1.67
Labourers	1.55	1.38	4.67	2.41	2.17	2.26
Supervisor	2.48	2.26	3.59	3.22	3.09	2.63
N. Coffee Plantations :—						
Maistry/Kangani	1.97	1.77	2.23	1.77	2.10	1.90
Labourer	1.66	1.26	1.73	1.30	1.53	1.27
O. Rubber Plantations :—						
Field worker	1.89	1.42	1.90	1.42	1.98	1.48
Tapper	1.42	1.24	2.07	1.87	2.22	1.96
P. Manganese Mines :—						
Ore washing operator	2.11	1.46	3.65	2.59	2.50	1.81
Mate	2.48	0.98	3.29	0.98	2.63	1.08
Loader unloader	2.03	1.43	2.27	3.28	2.29	2.27
Miner	1.50	1.28	3.21	2.81	2.81	2.12
Q. Mica :—						
Dhani	1.76	1.00	1.85	1.00	1.72	1.00

5.185 The other, indirect way for evading this principle is by classifying certain jobs as earmarked for women, and keeping lower wage rates for such jobs. According to the Second Occupations Wage Survey, the restriction of women to a few selected occupations is undoubtedly one of the most important factors affecting women's employment and the principle of wage equalisation. The following table indicates the extremely limited number of occupations in different industries which appear to be open to women:—

5.186 It may be observed that in most of the older industries, the majority of the occupations employing women are mostly of an unskilled and semi-skilled nature. This enables employers to keep their wages at levels lower than the male workers. The other trend noticed in many industries is that while male workers may graduate from unskilled to semi-skilled and from the latter to the level of skilled jobs, sometimes even to jobs at supervisory levels, the female workers, by and large, tend to remain at the level where they are recruited. According to the Directorate General of Employment and Training, the occupational pattern of women employees indicates their concentration at the level of unskilled workers. In the private sector

TABLE XXVI
Number of Occupations Employing Women in Selected Industries
Industry Occupations in which women constitute 5% or more of total employees

	Total number of occupations selected	Number in which women form 5% of employees	Names of Occupations in column 3
1	2	3	4
A. Manufacturing :			
Cotton Textile	28	4	Winder, Sweeper, Winder (cray), Reeler
Jute Textile	37	6	Work winder, braker feeder, hand-sewer, Reving feeder, Softener receiver, sweeper
Woollen Textile	26	6	Darner/Cloth Mender, Picker, Bobin Seeter, winder, reeler, residual occupations
Metal extracting and refining.	30	1	Reza/Mazdoor
Manufacture of Machine tools	27	1	Packer
Manufacture of electrical machinery and appliances	31	6	Examiner (Mechanical) Grade I and II, Coil Winder Grade I & II, Apprentice, Assembler.
Fine Chemicals	38	10	Helpers, machine/plant operators and attendants, Muccadam.
B. Plantations :			
Tea	7	2	Labourers (field worker, mazdoor/pruner / beldar/plucker etc.) residual occupations.
Coffee	7	2	Regular labourer, casual labourer
Rubber	6	3	Tapper, field worker, residual occupations.
C. Mines :			
Coal	26	5	Sweeper, general mazdoor (earth cutter, stone cutter, crushing mazdoor) shale picking mazdoor, loader/unloader, miner.
Iron ore	31	4	Reza/mazdoor, sweeper, skip loader, miner.
Mica	20		Surface mazdoor, Reza residual occupations.
Manganese	28	12	Ore washing operator, excavator, loader/unloader, mazdoor, digger, sweeper, carrier, open cast miner, sorter, scrooner and cleaner, dresser, miner.

Source : Second Occupational Wage Survey (1963—1965)

55.3% of the women employees and in the public sector 20.4% of them are unskilled workers, as against 33.5% and 17.4% in the case of men. In both public and private sectors there is a continuous decrease of unskilled workers.

5.187 A study initiated by the Committee in 1973-74 covering a sample of 200 undertakings in the public and private sectors reveals the concentration of women at the lower levels of the production process.

5.188 Table XXVII indicates that among the industries covered by the study in the private sector, all the women in cement, metallurgy and mining are unskilled workers. In textiles, light electricals, electronics and engineering industries the large concentration of women workers is at the semi-skilled level with a substantial number of unskilled workers in textiles and heavy engineering. Only in textiles and engineering do we find a significant number of women at the skilled level. Only one of the industries in the private sector has provided any opportunity for women at the supervisory level.

5.189 Even the newer industries like engineering, electronics and pharmaceuticals which are increasingly employing educated women as skilled workers tend to limit their participation to a few processes where the job involves dexterity of fingers or is repetitive and monotonous in nature. In the pharmaceutical industry in which women are said to have found 'a comfortable place', semi-skilled jobs like bottling, labelling and packing are done by women, though a few are employed as analysts and chemists¹³.

5.190 Table XXVII (b) indicates that the situation is a little better in the public sector where a few women are found at the supervisory level in the engineering, electricals, telecommunication and other industries, with a large number of them in the mining industry. In the mining, tele-communication, simple engineering and electronics industries particularly, the distribution of women workers at all the levels of the production process indicates a very healthy trend. It would appear, therefore, that the public sector is over-throwing the existing prejudices against appointment of women in higher levels of the production process at a faster rate than the private sector.

5.191 The division of the labour market into a male and a female sector very often tends to control the distribution of women workers within the economy and restricts opportunities for employment, training and promotions within the industry. In a television manufacturing unit at Kanpur we found the entire assembly shop manned by women. The majority were matriculates but four had graduated from the polytechnic. Their promotions to the supervisory level as 'testers' had been conceded by the management only when they threatened to resign. In Hindustan Machine Tools at Bangalore certain operations are virtual monopolies of women because the jobs require both dexterity and patience. We were told by the management that the women had to be recruited before the age of twenty, as they cannot acquire the skill at a later age. In aptitude tests applied before recruitment, women had been found to fare better for these operations. This is one of the rare cases where we found that some scientific assessment of the relative productivity of the two sexes for a particular job had been undertaken. In the majority of concerns which we visited no such job appraisal had been made and restriction of women to particular types of jobs and their exclusion from the higher levels of the production process was merely based on prejudice and continuity of a traditional situation.

5.192 The causes for this restriction and what may be termed as feminisation of particular occupations lie in the—(a) prevailing social attitudes which tend to regard women as unfit for most occupations; (b) the resistance of employers, and in some cases, of male workers to appointment of women at higher levels; (c) denial of on the job training opportunities in higher skills; and (d) the ignorance of most women regarding jobs outside the conventional classifications. Absence of any clear policy or criteria by which jobs may be classified as suitable or unsuitable for women helps to perpetuate this restrictive tendency. In our opinion, the prejudice is higher among employers, who use the resistance of men workers as a device to justify their own biases. Since men workers do not object to women supervisors in the services, we do not feel that it would be impossible to get a similar situation accepted

13. Occupational Pattern of Women Employees in India Part I, 1967, D.G.E. & T., Ministry of Labour, Employment and Rehabilitation. Data available for private sector is for 1967 while that for the public sector is for 1968.

14. Panakal, S—Women Workers in Pharmaceutical Industry—proceedings of a seminar on "Women in Industry" Delhi—July, 1968.

TABLE XXVII (a)
Women Employees According to Different Categories at Production Level in (Private Sector)

Serial No. Name of Undertaking	No. of units	Total women employed	Female emp. at production level and per- centage to total emp. women	(1) Supervisory	(2) Skill	(3) Semi-skilled	(4) Unskilled
1. Textiles	14	2267	1925 (84.91)	—	370 (19.22)	1154 (59.95)	401 (20.83)
2. Light Electricals	1	1414	1186 (83.88)	—	13 (1.10)	1161 (97.89)	12 (1.01)
3. Electronics	8	1344	1130 (84.08)	—	95 (8.41)	980 (86.73)	55 (4.86)
4. Engineering							
a) Heavy	15	575	426 (74.09)	—	17 (3.99)	290 (63.08)	119 (27.93)
b) Light	2	17	12 (70.59)	—	6 (50.00)	6 (50.00)	—
5. Cement	2	103	85 (82.53)	1 (1.18)	3 (3.53)	—	81 (95.29)
6. Mining	1	661	649 (98.18)	—	5 (0.77)	1 (0.15)	643 (99.08)
7. Metallurgy	1	34	23 (67.65)	—	—	—	23 (100.0)

TABLE XXVII (b)
Women Employees at Production Level in Public Sector

Category of Industry	No. of Units	Total women employees	Women em- ployees at production level	(1) Supervisory	(2) Skilled	(3) Semi-skilled	(4) Unskilled
<i>Engineering :</i>							
(a) Heavy	6	904	383 (42.37)	—	—	—	383 (100.0)
(b) Light	7	614	348 (56.68)	1 (0.29)	17 (4.89)	260 (74.71)	70 (20.11)
(c) Simple	22	1547	630 (40.72)	26 (4.13)	438 (69.52)	85 (13.49)	81 (12.86)
<i>Electricals:</i>							
(a) Light	2	117	68 (58.12)	—	66 (97.06)	1 (1.47)	1 (1.47)
(b) Electronics	1	2750	2393 (87.02)	69 (2.88)	2309 (96.49)	3 (0.13)	12 (0.5)
(c) Heavy	7	1164	371 (31.87)	1 (0.27)	38 (10.24)	89 (23.99)	243 (65.5)
<i>Chemicals:</i>							
(a) Fertiliser	15	739	298 (40.32)	—	—	298 (100)	—
(b) Plastics	4	248	204 (82.26)	1 (0.49)	9 (4.41)	14 (6.86)	180 (88.24)
<i>Mining</i>	5	33,978	16588 (48.82)	3452 (20.8)	4994 (30.11)	6258 (37.73)	1884 (11.36)
<i>Telecommunication</i>	1	597	222 (37.19)	10 (4.50)	112 (50.45)	53 (23.87)	47 (21.18)
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	7	899	85 (9.45)	3 (3.53)	45 (50.94)	1 (1.18)	36 (42.35)

Note: Figures in Parenthesis denote percentage of total of women employees.
Source: Data Collected by the Committee.

in industry. As we have seen, women have started appearing in supervisory capacity in some of the new industries.

5.193 There is no doubt that wage discrimination is re-inforced by the feminisation of particular jobs, generally at lower unskilled levels of the production process, with low rates of wages. Employers confess that men would not do the same jobs at the existing wage rates. In areas where men have to be employed for the same jobs, they are usually placed in a higher category, in order to maintain the wage differential.

5.194 The I.L.O. convention on Equal Remunerations permits wage differentials on the grounds of differences in productivity and in the nature of the jobs performed by men and women. In our opinion, this is being misused to justify wage differentials and restricting women to limited occupations. In answer to our specific questions in this regard, some employers conceded that women, being more disciplined and conscientious, are more productive than men. They take less time off during work and being more conscious of their responsibility for feeding the family, work harder to increase their earnings. In spite of such concessions, we regret to find that differentials and lower wage rates for women continue to be justified on the theory of lower productivity of women. In the absence of any scientific job appraisal system, this theory cannot be accepted. Nor can we accept the tendency to restrict women to limited occupations or placing workers on the same jobs in different categories in order to maintain women's wages at a lower level.

5.195 It may be noted that the I.L.O. has emphasised the need to pay greater attention to wage fixing procedures in industries and in areas of employment largely reserved for women. In our opinion, unless this trend of relegating women to limited fields and levels of employment is arrested, the principle of equalisation of wages and opportunities for employment will remain inoperative.

3. Structural Changes in Industry through Rationalisation and Modernisation

5.196 The single-most important factor contributing towards this declining trend in women's employment in industry lies in the fact that the extent of employment in factories, of which a substantial proportion is constituted by large scale industry, is largely determined by the relative degree of capital intensity and the choice of technology. These represent part of the general structural changes taking place in our economy. "Technological changes in some of the urban occupations, like industry, trade, commerce and in public offices not only reduce the rate of absorption of new labour but also involve the displacement of some labour, thereby increasing the number of the unemployed¹⁵."

5.197 Both the National Commission on Labour and the Committee on Unemployment pointed out that a policy of heavier investment in more capital intensive industries and technology has an adverse effect on employment and utilisation of labour¹⁶.

5.198 The initial adverse impact of more sophisticated technology in industry on the employment of women has been a global trend. When modern industry first started in India, the process of production included several stages of manual and semi-manual operations such as reeling, waste picking, winding and sizing in cotton and silk industries, batching, preparing, warp winding and hand sewing in jute, liming in leather tanning, etc. With increasing mechanisation some of these processes became obsolete. The introduction of high speed machinery in the winding section of textile manufacturing reduced the number of workers to one-fourth or one-fifth of the original number. The introduction of automatic machinery in silk industry and the switching over to production of synthetic materials, the supply of processed yarn in 'cone' instead of 'hanks' or cakes decreased the demand for female labour who were engaged in the earlier manual processes.

5.199 There is a standard argument that women workers tend to stick to a single operation and do not want to learn new processes. Out of about 200 operations in the textile industry, women are employed only in four or five. The fundamental assumption underlying this practice is that women have limited aptitudes and are not capable of developing higher skills required for machine operations. This is not borne out by any empirical evidence. We have presented evidence of a large number of mechanical operations where women are playing their

15. Report of the Committee on Unemployment—para 211.

16. Ibid—Chapter VIII; National Commission on Labour—Chapter 18.

full role. Some of the new industries like electronics, tele-communication, light electricals etc. have found women capable of handling machines and prepared to acquire the skills needed for some of the sophisticated mechanised jobs.

5.200 The so-called incapacity or lack of aptitude of women spring from lack of training. We have found ample evidence that in many industries women are not given any chance to acquire training when a new process or machine is introduced. In the case of men there is generally an agreement between the trade unions and the management that training would be provided to prevent their being declared as surplus. It is remarkable that the need to train women workers in a similar manner is generally overlooked by both management and the unions. The main impact of modernisation and new technology thus falls on the women who become dispensable. Senior executives of important industries admit practicing a policy of 'replacing women by men or machines'

5.201 Apart from the absence of training within industry, women are handicapped by lack of pre-recruitment training, particularly of the technical variety. Vocational and technical training for women is a new development and the number of women with such training is still small. The majority of the women being displaced from employment as a result of technological changes are the illiterate and semi-literate workers. Illiteracy still constitutes the biggest barrier for learning new trades, particularly those involving sophisticated methods of production.

5.202 The efforts made by the Ministry of Labour to spread education among industrial workers through the Workers Education Programme have so far tended to ignore the needs of women. The success of this programme depends on a number of trained and competent 'worker-teachers' who are given the training in the first phase. We understand that among the workers sent for this training from industries in Bombay, the first batch of two women were admitted only in 1974.¹⁷

5.203 There is a strong belief that workers in the lower income groups and women in particular are still very much under the influence of the traditional pattern of family and caste occupations. "Tradition governed jobs to a great extent and often because of this mechanical form of working, training and apprenticeship courses are held unnecessary." This is often offered as an explanation for the reluctance of women to change their occupations or to acquire new skills. The refusal of some women to change their modes of dress and ornaments in the interest of safety in factories is cited as an example of their tradition-bound attitudes.

5.204 These arguments were perhaps applicable in earlier years when factory workers were first generation migrants from the rural areas with little exposure to urban influences. In the last three decades, however, the situation has changed rapidly. The industrial workers of today is very much exposed to the rapid processes of social change that are more visible in the urban areas. Modes of dress and living are changing rapidly. Rising levels of aspirations and the increased exposure to mass media, particularly films have affected the attitudes of industrial workers and their families greatly. In a rubber factory at Poona we met semi-skilled women workers, whose mode of dress and attitude for coming to work was not different from those of white collared workers.

5.205 In our opinion, the main obstacles to women adjusting themselves to the new methods of production are illiteracy and absence of training opportunities. The argument regarding their reluctance to learn new skills or change their ways according to job requirements represents the legacy of a period that has passed away. New industries like electronics and pharmaceuticals which have found women's productivity to be higher than that of men have not experienced any difficulty in giving them the necessary training.

5.206 The technological changes and the preference for higher investment in capital intensive technology have contributed largely to the rising level of general un-employment in the country. The increasing number of unemployed men have better access to employment information as they are relatively more literate and educated and do not suffer from the same degree of restricted mobility as the women. A large number of women who need work are

17. This information was given to us by some trade union representatives. We failed to obtain information regarding the number of women so far trained as teachers in this programme.

18. Sen, Gupta Padmini—"Working Women's Traditions and Customs and their Repercussions on Productivity."

handicapped by their ignorance job opportunities. The National Employment Service, designed to provide assistance in employment information and placement has not penetrated beyond urban areas, and has proved itself to be totally inadequate in meeting the needs of women job seekers. Many women are still ignorant of the existence of employment exchanges. Even for the few who register themselves with the exchanges, the assistance provided has been negligible.

5.207 The causes of decline of the number and proportion of women in industry, therefore, lie primarily in their displacement from the old industries like textile, jute and mines, a decline which has not been off-set by the increase in women's employment in a few new industries. The major share of industrial development in the post-independence period has gone to the heavy industries, which are capital intensive. Their failure to generate adequate employment opportunities has affected both men and women but women have suffered more because of their lack of competitiveness and bargaining power, which are directly linked to their illiteracy and lower social status. The solution of the problems that affect women workers in organised industry will require special attention and consideration from Government, employers and trade unions.

B. SERVICES AND PROFESSIONS

5.208 Unlike the situation in non-agricultural occupations and organised industry, the services and professions have provided greater opportunities to women in the post-independence period. Earlier, both in the public and private sectors, women's participation was practically confined to health and education, though the Second World War period ushered in a small but significant entry of women into clerical and secretarial occupations. Other services and professions were the monopolies of the urban educated middle class, whose views about women's employment were extremely restrictive.

5.209 While the range of jobs open to educated women has widened in both public and private sector, as has already been discussed in the preceding sections, the demand for unskilled women labour is shrinking.

5.210 The immediate factors responsible for the emergence of women in non-traditional fields of employment in the post-independence period are :—

- (a) the Constitutional guarantee of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in matter of employment ;
- (b) development of women's education and their entry into areas of education and employment hitherto monopolised by men ;
- (c) an increasing tendency among the urban educated women to take up paid employment which reflected gradual ideological change in social values as well as the growing economic pressure on urban middle class families ;
- (d) expansion of employment opportunities in the tertiary sector, as a direct consequence of the increasing rate of development.

5.211 (a) The constitutional guarantee of 'equality of opportunity' and non-discrimination 'on grounds of sex' in employment and office under the State and the specific directive 'to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people' had a direct bearing on the employment aspirations of middle class women. The emphasis on women's equality, that emerged during the last phase of the freedom movement had influenced the attitudes of educated middle class women in a most marked manner. The immediate expression of this in the period after independence could be found in three spheres : (i) in higher education, (ii) the employment market, particularly for jobs requiring higher education, and (iii) in politics. Women began to enter the competition for services under the Government from the very beginning, and the success of a few in these most prestigious occupations, which had hitherto been the monopoly of men, inspired others and helped them to shake off their traditional inhibitions and lack of confidence. By this they set in motion the attitudinal change of society, particularly of men in Government agencies to their unfamiliar presence in these occupations.

5.212 (b) The rapid expansion of women's education that characterised the post-independence period both contributed to, and gained further momentum from this process. Hitherto women's education had been seen more as a measure for promoting social justice and family welfare. The possibility of employment under Government provided the stimulus that women's education had lacked so far, particularly in the field of higher education. The

demand for increasing opportunities led to increase in the number of institutions, while the demand for equality broke down the resistance of academic authorities, and opened to women training in engineering and other applied and vocational sciences which had been monopolies of men till then.

5.213 (c) Apart from education the most important force behind this increasing entry of a new class of women, in the field of wage employment, is sometimes described as 'emancipation born out of necessity'. "With a few exceptions in the higher strata of society, the majority of women take to work for economic reasons."¹⁹

5.214 This has been confirmed by several studies²⁰ on women's motivation for employment among the urban middle classes. An increasing number of these women now have to support their families, both before and after marriage. Rising prices and levels of unemployment, added to the increasing costs of education and housing, and absence of social security, have increased the degree of economic pressures on the major section of this class. At the same time, for at least an important segment of this group, aspirations for a higher standard of living have increased the necessity of having more than one earner in the family.

5.215 According to a study undertaken by the Sriram Centre of Industrial Relations in 1972, covering a total sample of 500 respondents drawn from middle class working women, the respondents attached highest importance to "reducing the economic burden of their families". In terms of specific economic advantages arising from their employment, they attached primary importance to "augmenting the education and diet of the family members—of children in particular." Next in order of importance was savings from future economic security of the family as compared to the expense on current consumption.

"In the scheme of thinking of the respondents, personal enjoyment, up-keep or comfort were rated very low as the end results of additional earnings from their own job. On the other hand, relatively much higher importance was attached to proper furnishing of the house and for being able to use gadgets and conveniences for facilitating the performance of their own domestic chores."²¹

5.216 Though some of these studies have referred to non-economic motives among women of this class in taking up employment, the recent studies indicate that the importance of such factors is relatively much less significant. The study cited above found one non-economic reason to be significant among trained women. This was to utilise their education and training.

5.217 The Committee's experience during its tours as well as the results of our Survey confirms the reality of this trend. Wherever we went the most repeated demand from middle class women in urban and rural areas was for increasing employment opportunities without which many families would be reduced to starvation. In West Bengal, a region where the taboos on women's work outside the home had been higher than in most other areas, we met with this demand from even elderly middle-class women. In their view, if their daughters and daughters-in-law did not obtain some employment then the families, particularly the dependent, old and young would face destitution.

5.218 According to our Survey, an overwhelming majority of the respondents, male and female, supported women's employment to augment the family's income. Almost half of the respondents agreed that a woman can do the same work that a man can do, and 87% observed that they should get the same wages as men for similar work. This response was in spite of the view of nearly half the respondents that general service conditions are unfavourable to women. Views on purpose of educating women revealed that fear of insecurity, resulting from loss of support from the bread-winners of the family caused by death or other reasons is still the most compelling force behind this change of attitude to women's employment. The disintegration of joint families and the loss of their rural income has made many of these families totally dependent on their earnings from jobs. At the same time, the number of unmarried, widowed, divorced or separated women who can no longer expect to be fully supported by their families is on the increase.

19. NCL—Para 27.21

20. Ranade and Ramachandran—*Women in Employment* 1970; Kapur, Promila—*Marriage and the Working Women* 1970; Narula, U.—'Career Failure among Women'—*Social Welfare*, May 1967; Srivastava, V.—'Employment of Educated Married Women'—*Causes and Consequences* (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis) 1972; Dhingra, O. P.—*Women in Employment: A Field Study*; 1972.

21. Dhingra, op. cit.

5.219 An argument which is often raised in debates regarding women's employment is that their employment deprives men of jobs that they need to support their families. It is assumed that all women who work are only supplementing the family income to ensure a higher standard of living. These theorists have never tried to investigate how many women who work are sole or main earners in the family. The majority of working women whom we met during our tours, were supporting either their parents and younger brothers and sisters or their own children. We came across some married women, who had continued to work after their marriage in order to support their aged parents and to educate their younger brothers and sisters. Such cases may be rare, but they are significant as they express a complete transformation in social attitudes. A few years ago, parents would have considered it highly improper to accept any support from married daughters. Even today though economic necessity has helped to erode this attitude, the women who take up such a responsibility require considerable courage, because it is generally disliked by their in-laws. The fear of loss of earnings of a daughter is becoming an important factor in deferring marriage of middle class women in urban areas.²²

5.220 (d) The last factor stems from the pattern in India's economic development in the post-independence period and, the relatively higher rate of growth of the tertiary sector. This has opened up considerably more avenues for employment of women than in the past, both in the public and private sector.

5.221 The occupational distribution of women workers in public and private sector and their proportion to total workers in each category indicated in Table XXVIII & XXIX yields some interesting information. In the public sector, while the number of women employees in the categories of professional, technical and related workers and primary and middle school teachers, has been continuously rising since 1960, their proportion to total employees has more or less remained constant with only minor fluctuations. The number of women as administrative, executive and managerial workers increased from 0.10 lakhs in 1960 to 0.12 in 1966 but there was a downward trend in 1968. Their proportion to total workers, which was more or less constant at 3.3% declined to 2.5% in 1968. In the category of clerical and related workers, the number of women with the only exception of 1962, has gone up from 0.37 lakhs in 1960 to 0.79 lakhs in 1968. For the same period their proportion to total workers in this category has gone up from 4.2% to 7.6%. The number and proportion of women workers in transport and communication has remained steady, while in services, sports and recreations their number has gone up from 0.05 lakhs in 1960 to 0.13 lakhs in 1968. It may be noted however, that in this occupational division majority of women were working as maids, cooks, house keepers, cleaners, sweepers and launderers. The number of women as unskilled office workers has declined from 0.25 lakhs (4.5%) in 1960 to 0.16 lakhs (2.9%) in 1968.

5.222 In the private sector, the categories where both the number and proportion of women to total workers has shown a steady increase are :— clerical and related workers, service, sports and recreation workers and primary and middle school teachers. It may be interesting to note that there was a general slump in the employment of women in all categories in 1963 except for unskilled office workers. This decline was more marked in the administrative, executive and managerial workers and professional, technical and related workers.

5.223 Women employed in the management cadre belonging to the upper-middle class, where no distinction is made in the education of boys and girls. These highly educated women hold degrees in specific disciplines relevant for business management. Some of the fields where they are usually employed are in public relations, advertising, market research and cottage industries. This situation derives from certain socio-psychological reasons regarding their special abilities in these fields. There is a trend to employ women more in areas where the market or clientele consists primarily of women or where the nature of the job calls for a woman manager. The expansion of the hotel industry, for example, has opened some new avenues for women in the field of marketing, personnel management,

22. "When my parents sent me for this job, they said it was just for a few months until I got married. My marriage will hamper their standard of living, so there is no trace of any wedding bells" said a telephone operator in a reputed company—A Study on 'Women and Work' by Shanthi Sitaraman—Sunday World May 13, 1973. Similar situations have been described in the content analysis of periodicals in Bengali and Marathi languages prepared for the Committee by Tanika Sarkar and Sudha Goghe respectively. Some case studies of this kind were brought to our notice by Smt. Nirmala Banerji of the Centre for Study in Social Sciences, Calcutta.

house-keeping and public relations. Some illustrative examples of women in managerial positions are as follows :

The India Hotels Private Limited has a woman as the Sales Manager and Marketing Manager. Hindustan Milk Foods has a woman as Product Manager, India Tobacco Company Limited has a woman Accountant heading its Tax Department and a woman as Head of the Personnel Department of its Research Section.

Table XXVIII
Occupational-Educational Pattern in India
PUBLIC SECTOR

(Figures in lakhs)

Categories			1960	1962	1964	1966	1968
1. Professional, Technical related workers	T		5.05	6.11	7.19	7.32	8.59
	W		1.77*	2.09*	1.08	1.11	1.31
	%		(35.04)	(34.2)	(15.0)	(15.2)	(15.3)
2. Primary and Middle school teachers	T		5.77	6.19	7.52	9.72	10.79
	W		—	—	1.44	1.81	2.13
	%				(19.1)	(18.6)	(19.7)
3. Administrative, Executive and Managerial Workers.	T		2.76	2.93	3.17	3.59	3.87
	W		0.10	0.09	0.11	0.12	0.10
	%		(3.6)	(3.1)	(3.4)	(3.3)	(2.5)
4. Clerical and Related workers including sales workers.	T		8.83	8.82	9.43	9.59	10.41
	W		0.37	0.31	0.40	0.47	0.79
	%		(4.2)	(3.5)	(4.2)	(4.9)	(7.6)
5. Workers in transport and communication occupations.	T		2.91	4.81	4.83	4.78	4.81
	W		0.04	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.07
	%		(1.14)	(1.2)	(1.0)	(1.3)	(1.40)
6. Service, sports and recreation workers.	T		4.54	4.90	5.36	6.00	5.53
	W		0.05	0.09	0.10	0.11	0.13
	%		(1.1)	(1.8)	(1.9)	(1.8)	(2.4)
7. Unskilled office workers.	T		5.59	4.71	5.12	5.14	5.55
	W		0.25	0.13	0.15	0.13	0.16
	%		(4.5)	(2.7)	(2.8)	(2.5)	(2.9)

Source : Occupational—Educational Pattern in India. Public Sector—1968.

*Includes primary and middle school teachers.

5. 224 In some traditional industries, however, women have not yet been accepted at this level nor has industry developed yet the conditions suited to the life cycle and special requirements of women. It is for this reason that they find it more difficult to reach top level jobs. While some of the companies have opened their management cadre to women, it remains to be seen whether this will become an agent for change or whether it will terminate at an experimental stage.

5. 225 The detailed statistical data needed to assess the major occupational trends, namely the extent of women's entry into various professions and services and the levels of their employment in various white collared jobs is not available over a period. It is, therefore, difficult to give a correct statistical profile of the educated women workers. However, a review of the available data indicates that while a change is perceptible in the occupational pattern of women in this sector during the last two decades, two trends are clearly visible :-

- (a) the concentration of women in the professions of teaching and medicine ; and
- (b) recognition of certain low prestige jobs in the clerical services as particularly suitable for women and a consequent concentration of women in these occupations.

TABLE XXIX
Occupational-Educational Pattern in India
PRIVATE SECTOR

(Figures in lakhs)

Categories		1961	1963	1965	1967
Professional,	T	1.61	2.42	3.0	2.95
Technical and	W	0.55	0.31	0.75	0.01
Related Workers.	%	(34.2)	(12.6)	(25)	(34.3)
Primary & Middle	T	0.20	0.51	0.33	0.48
School Teachers.	W	—	0.02	0.17	0.33
	%	—	(3.8)	(51.5)	(68.7)
Administrative	T	0.44	0.56	0.60	0.56
and Executive &	W	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.01
Managerial	%	(11.3)	(1.8)	(1.6)	(1.8)
Workers.					
Clerical and	T	2.74	3.37	3.72	3.46
Related workers	W	0.13	0.12	0.16	0.23
including sales	%	(4.3)	(3.5)	(4.3)	(6.6)
workers.					
Workers in	T	0.46	0.64	0.67	0.55
Transport	W	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01
communication	%	(2.2)	(1.5)	(3)	(1.8)
and Occupations.					
Service, Sports	T	0.35	0.49	0.54	0.56
& Recreation	W	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.08
Workers.	%	(11.4)	(10.2)	(13)	(14.3)
Unskilled Office	T	1.74	1.10	1.14	1.09
Workers.	W	0.6	0.11	0.04	0.07
	%	(3.4)	(10)	(3.5)	(6.4)

Source : Occupational Pattern in India (Private Sector) 1967—D.G.E. & T.

Note :—Figures in parentheses show percentage of women to total.

TABLE XXX
Women in Selected Professions in Public and Private Sectors.

A. Teaching Personnel	Private Sector (1967)	No of Women Employed Public Sector (1968)
(i) Teachers—Middle and Primary	21,431	213,452
(ii) Teachers—Secondary school.	32,686	28,260
(iii) Teachers—University	18,897	4,206
B. Medical and Health Personnel		
(i) Nurses	6,845	22,727
(ii) Midwives & Health Visitors.	1,196	24,318
(iii) Nursing attendants & related workers.....	—	23,881
(iv) Physicians and Surgeons	NA	3,091
(v) Ayah and nurse maids	—	5,675
C. Telephone Operators	1,051	5,052
D. Clerical & Related Workers		
(i) Stenos ...	3,494	2,113
(ii) Ministerial Assistants and Clerks. ...	6,226	67,623
(iii) Typist and Teletypist	1,643	5,852

Source : D. G. E. & T.

5. 226 (a) Professions :— According to an ILO study made in 1970, only 17% of the professional and technical workers were women of which three-fourths were teachers. The Directorate General of Employment and Training's data for selected professions in public and private sectors (organised) identifies teaching, medical and health, clerical and related workers and telephone operators as the four occupations, where there is the largest concentration of women workers.

5. 227 The national classification of occupations adopted by the Census of India, 1971 indicates that the number of women teachers was 6 lakhs, whereas their number in other professions was negligible—physicians and surgeons .2 lakhs, nursing and other medical and health technicians 2,500, lawyers 1,700, and architects, engineers and surveyors 700, accountants etc. 2,700. Apart from persons serving as teachers, other qualified scientists, serving in professional capacity (physical scientists, life scientists, social scientists, mathematicians) add up to a total of 18,000. Of this last group, social scientists form the major section (16,000). It would thus appear that research, particularly the field of social research and social work are emerging as new occupations where women are present in a significant number. In relation to men, their ratios in these selected occupations are given below :

Physicians and Surgeons	—	7.1%
Lawyers	—	1.2%
Teachers	—	30.3%
Nursing and other medical and health technicians	—	72.2%
Scientists	—	10.9%

Within teaching, primary school teaching accounts for about 71% of the women teachers followed by secondary schools which accounts for 21%.

5.228 Teachers :— The heavier concentration of women professionals in teaching and medicine reflects both opportunities as well as preferences. Teaching as an occupation, particularly at the school stage, requires relatively little training beyond general education, in comparison to the professions of medicine, engineering, etc. In the prevailing social ethos, a long-term professional training for women is still accessible to a minority among the upper middle class. The second reason for their preference is respectability attached to this profession in society, in spite of its lower salary structure. Teaching has been always accorded a high status in Indian society, though its income potential has always been limited. Middle class families prefer to see their women in this profession more than any other. One of the reasons for this perhaps because it gives a woman comparatively more time for her household duties, as there are more vacations and limited hours of work.

5.229 Another reason for the heavy concentration of women in teaching has been suggested by sociologists, who report that the percentage of women teachers in lower age-group is much higher than the men teachers at practically all levels of teaching. Women enter the profession in substantial number but their number declines beyond the age of 30 and drastically after 35²³. This may be interpreted to suggest a substantial entry of women into this profession before marriage and a tendency for some of them to leave employment with increase in their family responsibilities. In the absence of studies based on the same cohort of teachers over a time period, it is not possible to accept this explanation. An alternative explanation ; and in our opinion the more valid one, is the increasing rate of expansion of employment opportunities in this profession in recent years, and the greater degree of preference for women teachers in primary and middle schools which would account for a larger number of younger women in this profession. A third possibility, which required investigation, is the relatively lower salary structure in many private schools. It is an accepted fact that it is easier to obtain the services of women for such low rates than men since women constitute a higher proportion of the educated unemployed.

5.230 Doctors :— According to the Manpower Survey of 1967-68 the existing medical work force comprised 12,000 women out of a total of 1,20,000 doctors. According to 1971 Census (1% sample data) however, the ratio of women physicians and surgeons is only 6.1 per hundred men—23.8 thousand women to 336.3 thousand men. The number of qualified women doctors is however about 25 per 100 men. This may indicate both underutilisation due to

23. Gore, M. S., Desai, I.P. and Chitnis, Suma—*Field Studies in the Sociology of Education—An India Report*—National Council of Educational Research and Training—1970.

women doctors dropping out of the profession, or alternatively their migration to other countries for employment.

5.231 It may be noted that though medicine has been an accepted and respected profession for women for a considerable period the general tendency has been for women to concentrate in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology. In recent years they have also entered paediatrics, surgery, medicine, pathology, radiology, anaesthesia, etc. Since the majority of their clientele continue to be women, as very few men would still consider it proper to consult a woman doctor, it is but natural that the majority of women doctors should take up specialisation in women's and children's diseases. A new field for women doctors is administration in hospitals and public health. During the pre-independence period, there was a considerable disparity between men and women medical officers in the management of hospitals. In some of the States, women doctors were not given the same status or pay scales as men. This disparity continued in Punjab until 1962, when women doctors were given the status of Civil Surgeons, after considerable struggle on their part.

5.232 One particular problem worth noting in the employment of women doctors is their heavy concentration in urban areas, and the regional disparities in their utilisation. Out of 23,000 employed doctors in 1971 as many as 19.5 thousand were serving in urban areas. According to the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, in large urban centres like Bombay, Delhi and Madras women doctors form 20-40% of the total number of doctors. In relatively backward States like Assam and Madhya Pradesh they form only 2-4% while they constitute about 16% in Punjab and 20% in Maharashtra. Since most women doctors come from urban middle class families, they tend to stay in urban areas, while rural areas continue to suffer from a shortage of women doctors. It would be difficult to improve their representation in rural areas unless adequate arrangements for housing and other amenities, particularly the schooling of young children are provided.

5.233 We would like to note here that as compared to the rather indifferent reception of other women workers in the rural areas, the professions of teaching and medicine have come to receive a high degree of respect and acceptance from rural society. We were informed by women in different States, that these two groups of professionals now enjoy a great deal of respect in rural areas. It should, therefore, not be difficult, in our opinion, to elicit a greater degree of public cooperation to make their stay in these areas easier.

5.234 Nurses :— Regarding the other categories of medical personnel, Table XXXI indicates the increase in the number of nurses, mid-wives and health visitors during the last two decades. Nurses and mid-wives constitute the largest of these three groups. According to the Census of 1971, the total number of women in all categories of para-medical personnel amounted to 1.55 lakhs, of which .9 lakhs were concentrated in urban areas, their ratio to men being 72.7%. While these professions do not carry the same status as that of the doctors, nor the same pay scales, there is no doubt that their status has increased in the post-independence period. Before independence, nursing used to be a monopoly of a few communities like Anglo-Indians and Indian Christians viz. communities which did not impose any taboo on their women taking up this profession. These taboos have lessened to a very great extent in most States²⁴ and better training opportunities for women in Nursing school and colleges have helped to increase the status of this category of professional workers. The expansion of health services has increased employment opportunities. In spite of this, however, the arduous nature of the duties which includes night work and the relatively low scales of pay still constitute handicaps for women in this profession. It should be noted that there has been an increase in the migration of qualified nurses from the country in recent years. Unless this trend is arrested by providing better terms of service and facilities, this trend may form one of the important elements of the 'brain-drain' from the country.

5.235 While the principle of discrimination against married women in both these professions has been formally abandoned, elements of discrimination still remain. It was brought to our notice that in the Army Medical Service, which employs a large number of women doctors and nurses, until 1972, married women had to leave the nursing service. Revision of the rules in that year has made it possible for them to continue in service at their request, by grant of 2 years extended tenure at a time. Married women are still not recruited to the Military Nursing service, and if they marry during probation they have to leave the service.

24. In States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Orissa, etc., however, the prejudice still persists. The hospitals in these States are, therefore, largely staffed by nurses from the State of Kerala.

TABLE XXXI
Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors

<i>Year</i>	<i>Nurses</i>	<i>Midwives</i>	<i>Health Visitors</i>
1951	16,550	19,281	578
1961	35,584	41,575	1,690
1967	59,914	65,589	3,307
1970	71,199	76,293	4,283

(This Table gives the actual number of nursing personnel registered with the nursing council or boards according to different categories.—Statistical Abstracts India. Figures for 1970 from Pocket Book of Health Statistics—1973.)

Married women may, however, be recruited on local basis on one year contract renewable annually. One glaring omission in the Army Service Regulations is the lack of provision for any paid maternity leave to both women doctors and nurses. This, in our opinion, constitutes a definite disability, and should be removed forthwith.

5.236 *Lawyers* :—In the absence of any reliable data or case studies, it is difficult to make any observation regarding the status of women in other professions. We have, however, received complaints from women lawyers in many States regarding lack of opportunities extended to them for judicial appointment. While the number of practising lawyers has been on the increase, only one woman has, so far, been appointed a High Court Judge. In our view, a change in this trend is necessary not only in the interest of women in this profession, but also for the large number of women who find a lack of understanding of their personal difficulties in family matters from the judicial profession. The Family Courts and the Special Tribunals that we have recommended elsewhere, if accepted, should provide increasing opportunities for women trained in law.

5.237 *Social Workers* :—A new profession which is emerging mainly after independence is social work, a field where leadership was generally assumed by women on a voluntary basis in the years before independence. The majority of professionally trained social workers today work in institutions, departments and organisations engaged in social welfare, both public and voluntary. The first school of social work in India was established by a woman. These schools offered equal opportunities to men and women from the beginning. According to a study²⁵ undertaken by the Indian Council for Social Welfare in 1968, there were about 3,153 social work graduates at that time. This number is estimated to have risen to about 6,000 by 1971. Out of a sample of 1107 covered by the study, 30% were women. In employment opportunities, however, women were found to have obtained their first jobs earlier than men. Out of 319 women, 40% found employment within one month after training, while only 29% of the 732 men succeeded in doing so. 80% of the women could find employment within 6 months of training, while this was true only 53% of the men in the sample. The reasons offered for the greater ease with which women get employment in this profession are :—(a) personal inclination on the basis of aptitude which makes them less selective about the type of employment; and (b) the greater difficulty for social workers obtaining employment in industrial jobs. Since men tend to specialise more in labour and industrial relations, they find it more difficult to get jobs. "On the contrary, the women who normally tend to specialise in primary social work and community organisation, have less difficulty in getting absorbed in the related settings."²⁶

5.238 19% of the women, however, complained of poor services and working conditions as a discouraging trend in the employment of social workers. The salaries for this occupation in both voluntary as well as private sector generally ranges between Rs. 200 and Rs. 800.

"This is not true of the few who today hold high positions both in government departments as heads of educational institutions or other capacities, who draw a fairly large salary in keeping with the positions held, but they are a very small minority. Academic institutions such as schools of social work and industrial establishments offer better salaries, service and working conditions and opportunities for professional growth, than the primary social work fields²⁷."

25. Ramachandran, P. and Padmanabhan, A.—Professional Social Worker in India—1969.

26. Ibid—page 128.

27. Basu, Sita—'Women and Social Work' in Wasi, Muriel (Ed.) 'The Educated Women in India'—1973—p 92.

Positions held by the majority of women in this profession are generally in the middle and the lower category with very few holding key posts. Only 2 schools of social work are headed by women and very few heads of departments dealing with social welfare or related subjects at the Central and State levels are professionally qualified women.

(b) *Concentration of women in low level jobs in clerical and related services.*

5.239 Registers of Employment Exchanges and the views expressed by various employers, both in public and private sectors, make it clear that jobs of receptionists, clerks, stenographers and typists are absorbing more and more educated women. Out of 9.18 lakhs of women work seekers registered with the employment exchanges at the end of 1973, as many as 69,355 were seeking clerical and related jobs. The concentration in particular fields is indicated below :

Typists	50,448
Stenographers	7,080
Clerks	2,800
Key Punch operators	2,592
Telephone operators	1,392
Middle school teachers	27,525
Primary school teachers	26,100
Secondary school teachers	24,163
Manual training teachers	6,885
Nursing attendants	5,926
Midwives	2,555
General Nurses	2,058

Source :—Directorate General of Employment and Training. The demand for unskilled women labour is shrinking both in public and private sectors and the growth in the numbers of women in white collared jobs is definitely on the increase but predominantly in the low-prestige occupations.

5.240 A sample survey of the pattern of graduate employment in the country undertaken by the Directorate General of Employment and Training towards the beginning of 1960 also found that the second highest percentage of employed women graduates were engaged in clerical and related work in the Central Government. About three-fourths of the employed women were earning below Rs. 300 per month and only 6% had a monthly income of Rs. 300 and above.²⁸

TABLE XXXII
Women Employed in Central Government at different Levels.

Total	Class I		Class II		Class III		Class IV	
	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971
Females	42 (100)	251 (100)	231 (100)	269 (100)	720 (100)	4175 (100)	10 (100)	84 (100)
General	29 (69)	176 (70)	267 (95)	785 (90)	549 (76)	2959 (71)	5 (50)	68 (81)
Technical	7 (17)	29 (12)	13 (4)	61 (7)	109 (15)	902 (22)	2 (20)	8 (10)
Professional	6 (14)	46 (18)	1 (1)	23 (3)	62 (9)	314 (8)	3 (30)	8 (10)

Figures in brackets denote percentage.

5.241 The Committee obtained information from various Ministries and agencies of the Central Government regarding the number of women employees at different levels. The data presented in Table XXXII indicate that the largest numbers are concentrated in Class III i.e. ministerial and related staff. The expansion at this level has been much faster than that at the other levels, increasing from 720 in 1961 to 4,175 in 1971. As compared to this, the number of women in Class II services has increased from 231 to 269 and that in

28. Report on the Pattern of Graduate Employment (1963)—DGE & T pp. 56-78. The study was confined to University graduates who received their degrees in 1950 and '54.

Class I from 42 to 251. The number of Class IV employees increased from 10 to 84.²⁹ The percentage increase of employees in this limited group of Central Government agencies indicates a faster rate of growth of women employees than the total. A detailed analysis shows that the highest number of Class I officers is to be found in the Department of Atomic Energy (121). Other Ministries with a relatively higher number of women at this level are the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, External Affairs and Tourism and Civil Aviation. Their numbers in the other Ministries are negligible. In Class II, the highest numbers are found in Tourism and Civil Aviation (626), Education and Social Welfare (65) and Atomic Energy (48). In Class III the largest concentration is again in Atomic Energy (1092), Defence (652), Supply and Rehabilitation (637), Education and Social Welfare (628), Tourism and Civil Aviation (206), Irrigation and Power (195), Commerce (148), Shipping and Transport (131). This indicates that only a few Ministries have shown themselves particularly friendly to receiving women on their staff. The new Department of Science and Technology would also come within this group with 11 women in Class I, 14 in Class II, 99 in Class III. While we regret our inability to make this study comprehensive, our failure to obtain similar information from the other Ministries confirms our belief based on unofficial information, that certain Ministries and agencies of the Government of India are practising a subtle form of discrimination by resisting the posting of women on their staff. Another inference that may be drawn from this data is that the discrimination against women is considerably less in agencies which employ a larger proportion of scientists and other professionals. The case of Atomic Energy, Education and Social Welfare and Science and Technology provide distinct evidence of this. Since these are also relatively lower staffed agencies, their impact on the total employment of women in Central Government agencies can be only marginal.

5.242 We tried to obtain similar data regarding the employment of women at different levels from various public and private undertakings. Information was obtained from 137 public undertakings and 72 private ones. Table XXXIII indicates the distribution of women employees at the level of management, executives and clerical staff. The trend is clear regarding their concentration at the clerical level, both in public and private sector. The greater percentage of women employees is found in the production level with the exception of fertilisers, advertising and steel. In the public sector it is remarkable that their proportion in clerical work outstrips their proportion in the production level (Simple engineering, heavy electricals, fertilisers, textiles, steel and oil). At the level of executives only the advertising industry in the private sector seems to have accommodated a few women. In the public sector, while finance, banking and insurance, steel, heavy engineering and heavy electricals have a certain number of women their proportion is exceedingly small. The number of women at the managerial level is negligible except in light electricals in the private sector.

5.243 The distribution of women clerical staff at the levels of supervisors, assistants and lower grade employees indicates the same pattern (Table XXXIV (a) and (b)). The concentration is generally in the ranks of typists, stenographers and receptionists except in mining and steel, heavy electricals and tele-communications.

5.244 Data supplied by the Union Public Service Commission also indicates an increase in the number of women being recruited as stenographers and assistants in the Central Services as indicated by Table XXXV. Their ratio to men has shown a steady improvement during the last decade.

5.245 The Central Services which threw open their ranks to open competitions, giving equal opportunities for women, since 1948 show a slow but steady increase in the number of candidates as well as successful entrants (Table XXXVI). In the IAS/IFS/IPS examination the ratio of women to men recommended for appointment has improved from 1 : 81.6 in 1960 to 1 : 7.5 in 1972. In the other services, however, e.g. the Indian Economic Service, the Statistical Service, and the Engineering Service their proportion still remains low, though in the Electrical Engineering Service their position is relatively better as also in the ranks of Geologists. The Forest Service has received no women even though women have been appearing in these examinations, though in very small numbers. It should be noted that

29. It should be noted that this is not a comprehensive study of Central Government employees but covers only the partial response received from the various Central Ministries. Though they were asked to include their subordinate agencies, not all of them did so. We also failed to obtain any response from a few Ministries—Railway, Information and Broadcasting, Health and Family Planning, Home Affairs. The data should, therefore, be regarded as purely illustrative.

TABLE XXXIII

Distribution of Women Employees in different categories in Public and Private Sector

<i>Undertaking</i>	<i>No. of Units</i>		<i>Total Women Employees</i>		<i>Managerial Level</i>		<i>Officers Level</i>		<i>Clerical</i>	<i>Level</i>
	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
Heavy	6	15	964	575	18 (1.99)	—	35 (3.87)	3 (0.52)	436 (48.33)	135 (23.48)
Light	7	2	614	17	1 (0.16)	—	13 (2.12)	1 (5.88)	210 (34.20)	4 (23.53)
Simple	22	—	1547	—	3 (0.19)	—	27 (1.75)	—	816 (52.75)	—
Electricals:										
Light	2	1	117	1414	— (3.11)	44	2 (1.71)	—	47 (40.17)	18 (13.01)
Electronics	1	8	2750	1344	—	—	12 (0.44)	11 (0.82)	328 (11.93)	187 (13.91)
Heavy	7	—	1164	—	—	—	38 (3.26)	—	702 (60.31)	—
Chemicals										
Fertiliser	15	5	739	122	—	—	10 (1.74)	1	389 (52.64)	98 (80.33)
Plastics	4	—	248	—	—	—	1 (0.40)	—	43 (17.34)	—
Finance & Banking:										
Insurance	30	1	3332	3	11 (0.30)	—	58 (1.74)	—	3126 (93.28)	—
Tele Communication:										
Advertising	1	—	597	—	—	—	13	—	359	—
	—	7	—	157	—	3 (1.91)	—	36 (22.93)	—	103 (65.61)
Textile	1	14	12	2267	—	—	—	11 (0.49)	11 (91.67)	174 (7.68)
Mining	5	1	33978	661	—	—	43 (0.12)	—	974 (2.87)	12 (1.82)
Steel	5	1	532	22	—	—	28 (5.26)	2 (9.09)	504 (94.74)	20 (90.91)
Oil	4	—	355	—	—	—	10 (2.82)	—	332 (93.78)	—
Research & Development										
	2	—	465	—	—	—	1	—	464 (99.78)	—
Planning & Construction										
	8	—	167	—	1 (0.60)	—	7 (4.19)	—	158 (94.61)	—
Others	7	13	899	305	— (0.66)	2	51 (5.671)	23 (7.54)	763 (84.67)	230 (75.41)

N.B. Figures within brackets denote percentages to total Women Employment.

TABLE XXXIV (a)

Woman Employees at clerical level in Public Sector.
Clerical & related workers

Name	Total W. Employees	Total clerical & their % to total w. Emp.	Supervisory	Assistant	Typist/Steno/ Receptionist.
Eng.					392
[a] Heavy	904	436 (48.23)	14	30	170
[b] Light	614	210 (34.20)	14	26	29
[c] Simple	1547	816 (52.75)	16	771	
2. Electricals				164	134
[a] Light	2750	328 (11.93)	30	459	224
(b) Heavy	1164	702 (6.31)	19		
3. Chemicals				33	352
Fertiliser	739	389 (52.64)	4	207	2913
4. Finance, Banking & Insurance :	3332	3126 (93.82)	6		
5. Planning & Construction	167	158 (94.61)	6	42	110
6. Oil	355	332 (93.52)	3	95	234
7. Mining	33,978	974 (2.87)	380	268	326
8. Steel	532	504 (94.74)	6	347	151
9. Research & Development	465	464 (99.78)	—	1	463
10. Food Processing spreservation	91	86 (97.80)	3	10	73
11. Telecommuni- cation	597	359 (60.13)	79	127	153
12. Miscellaneous	899	763 (84.87)	375	11	377

TABLE XXXIV (b)

Women Emp. At Clerical Level : (PRIVATE SECTOR)

1. Electricals	T.W. Emp.	Clerical level	Supervisory	Asstt.	Typist/Steno Tel. Operator
A. Light	1414	184 (13.01)	—	15	169
B. Electronics	1344	183 (13.91)	—	84	99
2. Engineering				19	114
A. Heavy	575	135 (23.48)	2	2	96
3. Chemicals	1122	98 (80.33)	—	7	96
4. Advertising	157	103 (65.81)	—	—	172
5. Textiles	2267	174 (7.68)	2	—	20
6. Steel	22	20 (90.91)	—	—	215
7. Miscellaneous	305	230 (75.41)	—	15	

TABLE XXXV

Stenographers and Assistants as Recommended by the Union Public Service Commission

Stenographers and Assistants as Recommended by the Union Public Service Commission							
Name of the Examination and year	No. of candidates appeared			No. of candidates recommended			Ratio of women to men
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	
Stenographers							
1. 1963	1944	1913	31	457	454	3	1 : 151.3
2. 1966	1747	1676	71	219	212	7	1 : 30.3
3. 1969	2038	1897	141	280	264	16	1 : 16.5
4. 1971	2366	2077	289	129	113	16	1 : 7.1
5. 1973	1729	1481	248	200	180	21	1 : 8.6
Assistants Grade Examination							
1. 1963	3063	3036	27	197	195	2	1 : 97.5
2. 1965	1901	1867	34	92	91	1	1 : 91
3. 1969	2891	2779	112	353	397	16	1 : 24.8
4. 1971	7889	7229	460	362	350	12	1 : 29.2
5. 1973	8096	7347	749	374	352	22	1 : 16

TABLE XXXVI

Name of Examination and Year	No. of candidates appeared			No. of candidates recommended			Ratio of women to men (recommended for appointment)
I.F.S., I.A.S., I.P.S. etc.	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	
1. 1960	5873	*	*	333	328	5	1 : 65.6
2. 1963	4282	*	*	417	400	17	1 : 23.5
3. 1966	5040	*	*	426	385	41	1 : 9.4
4. 1969	6516	6153	363	378	337	41	1 : 8.2
5. 1972	8424	7800	624	549	485	64	1 : 7.6
<i>Indian Forest Service</i>							
1. 1967	1338	1335	3	54	54	—	
2. 1969	949	947	2	16	16	—	
3. 1971	1510	1504	6	11	11	—	
4. 1973	2439	2420	19	26	26	—	
<i>IES/ISS</i>							
1. 1967	2386	*	*	45			
2. 1969	1892	*	*	48			
3. 1971	572	*	*	25			
4. 1973	304	260	44	13	13	—	
<i>Eng. Services</i> (1960 to 66 no women candidate recommended for Eng. Service)							
1. 1969	2105	2104	1	235	235	—	
2. 1970	2105	2100	5	277	276	1	1 : 276
3. 1971	1883	1877	6	321	321	—	
4. 1972	2745	2739	6	453	452	1	1 : 452
<i>Eng. Service (Elect.)</i>							
1. 1971	315	307	8	89	87	2	1 : 43.5
2. 1972	516	509	7	250	248	2	1 : 124
3. 1973	879	862	17	85	83	2	1 : 41.5
<i>Geologists Exam.</i>							
1. 1969	239	238	1	42	42	—	
2. 1972	322	314	8	100	99	1	1 : 99
3. 1973	332	325	7	137	134	3	1 : 44.7

Source : U.P.S.C.

the Indian Police Service, which had refused to accept any woman earlier, withdrew its resistance after a recent representation from some women candidates.

5.246 While we regret that we did not get any response from the Ministry of Railways to our request for information, we have been unofficially informed that of the 10 Services under the Railways, women have been accepted at the Class I level only in two, viz. Accounts and Medical. Certain candidates who have sought admission to the Traffic Service, were denied the opportunity and persuaded to opt for Accounts. We have also been informed that the Railway Board has resisted the posting of Class I women officers on the staff of the Board.

5.247 The important issue concerning women in the Central Services that received considerable public attention recently was regarding the constitutional validity of Rule 5 (3) of the IAS Recruitment Rules, 1954. According to this Rule, when an unmarried woman officer married "the Central Government may, if the maintenance of the efficiency of the service so requires, call upon her to resign". This rule had been cited in a case which came up for consideration before the Supreme Court under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1967.³⁰ In this case, the legality of a service rule adopted by the respondent concern, (International Franchise (Pvt.) Ltd.), by which the services of a woman worker were automatically terminated on marriage, was sought to be defended on the analogy of Rule 5 (3) of the IAS Recruitment Rules. The Court, while striking down the said rule in the respondent concern in the interests of social justice, observed as follows :

"It will be seen that this rule for the Indian Administrative Service is not unqualified like the rule in force in the respondent concern. It only lays down that where an unmarried woman married subsequently, the Central Government may, if the maintenance of the efficiency of the Service so requires, call upon her to resign. Therefore, this rule does not compel unmarried women to resign on marriage as a matter of course, as is the case in the respondent-concern. It is only when the Central Government considers that marriage has impaired the efficiency of the woman concerned that the Central Government may call upon her to resign. The rule which is in force in the respondent concern however assumes that merely by marriage the efficiency of the woman employee is impaired and such an assumption in our opinion is not justified."

5.248 Though Rule 5(3) was upheld by the Supreme Court, we are happy to note that it was deleted from the IAS Recruitment Rules in 1972, after an assurance given by the Prime Minister in Parliament, since it amounted to discrimination against married women.

5.249 The low proportion of women in the higher ranks may be a reflection either of prejudices and discriminatory recruitment policies or lack of career orientation and career commitment on the part of women. Disparities in the proportion of men and women at different levels of responsibility are important indicators of the unequal employment status and opportunity for men and women which are the direct result of a combination of factors i.e. the educational system, training, job-orientation and culture conditioning. Many private concerns do not recruit women into their managerial cadre as a matter of policy as they believe that women cannot exercise supervision and control and they are weeded out on promotion. Such prejudices tend to persist and are difficult to break down. In response to our request for information regarding policy in regard to recruitment of women, one nationalised undertaking observed :—

"Our general policy has been to avoid, as far as possible, appointment of female employees in the Organisation. Lack of education among womenfolk, socio-economic backwardness of the state, have been largely responsible for creating an atmosphere which has been discouraging to women's employment. Admit these conditions, while very few women candidates were coming forward for jobs in our organisation, we were reluctant to appoint them lest it may create administrative problems. Besides, as a private business organisation prior to nationalisation, we gave due consideration to efficiency, discipline, administrative ability, hard work and in our opinion women candidates in general were not upto the mark."³¹

5.250 The ILO report on "Women Workers in a Changing World" noted that "while formal discrimination in employment based on sex is tending to disappear, informal policies and

30. Bombay Labour Union v. M/s International Franchise (Private) Limited, A.I.R. 1960 S.C. 942.

31. A unit of the Life Insurance Corporation of India in the Northern Region.

practices are tending to persist. The residual forms of discrimination tend to operate, formally and informally, at a higher level in the occupational pyramid, often blocking the advancement of women on the ground of their individual merit irrespective of sex."⁸²

5.251 In spite of these limitations, an overview of the trends during the last three decades reveals that the contribution and achievement of women in this sector have been significant. The number of women working as lawyers, engineers, technologists, scientists, accountants, and auditors, journalists, business managers and executives, may be small but they indicate a qualitative change.

