

THE BASE PAPERS BY CONSULTANTS ON ALL THEMES

Group I - Gender perspective in Health, Nutrition, Sanitation & Drinking Water

Gender Perspective in Health, Nutrition, Safe Water and Sanitation in Gujarat

Health is a fundamental human right. (Alma Ata Declaration of 1978).

According to the World health Organization (WHO), health is a 'state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity'. According to this definition, very few Indian women enjoy a healthy life. The appalling condition of women's health arises from their unequal status in society where besides patriarchy, caste and class create unequal power relations do not allow women to have control on their physical, emotional and social health.

WAH! (Women's and Health) national and regional level network have developed a holistic and comprehensive definition of women's health.

"Health is a personal and social state of balance and well-being in which a woman feels strong, active, wise and worthwhile; where her diverse capacities and rhythms are valued; where she may decide and choose, express herself and move about freely."

At a Glance: Health of Women in Gujarat

- Sex ratio 921
- Infant mortality rate is 62.6%
- Under five mortality rate 85.1%
- Women with anaemia 46.3%
- Women with moderate / severe anaemia 16.8%
- 27% of women age 15-19 are already married
- Women having at least one reproductive health problem 28.6%
- Only 29.8% women heard of AIDS.

(NFHS 1998-99)

1: Declining Sex Ratio

Sex ratio (defined as females per thousand males), is an important health parameters of the society and it indicates the balance between males and females in a society. Normally, women are in more numbers for 1000 men. In India, due to male dominated society and son preference the sex ratio is less than 1000 except in Kerala.

In the decade of 1991-2001, though the overall sex ratio of India has marginally increased. In the case of Gujarat, it has reduced significantly form 934 to 921. Out of the 25 districts in the State of Gujarat, the ratio is best in the tribal district of the Dangs and in the district of Amreli, which is as high as 986 females per 1000 males, whereas the ratio is poorest in the district of Surat which is as low as 835 females per 1000 males. Trend in sex ratio in rural areas is higher than the urban areas (Census of India-Gujarat 2001, Series 25).

The reason of poor sex ratio in 0-6 years could be due to--

1. Son preference leading to female foeticide and infanticide.
2. Poor care of girl child leading to higher mortality rate among them.

Gujarat ranks 22nd in sex ratio among the States of India.

Female Feticide: Misuse of the technology through amniocentesis test for determination the sex of the foetus, followed by a selective abortion of the foetus if detected to be female affect the overall sex ratio of the state. The imbalance in the sex ratio in Gujarat indicates that even after the bill in regulation of Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act-PNDT passed from the year 1995 sex selective abortions continues. The sex ratio on the age group of 0-6 years further reconfirms the practice of sex selective abortion. The disparity in the sex ratio is most conspicuous in one of the most prosperous states of India.

Female Infanticide: Infanticide is prevalent in India since a time immemorial. Female infanticide is still widely prevalent among the Rajput community in Kutch area. This is primarily due to the burden of heavy dowry expected from the bride's parents.

Poor care to girl child: More deaths of girl children and women clearly indicate lack of appropriate care, lack of access to health care and appropriate nutrition. In a male dominated patriarchal society, the neglect of women starts from birth itself, and sometimes even before birth, and continues throughout life. There are many sayings in the Indian culture that relegates women and girl children as the inferior sex, for example, "Streeni Budhi Paagma Hoy" (women's intelligence is located in her feet). Such popular sayings further reinforce the low status of women.

It is clear that the situation of women in the State of Gujarat is grim and urgent action is needed to correct this.

2: Women's Health

Throughout the world, women and girls have not enjoyed equal access to basic human rights, protections, resources and services. Gender