5.252 While the overall increase in the number of women in these occupations indicate a relatively widening field for employment of educated women, this should not be given undue importance. We did not attempt any definition of the type of work or of the sections of workers employed in this sector since it was neither possible nor necessary. Broadly, the tertiary sector constitutes that sector of the economy in which no production of material goods take place. In this sense, all work in the tertiary is unproductive. In an economy like ours, where an unusually high proportion of total capital is invested in trade and commerce or where because of social and political considerations, allocation of resources for defence, maintenance of law and order and certain social services like education and health are high, the tertiary sector is somewhat bigger in volume than in other developing countries. As a result of this, employment in the tertiary sector is general and in the public sector in particular has increased at an exceedingly fast rate. The expanded role of Government at all levels of the development process has been one of the greatest contributory factors towards this.

5.253 As compared to this, the actual production of goods has not increased at the same pace. It has been increasingly realised that a developing economy cannot bear the weight of this very heavy tertiary sector, with the increasing constraints on resources available for development and inflationary tendencies. The increasing financial crisis has already imposed severe constraints on public resources and calls for reduction in public expenditure and non-productive expenditure in the economy as a whole. The major impact of these demands are bound to be on these sectors where we have noticed a concentration of a larger proportion of women's employment viz. education, health and other social services. It is an established fact that this is the sector which receives the first impact of an economy drive, both in the public and in the private sector. We may, therefore, anticipate a slowing down, if not an actual reduction in the opportunities for women's employment in these services and professions.

5.254 The over-riding inference from the existing trends in different sectors of the economy suggests, that without increasing opportunity for women's employment in the productive sectors, it will not be possible to arrest the established trend of decline in women's economic participation that we have pointed out earlier. The marginal contribution that the tertiary sector can make to the employment situation as a whole is negligible, and in the interests of economic development of the country as a whole, attempts are bound to be made in the near future to reduce the present imbalance between the production and the tertiary sectors. This points to the imperative need to increase opportunities for women in the former.

III—Infrastructure for Women's Participation in a Modernising Economy.

5.255 The sectorwise examination of women's rights and opportunities for economic participation, indicates that the major forces affecting women's employment, stem from structural changes within the economy—in agriculture, industry, and the economy as a whole. The change from traditional to a modern market economy, from laissez-faire to deliberate planned development, from unorganised to organised production, from unregulated to regulated relations of production, from labour to capital intensive technology, and the intensification of socio-economic inequalities, all have had an impact on the employment situation. Women being a vulnerable group with fewer avenues open to them, have been affected more adversely than men.

5.256 A. *Education* :—Modern methods of production, marketing and planning call for a higher level of knowledge and skills than those required by a traditional economy. The increasing complexity and inter-relationship between production, investment and the process of competitive selection, increases the importance of education and dissemination of information.

5.257 Though educational opportunities did expand in the post-independence period, it was relatively slower among women, particularly at the primary and secondary levels³³. The rate of expansion was much faster at the level of higher education, and was the virtual monopoly of the middle class. In the case of women, both secondary and higher education was practically confined to the urban middle class. On the other hand, the number of illiterates, who remained outside the reach of the educational system also increased—the women outnumbering the men. This pattern of educational development, coupled with the changes in the economy, has, inevitably affected the economic opportunities of women.

TABLE XXXVII (a)

Educational Status of workers URBAN 1961 and 1971.

Educational level	1961				1971			
	Total		Workers		Total		Workers	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
1. Total	22419892	4010042			28554300	3285700		
2. Illiterate	7895414	3253237	35.2	81.1	9129500	2165400	31.9	65.8
3. Literate without educational level	6792861	321460	30.2	8.0	3295100	165300	11.5	5.0
4. Primary or junior basic	4449714	209167	19.8	5.2	5260000	208100	18.4	6.2
5. Matriculation or Higher Secondary	2330992	143113	10.4	3.5	4368300	149500	15.1	4.4
6. Technical diploma not equal to degree	67116	6914	0.3	0.1	4759000	371200	16.6	11.3
7. Non-technical diploma not equal to degree	110385	11957	0.4	0.2	42000	5800	0.1	0.1
8. Graduate or post graduate	599707	36370	2.6	0.8	132600	27200	0.4	0.8
9. Technical degree or diploma equal to degree or post graduate degree	173703	27824	0.7	0.6	983300	87300	3.4	2.3
10. Engineering	42831	116	0.1	0.0	305800	49800	1.0	1.4
11. Medicine	36849	5713	0.1	0.1	278700	56100	0.9	1.3
12. Agriculture	4992	28	0.0	0.0	132600	1400	0.4	0.0
13. Veterinary and dairying	2170	10	0.0	0.0	67900	15100	0.2	0.3
14. Technology	2744	30	0.0	0.0	11900	200	0.0	0.0
15. Teaching	42487	114470	0.1	0.4	57000	38100	0.1	1.1
16. Others	41610	2457	0.1	0.0	9300	1300	0.0	0.0
			100.0	100.0			100.0	100.0

33. Discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

5.258 The work participation rate by education level shows that while employment opportunities for educated women have increased, there has been a negative trend in the participation rate of illiterate and semi-literate women, whose share in employment has declined.

5.259 During 1961-71 the participation rate for illiterate women declined substantially from 81.1% to 65.8% in urban areas, but showed marginal variations in rural areas (Table XXXVII (a) & (b)). As pointed out in section II B and III A, the employment of women has declined significantly both in unorganised non-agricultural occupations and in organised industry. Our review indicates that there is a large scale displacement of illiterate and semi-literate women workers from organised industry and non-agricultural occupations in the unorganised sector. This is also evident from the fact that the drop has been more marked in the urban areas. A superficial conclusion that could be drawn from this data, is that the decline in the numbers of illiterate or semi-literate women workers, indicates a rising level of education.

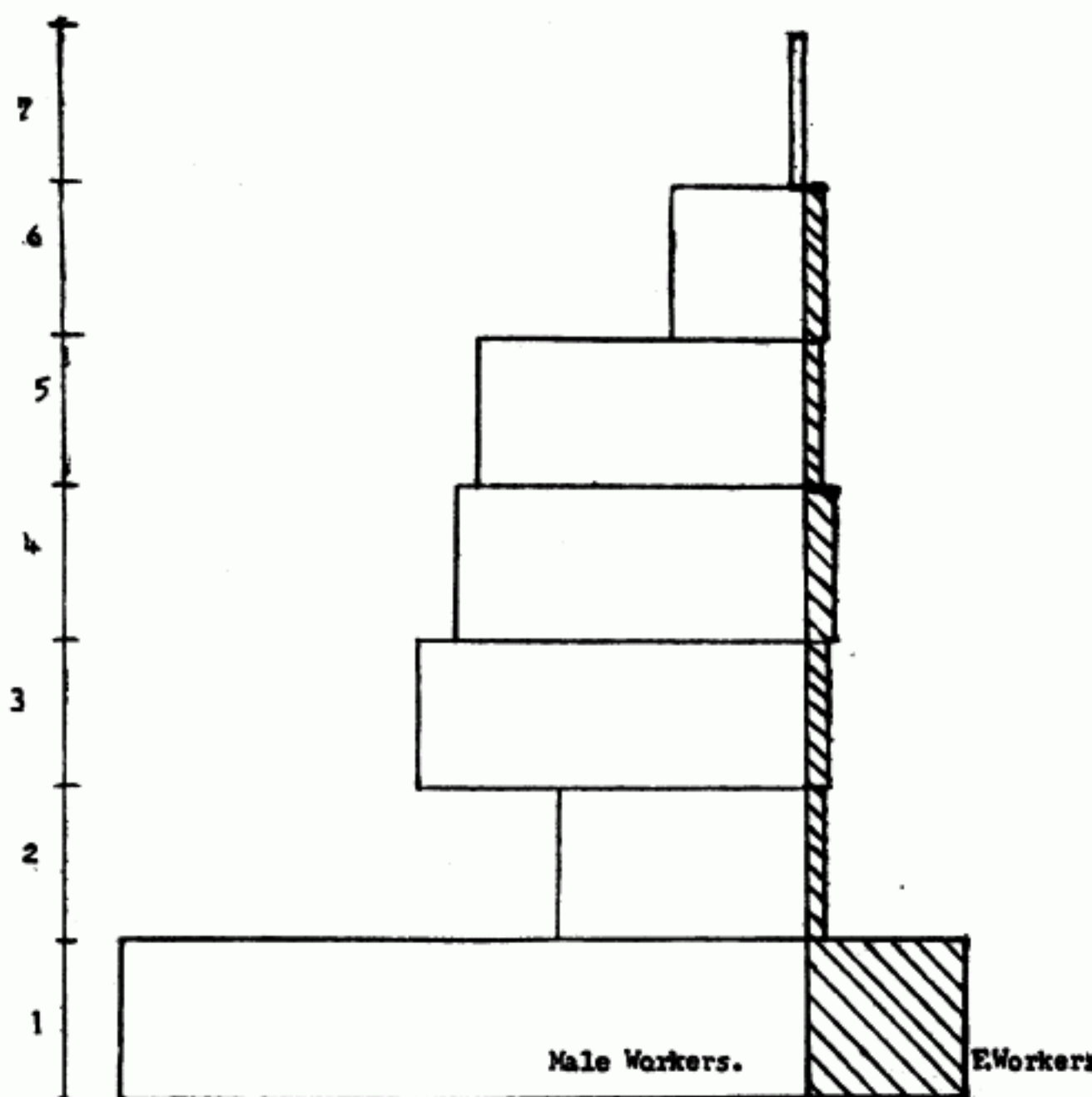
TABLE—XXXVII (b)
Educational Status of workers in RURAL, 1961 & 1971

Educational levels:	Males	1961				Males	1971			
		Total workers	Females%	% workers to total			Total workers	Females%	% workers to total	
		M & F for each educational levels					M & F for each educational levels			
1. Total.....	106750873	55494693				119791400	27712600			
2. Illiterate...	73244022	53078059	69.5	95.6		77887100	25527400	65.1	92.1	
3. Literate (with-out educational level)	23403673	1772430	21.0	3.2		14857100	893300	12.4	3.3	
4. Primary	8512723	578515	8.1	1.1		15382000	842000	12.9	3.0	
5. *Middle	—	—	—	—		7286900	241300	6.1	0.8	
6. **Matriculation and above	1590185	65689	1.4	0.1		4378300	208600	3.7	0.7	
7. Matriculation or Higher Secondary						3645400	138100	3.1	0.4	
8. Non-Tech. diploma or certificate not equal to degree						55300	7400	0.0	0.0	
9. Technical diploma or certificate not equal to degree						109900	36700	0.0	0.1	
10. Graduate and above						567700	26400	0.4	0.0	

*The educational category as 'middle' given separately is applicable only to 1971 figures whereas for 1961 it is included in the category of 'primary'.

**Classification of educational level in 1961 is made only upto 'Matriculation and above' whereas that of 1971 is upto Graduate and above and is in the table. The figures in the 1971 column against the educational category of Matriculation and above are given to facilitate comparison. These figures represent the total sum of all educational categories, commencing from Serial No. 7 to 10.

Source : 1961 figures : Part II B(i) General Economic Tables; and 1971 figures : Paper 3 of 1972 Economic characteristics of population.

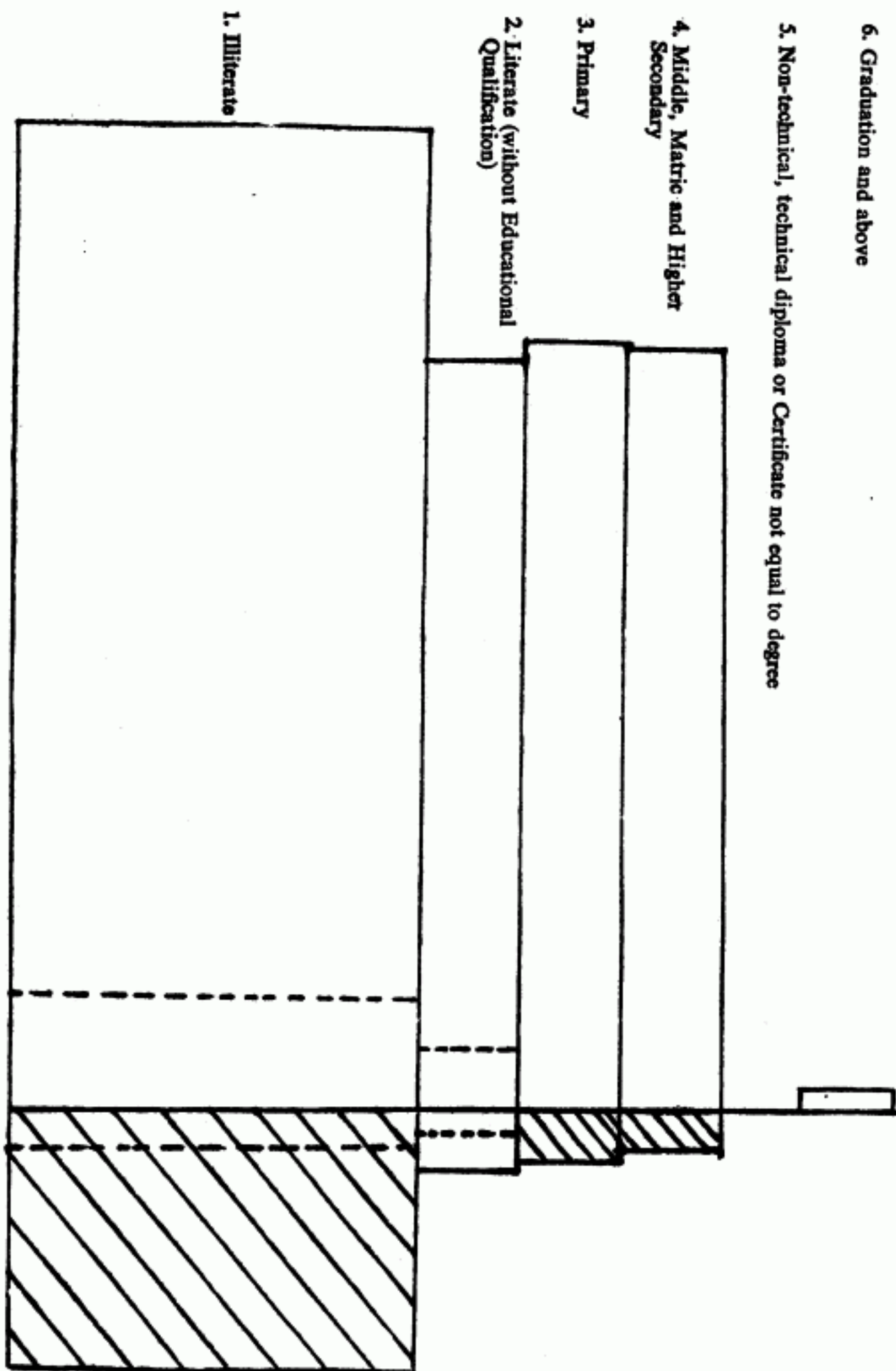


Educational Status of Male & Female Urban Workers, 1971

- (1) Illiterate
- (2) Literate without educational qualification
- (3) Primary and Junior Basic.
- (4) Technical diploma not equal to degree.
- (5) Matriculation & Higher Secondary
- (6) Degree, P.G. Degree, Technical degree or Diploma equal to Degree or P.G. Degree Engineering, Agricultural and Medicine.
- (7) Non-technical diploma not equal to Degree, veterinary, dairying, technology, teaching and others.

Source : Census of India 1971. General Economic Tables. Paper 3 of 1972.

Educational Status of Male and Female Rural Workers, 1971.



Source ; Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

education. The pattern of women's educational development in the years since Independence, however, indicates that it has failed to penetrate, in any significant manner, the large mass of illiterate adult women, whose numbers have increased over the years. Since they also come from the poorest section of the population, where employment is a dire necessity, this change in the composition of the women work-force has to be regarded as an indicator of the displacement of this section of women from the work-force, a consequence of the changing levels of technology, and methods of business organisation. The increase in the participation rate of technical diploma holders from 0.6% to 2.3%, indicates the operation of the growing demand for modern technical skills in new industries like electronics, pharmaceuticals electricals etc. and in new services for technical personnel. The distribution of degree holders and technical female personnel by labour-force status and level of education indicates that the majority of them were employees and only 2.1% being self-employed (Table XXXVIII).

5.260 Among the educated women, the worker rates for women who have received a technical degree and diploma (mainly in teaching and medicine) were substantially higher than those who had received non-technical degree or diplomas or had studied upto the Higher Secondary level. The differential according to fields of specialisation of technical degree and diploma holders are smaller among males than among females. The distribution of women degree holders and technical personnel by sector of employment show that 58% are employed in the public sector, 36.6% in the private sector and 5.4% are self-employed.

TABLE XXXVIII

Distribution of Degree holders and Technical female Personnel by status and level of education, 1971 : (selected categories)

Labour force status	Doctorate		Master Post-graduate		Bachelor	Equiva- lent	Dip- loma	Certifi- cate	Total
	No.	%	No.	%					
A. 1. Employee	1373	70.8	40302	48.1	99344	32.0	6599	55.0	147618 (36.1)
2. Self employed	51	2.6	1700	2.0	5982	1.9	950	7.9	8683 (2.1)
3. Unemployed trying for jobs	243	12.5	15376	18.4	62126	20.0	2061	17.2	79804 (19.5)
B. 4. Student trainees	84	0.2	326	0.4	3424	1.1	159	1.3	3913 (1.0)
5. Apprentice	—	—	33	Neg.	394	0.2	65	0.5	492 (0.1)
C. 6. Unemployed and not trying for job	135	7.1	15192	18.2	73721	23.7	1107	9.3	90155 (22.1)

Compiled from Census of India 1971, G. Series Tables (National level) Degree holders and Technical Personnel (P) office of the R.G.India

5.261 The extent to which persons of different educational levels undertake productive roles in the economy is an indicator of the nature of utilisation of the investment in their education. Women with degree or diploma in medicine and teaching generally pursue a career. The differential in participation rate between such women and their male counterparts is not more than 20%.

5.262 The table XL below giving the proportion of formally trained men and women in selected occupational categories indicates that employed women by and large are better equipped than men in most of the occupations :

TABLE XXXIX

Distribution of Women Degree-holders and Technical Personnel by Sector of Employment

Level of Education	Total	%	Sector of Employment		%	Private	%	Self-Employed
			Public					
Doctorate	1,380 (100.0)	0.9	1,005 (72.8)	1.2		328 (23.8)	0.6	47 (3.4)
Master/Post Graduate	40,081 (100.0)	26.8	22,507 (56.2)	26.0		16,015 (40.0)	29.3	1,559 (3.8)
Bachelor/Equivalent	1,00,605 (100.0)	67.3	58,231 (57.9)	67.1		36,798 (36.6)	67.3	5,576 (5.5)
Diploma/Certificate	7,444 (100.0)	5.0	4,980 (66.9)	5.7		2,565 (21.0)	2.8	899 (12.1)
All levels of Education	1,49,510 (100.0)	100.0	86,723 (58.0)	100.0		54,706 (36.6)	100.0	8,081 (5.4)

Source : Census of India 1971, G-Series Tables (National Level), Degree holders and Technical Personnel (Provisional), Office of the Registrar General, India, Ministry Home of Affairs, New Delhi.

TABLE XL

*Percentage of Formally Trained * Men and women in Selected Occupational Categories.*

	Men	Women
(i) University teachers	49.4	37.9
(ii) Secondary teachers	63.7	77.8
(iii) Primary & Middle teachers	77.0	81.6
(iv) Labour and Social Welfare	21.2	35.2
(v) Librarians & Archivists	53.8	72.5
(vi) Village officials	27.8	35.5
(vii) Allopathic physicians and surgeons	96.1	100.0

* Holding degrees, diplomas, certificate in profession concerned.

Source : Occupational—Educational Pattern in India (Public Sector) 1968.

5.263 The rising participation rate of educated women is also witnessed by the Employment Exchange statistics. Since 1963 the number of female job seekers with matriculation as well as higher education on the live Register has increased more rapidly than for males. Between 1964-68 the number of female job seekers registered with Employment Exchange increased by about 81%, while that of male job seekers increased by only 14%. For matriculates and higher educated job seekers the corresponding increases were 72% and 116% for males and females respectively³⁴. In 1973 the percentage increase of women work seekers over the previous year was 25.7% for those with qualifications below middle school; 39% for matriculates and under graduates and 95.4% for graduates and post-graduates. This phenomenon assumes importance in view of the relatively rapid spread of women's education in urban

TABLE XLI

Average (Median) Duration of Unemployment among Graduates and Technical Personnel by sex level of education

	Male	Female
All levels of Education	12.9	14.8
Doctorates	12.0	15.1
Master/Post-graduate	13.1	16.9
Bachelor/Equivalent	12.7	14.2
Diploma	16.7	17.4
Certificate	20.8	24.0

* 1971 Census special enumeration.

34. Visaria, Pravin, "Labour Force Participation By age, Sex and Educational level in India"—1971.

India and the paucity of employment opportunities. Taking different subject fields together, the average duration of unemployment is higher for women than for men, as indicated in the Table XLI.

5.264 According to the Census of 1971, the average waiting period for a male graduate before getting employment was 12.9 as against 14.8 months for a woman graduate³⁵. The only exception to this is the field of medicine and nursing where the average waiting period for men with post-graduate qualification and with doctorate is higher than for women³⁶. This sometimes acts as a strong deterrent for many a woman without specialisation from seeking employment.

5.265 The total stock of degree holders and technical personnel by subject field, level of education and sex, and the distribution of degree holders and technical personnel who were found unemployed, was obtained by CSIR on individual enumeration slip in 1971. The study revealed that out of 4 lakh women degree holders only one and a half lakhs were employed which is only 4% of the total working women in the country. Of these employed women 62% earned less than Rs. 500, 17% earned between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1000. Of the total number of unemployed women graduates, only 110,000 women were seeking jobs and the largest number of this component were holding degree in Arts and Humanities and the next were those holding degrees in Science. Of the women who were not seeking employment, 55% had degrees in Arts and Humanities, 50% in Science, 18% in technical or engineering and 9% in vocational courses.

The dilemma of idleness among educated women :

5.266 The paradox of women's employment is that while illiteracy drives many out of employment, education does not necessarily lead to their employment. "That participation ratios are not higher has at least as much to do with considerations of status and prestige as with the absence of jobs for those who seek but cannot find them. It is of course conceivable that a more progressive and expanding society could elevate the position of women and change attitudes toward female work. But an economy whose capacity to absorb men of working age is strained, does not encourage the elimination of traditional forms of discriminations against economic activity by women³⁷."

5.267 Idleness can both be voluntary and involuntary. Since our labour market does not provide full, productive and freely chosen employment and jobs are at a premium, many women prefer to avoid the competitive pressures. Utilisation of labour in any society depends to a certain extent on social institutions, taboos and inhibitions related to status and work which affect women more than men. These attitudes are reflected in social institutions, and the relationship between institutions and attitudes is mutually reinforcing³⁸.

5.268 The development of education has been mainly confined to middle class families, among whom the attitude to women's employment outside the home had been most restrictive. This attitude however has been changing rapidly under economic pressure and the changing social scene. The real difficulty lies in the failure of the economy to absorb all its labour power and to appreciate the need for an institutionalised pattern of labour utilisation that takes note of women's roles as housewives and mothers. So far, in spite of occasional lipservice to the idealised image of women in these roles, little attempt has been made to assess its productive value. Still less attention has been given to providing the necessary infrastructure to remove women's disabilities in the labour market. Education alone cannot remove these disabilities.

B. Vocational and Technical Training

5.269 The need to relate education and particularly vocational training to actual employment opportunities has been repeatedly emphasised by various expert bodies like the ILO, the National Commission on Labour, the All-India Council for Technical Education, the Institute of Applied Manpower Research and the University Grants Commission, Committee on Coordination of University Education with Manpower Requirements (1967).

5.270 In view of the current social prejudices against employment of women and their large scale displacement from employment as a result of structural and technological changes

37. Myrdal, G—Asian Drama—p. 1131

38. Ibid P. 1000.

taking place in the economy, vocational training for women requires special attention and priority. This has been emphasised by the International Labour Conference in 1965 and the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women in each of its reports. In India, the National Committee on Women's Education, had pleaded strongly for better and more extensive facilities for vocational training for women particularly since the general educational system paid little regard to the needs of industry and commerce.

5. 271 The inadequacy of vocational training opportunities for women, widens the productivity gap between men and women at all levels and makes them unwanted by the economy. Training facilities when they are provided, display the existing social bias regarding the suitability of particular occupations for women which leads to over-concentration in a limited group of subjects.

5. 272 Our examination of opportunities for vocational and technical education for women is based on the following :— (a) on the job training ; (b) pre-employment training-technical and professional ; (c) training programmes undertaken by different Government Department and voluntary organizations for developing skills and human resources. We have not included professional training at the university level because, as will be discussed in the next chapter, there is no real evidence of discrimination or any substantial wastage of training at this level.

5: 273 (a) *On the Job Training* : The major factor limiting women's contribution to the modern industrial sector is lack of adequate opportunities for on-the-job-training. We have already pointed out that women have been greater victims of rationalisation and modernisation in industry. Some of the new industries like electronics, simple engineering, telecommunications etc provided in-service-training to women with comparatively higher educational qualifications. In spite of opportunities provided by these few industries, however, the disparity in opportunities available to men and women is glaring. Under the Apprentices Act, 1961, 161 trades with 87,000 places have been located for apprentices in 101 industries. 52,500 apprentices have actually been engaged against these places of which only 104 are women whose distribution in different trades may be seen in Table XLIII. The bias for confining women trainees to limited group of trades is clearly visible —

TABLE XLIII :

Statement Indicating the Number of Women Apprentices Under Training, under the Apprentices Act—1961 (as on 31.3.74)

S.No.	Designated Trade	No. of Apprentices
1.	Book Binder	41
2.	Compositor Hand	21
3.	Clerk General	16
4.	Book Keeping & Accountancy	1
5.	Sales Assistant	6
6.	Hotel Clerk/Receptionists	2+2
7.	House Keeper	6
8.	Laboratory Assistant	1
9.	Sheet Metal Worker	3
10.	Grinder	1
11.	Draughtsman Civil	3
12.	Others	1
Total :		104

5. 274 Representatives of trade unions informed us that the training provided to workers for handling new machinery in different industries, seldom extends to women except in the few specific industries like machine tools, telecommunications and electronics in which women's greater aptitude for particular operation has already been recognised³⁹.

39. Vide Supra Para 5.197 for a detailed discussion.

5. 275 (b) *Pre-employment Training* : In the non-engineering trades where women constitute 44.97% of the total number of trainees, the most popular trades are cutting and tailoring, embroidery and needle work, knitting, and stenography. Of these, the first two are completely monopolised by women even in co-educational institutions. The situation is very different in the engineering trades where they form a mere 0.27% of the total trainees. The most popular courses are for draftsman, instrument, mechanics, radio and T.V. mechanics, electronics, surveyors, carpenters and painters.

5. 276 On the recommendation of the National Committee on Women's Education, the Ministry of Education took up a scheme to establish 24 women polytechnics for post-matriculation training in various skills in industrial, commercial and public service occupations 'in accordance with developing needs of the national economy' and to 'promote awareness of new opportunities and needs for women workers in such fields as social welfare, nursing, chemical and pharmaceutical industries etc., in which women could be gainfully employed'. The total admission capacity of all these polytechnics is over 2,000 for courses which require 2 to 3 years for completion. According to the Ministry of Education in commercial practice, stenography, catering and food technology, the admissions exceed the sanctioned capacity, while in other trades they fall short of the available number of seats. The out-turn for all the courses is considerably lower than the admissions. The total out-turn during 1973 amounted to only 822 against an admission figure of 2143 i.e. 38.3%. This points to both wastage of available facilities as well as a failure in the realisation of the objectives of this scheme. In the absence of inadequate assistance in placement, quite a few women on completion of these courses remain unemployed. The second reason for this is that the courses are not designed with any particular consideration for the employment potential of the locality. For example, during the Committee's tour of Andhra Pradesh we were informed by officials of the Industries Department that though there was an increasing demand for women in the tele-communication and electronic industries, none of the women's polytechnics in the State were providing in these subjects. On our asking why had not been done, the officials replied that the control of polytechnics rested with the Department of Education and not Industries. In Himachal Pradesh we received a number of requests from women's groups for training in food technology so that the products of their orchards are not wasted but no training facilities of this type exist in that State. Courses introduced are not always in relation to the demands of the region, e.g., dress and costume designing, a significant avenue for employment of women in bigger cities, hardly constitutes an important or a significant source of employment in the interior of the country. A heavy concentration on the same course e.g., tailoring, also leads to minimisation of job opportunities.

5. 277 In 1968-69 the All India Council for Technical Education reviewed the functioning of women's polytechnics and came to the conclusion —

(1) A direct relationship should be established between courses of training provided and employment opportunities available. For this purpose, for each polytechnic, there should be an advisory Committee including representatives of employing organisations. Before any new course is started, close consultation should be held with the prospective employers to determine available job opportunities.

(2) Each polytechnic should establish a production centre in the relevant field to provide practical training and improve standards and content of the courses. Such production centres might be started with the assistance of small scale industries departments of the State concerned.

(3) Polytechnics should offer short term job-oriented courses in selected fields where employment opportunities exist.

(4) Start an employment advisory service for its students.

(5) Service units should be established in these institutions to cater to the needs of the local public in such matters as providing practical, services, bulletins, model estimates etc.

5. 278 Earlier 75% of the non-recurring expenditure and 75% of the recurring expenditure was borne by the Central Government. Since the commencement of the 4th Plan the Central Government stopped direct financial assistance for implementing specific development programme and now it is for the state Government to implement these recommendations.

5.279 Unfortunately while the Ministry of Education supplied information regarding the list of sanctioned courses and admission capacity in each of the 24 polytechnics, we were unable to obtain actual information regarding the teaching facilities available in the different institutions. Un-officially information received from different sources suggests that in many of the institutions some of the courses exist only on paper, particularly since the stoppage of central grants. Many of the State Governments find it difficult to provide adequate support to these institutions for their general maintenance. This could account for the very poor number of admissions against the courses for the country as a whole. The second reason is the failure to implement the recommendations of the All India Council for Technical Education regarding the opening of production centres and provision of employment advisory service. Technical training for women is a relatively new field in India. In the absence of greater assistance in the placement of successful trainees, parents will be reluctant to send them to these institutions.

5.280 It is to be noted that some private institutions providing similar types of training to young women in the large cities, including a placement service, which relate the training to the actual employment potential of the area, have proved to be highly successful. Mention may be made here of two institutions in Delhi. The Secretarial Training School, started by the Young Women's Christian Association some years ago, has proved to be so successful as to justify its expansion to other types of vocational courses during the last few years. A similar unit started by St. Thomas Girls' Higher Secondary School has also expanded rapidly, and is attracting students with even university degrees. Their success lies in their placement assistance and in the liaison that they maintain with employing agencies.

5.281 In the present socio-economic set up, self-employment of women requires much more than training in a particular productive trade. Without knowledge of the market mechanism, and capital resources, training alone cannot help women to face the competition. The production centres recommended by the All India Council for Technical Education as a part of polytechnic training have remained conspicuous by their absence. In our view, without supportive assistance in the way of training in organisation of production and marketing and in procuring capital and raw materials, it will not be possible for the majority of these young trainees to utilise their training in self-employment. The officials of the Industries Department in Andhra Pradesh informed us that in spite of the existence of a Government scheme to provide financial assistance for generating self-employment, the Department has been unable to assist many women to obtain the required help from banks. Even when such projects are sanctioned by Government, banks hesitate to provide the loans as they feel that the life of the projects may terminate when these young women get married.

5.282 (c) *Training Programmes Undertaken by different Agencies in charge of Development* : Unlike the more formal programmes of pre-employment training, in the sphere of informal training programmes, a great deal of emphasis has been given to training women by various agencies in charge of development and welfare. All agencies specifically concerned with women's welfare and development, both government and voluntary, have always attached the highest priority to improving women's earning capacity.

5.283 *Training schemes to improve the earning capacity of women* :— Programmes have been developed to solve the economic needs of women hard-pressed by the processes of social change and break-down of familiar obligations to support needy women-widows, deserted and aged women as well as women from lower income groups.

(i) The Central Social Welfare Board is the most important agency providing assistance for these programmes operated by autonomous and voluntary organisations. It provides financial assistance for setting up production units in small scale industries, handicrafts and ancillary units for larger industrial undertakings. In 1972-73, 24 handicraft units were functioning with an employment potential of 975. Apart from this, 21 handloom training-cum-production centres are being assisted by the Board. Some training centres have also been set up in association with the All-India Handicrafts Board. There are 21 institutions running production units for handlooms under this programme in various States with an employment potential of 790. According to information available, a total of 140 units are in existence under this programme providing employment to 4,235 workers. (For details please see Chapter VIII paras 121-124)

(ii) *Training of development cadres* :— Under the insistence of various developmental agencies, particularly the Central Social Welfare Board, training courses have been developed for village level workers (gramsevikas, gramalakshmis, mukhya sevikas, bal-sevikas, etc. by

agencies like the Kasturba Memorial Trust, Visva Bharati, Jamia Milia and various schools of social work. They are mostly pre-service or in-service training for these cadres, fully financed by Government.

(iii) The programmes by the Kasturba Memorial Trust, Visva Bharati and Jamia Milia, have displayed considerable inventiveness in developing new types of cadres for working in rural areas.

(iv) The Indian Council for Child Welfare also runs 27 centres in different parts of the country for pre-service and in-service training for bal-sevikas. The training is financed by the Government.

(v) The Ministry of Health has training programmes for Health Visitors and auxiliary nurse midwife for developing health services, both rural and urban areas.

5.284 The Ministry of Food and Agriculture has also organised 22 community canning and food preservation centres. There are four institutes of catering technology and applied nutrition in the country. Though not exclusively for women, they train some women. Under the co-ordinated programme for community development, training is given in selected productive activities like kitchen-gardening, poultry keeping, dairy science etc.

5.285 The Ministry of Home Affairs has a scheme for training of women and children of Central Government employees belonging to the low income groups. There are 62 centres under this scheme. Training is provided in cutting, tailoring and embroidery. Students are recommended as private candidates for the diploma courses of the Industrial Training Institutes. Some home employment is provided to these women through Government contracts.

5.286 Similar programmes have been initiated in a few of the States by the Department of Welfare, Labour, Industry, and Education for training mainly in sewing, embroidery, handicrafts and tailoring.

5.287 We visited a number of these training centres. In our view, much of this well-meant effort ends in futility, because they are not linked to production and marketing. The bias for traditional or home crafts limits their scope since the indigenous markets for these products are now on the decline, and marketing, both internal and for export, is mainly in the hands of intermediaries. Strangely even the Government Emporiums are also dealing through middlemen and do not buy directly through the production centres, even though the latter are financed by Government. Even without these handicaps, the scope of the programmes are so limited that they can only make a marginal impact on the employment needs of women. Another difficulty lies in the multiplicity of agencies engaged in this work, leading often to duplication and over-concentration in a few areas, leaving the large areas of the country completely untouched.

5.288 It is unfortunate that though the training programmes developed by welfare and other developing agencies have shown greater understanding of the employment needs of women, their efforts suffer from lack of adequate resources and co-ordination. In our view, better degree of planning, co-ordination and redistribution of responsibilities in these fields would prevent considerable wastage of resources and instil a greater sense of urgency and productivity in these schemes for improving women's earning power.

(c) *Special problems of working women*

(i) Part-time Employment :

5.289 While part-time employment presents a partial solution of the employment needs of many women, there is no generally accepted definition of such types of employment in terms of hours, remuneration and other facilities. The ILO described two occupational categories which employ the largest number of part-time workers in both developing and developed countries, cleaning and related work—both in private households and institutions, and professional and technical services. Other areas where part-time work is common are agriculture and commerce and manufacturing, particularly in consumer goods industries. The available statistical data does not make it possible to obtain an accurate picture. Since the arrangements for part-time employment are largely determined by the nature and pressure of work, it can only be conceived within the framework of the broader policies guiding and governing the integration of women in economic life.

5.290 In response to the ILO's enquiry regarding the possibility of providing part-time employment, to women with family responsibilities, many governments expressed their reservation. They felt that providing such employment to women only may adversely affect full-time employment opportunities, or may result in discrimination and exploitation in respect of employment and promotion. It was stated that part-time employment should not be imposed on women with family responsibilities who, given suitable child-care services, would prefer full-time employment.

5.291 Such views ignore the repeated advice of expert bodies like the ILO or the National Committee on Women's Education in India and reflect the attitude of employers and workers who fear the invasion of the labour market by part-time workers. Part of this apprehension is also due to the difficulties in making administrative arrangements for such workers. It should be noted that this kind of resistance is found mainly in the organised sector whose wide structure, labour policy and legal provisions are geared to the needs of full-time workers only. In the unorganised sector, part-time employment is very much of a reality. As we have pointed out earlier, very little is known about dimensions of this group either in numbers or in the nature of their problems. The studies conducted by the ILO in 1952 and 1962, referred to the serious gaps in national information regarding employment opportunities, number and characteristics of persons engaged in or seeking part-time employment. The International Labour Conference recommended that surveys need to be conducted in cooperation with employers and workers, regarding the scope of part-time employment.

5.292 The International Labour Conference resolution concerning part-time employment and the employment of older women, adopted at the 38th session in 1955, drew attention to the basic principles that it should not adversely affect full time employment and general level of wages, contrary to the provision of the Convention on Equal Remuneration. It further mentioned that adequate attention should be paid to the conditions of employment, with particular reference to the need of equality of opportunity and treatment with full-time workers, equality of remuneration and rights in respect of holidays with pay, sick leave and maternity leave, and adequate social security protection. Obviously these points raise many problems in practice — because of the absence of adequate information relating to the demand and the opportunities for part-time work, needs and preferences for such work and the size and characteristics of part-time workers.

5.293 While empirical investigations are necessary to assess the need, scope as well as problems of part-time employment, conducting such enquiries among women already in full-time employment can yield misleading results. A pilot study conducted by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the Delhi School of Social Work, found 74% of the women reluctant to accept part-time employment because of its low remuneration. Such responses are obvious when it is noted that one-third of the respondents earned 50% of their family income. Some were either the major or the only source of income of their respective families.

5.294 For women who need employment to augment the families income, and whose inability to arrange child care or home responsibilities, make full-time employment a burden on their physical and mental resources, part-time employment could be a boon provided it carried adequate remuneration and greater security and protection than it does at present. The first step to provide support to such women is to investigate the existing models of part-time employment prevalent in the unorganised sector and to provide legal and social support against their exploitation. We have been informed that the National Labour Institute proposes to initiate some experiments in offering part-time employment to women workers.

5.295 We suggest that an all-India survey should be undertaken to investigate in which areas and in what manner part-time employment of women, is possible, keeping in view their special problems. Availability of this data will help in adopting legal measures which will provide security of some employment benefits.

(ii) Problem of Re-entry

5.296 The ILO has drawn attention to the problem of re-entry into employment after a lengthy absence mainly caused by family reasons. Some countries have already provided safeguards for working mothers protecting their right to employment in jobs previously held or comparable ones, for a stipulated period of absence on prolonged maternity leave.

5.297 The ILO's questionnaire regarding adoption of an international instrument on this issue evoked high proportion of negative replies, and of replies giving strictly qualified

steps to co-ordinate the provision of these facilities by employers, voluntary agencies and community effort to ensure their even distribution and at least minimum standards of services.

(v) Accommodation and security

5.306 The problem of accommodation has become acute for working women both in urban as well as rural areas. This was emphasised in a National Seminar on Social Problems of Working Women in 1973. Educated women are reluctant to go and work in rural areas because of accommodation difficulties, though efforts are being made by Government to provide accommodation to Government functionaries in education, health and other developmental services. These efforts have not, however, always taken into consideration the questions of security and distance from place⁴². The problem is acute for both single women who are not fully accepted by rural society, and for married women with families.

5.307 In urban areas, working women living in slums face high incidence of disease and socially deviant behaviour, the primary cause of which lies in bad housing. The employers' responsibility for providing adequate housing is generally not fulfilled. For unmarried working women some efforts have been made during the last two decades to provide hostels with the aid of voluntary agencies. The Central Social Welfare Board's programme in this connection is being supported by the Department of Social Welfare, with building grants for such hostels. Their numbers are, however, still very limited, and they can cater to the needs only of middle class working women. The problem needs to be solved by co-ordinating efforts of Government, employers and voluntary agencies.

5.308 The problem of security to which women workers, particularly young ones, are exposed, has been pointed out in the reports of certain Committees of the Government and social welfare organisations. A Committee of the Maharashtra Government examined the difficulties that women Government functionaries have to face, particularly in rural areas, and recommended that women functionaries posted in rural areas should be of a more advanced age. A similar Committee, appointed by the Government of Karnataka, recommended posting older women as supervisory staff and involvement of senior local women, including wives of senior official. The Committee of the Maharashtra Government also advised setting up of enquiry committees at divisional headquarters for investigation of such grievances of women officials on a priority basis.

5.309 While we realise that these problems are essentially related to the transitional state of our society, some supportive measures to look into these difficulties and to provide assistance, is a necessity at present.

(vi) Service Conditions

5.310 Both the Committees of Maharashtra and Karnataka, referred to above, recommended changes in the cadre and recruitment rules for various categories of women workers needed for developmental activities. The existing rules, in their opinion, kept out "really qualified and experienced women from the purview of these posts." The Maharashtra Government has relaxed the maximum age limit for recruitment with a view to recruiting women of greater experience for work in rural areas. Possibilities for similar relaxation in other states need to be examined. In Uttar Pradesh, local women are trained and posted to their own villages to ensure greater acceptance by the society.

5.311 During our tours, we received complaints from various categories of women employees regarding service conditions. Many of these cadres are working on an ad-hoc basis from plan to plan or sometimes even on annual extension of their services. They are denied promotion opportunities and adequate pay scales. This is particularly the case with women recruited for the rural development programmes of the Central Welfare Board and Department of Community Development. Similar complaints of lack of promotion opportunities were made by telephone operators, clerks, typists and stenographers. The representatives of the Trained Nurses Association pointed out the absence of gazetted posts in their profession. Nurses we met during our tours also complained of over-crowding in hospitals, long hours of duty, and lack of accommodation for married nurses. The Auxiliary Nurse Midwives posted in rural areas face an additional problem of transport and security in cases of night calls.

42. These problems have also been discussed in Chapter VI.

5.312 There is a general feeling among many of these women workers that even where promotional possibilities exist, the claims of the women are discriminated against not only by private employers but even by the Government.

5.313 A major problem repeatedly brought to our notice was on the question of transfers. Though most of the State Government have adopted conventions, to post husband and wife to the same place, if they are both in Government's service, this has not always been possible. This convention has sometimes resulted in single women being subjected to frequent transfers causing great hardship. While we appreciate the administrative difficulties of fulfilling such a convention, frequent transfers of low paid women employees should be avoided as they cause innumerable difficulties.

5.314 Some consideration is also needed for provision of adequate transport or transport allowance to women who have to carry out touring duties. The inadequacy of this provision often results in inefficiency. The assistance of local authorities, including local self-governing bodies, could be obtained to provide suitable accommodation during night halts for these touring officials.

5.315 While we realise that many of these difficulties may be inevitable in a transitional situation, it is our belief that a commitment to the national objective of integrating women into the process of development at all levels can help to solve them in due course. The constitutional guarantees and the objectives of the nation, require acceptance by the society of the multiple roles of women as home makers and mothers as socially and economically productive in the same manner as direct participation in the economic process. It is, therefore, imperative that society in general, and the State in particular, provide the necessary conditions and support to enable women to perform their various roles successfully. As citizens they deserve the protection of society. Marriage and motherhood, which contributes to the continuation of the nation should not become disabilities in the gainful participation of women in the economic process. Without the type of supportive services and institutionalised aids suggested above, these dual roles will continue to impose a tremendous strain on the physical and mental resources of women. It will also affect the welfare and development of the future generation through inadequate care in childhood.

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.316 The Indian Constitution guarantees equality of opportunity in matters relating to employment and directs the State to secure equal rights to an adequate means of livelihood, equal pay for equal work, and just and humane conditions of work. Our Labour Laws concerning women reflect the attitude of protection and welfare through provision of maternity benefits, creches and restriction on types of work that are considered unsuitable to their health. Though the Government of India ratified the ILO Conventions regarding equal remunerations and against discrimination, this shifting emphasis towards equality and greater employment opportunities has not as yet found reflection in Indian laws. Executive actions initiated in this direction, have made some impact in the organised sector, but in the vast unorganised sector no impact of these measures have been felt either in conditions of work, wages, or opportunities.

5.317 The impact of transition to a modern economy has meant exclusion of an increasing number and proportion of women from active participation in the productive process. A considerable number continue to participate for no returns and no recognition. The majority of those who do participate fully are on sufferance, without equal treatment, security of employment and humane conditions of work. A very large number of them are subject to exploitation of various kinds with no protection from society or the State.

5.318 'Adequate means for livelihood' or employment is the chief objective of development. There has been little progress in the achievement of this right for both men and women, but estimates of employment and under-employment clearly indicate that the position is worse for women. While the Constitution has guaranteed equal rights, the measures initiated since independence to remove women's disabilities and handicaps, particularly in the field of economic participation, have proved to be extremely inadequate.

5.319 While the draft Fifth Five Year Plan emphasises the need to utilise all idle manpower to speed up the process of development, its priorities for women's development omits employment generation as a specific objective. It is assumed that the ratio of females to males in the labour force will remain constant at 16% for the next years, visualising no structural changes by which a greater participation of women in the productive process can be ensured.

5.320 The experience of some countries has shown, that it is possible by public policy to accelerate women's employment in new areas of work, by finding solutions to their problems of family life and child care. These countries see no necessary contradiction between encouraging women's work at all levels and maintaining laws protecting women's health and welfare, in view of their role as mothers. What is more distinctive about socialist countries is the effective institutionalisation of the rights of a working mother by protecting her right to return to her job.

5.321 While several factors have handicapped Indian women from being effectively integrated into the process of development, the lack of a well-defined policy indicating areas where they require special assistance and protection leave them without access to knowledge, skills and employment. The replies received to our question regarding the policy followed in employing women in various concerns, indicate the continuation of old prejudices regarding women's efficiency, productivity, capacity for skills, and suitability that debar them from employment in many areas. Wage discrimination is the result of this restrictive confinement of women to limited types of work. The replies clearly indicate that while there is a definite policy for excluding women from various types of jobs, the criteria for determining their unsuitability are not clear or uniform. Certain industries declare them to be unsuitable for technical as well as manual jobs, others declare them to be unsuitable for managerial and administrative jobs as well as unskilled work, yet another group finds them unsuitable for field duties. The general tendency appears to be, to find them unsuitable for all jobs other than clerical. The West Bengal Public Service Commission even finds them unsuitable for certain teaching posts, though teaching is generally accepted as the most suitable profession for women. The Defence Forces find them unsuitable even for posts of legal officers in the office of the Judge, Advocate General which involves no combatant duties. We have pointed out many industries and administrative agencies where women have been found to be suitable for all these types of work.

5.322 The objective of a labour market policy is full, productive and freely chosen employment. Recasting the employment policies for women requires re-examination of existing theories regarding their suitability for different types of work on scientific lines, and a deliberate effort to promote equality of opportunity by special attention to women's disabilities and handicaps. The recommendations that we make are directed towards making the Constitutional guarantees meaningful and for arresting the trend towards gradual exclusion of women from their right to a fuller participation in the economic process.

5.323 *We therefore recommend* : 1) the adoption of a well defined policy to fulfil the Constitutional directives and Government's long term objective of total involvement of women in national development. Such a policy should be framed by a Government Resolution.

This policy will need to be implemented carefully to avoid evasion by direct or indirect methods. Apart from specific occupations from which women are debarred by law, employers should not be permitted to exclude them from any occupation unless the basis for unsuitability is clearly specified.

2) the creation of a cell within the Ministry of Labour and Employment at both Central and State levels under the direction of a Senior Officer to deal with problems of women.

3) We further recommend the following changes in the existing laws :

A. Maternity Benefits Act 1961

5.324 (i) This Act should be extended to all industries not covered by the Act at present and the provision of maternity relief ensured by the creation of a Central Fund by levying contributions from employers.¹ The administration of the Fund should follow the pattern already established by the Employees State Insurance Corporation.

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

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

1. This has also been recommended by the National Commission on Labour.

(iv) For women retrenched for short periods and reemployed on the same jobs, the period of unemployment should not be treated as discontinuation of service for their eligibility for this benefit. For casual labour, a minimum of 3 months of service should be considered as qualifying them for this benefit.

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

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

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

(viii) The system of paying cash benefits in a lump-sum sometimes gives rise to inadequate attention to the nutritional needs of the mother and the child. Payment of maternity benefits should be made in two instalments, before and after confinement, as already prevalent in many industries.

B. Provision of Creches

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

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

(iii) Wherever there is a demand, a day-centre should be provided for keeping small children for other groups of women workers e.g. workers in offices, hospitals, shoppes and commercial establishments.

(iv) As far as possible, creches should be established near the residence of women workers rather than the place of work. The ideal arrangement, in our view, would be neighbourhood creches. This will benefit women in all occupations, both in the organised and unorganised sector.

C. Working Time

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

4. We further recommend

Effective implementation of the Maternity Benefits Act in all states, and the extension of the Employees State Insurance Scheme to those areas which are not covered by it at present.

5. Equalisation of wages

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

(ii) We further recommend incorporation of this principle in the Minimum wages Act.

6. Integrated development of training and employment

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

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

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

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

(v) Development of training programmes in production and market organisation to develop self-employment.

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

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

7. Part-time Employment

We recommend specific provisions for part-time employment of women by suitable revisions in recruitment rules and service conditions. *We also recommend* detailed investigation of areas where part-time employment could be generated by agencies like the Directorate General of Employment and Training, the Institute of Applied Manpower Research, the National Council of Applied Economic Research etc. Such studies should include examination of existing avenues for part-time employment viz., in the unorganised industries and occupations.

8. Employment Information

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

9. Provision for Re-entry

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

10. Enforcement of laws protecting women workers

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

11. We further recommend:

(i) That trade unionists and labour leaders should take steps to organise labour unions in the field of agriculture and other industries where such organisations do not exist at present.

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

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Emphasis on different arguments justifying the value and necessity of education from the point of view of the individual as well as society has varied according to the historical needs of any society in different stages of its evolution. The first argument regards education as a value in itself, since it develops the personality and the rationality of individuals. The assumption here is that society, recognising the innate value of rationality and learning, accords a high status to the educated. The second argument emphasises the usefulness of educated persons to society at large. Their knowledge, by serving a social purpose, raises their status in society. From the point of view of the individual, education provides the necessary qualification to fulfil certain economic, political and cultural functions and consequently improves his socio-economic status.

6.2 With the recognition of the need to direct the process of social change and development towards certain desired goals, education has come to be increasingly regarded as a major instrument of social change.

"The realization of the country's aspirations involves changes in the knowledge, skills, interests and values of the people as a whole. This is basic to every programme of social and economic betterment of which India stands in need.....If this 'change on a grand scale' is to be achieved without violent revolution (and even for that it would be necessary) there is one instrument, and one instrument only, that can be used: Education."¹

6.3 One of the expectations from this directed use of education is that it will bring about reduction of inequalities in society, on the assumption that education leads to equalisation of status between individuals coming from hitherto unequal socio-economic strata of society.² It was on this argument that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights included education as one of the basic rights of every human being.³ The Constitution of the UNESCO directs its efforts to achieve 'the ideal of equality of educational opportunity without regard to race, sex or any distinctions, economic or social'.

Education and women's status—The 19th Century View.

6.4 The history of the movement for improving women's status all over the world shows emphasis from the beginning on education as the most significant instrument for changing women's subjugated position in society. Increase of educational facilities and opportunities, and the removal of traditional bars on entry of women to particular branches and levels of education, came to be supported by all champions of women's emancipation from the 19th century onwards. Social reformers in India, whether they were modernising liberals or revivalists, also emphasised the crucial importance of education of women to improve their status in society. However, when we look into their justification for this departure from the tradition then prevalent in the country, we notice certain significant omissions. According to the reformers, the main purpose for educating women was not to make them more efficient and active units in the processes of socio-economic or political development, but to make them more capable of fulfilling their traditional roles in society as wives and mothers. The opposition of the orthodox conservatives was countered by the argument that women's education would strengthen the bonds of tradition and the family as the chief unit of social organisation. In their view, the denial of education and early marriage prevented the development of the personality and rationality of women. Stunted and crippled personalities affected the harmony of the family atmosphere, weakening the bonds of the family.⁴ Education

1. *Education and National Development*, Report of the Indian Education Commission, Chapter 1 p. 7.8.

2. Ibid 18-19.

3. "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."—Universal Declaration of Human Rights-Art. 26 p.

4. This comes out very clearly in the prolonged debate on Women's education carried on in the leading newspapers and journals of the period and in the writings of the 19th century reformers.

for women was regarded as a means to improve their status within the family, and not to equip them to play any role in the wider social context. The absence of any economic compulsion was, in fact, the main reason for the slow progress of women's education in this country.⁵

6.5 Because of their reluctance to interfere in social matters, the colonial authorities generally supported this purely humanitarian and limited view of women's education. The problem of reaching education and health services to the women of this country led to a realisation of the need for women teachers and doctors. Since this was not possible without training women in these professions the importance of these two vocations outside the familiar roles had to be incorporated in the programmes for women's education.

Post Independence Era—New Roles and Rights.

6.6 In the discussions on women's education in the post-independence era, a new dimension appeared due to the acceptance of equality of women and their need to play multiple roles in society.

"The general purpose and objective of women's education cannot, of course be different from the purpose and objective of men's education...At the Secondary and even at the university stage women's education should have a vocational or occupational bias."⁶

"In a democratic society where all citizens have to discharge their civic and social obligations, differences which may lead to variation in the standard of intellectual development achieved by boys and girls cannot be envisaged."⁷

"In the progressive society of tomorrow, life should be a joint venture for men and women. Men should share the responsibility of parenthood and home-making with women and women in their turn should share the social and economic responsibilities of men."⁸

6.7 The emphasis on education equipping women to carry out their multiple roles as citizens, house-wives, mothers, contributors to the family income and builders of the new society is consistent with the trend of discussions in international agencies on women's education as a basic ingredient for improvement of their status.

Traces of Ambivalence between old and new views.

6.8 In spite of the growing recognition of importance of women's education, traces of the earlier view which supported it mainly as an equipment for their roles as wives and mothers without conceding any position of equality with men in other spheres of life, can still be found not only in the opinions of individuals, but even in the statements of official agencies.

"Women's and men's education should have many elements in common, but should not in general be identical in all respects, as is usually the case today. A woman should learn something of problems that are certain to come up in all marriages, and in the relations of parents and children, and how they may be met. Her education should make her familiar with problems of home management and skilled in meeting them, so that she may take her place in a home with the same interest and the same sense of competence that a well trained man has in working at his calling."⁹

6.9 An understanding of this ambivalence between the traditional and the new attitudes on women's education is essential for examining the progress of women's education in this country, because it has an impact on academic planning, allocation of resources and development of values in society for both men and women. It lies at the root of all discussions regarding differentiation of curricula between the two sexes and continues to affect social attitudes regarding women's education, its social use and women's roles in society. This in

5. Majumdar, R.C.—*British Paramountcy & Indian Renaissance* p. 289-quoting Rev. Krishna Mohan Bandopadhyaya.

6. *First Five Year Plan*—Government of India-1951 Chapter XXXIII.

7. *Report of the Secondary Education Commission*-Government India, 1953. Chapter IV.

8. *Report of the Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for boys and girls* Government of India 1954. Chapter IV.

9. *Report of the University Education Commission, 1949* Government of India, Chapter 12.

turn has an impact on the class composition of women who are recipients of education. The achievements or the failures in the use of this instrument for transforming women's status have to be measured by these social indicators as well as quantitative ones like enrolment out-turn, number of institutions and teachers, literacy rates and total stock of educated women at different levels and in the light of the stated national objectives.

"The educational system must produce young men and women of character and ability committed to national service and development. Only then will education be able to play its vital role in promoting national progress, creating a sense of common citizenship and culture and strengthening national integration."¹⁰

Progress of Women's Education in India: The Formal Education System.

6.10 The Constitution of the Republic of India guarantees equality of opportunity to all citizens irrespective of race, sex, caste and communities and directs the State to "Endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years"¹¹ The Indian Education Commission in its Report (1966) regretted the failure to achieve this target. It emphasised the crucial importance of fulfilling this directive in the coming decades. In view of the immense resources needed for this purpose, the Commission recommended phasing of this programme in the following manner;—

—“by providing five years of effective education to all children by 1975-76 and seven years of such education by 1985-86;

—by making part-time education for about one year compulsory for all children in the age group 11-14, who have not completed the lower-primary stage and are not attending schools. The aim will be to make these children functionally literate and stop all further additions to the ranks of adult non-literates; and

—by efforts to liquidate adult illiteracy.”¹²

6.11 The following review will indicate that even the targets recommended by the Education Commission have not been achieved, particularly in the case of women. The enrolment targets set for the Third Plan by the National Committee on Women's Education (1959) were equal numbers with boys in the age group 6-11, at least half that of boys in the age group 11-14 and least one-third that of boys in the age-group 14-17. As indicated in Table 1 the targets for the age groups 6-11 and 11-14 have not been reached even at the end of the Fourth Plan. The expected proportion of one-third in the age group 14-17 set for the Third Plan has however been exceeded slightly by the end of the Fourth Plan. The Fifth Five Year Plan notes that in spite of substantial progress in the expansion of educational facilities, the targets laid down for both elementary and secondary education registered a shortfall in enrolment, while those in higher education were exceeded. “But shortfalls have been particularly large in the case of elementary education, more so in the case of girls”.¹³

6.12 Educational experts now admit that the delay in the achievement of the Constitutional directive is mainly due to the slow progress of education among girls, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The discrepancy in the progress of education between boys and girls may be seen in the marked difference in the percentage of boys and girls of the corresponding age groups enrolled in primary, middle and secondary schools.

Development in the Pre-Independence period:

6.13 The foundations of the formal system of education, sponsored and supported by the State, and divided into three well-defined stages (primary, secondary and university) and two main streams (general and vocational) were laid during the first half of the nineteenth century. It was created essentially for men with the ultimate objective of utilising them as government servants. In the initial years girls had little or no access to it, partly because of the traditional prejudices against their formal education and partly because society at that time could not imagine them as government servants. However, as the formal system of education began to spread, the role of education as a liberating influence came to be recognised and increasingly accepted. Thus began the advocacy of the access of girls and women to the formal

10. National Policy on Education-Government of India 1967.

11. Article 45.

12. Op Cit— Para 5.3.

13. Draft Fifth Five Year Plan 1974-79, p. 191.

TABLE I*Enrolment Targets and Achievements in the Fourth Plan.¹⁴**(Figures in lakhs)*

<i>Age group Classes</i>	<i>1968-69</i>	<i>1973-74* (Target)</i>	<i>1973-74 (likely position)</i>
<i>(0)</i>	<i>(1)</i>	<i>(2)</i>	<i>(3)</i>
6-11/I-V			
boys	342.10(93)	412.50(105)	393.53(100)
girls	201.70(57)	273.30(73)	244.01(66)
total	543.89(76)	685.80(90)	637.54(84)
11-14/VI-VIII			
boys	87.11(45)	121.90(56)	104.92(48)
girls	33.40(18)	59.10(29)	15.37(22)
total	120.51(32)	181.00(45)	150.29(36)
14-17-18/IX-XI/XII			
boys	50.90(29)	70.00(35)	61.60(31)
girls	17.40(10)	26.90(14)	23.40(12)
total	68.30(20)	96.90(25)	85.00(22)
17-23/university stage total	16.90(2.9)	26.60(3.9)	30.00(4.4)

*In the case of secondary and university education these are estimates.

Note : Figures in parenthesis indicate enrolment as percentage of the relevant age-group.

TABLE II

Enrolment in primary education as percentage of the population in the corresponding age groups

<i>Year</i>	<i>Primary stage classes (I-IV)</i>			<i>Middle stage (classes V-VII)</i>		
	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
1950-51	55.0	20.1	37.8	20.8	4.6	13.0
1955-56	59.5	25.0	42.6	25.6	6.9	16.5
1960-61	74.0	35.0	54.8	35.5	12.5	24.3
1965-66	90.2	47.6	69.2	49.9	20.7	35.6
1970-71	109.8	68.6	89.7	66.7	33.0	50.7
1975-76 (Estimated)	109.7	97.2	106.4	81.9	55.7	69.2

*includes repeaters and other average students.

Source—Ministry of Education Government of India.

TABLE III

Secondary Stage

<i>(Classess VII to X)</i>				<i>(Classes IX to XI)</i>		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
1950-51	10.9	1.8	6.5	3.3	0.5	1.9
1955-56	14.9	3.3	9.3	5.2	0.9	3.1
1960-61	20.8	5.4	13.1	8.0	1.6	4.9
1965-66	28.7	9.1	19.1	11.5	2.3	7.0
1970-71	34.2	12.2	23.4	14.6	3.5	9.2
1975-76	40.8	16.9	29.1	17.0	4.8	11.0

Source—Ministry of Education, Government of India.

14. It should be noted that the targets of Planning Commission for the IV Plan were considerably lower than these set by the National Committee on Women's Education.

system of education spearheaded by national leaders, missionaries and a few enlightened officials. It received little response. Only a few thousand girls, mostly belonging to urban upper and middle class families entered the formal system of education between 1850 and 1870. As women teachers became available and social forces like a rise in the age of marriage urbanisation and the demand for educated wives began to gather momentum during the last hundred years, this movement steadily grew and today the total enrolment of girls in the formal system of education at all stages and in all streams, is more than thirty-two millions.

6.14 The movement naturally began in the cities, and then spread to the towns and villages. It began among the Christians, Anglo-Indians, Parsees and upper caste Hindus. Wealth played an ambivalent role; while middle class families were generally more favourable to the education of girls, some of the richer and more aristocratic families remained aloof and do so even today.

6.15 The mass awakening during the freedom movement, and the role that women played in the struggle had a great impact on women's education, and it began to increase at a much faster pace. In 1854, the total enrolment of girls in the formal system was only about 1,97,000 all in primary schools. But over the following nine decades, it grew significantly as indicated in the following table:

TABLE IV
Education of Girls and Women in Pre-Independence Period

Year	Percentage of literacy for women	Enrolment of girls in				Total
		Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Colleges & Universi- ties	Other Institu- tions	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1881-82	0.2	124,291	2,054	6	515	127,066
1901-02	0.7	344,712	9,075	256	2370	365,413
1921-22	1.8	1186,224	26,163	905	10,836	1224,128
1946-47	6.0	3475,165	602,280*	23,207	56,090	4156,742
No. of girls enrolled per 100 boys		36	22 for middle schools 14 for secondary schools	12 for general education 7 for vocational education.	12	30

*This includes 3,21,508 girls enrolled in middle schools. The enrolment in secondary schools proper is thus only 2,80,772.

Source: Min. of Edu. Government of India.

6.16 The expansion of women's education began at the primary stage and was mostly confined to it for quite some years. In 1947, 83% of all girls enrolled were in primary schools (about half of them in class I only). Expansion at the secondary stage was slow to start and slow to spread. In 1947, only 7% of all girls enrolled were in secondary school. However, contrary to what happened in Western countries, the admission of women to Indian Universities presented no problem. Calcutta University permitted women candidates to appear for the Entrance and B.A. examinations as early as 1877 and 1878 respectively. Bombay University followed in 1883. The first two women graduates of Calcutta received their degrees in 1883, the year of the University Silver Jubilee. Congratulating them and the University for 'this memorable event', the Vice Chancellor described it as a paving stone to "A general recognition of the right of the women of this country to education, and of the duty of the men of this

country to provide it from them."¹⁵ Even with the removal of the ban, the spread of higher education among women remained slow. In 1947 the total enrolment in higher education was only about 23,000 which was 1/2% of all girls enrolled in the educational system.

Development in the Post-Independence Period

6.17 Since independence, the education of women at various levels has expanded more rapidly but is still far from satisfactory.

TABLE V
Education of Girls and Women in the Post-Independence period

Year	Enrolment of girls in			
	Primary School Classes (I-V)	Middle School Classes (VI-VIII)	Secondary School Classes (IX-XI)	Colleges and Universities (General Education)
1946-47	34.75(36)	3.22(22)	2.81(14)	0.20(12)
1950-51	53.85(39)	5.34(20)	1.61(15)	0.40(14)
1955-56	76.39(44)	8.67(25)	3.18(21)	0.84(17)
1960-61	113.47(48)	16.70(32)	5.41(23)	1.50(22)
1965-66	182.93(57)	28.46(37)	11.72(30)	3.24(28)
1968-69	199.36(59)	34.93(39)	15.60(32)	4.32(30)
1973-74	244.01(62)	45.37(43)	23.40(36)	9.00(31)
(Estimated)				
1978-79	318.90(69)	72.50(51)	31.70(39)	16.00(34)
(Projected Target)				

Notes: (1) The statistics of 1946-47 refer to enrolments in primary, middle and secondary schools and not in classes I-V, VI-VIII and IX-XI and hence are not strictly comparable. The comparable figures would more probably be 36.8 lakhs at the primary stage, 3.2 lakhs at the middle stage and 0.8 lakhs at the secondary stage.

(2) Figures in parentheses indicate the number of girls for every 100 boys enrolled.

(3) Figures in the last column relate to enrolment at undergraduate, post-graduate and research stages in general education—arts, science and commerce courses.

SOURCES :

(1) Figures for school enrolment in 1950-51, 1960-61, 1965-66, 1968-69 are from Ministry of Education, Form A.

(2) Figures for school enrolment in 1973-74 and 1978-79 (target) are from 'Draft Fifth Five Year Plan, 1974-79' Vol. II p. 197.

(3) Figures of enrolment in colleges and universities are taken from Ministry of Education, Form A, for all years up to 1968-69.

Differences in the Enrolment of Boys and Girls

6.18 During the year of independence i.e., 1947-48, the total number of boys enrolled at various levels of the educational system was 1,11,34,665 while the girls were only 35,50,503 indicating an excess of 75,84,162 boys over girls. The following table indicates the relative expansion in the enrolment of boys and girls at all levels of the educational system.

¹⁵ *Calcutta University Convocation Addresses (1883)*—Vol. II p. 465. It may be noted that London University opened its gates to women in 1878 but Oxford and Cambridge did not admit them to their degrees till after the First World War though they were permitted to appear at the examinations at Cambridge from 1872 and at Oxford from 1884.

TABLE VI
Total Enrolment in the Educational System All Levels.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Excess of boys over girls</i>
1950-51	1,91,42,009	64,00,763 (33)	1,27,41,246
1960-61	3,37,04,897	1,42,59,505 (42)	1,94,45,392
1970-71	5,57,12,623	3,00,30,484 (54)	2,56,82,139

(Figs. within parentheses indicate the number of girls enrolled per 100 boys).

TABLE VII
Percentage Distribution of Boys and Girls in Different Stages of the Educational System.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pre-primary</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Secondary*</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Professional schools</i>	<i>Total</i>
1950-51						
Boys	0.1	70.0	20.9	2.0	7.0	100.0
Girls	0.2	82.4	12.7	0.6	4.1	100.0
1960-61						
Boys	0.3	67.3	24.7	2.7	5.0	100.0
Girls	0.6	76.7	18.4	1.3	3.0	100.0
1970-71						
Boys	0.3	66.3	26.4	4.5	2.5	100.0
Girls	0.5	74.3	19.5	2.4	3.3	100.0

*(Secondary includes middle, high and higher secondary)

As already indicated in Tables II & III, the percentage of enrolment to the population in the corresponding group also shows a marked difference between boys and girls in all these years.

PRESENT POSITION¹⁶

6.19 In classes I-V, the total enrolment is 244 lakhs or 66 per cent of the total population in the age group 6-11. One girl out of every three is thus still out of school. What is worse, the drop-out rates are very high : of every 100 girls enrolled in Class-I, only about 30 reach Class V. In Classes VI-VIII, the total enrolment is 45.37 lakhs or only 22 per cent of the total population in the age group 11-14. Only one girl out of 5 is at school in this age group. As universal education in the age group 6-14 is the total national objective, it is obvious that considerable headway is still to be made in the expansion of education for the age group 6-11 and especially for the age group 11-14.

6.20 The enrolment of girls at the secondary stage at present is 23.4 lakhs or 12% of the total population in the age group 14-17 (as against 31% for boys). The proportion of girls enrolled now drops down to 1 in 8. Secondary education, even now, is largely confined to the upper and the middle classes, urban areas. In the rural areas, it mainly utilised well-to-do families, particularly from the middle classes.

¹⁶ Vide Table I.

TABLE VIII
Percentage Distribution of Enrolment of Boys and Girls in Secondary Sections.

Areas	Percentage enrolment of		Total
	Boys	Girls	
Rural	83.42	16.58	100.00
Urban	71.31	28.69	100.00
Total	76.64	23.36	100.00

SOURCE : Second All-India Educational Survey—National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1967 p. 62.

6.21 At the university stage, the total enrolment in general education, i.e. in Sciences Humanities and Social Science is about 9 lakhs or about 1.3% of the age group 17-23 (about 31 girl for every 100 boys enrolled). A stagewise analysis, however, shows that the proportion of women to men is higher at the post-graduate than at the under-graduate level and is showing a rapid increase. In professional education, women have substantial enrolments in teaching, medicine, and fine arts; but their enrolment in other courses like commerce, law, agriculture or engineering is still very small. *Higher education is mostly confined, even more than secondary education, to urban upper and middle classes.*

6.22 The National Committee on Women's Education had reviewed the progress of women's education before, during and after independence and concluded that in spite of the direct action taken by the States for this purpose after independence, "the education of women has not made satisfactory progress between 1947 and 1957. Even today there is a very wide disparity between the education of men and that of women and only 36 girls are under instruction for every hundred boys at schools. The targets fixed for the First and Second Plan even tend to widen this disparity and the education of women has made very slow progress in rural areas where it is needed most."¹⁷

TABLL IX
Enrolment of Women in University Education (All Levels included)—(Faculty-wise)
(U.P. Board included)

Year Faculty	1950-51			1960-61			1970-71		
	Total	Women	No. of women per 100 men	Total (T)	Women (W)	No. of women per 100 men	Total	Women	No. of women per 100 men.
Arts	1,82,005	29,262	16.1	4,86,228	1,19,687	24.6	13,29,626	4,21,850	31.7
Science	1,27,168	9,046	7.1	3,02,700	31,696	10.5	9,48,009	1,68,540	17.8
Commerce	34,067	189	0.6	90,214	831	0.9	3,44,108	12,675	3.7
Education	4,135	1,339	32.4	19,005	6,230	32.8	56,922	20,799	36.5
Eng./Tech.	12,094	19	0.16	45,389	403	0.89	90,034	910	1.0
Medicine	15,260	2,493	16.3	35,215	7,714	21.9	97,601	22,296	22.8
Agriculture	4,744	8	0.17	27,584	124	0.45	43,352	169	0.4
Veterinary Science	1,101	5	0.45	5,385	38	0.71	6,222	44	0.7
Law	13,649	290	2.1	27,251	815	3.0	70,618	2,626	3.7
Others	2,522	475	18.8	10,893	2,917	26.8	14,800	5,913	40.0
All faculties	3,96,745	43,126	10.9	10,49,864	1,70,455	16.2	30,01,292	6,55,822	21.9

SOURCE : 1950-51 and 1960-61—Ministry of Education and Social Welfare-U.G.C.

17. *Report of the National Committee on Women's Education*, Government of India-1959-p. 182.

TABLE X
Enrolment for University Education (All Faculties inclusive) Stage-wise
(U.P. Board included)

Stage	Undergraduate			Post-graduate			Research			All levels		
Year	Total	Women	Wx 100	Total	Women	Wx 100	Total	Women	Wx 100	Total	Women	Wx 100
	(T)	(W)	T	(T)	(W)	T	(T)	(W)	T	(T)	(W)	T
1950-5	375,319	40,499	10.8	19,922	2,425	12.1	1,434	202	14.1	396,745	32,126	10.9
1960-61	985,872	159,491	16.2	58,909	10,170	17.3	5,083	794	15.6	1,049,864	179,455	16.2
1970-71	2,826,799	611,553	21.6	161,182	41,516	25.8	13,311	2,753	20.7	3,001,292	655,822	21.9

*includes P, UC, PP, C.

£ Included the Research enrolment of commerce, Education, Engg./Tech. and medicine.

SOURCE : 1950-51 and 1960-61—Education in Universities in India—
Annual Publication of the Union Ministry of Education
and Social Welfare.

1970-71 University Development in India—Basic Facts and
Figures—U.G.C.—Annual Publication.

The Committee had, therefore, strongly recommended "that the education of women should be regarded as a major and a special problem in education for a good many years to come and that a bold and determined effort be made to face its difficulties and magnitude and to close the existing gap between the education of men and women in as short a time as possible; that the highest priority should be given to schemes prepared from this point of view; and the the funds required for the purpose should be considered to be the first charge on the sums set aside for the development of education."¹⁸ Following this recommendation, efforts to bridge the gap between boys and girls in education were stepped up from 1960. The growth rate of boys' and girls' enrolment at different levels in the next quinquennium again indicates slackening of the efforts.

TABLE XI
Quinquennial Growth in Enrolment by Stage Education—1960-61 to 1970-71.

Stage	1960-61 to 1965-66 Quinquennial growth rate			1965-66 to 1970-71 (75) Quinquennial growth rate		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Pre-Primary	45%	43.9%	47.0%	29.9%	19.0%	24.8%
Primary	34.9%	56.1%	41.8%	20.6%	30.7%	24.2%
Secondary	49.7%	70.6%	54.7%	18.2%	30.5%	21.5%
University	76.3%	119.4%	83.5%	57.3%	78.4%	61.5%
Professional and special school.	16.5%	74.6%	1.6%	3.9%	34.6%	9.3%
All Stages	37.1%	60.1%	44.0%	20.5%	31.5%	24.2%

6.23 It is to be noted that the rate of growth is much higher in the university and the vocational stages than in the primary and secondary stages. Interpreted in the context of Indian social conditions, this indicates that the expansion of women's education is much faster when the beneficiaries are from the urban middle class.

Chart No. I
Proportion of School Population in Relative Age-groups covered by the School System Sexwise—1971

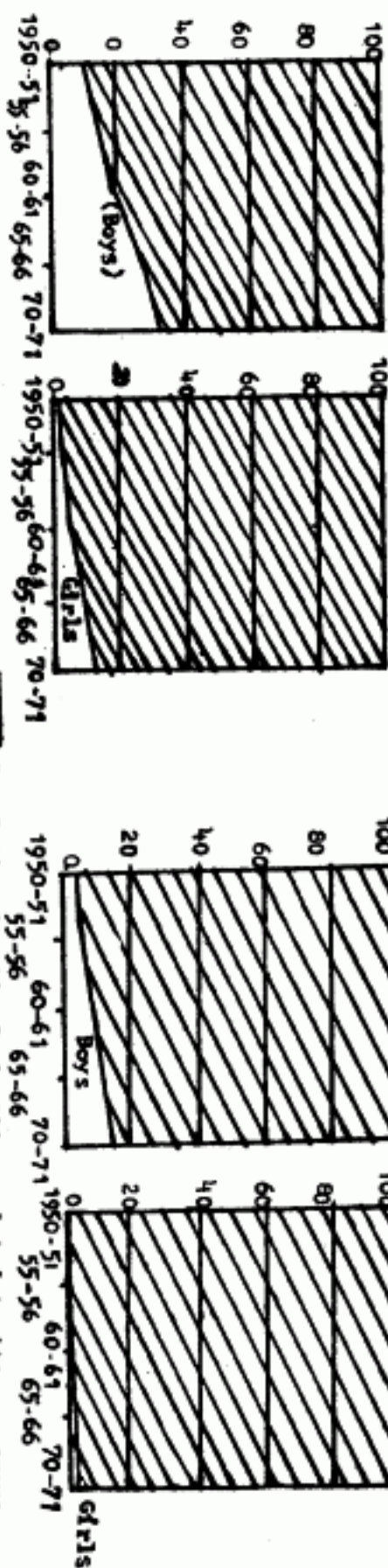


Chart-II.

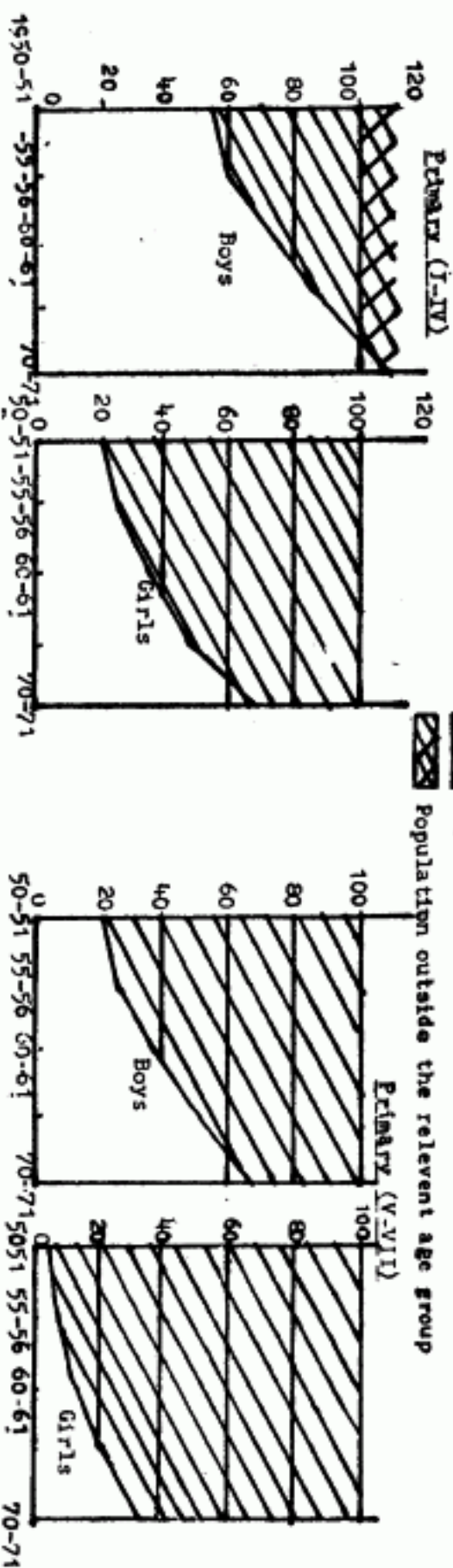
Enrolment as Percentage of Population in the Corresponding Age Group :

Secondary (VIII-X)

Secondary XI-X



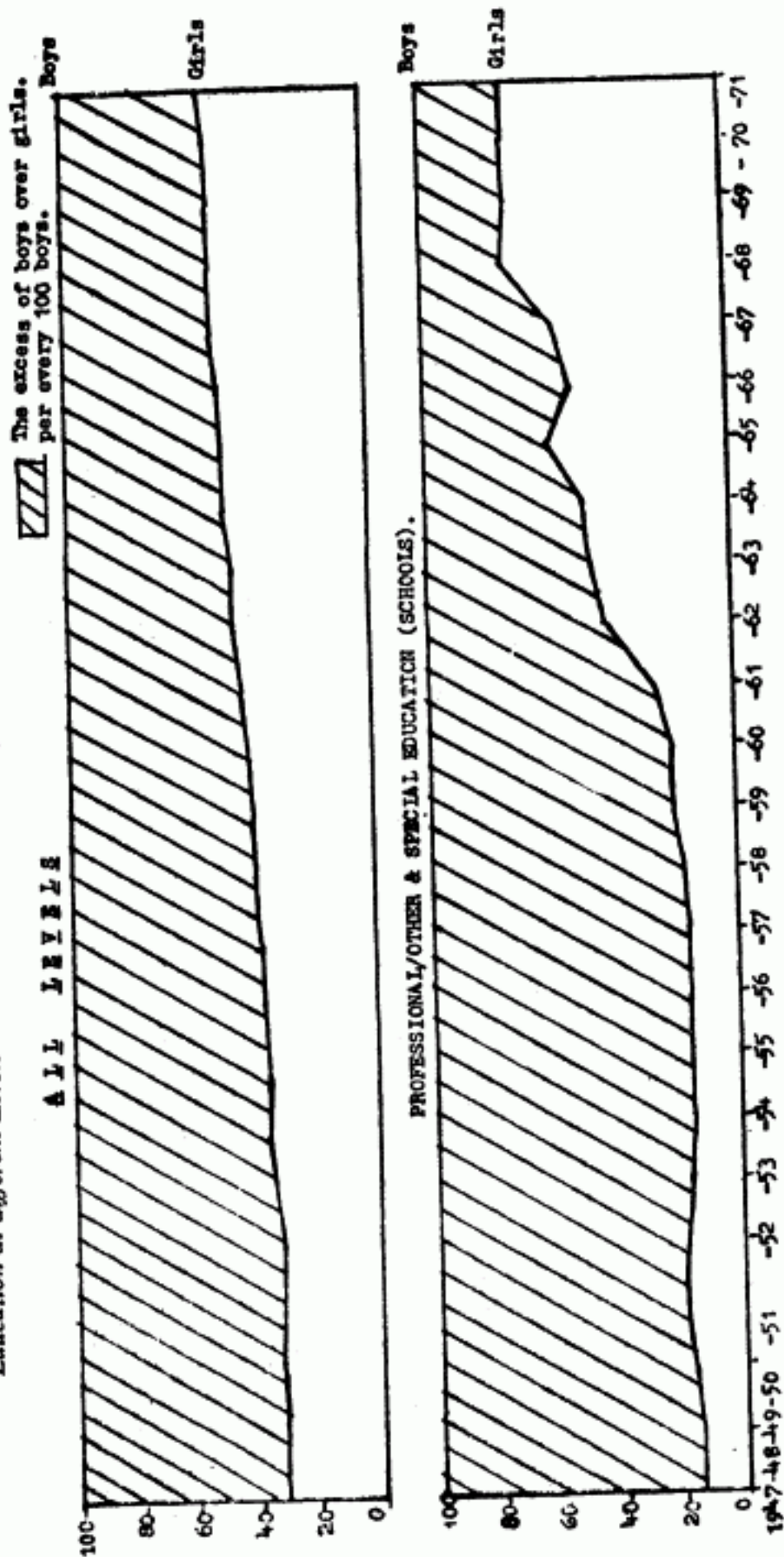
Population outside the relevant age group



Source : Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

Chart—III.

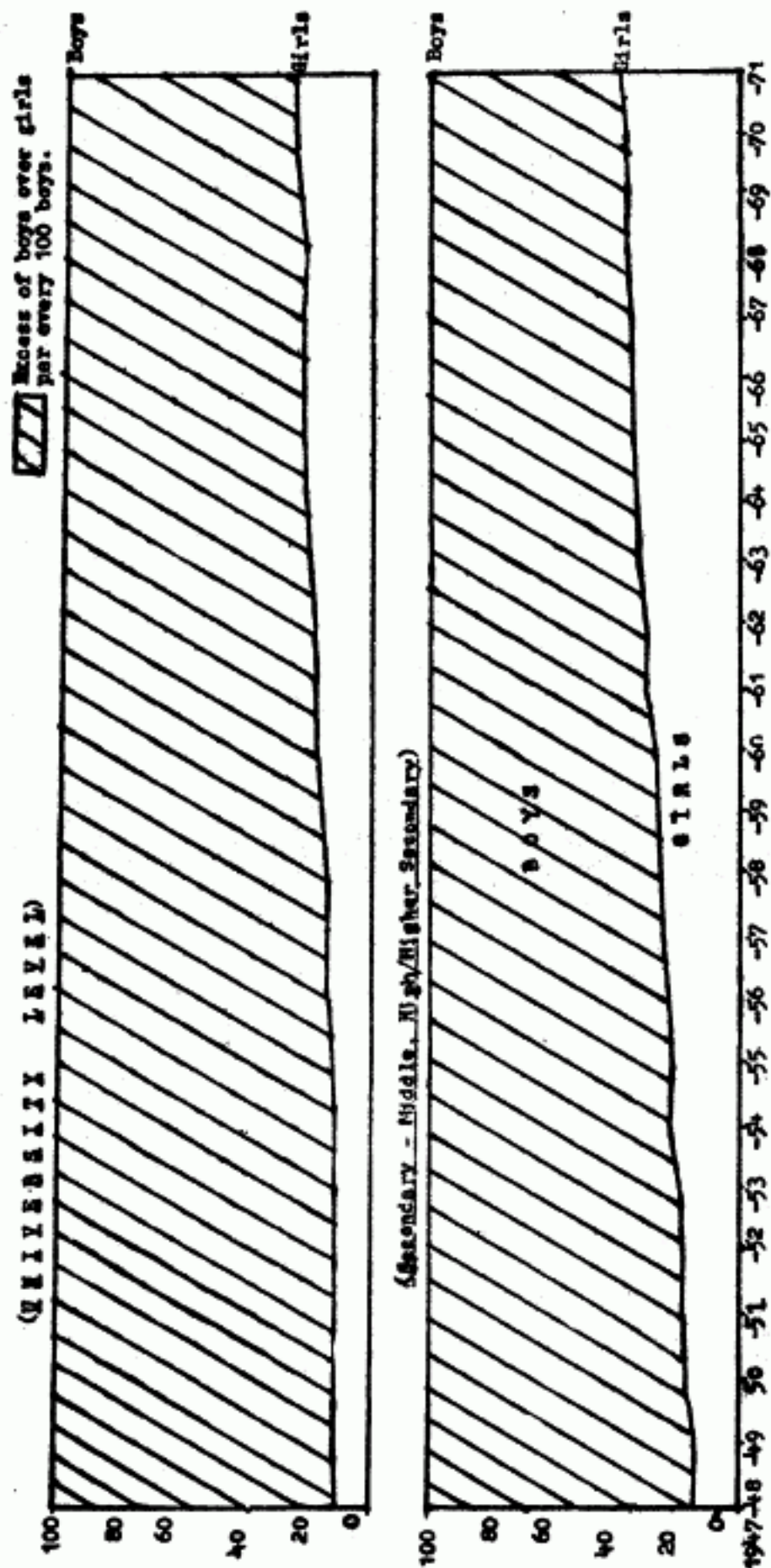
A Graphic Representation of the Relative Rate of Growth of Female Education as Compared to Male Education at different Levels—variation in the number of girls per hundred boys—during 1947-'48 to 1970-71



Source : Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

Chart—III (a)

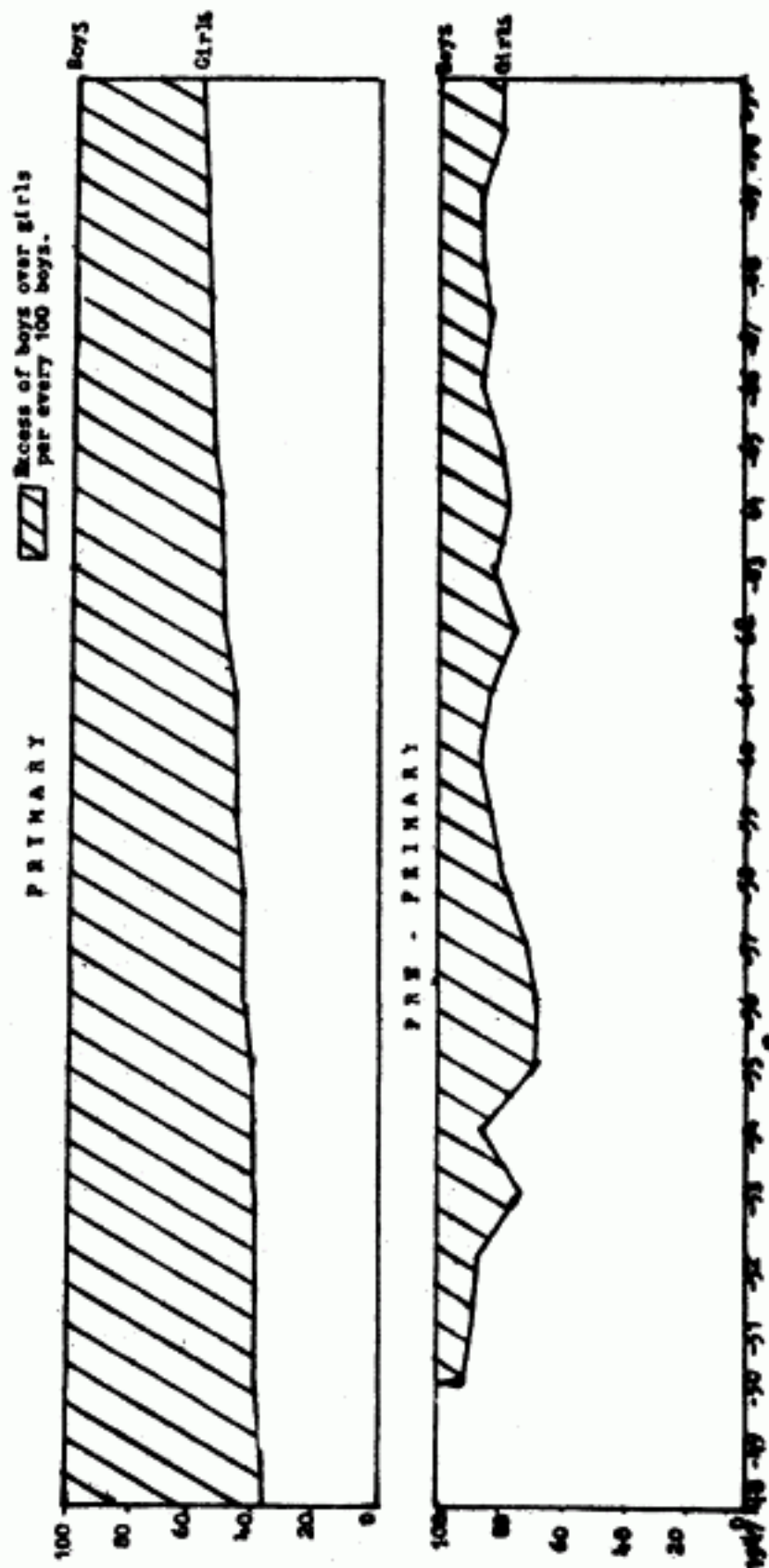
A graphic representation of the relative rate of growth of Female education as compared to Male education at different levels—variation in the number of girls per hundred Boys—during 1947-48 to 1970-71



Source : Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

Chart—III (b)

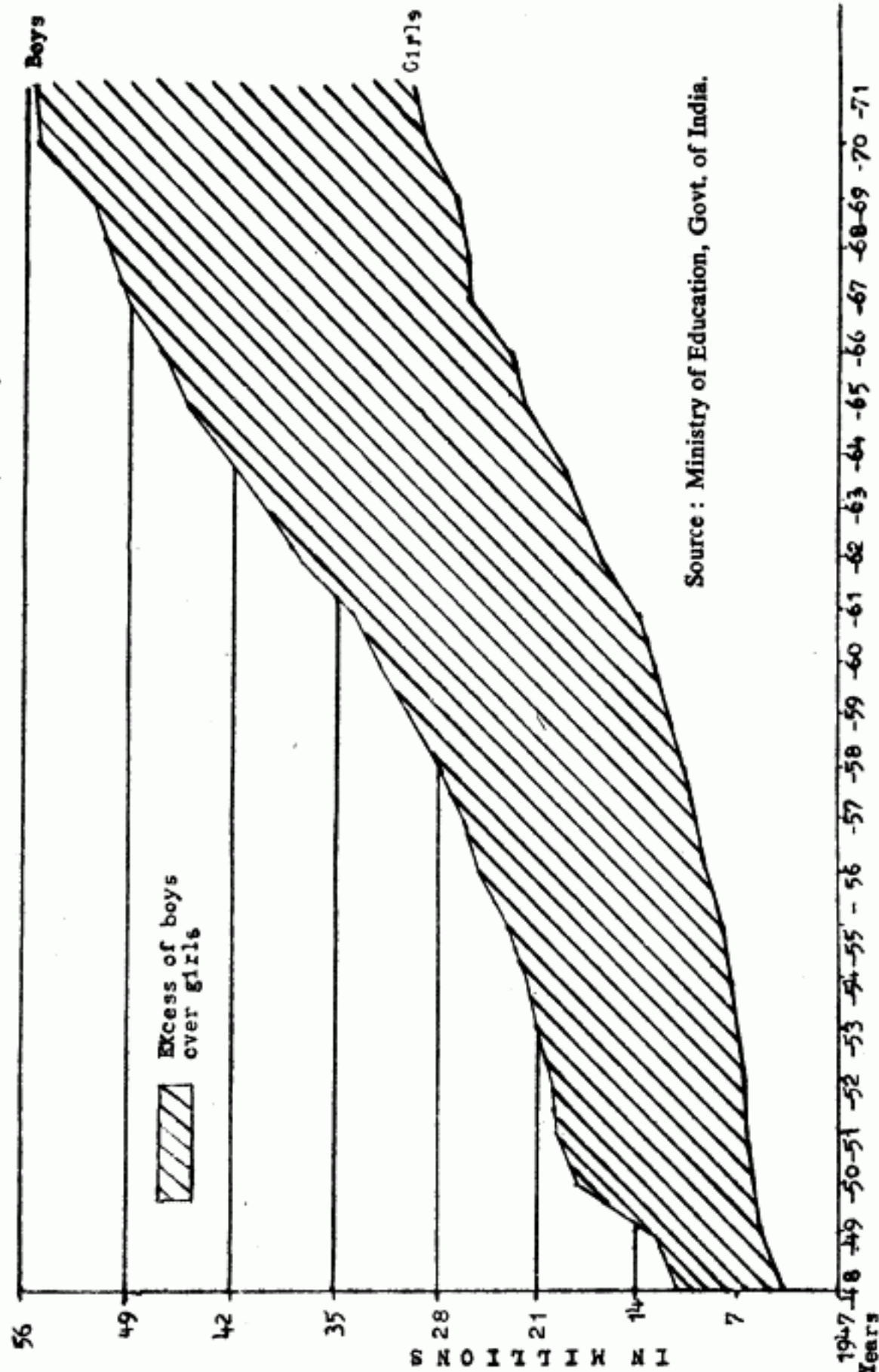
A graphic representation of the relative rate of growth of Female—education as compared to Male education at different levels—variation in the number of girls per hundred Boys during 1947-48 to 1970-71



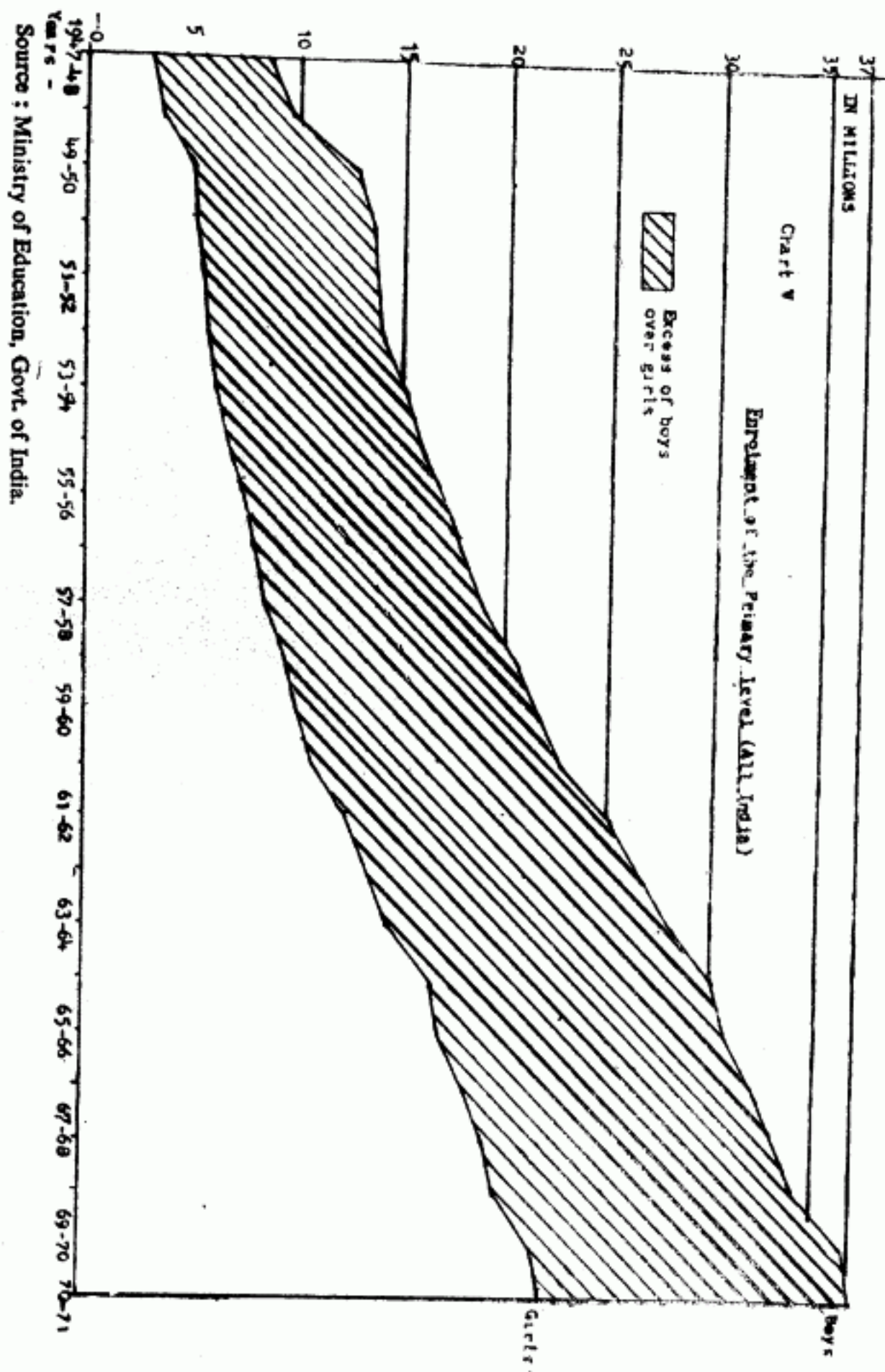
Source : Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

Chart—IV

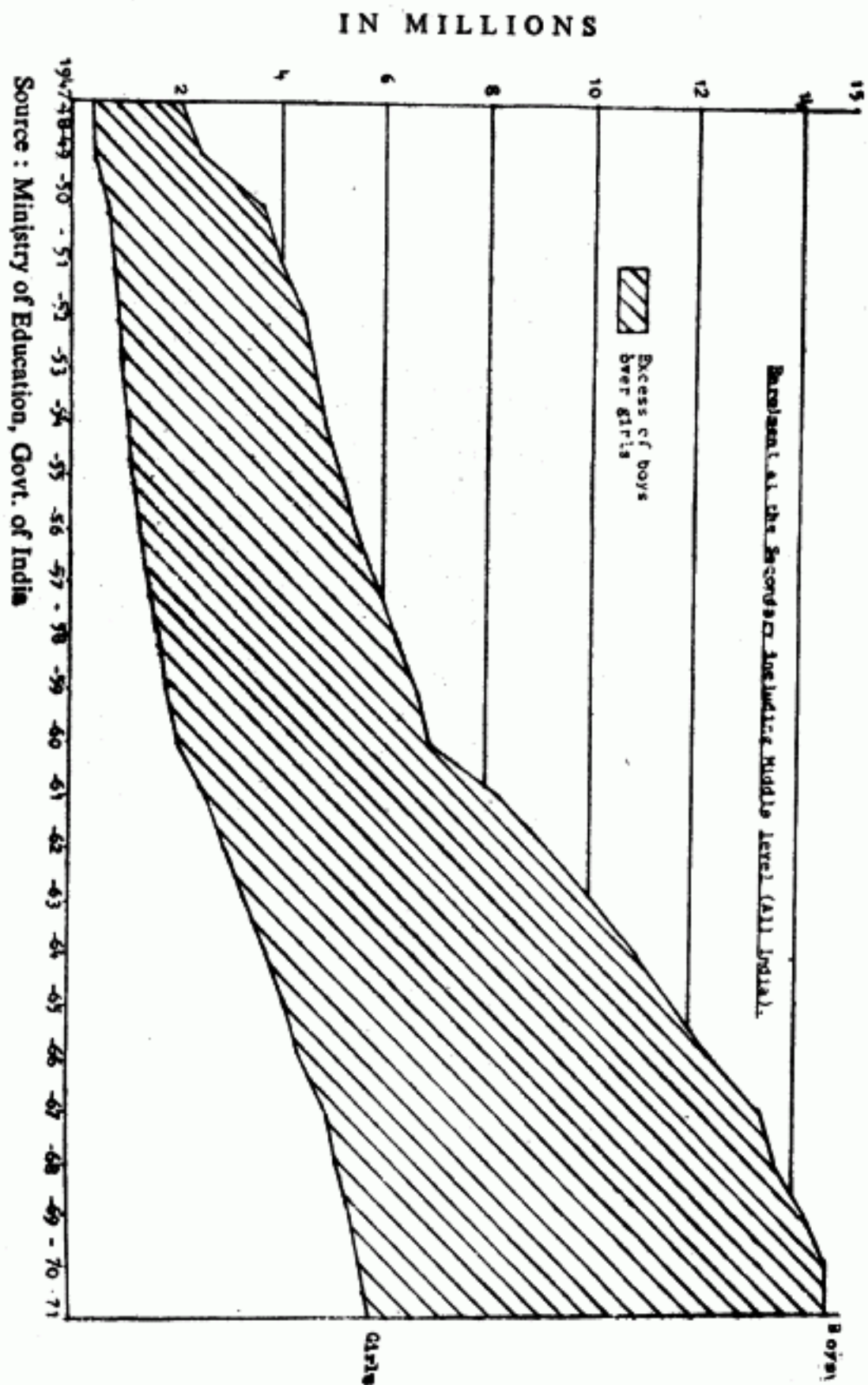
Enrolment for Education—All levels combined—(All India)



Source : Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

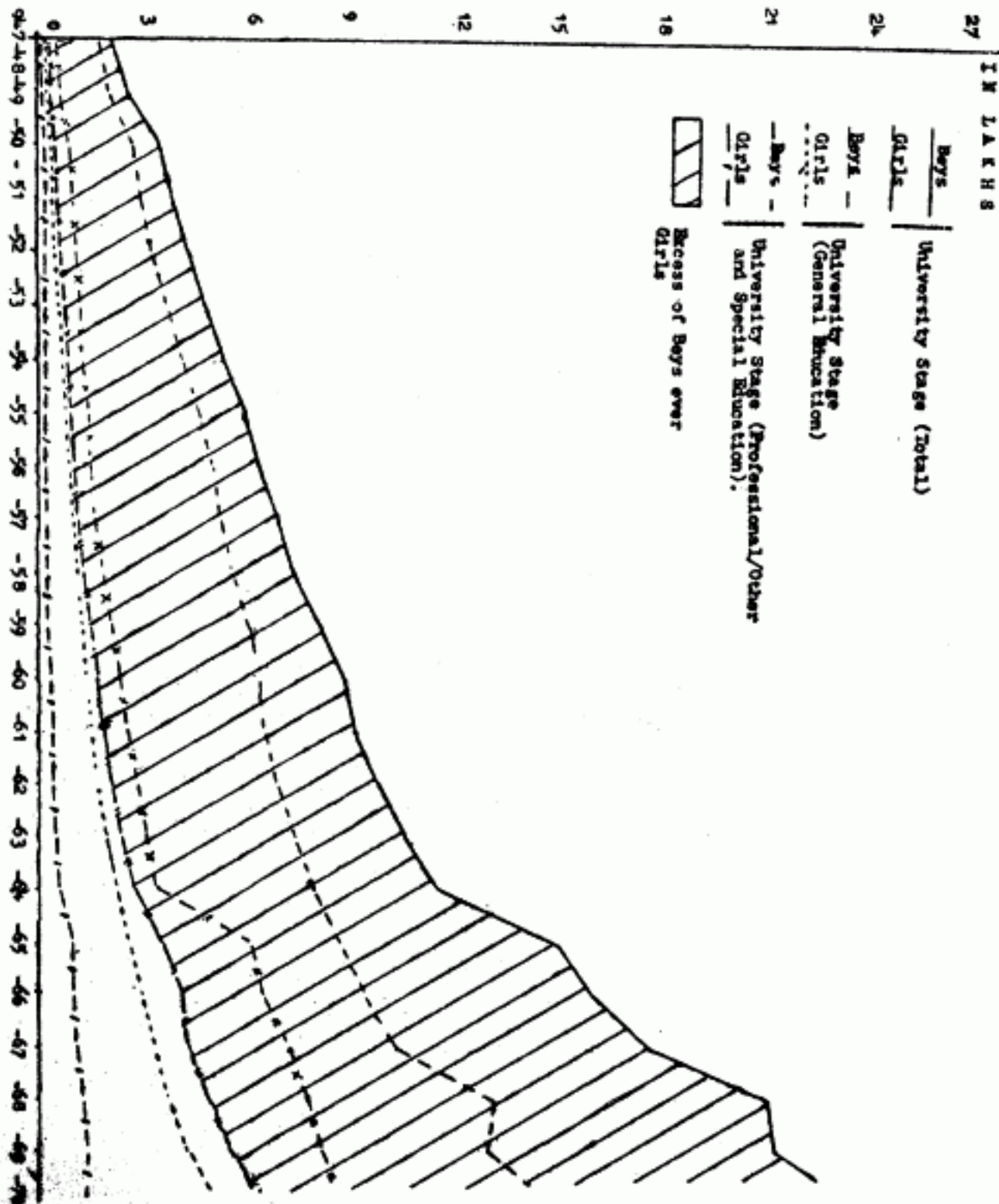


Chart—VI



Chart—VII

Enrolment at the University stage (All-India)

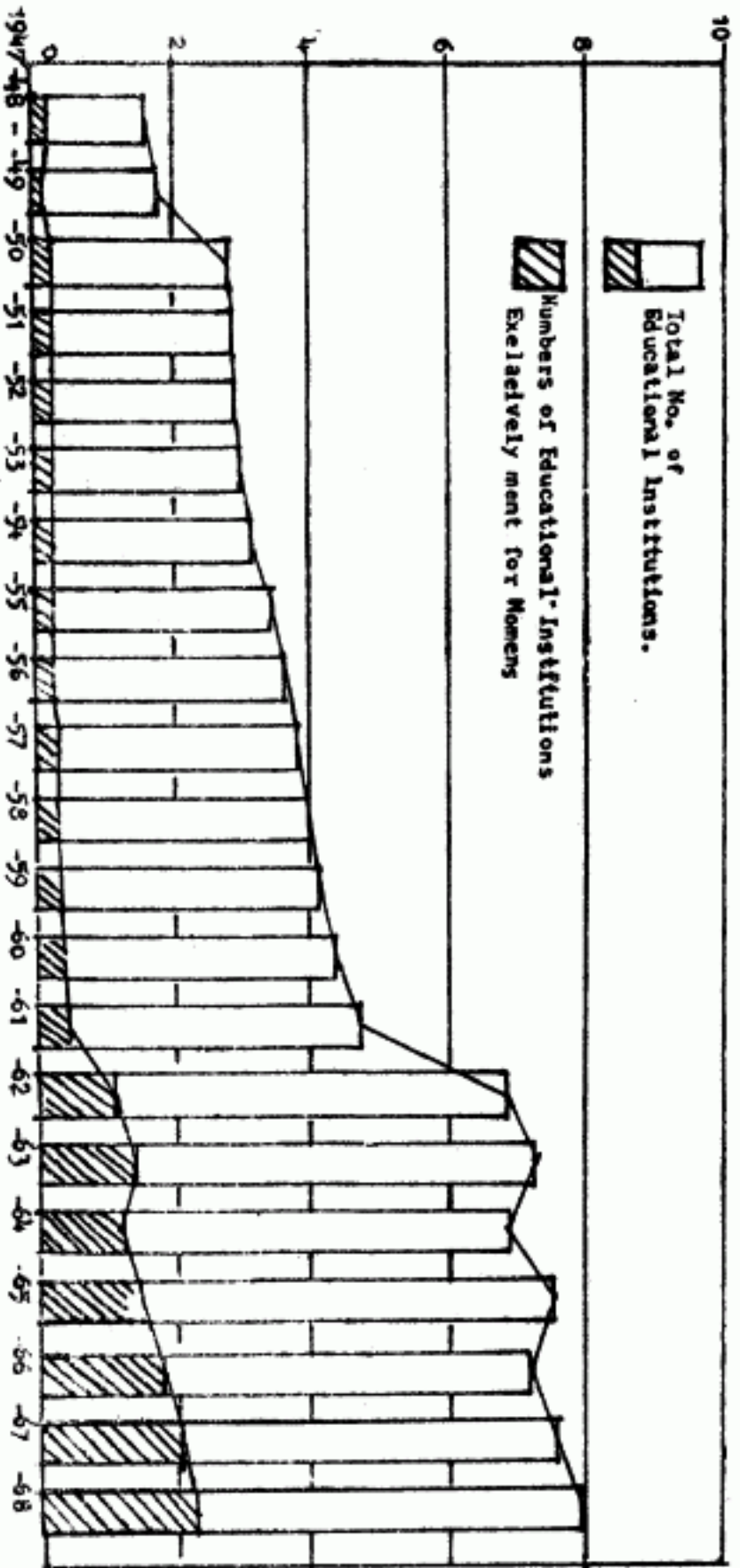


Source: Ministry of Education.

Chart—VIII

INSTITUTIONS
IN LAKHS

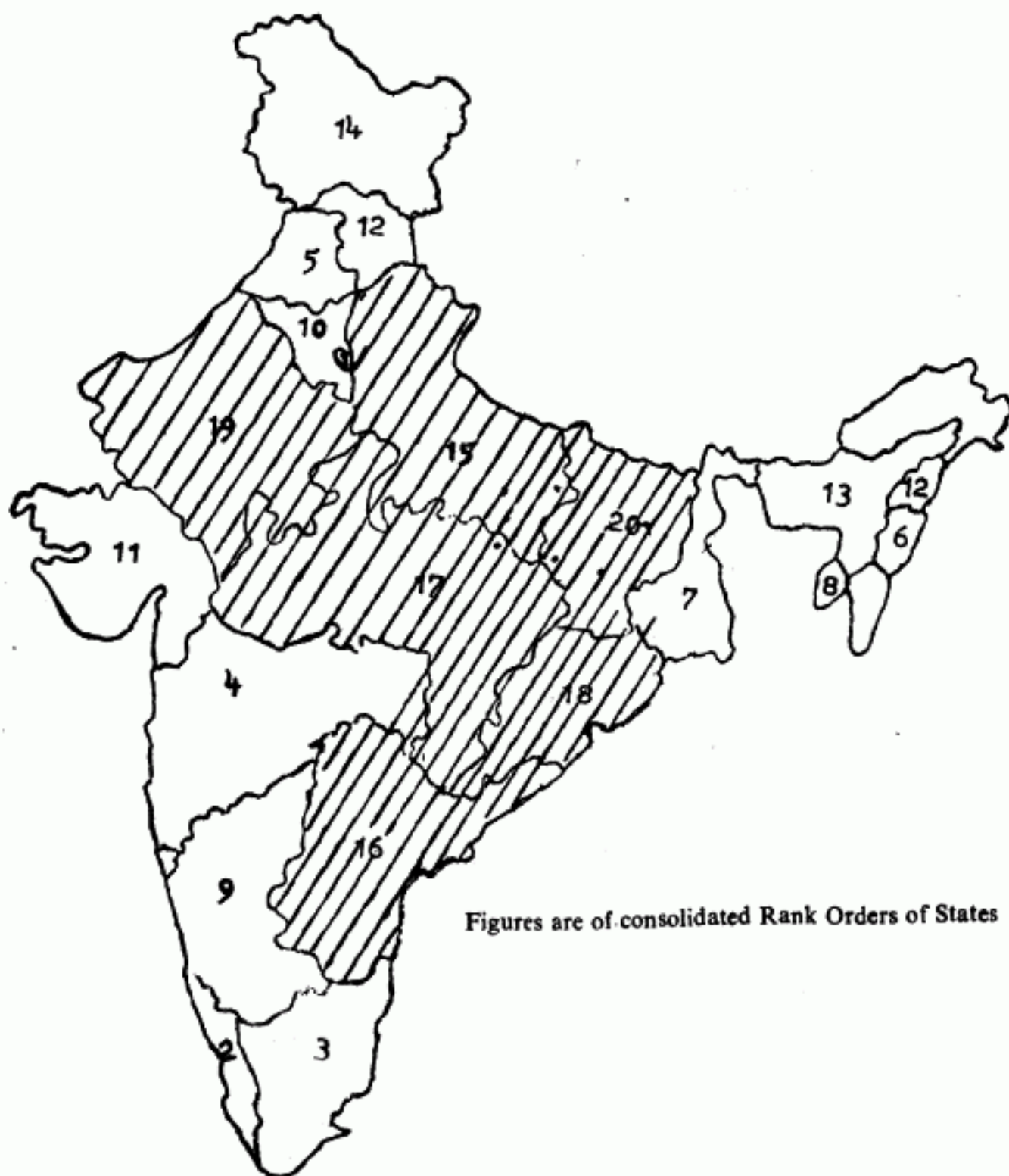
Growth of Educational Institutions (1947-48 to 1967-68)



Source : Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

Chart—IX

Six Backward States in Women Education :

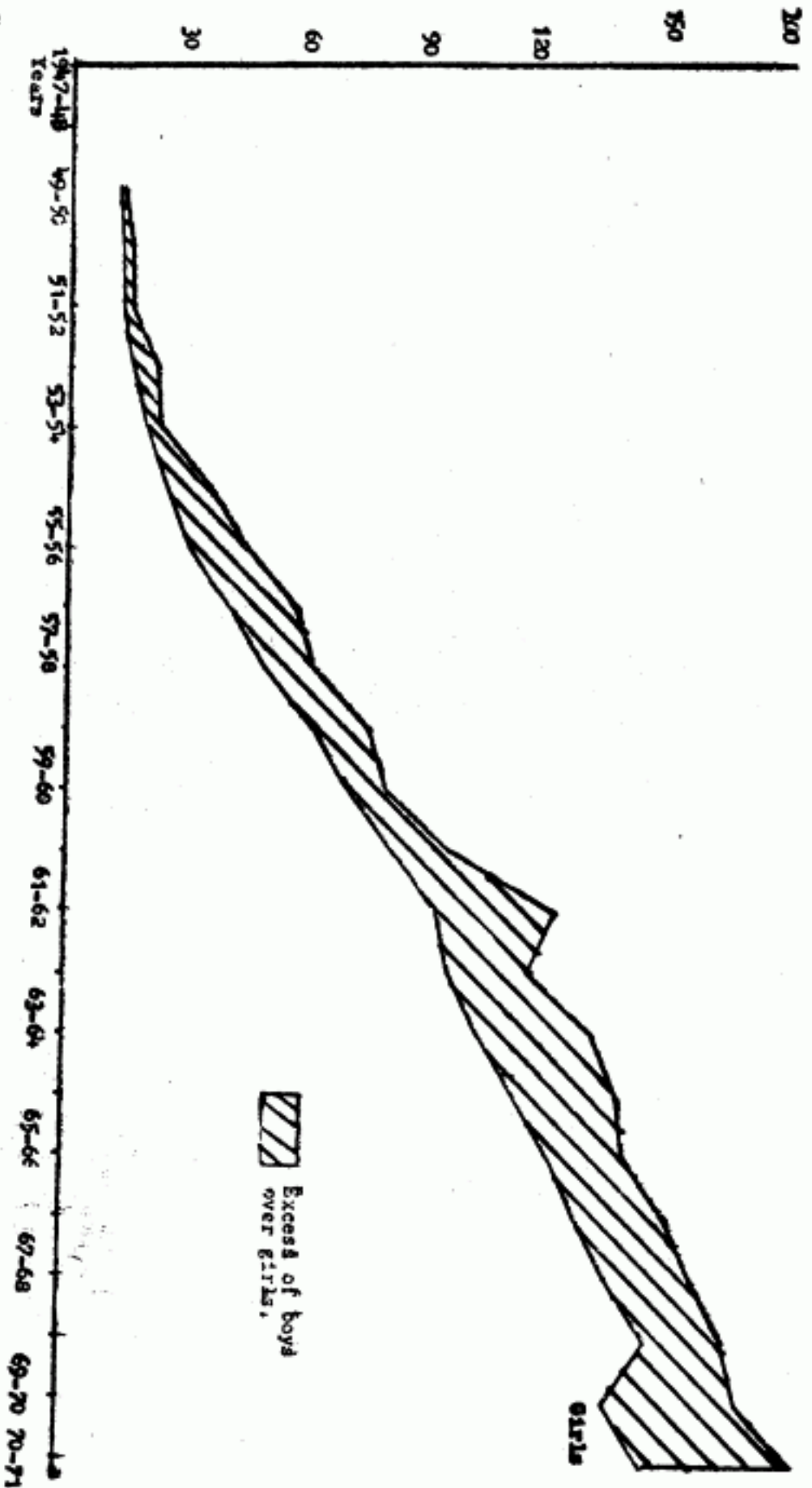


Figures are of consolidated Rank Orders of States

Note : The map is based on data for 1968-69. Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA) is not indicated in this map as it was not in existence at that date. It would also have to be included among the backward States.

Chart—X

Enrolment at the Pre-Primary level (All-India)



Source : Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

Enrolment as an Index of Educational Advance : Problems of Retention, Wastage and Stagnation.

6.24 While educational statistics have always tended to use enrolment as the main indicator of measuring progress, in the Committee's experience this suffers from certain limitations. Since the quantum of grants for all educational institutions is linked to enrolment figures there is an inevitable tendency to attach undue importance to mere enrolment. These statistics do not, however, indicate whether all children on a school register in fact attend school even for a short time. As observed by the Education Commission "the task of universal education begins when children are enrolled in Class I. It is completed only when they are successfully retained till they complete class VIII"¹⁹.

The problem of drop-outs of enrolled children as well as the problem of stagnation have contributed to the unreliability of enrolment statistics as a valid measure of progress.

6.25 The National Committee on Women's Education, while admitting that these were general problems of the educational system, had indicated that the extent of wastage or drop-outs was much higher in the case of girls. The all-India average of dropouts at the primary stage was 74% for girls while that for boys was 62.4%. The Education Commission reporting in 1966 found wastage at the lower primary stage to be 56% for boys and 62% for girls, about two-thirds of this wastage occurring in class I. At the higher primary stage wastage was 24% for boys and 34% for girls²⁰. A recent study conducted by the N. C. E. R. T.²¹ on the problem of wastage and stagnation in primary and middle schools also corroborates this finding.

"The differences between the rate of wastage and stagnation for boys (62.30%) and girls (71.36%) are highly significant. The rate for boys is 37.59% between grades I and II, 10.53% between grades II and III, 7.14% between grades III and IV, and 7.04% between grades IV and V. For girls it is 42.85% between grades I and II, 12.12% between grades II and III, 8.51% between grades III and IV and 7.88% between grades IV and V. This indicates that except for grades I and II, the difference's in the rates of wastage and stagnation for boys and girls in other grades are minor."²²

6.26 One of the causes for this large wastage in Class I is the prevalent practice of enrolling children in class I throughout the year. In spite of repeated recommendations against this practice we regret to find it to be still prevalent in many States. For example, in Madhya Pradesh an enrolment drive was undertaken just 5 weeks before the end of the session.

6.27 The economic and educational causes of wastage and stagnation are well recognised. In case of girls, however, social factors like marriage, betrothal and parental apathy to girls education also play a major part. The National Committee on Women's Education had estimated that 25 to 30% of cases of wastage among girls fell under this category. In our opinion the slow progress in enrolment and the high rate of dropouts and failures in the education of girls spring from the same reasons and ultimately affect the over-all progress of women's education.²³

Out Turn

6.28 Turning from enrolment to the outturn of students from the schools and the university system we find that the progress is extremely slow.²⁴ The significant features are the slower rate of increase in number of girls per 100 boys at the school final examinations viz. Matriculation and Higher Secondary and the much faster rate of increase at the University stage, particularly in the first degree. This shows that the gap between men and women is narrowing more rapidly at the higher level than at the primary and secondary stages. Since

19. Op cit. para 7.25

20. Ibid para 7.22

21. Sharma, R. C. and Sapra, C. L. — Wastage and Stagnation in Primary and Middle Schools. National Council of Educational Research and Training, 1971.

22. Ibid p. 38.

23. Op cit-paras

24. Vide Table XII.

TABLE XII : Out Turn of Students at Different Stages of the Educational System

Examination		Matriculation and equivalent			Higher Secondary and equivalent			Pre-University			Intermediate		
Year		Boys	Girls	No. of Gs/100 boys	Boys	Girls	No. of Gs/100 boys	Boys	Girls	No. of Gs/100 boys	Boys	Girls	No. of Gs/100 boys
1947-48		126885	15391	12	—	—	—	—	—	—	30898	4680	15
1950-51		210995	30148	14	—	—	—	—	—	—	63168	9517	15
1955-56		357166	72328	20	—	—	—	—	—	—	111818	19921	18
1960-61		452153	113966	25	46707	10290	22	71824	20650	29	92838	22893	25
1965-66		645552	202711	31	167852	39318	23	113094	39783	35	52306	16255	31
Examination		B.A./B. Sc.			M.A./M. Sc.			Doctorates			Professional Degrees and Equivalent Diploma only		
		Pass	Hons					Genl. and Professional Subjects					
Year		Boys	Girls	No. of Gs/100 boys	Boys	Girls	No. of Gs/100 boys	Boys	Girls	No. of Gs/100 boys	Boys	Girls	No. of Gs/100 boys
1947-48		15719	2867	18	3190	444	14	102	4	4	10173	—	—
1950-51		27357	4881	18	6262	876	14	136	10	7	(Break up is not available)		
1955-56		44041	9948	23	9603	2166	23	321	29	9	17892	1553	9
1960-61		70757	22295	32	18570	5115	28	959	283	3	31951	3821	12
1965-66		89865	38589	43	25959	9628	37	808	99	16	53045	7179	14
											67546	10721	16

higher education in India is still confined to a small minority of the population²⁵, the impact of this trend on the educational development of women as a whole cannot be described as high.

TABLE XIII
Estimated Total Stock of Educated Persons by Sex & Levels (Figures in Hundreds)

	<i>Males</i>	<i>Percentage of Total male population</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Percentage of Total female population</i>
Primary	334,989	11.9	165,115	6.3
Middle	207,089	7.3	76,930	2.9
Matriculation or Higher Secondary	134,733	4.8	37,365	1.4
Non-technical Diploma or Certificate.....	1,388	0.04	455	0.01
Technical Diploma or Certificate...	3,048	0.1	1,020	0.0003
Graduate	28,212	1.0	6,931	0.3

Source : Census of India 1971, Part II Special-estimated from 1% sample data. p. 121.
Note : Percentages calculated.

TABLE XIV
Degree Holders and Technical Personnel in each Subject Field, 1971.

<i>Subject Field</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Total	2,191,300	1,782,300	409,000
1. Arts/Humanities	1,139,900	843,800	296,100
2. Commerce	172,000	168,100	3,900
3. Agriculture	39,600	39,200	400
4. Veterinary Science/ Medicine	11,000	10,800	200
5. Science	450,400	368,600	81,800
6. Engineering & Technology	249,700	246,200	3,500
7. Medicine (Allopathy)	68,400	55,100	13,300
8. Medicine (Others)	23,200	20,400	2,800
9. Nursing*	3,800	400	3,400
10. Technical/vocational trade.....	19,700	18,500	1,200
11. Others	13,600	11,200	2,400

SOURCE : COUNTRY STATEMENT—INDIA—Submitted to World Population Conference, Bucharest (Romania) 19—30 August 1974.

NOTE : During the 1971 Census, a schedule was distributed among degree holders and technical personnel for being filled by them and return to the census enumerators/census office. The above table is based on filled-in schedules received back.

* The degree course in nursing has started only recently, but, according to the draft Fifth Five Year Plan, the number of nurses by the end of 1973-74 is likely to be 88,000.

6.29 In professional education, the only courses open to women before independence were medicine, education, nursing and law. Since very few women sought training in law, professional education for them was in fact confined to the first three. Admission to Engineering and technology courses was thrown open to women only in 1948. Considering this late start, their success in these courses has been significant. Their representation in other professional fields, however, remains very slow²⁶. Similarly, women's entry into

25. Vide Table XIII.

26. Vide Table XIV.

research is mainly a post-independence development and the progress at this level is satisfactory. The earlier wide-spread belief that girls had less aptitude and even intelligence than boys for pursuit of studies, particularly in subjects like Mathematics or Science, has been completely disproved by their success at various examinations. At the University level in particular, the performance of girls in all subjects, including Science and Mathematics has often outstripped that of boys. A general opinion of faculty members is that the average girl student is more conscientious and disciplined than the average male student.

Growth of Institutions :

6.30 The National Committee on Women's Education had felt that provision of separate institutions of girls would help to break down the prejudice against their education, and provide more impetus to the spread of education among women. There is no doubt that in the period since 1960-61 there has been an enormous expansion in the number of these exclusive institutions. In 1947-48, institutions meant exclusively for women constituted only 10.3%; by 1967-68 they formed 29% of the total. Out of the total number of educational institutions established during this 20 year period, slightly more than half came up between 1960-61 and 1967-68. In the case of institutions exclusively meant for women, however, more than three-fourths of the increase took place between 1960-61 and 1967-68.

TABLE XV

Growth of educational institutions.

Year	Educational Institutions.		
	Total number of Institutions	number of Insti- tutions exclu- sively for girls.	Percentage of Col. (3) to Col. (2)
1	2	3	4
1947-48	1,64,553	16,951	10.3
1950-51	2,86,860	24,829	8.7
1955-56	3,66,641	24,873	6.8
1960-61	4,72,655	41,674	8.8
1961-62	6,85,602	1,16,150	16.9
1962-63	7,26,632	1,42,572	19.6
1963-64	6,91,986	1,22,784	17.7
1964-65	7,53,418	1,44,069	19.1
1965-66	7,27,262	1,81,238	24.2
1966-67	7,58,790	2,10,291	27.7
1967-68	7,93,799	2,30,032	29.0

Source : Ministry of Education.

6.31 While we welcome the growth of institutional facilities for the spread of education among women, we would like to point out certain adverse features of this rapid growth that have been brought to our notice. At the primary level, a large number of these schools are single-teacher institutions, with obvious limitations on their teaching capacity. One of the reasons mentioned to us for low enrolment and high dropouts of girls was the wide prevalence of single-teacher schools which frequently have to close due to the absence of the teacher. The problems become more acute when the teacher is on maternity leave, since provision of a substitute is tardy or absent.

6.32 At the middle and the secondary level, there is frequent criticism of the low standard of teaching facilities, particularly for subjects like science and mathematics. The students' choice of subjects is very often determined, not by their aptitudes, but by institutional limitations.

6.33 At the college level the expansion has been most rapid, from 81 women's colleges in 1953-54 to 435 in 1971-72. 250 of these colleges, however, have an enrolment of less than 500

(55 have less than 100), which makes them non-viable from the point of view of resources, both financially and academically:²⁷

6.34 One of the results of the policy to encourage establishment of women's institutions has been a relative lack of vigilance by the public and academic authorities regarding standards of these institutions. Eligibility conditions for recognition or for financial assistance through grants-in-aid have frequently been relaxed or waived altogether.

6.35 In our opinion the spread of substandard or limited education will not help the achievement of equality of opportunities, and may in the long run damage the cause of girls education. Vigilance regarding standards is imperative, particularly at the higher levels of the educational system and must form a part of the policy of encouragement and assistance.

Women Teachers

6.36 The need to increase the number of women teachers as an essential condition for the development of women's education has been long recognised in India. In recent years, this has been emphasised even more by the National Committee, the National Council for Women's Education and the Education Commission who recommended adequate provision for their training and recruitment. The Education Commission recommended that the employment of women teachers should be encouraged in all stages and all sections of education. In order to achieve this, the Commission suggested provision of the following :

- (a) opportunities for part-time employment on large scale;
- (b) residential accommodation particularly in rural areas;
- (c) special allowances for women teachers working in rural areas, and
- (d) expansion of condensed courses for adult women and education through correspondence courses.

6.37 In 1947, 14.4% of the school teachers in the country were women. In 1965-66, they formed 21.8%. While the proportion of women teachers at different levels has increased very slowly as indicated in the following tables, it may be noted that the percentage of trained teachers is higher among women than men.

TABLE XVI

No. of women teachers employed in

	<i>Primary schools</i>	<i>% Trained</i>	<i>Middle schools</i>	<i>% Trained</i>	<i>Secondary schools</i>	<i>% trained</i>
1950-51	28,281 (18)	69.1	12,887 (18)	58.1	19,982 (19)	66.2
1955-56	1,17,067 (20)	73.7	23,844 (19)	63.2	35,085 (23)	72.9
1960-61	1,26,788 (21)	73.4	83,532 (32)	73.4	62,347 (22)	73.9
1965-66	1,80,315 (24)	73.1	1,38,539 (36)	79.0	1,10,703 (30)	76.3
1968-69	2,09,504 (26)	76.9	1,53,034 (36)	82.4	1,20,678 (30)	80.3
1973-74	2,50,000 (26)	77.0	1,99,000 (37)	83.0	1,50,000 (30j)	81.0

Source : Ministry of Education, Form A, except for 1973-74 which are estimates. Figures in parentheses represent percentage of total teaching staff.

27. A study of the social response to development of women's education in the State of Bihar conducted at the request of the Committee, clearly indicates the wide-spread character of these beliefs regarding the lower standard of facilities in women's institutions. The majority of respondents explained this situation by the indifference of public authorities and the higher priority given to Women's education—Prasad, R. C.—Public Policy & Social Feedback: Women's Education in Bihar. (1974).

TABLE XVII

Faculty	No. of women teachers in colleges and universities		
	1950-51	1960-61	1970-71
Arts	1,091 (11.4)	5,624 (14.9)	10,136 (19.7)
Science	379 (6.3)	Included in Arts	5,381 (13.6)
Commerce	4 (0.4)	57 (2.1)	227 (3.2)
Education	130 (24.3)	448 (22.8)	924 (23.9)
Engg./Tech.	1 (neg.)	12 (0.3)	92 (1.2)
Medicine	173 (9.8)	731 (12.8)	2,236 (19.2)
Agriculture	1 (0.2)	21 (1.4)	49 (1.5)
Veterinary Science	12 (8.2)	11 (1.7)	18 (1.6)
Law	Nil	9 (1.2)	173 (10.8)
Others	24 (16.1)	10 (4.2)	154 (15.7)
All Faculties	1,815 (8.5)	6,923 (12.5)	19,390 (15.0)

Source : Ministry of Education and Social Welfare for 1950-51 and 60-61 and University Grants Commission for 1970-71. Figures in parentheses represent percentage of total teaching staff.

6.38 Even in the States like Haryana, Punjab, Tamilnadu where almost all the villages have been electrified and are connected to the cities by pukka roads, women teachers are still reluctant to serve in rural areas. The problem becomes more acute in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir where the villages are often situated in remote and inaccessible areas.

There is no public conveyance available and very often the villages can only be reached on horse back, by bullock cart or on foot. Some of the basic problems identified by women teachers, in almost all the states that the committee visited, are given below:-

- (a) Women teachers face a certain degree of resistance from their families to their working in rural areas, partly from the general apprehension against women working away from home, and partly from a fear of personal insecurity in villages. This has been aggravated by the deteriorating law and order situation in some villages. There is also a fear that rural society may be unfriendly and even antagonistic to outsiders. We would, however, like to mention that in some states we were told that rural society had now come to accept and even respect women teachers and doctors.

Most of these attitudes are shared by the teachers themselves. Added to them is another cause of resistance from the women, used to life in urban areas, that life in villages would be dull and unattractive.

- (b) Apart from these factors, the lack of physical amenities like modern medical facilities, proper accommodation, toilets, transport and schooling for children are real difficulties that deter women from service in rural areas. Even when houses are provided, they are often outside the village, without any consideration for the problems of distance and insecurity that women have to face. If they are within the school, the teachers cannot bring their families. The problem of accommodation becomes still more acute with married women, if they have to work away from their husbands and families.

6.39 In our opinion these problems need to be solved on a priority basis in order to increase the supply of women teachers in rural schools. If this is not done, then the present imbalance in the development of women's education between urban and rural areas will increase. Added to this will be yet another imbalance, that of increasing unemployment among trained and qualified women teachers, whose reluctance to serve in rural areas prevents their employment. The beginnings of this imbalance are already noticeable in many states.

Inspection :

6.40 The system of inspection of schools varies from state to state. The general complaint, however, is that schools are not inspected regularly. In Himachal Pradesh a retired school teacher informed us that during her 24 years' service, she had faced only three inspections. In some states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar village schools to be inspected once a year are only those which are within easy reach. In most states all inspections cease during the rainy season.

6.41 There is an over-all inadequacy of women on the inspecting staff. Insufficient numbers and over-large jurisdictions contribute to the general inefficiency of inspections. For women in particular, the problems of distance, and inadequate arrangement for transport and night halts create added difficulties. This leads sometimes to a reluctance to serve on the inspecting staff, and in the states where the grade of inspectors is the same as that of headmistress of a high school (e.g. Punjab), women members of the service prefer to remain as headmistresses. In Himachal Pradesh, we found that there was no women on the inspecting staff.

6.42 States like Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh do not have a separate women's cadre of inspectors, and girls' schools are often inspected by male inspectors. In the case of single-teachers schools, this sometimes creates a problem. We received some complaints from teachers of misbehaviour, blackmail or exploitation on the part of inspectors.

Attitudes to the Education of Girls and Women.

6.43 Social attitudes to the education of girls vary, ranging from acceptance of the need to one of absolute indifference. The Committee's survey²⁸ reveals some interesting trends. A statement that girls should not be given any education received a categorical rejection by 77.8% of the respondents. A small minority (16.8%) did, however, agree with this view. In the case of higher education, however, we find a surprisingly hostile attitude since over 64.50% responded that a girl should not be allowed to go for higher education even if she is very intelligent.

6.44 In view of the Constitutional directive regarding free and compulsory education up to the age of 14, we tried to elicit public opinion on the question of making education compulsory. In response to our general questionnaire, 77.5% of the respondents, male and female, supported compulsory education for upto the 8th class. A separate questionnaire issued to educationists and administrators²⁹ regarding measures necessary to improve girls' enrolment in schools also evoked a substantial support in favour of compulsion.

6.45 In urban areas, by and large, the acceptance of the need of education for girls is greater than in rural areas. Among the affluent there are two distinct attitudes. Some families are opposed to it for traditional reasons while others have welcomed it as an accomplishment and a symbol of modernisation. Among the middle classes the acceptance is the highest. The attitude among the lower middle class is more difficult to generalise because today's lower middle-class consists of white collared as well as manual workers. Though economically one, socially they are two distinct classes, their attitudes being determined much more by their social background rather than their economic position. While an increasingly large section, conscious of economic necessity, is prepared to make substantial sacrifices for girls' education, a very large number still finds itself unable to do so for economic and social reasons. For the majority of the people who live below subsistence level, poverty is the predominant factor governing the attitude to girls' education³⁰.

28. General Survey on the Status of Women in India (Appendix I).

29. D.P.Is, Principals, Headmistresses, Block Development Officers, Village Level Workers and Mukhya Sevikas.

30. According to our survey, a great majority of the respondents favour girls education for the following reasons :-

(a) Education is good for all-round development of girls (88.15%) ;

6.46 Reasons for the variations in social attitudes and the consequent slow progress of women's education are both social and economic. (a) Large majority of girls, by the time they reach the age of eight, are required at home to do various domestic chores, e.g. collecting fire-wood, coal waste, cow dung, fetching water, sometimes from long distances, washing, cleaning, cooking, reaching food and water to parents in their places of work, etc.

(b) Majority of girls of this age group have to look after the siblings, especially when their mothers are engaged in earning a livelihood.

(c) A substantial number of girls are engaged in contributing to the family income by their own labour. The prevalence of child labour has long been admitted as the greatest deterrent to the spread of education among children of the poor. The Committee was appalled by the extent and degree of use of young girls of five to fourteen working for twelve hours a day. One 12 year old girl in Andhra Pradesh informed us that she could not remember any other pattern of existence in her whole life. Similar is the case in fire-works, matches, weaving and many other industries, mostly in the unorganised sector. A very large number of girls in this age group work as domestic servants—either as helpers or as independent earners. In Calcutta, we found one 12 year old supporting a family of six members by working in a number of houses as a part-time domestic servant. This was by no means an exceptional case. These girls are too exhausted at the end of their day's labour to attend evening classes even if they could be arranged.

In the agricultural sector, girls in the same age-group do share the burden of field labour, but mostly in the peak seasons. Their hours of work being less, it is possible for them to attend school, if facilities were available. The school term should be adjusted according to the seasonal agricultural activities. It should be noted that the exclusion from education because of participation in labour is higher among girls than boys, as they constitute a higher proportion of the unpaid family workers. According to the National Sample Survey (1960-67) the labour participation rates for boys and girls in the age-group 10-19 is on the decline in urban areas. In rural areas a similar trend is evident in the case of boys, but for girls this decline is negligible³¹.

(d) Our Survey reveals several difficulties in the way of facilities for girls' education. Nearly 53% of the respondents refer to shortage of schools in general, 57.65% to absence of separate schools for girls in many places, 43.57% to over-crowding in schools and 53.95% to distance from house to school. While 39.41% point to the absence of women teachers, 40.46% do not regard this as a difficulty. Other difficulties brought to our notice are the lack of adequate transport arrangements and toilet facilities, as also the prevalence of single teacher schools.³² (a), (b)

(e) The irrelevance of education as imparted in schools today has been discussed at length by the Education Commission. While endorsing their views, we would like to add that this has a particularly adverse effect on parental attitude to the education of girls, especially in rural areas. Parents who have not as yet accepted the utility of educating girls find in its irrelevance, justification for their apathy. Mothers of young girls told us that except for reading and writing, which the girls could pick up in two or three years, schools taught very little that was useful. One peasant woman in a Punjab village felt that one way of making school education more meaningful would be to train girls to handle and repair tractors. Some women in the Kulu valley wanted training in methods of fruit preservation, so that they could fully utilise the products of their orchards.

(f) Education in the rural areas often results in alienation of the girls from their habitat. While this criticism was voiced in many places, the most vocal opinion was expressed by women in the villages of Himachal Pradesh. Since the development of the state and the standard of living of its people depended on the continued efforts of women in agriculture, education in their opinion was becoming an adversary of progress. Girls who

(b) Education is helpful in case of misfortune and emergency (86.94%) ;

(c) Education brings prestige to the girl and the family (82.87%) ;

(d) Education enables girls to earn a living (75.91%) and

(e) Education would enable girls to add some income to the family (69.43%).

31. Report of the Committee of Experts on Unemployment Estimates (1970)—p.169. See Table V in Chapter V.

32 (a). Vide para 6.31

32 (b). Muslims whose mother tongue is Urdu, particularly in rural areas, are reluctant to send their daughters to school because of the lack of facilities for learning Urdu.

completed their formal education in the villages did not want to continue living in villages or take part in agricultural activities. The problem became more acute when, owing to absence of secondary school in the villages, they had to study outside, in urban or semi-urban areas. Many of them found village life with its hardships intolerable afterwards. This was particularly brought to our notice in Nagaland and Himachal Pradesh. Most girls who complete secondary school develop a desire for white-collared jobs, or urban life in some form.

(g) While early marriage or betrothal was undoubtedly the greatest deterrent to progress of girls' education in the past, it is much less so now. Our survey indicates that only 38.1% of the respondents find early marriage a genuine difficulty for girls' education while 41.5% do not agree with this view. The average age at marriage has been rising steadily from 15.4 between 1941-51 to 18 in 1961-71. The national average for 1971 is 20 in urban and 18 in rural areas. The percentage of unmarried girls in the age group 10-14 rose from 77.63 to 86.21 in rural areas and from 93.01 to 95.79 in urban areas between 1961 and 1971. For the age group 15-19 this percentage changed from 14.2 to 36.91 in rural areas and 29.4 to 63.76 in urban areas. When we turn to the admittedly educationally backward states, however, we find this to be still a problem. The average age at marriage for women during 1951-61 was 14.81 in Bihar and Orissa, 13.87 in Madhya Pradesh, 14.22 in Rajasthan and 14.43 in Uttar Pradesh, when the national average was 16.3. During our tours we met a number of girls in their teens who were already married. The social restriction on girls pursuing their studies after marriage however has been rapidly breaking down. In one high school in Madhya Pradesh we found 10% of the girls were married. At the higher levels of education the presence of young married women is a normal phenomenon. Nevertheless, the problem still continues to exist in certain communities and areas.

6.47 The strongest social support for girls' education continues to come from its increasing demand in the marriage market. According to our survey, 64.25% of the respondents felt that education helped to improve marriage prospects of a girl. For example, when a residential school for tribal boys was started in Deomali (Arunachal Pradesh), the demand for a similar institution for girls came from totally illiterate tribal parents, as they apprehended that the boys, once educated would refuse to marry within the community if they did not find educated girls.

The influence of the marriage market is also restrictive in some ways. Since marriage within the community or caste continues to be the prevalent norm, in communities where education has not spread sufficiently among the men, the parents are reluctant to educate their girls beyond a certain level. It is taken for granted that the man has to be more educated than the woman. This has been intensified by the pressure of the dowry system which acts in two ways³³. On the one hand the search for bride-grooms for educated girls becomes confined to men with still higher education-whose demand for dowry is prone to be higher. On the other, the burden of the double expenditure-on education as well as marriage-acts as a deterrent to girls education.

Literacy

6.48 Our review of the progress made by women within the formal system of education indicates its severe limitations. In spite of all the expansion, the system now covers only 10% of the total female population³⁴. In the 15-25 age group however, the situation is much worse, as the table below will indicate. Less than 7% of the 15-25 age group and less than 2% of the 25 and above age group are now covered by the formal system. The vast majority are still illiterate. As for the literate section, the skill acquired may be illusory or temporary, as many of them do not succeed in retaining literacy. A study sponsored by UNESCO on retention of literacy in Malaysia and India (1970) found that literacy is not permanently retained without four years of formal schooling, or high proficiency in adult literacy courses (designated as grade III by the Literacy House, Lucknow). Two other factors contribute to the loss of literacy:-(a) lack of use in occupation, and (b) non-recognition of the value of literacy by the community. This study also indicated that the percentage of loss of higher among women in both urban and rural areas³⁵.

33. Vide Chapter III.

34. Vide Table XIII.

35. Roy, Prodip to and Kapoor, J.M. *Retention of Literacy*-Council for Social Development, 1970.

6.49 As pointed out elsewhere in our Report, illiteracy remains the greatest barrier to any improvement in the position of women-in employment, health, the enjoyment and exercise of legal and constitutional rights, equal opportunity in education, and generally in attaining the equality of status that our Constitution has declared as the goal of this nation. The trend of discussion in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and various reports of the UNESCO over the last three decades, indicate that the achievement of high educational status by a minority produces little or no impact on the status of the large mass of women if they remain outside the reach of education or other instruments of modernisation because of illiteracy.

TABLE XVIII
Educational level of Women by Age Group (in lakhs)

Educational level of Women by Age Group (in lakhs)			
Educational level	No. of Women		Total
	Urban Areas	Rural Areas	
<hr/>			
Illiterate	(Age-Group (15-24))		
	36	262	298
			(67.5 p.c. of the total number of women in this age-group)
	<hr/>		
	Literate	7	21
Primary and Middle level...	35	52	87
Matriculates and above...	20	7	27
			(6.2 p.c. of the total number of women in this age-group)
<hr/>			
Total of literate and educated.	62	81	143
<hr/>			
Illiterate	(Age-Group (25-and above))		
	129	816	945
			(88.6 p.c. of the total number of women in this age-group)
	<hr/>		
	Literate	17	29
Primary and Middle level...	41	41	82
Matriculate and above	14	3	17
			(1.6 p.c. of the total number of women in this age-group)
<hr/>			
Total of literate and Educated	72	74	146
<hr/>			

N.B. The percentages of different age-groups and different educational level (for women) were derived, in the first instance, from the one per cent Sample Data of the 1971 Census. These percentages were then applied to the total female population as given by the 1971 Census in order to arrive at the approximate figures presented above.

6.50 The advance of Indian women in this field can only be described as pitifully meagre as the following table will indicate:

TABLE XIX
Progress of Literacy—1901-1971
Number of Literate Females per 1000 Males

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total literate males</i>	<i>%age of literate males to total male population.</i>	<i>Total literate females.</i>	<i>%age of literate females to total female population.</i>	<i>No. of literate females per 1000 males.</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6
1901	14690080	9.83	996341	0.69	68
1911	16938815	10.56	1600763	1.05	94
1921	19841438	12.21	2782213	1.81	140
1931	23969751	15.59	4169105	2.93	132
1951	45610431	24.95	13650683	7.93	299
1961	77939833	34.44	27578928	12.95	354
1971*	111911000	39.51	48699191	18.44	435

*Provisional population totals, Paper 1 for 1971 supplement Census of India.

Source : Census of India 1961 Vol. I Part II A, General Population Tables p.181. "Some Quantitative Indices of Social Change in India" Census publication. p.22

6.51 The significant point to be noted is that, unlike the enrolment in the formal educational system, literacy did not increase at such a rapid rate after independence, either in absolute number, or in relation to the growth of literacy among men. The enrolment of girls in primary education increased from 20.1% in 1950-51, to 68.6 in 1970-71 This indicates that despite the progress in formal education, the poorer sections of Indian women, the majority of whom have to labour for living, are still illiterate.

6.52 The Education Commission had emphasised the imperative need "to liquidate adult illiteracy" and "to stop all further additions to the ranks of adult non-literates,"—describing such measures as "transitional." In reality the number of illiterates has been increasing with such rapidity that the task of eradicating it is becoming more and more formidable with the passage of time.

TABLE XX
Number of Illiterates-By Sex 1951-71

<i>Census Year</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
1950-51	139,918,031	161,908,945
1960-61	148,206,268	185,211,889
1970-71	172,025,614	215,314,004

6.53. The challenge of the widening illiteracy gap will have to be borne in mind in determining priorities in educational development in the years to come. The claims of the formal educational system which can cater to the needs of only a minority for a long time will have to be balanced against the claims of eradication of illiteracy. This stands out as

the most important and imperative need to raise the status of women who are already adults and constitute the largest group.

6.54 The enrolment figures under the programmes of adult literacy for women as given by the Ministry of Education are :— 2 million in 1950-51 ; 3 million in 1960-61 ; 6 million in 1965-66, and 3.2 million in 1968-69. This should not result in complacency. In the absence of specific evaluation of these programmes, we have no evidence that enrolment necessarily resulted in these women becoming literate.

6.55 It is obvious that while the constitutional directive of universal education upto the age of 14 years must receive the highest priority in the formal system, the need of the large majority of adult women, illiterate or just literate, cannot be met by that system. An alternative system has, therefore, to be designed for this purpose to provide basic education to adult women, particularly in the 15-25 age group.

Imbalance in Educational Development

6.56 The sharp increase in the number of illiterate women in spite of the rapid expansion of education of women at various levels, points to severe imbalance in the distribution of educational effort and resources among different sections of the population. Education is a double-edged instrument which can eliminate the effects of socio-economic inequalities, but which can itself introduce a new kind of inequality between those who have it and those who do not.

6.57 The Education Commission had identified amongst other forms of educational inequalities, the wide disparity of educational development between the advanced and the backward classes. While agreeing with this view, we would like to emphasise another important factor which has a direct impact on the development of women's education viz., regional differences. Imbalances in women's education and literacy are the consequences of great disparity of educational progress between rural and urban areas, between different sections of the population and between regions, which reflect, to a great extent variations in regional attitudes to women. The following tables attempt a comparison in the development of literacy and education at different levels for women in different States. They indicate dimensions of the imbalance.

6.58 While the enrolment ratios shown as percentages of enrolled girls to the female population in the relevant age group has been used as a common denominator for all States, the absolute number provide some idea of the magnitude of the achievement. It is clear from the tables that while all States have been making rapid progress in the education of girls, the rate of progress has been uneven between different States. The ranking order of States for each level of education show certain variations in the achievements of the same States at different level of education. While Bihar and Rajasthan have maintained uniformly the lowest performance at all levels, States like Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura show a higher achievement at the Primary levels during this 12-year period. The only States where both primary and middle levels show equal or similarly high achievement are J & K, Kerala, Nagaland, Delhi and Tamilnadu. The case of West Bengal is rather unique as it seems to have merely maintained its position at the primary level and lost ground at the middle level during this period. At the secondary level, majority of the States registered a distinct improvement. Enrolment in vocational and technical courses at the lower level in a number of States, however, has remained static. Some of the exceptions to this rule are Assam, Maharashtra and Delhi. For professional and technical courses at the higher level the increase is marginal. This is not conducive to the diversification of women's education at the higher levels, or to the employment of educated women.

6.59 A statewide study undertaken at the request of the Committee found a very significant correlation between the growth of girls' education and the female literacy rate. No such significant correlation could, however, be established between the girls' education and (a) per capita income of the State; (b) density of population; and (c) sex ratio³⁶.

36. Ravindranathan, M.R., Correlation Between Enrolment of Girls per hundred Boys and other factors such as density of population, per-capita income, sex ratio and female literacy rate. Study done for the Committee.

TABLE XXI

Enrolment Ratios (Percentage of Girls in relevant age group) by Stage of Education for Girls. Comparison between 1956-57 and 1968-69.

Union Territory/ State	Literacy Rate		Primary (I-V)		Middle (VI-VIII)	
	1961 (P.C.)	(1971)	1956-57	1968-69	1956-57	1968-69
1. Andhra Pradesh	12.03	15.65	43.5 (910)	60.0 (1590)	6.8	13.9 (198)
2. Assam (y)	17.11	18.68	45.5 (305)	56.4 (622)	12.0 (39)	22.3 (128)
3. Bihar	6.90	8.79	14.4 (355)	27.2 (1045)	1.7 (18)	6.4 (133)
4. Gujarat	19.10	24.59		62.7 (1086)		24.7 (220)
5. Maharashtra	16.76	25.95	48.5 (1526)*	71.0 (2245)	9.7 (256)*	26.6 (442)
6. Punjab	17.41	25.75	36.5 (375)@	56.9 (530)	10.3 (57)@	31.1 (141)
7. Haryana	9.21	14.68		37.4 (240)		20.8 (65)
8. J. & K.	4.26	9.10	9.2 (26)	43.0 (105)	4.0 (6)	24.4 (30)
9. Kerala	38.90	53.90	99.8 (947)	115.5 (1517)	35.9 (194)	61.0 (429)
10. Madhya Pradesh	6.73	10.82	17.1 (278)	30.6 (833)	2.8 (32)	10.9 (158)
11. Karnataka	14.19	20.74	44.2 (591)	72.0 (1365)	8.9 (95)	15.6 (158)
12. Nagaland	11.34	19.21	<	71.4 (20)	<	31.3 (5)
13. Orissa	8.65	13.75	18.5 (177)	46.6 (636)	1.7 (4)	9.1 (67)
14. Rajasthan	5.84	8.26	9.5 (103)	22.2 (380)	2.4 (14)	8.0 (71)
15. Tamil Nadu	18.17	26.83	49.0 (959)	88.9 (2038)	12.3 (135)	32.5 (416)
16. Uttar Pradesh	7.02	10.20	14.4 (584)	65.7 (3727)	3.3 (71)	11.2 (335)
17. West Bengal	16.98	22.08	50.8 (795)	57.0 (1701)	48.8 (118)	22.6 (350)
18. Delhi	42.55	47.64	76.7 (83)	78.7 (188)	38.1 (25)	70.8 (85)
19. Himachal Pradesh	9.49	20.04	24.5 (15)	57.2 (131)	5.4 (1)	22.3 (25)
20. Manipur	15.93	19.22	48.0 (18)	87.0 (67)	8.6 (2)	22.0 (9)
21. Tripura	10.19	20.55	38.4 (18)	57.1 (60)	9.1 (2)	25.5 (13)

Note :—Absolute numbers (in thousands) are given in brackets.

* Includes Gujarat.

@ Includes Haryana.

(<) Includes Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh.

(y) Includes Assam.

TABLE XXII

Enrolment Ratios (Percentages) By Stage of Education For Girls Comparison Between 1956-57 and 1968-69.

State/Union Territory.	Secondary and Higher secondary (ix & xi)		Vocational and Special courses		University and College General		Professional and special colleges.	
	1956-57	1968-69	1956-57	1968-69	1956-57	1968-69	1956-57	1968-69
1. Andhra Pradesh	2.2	6.8	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.09	0.007	0.03
2. Assam	3.9	13.6	0.08	0.21	0.04	0.17	0.001	0.01
3. Bihar	0.6	2.4	0.12	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.001	0.02
4. Gujarat	—	14.5	—	0.23	—	0.21	—	0.04
5. Maharashtra	4.0	13.5	0.46	13.47	0.09	0.22	0.016	0.10
6. Punjab	4.6	13.3	0.11	0.12	0.08	0.34	0.021	0.10
7. Haryana	—	7.4	—	0.07	—	0.18	—	0.14
8. J.&K.	2.2	8.5	—	0.01	—	0.26	—	0.03
9. Kerala	13.2	28.0	0.06	0.02	0.11	0.52	0.008	0.11
10. Madhya Pradesh	0.9	5.2	0.05	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.006	0.03
11. Karnataka	3.5	9.3	0.10	0.11	0.04	0.17	0.011	0.06
12. Nagaland	—	7.1	—	0.34	—	—	—	—
13. Orissa	0.6	3.1	0.21	0.04	0.01	0.05	0.001	0.01
14. Rajasthan	1.0	3.6	0.07	0.05	0.02	0.07	0.002	0.03
15. Tamil Nadu	4.2	17.0	0.06	0.03	0.02	0.17	0.004	0.09
16. Uttar Pradesh	1.7	3.9	0.03	0.02	0.05	0.21	0.005	0.03
17. West Bengal	4.6	10.0	0.31	0.22	0.16	0.52	0.020	0.07
18. Delhi	15.9	46.1	0.61	0.79	0.33	1.18	0.132	0.17
19. Himachal Pradesh	2.4	9.2	0.12	0.06	0.01	0.12	—	0.06
20. Manipur	4.1	11.1	0.53	0.55	0.03	0.36	—	—
21. Tripura	9.0	13.6	0.77	0.56	0.03	—	—	—
INDIA	3.0	9.1	0.14	1.30	0.05	0.19	0.008	0.06

6.60 A recent study of patterns of literacy has emphasised the importance of population composition in determining the literacy rate³⁷. For example, cities and regions with a high proportion of Muslims or Scheduled Castes and Tribes are marked by low literacy rates while those with relatively high percentage of Christians have a high literacy rate. While there is always a big gap in the literacy rates of urban and rural populations, broadly speaking Southern States have always maintained a higher literacy rate. It is interesting to note that the literacy of Kerala's rural population is higher than the country's city population as a whole.

6.61 Low Educational Development among Muslim Women:—Apart from the lower rate of literacy among Muslim women, our survey on the Status of Women in Minority Communities has definitely revealed that the number of Muslim women with no formal education continues to be very high even in those States which have otherwise progressed considerably in the development of women's education³⁸.

6.62 Slow Progress of Education among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes : The following tables indicate the very low level of educational development of women among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes :-

37. Kishan, Gopal, and Shyam, Madhav—“Patterns of City Literacy”—*Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. IX No. 20 May 18, 1974.

38. Vide Appendix II.

TABLE XXIII

Ranking of States for Each level of Education, according to Ranges of Enrolment Ratio of Girls. Comparison between 1956-57 and 1968-69

State/Union Territory	Literacy 1961	Primary 1971	1956-57	1968-69	1956-57	Middle 1968-69
1. Andhra Pradesh	2	2	2	3	1	1
2. Assam	2	2	2	3	1	2
3. Bihar	1	1	1	1	1	1
4. Gujarat	2	2	—	3	—	2
5. Maharashtra	2	3	2	3	1	2
6. Punjab	2	3	2	3	1	3
7. Haryana	1	2	—	2	—	2
8. J. & K.	1	1	1	2	1	2
9. Kerala	3	4	4	4	3	4
10. Madhya Pradesh	1	2	1	2	1	1
11. Karnataka	2	2	2	3	1	2
12. Nagaland	2	2	3	3	—	3
13. Orissa	1	2	1	2	1	1
14. Rajasthan	1	1	1	1	1	1
15. Tamil Nadu	2	3	2	4	1	3
16. Uttar Pradesh	1	2	1	3	1	1
17. West Bengal	2	2	3	3	4	2
18. Delhi	3	3	4	4	3	4
19. Himachal Pradesh	1	2	1	3	2	2
20. Manipur	2	2	2	4	1	2
21. Tripura	2	2	2	3	1	2

Note :—Ranks (in ascending order) used for different ranges of enrolment and literacy rates.

Literacy Rates : Rank 1 for less than 10 p.c.
 Rank 2 for 10 to less than 25 p.c.
 Rank 3 for 25 to less than 50 p.c.
 Rank 4 for 50 p.c. and above.

Enrolment Ratio

in Primary Classes : Rank 1 for less than 30 p.c.
 Rank 2 for 30 to less than 50 p.c.
 Rank 3 for 50 p.c. to less than 75 p.c.
 Rank 4 for 75 p.c. and above.

Enrolment Ratio

in Middle Classes : Rank 1 for less than 15 p.c.
 Rank 2 for 15 to less than 30 p.c.
 Rank 3 for 30 p.c. to less than 45 p.c.
 Rank 4 for 45 p.c. and above.

TABLE XXIV

Ranking of States For Each Level of Education According to Ranges of Enrolment Ratio of Girls Comparison Between 1956-57 And 1968-69.

State/Union Territory	Secondary & Higher Secondary		Educational		University & College General		Professional Special Colleges	
	1956-57	1968-69	1956-57	1968-69	1956-57	1968-69	1956-57	1968-69
	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
Andhra Pradesh	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Assam	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1
Bihar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Gujarat	—	2	—	2	—	2	—	2
Maharashtra	1	2	3	4	1	2	1	4
Punjab	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	4
Haryana	—	1	—	1	—	2	—	4
J. & K.	1	2	—	1	—	2	1	3
Kerala	1	4	1	1	1	4	1	4
Madhya Pradesh	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Karnataka	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	3
Nagaland	—	1	—	3	—	—	—	—
Orissa	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Rajasthan	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Tamil Nadu	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	4
Uttar Pradesh	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2
West Bengal	2	2	3	2	2	3	1	3
Delhi	2	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
Himachal Pradesh	1	2	1	1	1	1	—	3
Manipur	1	2	4	4	1	2	—	—
Tripura	1	2	4	4	1	1	—	2

Note : Ranks (in ascending order) used for different ranges of enrolment and literacy rates.

Column 2 is for vocational and professional education—junior education—junior level i.e. school standard.

Column 4—similar courses of university standard.

- (i) Literacy Rate : Rank 1 for less than 10 p.c.
Rank 2 for 10 to less than 25 p.c.
Rank 3 for 25 to less than 50 p.c.
Rank 4 for 50 p.c. and above.
- (ii) Enrolment ratio in H.S. and Secondary classes. Rank 1 for less than 7.5 p.c.
Rank 2 for 7.5 to less than 25 p.c.
Rank 3 for 25 to less than 50 p.c.
Rank 4 for 50 p.c. and above.
- (iii) For University enrolments as p.c. of all female population. Rank 1 for less than 15 per cent.
Rank 2 for 15 to less than 30 p.c.
Rank 3 for 30 to less than 50 p.c.
Rank 4 for 50 p.c. and above.
- (iv) For Vocation (school standard) enrolment relative to female population. Ranks denote same range as for University
- (v) Professional Enrolment as p.c. of female population. Rank 1 for less than .03
Rank 2 for .03 to less than .05
Rank 3 for .05 to less than .08
Rank 4 for .08 or above.

TABLE XXV
Percentage Distribution of Literates and Illiterates among Members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, India 1961.

<i>Literates/ Illiterates</i>		<i>Scheduled Castes</i>			<i>Scheduled Tribes</i>		
		<i>Total</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
Literates	Persons	10.27	8.89	21.78	8.54	8.17	22.41
	Males	16.95	15.05	32.16	13.84	13.38	30.43
	Females	3.28	2.52	10.02	3.17	2.91	13.45
Illiterates	Persons	89.73	91.11	78.22	91.46	91.83	77.59
	Males	83.05	84.95	67.84	86.16	86.62	69.57
	Females	96.72	97.48	89.98	96.83	97.09	86.55

Source : Bose, Ashish. *Studies in India's Urbanization 1901—1971* pp. 298-99.

TABLE XXVI
Distribution of 1,000 Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Males and Females by Educational Levels, India, 1961

<i>Educational Levels</i>	<i>Scheduled Males</i>		<i>Caste Females</i>		<i>Scheduled Males</i>		<i>Tribe Females</i>	
	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
Total	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000
Illiterates	849	678	975	900	866	696	971	865
Total literates	151	322	25	100	134	304	29	135
Literates with- out educational levels.	113	206	20	67	99	166	23	78
Primary or Junior Basic.	35	98	5	31	34	117	6	49
Matriculation or above.	3	18	N	2	1	21	N	8

Source : Ibid. pp. 298-299.

TABLE XXVII
Educational Imbalance at the District level literates as per cent of total population

		<i>Persons</i>		<i>Female</i>
1.	<i>Andhra Pradesh</i>	24.56		15.65
	Hyderabad	39.91		29.57
	Adilabad	14.14		6.48
2.	<i>Uttar Pradesh</i>	21.64		10.18
	Dehradun	45.06		33.85
	Basti	15.57		4.85
3.	<i>Madhya Pradesh</i>	22.12		10.84
	Indore	44.35		31.42
	Bastar*	9.64		4.09
	Rural	8.11	<i>Males</i>	2.92
	Urban	49.21	13.31	36.98
4.	<i>Orissa</i>	26.12	59.55	13.75
	Cuttack	36.37		22.49
	Koraput*	10.57		4.71
5.	<i>Rajasthan</i>	18.79		8.26
	Ajmer	30.19		18.18
	Barmer	10.02		2.70
6.	<i>Bihar</i>	19.79		8.49
	Patna	29.77		15.04
	Champaran	14.06		5.44

*Predominantly inhabited by Scheduled Tribes.

6.63 The influence of these sociological factors on education makes it clear that the use of national or state averages in assessing educational progress are not always meaningful. The table on pre pages illustrate the wide gap that characterises literacy development of districts or regions within the States which we have identified as being particularly backward in their attention to the development of women's education :

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

Co-Education

6.65 The imbalances just pointed out make it difficult to put forward a set pattern of recommendations. Besides the general problems of education, there are certain specific issues on which it is not feasible to insist upon a uniform pattern for the whole country. One such example is co-education. This issue has been examined by various Committees and Commissions.

6.66 In 1953, the Secondary Education Commission observed that there could be no hard and fast policy with regard to co-education as social attitudes differed very greatly in this respect. The Commission, therefore, recommended :

- i) opening of separate schools wherever possible as they were likely to offer better opportunities for physical, social and mental development of the girls;
- ii) girls whose parents had no objection should be free to use co-educational facilities in boys' schools. The Commission, however, prescribed specific conditions in the way of mixed staff, teaching of subjects which appeal to girls such as home craft, music, drawing, etc. and separate facilities for co-curricular activities for such institutions.

In 1959, the National Committee on Women's Education recommended that co-education should be adopted as a general policy at the primary stage, but as a transitional measure, separate schools may be provided in places where there was a strong public demand for them and enrolment of girls was large enough to justify separate schools. At the middle and secondary stages more co-educational schools should be started, subject to the condition of adequate attention being paid to special needs and requirements of girls. Separate secondary schools for girls should, however, be provided specially in rural areas. The Committee while recommending alternatives in areas where co-education was not acceptable, suggested efforts to remove difficulties and apprehensions against co-education by providing right type of staff, encouraging parental visits and the appointment of women teachers and women heads in co-educational institutions.

6.67 In 1962, the Committee on the Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls admitted the division of academic opinion on co-education and recommended the following :-

- i) adoption of co-education as the general pattern at the elementary stage with a vigorous propaganda to overcome resistance to co-education. As a transitional measure, however, separate primary or middle schools might be provided in case of a large demand;
- ii) full freedom to management and parents to establish co-educational or separate institutions at the secondary and collegiate stage ;
- iii) appointment of women teachers in all educational institutions at the secondary and university stage which are ordinarily meant for boys. Similarly some male teachers should also be appointed in secondary schools and colleges meant for girls, removing the existing ban on such appointments.

6.68 In the course of our investigation we found continued evidence of this divergence of views regarding co-education. According to our survey, as many as 57.56% regard absence of separate schools as a reason for not sending girls to schools. Some persons consider that co-education may lead to immoral behaviour. In Punjab, we were told that Swami Dayanand Saraswati had prescribed a distance of at least 5 miles between boys' and girls'

Schools. Among those communities which observe purdah there is naturally a demand for separate schools. Meos in Haryana and Rajasthan, the Maplahs in Kerala, a large number of Muslims in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh etc. fall in this category. It is interesting to note, however, that there was no demand for separate schools in Kashmir, although the majority of the population of that State is Muslim. In certain areas we found the resistance to co-education to be higher among the Hindus than Muslims. For instance, in the village Bankheri in Madhya Pradesh, not a single girl from upper-caste Hindu families was attending school even at the primary level, because there was no separate school for them, while in a village with a pre-dominantly Muslim population in Bihar Sharif there was no objection to girls attending a co-educational school upto middle level. Another respect in which our findings have been somewhat different from findings of earlier Committees is regarding the variation in urban and rural attitudes to co-education. We have found the resistance to be more of an urban middle class phenomenon. One of the reasons for this is increasing indiscipline and rowdyism in institutions for secondary and higher education. The under-Privileged classes do not seem to have such objection to co-education. In Himachal Pradesh the rural population expressed surprise at our question. In their view, if boys and girls could work together in fields there could be no reason why they could not study in same schools.

6.69 The advocates of co-education support it not only from the point of view of economy and efficiency but some of them also claim that the performance of students is better in co-educational schools especially if the sex ratio is even³⁹. Our survey of official opinion shows a clear preference for co-education as indicated by the following table. The significant point to be noted is that the support for co-education, particularly at the primary and middle levels, comes not only from the Directors of Public Instruction and Principals but from field staff working in rural areas such as Block Development Officers and Mukhya Sevikas. It should also be noted that the support from this last category is considerably reduced at the level of secondary education. During our tours we found that a large number of persons are opposed to co-education at the secondary stage because they feel that adolescent youth should be segregated.

TABLE XXVIII
Views of officials regarding co-education at different levels.

<i>Level.</i>	<i>T.No. of persons</i>	<i>Strongly in favour</i>	<i>Gene- rally in favour</i>	<i>No. objec- tion</i>	<i>Do not like</i>	<i>Strongly oppose</i>	<i>No. Res- ponse</i>
Primary	917 (100.0)	319 (56.6)	174 (19.0)	175 (19.1)	9 (1.0)	4 (0.4)	36 (3.9)
Middle	917 (100.0)	327 (35.7)	262 (28.6)	211 (23.0)	62 (6.8)	18 (1.9)	37 (4.0)
Secondary	917 (100.0)	142 (15.5)	186 (20.3)	198 (21.6)	225 (24.5)	115 (12.5)	51 (5.6)
University	917 (100.0)	155 (16.9)	170 (18.5)	238 (26.0)	174 (19.0)	114 (12.4)	66 (7.2)
Polytechnic and Vocational	917 (100.0)	151 (15.4)	156 (16.9)	245 (26.7)	184 (20.1)	122 (13.3)	69 (7.6)
Professional and Technical	917 (100.0)	174 (19.0)	181 (19.7)	258 (28.1)	130 (14.2)	96 (10.5)	78 (8.5)

39. Findings of a study by B.K. Nayar, Secretary, Indian National Science Academy—1968.

6.70 We have been told repeatedly that boys' schools are better equipped, have more choice of subjects and have better academic standards. In one boys' school in Aligarh district there were 30 girls studying even when there was a separate school for them in the same vicinity. The quality of teaching was poor in the girls' school and therefore, the parents preferred to send them to boys' school. According to the Bihar study⁴⁰ "most responses underlined lack of required teaching facilities as the reason for women going to men-predominated educational institutions". In other States also similar opinions were voiced.

6.71 Karnataka is the only State in the whole of India where all schools at the primary level (I-IV) are separate for girls; but from class V onwards co-education is the norm. The official explanation for this policy was, that separate schools made it easier to enrol and retain girls for 4 years. Once parents got used to the idea, they agreed more readily to their daughters' continuing their studies further. The Committee is not in a position to assess the impact of this policy.

Contrary to the recommendations of various national Committees, some states e.g. Bihar, have definitely adopted a policy against co-education to the extent of discouraging it.

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

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

Curricula

6.73 The need for a separate curricula for girls has been a controversial issue since the 19th century and reflects the ambivalence regarding the purpose of women's education. It is argued that :

- (i) society assigns different roles to men and women. Since women are expected to be good wives and mothers their education must be adopted to these roles;
- (ii) the average school life of girls being shorter than that of boys the courses for girls must also be shorter;
- (iii) the intellectual inferiority, lack of aptitude and physical weakness of girls call for simpler and easier courses of study;
- (iv) the qualities to be inculcated in girls have to be different from those of boys so that they do not become bold and independent in spirit.

6.74 These arguments received official support and became a part of the Government's policy towards women's education. Starting with the Hunter Commission of 1882, most Government committees on education accepted the validity of these arguments. This position remained even after independence and resulted in certain subjects being regarded as specially suitable for girls. Home/Domestic Science, needle work and fine arts thus came to be regarded as exclusively girls' subjects in schools. Mathematics and science on the other hand were regarded as too difficult and unnecessary for girls and were, therefore, kept

40. Supra n. 27.

optional. Consequently, majority of girls' schools did not provide the facilities for teaching of science and mathematics.

6.75 The pace of socio-economic change, the new attitude towards women's roles in society which came with the freedom movement, and the outstanding success of some girls in subjects like mathematics and science were, however, offering serious challenges to these established views. The National Committee on Women's Education (1959) taking note of these changes, recommended common curricula for boys and girls, with no differentiation on the basis of sex. Following this, the Committee on the Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls (1964), examined the whole problem comprehensively and rejected the traditional view that 'mere biological difference of sex created different physical, intellectual and psychological characteristics between men and women' which 'necessitated the provision of differentiated curricula for them.' In their opinion, the differences which men and women exhibit are the result of social conditioning, expressed through:—

- “(i) the differential pattern of division of labour between the sexes ;
- (ii) the stereo-types of 'masculine' and 'feminine' personalities to which both men and women are expected to conform ; and
- (iii) the unequal social position accorded to the two sexes.”

The Committee therefore recommended a common course, at all levels, and advised the inclusion of home science in the core curriculum for boys and girls upto the end of the middle stage to counter-act the influences of traditional attitudes which regard certain tasks as 'manly' and others as 'womanly'. The Education Commission (1966) endorsed these recommendations.

6.76 Our investigation indicates that this new trend of thought is now widely accepted. According to our survey, 69.82% of the respondents agree that girls should get the same type of education as boys.

6.77 In spite of this marked change, however, a demand for differential curricula comes from parents whose sole object in educating girls is to improve their prospects in the matrimonial market. These parents often discourage girls from taking up 'difficult' subjects. Sometimes 'difficult subjects' require coaching and the parents are not prepared to spend 'that extra' on the girls, while for the boys 'it has to be done'.

6.78 The number of girls taking up science and mathematics is steadily increasing. In our tours we found girls very much interested in science subjects. In reply to our specific question, many of them expressed a desire for science to be made compulsory up to high school. Quite a few wanted to study subjects which would give them a larger perspective. In a school in Madhya Pradesh they wanted 'general knowledge' and 'news' to be made part of the curriculum.

6.79 In spite of the recommendation of the Education Commission, many States still continue to prescribe different curricula for boys and girls at the school level. This has had an adverse effect particularly on the teaching of mathematics to girls.⁴¹ Many girls' schools still make no provision for the teaching of science subjects. This has resulted in a lack of adequate number of women teachers in these subjects. We found in some schools science being taught by teachers who had never studied science themselves.

6.80 Home Science has for long been emphasised as a subject most suited for girls, and a large majority of girls take up this course. We are not against the teaching of home science but we feel that the courses now current in this subject require major revision. In our opinion, the present pattern of uniformity in these courses neglects the environmental factors and availability of local resources. Introducing these dimensions would make them more relevant and realistic. In one school we visited, the lesson in progress was how to decorate a room. There were two styles of decoration—"Deshi" and "Videshi". On enquiring, the girls told us that in 'Videshi' style the room should have a sofa set etc., but they were not taught how to decorate it in 'Deshi' style.

This course if revised and developed with proper scientific foundations, would be suitable for both boys and girls and meet the needs of general as well as vocational education.

41. Many Boards of Secondary Education still permit girls to take a limited course in mathematics, e.g., home mathematics, or arithmetic and domestic science etc., in lieu of the compulsory mathematics prescribed for boys.

For example, cooking should include knowledge of nutrition, dietetics, canning and food preservation etc.

6.81 We recommend :

- (i) There should be a common course of general education for both sexes till the end of class X, all courses being open to boys and girls.
- (ii) At the primary stage, simple needle craft, music and dancing should be taught to both sexes.
- (iii) From the middle stage, differences may be permitted under work experience.
- (iv) In class XI—XII girls should have full opportunity to choose vocational and technical courses according to local conditions, needs and aptitudes.
- (v) At the university stage there is a need to introduce more relevant and useful courses for all students.

Pre-Primary Schools

6.82 Attempts to reduce inequalities in educational opportunities must begin early if they are to have any impact. A child who has attended a pre-primary school is better adjusted to the school environment. It has been found that adequate attention at this stage can help to reduce the problem of wastage and stagnation in the first two years of primary school. It positively helps the children to overcome their environmental disadvantages. It is the best time for socialisation and inculcating egalitarian values in the children as they are unaware of differences of caste, class, creed or sex and are unhampered by social inhibitions or taboos.

6.83 We were particularly impressed by the achievement in this respect of the 'balwadis' in the rural areas. The children in these institutions come from all classes of the rural population and mix freely in an atmosphere of happy co-operation. As there is no resistance to sending girls to these institutions, they also help to get parents accustomed to the idea of continuing the schooling of girls. We feel that these institutions can make a real contribution to the changing of social attitudes in the rural areas.

6.84 Apart from the benefit that these institutions can bring to the very young, they serve another useful function, namely, relieving the mothers of small children for other work, and increasing the chances of schooling of older girls by releasing them from the responsibility of looking after the siblings.

6.85 We therefore recommend :

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

Universalisation of education for the age group 6-14

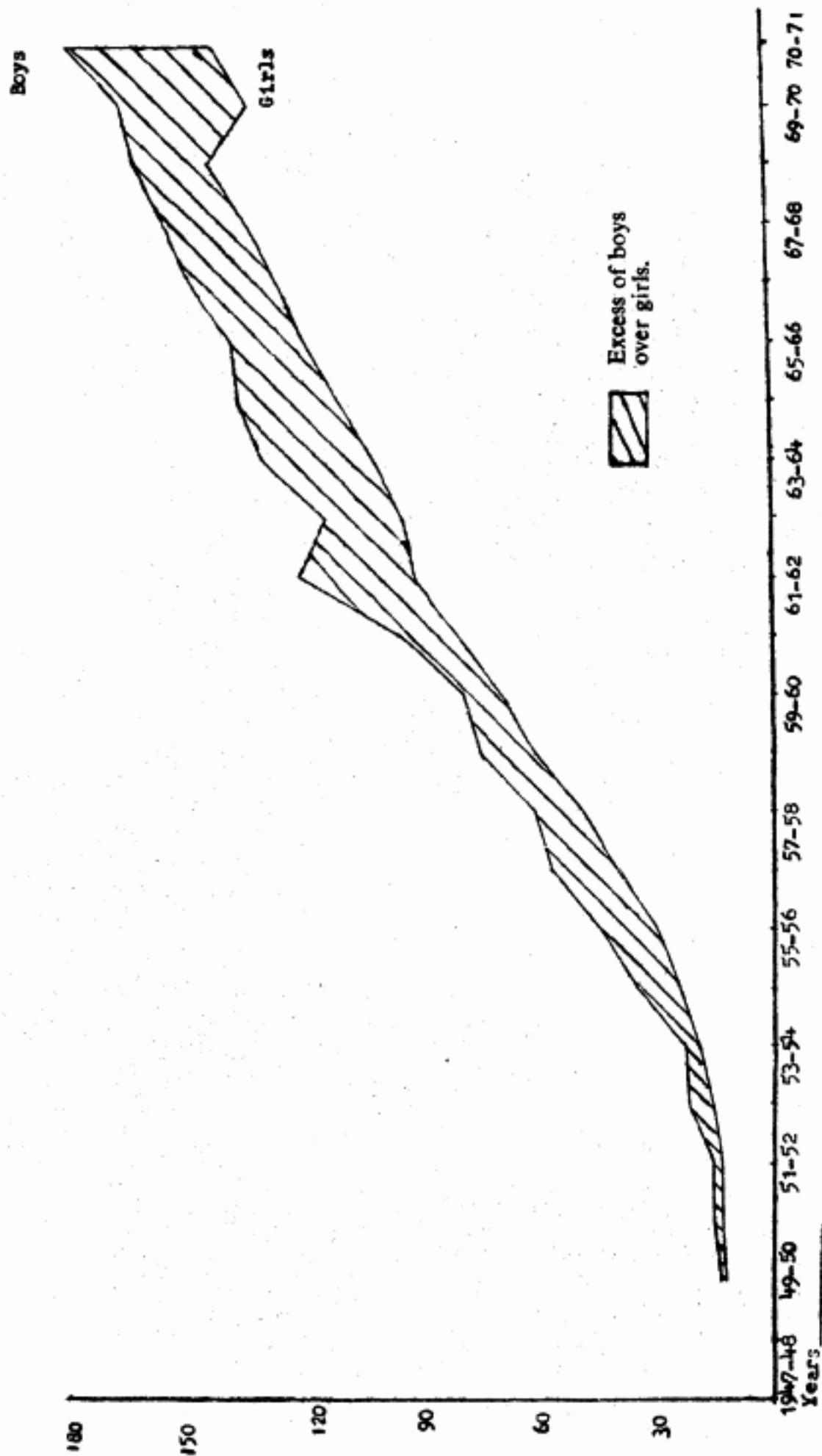
6.86 Primary:—The problems of girls' education at this stage are mainly of accessibility of schools, enrolment and retention. There are still many areas where new primary schools need to be established. Many of the unserved villages are small and scattered, while some villages have more than one school, a position which will have to be rationalised in the interest of economy and efficiency. Though complex and difficult the magnitude of the problem is not large and it can be solved by planned and determined efforts.

6.87 We recommend :—

- (i) Provision of primary schools within walking distance from the home of every child within the next 5 years.
- (ii) Establishment of ashram or residential schools to serve clusters of villages scattered in difficult terrains. Where this is not immediately possible, peripatetic schools may be provided for the time being.
- (iii) Provision of mobile schools for children of nomadic tribes, migrant labour and construction workers.

Chart—X

Enrolment at the Pre-Primary level (All India)



Source : Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

- (iv) Sustained propaganda by all types of persons, preferably women—officials and non-officials, social and political workers, to bring every girl into school in Class I preferably at the age of 6. They should visit local schools and involve parents and community leaders in order to promote the schooling of girls, particularly in backward areas.
- (v) Provision of incentives to prevent drop-outs. Since poverty is the major cause of drop-outs the most effective incentive, in our opinion, is the provision of mid-day meals. The rate of children passing the primary level has definitely gone up in States which have introduced mid-day meals. In Kerala, which has the highest literacy rate among women, this provision is one of the major factors for the enrolment and retention of children in schools today. In reply to our questionnaire,⁴² the majority has given highest priority to this incentive. The other important incentives which require to be provided to needy children are free school uniforms, scholarships or stipends and free supply of books and other study material. For girls particularly the lack of adequate clothing is a great deterrent to attending schools. For schools which do not prescribe any uniform some provision of clothing is necessary.
- (vi) Special incentives for areas where enrolment of girls is low. This will need to be worked out according to local conditions. We suggest special awards or recognition to the community, teachers, students etc.
- (vii) At least 50% of teachers at this stage should be women.
- (viii) Provision of at least two teachers in all schools, and conversion of the existing single-teacher ones as early as possible.
- (ix) Developing a system of part-time education for girls who cannot attend school on a full time basis. This system should provide education to girls at a time convenient to them.
- (x) Adoption of the multiple entry system for girls who could not attend school earlier or had to leave before becoming functionally literate.⁴³
- (xi) Provision of additional space in schools so that girls can bring their younger brothers and sisters to be looked after, either by the girls themselves in turn, or by some local women.⁴⁴

6.88 Middle :—Recommendations made for the primary stage are applicable to middle schools as well.⁴⁵ There is a great paucity of educational facilities at this level. We would like to reiterate opening of schools and greater flexibility in admission procedure, to help girls to complete their schooling.

6.89 Sex Education :—During our tours we tried to elicit opinion on the question of imparting sex education to girls. We asked teachers in particular to give us their views on the issue, both as teachers and mothers of young daughters. While the large majority agreed on the necessity of such instruction, most of them doubted their own ability to handle it. They also felt that such instruction would be totally impracticable in co-educational schools. We feel that the matter needs to be carefully planned by experts.

6.90 We recommend*—

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

6.91 Secondary : The gap between boys and girls is the highest at the secondary stage. At the same time, secondary education is becoming increasingly the minimum qualification for

42. Op cit. N. 30

43. Infra para 6. 106.

44. Supra paras 6.84 & 85(ii).

45. Except for peripatetic and single teacher schools.

* Smt. Lakshmi Raghuramaiah did not agree with these recommendations.

most employment, both in the tertiary and the secondary sector, as well as for most professional training. Since very few girls manage to complete secondary school, this insistence debar them from most vocational training.

6.92 We recommend :—

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

6.93 General Recommendations :

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

6.94 Higher Education : The problems at the level of higher education are general and require reform of the system to make it more relevant and responsive to the needs of society. The progress of women in this sector with all its limitations has been relatively satisfactory in comparison with the position in school education and we have no special recommendations to make.

6.95 It is, however, necessary to discuss one issue which is very often raised in this context. It is argued that a large proportion of the expenditure incurred on the higher education of girls is wasted because many of them get married and do not use the knowledge and the skills they acquire for social purposes. This argument is also used to make out a case for curtailing the opportunities now open to women in higher education. We do not agree with this view. We believe that the spread of higher education among women, whether general or professional, is still restricted, and that, for the needs of a modern society, there is need to expand it considerably. We also believe that an educated woman does become a better citizen and that the benefit of her education goes to enrich the life of her family. If her talents and skills are not fully utilised today in work outside the home, the responsibility is of the society which does not provide adequate opportunities for such women to be of greater social use. The proper policy would be to see that their talent is fully utilised for social and national development.

6.96 We therefore recommend :—

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

6.97 Non-formal Education : The greatest problem in women's education in India today is how to provide some basic education to the overwhelming majority who have remained outside the reach of the formal system, because of their age and social responsibilities as well as the literacy gap. The large majority of them are illiterate or semi-literate. Out of every 100 women in the 15-25 age group, about 7 are in some educational institution, about 18 are dropouts from the system and 75 are illiterate. If national plans for development have to make any headway, then it is imperative to increase the social effectiveness of this most significant group of young women, even if we cannot do so for the still older group. Our review has indicated the impossibility of educating them through any kind of formal institutionalised process. Apart from the prohibitive cost that such an attempt would involve, a formal system, by its very nature and pattern of organisation is limited to cater to the educational

needs of only those who enter it formally and are able to stay in it for a considerable length of time. It is essentially designed for young, full-time students who are not called upon to shoulder any other major responsibility of life during their period to study.

6.98 The Government of India's efforts in the field of adult literacy and adult education since independence have been largely based on a policy of encouraging voluntary agencies to undertake this task with supporting funds and guidance from the Government. The declared objectives of these programmes were :—

- familiarising the masses with the democratic process ;
- activating large scale co-operation in the building up of a welfare state ;
- imparting rudimentary literacy skills as a means for self-emancipation, self-fulfilment and social justice⁴⁶.

These objectives, however laudable, are extremely difficult to translate into concrete terms which would be within the grasp of both the agents and recipients of such education.

6.99 The Fourth Plan introduced a programme of functional literacy built round farmers' training in selected districts where high yielding varieties of crops were being cultivated. According to the estimates of the Ministry of Education, about 3 lakh persons received this training during the Fourth Plan, "out of whom women may be estimated at approximately 30%". This programme will be continued in the Fifth Plan, the target being 1.3 million persons. The Ministry 'hopes' that women will constitute 40 to 50% of this group. It is also proposed to extend this programme to dry farming, small scale farming, family planning etc. Apart from this a programme of functional literacy for adult women is being formulated by the Department of Social Welfare. The curriculum will include training in vocational and occupational skills in areas like kitchen gardening, food cultivation, poultry keeping, animal husbandry and household arts like sewing, knitting etc. along with home management, child care and civic education. A similar programme for non-student youth (age group 6-14 and 15-25) draws a sharp distinction between men and women—emphasising family life education, health, nutrition, child care and craft and self-employment for the latter.

6.100 In our opinion, these are fields which can no longer be limited to women. Changes in family life, food habits, the control of the family, all require joint efforts of men and women and continuing this kind of artificial division between men and women may defeat the purpose of these programmes. As for vocational and occupational skills, the needs of women are perhaps greater than those of men. While we do not deny the value of crafts, women's need for vocational training cannot be limited to them. The skills will differ according to the industrial and market potentials of regions and it is imperative to relate the training to local needs, resources and employment possibilities, instead of adopting an artificial sex-selective approach.

6.101 We fear, however, that such ad-hoc approaches, through a multiplicity of programmes being implemented by various governmental agencies, will lead to overlapping, lack of coordination, and ultimately to wastage of resources on administrative machinery. The problem, though of great magnitude, is an integrated one, and cannot be solved by these short term programmes. While they may bring education to a few thousands, all the time lakhs are being added to the ranks of illiterates and dropouts. What is needed is a continuous process, not short-term intensive courses as undertaken under existing programmes of adult education.

6.102 A formal system, designed for the young, can use certain compulsive, corrective and didactic methods which would be inapplicable to a non-formal system where the majority of students would be adults, with experience of problems of life and little time to spare for being educated. Such a system would, therefore, need to have certain definite characteristics, different from a formal system. In our opinion —

- (a) It must be useful in such a way that the usefulness is immediately perceived by the recipients ;
- (b) It must be related to specific areas of experience familiar to the students, since educational material totally alien to their world of experience would pose enormous obstacles to understanding and interest ;

46. Deleon, Asher — *Informal Education* — Government of India, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1973.

- (c) It should aim to develop skills to acquire information and to apply it to real problems, and to understand events and happenings in the immediate environment.

6.103 The basic requirement for such a system, is a reduction of the psychological gap between those who teach and those who learn. A feeling of identity of interests and common experience are vital for such a system to overcome obstacles of low motivation and apathy. It follows that the system should be a part of the community, involving a large proportion of its members both as teachers and as learners. In our opinion it is imperative to use all available educational resources in the community for this purpose, rather than import educational 'agents' from outside. The school teacher, the doctor, the ANM Auxiliary Nurse Midwife, the agricultural extension worker and the successful farmer, the mechanic, the welfare worker, the local political representatives, and the handful of educated persons who either live in or come to the village periodically, all should be able to contribute to this programme

6.104 Any attempt to professionalise this system will, in our opinion, defeat the purpose. The entry of professionals is likely to lead to development of (the limiting, selective and) a rigid approach, with fixed curricula and class room procedures which generally result in increasing distance and distinction between those who teach and those who learn. This has happened frequently in adult education programmes, when they develop into 'courses'. Besides, the prohibitive cost that such professionalisation would involve, would inevitably limit its operation to a few selected centres. The teachers in a non-formal system must have other skills of direct relevance to the problems of the community. Without this kind of community involvement such programmes are likely to lack stability and continuity.

6.105 *Contents of the system* :— While it is necessary to guard against any fixed or uniform curricula, certain broad areas could be identified. The object of the system should be to provide access to information and use of information for better participation in social life. Literacy would certainly have to form the core of the package, but the experience of various literacy programmes in India and abroad indicate that it is necessary to make it instrumental or 'functional' rather than the end object. It has also been suggested that in the first phase of this programme the main emphasis should be on reading and basic arithmetical skills⁴⁷.

6.106 The system that we have in mind is a continuous programme of learning useful things, in which members of the entire community can participate in their spare time, and where the barriers that now divide the educated from the uneducated become irrelevant. Though primarily meant for adolescents and adults, the system should not exclude the young, particularly all those who for economic or social reasons have been denied any formal education. Some of the latter may even use this as a stepping stone to enter the formal system if our recommendation regarding multiple entry is accepted.

6.107 The system will need a community group to organise and sponsor it. The panchayats and the women's panchayats that we recommend in chapter VII, would appear to be the ideal bodies for this purpose. Government's role should be limited to providing technical guidance and advice, and enabling government functionaries at the local level to participate in the programme, apart from supportive assistance in the form of literature and reading material. The system can make an impact only if the access to information is available through reading material and equipment. Development of basic libraries, in villages and the slum areas of towns, is an imperative necessity for this purpose. *We therefore recommend concentration of governmental effort on providing this infra-structure suggested in the discussion on the problem of formal education.*

Equality of Sexes as a Major Value to be inculcated through the Educational Process :

6.108 The deep foundations of the inequality of the sexes are built in the minds of men and women through a socialisation process which continues to be extremely powerful. Right from their earliest years, boys and girls are brought up to know that they are different from each other and this differentiation is strengthened in every way possible—through language forms, modes of behaviour of labour etc. They begin to learn very early what is proper or not proper for boys and girls and all attempts at deviation are noticed, discouraged and sometimes punished. The sissy and the tomboy are equal objects of derision. There is

47. This is the finding on evaluation of various UNESCO-sponsored literacy projects in Turkey, Iran and Tanzania : Oxenham, J — Adult Literacy : Recent Experience (xeroxed) — Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex.

nothing wrong in this if it were merely a question of distinction. But it soon gets inextricably tied up with the traditional concepts of the roles of men and women and their mutual relationships which are based on inequality. The process of indoctrination affects the development of individual personalities.

6.109 The only institution which can counteract the effect of this process is the educational system. If education is to promote equality for women, it must make a deliberate, planned and sustained effort so that the new value of equality of the sexes, can replace the traditional value system of inequality. The educational system today has not even attempted to undertake this responsibility. In fact, the schools reflect and strengthen the traditional prejudices of inequality through their curricula, the classification of subjects on the basis of sex and the unwritten code of conduct enforced on their pupils.

6.110 We received criticisms of school textbooks in this respect in many places. In Manipur, and Andhra Pradesh in particular, a number of women were highly critical of the inclusion of stories of Sita and Savitri, as ideals of womanhood, since they tend to perpetuate the traditional values regarding the subordinate and dependent role of women. This result in the development of social attitudes among even many educated persons; men and women, who accept women's dependent and unequal status as a natural order of society.

6.111 Such a system of values is contradictory to the goals set before this nation by the Constitution. The concomitant of equality is responsibility and unless this is admitted by men and women equally, the desired transformation of our society will receive a severe set back. This is one area where a major change is needed in the context and organisation of education. Educators must admit their responsibility and bring about this much needed change in the values of the younger generation.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL STATUS

7.1. Political status of Women can be defined as the degree of equality and freedom enjoyed by women in the shaping and sharing of power and in the value given by society to this role of women.

7.2. The Indian Constitution guarantees political equality through the institution of adult franchise and Article 15 which prohibits discrimination inter-alia on grounds of sex. It should be kept in mind that this recognition of political equality of women was a radical departure not only from the socio-cultural norms prevailing in traditional India but also in the context of the political evolution of even most advanced countries at that date. With the exception of the socialist countries, no other State in the world had accepted women's equality as a matter of course.

7.3 The United States and the United Kingdom granted franchise to women only after World War I, after decades of struggle by their women. Most other countries, Eastern or Western, conceded it only after World War II. Japan granted franchise to women in 1946, China in 1949. The exceptions were Thailand and the Philippines which granted a limited franchise, similar to the Indian case, in 1932 and 1933 respectively. Amongst the west European countries, France granted franchise to women in 1945, Switzerland in 1971.

7.4 In the case of India, the two major forces which acted as a catalyst in the achievement of political equality of women were the national movement¹ and the leadership of Gandhi, who declared himself to be "uncompromising in the matter of women's rights."

"Women must have votes and an equal legal status. But the problem does not end there. It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberations of the nation."²

The Pre-Gandhian Period

7.5. The 19th century reform movement and the spread of education among the women had definitely initiated the process of improving the status of women. However, this process was essentially limited to improving the position of women within the traditional family structure. Prevalent social attitudes, particularly among the upper and middle classes, continued to regard domestic life as woman's sole occupation.

7.6. Nevertheless there was a minority of women who voluntarily participated in both social welfare and revolutionary movements. They were active in the cause of women's education, welfare of the weaker sections in society and relief to distressed persons during emergencies like floods, droughts, famines, etc. A still smaller group became involved in the revolutionary movement, actively participating as couriers, distributing literature, looking after various institutions and risking police repression, imprisonment, and even capital punishment. In both these cases, the women received a certain degree of support from their families in such activities, either overt or covert. Most of them came from the affluent or middle class families in urban areas. The social attitude to this first awakening was one of reserved acceptance, extending sometimes to admiration and pride in the heroism displayed by some of these women. But it by no means amounted to accepting this as a norm for women's role and behaviour in society.

7.7. The 19th century reformers professed concern for the low status of women, but their efforts were concentrated towards improving women's position within the family, for the purpose of strengthening the family as the basic unit of social organisation. Raising the

1. "It was the spirit of nationalism and the exigencies of the nationalist struggle that accounts for women's progress in South East Asia, and there was a direct correlation between the two phenomena". Phadnis, Urmila and Malini, Indira (Ed) "Status of Women in Selected Countries" (unpublished Volume prepared for the Committee on the Status of Women in India, 1974) p-92.

2. Mahatma Gandhi in *Young India*, 17.10.1929

status of women was seen only as granting her the right to property, re-marriage after widowhood, abolition of child marriage and the right to education.

7.8 A characteristic of this movement was its elitist approach. Most of the demands were relevant only for a limited section of women i.e. the upper and middle classes. They did not represent the problem affecting the majority of women. The social change envisaged was a limited one of transformation within the system, rather than that of the system³.

7.9 The turn of the 19th century witnessed some results of the dissemination of education to women, however restricted, and the impact of the ideas of the reformers in the changes taking place in the status of women. This was manifested in the emergence of women's organisations, when women entered public life in larger numbers than before. This period saw the birth of organisations such as The Women's Indian Association (this was later merged in the All India Women's Conference), the National Council for Women and The All India Women's Conference. It also opened a new chapter in the women's movement for equality. A demand for women's franchise was initiated in 1917 when a deputation of Indian women led by Sarojini Naidu, presented to the British Parliament a demand for the enfranchisement of women on the basis of equality with men.

7.10 The constitutional reforms of 1919 left the matter to the discretion of the elected legislatures in the provinces and finally the Reforms Act of 1921 enfranchised a very small fraction of the Indian population including women. This right to vote, however, was subject to certain reservations: women could vote only if they possessed qualifications of wifehood, property and education. These qualifications, apart from making the woman's right dependent on her marital status, in fact restricted it to an infinitesimal minority of women.

7.11 The gap between the radical nature of the demand and actual achievement was a characteristic of the period till independence. It represented not only the reluctance of the foreign rulers to accept the democratic aspirations of the people, but also their own political view regarding the limited role of women in Indian society. They could not believe that Indian society would ever regard women as equal partners of men. Nor could they expect women to act independently of the men, as a separate political force. Therefore, women did not feature in the framework of representation of classes, communities, and interests, which was offered by the colonial authorities as the solution of the Indian question.

The Gandhian Era

7.12 A transformation of the attitude to women was precipitated by the Gandhian view regarding women's role in a social revolution and reconstruction.

"Women is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the minutest details of the activities of man, and she has the same right of freedom and liberty as he... By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have."⁴

"Since resistance in satyagraha is offered through self-suffering. It is a weapon pre-eminently open to women She can become the leader in satyagraha which does not require the learning that books give but does require the stout heart that comes from suffering and faith."⁵

7.13 Responding to his call, women different communities and all walks of life came out to join the struggle—as political campaigners, joining protest marches and demonstrations, as constructive workers, participating in and often taking charge of the village reconstruction programmes, as workers in the cause of social and economic justice working for the removal of untouchability and other forms of social oppression. The highly educated and the not so well educated joined hands to spread literacy and develop self-reliance among the people. Women who had spent their lives behind purdah came out to fight orthodoxy, superstition and communal separatism.

3. In this context it becomes imperative to mention the only notable exception who stood for more radical measures. Agarkar believed that women should cease to be confined to the home and take up professions per with men. This was remarkable in an age which made an absolute distinction between service to the home and service to the community. (Liberal Thought in Maharashtra — unpublished thesis by D.N. Vora — Poona University).

4. Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India*, 26.2.1918

5. Mahatma Gandhi, *Young India*, 14.1.1932 and 24.2.1940.

7.14 Social legitimisation for such activity was not forthcoming at first but the women joined the men to fight in the movement. Events proved that without the cooperation of women the freedom struggle would not have been so successful. Under Mahatma Gandhi's direction the civil disobedience movement and the salt satyagraha saw women in the forefront. The breaking of the forest laws, boycott of foreign cloth and liquor shops resulted in women suffering police repression, incarceration in prisons and other indignities. Scores of women were in the vanguard of the movement.

"Our women came to the forefront and took charge of the struggle. Women had always been there of course but now there was an avalanche of them which took not only the British Government but their own men-folk by surprise. There were these women, women of the upper or middle classes, leading sheltered lives in their homes, peasant women, working class women, rich women—pouring out in their tens of thousands in defiance of government orders and police lathis. It was not only the display of courage and daring but what was even more surprising was the organisational power they showed."⁶

7.15 This kind of participation had a direct impact on the attitudes of women also. A meeting of representative women's organisations in 1930 drafted a memorandum demanding immediate acceptance of adult franchise without sex discrimination. It was turned down by the Government, but in 1931 the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress took the historic decision, committing itself to political equality of women, regardless of their status and qualifications.

7.16 The Government of India Act of 1935 increased the number of enfranchised Indians the proportional suffrage rights of women and relaxed some of the previous qualifications. All women over 21 could vote provided they fulfilled the conditions of property and education⁷.

7.17 Independence brought the promise of actual liberation and equality. The Constitution pledged the nation to achieving a just society, based on the principles of equality and dignity of the individual, and proclaimed the right to political and legal equality as fundamental rights of all Indians. The guarantee against discrimination in employment and office under the State opened the avenues to offices of power and dignity.

7.18 It has been argued that political equality is meaningless in a country where the mass of the population suffers from poverty, continuous threat of starvation, illiteracy, lack of health, and inequality of class, status and power. It is more so in the case of women who suffer from another dimension of inequality, namely the weight of traditional attitudes that regard them as physically, intellectually and socially inferior to men. It is, however, clear from Mahatma Gandhi's statement that the equal legal and political rights of women were only to be a starting point to enable the society to transform itself by ending all exploitation, a process in which women would be the prime movers.

7.19 Looked at from this angle political rights and status appear as only instrumental for achieving general equality of status and opportunities and social, economic and political justice. It, therefore, becomes important to examine the efficiency of this instrument in the practical operation of the political process. We have used the following indicators for this examination :

(a) Indicators of Participation in the Political Process :— The readiness and willingness of the people to participate in the political process is a basic requirement for a democracy. The role of women in this field can be measured by the turn out of women voters and number of women candidates in each election.

(b) Indicators of Political Attitudes :— Since attitudes play a major role in determining political behaviour, the level of awareness, commitment and involvement of women participating in politics, particularly their autonomy and independence in political action and behaviour, are important measures of their political status.

(c) Impact of women in the Political Process :— If political rights are only an instrument to achieve other goals, then this is the crucial measure of women's political status. Yet this is the most difficult to measure. Quantitative data is of little use because they may

6. Jawaharlal Nehru — *The Discovery of India* p. 27.

7. This act increased the number of women voters to more than 6 million from the 315,000 under the Act of 1919—Keith, A. B. — *A Constitutional History of India 1600 — 1935*.

TABLE I
Percentage turnout of voters in General Elections—Lok Sabha 1962-71—Statewise and Sexwise.

Name of State/ Union Territory	1962			1967			1971		
	by men voters to men electors.	by women voters to women electors.	Total voters to total electors.	by men voters to men electors.	by women voters to women electors.	by total voters to total electors.	by men voters to men electors.	by women voters to women electors.	by total voters to total electors.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Andhra Pradesh	69.03	60.34	64.72	72.08	65.26	68.67	64.39	54.71	59.57
2. Assam	51.50	37.23	45.09	66.50	50.83	59.28	58.37	41.57	50.69
3. Bihar	55.39	32.86	44.88	61.28	40.74	51.53	60.00	37.01	49.10
4. Gujarat	63.39	52.02	57.96	69.19	58.17	63.76	60.61	50.19	55.59
5. Haryana	—	—	—	75.41	69.44	72.62	67.78	60.48	64.34
6. Jammu & Kashmir	—	—	—	57.25	52.08	55.16	67.61	46.59	58.12
7. Kerala	74.10	67.08	70.55	77.13	74.20	75.64	65.77	63.30	64.53
8. Madhya Pradesh	60.36	28.90	44.79	64.35	42.48	53.47	58.24	37.59	48.00
9. Maharashtra	66.02	54.29	60.43	68.82	60.49	64.75	63.54	56.12	59.94
10. Mysore	65.18	53.07	59.30	67.36	58.34	62.95	61.73	52.71	57.42
11. Nagaland	—	—	—	—	—	—	56.82	50.37	53.77
12. Orissa	33.07	13.21	23.56	53.56	33.05	43.70	51.85	33.74	43.20
13. Punjab	65.90	58.13	62.37	73.44	68.43	71.14	63.36	55.87	59.89
14. Rajasthan	62.63	41.35	52.44	64.96	51.02	58.27	60.07	47.50	54.04
15. Tamil Nadu	73.07	64.55	68.77	79.23	73.94	76.56	74.48	69.17	71.82
16. Uttar Pradesh	59.42	39.46	50.35	59.27	48.96	54.51	52.23	38.84	46.10
17. West Bengal	61.98	47.62	55.75	70.88	60.15	66.03	64.79	58.74	62.16
18. Himachal Pradesh	43.68	22.04	33.60	57.97	44.05	51.20	48.44	33.38	41.18
19. Manipur	66.27	64.44	65.34	68.73	65.80	67.23	53.37	43.55	48.35
20. Meghalaya	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
21. Tripura	73.33	61.77	67.95	76.45	72.98	74.84	65.00	55.91	60.84
22. Andaman & Nicobar	—	—	—	79.22	76.77	78.45	69.72	72.33	70.55
23. Chandigarh	—	—	—	65.42	65.28	65.36	62.79	73.11	62.92
24. Dadra & Nagar Haveli	—	—	—	80.05	76.55	78.29	71.46	68.06	69.78
25. Goa, Daman & Diu	—	—	—	69.35	67.42	68.37	57.01	54.91	55.92
26. Laccadive, Minicoy & Amindivi Islands	—	—	—	78.27	86.16	82.02	(UNCONTESTED)		
27. Delhi	65.82	71.71	68.29	68.91	70.25	69.49	66.81	63.29	65.18
28. Pondicherry	—	—	—	76.01	73.72	74.85	71.93	68.28	70.10
29. Mizoram	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	62.05	46.63	54.76	66.73	55.48	61.33	61.00	49.15	55.35

Source : Report on the Fifth General Election in India, 1971-72.

not indicate the actual reality in the political process. We have tried to measure this by looking at the women's view of their own roles and efficacy in the political process, and society's attitude to these new roles of women. This is indicated by the success of women candidates at various elections, the efficiency of women's pressure groups, the nature of the leadership and women elites in parties and Government, and the effectiveness of campaigns for women's mobilisation particularly on issues that directly concern them.

7.20 In the course of our examination we have tried to separate certain myths from the actual state of affairs, by indicating the gaps that exist between popular notions and opinions and empirical realities, between what the law provides and the policy demands on the one hand and what society actually permits on the other. The evidence for our examination has been collected by various means, from published research on Indian political behaviour, some first-hand studies sponsored by the Committee, comments of political workers and parties, and the views of the large number of women belonging to different socio-economic categories, whom the Committee met during the tours.

I-Indicators of Participation

7.21 In a democratic system participation in politics has to be viewed at the levels of acquisition and exercise of power and exercise of the rights of a citizen. The study of general elections at these two levels offers certain quantitative measures of participation of citizens both as voters and as candidates. Unfortunately the statistics for the first two general elections do not throw light on the number of women candidates or voters. Our comparison, therefore, has to be limited to the last three general elections viz. those of 1962, 1967 and 1971. Table I indicates the percentage turn out of men and women voters in the last three general elections to the Lok Sabha by States.

Table II
Turn out of Women Voters Lok Sabha Elections

Year	Total voting percentage	Percentage turnout of female voters.	Difference between percentage turnout of male & female Voters.
1962	54.76	46.63	15.42
1967	61.33	55.48	11.25
1971	55.35	49.15	11.85

7.22 The over-all picture is given in Table II. It will be seen that the difference between percentage turn out of men and women voters has been decreasing. Between 1962 and 1967 the percentage of women who exercised their franchise increased nearly by 9% but in 1971 it decreased by 6.33%. This decrease is, however, nearly equal to the fall in the total voting percentage in that year. Since the difference between men and women voters does not show any substantial increase, it may be inferred that there was no significant change in the trend, which is visible when we compare the figures of 1962 and 1971. During the nine year period, while the total voters' turn out increased by only 0.95% increase in the percentage of women voters was 2.52%.

7.23 A comparison of the turn out in different States shows that the States of Orissa, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh registered a low turn out of total voters. The turn out of women voters in these States was still lower, resulting in a high difference between men and women. Assam and Jammu and Kashmir also come under this category. These States, as has been indicated in the previous chapters, are generally known for the educational and social backwardness of their women. All the demographic indicators viz. sex ratio, literacy rate, life expectancy etc. point to a low status of women in these States. This is reflected in the low participation.

7.24 It has generally been found that there is a close relationship between literacy and political awareness. The States and Union Territories which have registered the maximum mobilisation of women voters generally have a high female literacy rate. It should, however, be noted that it is not possible to establish a similar correlation between education or economic development and exercise of franchise by women. One great difficulty about the Indian political scene is that it is not possible to generalise about the inter-relationship

TABLE III
Minimum Mobilisation

		I		II		III		IV	
1962	Total	Orissa	(23.00)	Himachal	53.00	M P.	44.79	Bihar	44.88
	Women	Orissa	(13.25)	Himachal	22.04	M P.	28.90	Bihar	32.00
	Difference	M.P.	(32)	Bihar	23	Raj.	21	Orissa & UP	(20)
		I		II		III		IV	
1967	Total	Orissa	43.70	Himachal	51.20	Bihar	51.53	M.P.	53.47
	Women	Orissa	33.05	Bihar	40.74	M.P.	42.48	Himachal	44.05
	Difference	M.P.	(22)	Bihar	(21)	Orissa	(20)	Assam	(16)
		I		II		III		IV	
1971	Total	Himachal	41.18	Orissa	43.20	M.P.	48.00	Bihar	49.10
	Women	Himachal	33.38	Orissa	33.74	Bihar	37.01	M.P.	37.59
	Difference	Bihar	(23)	M.P. & J.K.	(21)	Orissa	(18)	Assam	(17)

Note : States have been arranged in ascending order, for total turnout, turnout of women voters, and difference between men and women voters. Higher difference indicates lower mobilisation of women.

between any single factor and political behaviour. Patterns of political behaviour from different regions show different relationships, influenced as they are by inter-related factors like the social status of women, their economic position, the cultural norms and the over-all regional outlook towards women's participation in the wider society.⁸

7.25 The number of women participating as candidates at different elections, however, shows a much greater difference. For the Lok Sabha, their highest number, reached in 1971, was 17% of the total seats. As compared to the total number of candidates, women have never exceeded 4%.

TABLE IV
Women Contestants for the Lok Sabha

Year of General Election	Total Seats Contested	Number of Women Contestants	Percentage	Number of women elected	% age of Winners
1	2	3	4	5	6
1962	491	65	13	33	50.6
1967	515	66	13	28	42.4
1971	518	86	17	21	25.9

7.26 The Statewise number of these contestants has been generally in accordance with the total number of seats allocated to the States. The maximum number was in U. P., except in 1971, when Bihar, the next biggest State in terms of Lok Sabha seats, took the lead by one candidate. The record of Madhya Pradesh is also high except in 1971, when it dropped. This indicates that there is no correlation between the general level of women's participation, (which is consistently low in U. P., M. P., and Bihar), and the selection of women candidates, which is mostly done by the parties. Punjab, where women's participation rate has outstripped that of men in the Urban areas, has an extremely poor number of candidates. Kerala and Maharashtra show a slow increase in the number of candidates over the years, and West Bengal

8. This is corroborated by the State profiles of women's participation in politics prepared for the Committee—Narain, I.—op. cit. and a three-State-study on Politicisation and Participation of Women—Sirsikar, V.M.—also prepared for the Committee.

a sudden one in 1971, but the most visible trend is the stagnation or even decline in the number in most States. Karnataka, though not backward in any sense, did not put up a single woman candidate in three of the general elections, and only one in the other two. Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland and most of the Union Territories never put a single woman candidate. (Table V)

7.27 Women in Manipur, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Orissa were particularly vocal in criticising the political parties for sponsoring so few women. In their view the small number of candidates represented not the aspiration of women, but the indifference of political parties in giving them nominations.

TABLE V

Statewise Distribution of Women Contestants for Lok Sabha in different General Elections

States	No. of Women Contestants			No. of Women Elected.		
	'62	'67	'71	'62	'67	'71
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Andhra	7	4	7	4	3	2
Assam	3	1	3	2	N	1
Bihar	8	12	18	6	4	1
Gujarat	5	1	1	2	1	N
Haryana	—	1	N	—	N	N
J & K	—	N	N	—	N	N
Kerala	1	3	4	N	1	1
M. P.	11	11	8	7	5	3
Tamil Nadu	4	5	2	1	1	1
Maharashtra	2	4	5	1	1	N
Karnataka	1	N	1	1	N	1
Orissa	N	1	2	N	N	N
Punjab	N	3	1	N	2	N
Rajasthan	6	2	4	1	1	2
U.P.	14	13	17	6	7	6
West Bengal	2	3	9	2	2	1
Nagaland	—	N	N	—	N	N
<i>Union Territories</i>						
Andaman etc.	—	N	N	—	N	N
Chandigarh	—	N	N	—	N	N
Dadra etc.	—	N	N	—	N	N
Delhi	N	1	3	N	N	2
Goa, Daman etc.	—	1	1	—	N	N
Himachal Pradesh	1	N	N	N	N	N
Laccadive etc.	—	N	N	—	N	N
Manipur	N	N	N	N	N	N
Pondicherry	—	N	N	—	N	N
Tripura	N	N	N	N	N	N
Grand Total	65	66	86	33	28	21

Note : The States and Union Territories as in the IV General Elections have been followed in this table. Himachal Pradesh, Manipur and Tripura became States afterwards.

7.28. The factors that determine the number of women candidates from different regions are obviously not related to the level of poll participation, literacy or economic and social position of women in a region. On the other hand the States where women's position is relatively low have a record of higher number of candidates. On the whole, we have to note that the number of women seeking elections either for the Lok Sabha, or for the State Assemblies, has been in no way comparable to their proportion in the population.

7.29. Apart from the election figures, our discussion with different groups of women in all the States point towards certain general conclusions. At the level of participation, women have improved their response to the political rights conferred by the Constitution. Keeping

other things equal, over-all development such as literacy, increased mass communication etc., may help to draw a larger number of women into the political mainstream. The present participation of women in the political process, however, presents sharp contrasts. The overall statistics indicates that women's participation, though improving, is still so small as to be discouraging, particularly when compared with that of men. Though there has been a substantial number of new women entrants, during our tours we were informed by many women that there has been a large number of drop-outs from active participation. When these are from families with long political traditions, they indicate a certain process of disillusionment. This is also corroborated by some of the State studies mentioned earlier.

7.30 Muslims and tribal women show a lower level of participation both as voters and candidates,⁹ though there are exceptions to this rule. Our survey on Muslim women indicates that a large number of the women interviewed had voted in the previous election.¹⁰ We also met some tribal women in Tripura, Meghalaya and Bastar (M.P.), who, though not formally educated, have a keen interest in politics and participate regularly.

7.31 Women of Scheduled Castes and other intermediary groups reveal a higher participation rate. In West Bengal, women from these groups were more aware and participated relatively better than the tribal women. Studies in Gujarat and Maharashtra have also corroborated this fact.¹¹ We met a number of women from these communities in villages in different states, whose determination to participate in elections was quite obvious.

7.32 In terms of voting participation, the rural-urban difference seems to be narrowing down, though the belief in the lower participation of rural women continues to be widespread. During the general elections of 1972, the Committee appointed some observers. The results of their investigation, as well as those of other studies¹² indicate that urbanisation per se does not have much influence on women's participation. On the other hand, the argument that domestic duties prevent them from participation is more commonly voiced by women in urban areas, particularly by the middle classes.

In many of the villages visited by us, we came across women who have been exercising their franchise, and were fully conscious of the power that this right gave them. A group of Scheduled Caste women whom we met in a village in Madhya Pradesh had not only voted in the last elections but were very much conscious of the power conferred on them by the franchise. They were emphatic that they would hereafter vote only for such candidates who will continue to take interest in their welfare even after the election. In a village in U.P., Scheduled Caste and Muslim women were very vocal, not only about their franchise, but also about the secrecy of the ballot.

7.33 There is a general consensus that the political parties have neglected their task of politically educating and mobilising women adequately. They have also tended to ignore the claims of women in nominating candidates for elections. This criticism was voiced even by successful women legislators.

7.34 Majority of the women candidates come from relatively well-to-do families, with a sprinkling of members of old princely houses. Only one party has occasionally backed women candidates from Scheduled Castes or Tribes and Muslims.¹³ Majority of the women candidates are educated, though their levels vary. About 70%-80% of the women Members of Parliament are, however, relatively better educated.

7.35 In terms of political socialisation or background, the smaller group among the candidates come from families with fairly long traditions of political participation. They are, therefore, highly articulate, have a sharp perspective of politics, and have continued in the struggle for power through several successive elections. The larger group consists of new entrants. Some of them had no previous political experience but entered the political arena for the first time through elections.

7.36 The greatest deterrent to women's active participation as candidates is the increasing expense of elections. Women were emphatic that families were still not prepared to finance

9. Sirsikar, V.M. op. cit.

10. Vide Appendix II. The sample was, however, a small one and is limited to urban areas.

11. Sirsikar, V.M. op. cit.

12. Ibid. Also the State profiles in Narain. I—op cit.

13. The present Lok Sabha has only 21 women, of whom only 5 & 1 are members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively. The Rajya Sabha has 17 women of whom 2 are Muslims, 1 Scheduled Caste and 1 Scheduled Tribe.

the elections of their women from family funds, though they would do so for the men. Since most women have no economic resources of their own, their aspirations could only be fulfilled if they were fully backed by a political party. Because of this factor, the majority of women candidates today are those who can command some independent means.¹⁴

7.37 The other factors which deter many women from active participation in politics are the threats of violence and character assassinations which have increased recently. This was mentioned to us by many legislators and political workers. Some of them have a long record of political activism, but still hesitate to face candidature at elections.

II. Indicators of Political Attitudes

7.38 It must be kept in mind that these three indices used to assess political roles are largely heuristic devices, which usually overlap in describing the empirical situation. Attitudes have a bearing on participation and impact, while attitudes in turn depend to a great extent on impact and levels of participation.

7.39 Relative differences in the political attitudes of men and women have been studied by various scholars and form a feature of most of our political literature since independence. Certain broad trends can be discerned, the most important of which are mentioned below. The point which emerges in the very beginning of our analysis is that there is no single homogeneous pattern. Levels of political awareness vary from region to region, from class to class and from community to community, and are conditioned greatly by the political culture of the area, the approach of the political parties to the women and the quality of local leadership.

7.40 It is generally held that political awareness varies with the levels of modernisation in a given area, with concomitant factors such as literacy rates, education and exposure to urbanisation and mass media. This correlation however seems more apparent than real, as proved by studies in different regions.

7.41 We have already pointed out the distinction in the influence of literacy and education on awareness and participation. While the former is generally found to be an important determinant for both awareness and participation, education does not command a similar influence. While a correlation can be established between education and awareness, this does not always extend to participation. We have also noted that similarly, urbanization alone cannot be identified with high political awareness or participation.¹⁵ In terms of urban rural variables, there is no significant difference in political awareness.

7.42 On an average, working women including professionals, indicate a higher degree of awareness, but this is not necessarily reflected in their participation.¹⁶ There is a uniform finding from different regions regarding the complaint of urban middle class women that they find their family responsibilities a handicap to political participation.¹⁷

7.43 There is no positive relationship between higher socio-economic status and the degree of awareness. We may cite a few illustrations from Prof. Sirsikar's study—in Gujarat, the high income group women are less aware and participate less in the political process; in Maharashtra, the higher the socio-economic status—other factors being equal—lesser is the proportion of women who participate. This is further borne out by the apathy of professionals with high socio-economic status.¹⁸ By and large, politics constitutes a peripheral interest for women from this strata, though a significant number of women legislators come from an affluent background.

7.44 Most studies on political behaviour have so far held that women are considerably influenced by their husbands and family wishes in political matters. During the course of our tours, however, we received ample evidence that this pattern is beginning to change and many women now exercise considerable autonomy in using their right of franchise.¹⁹ They emphasise their ability to do so because of the secrecy of the ballot. Many women told us

14. This is confirmed by the State studies, as well as statements of political workers.

15. This is borne out by many of the State studies.

16. Narain, I—op. cit. "Women voters & Mid Term Poll (1971)—A study of Attitudes, Awareness and Commitments" by Upreti, N. and Mathur, D.B.

17. Ibid. Also Sirsikar—op. cit.

18. Upreti & Mathur—op. cit.

19. This is corroborated by some of the State profiles of women in politics prepared for the Committee.

that though their husbands still try to influence their judgement "they can't find out whom we have really voted for." In rural areas the influence of village elders plays an important role in determining political choice which also influence the women's behaviour. Even in this, however, it would not be correct to describe this as a universal rule.

7.45 In spite of such changes, it is still evident that there is a difference in the level of political information and perception regarding implications of the right of franchise etc. between men and women, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Most scholars have attributed this to the lack of interest shown by political parties, in improving the political knowledge of women. Some have also levelled this charge against the women's organisations and pressure groups. A study of urban voters in Rajasthan provides an illustration—44.5% of the women did not have any clear cut idea about their criterion for voting: 19.5% considered the personality of the candidate, 22.3% caste and family as a factor, while only 8.3% and 5.5% considered the party and the issues respectively.²⁰

7.46 All the State profiles indicate one common trend—that women are more concerned with problems that affect their day to day lives. The issues are price-rise, non-availability of essential commodities, hoarding and blackmarketing, adulteration, unemployment and poverty. On several occasions during the last few years, women have organised protests against these problems.

7.47 There are indications of a growing trend of disillusionment with the political process among women. This may be partly attributed to their reactions against the prevalence of corruption and inefficiency in political circles but a great deal of such attitudes is on account of their feelings of ineffectiveness in solving problems which affect their lives. According to a study conducted in West Bengal, about 25% of the respondents stated that having votes has not helped women and even men. About 8% stated that they would not vote on principle since it did not help in any way.²¹ Another study done in Rajasthan in 1971 showed that 42% of the women interviewed including housewives and working women, supported revolution for social progress as opposed to the 'ritual' of elections.²² The majority of respondents in this study felt that the problems of the country needing solution in order of priority were as follows: 1) employment and poverty; 2) rising prices; 3) corruption; and 4) law and order.

7.48 The freedom movement and the period immediately succeeding independence brought the involvement and commitment of women in the political process. However, the institutionalisation of this process resulted in difference in perception of goals and methods of achievement. The absence of a movement in the period after independence explains the low involvement of women in the political process. Such involvement is however always visible during national emergencies.

7.49 It was repeatedly brought to our notice that the unity between political, economic and social issues that characterised the freedom movement was one of the causes for women's high degree of participation. The divorce between social problems that affect women directly, and the political process, has been one of the major causes of women's lower participation in politics in recent years.

III—Indicators of impact of women on the political process

7.50 While the percentage of political participation and the number of women contestants have shown a gradual increase, their record of success at elections, however, presents a very different picture. The number and percentage of successful women candidates for the Lok Sabha has been declining steadily from 33 (50.6%) in 1962 to 21 (25.9%) in 1971.²³ The variations in the number of contestants and those elected are not easily accountable. The sharp decline in successful candidates in 1971 has been attributed to the sudden increase in the number of independent women candidates which increased from 10 in 1967 to 31 in 1971,

20. Bhambhri, C.P. and Verma, P.S.—*the Urban Voter*—1973—p. 149.

21. Banerjee, Nirmala—*Politicisation and Participation of Women in West Bengal* (undertaken for the Committee).

22. Upreti and Mathur op. cit.

Note: As has been indicated, our findings regarding women's political attitudes are based mainly on our discussions with different groups of women during our tours, and on the results of studies on political attitudes and behaviour in different parts of the country. Since such studies are a new development in India, they suffer from obvious limitations. Most of them are micro-studies limited to particular regions. Nor are such studies available for all States.

23. Vide Table II. Three more have been elected since then.

only one of whom was elected, thus bringing the percentage of successful contestants down to 25.9%. This, however, does not explain why the parties' nominations should have been so few. Table VI indicates the party affiliations of contestants and successful candidates for the Lok Sabha since 1962.

TABLE VI

Female contestants and their political parties. (Figures below the line indicate successful contestants).

<i>Year of the Election</i>	<i>Cong.</i>	<i>Swat.</i>	<i>BJS.</i>	<i>CPI</i>	<i>CPM</i>	<i>PSP</i>	<i>SSP</i>	<i>Ind.</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1962	33	9	3	3	—	1	3	8	5	65
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	28	4	N	1	—	N	N	N	N	33
1967	36	3	3	3	1	1	2	10	7	66
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	21	3	1	N	1	N	N	2	N	28
1971	21 (14)*	3	3	3	2	1	1	31	7	86
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	15 (N)	1	2	1	1	N	N	1	N	21

*Figures in brackets indicate "Congress (0)"

N=Nil

Cong=Congress, Swat=Swatantra, BJS=Bharatiya Jana Sangh,

CPI=Communist Party of India, CPM=Communist Party (Marxist),

PSP=Praja Socialist Party, SSP=Samyukta Socialist Party,

Ind.=Independent.

7.51 A statewide comparison²⁴ of successful women candidates for the Lok Sabha shows that the number of successful candidates has been greater in U.P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh where the number of contestants has also been greater. Orissa, Haryana, Goa, Daman and Diu and Manipur are the only areas where women contested but were never returned. Percentage-wise Karnataka was the most successful. It set up only one candidate in 1962 and 1971 and elected the same. Bihar, U.P. Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal were the only States which sent women to the Lok Sabha in every election. In terms of the overall performance, however, Andhra and Assam may also be considered satisfactory.

7.52 Analysing the first general election Smt. Laxmi N. Menon had inferred that the number of women candidates was in inverse proportion to the percentage of literacy among them.²⁵ This hypothesis is confirmed when tested against the figures of subsequent elections in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and U.P. But Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir and Rajasthan do not substantiate this hypothesis. On the other hand, Kerala, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu do not support the reverse of this view i.e. the number of women contestants does not decline relatively with a higher literacy rate. We may infer, therefore, that literacy is not one of the facts that determine the number of women contestants or their success. The backing of the party which sponsors them, the personality of the contestants, including their family background, and the campaign strategy adopted, play a much more important role in determining the success or failure of women candidates.

7.53 Since 1952 a total number of 212 women members have served in the Indian Parliament. 129 in the Lok Sabha and 83 in the Rajya Sabha. Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu have sent more women to the Rajya Sabha than to the Lok Sabha. Jammu and Kashmir has not had a single woman representative either in the Lok Sabha, or the Rajya Sabha.

7.54 **State Legislatures** :—Women representatives in the State Legislatures also present a varied pattern. The most significant trend, however, is either a decline or stagnation in

24. Vide Table I

25. Menon. Laxmi N.

the percentage of successful contestants. In the First General Elections (1952) Gujarat elected four out of five women candidates to the Gujarat Assembly. In 1962 the number increased to 15 out of 24 but it dropped to 8 out of 17 in 1967 and 8 out of 21 in 1972. In the case of Karnataka, except for 1957 and 1962 the ratio of female to male representatives has been extremely low, the number of successful candidates dropping to 7 in 1967 and increasing marginally to 11 in 1972. In Maharashtra the number of successful candidates improved from 5 in 1952 to 14 in 1957 but has been declining ever since. The Rajasthan Assembly, which had 24 women between 1957 and 1962 contained only 6 in 1967-68. The West Bengal Assembly had 14 women in 1962, but has only 6 now.

7.55 Political Parties and Women²⁶ :—The election manifestos of the parties indicate that practically all of them agree that women constitute a backward section of the society to whom special privileges should be granted to bring them at par with men. The parties also agree that the existing gap between men and women should be reduced to the minimum possible.

7.56 The Indian National Congress is pledged to implement the principles of the Constitution. The recent manifestos of the party have emphasised development of education and employment opportunities for women.

The Congress has consistently maintained its position as the party sponsoring the largest number of women candidates both at Parliamentary and State Assembly Elections. The number of women contestants sponsored by the Congress, however, has remained much below its stipulated target of 15% of the total candidates. This percentage was initially decided by the party in 1957 and has been repeatedly reiterated since then but to no effect.

7.57 While the Congress has covered the largest area in sponsoring women as representatives and enjoys the distinction of having the largest number of successful women candidates in its ranks, women's position in the party hierarchy is not particularly impressive. This is significant in view of the undisputed leadership of the party by a woman. While the Working Committee, (the highest body in the party) contains 3 women out of a total of 21, and 2 out of 4 General Secretaries are women. There is considerable evidence that but for the pressure from the Working Committee, many States would continue to exclude women from the various Committees of the party at different levels. Two State Committees have women Presidents. Some of the State Committees had no women members for ten years or more. Their representation in District Committees, in Election Committees and most local units remained poor. The following examples will illustrate this fact. The Assam Pradesh Congress Committee did not have a woman member till 1972. The State Executive Committee had 2 women members in 1959 and none from then till 1970. Between 14 District Committees, the number of women has not exceeded 5. The Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee has only 19 women out of a total membership of 442 while its State Executive has only 3 out of 54. In the West Bengal, women form about 18% of the primary members of the Congress. There are 2 women in the State Executive of 30 members and only a few in District Committees. The new Constitution of the party provides that 50% of the nominated members on all Committees (who constitute 15%) will be women.

7.58 The Congress Mahila Front has been active in mobilising women in support of the party. In recent years it has been voicing the demand of women workers within the party. In some States it is becoming very critical of the neglect of women's demands by the official leadership. There is a general feeling among women political workers that they do not have enough opportunities to develop or demonstrate their organising ability. Exclusion from the decision making bodies within the party is responsible for considerable resentment among women political workers.

7.59 Communist Party of India ;—The Communist Party of India believes that in the capitalist system complete equality of women is not possible. Only a socialist system can liberate women fully by ending all types of exploitation. Women have a role to play in bringing about the social revolution which cannot be achieved if they remain in a backward condition. According to its election manifesto the party stands for equality of women in

26. The Committee invited national Political Parties to send their representatives for discussions. The following parties responded to the invitation :—(a) Bharatiya Jana Sangh; (b) Communist Party of India; (c) Communist Party of India (Marxist); (d) Indian National Congress (Organisation); (e) Socialist Party. The following parties did not send any representative :—(a) Indian National Congress; and (b) Swatantra Party.

every sphere of national life. The party demands equal pay for equal work, removal of all restrictions on employment of married women, extension of maternity benefits to all employed women and enforcement of the social laws that have been enacted to improve their status. The party appreciates the need for adequate financial allocation and extra facilities for women's education. It promises to achieve removal of all disabilities to secure women's equality with men in inheritance of property, marriage and divorce laws, entrance to educational institutions, professions and services.

7.60 Out of the total membership of 2½ lakhs of the party, women are estimated to form about 5%. Four women are members of the National Council which contains a total of 110 members. The State units of the party, however, show variance in the pattern of women's representation.

7.61 In their discussion with us the representative of the party observed that the fundamental rights of equality and protection of women guaranteed by the Constitution have not been achieved in reality because of the social situation. Some special amenities and incentives have to be provided to enable women to enjoy these rights, since rights without opportunities were meaningless.

The greatest cause of women's inability to enjoy these rights was their economic dependence and poverty. Attempts to implement the equal pay for equal work principle by industrial tribunals have invariably ended in retrenchment of women workers. Poverty also prevented them from enjoying the protection of the social laws enacted to improve their status. The answer to this handicap lay in fuller participation of women in the process of social production which should not be limited to small scale and cottage industries only. They suggested specific protection against retrenchment of women and drew the attention of the Committee to a trade union demand for 20% reservation of jobs for women in industry. In their opinion, this could be insisted upon in selected industries like textiles where the number of women workers has been declining. Free legal aid, particularly for women in adverse economic circumstances should also be provided to enable them to utilise the rights provided under the social laws.

Regarding education, while the party supported co-education as the ultimate objective, they noted the possible necessity of separate secondary schools for women. Hostel accommodation and generous provision of stipends was also essential to improve women's education.

7.62 **Communist Party of India (M) :—**The party believes that genuine equality between the sexes is not possible in a capitalist order, and can only be realised in the process of a socialist transformation of society. The party declares itself as opposed to any kind of discrimination against women. It is critical of the poor progress in the field of women's welfare since independence and demands greater facilities for women's education, removal of social disabilities, equal rights in matters of marriage, admission to professions and other services and equal pay for equal work. This party also holds that the nation cannot progress if its women remain in their present condition of illiteracy, limited opportunities for development and as victims of obscurantist customs and prejudices.

7.63 Women constitute about 1% of the party's membership. The Central Committee has one woman out of a total membership of 31. The State Council in West Bengal has 6 women members out of a total of 70. In the State Executive there are three women including one from the State Secretariat. A majority of the district and local councils contain one or two women members with the exception of the Calcutta District Council which has 6 women out of a total membership of 65.

In their discussion with the Committee the representatives of the party emphasised the need for economic independence of women without which there could not be real equality between man and woman in any sphere of life-social, political, legal or even family life. In the absence of economic independence women were as good as private property of men. In this context, they felt that the growing problem of rural unemployment was posing an increasing threat to the security and status of women in the rural areas. With the increase in landlessness and the decay of village industries, new avenues for employment of the vast masses of rural women were imperative. In the absence of land, basic economic security and literacy, rural women have been unable to enjoy their constitutional and legal rights to an even greater extent than their counterparts in the urban areas. This extreme

poverty was also the real cause for the low enrolment of girls in schools in these areas. Their suggestions to the Committee included the following :—

- (i) Mass employment and mass education including education of women about their emancipation.
- (ii) Free education of girls at all levels.
- (iii) Inclusion of principle of equal pay for equal work in the fundamental rights and removal of existing disabilities in the law of inheritance, marriage and divorce and admissions to professions and service.
- (iv) Equal shares of land and job facilities for peasant women and maternity benefits, and common kitchens for all working women.
- (v) Implementation of constitutional and legal rights and propaganda against orthodoxy and conservative attitudes towards women.

7.64 Bhartiya Jana Sangh : This party stands for advancement of women and is keen to take special steps to remove social and educational disabilities, to enable them to discharge their responsibilities to the family, society and nation, without any fundamental change in the traditionally established principles of social organisation. The party promises to enlarge and make more substantial the property rights of women, granting them absolute rights as members of their husband's family.

7.65 The Central Executive of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh contains five women members, one of whom is the Vice-President. The All-India Council has 83 women members. The President of the Kerala State Committee and the Vice-President of seven State Committees are women. Two States have a woman Joint Secretary. Apart from the member of the State Executives, district Committees elect one woman to State Councils. This constitutional provision is normally adhered to by 60% of the districts. The constitutional requirement of a minimum of two women members in district committees is normally followed only in 50% cases. In the local committees, however, this minimum of two cannot be met by even 20% of the committees, because it is difficult to find active women workers at the village level.

7.66 In their discussion with us, representatives of the party emphasised the need to increase the consciousness and political participation of women without which the constitutional guarantees would remain unimplemented. Their suggestions included the spread of civic and political education to foster a sense of national pride and political awareness to students, housewives and working women also who needed to be taught their civic and political rights and duties. It was their view that legislation could not improve the status of women, when society including women themselves continued to foster a sense of male superiority at all stages. In spite of outstanding performance of some women in politics, science etc. most women are conservative, backward and wholly dependent on men. Governmental and non-governmental efforts must combine to develop not 'independence' but 'individuality' of women so that they can co-operate in family, social and national life. Illiteracy and unemployment were the causes of their low position.

They were highly critical of the present trend in advertising and films which used the female figures in very bad taste. They felt that there should be some restriction or control on the mass media as these trends were leading to immorality and degeneration, particularly amongst the youth of the country. The problem of security, particularly for working women was becoming more acute, and it was necessary to provide more hostels for working women.

Regarding social laws, they said that women who protest against polygamy receive no protection and hence were afraid to do so in public. In cases of divorce, courts should examine the reasons for a woman seeking a divorce and not go by the 'matrimonial wrong' theory.

Their suggestions included, (i) free education for girls up to the end of secondary stage, (ii) night schools for working women, (iii) vocational training in village schools, (iv) compulsory home science classes in every school, (v) expansion of condensed courses and (vi) development of mobile libraries. To promote employment they suggested (i) reservation of some jobs for women in different spheres and (ii) legislation on equal pay for equal work, (iii) relaxation of conditions for employment of women, particularly rural areas.

7.67 Indian National Congress (Organisation):—This party is also pledged to uphold and implement the constitutional guarantees and directive principles of state policy that have a bearing on women's status. Out of a total membership of 28 in the Working Committee, two are women, one of them is the General Secretary.

7.68 In her discussion with the Committee, the representative of the party observed that the reason for decline in the representation of women in the legislative bodies lay in the slackening of the momentum of women's mobilisation achieved during the freedom struggle. Political conflicts now-a-days were only on economic issues and parties had not succeeded in drawing out women even though unemployment was worse among them. The development programmes for women in rural areas had no definite objective and had not been successful.

While women had developed an interest in voting, their political interest was still extremely undeveloped, the main reason for this being their economic backwardness. Interest in social welfare work had declined among political workers and the few who are still willing to continue such work suffered from lack of direction. The general decline in political interest of women was visible in the lack of applications for nominations and in participation in various organisational activities of the party. As a result, the 20% quota reserved by the party for women could not be filled in the last elections. There was considerable competition in obtaining nominations at different levels which deterred most women. The other two difficulties which prevented women from political work was their lack of economic resources and difficulties in leaving their families.

7.69 *Socialist Party:* The Socialist Party believes that women still suffer under a variety of social inequalities and demands special opportunities for women to enable them to enjoy their constitutional rights.

7.70 In her discussion with the Committee, the representative of the party emphasised the ignorance and indifference of women regarding the rights guaranteed under the constitution though they had developed considerable enthusiasm in casting their votes. The average Indian woman is still a secondary citizen whose status is subverted by the traditional confinement within the home, illiteracy, declining employment opportunities and the male attitude to women as objects of enjoyment. Molestation and atrocities on women have been increasing but there has not been adequate public protest against such acts either from society or from the Government.

In order to rescue women from their ignorance, backwardness and unemployment, a determined effort needs to be made by Government, social workers and social institutions to educate both men and women to release them from the bondage of outmoded traditions and superstitions. The representative drew attention to the Charter of Women's Rights, which has been adopted in 1969 by the Samajvadi Mahila Sabha, Maharashtra, the Women's front of the Socialist Party. The major demands are as follows :

Free education at all levels, vocational and technical education at secondary level, provision of part-time jobs, establishment of vocational guidance bureau, security arrangement and amenities for women working on night shifts and village level workers, uniform Civil Code, social mobilisation against the dowry system and greater scope for women in electoral contests and party organisation.

Positions in Government

7.71 Though only a very few women were able to reach the highest level of power and authority, those who did so were recognised for their administrative skills and capacity to manage their affairs. Since 1952 there have been 13 women ministers in the Union Government—6 of them were Deputy Ministers, 5 became Ministers of State, 1 attained Cabinet rank and the other Prime Minister—a position which she has retained since 1966. There was one Vice Chairman of Rajya Sabha and several in the panel of Chairmen of both houses of Parliament. Besides this, many others have been members of various standing and ad-hoc committees. About 16 of the women parliamentarians had previous experience of holding political offices in the States, either in the pre-independence ministries formed in 1937 or in the post-independence period. At the state level two women have held the office of Governor, two of Chief Minister, one of Speaker and one as Deputy Speaker since independence. Though only few have held cabinet rank, women have held office in most of the States. Compared to their overall number in the legislatures, the number holding offices was not low.

7.72 *Role of Women Elites in the Political Process:* one of the common characteristics of the women leaders in the political process during the period immediately after independence was their experience of participation in the freedom movement. The women members of the Constituent Assembly which also functioned as the Central Legislative Council in the first 5 years after independence were mostly veterans of the freedom struggle. Most of them had

worked in the movement for women's welfare and development. They were the spokesmen of the women's cause in the Legislative Body and played an important role in mobilising public opinion in support of the social legislations that changed the legal status of women within the first few years after independence. Some of them also played their part in shaping the policies and programmes women's development that were taken up by the Government of India.

7.73 While most of the women leaders who had attained a national stature during the freedom struggle were to be found in the circles of the Central Government or legislatures, in the States a new generation of women entered the political process. The accounts from the States emphasise that experience of social work, particularly among women, while it is still considered a qualification for candidates seeking representation in local bodies, has ceased to be an important qualification for women representatives in the legislatures. As pointed out by some of the political workers interviewed by the Committee, political conflicts these days, particularly at the state level seldom reflect social differences. The issues are primarily economic which are used by various political parties to seek power in the State Government structure. The women who have been involved in this process mostly come from the economic and political elite of the States and their entry into the political process, particularly representation, depends more on their support within the party rather than on the electorate. Their electorate campaigns are conducted by party workers among whom women form a minority. Only some women candidates have attained their position through active political and organisational work among the masses.

7.74 Women candidates and legislators have rightly seen their roles as representatives of the people. Both in Parliament and in State legislatures they have been more concerned with problems of a general nature dealing with issues of national and state importance. In the earlier years, while women participated in such general discussions, on questions relating to women, their championship of women's causes cut across party lines and evoked concerted articulation. In recent years, however, women legislators have not shown such concern or interest in problems that affect women specifically. During a recent debate in the Rajya Sabha on a private resolution on equal pay for equal work for women, not even one-third of the women members attended the discussion and only a few spoke. This lack of interest has led to criticism by women outside the circle of active politicians that the women political elite today are not much concerned with the problems affecting large masses of women in the country.

7.75 An analysis of debates and discussions in the legislative bodies indicate the very meagre attention given by these institutions to women's problems. It would appear that the political elite of the country, of both sexes, had come to believe that the problem of women had practically been solved with the measures—legal and administrative—adopted in the first few years after independence. The very articulate debates on women's problems that took place in the earlier period, in which women members invariably played a major role has not been repeated in the later years.

7.76 The reason for this lack of concern among the political elite to the problems of women is the absence of an active women's movement. While the number of political organisations seeking to mobilise women is now much higher than in the earlier period, their identification with different political parties prevents most of them from arousing women's consciousness for the solution of problems which are specific to women. We have already pointed out the significant gap between the degree of politicisation and participation of women and its reflection in the representation of women in the legislative bodies. States which have a larger group of women representatives both in the State Assemblies and in Parliament are also states where the level of politicisation among the masses of women is low. States where political mobilisation of women seems to have developed more have very few women members in the legislature. It would appear, therefore, that the institutionalisation of political activities has resulted in a failure on the part of women to exert adequate pressure on political institutions for solution of the problems that affect their lives. A number of women who have entered the power structure have reached it mainly through certain ascriptive channels. This, coupled with their small numbers in the legislatures as well as decision-making bodies within the parties explains their inhibition and failure to voice the problems of women in these institutions. The reasons for this gap have to be sought in the nature of campaigns to mobilise women, and in the functioning of the particular women's pressure groups.

Effectiveness of Campaigns to Mobilise Women

7.77 *Mobilisation by Political Parties* : It has been observed during all elections that political parties used women both as instruments of campaign and objects (women's welfare)

set forth for achievement. The hand-bills, posters and public meetings emphasise the specific promises for women in the parties' manifestos. Some local problems are also used in the propaganda. For instance, during the 1971 Parliamentary elections, the women of Bombay were promised copious water supply from municipal taps and abolition of prostitution.²⁷

7.78 In larger cities all the parties try to engage a number of active women workers for campaigning among women. During the 1962 elections, in one constituency in Bombay the Congress had 400 such workers, the PSP 200, the Jana Sangh 400 and the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti 100.²⁸ Housewives in urban areas were generally approached during the leisure hours of the afternoon.²⁹

7.79 Rural women, and women in smaller towns, however, generally do not get similar attention from the parties who often content themselves by approaching the heads of families or village elders. During the 1971 Parliamentary elections villagers complained of the campaign methods of all parties. In their opinion, vehicles passing through villages, shouting party slogans or approaching only prominent persons in villages, ignored the need of explaining matters to the villagers, particularly the women. In their opinion this would be much better achieved by village meetings which the women could also attend or by house to house approach by politically committed workers. Studies on the efficacy of mass media generally agree that inter-personal contact and public meetings are more effective with women than other mass media.

7.80 The inadequate number of women party workers have sometimes led to the use of paid canvassers. This experiment has, however, not yielded very happy results, particularly in rural areas. Villagers are generally opposed to women from outside coming in for canvassing except when they are known to be politically committed workers. One study of the 1962 elections in U.P. noted the very critical reactions of the local community to paid women canvassers brought from outside. Their employed status was the subject of many adverse comments in private discussions.³⁰

7.81 Most parties accept the religiosity of women and make use of religious festivals to approach them by organising religious functions. Even secular parties have indulged in this practice.³¹ It has generally been found that women attend such functions in larger numbers than men.

7.82 In spite of such occasional attempts, however, the common theme emphasised in practically all studies is that instead of approaching women voters individually or in a group, by and large all political parties and candidates attach greater importance to winning the support of the male active heads of families in the belief that their wishes would prevail with the women as well.³²

7.83 It is clear from the experience of all the general elections, that though the women constitute nearly 50% of the electorate they are not aware of their strength nor has this source been adequately tapped by any political party. There has not been any bargaining on the part of organised women with the political parties for their support, except in Jammu where the Istri Sabha put forward a demand for reservation of 6 seats as the price of support from its members. The political parties' failure to adequately mobilise women's support indicates that they have not yet appreciated this as a source of power. In the opinion of some scholars, if a political party organises this half of the nation its chances of winning the elections would improve considerably.³³

7.84 *Mobilisation by Non-political Organisations:*—The most important of these organisations are those which focus their activities exclusively on the welfare and liberation of women and are run by women themselves.

All India Women's Conference:—This was founded in 1926. Recognised as a forum for voicing the problems and grievances of women, it has non-political, primarily social objectives. From its inception it has stood for equal social, political and economic rights for women. The most notable feature of such activities was its campaign for reform of marriage and inheritance laws

27. Dastur, A.J. et al *Parliamentary Elections in Bombay*, 1971, pp. 26 & 32

28. Sirsikar, V.M.—*Political Behaviour in India—A Case Study of the 1962 General Elections*: 1963 p. 93.

29. Dastur, A.J.—op. cit.

30. Atal Yogesh—*Local Communities and National Politics*, 1971, p. 183.

31. Sirsikar, V.M.—op. cit.

32. Khanna, B.S., and Deva, S.—*Campaign and Voting in Haryana* (mimeo)—Punjab Unit p. 150

33. Sirsikar, V.M.—op. cit.

and mobilisation of support for the Hindu Code Bill. Most of the women members of the Constituent Assembly who fought for this measure in the central Legislature in the early 50's were leaders of the All India Women's Conference.

7.85 Since independence, however, the Conference has been focussing its attention primarily on the welfare and relief of women and children. The specific pressures and programmes started by the organisation for this purpose include enforcement of the anti-polygamy and divorce laws, development of institutional facilities for working and destitute women, liberalising the abortion law, family planning and equal pay for equal work. The conference is mainly a deliberative body using resolutions as its main method of pressurising the government.

7.86 *National Council of Women in India*:—Founded in 1925 it had objectives very similar to that of the AIWC. In the post-independence period it has concerned itself mainly with education, medical care and family planning. Its activities and membership is confined mainly to urban areas.

7.87 *Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh*:—Established in 1955, the sangh aims to work among and improve the conditions of rural women, to vocalise their aspirations through appropriate channels which could act as pressure groups on the government and other public authorities, for the removal of women's disabilities and to promote local leadership among rural women through constructive programmes. Its secondary objective is to assist in planned rural development deal with agriculture, cottage industries, rural housing etc. The sangh has been active in organising various training programmes for farm women, for women in border areas, and in organising mahila mandals in villages.

7.88 *National Federation of Indian women*:—Established in 1954, this federation has a different set of objectives. It aims at raising political and social awareness of women to fight for social justice and a social transformation, which alone can release them from their present restricted position in society. Their constructive programmes include mainly literacy but they have been active in mobilising women's protest against all types of injustice and social evils. They have been emphatic in condemning ill-treatment and exploitation of harijan women and women workers. The recent protests by women in different parts of the country against rising prices, hoarding, adulteration and corruption were organised as a result of an appeal from the National Federation of Indian Women.

7.89 From the discussions that representatives of these organisations had with the Committee, it appears that while their broad objectives and activities show certain similarities, there are certain differences in their concentration and orientation. Though the leadership of all these organisations come mainly from the urban educated middle class, the membership of the National Federation is composed largely of women from the less affluent sections of society—particularly working women. The hard core of its workers come from this group.

7.90 All of them admitted that they had not been fully successful in reaching the message of their new rights conferred by the Constitution and the Social laws to all women in the country. They also admitted that lack of consciousness among women had been a major cause for non-implementation of these laws.

7.91 *Stri Shakti Jagaran*:—This is a new movement to mobilise women to fight for a just place for women in society, using Gandhian ideals and techniques. Launched by the Mahila Sarvodaya Sammelan in 1973, the movement believes that the status of women can be raised by women alone. It appeals to all women to abandon purdah, untouchability to caste or class distinctions, dowry and ostentatious expenditure during marriages, discrimination between boys and girls and to resist corruption in all spheres, both within and outside family.

7.92 Apart from these bodies there are many professional or other specific women's organisations working in different parts of the country. A large number of them are engaged in some type of welfare work among women and children. The Federation of University Women's Associations has been studying problems of women and is currently engaged in exploring opportunities for part-time employment. The All-India Medical Women's Conference also has been discussing problems of women doctors, and issues arising from the present emphasis on family planning and nutrition. Though some of these organisations, like the Trained Nurses' Association, the Women Lawyers' Association etc. are more in the nature of

trade unions, some of them also take up some welfare or constructive work among women. They have not, however, undertaken any campaign to mobilise women in general.

7.93 Though the trade union movement in India is not a new one, it did not involve women in any substantial numbers till later. Since most trade unions in India are associated with some political party they are normally one of the most powerful agencies for political mobilisation. In the case of women, however, this part of their activity has been rather secondary. While women leaders in the trade union movement have played a major role in bringing about changes in the labour laws to provide protection for women both inside and outside the legislatures, most trade unions admit that they have not made much efforts in mobilising women to assert their legal and constitutional rights. One of our studies found that participation in trade union activities had no direct relationship with women's political awareness.³⁴

7.94 Whenever these organisations have acted in concert, to defend the rights of women their influence as pressures groups has however been fairly effective. We have already noted their role in the enactment of the social laws, e. g. the reform of Hindu laws, the proposed amendment of the income-tax law, to club the incomes of husband and wife for purposes of assessment, was protested against by most women's economic independence. It is generally believed that this protest was responsible for the abandonment of the idea.

General Conclusions :—

7.95 Our findings indicate that women's participation in the political process has shown a steady increase, both in elections and in their readiness to express their views on issues directly concerning their day-to-day life. But their ability to produce an impact on the political process has been negligible because of the inadequate attention paid to their political education and mobilisation by both political parties and women's organisations. The structures of the parties make them male dominated and in spite of outstanding exception, most party-men are not free from the general prejudices and attitudes of the society. They have tended to see the women voters and citizens as appendages of the males and have depended on the heads of families to provide block-votes and support for their parties and candidates.

7.96 The entire exercise of our Committee has indicated that in certain important areas and for certain sections of the female population there has been some regression from the normative attitudes developed during the freedom movement. Evidence of this has been given in Chapters III and V. Large sections of women have suffered a decline of economic status. Every legal measure designed to translate the Constitutional norm of equality or special protection into actual practice has had to face tremendous resistance from the legislative and other elites. Even after the promulgation of these laws, the protection enjoyed by the large masses of women from exploitation and injustice is negligible. As an example we would like to mention the cases of persecution of Harijan women that have increased in recent years. Among women themselves the leadership and the attitudes of the elites, social or political, have become diffused and diverse with sharp contradiction in their regard and concern for the inequalities that affect the status of women in every sphere.

7.97 We are, therefore, forced to observe that all the indicators of participation, attitudes and impact come up with the same results—the resolution in social and political status of women for which constitutional equality was to be only the instrument, still remains a very distant objective. While there is no doubt that the position of some groups of women have changed for the better by opening to them positions of power and dignity, the large masses of women continue to lack spokesmen who understand their special problems and be committed to their removal, in the representative bodies of the State.

7.98 From this point of view, though women do not numerically constitute a minority, they are beginning to acquire the features of a minority community by the three recognised dimensions of inequality:—Inequality of class (economic situation), status (social position) and political power. If this trend is allowed to continue the large masses of women in India may well emerge as the only surviving minority continuously exposed to and injustice.

7.99 The chasm between the values of a new social order proclaimed by the Constitution and the realities of contemporary India society as far as women's rights are concerned remains as great as at the time of independence. The right to political equality has not enabled women to play their roles as partners and constituents in the political process, because we have forgotten Gandhiji's warning not to treat political rights as an end in itself but only as a means.

7.100 Instead, these rights have helped to build an illusion of equality and power which is frequently used as an argument to resist special protective and acceleratory measures to enable women to achieve their just and equal position in society. It is surprising that in spite of the special powers provided by Article 15 (3) of the Constitution³⁵ almost no efforts have been made to redress the unequal status of women in different spheres. We have frequently heard the view that the greatest indicator of the status of women in this country is that it has been ruled by a woman for the last 9 years. We are compelled to disagree with this view, because in our opinion this is not an indicator of the real status of women in this country.

7.101 Though at the public level there are a number of women who recognise and advocate the desirability of giving equal opportunities to women in economic and political spheres, the norms and attitudes regarding a woman's role in society remains traditional. In this sense, the new rights prove to be only concessional. Thus it is clear that despite certain legal and even institutional changes, the final legitimation for a successful reorganization of society lies in a revolution in norms and attitudes in the minds of the people. The recommendations that we make are out of a desire to make the political rights of women more-functional as required by the needs of a democratic system.

THE QUESTION OF RESERVATION OF SEATS FOR WOMEN IN LEGISLATIVE BODIES

7.102 Before we take up our recommendation we have to record our views on a suggestion to which we have given considerable thought. In the course of our tours we received a demand from groups of women in some States for a system of reservation for women in the legislative bodies in the States and in Parliament. We summarise their arguments below:-

7.103 (A) The difficulties being experienced by women in obtaining adequate representation and spokesmen of their cause in these bodies, and the declining trend in the number of women legislations is the result of the reluctance of political parties to sponsor women candidates. The parties reflect the established values of a male dominated society, which would be difficult to alter without certain structural changes in the socio-political set up. The parties would continue to pay lip service to the cause of women's progress and the policy of 'tokenism' by having a few women in the legislative and executive wings of government whose minority and dependent status offer serious obstacles of their acting as spokesmen for women's rights and opportunities.

7.104 (B) If this process continues over a period of time more and more women, losing faith in the political process to change their condition in life, may opt out of the political system and become either passive partners or rebels. In the present context in India the greater majority would undoubtedly follow the first path because most of them have not shaken off the feelings of subjugation and inferiority generated by centuries of subordination.

7.105 (C) A system of reservation of a proportion of seats for women in these bodies would provide an impetus to both the women as well as to the political parties to give a fairer deal to nearly half the population in the various units of government. If women enter these bodies in larger number the present inhibitions that result from their minority position in these institutions may disappear faster and give them greater freedom to articulate their views.

7.106 (D) A system of reservation may also increase the women legislators' sense of responsibility and concern for the problems affecting women, thus ensuring the presence

35. Article 15 (1) "The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, place of birth or any of them (3) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children."

The only measures for the special protection of women taken up by Government since independence are in the field of Labour Laws. It should be noted that these were also recommended by various conventions of the International Labour Organisation.

of a body of spokesmen of the women's cause in the representative bodies of the States. Such a system would also help to increase the degree of political mobilisation of women both in the electorate and within the parties.

7.107 Support for reservation also came from a group of scholars who undertook an examination of women's role in the political process at the Committee's request. We summarise their views below:-

7.108 (a) The process of Indian women coming into their own 'politically' has been slow and halting because Indian political culture is a political, and the force of tradition has been particularly against participation of women in politics. Improving the political status of women is an integral aspect of the over-all problem of socio-economic change and 'broadening the political elite structure'. At a later stage of development changes in the socio-economic order may buttress changes in the political status of women but "it has to be the other way round in present day India".³⁶

7.109 (b) The failure of Indian society to "look upon women's participation with sympathy and understanding" is an exceedingly retarding factor in political socialisation of both men and women. A 30% reservation of seats in the legislative bodies for women will alter the very character of our legislature and will compel the political parties to change their strategies and tactics and induce them to give women their due. Reservation of seats for women cannot lead to their becoming 'isolated pockets in the nation', because "women are not marginal to society as a minority group might be". It could, instead lead to increase in women's participation and motivate them to shoulder their political responsibilities.³⁷

7.110 If "access to policy making powers and facilities is a component of social status" then the presence of more women in the legislatures will help to direct the rate and type of changes in the position of women. Only a system of reservations, increasing the number of women representatives will help to broaden the base of women's representation in the legislative bodies.

7.111 Such a transitional measure to break through the existing structure of inequalities will not be retrogression "from the doctrine of equality of sexes and the principle of democratic representation" and may serve the long term objectives of equality and democracy in a better manner than the present system where inequalities get intensified. As compared to the situation before independence when with a system of reservation women constituted 3.3% of the membership of the central legislature, the average proportion of women in Parliament since 1952 without reservation has been roughly 4%. The existing limitations on the role being played by this minority of women legislators may increase if their number declines further with the continuation of the already recognised trend in this direction.³⁸

7.112 We however received a strong opposition to the suggestion from representatives of political parties and most women legislators. They felt that any system of special representation would be a retrograde step from the equality conferred by the Constitution. There was also some resistance to women being equated with the socially backward communities as all women do not suffer from the same disabilities as these under-privileged groups. The representatives of some parties however did not have any strong objection to reservation of seats for women in local bodies for which certain precedents were already existing.

7.113 Though we have to record that the problem of under representation of women in the representative bodies of the State both quantitatively and qualitatively is a real one, after considering the matter very seriously we find ourselves unable to recommend a system of reservation to the State Assemblies and Parliament. Our reasons for rejecting the suggestion are summarised below:—

- (a) The women's cause in India has always been championed by all progressive elements, men as well as women. A climate favourable for the betterment of women's status can best be created by their joint efforts.

36. Narain I.—Political Status of Women in India—Introduction.

37. Sirsikar V. M.—Politicisation of Women in India.

38. Baxi, Upendra—Provisions Relating to Women in the Indian Constitution—an analytical examination undertaken for the Committee on the Status of Women in India.

It is a matter of coincidence that the two political scientists and the law expert should have made this suggestion. We were not able to ascertain the views of other experts on this question.

- (b) So far women have served as representatives of the people. Separate constituencies for women would narrow their outlook.
- (c) There is a fallacy in the entire argument for separate representation for women. Women's interests as such cannot be isolated from economic, social and political interests of groups, strata and classes in the society. In point of fact the problems connected with status of women are linked with formulation, articulation and modalities of the realisation of other interests.
- (d) Such a system of special representation may precipitate similar demands from various other interests and communities and threaten national integration.
- (e) Experience has shown that the privilege of reservation once granted, is difficult to withdraw. This would amount to perpetuation of unequal status.
- (f) Women have been competing as equals with men since 1952. They must continue to do so and stand on their own merits and intensify their political and social life. A departure from this equality now will be a retrograde step.
- (g) The minority argument cannot be applied to women. Women are not a community, they are a category. Though they have some real problems of their own, they share with men the problems of their groups, locality and community. Women are not concentrated in certain areas confined to particular fields of activity. Under these circumstances, there can be no rational basis for reservation for women.

7.114 We do not think it would be proper for us to suggest such a major change in our political structure on the basis of the rather insubstantial evidence that we have received.

7.115 Even though we did not accept the suggestions for reservation for women in Parliament or the State Legislature, we find that in order to provide greater opportunities to women to actively participate in the decision-making process, it is imperative to recognise the true nature of the social inequalities and disabilities that hamper them. This can best be achieved by providing them with special opportunities for participation in the representative structures of local Government. The necessity to associate women representatives in local self-governing bodies is already accepted in this country and provision for reservation of seats for women through either election, co-option or nomination in these bodies exist in most of the state legislations that govern the constitution of these bodies.

7.116 It has been our experience, however, that this association, with the exception of a few areas is mostly regarded as a form of 'tokenism.' We feel that the time has come now to move out of this token provision for women's representation to a more meaningful association of women in the structure of local administration.

A second reason for this is the general apathy and indifference of these local bodies of women's development and change of status which has been reported to us by women's organisations and welfare and extension workers, particularly in rural areas. It may be noted that a large number of Mahila Mandals have been organised in both rural and urban areas through the initiative of welfare organisations like the Central Social Welfare Board and its state agencies, Ministry of Agriculture and Community Development and voluntary bodies like the Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh. The status of these bodies is purely voluntary. Some of their members have acquired both experience and interest in developmental activities, but they are not representatives and their constitution does not result in associating or involving large majority of women in these activities. Nor do these bodies receive much recognition from the statutory local self-governing institutions. We received complaints of neglect and lack of funds for women's programmes from women workers throughout the country. This was confirmed by specialists working in the field of Community Development and Panchayati Raj.

7.117 *We therefore recommend the establishment of Statutory Women's Panchayats at the village level to ensure greater participation by women in the political process.* These bodies are not meant to be parallel organisations to the Gram Panchayats but should form an integral part of the Panchayati Raj structure, with autonomy and resources of their own for

Note : Smt. Neera Dogra, Smt. Lotika Sarkar and Smt. Vina Mazumdar have disagreed with this decision. Their note of dissent is attached at the end of the Report.

the management and administration of welfare and development programmes for women and children. We recommend them as a transitional measure to break through the traditional attitudes in rural society which inhibit most women from articulating their problems or participating actively in the existing local bodies. An exclusively women's body would eliminate this difficulty and provide opportunity to more women to gain experience and confidence in managing their own affairs. Their enhanced legal status, we believe, will have a direct impact on the general status of women in rural society and their increasing experience and responsibility may be expected to improve women's keenness and capacity for greater participation in the political process. Lastly, the existence of such statutory bodies would help to ensure better co-ordination of various Government services and programmes for women at the level of implementation. Like the Panchayats, these bodies could be directly elected by the women of the village and should have the right to send their representatives to the Panchayat Samities and/or Zila Parishads. To ensure a viable relationship between the existing Gram Panchayats and the proposed women's panchayats, the Chairman and Secretary of both these bodies should be ex-officio members of the other.

2. At the level of municipalities the principle of reservation of seats for women is already prevalent in certain states. *We therefore recommend that this should be adopted by all states as a transitional measure.**

We also recommend the constitution of permanent committees in municipalities to initiate and supervise programmes for women's welfare and development.

3. *We recommend that political parties should adopt a definite policy regarding the percentage of women candidates to be sponsored by them for elections to Parliament and State Assemblies. While they may initially start with 15%, this should be gradually increased so that in time to come the representation of women in the Legislative Bodies has some relationship to their position in the total population of the country or the state.*

4. *We further recommend the inclusion of women in all important committees, commissions or delegations that are appointed to examine socio-economic problems.*

*Smt. Phulrenu Guha, Km. Maniben Kara, and Smt. Savitri Shyam did not agree with this recommendation.

CHAPTER VIII

POLICIES & PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN'S WELFARE & DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Indian planners have generally seen development as a process comprehending the entire social system.

"Maximum production, full employment, the attainment of economic equality and social justice constitute the accepted objective of planning.....plan for development must place balanced emphasis on all these."¹

"Development touches all aspects of Community life and has to be viewed comprehensively. Economic planning thus extends out into extra economic spheres—educational, social and cultural."²

This broad approach to development was to give shape to the policy of transforming India into a welfare State, as directed by the Constitution.

8.2 The overall development process envisages a share in the development generated by the Plans equally for women and men. Since the Constitution stresses the need for promoting with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, the welfare and development of women received particular attention from the beginning.

"We talk about a welfare State and direct our energies towards its realisation. That welfare must be the common property of everyone in India and not the monopoly of the privileged groups as it is today. If I may be allowed to lay greater stress on some, they would be the welfare of children, the status of women and the welfare of the tribal and hilly people in our country. Women in India have a background of history and tradition behind them, which is inspiring. It is true, however, that they have suffered much from various kinds of suppression and all these have to go so that they can play their full part in the life of the nation."³

8.3 The Planning Commission's 'Plans and Prospects for Social Welfare in India, 1951-1961' spells out social welfare services as intending to cater for the special need of persons and groups who by reason of some handicap—social, economic, physical or mental—are unable to avail of or are traditionally denied the amenities and services provided by the community. Women are considered to be handicapped by social customs and social values and therefore social welfare services have specially endeavoured to rehabilitate them.

8.4 The Planning Commission defined three major areas under which they have paid special attention to women's development :—(a) education, (b) social welfare, and (c) health. The development of education for women has been already discussed. In this Chapter we shall examine the policies, provisions and programmes for women's development, in the fields of social welfare and health including the administrative agencies created by the Government of India to implement the overall policies regarding women's development in order to assess the achievements in this regard.

8.5 The First Plan emphasised that, in order to fulfil women's legitimate role in the family and the community, adequate services need to be promoted for her welfare. Well organized social service departments are needed in the States to initiate comprehensive programmes of women and child welfare. It recognised that the problem of high infant and maternal mortality were mainly due to mal-nutrition and undertook to develop (a) school feeding schemes for children and creation of nutrition sections in the State Public Health Departments; (b) maternity and child health centres; and (c) family planning.

8.6 The Second Plan emphasised the need for special attention to problems of women workers, since they were comparatively less organised and suffered from certain social

1. *First Five Year Plan*, Planning Commission-p.28

2. *Second Five Year Plan*

3. Jawaharlal Nehru-Foreword to *Social Welfare in India*—The Planning Commission, 1955.

prejudices and physical disabilities. They were also paid less because of the feeling that they were less suited to heavy work and were more vulnerable in situations which produced fatigue. The Plan stated therefore that women should be protected against injurious work, should receive maternity benefit and creches for children. It also suggested speedy implementation of the principle of equal pay for equal work, provision of facilities for training to enable women to compete for higher jobs and expansion of opportunities for part-time employment.

8.7 The main thrust of the Third Plan as regards women's development was on the expansion of girls' education.⁴ In social welfare, the largest share was provided for expanding rural welfare services and condensed courses of education for adult women. The health programmes for women mainly concentrated on provision of services for maternal and child welfare, health education, nutrition and family planning.

TABLE No. I

Allocations And Expenditure On Social Services In Various Plans (Rs in crores)

<i>Head of Development</i>	<i>First Plan</i>		<i>Second Plan</i>		<i>Third Plan</i>		<i>Fourth Plan</i>		<i>Fifth Plan</i>	
	<i>Allo-</i>	<i>Expdr.</i>	<i>Allo-</i>	<i>Expdr.</i>	<i>Allo-</i>	<i>Expdr.</i>	<i>Allo-</i>	<i>Expdr.</i>	<i>Allo-</i>	<i>Expdr.</i>
	<i>cation</i>		<i>cation</i>		<i>cation</i>		<i>cation</i>		<i>cation</i>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Education and Scientific Research	149 (7.6)	—	273 (5.8)	—	660 (7.7)	—	98.22 (8.50)	—	1826 (3.46)	—
2. Health	98 (5.0)	—	216 (4.6)	—	226 (2.6)	—	226 (2.6)	—	816 (1.53)	—
3. Family Planning	0.65	0.15	4.97	2.16	26.98	24.85	515 (1.9)	—	516 (0.97)	—
4. Social Welfare (1% approx.)	4.0	1.60	19.70 (2.2)	13.44 (2.3 approx.)	32.00	19.40	88.94	48.24* (1969-73)	229 (0.43)	—
(Social Services & Miscellaneous.	472 (24.1)	459 (23)	855 (18.3)	830 (18)	1492 (17.4)	1493 (17.4)	2771 (17.4)	—	5910 (11.17)	—
(Womens' Welfare under Social Welfare Sector)	** 4.00	** —	** 1900	** —	** 21.70	** —	** 73.06	** —	** 62.91	** —

Source : a) Planning Commission Government of India (Allocations on Women's Welfare Under Social Welfare Sector of Five Year Plans)

b) India—A Reference Annual 1974—pp 159 (Allocation and % of the First three Plans)

c) Draft-Fifth Five Year Plan—1974-79, Vol. I (Allocation and % of the Fourth & Fifth Plans) Govt. of India pp. 83-85

d) Indian Economy—Datta, R. and Sunderam, K.P.M.—pp 228 (Exptr. & % on Social Services of First three Plans)

e) Year Book—Family Welfare Planning in India—1972-73 (Allocation & Expdr. of First three Plans) Govt. of India—pp. 6, 7, & 8.

* 1972-73 (Expenditure on Fourth Plan) is anticipated.

** Includes provision for other categories e.g. Children, physically handicapped etc.

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate percentage of total allocation and expenditure.

4. This was in response to the recommendation of the National Committee on Women's Education, See Chapter VI.

8.8 The approach in the Fourth Plan was a continued emphasis on women's education. As regards social welfare, the approach was to let the voluntary sector operate the bulk of departmental programmes. Governmental efforts were confined to the provision of institutional services for destitute women and women rescued from prostitution. The basic policy was to promote women's welfare with the family as the base of operation.

8.9 The outlay on family planning was stepped up to reduce the birth rate from 40 to 25 per 1000 through mass education and motivation, and with cooperation of voluntary agencies and local leadership. High priority was assigned to immunisation of pre-school children and supplementary diet for children and expectant and nursing mothers.

8.10 The Draft Fifth Five Year Plan indicates that priority will be given to training women in need of care and protection, women from low income families, needy women with dependent children and working women. A programme of functional literacy to endow women with necessary knowledge and skills to perform the functions of the house-wife (including child care, nutrition, health care, home economics, etc.) will be launched for the age group 15-45. Special steps will be taken for the placement or follow-up of successful candidates under the existing scheme of condensed courses of education and the socio-economic programmes. In addition to production-cum-training units, managerial and sales training will be introduced to promote the marketability of goods produced in different units. Under the Health programmes, the primary objective is to provide minimum public health facilities integrated with family planning and nutrition for vulnerable groups, children, pregnant and lactating mothers. The plan emphasises the need to correct regional imbalances and provide services to meet the minimum needs of the community.

8.11. An examination of the Five Year Plans reveals that in spite of the policy emphasis on welfare or investment in human resources, the share of investment in the social services in terms of the actual allocation has been steadily declining in successive plans. The objectives emphasised in the various plans, as well as the share of allocations indicate that among programmes specifically designed for women's development, the order of priorities up to the Fourth plan has been education, then health, and lastly other aspects of welfare because it was generally assumed that all other programmes will benefit women indirectly, if not directly.

8.12. Programmes for women's welfare and development may be classified as follows:

A—Programmes under statutory obligations :—The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act, 1956 provides for institutional custody and after-care programmes. The Maternity Benefits Act, 1961 has a provision for leave and cash benefits. Under the protective laws, women in organised industries⁵ are entitled to provision of creches and family welfare facilities.

B—Programmes for development:—Under this category can be included the largest number of programmes which provide essential services and opportunities to women for development, such as education, health, maternity & child welfare, family planning, nutrition, socio-economic training and certain community organizations.

C—Programmes for special group :—These vary from State to State. Some special assistance programmes have been initiated to serve groups like widows, the aged and the destitute, in the way of pensions or homes. A programme to provide hostels for working women in urban areas was initiated in the Second Plan, and has been continued over all successive Plans. For girls from backward communities, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, there is provision for scholarships, and free residential schooling in Ashram schools.

8.13. While there has been additions and shifts in emphasis regarding the concept of women's welfare and development under the various Plans, and in some cases programmes have been expanded or integrated with others under a new nomenclature, the nature and content of the programmes have not changed.

Agencies for Women's Welfare and Development

8.14 In pre-independence India, while provisions of health and educational services had been increasingly demanded from the State, social welfare programmes were administered mainly

5. Some of the unorganised industries also have been recently brought under the scope of protective laws—see Chapter V.

by voluntary agencies. There was no comprehensive nation-wide programme to provide welfare services. After the attainment of independence, it was felt that social and economic uplift of the masses required Government assistance to strengthen the services rendered by voluntary agencies. The administrative structure inherited from the colonial Government was clearly not equipped for this task. The Central Government therefore created a new agency-the Central Social Welfare Board in 1953 to promote welfare and development services for women, children and other underprivileged group-by providing assistance to voluntary agencies, improving and developing welfare programmes and sponsoring them in areas where they did not exist. Following the creation of the Central Social Welfare Board, the State Governments set up, at the request of the Central Social Welfare Board, State Social Welfare (Advisory) Boards for the same purpose. This was necessary, as welfare is a State subject.

8.15 Even after creation of these Boards, there is no clear pattern in social administration. The responsibility for planning and administering women's welfare and development is scattered in various departments and other agencies of the government. The federal framework, and the need to involve voluntary or community organisation in this task generally results in a three-tier structure of administration, with agencies at the centre, the State and the local level.

8.16 At the Centre, the major responsibility for planning and implementing women's welfare and development programmes rests mainly with the following : i) Planning Commission; ii) Ministry of Education and Social Welfare with its two specialised agencies-the Central Social Welfare Board and the National Council for Women's Education* ; iv) Ministry of Health and Family Planning ; v) Ministry of Home Affairs ; vi) Ministry of Labour and Employment.

8.17 At the State level, there is no uniform pattern. Programmes for women's and children's welfare and development are administered by a large number of departments. All States have separate departments for Health, Family Planning and Education. With the exception of a few States, the Department of Agriculture and Community Development also is responsible for some women's programmes. In some States, the department of Local-Self-Government is involved in these programmes. Social Welfare departments or directorates as well as Social Welfare (Advisory) Boards have been set up in most States. In some cases, they exist independently while in others they have been combined with education, tribal welfare, etc. A few States have set up separate directorates for Women's Education, or Women's Welfare.

8.18 The Committee endeavoured to collect information from all Central and State Departments concerning their special programmes for Women's welfare and development. 12 Ministries of the Central Government indicated that they have some programmes for women's welfare. 19 States and one Union Territory indicated the existence of similar programmes. The replies were not comprehensive and often did not provide full answers to our questions. Two things, however, clearly emerge from these replies :

- a) These programmes, even when they have common objectives, are supervised and implemented by many Government departments without any effective machinery to coordinate their functions.
- b) Government departments, by and large, are not at all clear in their understanding of what constitutes welfare or development for women. Some adopt a comprehensive view, some a very limited one. A few regard improvement of earning power as essential for any development. Most are, however, content to adopt a somewhat charitable approach to welfare and equate it with assistance to women in distressed condition.

8.19 Since the major responsibility for social welfare and development lies with the Ministries of a) Health and Family Planning and b) Education and Social Welfare, we have examined them in some detail.⁷ The rest are only briefly enumerated.

*The N.C.W.E. was set up in 1959 to advise on all issues relating to girl's education, viz, policies, targets and priorities, methods of evaluation and collection of data and measures to influence public opinion. It has made several recommendations in this regard since then. It did not meet for three years after 1971, since it can meet only when convened by the Ministry of Education. The status of this body has deteriorated over the years mainly because it is only an advisory body without any executive powers.

Evaluation

8.20. It was not possible to use quantitative indices to measure progress in the implementation of these programmes, owing to data. Particularly in the field of development, programmes specifically meant for women are very few and do not give a total view of governmental effort to improve the condition of women. The general programmes, designed for all sections of the population, do not maintain separate records of allocations or expenditure for women, nor has any attempt been made so far to evaluate their impact.⁸

8.21. We were, however, surprised to note that with the exception of the Second Plan, all the others have confined their concern for women's development to only education, health and welfare.⁹ Conspicuous by its absence is any reference to the need for generating and improving employment of women. Even the Fifth Plan, which gives highest priority to employment generation, appears to accept the present low representation of women in the labour force as a natural order of things, which will continue unchanged in the years to come.¹⁰ This expectation appears to be in direct contradiction to the Planning Commission's own view, that utilisation of idle manpower would be a tremendous force to speed up the process of development.¹¹ It is also a denial of the Government of India's stated objective of the total involvement of women at all levels of national development.

8.22. It is interesting to note that all the agencies engaged in programmes exclusively for women, inevitably attach the highest priority to increasing women's earning power. But since these programmes are classified as welfare and therefore non-productive, they invariably enjoy lower priority.

8.23. This ambiguity and confusion springs from traditional middle class attitude regarding women's roles in society. It will continue to affect both planning and administration of women's welfare and development unless the objectives of such policies are clarified and given concrete shape.

II. Health Programmes

8.24. According to the World Health Organisation, health is "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity."¹ Health is both an important factor in the achievement of status as well as an indicator of social status, particularly for women, whose health is conditioned to a great extent by social attitudes. The health status of women includes their mental and social condition as affected by prevailing norms and attitudes of society in addition to their biological and physiological problems. Societies delineate women's roles partly according to their biological function and partly from prevailing attitudes regarding their physical and mental capacity. These social attitudes also influence the provision and use of preventive and curative health care, including maternal care.² The health care facilities offered by a community in the form of medical particularly maternity services for women, is a significant index of the emphasis that community places on the health of its women. Some studies in both the developed and developing countries have shown a definite link between low status of women and deficiencies in the knowledge and utilisation of preventive health services.³

8.25. In 1957 study was made of the percentage distribution of ailing males and females both adults and children according to expenditure for treating the illness in six rural communities covering six districts in Maharashtra State with a total population of 37,000. The survey revealed that in the year under study there were 730 ailing females and 513 ailing males in the age-group below 15 years. The percentage of males getting medical treatment was higher than females. The study also showed that more adult women had to be content with free or traditional treatment or no treatment as compared to the medical facilities used for the males.⁴

8. With the exception of education.

9. Our interpretation of the Plans in this regard was confirmed by discussions with senior representatives of the Planning Commission.

10. The Labour force projections in the Draft Plan indicate a constant sex-ratio with women constituting only 16% of the Labour force upto 1986.

11. Approach to Fifth Five Year Plan.

1. Preamble to Constitution of World Health Organisation.

2. Among some tribal communities, medical services are welcome except during maternity.

3. Koos, E.S. *The Health of Regionville*: Columbia University Press, New York, 1954.

Brightman, J. et. al. "Knowledge and utilisation of Health Services by Public Assistance Recipients". *American Journal of Public Health*, 48 (2) February, 1958, pp. 188-199.

4. Dandekar, Kumudini—"A Demographic Survey of Six Rural Communities"—1957.

8.26 The cultural norms that particularly affect women's health are the attitudes to marriage, age of marriage, the value attached to fertility and sex of the child, the pattern of family organisation and the ideal role demanded of the women by social conventions. They determine her place within the family, the degree of her access to medical care, education, nutrition, and other accessories of health. In India marriage is almost a universal function because of cultural and religious influences. The age at marriage and fertility rate have important demographic implications. The largest number of children are born to women who marry before the age of 19 years. Cultural insistence on the marriage of women in the early phase of their child bearing period leads to high fertility rate and each additional child is a burden on the mother, affecting her physical and mental health. Barrenness is regarded as a curse and the woman is always blamed for this. Though the desire for many children may not be, the desire for sons is widespread. The joint family system also has in many ways contributed to high fertility in India. It encourages early marriage and large sized families which appears as a source of collective economic security as well as emotional security.⁵

8.27 The lower status of woman is the result of her dependence and lower educational and social position. Tradition idealises her role as the mother, house-wife and the distributor of food. It is customary in all India households for the women to serve the family first and then to eat whatever is left. According to our survey,⁶ 48.53% of persons stated that in their families males eat first. In families affected by poverty, this generally results in still greater mal-nutrition for the women. The young girls as they grow up are taught subservience and self effacement. The process, therefore, starts at an early age and has very adverse consequences on women's health particularly at the time of pregnancy and child birth. From their childhood, girls are taught to be uncomplaining and to maintain strict secrecy about their physical troubles. With menstruation, taboos are enforced and restrictions placed on their movement. They are unable to either discuss their health problems, if any, or even visit the doctor. Later as a mother, with children depending on her for care and attention, the woman has a tendency to carry on until ailment overtakes her. Reluctance to visit a doctor, particularly a male doctor, arises out of these restrictions imposed on women from the beginning. Such social attitudes, therefore, lead to a general neglect of women's health and in view of their child bearing role, they are the greatest sufferers as compared to men.

8.28 A study of data from particularly the developing countries indicates that other health problems of women—the higher maternal and infant mortality, maternal morbidity, lower expectation, of life at birth, mal-nutrition, mental disorders, suicide rate and certain sex-selective diseases are linked to their status and role in the society. Child bearing and rearing is still the dominant role assigned to most women in developing nations. In the context of low socio-economic status of the bulk of the population, this factor becomes adverse to good health in the case of women. All the developing nations are faced with rapidly growing population. Inadequate housing, sanitation and poor medical facilities adversely affect the vulnerable segment of that community. Maternity, therefore, constitutes a special problem. The bulk of the stress and strain falls on the women who suffer from extremely poor health.

8.29 The indicators of women's health status in India are drawn from two sources:—

- (a) Demographic trends and
 - (b) Access to health services
- They should be examined separately.

A. Demographic Trends :

8.30 We have already drawn attention to the adverse and declining sex-ratio, higher mortality rate and lower life expectancy of women in Chapter II. The high birth and fertility rates, beyond doubt, contribute to the low health conditions of women. Starting with 1871, almost every census report has emphasised:

- (i) The crucial role of female mortality;
- (ii) The significant contribution of mortality in the age group 15-44 to aggregate female mortality;
- (iii) The crucial role of neglect of female health in determining female mortality; and
- (iv) The insignificant role of underenumeration to explain the adverse sex-ratio.

5. Davis & Blake—Social Structure and Fertility—An Analytical Framework.

6. Vide Appendix I.

Neglect of women was proved by customs like female infanticide then prevalent in certain parts of the country. Child marriage, pre-mature consummation resulting in early child-bearing, over-work and malnutrition were cited as other causes of women's poor health. The census of 1931 drew pointed attention to the higher female mortality in the age group 5-10, and "at the reproductive age". Tables II and III, indicate the high increase in female deaths in the age group 15-29 for both rural areas and the whole country. It is significant that in the age group of 1-4, in spite of some fluctuations, the mortality figures are higher than the 1960 figures throughout. Table IV indicates that in total deaths under one year, female deaths increase with age group from one week to 6 to 12 months. This is true for all areas and over the time period.

8.31 The apparently low sex-ratio of deaths (female deaths per thousand male deaths) is actually due to large under-reporting of female deaths as compared to male deaths. The doubtful accuracy of SRS data on age-wise and sex-wise mortality rates has been demonstrated in a recent study. The difference between estimated and reported deaths of females is sometimes said to be as high as 75.69% for rural areas and 59.07% for urban areas in the lowest age group;

46.57% and 35.47% in the age-group 1-19; 58.56% and 37.94% in the 20-49 age group; and 50.2% and 28.54% in the 50 + age-group. This difference in the case of males is consistently lower.

TABLE II
Sex Ratio Of Death By Age, All India

Age Groups	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Less than 1 Year	850	871	864	857	834	856	825	836	840
1-4 years	986	993	996	987	989	997	1016	1012	988
5-14 "	898	952	901	912	874	892	905	901	868
15-29 "	1136	1190	1121	1141	1119	1109	1107	1102	1076
30-49 "	861	970	892	891	855	843	839	828	873
50-59 "	769	773	750	755	739	694	680	669	653
60+ "	884	927	895	895	860	870	848	851	835
Age not stated								850	796
Total :	904	943	910	911	886	1139	881	878	859

Source : Vital Statistics of India

TABLE III
Sex Ratio of Deaths By Age, Rural India

Age groups	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Less than 1 year	840	869	862	353	825	850	939	859	84
1-4 years	972	979	988	976	982	989	1015	1009	98
5-14 "	899	958	902	916	876	892	910	913	87
15-29 "	1127	1205	1110	1136	1116	1100	1109	1099	107
30-49 "	887	952	925	927	888	877	876	877	92
50-59 "	806	817	801	807	795	748	731	730	71
60+ "	893	943	906	909	870	887	868	870	85
Age not stated								861	79
Total	908	948	920	922	896	1240	898	897	88

Source : Vital Statistics of India

8.32 All the available evidence leads us to conclude that female mortality in fact is higher for all the three age group, namely, during infancy, childhood and during the productive age particularly in rural areas. The inference from this is that female mortality is due to the consistent neglect of female health.

7. Vaidyanathan, K.E. (ED) *Studies on Mortality in India* 1972
8. Ibid.—p. 20.

TABLE IV
Sex Ratio Of Infant Deaths By Age For Total, Rural And Urban Areas 1960-68
Age Group

Year	Age Group															
	One week		One week-one month		1 month-6 months			6 months-1 year			Total death under year 1					
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1960	771	760	1,768	798	830	804	853	929	869	921	1,000	943	842	888	852	
1961	774	788	741	809	802	839	899	887	941	940	923	1005	860	855	878	
1962	796	810	761	825	825	825	880	872	913	939	925	994	864	862	870	
1963	766	782	760	807	802	827	896	391	910	933	917	998	856	853	867	
1964	789	803	755	810	806	824	1,050	899	1,802	913	896	982	892	855	1027	
1965	774	779	761	813	808	831	893	881	932	928	908	1015	855	849	877	
1966	778	782	768	801	796	819	898	897	902	935	919	1001	858	856	865	
1967	779	588	1485	808	809	806	899	896	907	946	671	990	856	789	1089	
1968	937	778	1426	782	780	789	887	885	894	918	911	946	840	842	833	

Note : Since the comparable data for Rural and Urban areas is not available, figures for certain areas (noted below) have been excluded from the totals:

1966 : Orissa, Chandigarh, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Laccadive, Minicoy, and Amindivi Islands and Dadra and Nagar Haveli.

1965 : Orissa, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, A. & N. Islands, Laccadive, Minicoy & Amindivi Islands, & Dadar & Nagar Haveli

1964 : Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan

1963 : Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan, Laccadive, Minicoy and Amindivi Islands

1962 : Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan Pondicherry, Goa, Daman and Diu, Laccadive. Minicoy and Amindivi Islands

1960 : All the Union Territories except Himachal Pradesh

TABLE V
Age Specific Sex-Wise Death Rates : Rural India—1965-67

Age Group	Period	Male	Female
1	2	3	4
Under 1	65-66	178.2	192.4
	66-67	162.7	173.1
1-4	65-66	29.4	42.7
	66-67	35.3	46.0
5-14	65-66	3.1	3.5
	66-67	3.3	3.8
15-44	65-66	3.7	5.1
	66-67	3.8	5.7

Source : Mehta, D.C. and Ghosh—M.H. Sample Registration in Vaidyanathan—KE (ED) Studies on Mortality in India Madurai 1972 p. 64

The latest SRS data for 1968 and 1969 also reflects the same pattern as reported in the various Censuses, namely that female mortality continues to be higher in the age group 0—4 and 15-34.

TABLE VI
Age And Sex Specific Death Rate (per 1000 population)

Items	Sex	Period	
		1968	1969
1	2	3	4
0-14	M	24.3	24.1
	F	27.9	29.6
15-34	M	2.8	3.3
	F	5.3	5.4
35-49	M	8.5	9.0
	F	7.6	7.5
49+	M	40.3	44.9
	F	37.1	41.1

It is also observed that the maternal mortality rate is high enough to raise the overall death rate for females and account for the low sex ratio. It was reported to be 252 per 1,00,000 live births in 1964 for the country as a whole, but for rural areas, it is as high as 573 in 1968.⁹ It is unfortunate that no later figures are available for this.

8.33 Recent medical research has tried to identify particular contributory factors to the problem of women's ill-health and higher mortality. Since maternal mortality in India continues to be so high, it is understandable that the bulk of this research has concentrated on this aspect of women's health. The specific factor that have been identified by various studies are firstly pregnancy wastage, caused by abortions and still births. The incidence of this phenomenon has remained constant over the period 1957-68, a period which witnessed intensification of family planning activity. In fact there was even an increase in actual numbers.¹⁰ Such foetal wastage prevails more in low income groups. One study reported that pregnancy wastage of malnourished mothers was 30% as late as in 1972.¹¹ Still births are reported as constituting 11 per 1,000 live births.¹² Much of this pregnancy loss and perinatal mortality is caused by premature births and malnutrition.¹³ Perinatal mortality and still births result from premature births, itself a consequence of maternal malnutrition, particularly iron deficiency during pregnancy. Haemoglobin estimations carried out on about 5,000 pregnant women in different parts of the country show that 30% of them are anaemic, i.e. they have haemoglobin levels below 10%. There is evidence that this is largely due to iron deficiency.¹⁴ Premature births have consistently been a very high proportion among the causes of infant deaths.

8.34 A second group of causes for both infant and maternal mortality relate to higher birth orders.¹⁵ Frequency of pregnancies causes protein malnutrition of the mothers. As it is, the majority of Indian women are victims of malnutrition. 10-20% of maternal deaths are known to be due to nutritional anaemias.¹⁶ This has been borne out by a series of studies of the National Institute of Nutrition. Table VII indicates the gap between the actual and recommended intake of nutrition in the case of pregnant and nursing women.

8.35 It has been estimated that if causes of maternal mortality are eliminated female mortality will decline substantially, since pregnancy complications still constitute 16.44% or the second highest contributor to female morbidity.¹⁷ The Bhore Committee¹⁸ had observed

9. Sex Composition in India-SRS-Analytical Series No. 4, 1972

10. Vital & Health Statistics, South East Asia Region 1966, Table 9, pp 30-31

11. Gopalan, C.J. and Naidu, A.N.,—'Nutrition and Fertility' *The Lancet*, Nov. 18, 1972, p 1078

12. W.H.O. World Health Statistics Annual, 1967, 1970

13. For a Volume of data on this see Gopalan, C.J.—*Collected papers, 1943-1973* Hyderabad, 1973 Also his paper 'Nutrition, Fertility and Sex-Ratio' submitted to International Congress on Nutrition at Mexico, 1973.

14. Gopalan, C.J. and Raghavan, K.V.—*Nutritional Atlas of India* 1971, p.4

15. Bajpai et. al. Observations on perinatal Mortality' *Indian Paediatrics*, 3, March, 1966; Mehdi et. al. Incidence and Causes of Perinatal Mortality in Hyderabad—*Indian Journal of Medical Research* 49, 1961, Gullik, F.A.—Parity, Contraception and Infant Mortality, USAID, New Delhi, 1970 (Mimeo)

16. Health Statistics of India, 1964

17. Sen Gupta et. al.—'A Pattern of Morbidity & Mortality in India'—Central Bureau of Health Intelligence, New Delhi, 1971. Ramakrishna, G. et. al. 'Impact of Prevention of Selected Causes of Death on Life Expectancy : in Vaidyanathan, op. at. : pp 278-279

18. Health Survey and Development Committee, 1946, Govt. of India.

TABLE VII
Nutrients Intake Gap

Nutrient	Actual	Recommended	Actual	Recommended
1	2	3	4	5
Calories	1440	2500	1425	2900
gms.	37	55	39	65
Iron (mg.)	18	40	18	30
Calcium (gm.)	0.2	1.0	0.2	1.0

Source : for data on Pregnant women : Leela Iyengar 1969 Nutrition, 3 (3), p. 2, for data on Nursing Women Annual Report of Nutrition Res. Lab. 1965-66; for recommended Allowances, see report of the Nutrition Expen. Group ICMR (1968)

that even psychiatric morbidity among Indian women was the result of mal-nutrition, frequent pregnancies and anaemia. While data on this aspect of women's health is scanty, a W.H.O. report indicates that psychiatric morbidity is more prevalent among women than men.¹⁹

8.36 All the demographic indicators thus point to a low health status of women. In particular they suggest that child bearing in India, for the majority of women, is more a health hazard than a natural function.

8.37 B. *Access to Health Services* : The broad objectives of the health programmes so far have been to control and eradicate communicable diseases, to provide curative and preventive health services in rural areas through the establishment of primary health centres in each block, and to augment programmes for the training of medical and para-medical personnel. In the Fifth Plan the main thrust is to improve the deficiencies in building, staff, equipment, drugs and medicines in the primary health centres and to integrate family planning and maternity and child Health services. Health is a basic component of the proposed minimum needs programme. Any assessment of the impact of these programmes on the health of women has to take both quantitative and qualitative factors into account. Any

Table VIII presents a comparative picture of available basic medical facilities in selected

TABLE VIII
Population Health Personnel Ratios In Selected Countries Of The World

Sl. No.	Name of the country	Year	Bed Population Ratio	Doctor Population Ratio	Dentist Population Ratio	Pharmacist Population Ratio	Nurse Population Ratio
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	India	1970-71	2,027	4,730	74,864	10,275	7,695
2.	Pakistan	1968	2,900	6,180	442,310	290,360	18,130
3.	Burma	1966	1,190	9,580	1,009,840	*	11,610
4.	U.A.R.	1968	490	2,080	18,500	6,530	3,900
5.	Japan	1968	70	910	2,820	1,650	400
6.	Indonesia	1967	1,470	27,560	146,380	131,830	8,310
7.	Thailand	1968	1,030	8,530	100,580	31,080	3,750
8.	U.K.	1967	100	860	3,870	3,060	330
9.	Australia	1966	90	850	3,350	1,390	150
10.	U.S.A.	1967	120	650	2,020	1,630	200
11.	Canada	1968	100	740	3,050	1,960	170
12.	U.S.S.R.	1968	100	50	2,850	*	250

*Information not available.

Source : World Health Statistics, 1968, 9.69 Pocket Book of Health Statistics, Ministry of Health & Family Planning countries of the world. It is clear that India's position is more backward than even some of the developing countries.

19. W.H.O.—Vital Statistics of South East Asia Region 1966. This is also the case in Ceylon and Thailand.

In spite of the achievements during the last four Plans. (Table IX) indicates that medical care remains inaccessible to a large section of the population.

TABLE IX
Achievements During The 1st, 2nd, 3rd And 4th Plan Periods

No.	Category	1st Plan	2nd Plan	3rd Plan	4th Plan		Population per unit of the end of the 4th Plan	Desired norms as per Mudaliar's Committee
		1951-1956	1956-61	1961-66	Achievement 1970-71	Target 1973-74		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Institutions	10,000	12,000	14,600	@	@	—	—
2.	Hospitals & Dispensaries	125,000	185,000	240,000	269,370	281,600	0.49 per 1000 population	1:1000 population
3.	Medical Colleges	42	57	87	96	103	5.75 million	107
4.	Annual Admissions	3,500	5,800	10,520	11,850	13,000	—	—
5.	Dental Colleges	7	10	13	15	15	—	—
6.	Annual Admissions	231	281	536	680	800	—	—
7.	Doctors	65,000	70,000	86,000	115,725	137,930	1:4300	1:3500
8.	Nurses	18,500	27,000	45,000	71,000	88,000	1:6400	1:5000
9.	Auxiliary-Nurse-Midwives	12,780	19,900	22,000	42,000	54,000	1:11700	1:5000
10.	Sanitary Inspectors	4,000	6,000	14,000	25,000	32,600	1:18300	1:10000
11.	Health Assistants Pharmacists	—	42,000	48,000	57,000	66,000	1:9060	1:10000

*Not available, @ Number not fixed

Source : Pocket Book of Health Statistics, Ministry of Health & Family Planning, 1973, p.20

Any increase in personnel or medical facilities is nullified by increase in the population. The quality of the existing health services is reduced by inadequacy of staff, medical supplies and equipment, and by over-crowding. In rural areas not even the minimum medical facilities by trained personnel is available in all districts. Distance and inaccessibility remains a major problem, particularly in hilly and difficult areas.

8.38 The lowest unit of the Health Service structure or its rural arm is the Primary Health Centre which is supposed to provide integrated and comprehensive curative and preventive health services in rural areas. The Bhore Committee²⁰ which proposed the setting up of primary health centres had recommended that, to start with, each centre should cater to a population of 40,000 with a 30 bedded hospital to serve four Primary Health Centres. It visualised district level hospitals with a strength of 500 beds. Among other staff, primary health centres were to include four public health nurses, two medical officers, four mid-wives and four trained dais. Describing these requirements as the 'irreducible minimum', the Committee had recommended the key importance of developing preventive health services, with 'the country-side as the focal point.'

The Mudaliar Committee²¹ reiterated these recommendations, adding further the provision of three specialists in medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, and 75 maternity and 50 paediatric beds to each district hospital.

²⁰ Op. cit. Para 8.35

²¹ Report of the Health Survey and Planning Committee (1964) Vol.I, Ministry of Health, Government of India

8.39 In fact, when the primary health centres were established, the 'irreducible minimum' requirements were not provided. They had to serve a far larger population of 60 to 70,000 with only one lady health visitor and four auxiliary nurse-mid-wives, six beds and three sub-centres. Each sub-centre was put in charge of one ANM. Their functions were wide, including medical relief, maternity and child-health, control of communicable diseases (including the major national programme of Malaria control), school health, environmental sanitation and health education. By 1961, 2,800 primary health centres had been established.

8.40 Though the recommendations of the Mudaliar Committee were not implemented due to shortage of trained personnel and funds, from 1963 family planning services were initiated with additional staff (one woman medical officer, one extension doctor, one ANM, and two family planning workers to supervise four sub-centres). The sub-centres were to cater to a population of approximately ten thousand and were more than doubled in number, but with family planning as their major activity. The emphasis on family planning was strengthened further in 1966 by treating it as a crash programme, providing additional staff, and delinking it from Malaria control activities. In most States, the existing four health assistants were transferred to the family planning side.

8.41 Though the number of primary health centres increased from 67 in the first five year Plan to 5195 in 1972 and the sub-centres from 17,522 in 1967 to 32,218 in 1972, their impact on the health of the rural population has not been substantial. An expert Committee²² observed in 1973 that apart from West Bengal and Kerala, where utilisation was 50%, in other States like Bihar, Rajasthan, U.P., Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir, the bed utilisation in primary health centres was hardly between 5-15%. The reasons for this under-utilisation were (a) apathy of the staff, (b) the status barrier that separates the doctor and his team from the village population, particularly the lower socio-economic groups, and (c) absence of lady doctors in many centres. Emphasising the need to improve maternity and child health services, the committee recommended the provision of domiciliary maternity services as essential.²³

8.42 Critics of the present pattern of health services feel that they have deviated from the basic recommendation of the Bhore Committee, to emphasise preventive services in the rural areas as the keystone of public health. Under the present system, the expenditure on curative services is three times that on preventive services,²⁴ but most of it is concentrated in urban areas. The 10% of hospital beds meant for the four-fifths of the population living in rural areas are ill-staffed, ill-equipped, and ill-financed.²⁵ In the sphere of women's health in particular, while all the expert Committee emphasised greater attention to maternity services, the actual position shows wide regional variations in the provision of this crucial service.

TABLE X
Medical Facilities By Sex-West Bengal In The Years 1951, 1961 and 1971

Medical Facilities By Sex-west Bengal in The Year 1951, 1961, 1971										
Year	No. of beds			Outdoor patients attending hospitals, dispensaries			No. of Maternity & Child Welfare Centres			
	Men	Women	Total	Maternity Beds	Men	Women	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1951	NA	NA	17107	2041	3391064	2045481	5436545	NA	NA	37
1961	NA	NA	29067	4339	5741381	4331218	10072599	NA	NA	472
1971	NA	NA	40450	6854	8402742	6338910	1474162	72	284	351
(Provisional)										

(Provisional)

Source : Government of West Bengal, Department of Health and Family Planning

22. Report of the Committee to examine the question of full utilisation of the existing beds provided at the Primary Health Centres in the country (1973) Ministry of Health & Family Planning. The Committee was appointed on the advice of the Central Maternity and Child Health Advisory Committee.
23. A UN Report had also observed that it was impossible for one ANM to provide ante-natal and post-natal care to a population of 10,000. The Mission recommended training the local dais to work under the supervision of the ANM.
Evaluation of the Family Planning Programme, United Nations Advisory Mission, 24.11.1969, p.31.
24. Banerji, D—Social and Cultural Foundations of Health Services Systems—Economic and Political Weekly, Special Number, 1974.
25. Report of the Study Group on Hospitals, 1968, Ministry of Health & Family Planning, Government of India, p.37.

8.43 According to the estimate of the Study Group on Hospitals, there were only 45,000 maternity beds in 493 maternity hospitals and wards of general hospitals in 1968. The total number of beds at that time was 2.75 lakhs, i.e. maternity beds constituted less than 17% of total hospital facilities. It should also be noted that most hospitals in India provide no other beds for women. The distribution of general and maternity beds in the States of West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh (Table X and XI) illustrate the general tendency.

Still more revealing is the gap in sanctioned and actual strength of women doctors in Uttar Pradesh. (Table XII). Table XIII provides comparative Statewise data on maternity services which when seen along with Table XIV, throws some interesting light on the relative efforts of different State administrations to protect the health of women.

TABLE XI (a)

Beds According To Sex In U.P.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Beds</i>	<i>Beds for Males</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Beds for females</i>	<i>%</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6
1962	72705	17998	64.96	9707	35.04
1963	29414	18773	63.82	10641	36.18
1964	30517	19228	62.99	11294	37.01
1965	30873	19688	63.77	11185	36.23
1966	33601	21284	64.95	11777	36.05
1967	33965	21988	64.74	11977	35.26
1968	34215	22068	64.50	12147	35.50

Source : Statistical Bulletin of U.P., Lucknow, 1969, p.51

TABLE XI (b)

Patient Treatment By Sex In U.P.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Inpatients</i>		<i>Outpatients</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
1	2	3	4	5
1962	524,589	370,580	14,890,103	8,842,015
1963	477,097	396,785	16,120,016	8,993,631
1964	517,789	392,881	14,984,539	9,499,673
1965	517,919	396,220	15,186,055	9,670,673

Source : Health Atlas of India

TABLE XII

Women Doctors And Women Hospitals—U.P.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Women doctors</i>		<i>Women hospitals</i>
	<i>Sanctioned strength</i>	<i>Employed strength</i>	
1	2	3	4
1962	402	235	163
1963	418	247	170
1964	428	249	182
1965	444	257	190
1966	512	268	204
1967	567	270	208
1968	588	288	211

Source : Statistical Bulletin of U.P., Lucknow, 1969, p.61.

TABLE XIII
Some Health Statistics for the States

<i>State</i>	<i>Per Capita Government Expenditure on Medical & Public Health Measures in 1963-64 Rs</i>	<i>Number of Beds in hospitals & dispensaries per 1000 population in 1964</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Births in Rural Households Attended by Trained Dai-Mid Wife Physician or Qualified Nurse in 1964-65</i>
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	2.88	0.53	12.24
Assam	3.28	0.45	12.88
Bihar	1.72	0.24	2.78
Gujarat	2.24	0.53	9.69
Haryana	—	—	15.32
Jammu & Kashmir	4.13	1.01	6.10
Karnataka	2.58	0.75	15.89
Kerala	3.70	0.94	25.72
Madhya Pradesh	2.27	0.41	5.14
Maharashtra	2.95	0.81	7.52
Orissa	3.21	0.43	6.79
Punjab	2.57	0.67	14.27
Rajasthan	3.80	0.52	4.07
Tamil Nadu	3.03	0.48	21.92
Uttar Pradesh	1.49	0.38	2.51
West Bengal	3.32	0.85	2.68
India	2.58	0.57	8.81

Notes : Columns (2) and (3) are taken from 'Health Statistics in India', Ministry of Health, Government of India, Column (4) is calculated from estimates given in NSS Report No. 177 for the 19th Round (1964-65). For Columns (2) Punjab includes Haryana.

Source : Bardhan, P.K.—'On Life and Death Question,—*Economic & Political Weekly*, Special Number, August, 1974, p.1297.

8.44 It may be noted that Kerala, which stands out for provision of maternity services also, has the highest expectancy of life for women, which is 60.7 for 1971-75, and the lowest infant mortality rate.²⁶ Uttar Pradesh, with the lowest provision for such services has a female life expectancy of 53.7, which is nearly the lowest in India, and the highest infant mortality rate.

8.45 There is no doubt that improvement of maternity services has a definite impact on life expectancy of women. States like Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Assam, Karnataka and West Bengal which have given some attention to these services, have helped to improve their women's expectation of life. The impact, however, cannot be uniform, because of the operation of other factors, like education, employment, general cultural norms etc., which exert considerable influence on women's utilisation of these services.

8.46 An important cultural norm which has a direct impact on women's health is the age of marriage. No district in Kerala has below 15 as the average age at marriage and only 3 districts (33%) have an average below 20²⁷. In the case of Bihar, Rajasthan and U.P., the picture is just the opposite, where 71%, 65% and 48% of the districts respectively have an

26. Vide Table 11—Chapter II

27. Vide Table 17—Chapter II

TABLE XIV
Projected Values Of Expectation Of Life At Birth All India And States, 1951-65

States	1951-60	1961-65	1966-70	1971-75	1976-80	1981-85
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
All India	M 41.9 F 40.6	48.7 47.4	53.2 51.9	57.3 56.0	61.1 59.0	63.1 61.8
Kerala	M 49.5 F 47.1	55.5 53.1	59.5 57.1	63.1 60.7	66.4 64.0	66.9 64.5
Punjab	M 49.9 F 44.0	55.9 51.0	59.9 55.0	63.5 58.6	66.8 61.9	67.3 62.4
Rajasthan	M 49.2 F 44.3	55.2 50.3	59.2 54.3	62.8 57.9	66.1 61.2	66.6 61.7
Maharashtra	M 40.1 F 44.3	52.1 50.3	56.1 54.3	59.7 57.9	63.0 61.2	63.5 61.7
West Bengal	M 44.1 F 44.5	50.1 50.5	54.1 54.5	57.7 58.1	61.0 61.4	61.5 61.9
Orissa	M 40.7 F 41.1	47.5 47.9	52.0 52.4	56.1 56.5	59.9 60.3	60.9 61.3
Madhya Pradesh	M 41.2 F 40.0	48.0 46.8	52.5 51.3	56.6 55.4	60.4 59.2	61.4 60.2
Karnataka	M 41.2 F 39.2	48.0 46.0	52.5 50.5	56.6 54.6	60.4 58.4	61.4 59.4
Gujarat	M 40.8 F 39.2	47.6 46.0	52.1 50.5	56.2 54.6	60.0 58.4	61.0 59.4
Uttar Pradesh	M 39.4 F 38.3	46.2 45.1	50.7 49.6	54.8 53.7	58.6 57.5	59.6 58.5
Bihar	M 37.4 F 37.8	44.9 45.3	49.9 50.3	54.5 54.9	58.8 59.2	60.8 61.2
Andhra Pradesh	M 37.8 F 36.0	45.3 43.5	50.3 48.5	54.9 53.1	59.2 57.4	61.2 59.4
Assam	M 36.6 F 37.0	44.1 44.5	48.1 49.5	53.7 54.1	58.0 58.4	60.0 60.4

Source : Family Planning Programme, Gujarat, Fact Book, p.9 Published by State Family Planning Bureau, Demographic and Evaluation Cell, Gujarat, 1972.

average below 15, 35% and 31% of the districts in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal also come into this category.²⁸

8.47 Kerala also has the highest female literacy rate which is 53% in rural areas, and 60.6% in urban areas. Tamil Nadu, though well behind Kerala, is still the second highest State in female literacy, which is 19% in rural areas and 45.4% in urban areas. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan stand out for their low female literacy rate.²⁹

8.48 We may infer from this that the availability and utilisation of medical care for women reflects the general social attitude to women in a region. There is also no doubt that the female literacy rate is an important determinant for utilisation as well as supply of medical and health care for this section of the population. This is particularly true of maternity and child care.

8.49 Apart from regional variations, the accessibility of health services is also affected by rural-urban and social-economic differentials, including a broad pattern of sex differentials. For example, uncontaminated water is available to 40% of towns, but only 9% of villages. Since about two thirds of the total number of doctors and nurses, and most hospitals are concentrated in urban areas, the four-fifths of the population living in rural areas get a much smaller share of these services. The National Sample Survey (19th Round, 1964-65) found that 46% of all births in urban India are attended by trained medical personnel, as compared to 9% in rural areas. The household consumption data of the same Round also shows that

28. Vide Table 16—Chapter II

29. Vide Table 28—Chapter II

average per capital private monthly expenditure on medicines and medical services is Rs 1.01 in urban areas, and about half that in rural areas. Majority of doctors in urban areas are private practitioners, charging high fees. Their services can be used only by the upper and middle income groups. Private nursing homes and paying hospitals, like private doctors, are almost totally out of reach of the poorer sections of society.

8.50 A recent study on rural health services brings out the peculiar tension created by scarce supply of medical personnel in the villages. On the one hand is the 'unmet felt need for the services of the Auxilliary Nurse Midwife at the time of child birth. Villagers are keen to have the ANM's services because they consider her to be more skilful than the traditional dai. Wherever the ANMs have provided the services, the dais' role has become less significant.³⁰ During our tours we were repeatedly informed of the inadequacy in the number and services rendered by ANMs. Apart from their small number, the area covered by these personnel is too large, with consequent transport and accomodation difficulties. Night-halts and the problem of security create difficulties for most of these workers in rural areas, and effect their functioning.³¹

8.51 Such problems very often obstruct an ANM from really attending to her duties in all places under her charge. Secondly, for an outsider to live and work in rural areas, a degree of social acceptance and security is essential. Protection extended by influential members of the village community ensures this, and prevents her being handicapped by their hostility. The result very often is that her services are monopolised by the dominant, or relatively well-to-do section of village society. It should also be remembered that the social and educational background of the ANMs is likely to be closer to the dominant, or well-to-do groups in the village, rather than the poorest.

8.52 This sort of cornering widens the gap between the ANM and the masses of women who need her services. 'The overall image of the ANM in villages, particularly in North India, is that of a person who is distant from them, meant only for special people or for those who can pay for her services. She is not for the poor. She can be called only when there are complications and then also she has to be paid.'³²

8.53 As for sex differentials, they are deep-rooted in social attitudes regarding the needs of women for care and assistance during ailments. In many areas we were told that rural society does not always care to report women's ailments, or seek medical aid. Women themselves often prefer to be silent in such matters. The studies in nutritional deficiencies of women indicate that their requirements are often sacrificed to provide a little more nutrition to others in the family. The incidence of diseases caused by malnutrition is higher not only among adult women, but even among female infants. At the same time hospital records reveal that more male children are treated for such diseases.³³

8.54 The two sets of indicators-demographic trends, and access to medical care, both reveal the same situation regarding the health status of women.

This increase in comparative neglect of female lives as an expendable asset, observed to persist and increase over several decades, is a matter of serious concern.³⁴

III FAMILY PLANNING

8.55 If the masses of Indian women are to be freed from their status as 'expendable assets' some of the obvious and immediate answers lies in releasing them from the bondage of repeated and frequent childbirth, providing them with some choice in the size of their families and in ensuring adequate medical facilities to protect them during and against maternity.

8.56 Propagators of the family planning movement in India have been keen to emphasise the improvement in the status of women as one of the direct consequences of acceptance of

30. Banerjee, D. Op-cit. The study covered 16 villages from seven States. Both the primary Health centres and the villages selected were much above the average. For a full report on the study, see the paper by the same author Health behaviour of Rural Populations: Impact of Rural services: *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. VIII, 1973-pp. 2261-2268

31. See Chapter VI for similar of problem of teachers and inspectresses of schools.

32. Banerjee, D.—Op. cit.

33. Gopalan, C.—Op. cit.

34. Mitra, Ashok *Population in India's Development 1947-2000*, 1974 p.13

response to family planning from different sections of society. The answers were interesting. Those doctors who had some kind of social commitment and sympathetic attitude invariably said that women from all classes and all religions came to them for advice while the others complained that Muslim women and women from the poorer sections of society were not interested. Our general impression has been that men, particularly Muslims, are not very much concerned about family planning, though in Kerala an enthusiastic Collector informed us that in the Family Planning camps a number of Catholic and Muslim men came to him for vasectomy but they did not want anyone to know about it and requested that the operations may be performed at night. He agreed to make the necessary arrangements and the response was good. According to him there was no significant difference in the percentage of acceptors from different communities. In a village in West Bengal while a B.D.C. was complaining that Muslims were not coming forward for family planning, an old, poor Muslim woman came up and asked where she could take her daughter-in-law for advice, so that she would stop having any more children. She already had 5 children. In Kashmir, the educated and working women are very much interested in family planning and we did not come across any group of women expressing disapproval on religious grounds.

8.65 An analysis of variance in five factors, viz., educational level of spouses, family income, number of children, urbanisation and exposure to mass media simultaneously has shown that the effect of each of these factors on the use of family planning methods is significant at 1% level.⁴ Some studies have suggested that the differential in adoption and use of family planning methods between States may be due to the differences in socio-economic characteristic of couples⁵ in actual implementation of strategies or combination of both.⁶

8.66 While some of the studies occasionally contradict findings of previous research, one factor which is generally emphasised by most is education, particularly the education of women.⁷ The Regional Fertility Survey conducted by the Demographic Research Centre, Lucknow 1966-67, indicated that mean number of live births varied inversely with the mother's education. The educational level of both husband and wife was found to have a very large influence on their attitudes towards family planning. The Delhi Fertility Survey conducted by the Demographic Research Centre, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi in 1969-70, based on a total sample of 9,000 households, indicated the inverse relationship between a couple's educational level and average number of live births in a pronounced way only when both husband and wife were educated beyond matriculation level, the variation being 2.73 for this group and 4.47 for illiterate couples. The Mysore Population Study reported that among the social and economic factors studied, the one which appeared to be the most significant in relation to fertility in Bangalore City was educational status, but education below the high school or university stage was not found to be related significantly to the average number of children born.

8.67 Education may affect fertility in two ways :—

- (i) by increasing knowledge and advantages of family planning; and
- (ii) by generating deliberate efforts for a planned family.

The first is effective at lower educational levels, while the latter operates probably when a sufficiently high level of education is achieved by the couple. The National Sample Survey indicated that the percentage of husbands desiring additional children after 2, declined from 60 when they were illiterate to 41.59 when they were intermediate and above. However, the decline was neither consistent nor pronounced when the educational level was below intermediate and above.

4. Operation Research Group, *Family Planning Practices in India* Baroda, 1973.

5. Jain, Anirudh K. and Sarma, D.V.N., 'Some Explanatory Factors for Statewise Differential use of Family Planning Methods in India' (Unpublished) cited in 'An Appraisal of Family Planning in India' by the same author—*population in India's Development* 1947-2000 page. 401.

6. (i) Aggarwala, S.N., 'A Study of Factors Explaining Variability in Family Planning Performance in Different States in India'. (ii) Vig, O.P., 'An Application of Path Analysis To Study Variation in Acceptance of the Family Planning Problems in India 1966-71. Proceedings of All India Seminar on Family Planning Problems in India, International Institute for Population Studies, Bombay, 1972. (iii) Misra, B.D., 'Family Planning—Differential Performance of States, *Economic and Political Weekly* 29th September, 1973.

7. Vide Chapter II, Section on Fertility, Family Planning and Education of Women.

TABLE XVII(a):

Percentage of husbands (with wife under 45 years of age) desiring additional children after two surviving children by educational standard.

<i>Educational standards of husbands</i>		<i>Percent husbands desiring additional children after two in each category</i>
1.	Illiterate	60.00
2.	Literate but below primary	52.44
3.	Primary	60.91
4.	Middle	53.65
5.	Matriculate	54.21
6.	Intermediate and above	41.59
7.	Total (All-India Urban)	55.89

Source : National Sample Survey

TABLE XVII (b)

Attitudes towards Family Planning and Educational level of wife

<i>Attitude towards family planning</i>	<i>Percent of couples Educational level of wife</i>			
	<i>Illiterate</i>	<i>Gone to primary school</i>	<i>Gone to secondary school</i>	<i>Gone to college</i>
Percent desiring three or less children	34.8	54.3	66.7	76.0
One must have a son	89.2	87.1	85.4	72.4
Disapprove adoption of birth control methods	46.5	23.0	1.43	6.4

Source: Operation Research Group, Baroda, Family Planning Practice in India. The First All India Report p. 5.

The Dharwar Surveys on the attitudes towards family planning undertaken by the Dharwar Demographic Research Centre in 1962 and 1969 indicated that educational level was the most important factor associated with awareness about family planning.

8.68 While all the major surveys found a positive relationship between education and knowledge, acceptance and practice of family planning, most of them have revealed the existence of other associational factors which may have influenced this relationship. Education is generally associated with one or more of the following: (a) rise in the age of marriage; (b) diversification of consumption pattern of people, involving both material and non-material aspects which can lead to a decline in the psychic utility generated by the birth of children; (c) urbanisation; (d) possible increase in work force participation of women; (e) higher socio-economic status of the couple; (f) higher mobility; (g) higher exposure to mass media and (h) more diversified knowledge of family planning methods. It has been found that couples with primary level education or below have very limited knowledge of family planning and are most often aware only of sterilisation and I.U.C.D.⁸

8.69 Most of the methods for contraception affect women directly, and acceptance by them would indicate the success or failure of a method.

8. Intra-uterine contraceptive device.

- (c) *Humanitarian grounds*, where the pregnancy has been caused by rape or
- (d) *Social grounds* :—
 - (i) where the pregnancy in a married woman is the result of contraceptive failure, or
 - (ii) that the environment of the pregnant women during the continuance of pregnancy and at the time the child would be born and thereafter so far as is foreseeable would involve risk of injury to her health.

Termination can be done only by registered practitioners certified for the purpose in approved places, mainly Government Hospitals.

8.76 While the Act emphasises its importance as a health measure, the permission granted under section 3(2) to permit such termination for married women in cases of contraceptive failure, has emphasised its importance as an instrument of population control. This has given rise to a strong difference of opinion among medical personnel who are averse to using abortion for such a purpose. Many of them insist on tubectomy as a condition for abortion. In their view, based on experience, abortions often lead to frequent pregnancies, apart from its health hazards.⁹

8.77 There is considerable evidence that the measure is being used more for birth control than for other reasons. According to a study undertaken in the Government and Children Hospital, Egmore, Madras, out of 7,957 abortions only 11 were for therapeutic reasons. 617 were cases of induced abortions admitted to the hospital only after complications had set in.¹⁰

8.78 A study undertaken by the International Research Fertility Programme revealed that 88% of abortion cases were among married women, of whom 55% were between the age of 25 to 33, 81% were urban, 19.1% rural; 37% had three or four children. In another study it was found that 72% were married, of whom 60% were in the 20 to 29 age group. The average total pregnancy of these groups was 4.3, where the average number of living children 2.5 and 0.8 had previous abortions. 50% of all the patients had a previous abortion in their record 17.8% had 2 to 5.¹¹

8.79 All the studies indicate "that most pregnant women who go in for induced abortions are fully motivated for small family norms if not planned parenthood. These people are very amenable and can be fully motivated for adoption of family planning methods, more often sterilization, if they have two or more living children or other temporary methods of spacing children."¹²

8.80 We have given serious consideration to this matter and discussed it with several representatives of the medical profession. While we appreciate the ethical considerations which make some of them reluctant to perform this operation, we feel that it is a woman's right to have control over the size of her family. At the same time it is important that doctors should have the authority to discourage such operations when it poses a definite risk to the health of a particular patient.

8.81 We, however, feel that the condition being imposed in many hospitals, that abortion will only be performed if the patient agreed to sterilization, should not be compulsive, particularly where a woman has only one child. It would be far better to adopt methods of persuasion through expert counselling rather than compulsion. Compulsive conditions of this kind will only drive women to unqualified persons, thus defeating the main purpose of this Act.

8.82 We have been informed that there are serious psychological hazards posed by both pregnancies as well as sterilization. It is, therefore, imperative to organise systematic research on this field, to ascertain the impact of these situations and operations on the physical and mental health of women.

9. Menon. M.K.K.—'Termination of Pregnancy'—Papers submitted to Seminar on Abortion held in the India International Centre in January, 1974.

10. Rajasekheran, N—Maternal and Child Health aspect of Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act.

11. Menon op. cit.

12. Balakrishnan, P.R. 'Implementation of Medical Termination of Pregnancy.'

8.83 The difficulties placed before us by medical personal regarding the recording procedure and paper work involved in these operations, lead us to suggest that these procedures need to be simplified. It is also necessary to extend facilities for authorised termination of pregnancies, particularly in the rural areas. We have also been informed that though the law does not require it, many hospitals insist on the husband's consent before performing these operations. A special effort needs to be made to convince the medical profession of the social value of this law, from the point of view of both individuals and society.

8.84 We have also been informed that most doctors are reluctant to perform these operations in the case of unmarried girls. It is necessary to clarify the point that rape is not the only ground to justify termination in cases of unmarried girls nor is there any legal obligation on the doctor to inform the police of an abortion done in a rape case. We note that the All India Medical Council has introduced this Act in the syllabus for medical jurisprudence, with the object of setting up new norms for the medical profession. This will go a long way in breaking down the resistance of doctors.

8.85 *We would also like to recommend the following changes in the Law:*

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

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

Change in Policy

8.86 During the First and Second Five Year Plans, Government's approach to the problem of population growth, and the need for family planning, was a long term objective, depending as much, if not more, on 'improvement in living standards and more widespread education especially among women', as on positive measures for 'inculcation of the need and techniques of family planning'.¹³ Admitting that rates of population growth could only be altered over a period, it was agreed that programmes to restrain population growth had to complement a massive development effort.¹⁴

8.87 From the Third Plan, however, restraint of population growth received a much greater emphasis and priority, with time-bound targets for reducing the birth rate and heavy investment in the administrative network to mount the programmes on the lines of a military operation, and the adoption of practices like mass sterilisation camps, financial incentives and appointment of promoters, to make sterilisation acceptable to the people. The legalisation of abortions in cases of contraceptive failure was also a step to promote reduction in the birth rate. Some State Governments even adopted measures to deny maternity benefits to Women Government Servants after the third child. We feel strongly about this measure, for the denial of maternity benefits to a working woman is likely to affect both the health of the mother as well as that of the child. In Madhya Pradesh, we met a group of women teachers who complained bitterly that this measure has resulted in a number of them having to work till the day before the child was born. We have already pointed out the results of the absence of this benefit to construction workers.¹⁵

8.88 The result of this change in emphasis was to put excessive reliance on the clinical, rather than the welfare approach to family planning. Heavy investment in services, personnel and propaganda, exclusively devoted to family planning, led to a relative neglect of the other health and welfare services. In the case of women, the maternity and child health services, family welfare, adult education, and economic progress, all suffered relative lack of attention and resources, and Family Planning came to be described as the most important governmental programme for women. The table indicates the inroads made by this programme on the

13. I Five Year Plan.

14. II Five Year Plan.

15. Vide Chapter 6 Section on Non-Agricultural Occupations.

investment of health services as a whole, resulting in the "unfinished public health revolution" in India.

TABLL XX
Allocation for Health & Family Planning in various Plans
(Rupees in Crores)

	<i>I Plan</i>	<i>II Plan</i>	<i>III Plan</i>	<i>IV Plan</i>	<i>V Plan</i>
a) Allocation for other Health Programmes	98	216	226	226	816
b) Allocation for Family Planning	6.50	49.70	269.70	315	516
Ratio of allocation for Family Planning to other Health Programmes	6.63	23	114.91	139.38	63.23

8.89 The Draft Fifth Plan has changed the emphasis again, mainly in view of a growing realisation that the programme is becoming increasingly unpopular among many sections, and is failing to achieve the unrealistic targets. It is also admitted that a purely clinical approach cannot overcome the socio-psychological resistance caused by poverty, ignorance, low survival rate of children among the poorer sections, and the economic and social dependence on children.

8.90 Though integration of family planning with maternal and child health care was suggested in the Fourth Plan, the policy of integration could not be achieved, since the family planning services had been already placed under a different administrative machinery from the other health services.¹⁶ A new strategy evolved for the Fifth Plan visualises the integration of family planning into the general health services, particularly its maternal and child care component including nutrition. The principle of integration will be extended to other fields, in particular to efforts at mass motivation through the existing channels for functional literacy, workers' education, health education and social welfare. It is proposed to reorganise training programmes to train multipurpose health workers to deliver the integrated health care services under the Minimum Needs Programme. The impact of this decision to see family planning in its proper perspective is clearly visible in the allocation of resources proposed for the Fifth Plan.

"The primary objective during the Fifth Plan is to provide minimum public health facilities integrated with family planning and nutrition for vulnerable groups—children, pregnant women and lactating mothers. It will be necessary to consolidate past gains in the various fields of health, such as communicable diseases, medical education and provision of infrastructure in the rural areas."¹⁷

8.91 During our tours we found that wherever the medical personnel and the village level workers were mature and sympathetic in their approach and worked with a sense of social commitment, their persuasive power evoked a great degree of response. On the other hand there was considerable criticism of the 'motivators', most of whom are very young and inexperienced as well as purely untrained persons. It was a frequent observation that they were responsible for criminal mistakes like persuading extremely young persons both male and female to undergo sterilisation, or bringing elderly women who were long past the child bearing age for the same entirely because of the financial incentives.

"Perhaps the greatest mistakes in the formulation of family planning programmes has been a gross over-estimation of the effectiveness of the 'motivators' and an equally gross under-estimation of the resistance to be encountered motivating a community as a wholeMotivation techniques were viewed as some sort of a magic which could be applied by a person to induce another to accept family planning."¹⁸

8.92 We understand that it has been decided to introduce community incentives and group awards for the programme personnel with a view to increasing the involvement of the

16. Banerjee, D—op. cit.

17. Draft Fifth Five Year Plan—Chapter 10-Para 10.9.

18. Banerjee, D—'Family Planning—Some Inhibiting Factors' in *Population in India's Development—1947—2000*—p.408.

community and strengthening the commitment of the staff and institutions in order to improve the quality of the services. Most of the doctors and the women with whom we discussed problems of family planning were of the opinion that while payment to acceptors should continue particularly for daily wage workers, the payment to motivators is not only a waste but has been responsible for much of the unpopularity of this programme. There were also severe criticisms of the lack of adequate follow-up measures. We also came across large gaps both in areas and communities where the family planning services have not reached. One group of women whom we met in Bangalore had never heard of family planning.

8.93 During the course of its tours in the States, the Committee met a number of health and family planning officials, social workers, as well as a cross-section of rural and urban women. An analysis of the tour reports reveals that the message of family planning has reached almost everywhere, but access to health and family planning services was most inadequate. Even in slum areas of big cities, there were no family planning clinics in the vicinity, and the women did not know where to go, though they were anxious to avail themselves of the information. In the rural areas, there was an acute shortage of maternity facilities, and trained medical personnel.

8.94 In Bastar district, and in some tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh, we were informed that the birth rate is 29 per 1000, which is well below the national target for the Vth Plan, and yet we found money being spent on Family Planning projects in these areas. There were huge hoardings and posters advocating the small family norm, when this money could very well have been utilised for other welfare activities in these extremely backward areas.

8.95 In our view, the inadequacy of qualified medical personnel and mature counselling present the greatest internal drawback to the success of this programme. We are entirely in agreement with the Draft Fifth Five Year Plan, that integration of family planning with more positive health services like maternal and child health and nutrition, and improvement in the life expectancy of children and mothers, will provide a far greater incentive to the adoption of family planning measures than the hitherto adopted negative approach.

III WELFARE PROGRAMMES

8.96 Programmes for women's welfare and development can be classified under the following broad base:

A. Programmes in the rural areas:—Welfare Extension Projects, Family and Child Welfare Projects, Organisation of Mahila Mandals, Training Schemes for Workers.

B. Programmes in urban areas:—Welfare Extension Projects, and Working Women's Hostels.

C. Other Programmes:—Grants-in-aid to voluntary organisations, Condensed Courses of Education for Adult Women, Adult Literacy and social education for women. Craft training centres, Socio-economic programmes, Nutrition Programmes, Social Defence Programmes, Border Area Programmes, Homes for Women.

8.97 A. *Rural areas*:—The concept of rural development as conceived in India covers a wide field and has a history. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore had seen rural development as an important method of social mobilisation which could build the social infrastructure for independence.¹ According to Tagore, it was an effort to make the village a self-reliant and self-respectful unit, with knowledge of its culture and history, and to enable the people to make use of modern resources for their full upliftment—physical, social, economic, and intellectual. Gandhi viewed rural development as aiming to make every village a 'Republic', in which no person would be unemployed, and everyone would enjoy sufficient nutritious food, houses with adequate hygiene and sanitation, and enough khadi for their clothing. Thus rural development was not seen only in its micro-dimension, but as a new philosophy for society, which was to bring social consciousness or a revolution among the rural people. Tagore's Shriniketan and Gandhi's Village Construction Programmes were the forerunners of rural development that was to be taken up by the Government after independence. The Community Development Programme undertaken by the Government of India drew heavily from the Gandhian concept.

1. Das Gupta, S.—'Voluntary Organisation in Rural Development'—National Seminar on Role of Voluntary Organisations in Rural Development: New Delhi, 1971.

8.98 The application of Gandhian ideas to the field of women's development had been done by the Kasturba Memorial Trust after the death of Kasturba Gandhi, which had been given a concrete form in the objectives and activities of the Kasturba Memorial Trust. This Trust was born with the objective of serving rural women by providing:

- (i) education for women and children;
- (ii) medical and health services; and
- (iii) socio-economic programmes in the form of khadi and village industries to relieve economic distress.

The Trust trained a number of gramsevikas and mid-wives and the training centres were specially conceived to train and mobilise village women, specially widows and deserted wives. The health programmes aimed at prevention of diseases as well as promotion of positive health through maternal and child welfare programmes.

8.99 When the Central Social Welfare Board decided to launch the Welfare Extension Projects in 1954, this three-fold approach was adopted as the basic framework for provision of services. The activities included Balwadis, maternity services and general medical aid, social education and craft training for women. The original Welfare Extension Projects (WEP) were to serve a unit of 25-40 contiguous villages, with a population of 25-30 thousand through five centres. At the end of the Second Plan, there were 420 such projects with 2,004 centres. Eight of these projects, with 40 centres, continue to be operated by the Central Social Welfare Board, while others have either been closed or handed over to Mahila Mandals and voluntary organisations which receive 75% financial assistance.

8.100 Since the general objectives and methodology of this programme were similar to those of the larger programmes of community development initiated by the Government during the First Plan in 1952, and to eliminate duplication of work, it was decided that Welfare Extension Projects should be started in Community Development Blocks on a coordinated basis. All original Welfare Extension Projects were converted into this pattern as soon as the area was covered by a C.D. Block. These projects covered a block of 100 village with a population of about 60,000 through 10 centres. The work and the functionaries were supervised by a Project Implementing Committee which consisted of representatives of block officials and local voluntary workers. For the first year the budget was shared by the Central Social Welfare Board, the State Government and Community Development Block in the ratio of 12: 6: 5 and at the end of 5 years the total expenditure was shared in the ratio of 24: 12: 5. At the end of March 1971, there were 264 projects with 2,800 centres.

8.101 Since greater importance was increasingly attached to the role of voluntary organisations in the continuance of welfare programmes, 1,629 centres of the Welfare Extension Projects (original and coordinated pattern) were handed over to Mahila Mandals by 31st March, 1966. 442 Mahila Mandals, who have taken over one or more activities of this project were given a grant of Rs. 25.69 lakhs during 1972-73.

8.102 On the recommendations of the Central Social Welfare Board and an Evaluation Committee of Social Welfare on the Welfare Extension Projects in 1964, it was decided to revise services existing in rural areas in different patterns aiming to develop a country-wide programme of integrated welfare services for children. Thus the Family and Child Welfare (F & CW) scheme was initiated in November, 1967, whereas extension projects provided services for women and children, the Family and Child Welfare Projects aimed at integrated development of the pre-school child, training to young mothers and all services that were necessary for the proper growth and development of the child and rural family.

8.103 The family and child welfare projects were funded by the Central and the State Governments in a 75: 25 ratio and aided by UNICEF with equipment, stipends and training facilities. They have progressively taken over the functions of the earlier projects of the Central Social Welfare Board and the Ministry of Community Development. The services provided are:—

- (a) Integrated services to rural children; specially pre-school;
- (b) Basic training to women and young girls in home management, health education, nutrition education, child care. General health and maternity services for women were also to be provided with the aid of the Primary Health Centres. Similar collaboration was also envisaged for nutrition. The CSWB's Annual Report for

1972-73 however laments the lack of coordination and cooperation from other agencies which results in gradual denudation of the programmes.

- (c) Assistance to women through Mahila Mandals, specially established centres and existing welfare agencies, for getting supplementary work to augment their income.
- (d) Cultural, educational and recreational activities for women and children.

There were 221 projects in existence at the end of 1970-71 and during 1971-72, 20 coordinated welfare extension projects were added to this scheme, bringing the total to 240. On 31st March, 1973, 281 projects were functioning.

8.104 Maternity and Child Welfare Services :— With the integration of the First Plan, Maternity and Child Welfare Services were taken up by the Ministry of Health as part of the overall development programme in health. These services were augmented by WHO and UNICEF. A number of Maternity and Child Welfare Bureaux were established in States, staffed by qualified women medical officers. At the same time, the then Community Projects administration also undertook these services in the Community Development and National Extension Service Blocks. Other Ministries like Railways, Defence and Labour also promoted Maternity and Child Welfare Programmes through the Ministry of Health. The number of Maternity and Child Welfare Centres increased and these services were given an important place in rural development programmes. The Union Government assisted the States in establishment of primary health centres and sub-centres covering a C. D. Block. At present, 5,195 Centres are functioning in the country. Maternity and Child Welfare Services are also undertaken by the Ministries of Railways, Labour (under Labour Welfare and the various Acts in this section) and public sector undertakings.

8.105 Mahila Mandals :— Practically from the beginning it was realised that the objectives of these rural development programmes could not be achieved without the active participation and leadership of the local community. Government functionaries, however, efficient and dedicated, can only provide some stimulus and act as catalytic agents to train and release efforts for self-help of the people. This was particularly true of women who had been paralysed by generations of social oppression, and denial of basic rights. Both the Central Social Welfare Board and the Department of Community Development concluded that the proper agency for the success of this programme would be a committee of local women. The organisation of Mahila Mandals thus became one of the objectives of these rural development programmes.

8.106 The declared objective of community development is to enable rural women to organise themselves at the village level to assemble on a regular basis to learn from each other and from workers appointed by the Government. The basic idea is to create opportunities for rural women to improve their status as house-wives and to take part in public affairs. The department therefore organises Mahila Mandals, imparts training facilities to their members and provides incentive awards for performance.

8.107 Mahila Mandals were organised in villages and blocks for promoting women's programmes. Nutrition, education, health, mother and child care, home improvement, adult literacy, recreation and cultural activities and training and house and family planning were part of their programmes. By the end of 1972-73 there were about 53,000 Mahila Mandals with a total membership of 14,00,000 averaging 11 Mahila Mandals per block. Under the Applied Nutrition Programme, additional facilities are being provided for the promotion of economic activities of Mahila Mandals towards development and management of kitchen and school gardens, organisation of fishery units etc. During the Fourth Plan 7,500 awards in various categories were given to Mahila Mandals.

8.108 The Central Social Welfare Board and the State Social Welfare Advisory Boards also realised the importance of Mahila Mandals and after 1961 they are being given grants upto 75% for running some programmes of the Board. In 1972-73, 442 Mahila Mandals received a grant of about Rs 25.69 lakhs. They are also running some Welfare Extension Projects of the Board.

8.109 Voluntary agencies like the Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh have also established a large number of Mahila Mandals. The representatives of the Village Mahila Mandals from the District Mahila Samities and the representatives of the District Mahila Samities constitute

the State panel or State branches. According to the Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh, its branches in the 17 States now cover 7,000 villages.

8.110 *Training Scheme for Workers* :—The various functionaries required for these rural development schemes are trained at centres located in different parts of the country. The training is organised by some government agencies like the Directorate of Extension of the Ministry of Agriculture and various schools of Social Work, non-governmental organisations like the Kasturba Memorial Trust Visva Bharati, Jamia Millia with assistance from the Central Social Welfare Board.

8.111 The Department of Community Development in the Ministry of Agriculture has a programme for training associate women workers to enable members of Mahila Mandals to come forward to become organised. The members of Mahila Mandals get to know about the organisation of Balwadis, health and nutrition, education, nursery, kitchen gardening etc. About 20,000 women received training in the Third and Fourth Plan and a sum of Rs 11.17 lakhs was spent during the Fourth Plan.

8.112 The Directorate of Extension of the Ministry of Agriculture also provides training for village level workers of Community Development Block at 25 centres. The emphasis is on the protection of Agricultural production and nutrition education. In service, training facilities are provided after 2-3 years service and two week refresher courses are given to Mukhya Sevikas. Refresher courses are also given to Instructresses for Gram Sevika and Mukhya Sevika training centres for six weeks. Associate workers such as Gram Lakshmis or Gram Kakis are also given one month's training. Under the nutrition education scheme of 1969-70, training is being given to associate women workers.

8.113 Farm Women's Training Courses for one week are organised at about 100 training centres for farm women. This farmers' training was started in 1968-69 in a few districts and is now being implemented in almost all districts. The emphasis is on agricultural production, re-production patterns of high yielding variety cereals, stock managements, nutrition etc. Radio broadcasting is also used for educating the farm women and organising discussion groups.

8.114 The Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh also holds various training camps for rural women. Among these are leadership training camps sanctioned by the Department of Social Welfare in border areas. Similar programmes have also been sponsored by the CSWB. The increased agricultural production programme is a seven day camp sanctioned by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture for training in improved agricultural methods and covered 650 villages till March 1973. The Ministry of Health has sanctioned the family planning orientation programme to train village women in methods of family planning.

B. Urban Areas

8.115 The structure of welfare programmes in urban areas varies from region to region. The municipalities and local administration are responsible for providing basic formal education and health facilities like schools, hospitals, dispensaries etc. Welfare programmes as such have already been left to voluntary organisations, which in some cases receive grants through the Central Social Welfare Board or the State Governments.

8.116 In 1958 the Central Social Welfare Board started Welfare Extension Projects in the urban areas to meet the needs of people living in the slums, particularly in new industrial areas. These projects provided balwadis, creches, arts and craft classes and family planning and maternity advice for women; they also do placement of destitutes. 65 such projects were in existence at the end of the Third Plan. They were reduced to 33 by 1971-72 and 1972-73. In 1972-73, 34 Welfare Extension Projects received Rs 2.78 lakhs benefiting approximately 70,000 families.

8.117 *Working Women's Hostels* :—An increasing number of women are leaving their homes and entering employment. The problem of accommodation in metropolitan areas, particularly impelled the Central Social Welfare Board to provide grants for hostels for working women as one of its services. The Board viewed this service as a preventive measure against the possibility of young girls in urban areas being exposed to undesirable and anti-social influences.

8.118 The scheme was started during the Second Plan and the Board sanctioned grants to voluntary welfare institutions willing to provide healthy accommodation at reasonable rates

for working women of lower income groups. At the end of the Third Plan, 101 grants amounting to Rs 9.76 lakhs had been sanctioned. During 1972-73, 29 hostels received a grant of Rs 66,000 from the Board. During 1971-72, the Department of Social Welfare initiated a scheme for financial assistance to voluntary institutions for the construction of hostel buildings in capital cities and cities with a population of over ten lakhs. The pattern of assistance is under review at present and in the Fifth Plan a sum of Rs. 5 crores has been set aside for hostels for working women.

C. Other Programmes

8.119 (i) *Condensed Courses of Education for Adult Women* :— The very high percentage of illiteracy amongst women as well as various difficulties in imparting education to them gave rise to the condensed courses of education for adult women which are being implemented by various governmental and non-governmental agencies. The programme was initiated by the Central Social Welfare Board in 1958 with the dual objective of opening new vistas of employment for needy women and to create a band of trained workers for various projects in the rural areas.

8.120 Under the scheme, adult women between the ages of 18 and 30, who have some schooling, are prepared for middle schools, matriculation or equivalent examination within a period of two years. Grants upto Rs 35,000 per course of two years are given for maintenance, stipends, salaries to teachers and educational equipment. Women who complete these courses can go in for vocational training as nurse, mid-wife, gramsevikas, etc. In the Second Plan Rs 58.82 lakhs were sanctioned for 271 courses, though only Rs 28.88 lakhs was released. In the Third Plan, a provision of Rs 150 lakhs was made for 500 courses. Upto the end of February 1973, 1,386 courses were started and Rs 3.0 crores were spent. Of 33,000 women enrolled about 25,000 completed their studies. The programme has been extended to wives of Jawans killed or disabled in action. The Community Development Department also has established adult literacy centres in blocks which cover women.

8.121 (ii) *Socio-Economic Programmes* :— It was realised at an early stage of the welfare programmes that they would not have the desired impact unless the women were imparted some craft or technical training. This was a part of the three pronged approach of the earliest programmes. While health received some attention and resources from the Ministry of Health, and Family Planning, as well as welfare agencies, the economic schemes did not receive corresponding attention from the concerned governmental agencies. On a very minor scale, some socio-economic schemes were initiated by the Central Social Welfare Board and its grants-in-aid schemes and also organised on a small scale by the Department of Community Development and some voluntary organisations. Initially started by the Ministry of Rehabilitation for refugee women, it was taken up by the Central Social Welfare Board in 1954, to provide leisure time employment to women in lower income groups and help them supplement their income. This was undertaken in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry which provide them necessary assistance in technical training, finance and marketing. The scheme was working in co-operation with State Governments and State Social Welfare Advisory Boards. 95 demonstration-cum-training centres set up in 26 pilot projects for industries in the Community Development Project areas have benefited women.

8.122 At present the socio-economic programme of the CSWB provides financial assistance to voluntary welfare institutions and to Co-operative Societies for setting up small production units where needy women or handicapped persons are given initial training and subsequently provided with employment. In the implementation of this programme, the Board as well as voluntary institutions and Co-operative Societies obtain technical assistance from the National Small Industries Organisation and regional offices of the All-India Handicrafts Board and All-India Handloom Board. The categories of the scheme that are being implemented under this programme are :—

1. Production-units of small-scale industries, such as manufacture of toys and articles, printing books, binding, fruit preservation and canning, bakery, confectionary, ready-made garments etc.
2. Handicrafts training-cum-procurement and production units; for example, cane and bamboo articles, mat-weaving, traditional embroidery, etc.
3. Handloom training-cum-production units;
4. Units ancillary to large industries; and

5. Industrial co-operative societies set up under the voluntary welfare programmes started by the Board in 1953-54.

8.123 Upto the end of March 1972, the Board had approved grants to 130 institutions for setting up production units with an employment potential of about 4,000 under various categories of schemes. By the end of March 1973, an amount of Rs 54.60 lakhs had been sanctioned for 140 approved units with an employment potential of 4,235.

8.124 The Annual Report of 1972-73 of the Central Social Welfare Board mentions that the attention of the State Governments have been drawn to the need for extending some sort of protection or patronage to socio-economic units run by voluntary institutions buying their products. The problem of marketing remains unsolved and unless this is overcome, the objective of a number of socio-economic programmes will remain unfulfilled. A number of Ministries such as Railways, Ministry of Labour, apart from the Ministry of Agriculture and Community Development have small schemes for providing craft training to women. The Mahila Samities of the Ministry of Railways have handicraft centres to help women in learning some trade to enable them to supplement the family income. Some public sector undertakings have mahila mandals which also provide such training. While the emphasis on these programmes to improve women's earning power indicates awareness of the dimension of women's problems, it is doubtful whether these programmes are having the desired impact, since most of these women are not able to obtain the raw-material or market the finished goods. It is also remarkable that the Governmental agencies responsible for promoting industrial development have completely ignored them and the reality of the problem that they are trying to solve.²

8.125 (iii) *Nutrition Programmes* :—The Plans emphasised nutrition as a major problem particularly in rural areas, and among the lower income groups. The Department of Social Welfare and the Central Social Welfare Board, the Ministry of Health and Family Planning, the Department of Community Development of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Education are all operating various nutrition schemes for women and children.

8.126 The Special Nutrition Programme of the Government of India was introduced in 1970-71 to provide supplementary nutrition to children in tribal areas and urban slums, by the Department of Social Welfare. This scheme covers a number of pre-school children in the 0—6 age groups and nursing and expectant mothers. Over 19,600 feeding centres have been set up in the tribal areas and about 7,500 in urban areas. The Department of Social Welfare also implements a nutrition programme for children in the age-group 3-5, through the balwadis and day care centres run by the CSWB, the Indian Council of Child Welfare, the Harijan Sevak Sangh, and the Adimjati Sevak Sangh, covering 2,00,640 children and 5,577 institutions. The balwadis of the Family and Child Welfare Projects were generally excluded from this Programme because provision for nutrition was already provided in the scheme. The Board, however, feels that it has not been possible to build up adequate machinery for implementation and supervision of this programme at the State and Central levels and it requires greater provision by the Government.

8.127 The Directorate of Extension of the Ministry of Agriculture has been running a Composite Nutrition Programme since 1969-70, to provide nutrition education in areas not covered under the Applied Nutrition Programme. It includes nutrition education, through mahila mandals, strengthening the supervisory machinery for women's programmes, encouragement of economic activities of mahila mandals, training of associate women workers and demonstration feeding. The Applied Nutrition Programme of the Department of Community Development was introduced in collaboration with UNICEF, FAO and WHO. It was intended to educate the rural people in improved nutrition by promoting the production and consumption of protective foods like fruits, vegetables, fish and poultry. From 1966-67, steps were taken to co-ordinate the operation of the Applied Nutrition Programme with other schemes like the Mid-Day Meal Programme of the Ministry of Education, and the Family and Child Welfare Projects of the Department of Social Welfare. During the Third Plan period, the ANP covered 221 blocks and by the end of 1972-73 it covered 1,101 projects and spent Rs. 1.46 crores for this purpose. Under this programme, demonstration, in cooking and feeding is held, particularly designed to give direction on nutrition through the mahila mandals and to train women workers.

8.128 The Ministry of Health has increasingly emphasised nutrition particularly for pregnant women, lactating mothers and pre-school children of the weaker sections, through an integra-

2. Vide Chapter V — Section on Vocational and Technical training.

3. Annual Report 1972-73 — CSWB.

ted programme of supplementary feeding, health care, immunisation as well as nutrition education. During the Fifth Plan, concentrated attention will be given to these vulnerable sections in rural areas, urban slums, tribal development blocks and school going children of the weaker sections. Within the resources allocated, it should be possible to cover about 11 million additional beneficiaries in the Fifth Plan. This programme is under the budgetary control of the Department of Social Welfare.

8.129 The Fourth Plan Special Nutrition Programme for pre-school children and expectant and nursing mothers has been redesignated and included in the Integrated Child Development Programme in the Fifth Plan. The services include supplementary nutrition feeding, immunisation, health check-up and referral services, health and nutrition education. The entire expenditure for the ICDP during the Fifth Plan will be made by the Centre and implemented through the State Governments and Union Territories. It is proposed to cover about 7,000 nursing and expectant mothers in each project. Women between 15-44 years numbering approximately 23,000 will be provided nutrition and health education. In the tribal areas

2,450 nursing and expectant mothers and 7,000 women in the 15-44 age groups are the target population for each project. The ICDP depends on inter-departmental co-ordination between the Ministry of Health, State Health Departments, Community Development Department and the Department of Social Welfare. The existing 33,000 feeding centres of the Special Nutrition Programme and balwadi nutrition programmes in operation in organised slums, tribal areas and other rural areas will initially be included into ICDP centres in the project areas.

8.130 **Social Defence Programmes** :—Among the services available in the country for the correction and reformation of persons who come into conflict with the law are the following which apply directly to women :—

- a) Suppression of Immoral Traffic ;
- b) After care services;
- c) Welfare Services in Prisons;

These services are provided by the Department of Social Welfare and the Rehabilitation Directorate at Central level.

8.131 (a) The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act of 1956 provides for protective homes and reception centres. There are at present 33 protective homes and 68 reception centres and district shelters in the country. A scheme for short stay homes for rehabilitation of women and girls facing moral danger was approved in 1969-70 and two pilot projects—one in West Bengal and the other in Madhya Pradesh were provided grants of Rs. 1.10 lakh in 1972-73. During the Second Plan, programmes were drawn up under Social and Moral Hygiene and After Care Programmes not only for those under the SIT Act, but also those discharged from Correctional and non-Correctional Institutions. The State Governments were assisted to set up special homes such as protective homes.

8.132 We visited some of these protective homes. In the Protective Home in Lucknow and in the Nari Niketan in Delhi, efforts are made to rehabilitate the inmates by providing training in sewing and embroidery. There is no formal procedure for marketing of these products, nor are the inmates given any training either to organise production or marketing. We were informed that sewing machines are presented to the inmates when they are discharged to help them to become self-employed. This practice was reported to be prevalent in many States. According to reports by social workers in different parts of the country, most of these young women find it difficult to earn an adequate livelihood from this occupation. Quite a number are compelled to dispose of the machines, and revert to their original profession. We were rather distressed to find that these homes house women rescued from immoral traffic as well as young girls sent under the Children's Act. Even insane women are housed in these homes. We consider this to be a very unhealthy and undesirable situation. We also feel that the training provided for rehabilitation in these homes is not adequate and requires much greater attention and planning as well as resources. We were informed that in some of the homes, efforts are made to return these young women to their families wherever possible, or to arrange marriages for them.

8.133 There has been considerable discussion on these programmes for rehabilitation of victims of immoral traffic. During a recent Judicial Seminar on Correctional Services,⁴ the

4. Organised by the Central Bureau for Correctional Services in collaboration with the Delhi University in February 1974.

speakers, who included representatives of the Association for Social Health, the Director of Social Welfare, Delhi Administration and members of the staff of the Delhi School of Social Work, pointed out the inadequacy of the arrangements for the employment of these young women. Without economic rehabilitation, much of the efforts made for their rescue is wasted. Some social workers have suggested to us that the best way for rehabilitation would be to set up production-cum-marketing centres along with these Homes. It is also necessary to diversify the types of training provided to the inmates, since over-dependence on tailoring and embroidery has led to considerable waste. Economic independence is the only way to protect these women from the clutches of persons who have a vested interest in this traffic.

8.134 Homes are also provided for the aged and destitute women in various States though the total number of such homes is inadequate in terms of the population to be covered. A scheme for the welfare of destitute women between the ages of 18-44 and 45-65 providing for basic amenities of food, shelter, clothing, besides education and training in craft to enable the younger group to become self-reliant, as also services for dependents children upto 7 years was finalised in 1970-71. For the first group, residential institutions to accommodate 200 persons were to be provided. The scheme was to be implemented by giving grants-in-aid to voluntary organisations upto 75% of the expenditure. The total Fourth Plan provision was Rs. 100 lakhs. We regret to note that the scheme remains unimplemented.

8.135 *Grants-in-Aid* :—Grants-in-aid are extended to registered voluntary institutions working for welfare of women, children and handicapped persons. Under the grants-in-aid for women's welfare during the First and the Second Plan, assistance was provided for expansion, development and improvement of activities of voluntary organisations. On the basis of the recommendations of the grants-in-aid Committee, the Board decided to limit the assistance during the Third Plan to consolidate and improve the activities initiated during the First and the Second Plan. Generally all grants except those given for developing special schemes were given on a matching basis.

8.136 The amounts allocated to these schemes during the four Plans indicate that while the First and Second Plans brought in a number of voluntary institutions within the network for administration of welfare services, Government's dependence on these bodies has registered a decline during the Third and Fourth Plans.

Grants sanctioned to Voluntary Organisations by the Central Social Welfare Board under Grants-in-Aid Programme.⁵

1st Plan	Rs. 75,54,000
2nd Plan	Rs. 294,00,000
3rd Plan	Rs. 246,00,000
4th Plan	Rs. 159,61,000

Voluntary Organisations

8.137 Voluntary welfare services in India have always been an integral part of the cultural and social tradition. The bulk of the social services were provided by the voluntary sector prior to independence. Social welfare services have always been present in some form or the other for the well being of the weaker sections of society who, because of various handicaps, social, economic, physical, etc., could not make use of, or were traditionally denied, normal facilities. The weaker sections included women, children, the aged, infirm and handicapped, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

8.138 Voluntary organisations may opt for several alternative roles according to their objectives and composition. They may be innovational and experimental activities in fields where Government has not entered. They may co-exist with a public sector and the private sector for social development because they may have some advantages over the former or they can provide the Government with a supportive base, i.e., they can work like agents of the Government at local levels and operate programmes of the Government as their own.⁶

8.139 Soon after independence, on the basis of a survey made by the Planning Commission, it was estimated that there were about 10,000 voluntary organisations in the field of social welfare. In order to strengthen and encourage these agencies the Central Social Welfare Board was established in 1953, with a nationwide programme for grants-in-aid. It was

5. This does not include grants paid for socio-economic programmes or condensed courses.

6. Das Gupta, S. — op. cit.

realised that the voluntary organisations, with the qualities of flexibility, of experimentation, human touch, nearness to the clientele, sensitiveness to the new problems and capacity to discover new ideas could be of great assistance, since it was not possible for any Government to take care of all the welfare needs of the people. The voluntary agencies could also mobilise resources from within the community for social welfare.

8.140 The relative importance of the role of the State and the role of the voluntary agencies has been engaging the attention of policy makers, planners, social thinkers, administrators and voluntary workers. In 1959, a Study team on Social Welfare and Backward Classes, appointed by the Planning Commission, recommended that whereas all programmes of social welfare arising out of the statutory responsibility of the State should be sponsored by State departments of Social Welfare, other social welfare services to meet local needs should be implemented through voluntary organisations. A seminar on Social Administration in Developing Countries held in New Delhi in March, 1964, felt that the co-operation of the State and voluntary agencies in meeting social needs would always bring out better results in promoting welfare services on a larger scale.

8.141 We met representatives of some national voluntary organisations working for women's welfare and the welfare of socially deprived groups. We also met representatives of voluntary welfare organisations in every State during our tours. Most of the women's voluntary organisations have been confined to the urban areas, with its membership drawn mainly from educated urban middle class women. Their main activities are conducting literacy classes, adult education centres, balwadis, promoting women's co-operatives, small savings, handicrafts, etc. Some of these organisations have also taken up family planning programmes. In times of emergency, such organisations have organised canteens, blood banks and other services. These organisations seek to raise the status of women in the social, economic, political and educational fields. They have passed numerous resolutions for the uplift of Indian women, but their constructive activities have suffered from limitation of resources, personnel, and failure to reach rural areas.

8.142 Only a few organisations have endeavoured to work amongst rural women, to improve their living conditions, promote leadership and assist them to take part in developmental activities. The Government has given grants for some voluntary welfare activities. In some cases, the grant has been for administration and maintenance while in other cases it has been allotted for programmes only.

8.143 Apart from The Central Social Welfare Board's grants-in-aid programme, there is no machinery to co-ordinate and distribute the services provided by these bodies, to ensure greater efficiency and even distribution. Nor are the resources of the majority of these organisations adequate to maintain trained workers for their complex types of work. Initially, the important organisations were able to act as pressure groups in directing the attention of the Government to social problems, and to mobilise support for social legislation. Our investigation has shown that these law still remain unknown to the large mass of Indian women, who have not been able to take advantage of them. Most of these organisations operate independent of each other and as such have not been able to fully benefit the community.

Governmental Administration of Welfare Programmes :—

8.144 Expenditure for welfare programmes, including programmes meant for women is low in comparison to other sectors, since it has been viewed as a non-productive item in comparison to the economic sectors. In times of stringencies, financial cuts are made first in this sector, since returns from investments are not immediate. A break up of allocations indicates that a major part of the expenditure is on maintenance and establishment charges, leaving only a small percentage for actual services.⁷ The administrative tradition in India has tended to emphasise maintenance of law and order, and economic development, and departments dealing with welfare programmes generally occupy a relatively less important position in the Governmental structure. The training imparted to the administrators also emphasises the same aspects. It has now been realised that administration must also be welfare oriented and recently a working group has been set up to frame a syllabus for social administration for the training of service probationers at the National Academy of Administration and other State level training institutes.

7. The Welfare Centres run by the Labour Dept. in U.P. have an annual provision of Rs. 60,000. The expenditure on staff and other establishment charges, we discovered, came to nearly Rs. 4000 per month.

8.145 The administration and handling of welfare programmes has become increasingly technical. Administrators have to acquire technical orientation for successful implementation of social welfare programmes. The lack of emphasis on the required technical competence and the limitation of resources have had an adverse impact on the quality and success of welfare programmes.

8.146 Certain factors impede realisation of a high degree of rationality in organisation and flexibility in operation. The federal nature of our polity vests responsibility for implementing social policy and programmes with State and local authorities, but resources and agencies for planning are at the Centre. The weakness of local authorities further complicates the problems. There is dire need for greater co-ordination between voluntary agencies and organisations built up by Government, between activities of States and the Central Government and of the district or local level organisations and the States.

8.147 *State Level* :—At present the majority of the States have a Minister-in-charge of Social Welfare, though their portfolio might include other subjects. State Governments give still lower priority to social welfare programmes, and are reluctant to allocate sufficient resources. It has also been found that in the operation of the democratic process, the interests of the weaker sections are sometimes neglected, as they are relatively less vocal and less powerful than the dominant section of the population. Due to existing social prejudice and attitudes towards women, any policy regarding their welfare and development is limited either to education or welfare of special groups like handicapped or destitute women. Therefore, though social welfare is a State subject, the major share of the State's allocations go towards the maintenance of the existing social welfare activities initiated generally by the Centre.

8.148 As an illustration, it may be mentioned that during Shri Charan Singh's tenure as Chief Minister in U. P., all women's welfare programmes of the Government were summarily discontinued. The State Social Welfare (Advisory) Board was however allowed to continue because of strong representation from the State Finance Department that its abolition would result in stoppage of Central assistance. The closure provoked a protest from the women functionaries whose services were held up as a model to other States, because of their success. The result of the closure has left only skeletal services for women in the States.⁸

8.149 Most State Governments do not have any machinery for collection of data or planning of welfare services. The State Social Welfare (Advisory) Boards, which might have fulfilled this role, serve mainly as a link organisation to supervise, implement and report on the working of aided voluntary organisations in the State and as an agency of the Central Social Welfare Board. The relationship between Central and State Governments, the Central Social Welfare Board and the State Governments are also not clearly defined and the status of the State Boards differs from State to State.

8.150 Local administrations have shown even less interest in women's welfare programmes in general and local bodies authorised to allocate resources have given very low priority to them. Every where we were told that the Mahila Mandals were being starved of funds and not being provided even with accommodation. The process of co-opting women into the panchayats has also not been very successful as their small numbers has prevented them from being more effective in emphasising the needs of women. As a rule, they have not had an effective voice in policy making or the allocation of resources. The male members of the rural elite are by and large not favourably disposed towards improving and changing the position of women and consequently women's programmes are apt to be neglected.

8.151 *Increase in role of Centre* :—The neglect and indifference to welfare activities by the local and State Governments has led to an increase in the role of central agencies in this field. Within the federal framework the Central Government's role should normally be planning, monitoring progress of activities, stimulating particular activities to ensure a national minimum standard, and guiding States through policy directions, giving advice and providing technical and financial help. The reasons for this increase in the role of the Centre can, therefore, be summed up as follows :—

- (a) Limitation of resources of the State Governments;
- (b) Indifference and low priorities for welfare programmes on the part of most State Governments;

8. A Senior Officer of the Central Government described the attitude of most State Governments to Women's Programmes as one of indifference. Posts earmarked for these programmes often lie vacant, and are then diverted for other purposes.

(c) Absence of proper welfare agencies in most of the States.

8.152 The experience of the Central Social Welfare Board suggests that the Coordination Committees as envisaged at the local level for some of the projects of the Board were not very useful since local administrations were not willing to take up women's welfare programmes. The State Boards were not in a position to function autonomously and the State Governments were disinterested in women's welfare programmes.

8.153 Under the system of financial relations between the Central and the State Governments, the Centre provides assistance for development programmes during a Plan period either on sharing or on full basis. At the end of the Plan period full responsibility for continuing the programmes devolves on the States. In the case of the women's programmes initiated by Central agencies, State Governments have not always been willing to accept the responsibility for continuation. In such cases, these programmes have had to be discontinued or redesignated as a new programme so that Central assistance could be continued.

8.154 Standardisation of Programmes :—The concept of a local need-based approach to social welfare has gradually been over-shadowed as a direct consequence of this centralising trend. Programmes and policies are initiated at the Centre, and there is increasing distance between the level of policy making and the levels of implementation. National programmes are framed without adequate reference to local variations and needs and this defeats the very purpose of social welfare. It particularly affects the initiative of the local community and the voluntary sector, and leads to increasing bureaucratisation. It has also prevented the State Governments from admitting their responsibility in the field of welfare.

8.155 Because of this bureaucratisation and centralisation, the authority and initiative of the field staff is considerably impaired. As an example, the field staff at the State level are not taken into confidence nor are their suggestions considered at the level of policy and planning. For a number of schemes of the Central Social Welfare Board, the State Boards have little authority for initiating and reviewing the programmes.

8.156 The delays inherent in routine procedure and functioning of the Government hampers the progress of the programmes. Government organisations and procedures, with rigid rules governing sanctions and expenditure by their very nature, are not suited to the essentially informal and personal approach required for welfare work. Generally the approach of the voluntary workers and organisations is more flexible and personal. Once funds have been allotted for a particular project, they cannot be diverted for any other purpose and these agencies have to function within the rigid framework of the Government sanction.

8.157 Lack of Coordination :—An examination of welfare and development activities undertaken in the country so far indicates that there is a multiplicity of programmes, agencies and functionaries. A large number of these programmes have very similar objectives and functions.

These programmes are run by different Departments, have separate allocations, and the field staff belong to different agencies. Areas of implementation in many cases are not rationally demarcated. Since most of these are Central programmes, planning and policy making is carried out by separate Ministries and Departments at the Centre. There is very little or no coordination between these Ministries and Departments, except where a coordinated programme has been envisaged (as in the case of the Fifth Plan Integrated Child Development Programme). This leads to a waste of funds in the duplication of administrative machinery, leaving a relatively small amount for the actual implementation of the programmes.

8.158. There is very little coordination at the State level also. Even though the State Social Welfare Advisory Boards have some government officials as members, this has failed to ensure any substantial coordination of governmental effort in the welfare of women. At the project level, the functional committees and implementation committees are constituted with representatives of the State Governments and the State Boards. They have to work in collaboration with the panchayats or other local organisation. The experience of these committees has not been always happy. Besides, their scope of activities is limited only to the programmes of the Board.

8.159. There is little justification for the vast number of agencies for implementing welfare programmes with almost similar objectives. A division in administrative agencies can be justified on one of three grounds :

(a) territorial distinction i.e. each agency functioning in clearly demarcated territory ; (b) methodological distinction i.e. if the method of work has to be different ; (c) functional distinction i.e. if the objectives of the agency are such as to warrant a separate organisation. The present allocation of work amongst various agencies has followed no such principle of clear distinctions.

The Central Social Welfare Board

8.160 As one of the most important agencies for the implementation of social welfare activities, the status of the Central Social Welfare Board is currently under consideration. Though in practice the Board has enjoyed some autonomy, legally it has no independent existence. It was given the status of a charitable company in 1969 to meet audit objections in the way of giving grants. This has not solved its problems and its relationship with the Department of Social Welfare in regard to policy, planning and approval of programmes and financial allocations clearly indicates its status as a subordinate agency of the Department.

8.161 The justification for creating an agency outside the ministerial framework of the Government lay in the peculiar nature of welfare work, which required a flexible, personalised and committed approach, not easily possible within a Government department because of procedural rules and regulations. The intention of the Government was thus undoubtedly to create a specialised agency with its membership drawn from the ranks of social workers, with direct experience of voluntary welfare activities. Some other specialised agencies created by the Government have been given statutory autonomous status. The unfortunate vagueness of the status of the Central Social Welfare Board, created administrative difficulties and led to its registration as a company in 1969. This arrangement has been admittedly unsatisfactory, and there is an increasing demand for a more autonomous status.

8.162 It may also be noted that at the time of the creation of the Central Social Welfare Board, the Government of India had no central department responsible for social welfare. With the establishment of the Department in 1966, and its increasing role in planning and execution of various welfare programmes, the Central Social Welfare Board's position has become still more anomalous. Uncertainty regarding its ultimate status and consequently of the State Boards has had a very adverse effect on their functioning.

8.163 At a Conference of State Ministers of Social Welfare held in July 1972, recommendations were made for the reorganisations of the Central Board. This re-organisation was dependent upon the adoption of a general enabling enactment. The State Governments, who had been advised to implement recommendations of this Conference with regard to the State Welfare Boards, were asked to defer action until the reorganisation of the Central Social Welfare Board.

8.164 At a second Conference of the Social Welfare Ministers and Secretaries held in January 1974, discussions covered four major points. In regard to functions of the Central Social Welfare Board, it was decided that in addition to its executive functions, the Central Social Welfare Board should be responsible for the following :—

- (a) To advise the Government on the problems and provision of measures for the welfare of women, children and the handicapped.
- (b) To promote investigation into the study of problems in specific areas, particularly those affecting women and children.
- (c) To arrange training for social workers at all levels for promoting the involvement of women in national activities.
- (d) To provide technical guidance to voluntary organisations for effectively rendering welfare services.

8.165 In regard to the composition of the Central Social Welfare Board, the Conference urged that all the Governments of States and Union Territories by rotation, should be represented on the executive committee and the General Council of the Central Social Welfare Board. In conformity with their demand for greater control over the State Boards, the States and Union Territories wanted a greater voice in the nomination of State Board members. With regard to relationship between the Central and State Social Welfare Boards, some States wanted them to be set up by the State Governments, while others wished to register them as independent societies.

8.166 Procedures and Difficulties Faced by Field Agencies :—Because of the present variations in status and functions of these multiple agencies for welfare and development activity, the field staff experience many difficulties. The procedure for the release of grants to a voluntary agency often takes about six months and a great deal of hardship is faced by the voluntary agencies whose meagre resources often do not permit continuation of the programme. The uncertainty felt by the staff seriously hampers their work. Many voluntary agencies informed us that they do not have trained workers to manage the accounts in the manner required by the Government.

8.167 The ad hoc nature of the programmes, their frequent conversion under the various Plans, and the reluctance of State Governments to take over maintenance have also caused a great deal of uncertainty among the field staff. For example, in the case of the Family and Child Welfare Projects, at the end of the Fourth Plan period, 13 States and 3 Union Territories have agreed to accept the responsibility. Six States have not agreed and the continuation of 74 projects are now uncertain. It is proposed to absorb them in the Integrated Child Development Programme. The feeling of the Board in this matter is clear. "With more time, more projects could have been started in consultation with State Governments. The proposed change in the nomenclature and contents of the programme and transfer of all the programmes from the Board to the State Governments, without ensuring continuity by allowing sufficient time for the existing schemes to achieve their objectives, only tends to confuse the rural population."

8.168 The staff of the Central Social Welfare Board and the State Boards are not considered on par with Government employees and do not enjoy the same facilities and benefits. Their status at the field level is also temporary and dependent on the allocation for the year or the life of the projects. They have a feeling of uncertainty because of the temporary nature of their appointment which is dependent on the continuance of the scheme. They face a number of difficulties, particularly accommodation problems.

8.169 We met a large number of these field workers in various States. In our experience, the workers from voluntary organisations and the Board's staff have, on the whole, established better relationship with the village community, since they are better motivated and dedicated to welfare work, as compared to Government functionaries who are more concerned with their service conditions, promotions, etc. The Board's cadre are more knowledgeable about the programmes in their areas and can give a better idea about the difficulties with regard to their implementation.

8.170 In recognition of this problem, the Department of Social Welfare has, recently examined the service conditions of the staff of the Board, and some of the recommendations of the Third Pay Commission have been made applicable to employees of the CSWB. An Officer on special duty was appointed by the CSWB in 1973 for drafting service regulations for its employees. The draft is now under examination by the Department of Social Welfare and is expected to be finalised in the near future.

8.171 Deficiencies of the Programme :—While most programmes for women have emphasised 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 their awareness and improve their participation as citizens. The objective of improving their earning power has also not been adequately fulfilled.

8.172 The Role of Voluntary Agencies :— Though it would be difficult to demarcate territories, the relationship of the voluntary and the Government sector should be all along complementary and mutually supportive. The present relationship between these two has not been very satisfactory and a number of complaints have been voiced on both the sides. Ideally the Voluntary Sector should provide services for implementation of welfare programmes while the financial contribution should come from the Government. Further, the voluntary agencies have a surveillance role to play to see to what extent social legislation and the Government have contributed and can contribute to social welfare.

8.173 Voluntary organisations complain of lack of involvement with Government programmes since they are not consulted at the planning stage. Being totally outside the decision making process, they have been reduced to the level of grant receiving agencies. Due to paucity of funds many voluntary agencies have come to rely heavily on the Government and in this process, the initiative and humanitarian impulse of voluntary welfare work has been

considerably reduced. The basic concept of social work is that it should arise out of the local community needs. Voluntary agencies have repeatedly stressed that they should be equal partners with the Governments in the fields of welfare and accountable only for rendering proper accounts for grants. At the policy planning level, voluntary agencies desire that their experience and advice should be taken into account.

8.174 The voluntary agencies also express difficulties faced by them because of lack of training of their workers. Training facilities should be provided by the Government, if possible. Without technical and organisational competence, they are unable to utilise resources in the most productive manner. One of the representatives of a voluntary organisation needed to review their organisational structure with a view to improving the managerial and professional competence of their workers.

8.175 The rising cost of living has reduced funds from private sources. It has also affected the ability of women to devote the same time and resources to voluntary work. Consequently, the area of constructive work of most of these voluntary agencies is limited to their neighbourhood.

8.176 The Conference of State Ministers and Secretaries of Social Welfare held in January 1974, earmarked the following programmes as of interest to voluntary organisations:

1. Socio-economic programmes organised broadly on a co-operative basis ;
2. Condensed courses of education for adult women ;
3. Functional literacy for women ;
4. Integrated Child Development Service Programme.

It was also agreed that the procedures and rules for making grants should be liberalised, and new ways found for raising and training voluntary workers, to ensure greater coordination amongst them and to improve the dialogue between governmental and non-governmental sectors at all levels, particularly at the district level. This can succeed only with a change in the approach to the voluntary sector.

Recommendations :

A. Health and Family Planning

8.177 While welcoming the proposed integration of family planning and maternity and child health services in the Fifth Plan, we wish to offer certain suggestions with regard to its organisation at different levels, so that the objective of integration is not defeated by organisational separatism.

We recommend that :

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

2. A separate budget head for maternity and child health services should be created, drawing on the provisions now made for family planning and the general health services. It is important to increase the provision for these services to avoid their being neglected, as has been the trend so far. Since programmes for immunisation and nutrition of infants yield better results when they form a part of general maternity and child health services, we see no difficulty in increasing the allocation for these services.

3. At the level of the primary health centres, the maternity and child health services should be separated for purposes of administrative supervision, provision of medical personnel and budget. While they may share the same buildings and equipment, a separation of the administrative structure required for maternity and child health services will ensure greater priority of treatment. It has often been found that the services of the lady doctor, lady health visitor and the auxiliary nurse-mid-wife, are not available to the poorer sections of the rural community. The primary health centres have to cater to the whole population, and women and children do not always get the priority of treatment in the way of medical attention or medicines and other facilities. Separating the M.C.H. Unit will limit the clientele to the women and children, and make the services more accessible to these weaker

groups. The allotment of facilities in the way of maternity beds, equipment for immunisation of children and family planning for women could be allocated to the M.C.H. Unit. The P.H.C. could be responsible for sterilisation operations for men along with other general health services.

The proposed Integrated Child Development Programme calls for a coordinating agency at the implementation level, to coordinate all the nutrition and immunisation measures which form a basic component of the programme. If the M.C.H. Unit is separated as suggested above, these functions could be allotted to it.

Yet another function that could be undertaken by these Units with suitable provision of staff, is that of maintenance of fertility and morbidity statistics for women and children, the absence of which has made it impossible to undertake any substantial research and evaluation in these fields.

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

The separation of the M.C.H. Services with family planning as a component at all levels will be a step towards a system of health services which would be reasonably accessible to women and children for preventive, diagnostic and supportive treatment, no matter at which point or stage the patient enters the system.

5. We recommend the abolition of the present practice of providing financial incentives to promoters of family planning.

6. We also recommend that incentives to women who accept family planning should be in the shape of a token or certificate to ensure them higher priority in health care facilities for both the mothers and their children. Such a step will promote greater acceptance of family planning and correct the social attitude towards these practices. Compensation for loss of wages during sterilisation operations should however be paid to daily wage earners. Others should be given paid leave for this purpose.

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

8. We further recommend the promotion of research in the field of female disorders e.g. puerperal psychosis and the ill-effects of family planning methods, on their health.

9. We disapprove the denial of maternity benefits to women in government service after three children, as adopted by some State Governments, and recommend rescinding of such orders.

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

8.178 B. Welfare and Development

1. Any programme for women's welfare and development must have an integrated approach. In order to prevent any ambiguity in the understanding of what constitutes women's welfare and to prevent the development of policies that sometimes go against the basic objective, we recommend that the Government of India should evolve a National Policy on women's development in the light of the Constitutional Directives and pledges made to the women of this country and to the international community from time to time.

We also feel that in the absence of a general policy for social development, the weaker sections of society tend to receive inadequate attention. Economic development has sometimes contributed to elimination of social inequalities, but has also aggravated them. Adoption of a policy for social development would clarify matters, and provide a frame of reference for assessment of governmental and voluntary effort in these fields.

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

We recommend :

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

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

CHAPTER IX

THE ROLE AND INFLUENCE OF THE MASS MEDIA ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN.

9.1 We have seen that religious tradition as well as some features inherent in the social structure have perpetuated certain stereotypes and myths about women. Although their virtues and merits have at times been extolled, the principal social role assigned to a woman is essentially one subordinate to man. The social norms, attitudes, and values sustained by such stereotypes are deeply entrenched. To eradicate them would need determined and purposive effort. Education and the mass media of communication could be important in bringing about changes in attitudes, but both have limitations. Like education, mass communication is a necessary but not sufficient condition of change.

9.2 The role and influence of the mass media on the status of women can be considered from the following angles :—

- (a) a content analysis of the media and their treatment of women ;
- (b) the influence of the media on their audience ;
- (c) the influence of the media on women themselves.

9.3 Studies have revealed that the mass media have made and can make a great impact on social change. Changes in a society's attitudes, are the result of historical growth, the gradual spread of education, the work of social reformers and charismatic leaders and so on. However, modernising societies have come to rely increasingly on the mass media for spreading messages.

The media provide information and guidance and create awareness. They can assist changes in attitude by reinforcing ideas and providing real or ideal models or behaviour and can raise aspirations for better standards of living. The media can thus contribute towards the development of skills, tastes and images current in a society.

9.4 The content of communication at any given time reflect the pattern of values of a society. The way subjects dealing with women are treated indicates to a great extent, the prevailing attitudes of that society towards its women. This could work both ways, to improve, or lower women's status in the society by introducing new, or reinterpreting old ideas.

9.5 In any country, women who are half the total population are often half the audience. The success or failure of development plans, in education, family planning, community development, health and nutrition depends upon the involvement and participation of women. Our investigation shows that compared to men, women are underprivileged in many ways and suffer from serious disabilities. Since formal education is a costly and a long term process, it is essential to harness the mass media for the eradication of illiteracy and to speed up the spread of basic education among women and girls. The National Council for Women's Education emphasised the potential significance of the mass media to generate public opinion in rural areas in favour of girls' education. The Family Planning Programme is making intensive use of the mass media to inform and create awareness among the people.

9.6 Incidental studies on the impact of mass media indicate, however, that women's exposure to the media is often very inadequate, and unsatisfactory. It appears that the mass media has not been an effective instrument to inform and prepare women to play their new roles in society. The Committee's investigations indicate a general lack of awareness about rights, problems, opportunities and responsibilities among both men and women. Since the Government controls a significant section of the mass media, it should set the pace. May be there is little that the private sector can be forced to do, but there is need for pressure groups within society itself to spearhead changes in the role of the media.

9.7 A proper assessment of the present role of the media in regard to the status of women will require detailed surveys and studies. Due to the want of empirical data, our comments on the influence of the mass communication media on the status of women is based mainly on expert comments and views, and discussions with individuals in various walks of life.

9.8 The most significant factor in mass communication is that in India, where 80% of the total population is still rural, the mass media is concentrated in urban areas and emanates from there. The themes are mainly urban and are concerned largely with the educated elite. The communicators themselves are from the urban areas. Starting with the Press, which has a powerful role to play in moulding public opinion, almost all the newspapers are published from the major cities and towns and give emphasis to political and urban news.

Role of the Press

9.9 The serious press in India has by and large not degraded the status of women. News items highlighting the role of women have been publicised whenever possible. Some noteworthy achievements by women in different fields appear in daily newspapers from time to time and the major dailies and almost all the Indian language dailies carry a weekly women's section. A content analysis of this section would be needed before any comment can be made on the subject matter of the sections and their views on the role and status of women.

9.10 A citizen should be able to appeal against misuse of his or her name by the press. For instance, in report about rape, abduction or other such incidents, the press should not mention the name of the girl, or of her relatives. The press is supposed to exercise restraint and not publicise news which may affect a woman's reputation.

9.11 Recently there has been some protest against the use of the female figure in advertising. As far as the press in India is concerned, the revenue from advertisement sustains a large number of dailies. The discretion, if any, in the selection or rejection of advertisements is exercised by the owner or staff of a paper and could be heavily influenced by financial considerations and not the subject matter of the advertisement. The present tendency of advertising agencies to over-emphasise the female form has resulted in number of complaints to the Press Council of India about exploitation of sex in advertisements.

9.12 Among the powers and functions of the Press Council, the following two have a bearing on the status of women:

- (a) To build up a code of conduct for newspapers, news agencies and journalists in accordance with high professional standards.
- (b) To ensure the maintenance of high standards of public taste and foster a due sense of both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

9.13 An examination of the complaints made to the Council during 1972-73 showed that there were quite a few from individuals complaining against the photographs of female figures in advertisement and otherwise.

9.14 It is interesting to note that out of a total of 103 complaints made to it in 1972, the Press Council considered 24 complaints about objectionable writing. Of these 9 dealt with obscenity. One ruling about the publication by Blitz of two photographs of women said that, as they served no purpose, "they could easily have been avoided by the Blitz, which was a serious paper." A number of other complaints dealt with undue exposure of the female figure in advertisements and film journals.

9.15 The debate on the use of the female figure in advertisement continues unresolved. While the Board of Advertisers are supposed to maintain high standards, it is the responsibility of the general public and particularly women's organisations to complain or protest against obscenity. The Press Council has already given a ruling on this subject and until there is a more vigilant watch on advertisements, hoardings and posters, the present stress on near nudity and sex to sell goods and attract cinema audiences may continue. It is commonly complained that cinema advertisements tend to use for display scenes cut out by the censors.

9.16 On a complaint that a soap advertisement was exploiting sex, the Press Council* observed that such complaints reflect the confusion in values and attitudes prevailing in our

society, because the woman in the picture was not less modestly dressed than several modern women one might see in the streets, at parties and at shopping centres. On saying this, the Council was not oblivious of the fact that many women appeared in public fully clad, without exposing anything below the neck, or above the ankle, with blouses upto the elbow. However, the norms of dress followed by a large number of other respectable women might not measure upto the requirements of the puritan.

9.17 The Council had this group in mind when it referred to the dress of the modern women, since in judging contemporary society it had also to consider the mores prevalent among this section. They were an integral part of Indian Society, and "signified the contemporary ethos."

9.18 Referring to this controversy in the foreword to the Seventh Annual Report, 1972, the Chairman of the Press Council observed, "The next aspect of journalistic propriety I wish to refer to is the increasing number of papers resorting to the publication of barely clothed female figures. These appear in advertisements and are sometimes published even when they seem to serve no apparent purpose. This criticism copied from the other societies which are more permissive, hardly, if I may say so, fits in with our culture." While the Press Council can fulfil a watch dog function it cannot lay down any positive guidelines to form new attitudes towards role of women.

Role of Radio

9.19 By its reach and impact the radio provides the most powerful mass communication. It is specially important as a medium of information and education in a vast country like India where the coverage of the press is not extensive. All India Radio operates under the administrative control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and is the sole broadcasting organisation in the country. Its special women's programmes are broadcast regularly from all stations of the AIR, at least twice a week. In 1971, women's programmes occupied a total of 3,729 hours and 06 minutes, i.e., 1.5% of the total broadcasting time and in 1972, they took 3,746 hours, i.e. 1.4%. Special broadcasts are also put out by the Farms and House units of AIR for rural women. These programmes, specially meant for rural women, provide education and entertainment and are broadcast in the regional languages at a time most convenient for women to listen. In each State, women's welfare organisations of the State Governments organise listening clubs with follow up discussions in the mahila mandals. Two mass communication researchers, Mathur and Neurath, who studied village radio broadcast in India found that such broadcasts had effect where listening clubs were organised and suggestions were followed.¹

9.20 Nutrition is a subject of recent interest to wives and mothers in villages and towns. UNICEF have provided 5,000 transistor sets to enable mahila mandals to listen to programmes about nutrition. Women also participate in broadcasts of cultural and entertainment programmes. Programmes for women range from 30 to 45 minutes twice or thrice a week. Discussions and talks on the topics of interest to women are also included.

9.21 Under the commercial services of AIR, started in May, 1970, radio programmes are used for advertising. A code of conduct guides the staff and advertisers and ensures that commercial programmes are not only in good taste, but also in conformity with the national interest and with public welfare. The Family Planning Units of AIR plan and produce family planning programmes for rural areas, industrial workers, women and youth, projecting a broad based social movement closely linked with maternity and child health and nutrition.² While the Government of India has laid stress on family planning instruction, national integration, nutrition, new agriculture practices, just how much has been achieved in a positive way to emphasise the new role of women in present day society remains unsure. The Audience Research Unit might be able to provide some feedback. It is important to study the existing programmes and their impact which may indicate gaps in programme content and coverage and indicate guidelines for future women's programmes. It is important to remember that with the high percentage of illiteracy, higher among females, radio is the medium with a vast potential for educating the illiterate. An administrator with long experience of work in the AIR said at the Asian Region Seminar for the International Alliance of Women New Delhi in November, 1973 that, "Village housewives have been

1. J. C. Mathur & P. Neurath, *An Indian Experiment in Farm Radio—1959* - UNESCO quoted in *Communication and Political Development* by Lucien Pye—page 247.
2. India, 1974—A Reference Annual—Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.

badly neglected. AIR's programmes for women are for the urban middle class women and have no relevance to the working women in the village. Programmes on family planning have to be directed to peasant women, along with programmes on hygiene, nutrition, etc., through those in the village whose voice can command respect.³

Role of Television

9.22 The development of television as a medium of mass communication is still at a pioneering stage. Apart from the Delhi Television Centre set up in September, 1959, television facilities have recently been extended to Bombay and Amritsar and will also start functioning in Calcutta, Madras, Jullundur and Lucknow with relay centres at Poona, Bhatinda, Kanpur, Karnal, and Mussoorie.⁴

Two relay centres to be set up in Calcutta will serve Kharagpur and Durgapur/Asansol areas.⁵

9.23 Apart from special educational and farm programmes, the television service from Delhi provides a varied programme mix to viewers including programmes for women and children. Few specialised programmes so far have been aimed at popularising better agricultural practices under the 'Krishi Darshan' programme. The total duration of the transmission is more than three and a half hours daily apart from the school television broadcasts.

9.24 The weekly women's programmes include discussions about social problems, but the typical programme is likely to contain subjects of interests to house-wives only. An assessment of the number of these women's programmes and their impact will have to be made before ways and means of utilising this medium can be recommended.

Role of Literature

9.25 In the early part of this century, a large number of books of fiction were written. The aim of authors like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra, Prem Chand and others was definitely social reform. They dealt with a number of social problems affecting the status of women and attempted to portray even prostitutes in a sympathetic light. A cursory glance at popular book stalls of fiction which is voraciously consumed by college students and others these days, however, shows a depressing lack of taste. In adherence to the western trend of sex and violence, modernity in Indian fiction seems to mean imitation of western themes. While a few playwrights have attempted to highlight social and economic problems, their books are still not best sellers. Romance and pornographic literature is still popular, perhaps because it is cheaper in price and readily available. Gandhiji criticised distasteful descriptions of the female form in popular fiction and condemned writers for dwelling on them with the "sickly sentimentality". Political leaders have also from time to time expressed their views on the new role of women in a developing society but these have not been adequately publicised. The Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has brought out a few books on women of India.

Role of Youth Magazines

9.26 There are a number of recent publications of magazines aimed at youth. A brief examination of typical youth magazines shows that they do not provide much food for thought. They imitate their western counterparts and the emphasis is on fashion, music, films and sex. It remains to be assessed what that impact of such magazines may be on the minds of impressionable boys and girls and whether they are, in any way, preparing the future generation for accepting the new role women are expected to play in society.

Role of Films

9.27 Film exerts a tremendous influence on the audience because of its vivid and powerful impact. All cultural media like theatre, art, architecture and films project a pattern of moral values as well as reflect established patterns. The influence of these media on social values and modes of behaviour is thus a two-way process.⁶ The Cinema makes a

3. Masani, Mehra "The Role of Communication in Changing Attitudes International", Alliance of Women, Asian Regional Seminar November, 1973.

4. India, 1973, Reference Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, pages 132-133.

5. India, 1974—page 114.

6. Mayor, J. P., Sociology of Film.

much wider and deeper impact because in the modern industrial and mechanized State, the cinema is more easily available.

9.28 India is one of the largest producers of films in the world. In 1971, India produced 433 feature⁷ films and 414 in 1973. Out of these respectively 146 and 134 films were produced in Bombay, 250 and 243 in Madras and 37 in both years in Calcutta. The Film Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, produces a large number of news and documentary films annually. The Division has produced more than 3,000 films in the last 25 years. Most of the films are in English and 14 regional languages. In 1971-72, Films Division produced 90 documentary films through its own units and 23 through outside producers. In addition, 65 newsreels and 43 documentary films were produced by State Governments. These figures indicate the enormous scope of the film industry in India⁸. An interesting fact is that out of the total number of feature films produced, as many as 283 in 1971 and 273 in 1972, were on social themes, the next highest category being crime films, which have shown a steady increase since 1961 when 30 crime films were produced as compared to 82 for 1972⁹.

9.29 The Government appointed an Enquiry Committee on Films Censorship in April 1968 to enquire into the working of the existing procedure for certification of films for public exhibition in India. The Cinematograph (Second Amendment) Bill 1973, was prepared after taking into consideration the recommendations of the Committee. The report highlights the attitude of the film maker and film goers. The average Indian film goer is well aware of what usual themes in the films are likely to be and the box office usually demands a star-cast and dances and night club scenes, though not all witnesses and members of the Committee agreed with this observation. The content of the bulk of Indian movies is sex and crime and "they follow the base motive of the lower type of American movies with inartistic plots, vulgar dances and songs and dialogues in a disgusting tone. Even the titles of the films are objectionable and the posters which advertise them are improper and vulgar."¹⁰ The sole aim of the film industry is to make money. The Vice-President of the South Indian Film Chamber commented, "The Chamber did not award any prizes for films of outstanding merits, nor did it discourage the production of low quality and vulgar films. The aim of the Chamber was solely to protect the industry."¹¹ A film critic and social worker said that he knew instances of some girls who had deviated from the path of moral rectitude on seeing excessively erotic films. A lady member of an examining panel thought that producers should come to some kind of mutual agreement not to project on screen scantily dressed girls and women. The general opinion appears to be that there is a rapid increase in the emphasis on sex themes in films. The ambivalent attitude of the Indian film producer is illustrated in his projection of the heroine who is supposed to embody all the virtues but is usually immodestly dressed and the hero, who is otherwise a 'good man' behaves in a very vulgar fashion on meeting the heroine. The usual Indian film has by and large exploited sex to attract audiences and has degraded the image of the Indian woman.

9.30 The cinema exercises a tremendous influence on the juvenile and uneducated mind. In 1957, a survey was made covering Greater Bombay, and large number of young persons and adults were questioned¹². The investigators noticed a marked tendency particularly among adolescents to imitate patterns of behaviour shown in the films. Four types of unhealthy influences noted were in habits of living and spending, manners and mannerisms including fashions in clothes, hair dressing, speech and behaviour towards the opposite sex and immoral and anti-social practices like stealing, prostitution etc.

9.31 Another survey conducted by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication for the Enquiry Committee on Film Censorship in 1968-69, revealed that out of the total sample, nearly 88% were film goer, with youths forming the majority. Categories of films preferred and generally viewed by women were, (i) Films on family life, (ii) musicals and (iii) devotional films. Girls preferred (i) Western films (ii) musicals and (iii) romantic and tragic films. The least preferred films were on contemporary themes. Questioned as to what

7. India 1973—A Reference Annual, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, P.140.

8. Ibid, P.143.

9. India 1974—A Reference Annual, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (1973 & 1974), pages 123-125.

10. Report of the Enquiry Committee on Film Censorship—Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, p.75.

11. Ibid, p.79.

12. Ibid, p. 70-72.

should be the chief aim and purpose of films produced in India, 31.11% of the men said that it should be to educate. 42.40% of the women emphasised the development of social, cultural and religious values in society. 37.65% of the college boys laid emphasis on entertainment¹³. As regards the treatment of sex and love in films and details of reactions to the nude human form in painting or sculpture, 36.60% women regarded it as objectionable and 38.40% as indecent, 34.47% of the college girls regarded it as unobjectionable and 25.88% as aesthetically satisfying. In regard to objectionable and undesirable elements in films, one out of ten adults considered a film undesirable when it dealt with violence, crime and horror, while one in twenty youths said so. Nearly half of the men and one-third of the youths considered films dealing with sex and violence to be undesirable, while seven out of ten women considered such themes as objectionable. 41% of the adult sample and the 36% of the youth sample agreed with the statement that 'sex and violence are the predominant themes of a large number of Indian and foreign films' and that there was a growing tendency to expose the artists' body for either aesthetic purpose or dramatic purpose or merely for commercial exploitation. 71.67% of the men and 36% of the women agreed that this exposure served only commercial exploitation¹⁴. The study indicated further that 32.90% of the sample did not agree with the statement that the present day film goer will lose interest in Indian films if these did not have cabaret or night club scenes showing scantily dressed girls¹⁵.

9.32 Among the grounds on which a film may be refused a censorship certificate are those involving "indecent and immorality". The Central Board of Film Censorship has headquarters and regional offices which review and censor films. This is one measure of possible control, though there is a great deal of debate as to the extent of control in censorship particularly regarding sex and violence. The legal aspects of film censorship have been discussed in the report of the Enquiry Committee on Film Censorship. Articles 15 Clause 3 and Article 39 (f) which empower the State to make a special provision for women and children and to protect childhood and youth against exploitation, are thought to be wide enough to authorise any law or regulation to protect children and young persons from the influence of certain types of film¹⁶.

9.33 In 1960, the Government of India set up a Film Finance Corporation, which provides loans for films with valid cinematic values, which eschew the box office formula. The Government also gives national awards to films of high ethical and technical standards and of social, educational and cultural value.

9.34 Reviewing the role and influence of the Indian films, it may be observed that in its content and treatment of women, it has laid more emphasis on sex to draw audiences. The stress is on the physical attributes of the heroine. In most social films she is invariably assigned a subordinate status in relation to men in all spheres and thus continues to perpetuate the traditional notion of a woman's inferior status. Very few films have endeavoured to project the new role of women in present day society. These films have not attempted to educate women regarding their rights, duties or responsibilities and have ignored reality. A few film makers have made films on contemporary themes and problems. But even these have not attempted to change traditional or conventional images of women and tend to perpetuate the status quo.

Images of Heroine

9.35 In the earlier thirties, film themes were largely based on adventure stories or religious mythology with emphasis on a virtuous heroine who remained devoted to her love. During the period between 1939 and 1945, escapist films with light music, stunts, plenty of dances and physical display, made the heroine more a symbol of sex rather than devotion. Elements of crime and adventure were also thrown in.

9.36 This period was followed by revival of interest in moral and social themes and films by younger directors like Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Chetan Anand & others dealt with problems like casteism and prostitution. "The liberal inclusion of love and sex, dance and music and humour as concessions to the requirements of the box office have led to the vulgarisation of serious themes in such films¹⁷". Love and sex form a dominant theme in most Indian films and 'there is a full quota of amorous sequences'. Women are treated only as an objective of

13. Ibid p. 185.

14. Ibid p. 187-188

15. Ibid p. 189

16. Ibid p. 56

17. Saxena, R.N "Indian Films and Image of Women". Paper prepared for the Committee.

sex. The 'other girl' is a stock character who is responsible for disturbing the development of a love affair between the hero and the heroine and is usually portrayed as a 'vamp' or woman of easy virtue. The other stock character is older woman, who may be the mother-in-law and she depicts the conflict between the younger and the older generation. She is usually of a shrewish temperament. Recently, western cinemas have greatly influenced Indian films, particularly in the physical display of love and of the human body especially female. Recent Indian films are becoming more sexy, in their content¹⁸. The bedroom, bathroom, cabaret and rape sequences are a must in box-office hits.

Need for Agencies for Co-ordination Communication and Implementation of Measures to Improve the Status of Women

In spite of Constitutional and legal equality, women's status in every sphere of life, remains unequal with persistent disparities. Many laws have been passed to remove these disabilities, but they have had little impact. Administrative programmes, introduced with the object of promoting women's welfare and development have suffered from various handicaps. One of the reasons for the lack of sustained effort and attention in this direction has been the absence of any single agency, which could co-ordinate and examine the multiple measures legislative and administrative—initiated by the Government, and provide expert advice on methods of implementation. Under present rules of business in the Government, women's affairs are really nobody's concern.

The U.N. Commission on the Status of Women, in its 25th Report, has recommended the establishment of a National Commission or similar bodies "with a mandate to review, evaluate and recommend measures and priorities, to ensure equality between men and women, and the full integration of women in all sectors of national life. Wherever possible such bodies should be composed of both men and women and include governmental and non-governmental representatives. Under the Commission or similar body, Sub-Commissions or Working Groups could undertake fact finding and comprehensive studies, paying special attention to the needs and problems of women in both rural and urban areas."

We have given careful consideration to this matter and agree on the need for constitution of agencies of this type at the State and National levels. We also believe that it is imperative for such Commissions to have certain recommendatory and mandatory powers as well as statutory, autonomous status if they are to be effective in their functions.

We, therefore, recommend the constitution of statutory, autonomous Commission at the Centre and the State with the following functions :-

(a) *Collection of Information* :— regarding all trends in social organisation that effect women's enjoyment and realisation of their basic rights, in order to study and evaluate these trends. For this research function, it would be necessary for these Commissions, both at the Central and State levels, to have the right to call for information on different matters e.g., education, employment, health, welfare, political participation, impact of social legislation etc. from the concerned agencies of the Government. It would also be necessary for the Commissions to have the right to suggest improved methods for collection of data in different fields.

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

- (i) To censure non-implementation of these measures; and
- (ii) To point out lacunae or deficiencies in such measures and suggest amendments or improvements.

The Commissions' criticisms and suggestions would be made, after due consultation with relevant Ministries and Departments of Government in the form of report to Parliament or the Legislative Assembly. They would need to be answered by the Government concerned within a stated period, in the form of explanations or assurances to Parliament or the State Legislature.

(c) *Recommendations of new laws, policies or programmes* aiming to implement the Directive Principles of State Policy and the objectives of the U.N. Resolutions and Conventions regarding the status of women. The Commissions' recommendations in this regard would be

18. Ibid.

made to Parliament or the Legislative Assembly and Government will be statutorily responsible to consider such recommendations for action or to explain why they cannot be accepted. It may, however, be provided that the Commissions will consult the relevant agencies of Government before making such recommendations.

(d) *Redressal of grievances* in cases of actual violation of existing laws. The Commissions may be empowered to take effective steps to redress the grievances of affected parties.

Composition

In view of the functions visualised for the Commissions, it is important to ensure that their composition should be broadbased, one category being selected for their representative status, from different bodies engaged in problems affecting women in different sectors of society. For this purpose, a panel of names could be invited from leading women's organisations, trade unions, Legislative and Legal Bodies, and employers from both public and private sectors, and a selection made from out of this panel. The second category would need to consist of experts from the fields of law, health, education, social research, planning and administration. The exact number of members cannot be specified at this stage, but the above mentioned categories should be represented. The Commissions will thus be composed of representatives of different categories of organisations and nominated experts. Further powers may be conferred on the Commissions to co-opt one or two members keeping in view the sectors which fail to obtain representation.

The Chairman and the majority of the members of all the Commissions should be women. It would be necessary to appoint non-officials as Chairmen but on a full time basis. The Commissions should also be empowered to appoint their secretariat including the Secretary.

Smt. Urmila Haksar and Smt. Sakina A. Hasan were not in favour of this decision.

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

1. Phulrenu Guha
2. Neera Dogra.
3. Leela Dube
4. Urmila Haksar.
5. Sakina A. Hasan

6. Maniben Kara
7. Vikram Mahajan
8. Lakshmi Raghuramaiah
9. Lotika Sarkar
10. Savitri Shyam
11. Vina Mazumdar

New Delhi,
December 31st, 1974.

Chapter VII "Political Status Notes of Dissent"

I do not agree with the first paragraph of the second recommendation regarding the reservation of seats at the level of municipalities in Chapter VII on Political Status for the same reason for which reservation of seats for women in Assemblies and Parliament was not recommended. I feel that women along with men form a part of society. Even if this reservation of separate seats for women is for a transitional period, in my opinion, it will not be of help in increasing women's participation on the whole. There is a possibility that reservation of seats will only help women of a particular class who are already privileged. It should be our aim to see that the masses of women of all classes become equal partners with men in all senses in society. Separate seats will weaken the position of women. They must come up on the strength of their own abilities and not through special provisions. It is only in this way that they will be in a better position vis-a-vis men and will be able to stand on their own as equal partners.

Apart from that, this type of reservation of seats might lead other communities/classes to argue for reservation of seats. This, to my mind, will encourage separatist tendencies and hamper national integration.

I feel very strongly that it is up to the leaders of the country, of all shades of political opinion and particularly women leaders who are already in positions of authority, to endeavour to see that women in large numbers are given seats and also to encourage women's participation. For this, it is absolutely necessary to provide facilities by which women may be prepared to take an active part in different elected bodies and also when elected, to function in a proper manner.

In municipalities, if seats are reserved for women, they represent the whole constituency and not only women. I agree that more women's participation in the municipalities and local bodies is needed. For that, a well thought out system of education for women is to be planned and executed.

The sole consideration for selecting a representative must be seen from the viewpoint of efficiency as to who can serve the constituency better. It is not a question of representation of men or women. At the same time, in any elected body, even if the proportion of men and women is unequal, this does not prevent the elected body from functioning effectively or efficiently and also representing the entire society.

Women are an integral part of society. The provision of reservation of seats for women in municipalities will only serve to reinforce the separate identity of women rather than promote their representation and integration with the rest of society.

Phulrenu Guha

New Delhi
31st Dec., 1974.

Chapter VII "Political Status Note of Dissent"

I am generally opposed to the system of reservation of seats in Legislatures and other elected Bodies. It has no meaning, particularly in the case of women who constitute at least fifty percent of the population. They have little representation in elected bodies, but giving them a nominal representation through reservation will not help them. It may even obstruct their progress as it may lead to complacency. Larger representation of women is essential in their own interest as well as in the interest of the society, but they should secure it by awakening women to their rights and responsibilities, and by creating public opinion in its favour. Efforts in that direction, along with education to equip women to shoulder and discharge public responsibilities will prove of greater benefit to them than a few more seats secured through reservation.

Maniben Kara

Note of dissent

By

Lotika Sarkar and Vina Mazumdar

As members of the pre-Independence generation, we have always been firm believers in equal rights for women. For us the recognition of this principle in the Constitution heralded the beginning of a new era for the women of this country. As we have never been supporters of special representation or class representation in any form, in academic discussions we had often criticised the system of reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, as a legacy of the colonial period which institutionalised the backwardness of certain sections of our population.

When we started out on this investigation, it had not even occurred to us to seek the opinion of the people about the system of representation provided in the Constitution. For us, it was a settled fact, embodying a principle of a democracy in which no change could be considered. This is why we never thought of including a question on this point in our questionnaire, nor did we think of asking this question of the people whom we interviewed during our early tours. Only when the problem kept being posed repeatedly before us by various groups of women in the course of our discussions did we become aware that a problem like this was real and very much in existence. The Committee has accepted the reality of the problem and our Report has presented both sides of the basic argument¹.

1. Chapter 7—paras 7.105 to 7.120

We regret our inability to agree with the Committee on the decision that was taken. While we too, feel that our investigation and examination of this question was not adequate to recommend a major change in our system of representation, we consider that it would not be proper for us to turn our back on the pressing reality of the problem. A political system cannot be based on ideology alone but must keep in touch with the actualities of the social situation and so adjust its operation as to achieve the desired goals of the society. The mechanics of a system, if they do not grapple with the needs of a society, can defeat the ultimate objective in the long run. It is for this reason that we are compelled to dissent from the Committee's decision on this point.

Our reasons for dissenting on this matter are consistent with the findings that run throughout the Report, that despite progressive legal changes, the actual condition of life of the mass of Indian women has not changed much. The continuing under-representation of women prevents their proper participation in the decision making process in the country. The success of a few in reaching positions of power and dignity may, to the uninformed eye, suggest the existence of full opportunities for such participation, but we have shown that this is far from so in the political process or in economic activity, in education and in general social status. The number of women elected to Parliament constitute less than 5% of the members. The proportion of women in the pre-Independence Central Legislature (elected under the Government of India Act 1935) was 3.4%. The infinitesimal gain of 1.6% in proportion over a quarter century (and the pattern has been a zig zag one), when taken with the decline in the absolute number of representatives during the last ten years, is a sufficient indicator of the reluctance of our society to accept the principle of equal representation for women.

The second problem in a way stems from the inadequate representation of women in these bodies. The basic principle underlying universal franchise is the need to involve all classes and sections of the population in the process of decision making so that the policy reflects the problems, need, and aspiration of the whole of society, and not of a limited group. Every democracy has to pass through this phase, when a limited group of persons, small in number as well as narrow in their class composition, acts as the voice of the people. The institution of universal franchise, in the course of its functioning, should gradually expand the representative base of this group and alter its class composition. As Professor Sirsikar² points out, this is already happening in the case of the male legislators in this country within the short period since Independence. In the case of the women, however, the story is quite different. More than 1/3rd of the women in Parliament belong to professional groups which means the urban middle class. Most of these members are college educated, and a fair number have overseas education as well. Quite a few of the women legislators in the States, as well as the Centre, belong to royal or zamindari families or have 'agricultural interests' arising out of landed property. As compared to their male counterparts, the background of the women legislators is considerably narrower and represents mainly the dominant upper strata of our society.

Their restricted origin apart, Indian women legislators suffer from other inadequacies. A considerable number of them, as we were informed again and again, have not worked their way up in the political system from actual work among the people, but have been drafted into the system at different levels because of their contacts with persons in positions of power and influence. Our discussions with some individual members of this group revealed that they lacked enough awareness and understanding of the basic problems affecting the majority of women in our society. We were also told repeatedly that women members in the legislative bodies have not displayed adequate alertness and initiative in posing these problems before the Government, the legislatures of the people of this country. To cite a few examples, it is a regrettable fact, that in spite of the Law Commission's recommendations (15th Report of the Commission 1960) regarding the reforms needed in the Christian Law of Marriage and Divorce to ameliorate the disabilities of Christian women, the Bill was shelved without any dissenting voice from among the women Members of Parliament³. In the case of another recommendation of the Law Commission (41st Report—1969), regarding reforms in the Criminal Procedure Code, to end the claim for maintenance to divorced wives, the law was passed, after specifically excluding Muslim women from this category. In this case too, the women members of Parliament failed to register any protest against this injustice to a large section of women in our society⁴.

2. Op. cit vide Chapter VII

3. Vide Chapter 4 paras 4.104

4. Ibid para 4.148

In voicing our criticism we would not like it to be thought that we are merely condemning without understanding the difficulties under which our women legislators have to function. As we have pointed out, their small numbers and their dependence on the support of their political parties, which are all dominated by men, have aggravated their inhibitions and weaknesses in asserting righteous but unpopular causes. Most of us have had to experience the tremendous force of these inhibitions bred by cultural values over generations. It is far easier for a woman to be outspoken when she is backed by a large group, than when she has to stand alone. We have also seen the courage with which some women have taken up the cudgels in defence of some unpopular causes, and the degree of social pressure, character assassination and social ostracism that they have had to face for such action. They deserve the admiration of the womenfolk of this country, but unless we can enlarge their ranks, it is our firm belief that the social revolution that Gandhiji had expected to be the end result of women's participation in the 'political deliberations of the nation' will not be achieved.

The reasons given by our colleagues for rejecting the demand for reservation in the legislatures evade, in our opinion, the real issues and are based on an ideological principle which does not take into consideration the needs of women in present day India. No one who has studied the history of the last 200 years would deny the signal contribution made by distinguished men to the women's cause. The greatest of them, however, always observed that the real cause of women's low status in this country lay 'in men's interested teaching' and in women's acceptance of them. To believe that these champions of women's cause reflected the thinking of the majority of men in this country would be a travesty of history. If that had been the case, they would not have had to face the kind of social opposition that was unleashed on them at every step. It is certainly not expected that women alone will represent women; or progressive measures in their favour, just as men also do not do so. The fact that some men have managed to stand out in defence of women's rights shows that, with more women actively participating in the political process there will be more spokesmen with actual knowledge of women's problems. Larger numbers will also help to break the somewhat exclusive class composition of this group.

About the argument that the system of special representation might precipitate fissiparous tendencies, we cannot do better than quote Professor Sirsikar's answer. Anticipating this criticism, he observed "women are not marginal to society as the minority group might be. They are not a dispensable part of the society—they are as essential as men for the very sustenance of the society." A system of reservation for women "would not create what is feared by the critics, isolated pockets..... this may make exacting demands on women..... but would motivate women to come forth to shoulder these responsibilities."

When one applies the principle of democracy to a society characterised by tremendous inequalities, such special protections are only spearheads to pierce through the barriers of inequality. An unattainable goal is as meaningless as a right that cannot be exercised. Equality of opportunities cannot be achieved in the face of the tremendous disabilities and obstacles which the social system imposes on all those sections whom traditional India treated as second class or even third class citizens. Our investigations have proved that the application of the theoretical principle of equality in the context of unequal situations only intensifies inequalities, because equality in such situations merely means privileges for those who have them already and not for those who need them.

Our colleagues did appreciate the reality of the problem of under-representation and the failure of the large majority of women to overcome social resistance to asserting their political and legal rights. This is implicit in the recommendations for the constitution of women's panchayats and for the reservation of seats for women in municipalities. We regret that they could not agree to the logical extension of the same principle to legislative bodies. We have been compelled to explain our decision at considerable length because we feel that the problem that we have posed requires careful consideration by all who strive for an egalitarian and a just society.

Lotika Sarkar

Vina Mazumdar

December 31st, 1974

The majority of respondents who observed purdah come from category 2,4 i.e. mainly housewives. In the other categories which include students, working women and career women, the incidence of purdah is much lower. Only in the case of Kerala and Delhi are there a few respondents in category 3 who observe purdah.

The instance of purdah among respondents was quite high in Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, U.P. and J. & K. where more than 50% of the respondents observed purdah.

Once the respondents are gainfully employed either in study or in jobs the incidence of purdah sharply declines. The table on daughters' education shows that the majority of respondents' daughters are being formally educated and this should reduce the incidence of purdah.

State	Category	Res- pondent	Daugh- ters	In- laws	All women in the house	None
Delhi	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.9	54.5
	2	39.7	0.0	1.4	42.6	13.2
	3	38.8	5.5	0.0	22.2	27.7
	4	14.2	0.0	6.1	53.0	20.4
	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.2	78.9
Maharashtra	1	4.7	0.0	0.0	47.6	42.8
	2	29.1	1.2	1.2	13.9	48.1
	3	14.2	0.0	0.0	14.2	57.1
	4	9.0	0.0	4.5	18.1	61.3
	5	8.5	0.0	2.8	0.0	77.1
Kerala	1	4.3	0.0	4.3	8.6	60.8
	2	27.1	0.0	5.0	3.3	42.3
	3	72.2	0.0	0.0	5.5	22.2
	4	35.4	0.0	3.2	9.6	35.4
	5	—	—	—	—	—
Tamil Nadu	1	13.7	0.0	0.0	24.1	44.8
	2	34.4	0.0	3.2	29.5	27.8
	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	50.0
	4	17.0	4.8	2.4	17.0	43.9
	5	0.0	0.0	12.5	31.2	43.7
Andhra Pradesh	1	25.0	3.5	14.2	25.0	28.5
	2	33.3	0.0	6.0	23.2	14.1
	3	11.1	2.2	4.4	26.6	33.3
	4	25.0	0.0	0.0	42.5	30.0
	5	26.3	0.0	5.2	5.2	52.6
West Bengal	1	11.7	0.0	0.0	29.4	52.9
	2	26.3	5.2	0.0	26.3	36.8
	3	28.0	23.0	7.6	7.6	38.4
	4	15.7	10.5	0.0	26.3	36.8
	5	5.5	0.0	5.5	44.4	38.8
Gujarat	1	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.4	70.3
	2	15.6	0.0	1.9	1.9	76.4
	3	10.0	2.5	0.0	5.0	80.0
	4	16.1	0.0	0.0	3.2	77.4
	5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.00
Uttar Pradesh	1	6.8	0.0	6.8	6.8	37.9
	2	60.3	0.0	1.8	13.2	24.5
	3	33.3	0.0	4.7	9.5	52.3
	4	35.7	0.0	2.8	31.4	28.5
	5	19.0	0.0	19.0	4.7	28.5
J & K	1	3.5	0.0	7.1	57.1	28.5
	2	31.5	2.7	1.3	34.2	23.2
	3	8.3	8.3	0.0	41.6	33.3
	4	37.2	0.0	1.9	33.3	25.4
	5	14.7	2.9	0.0	47.0	35.2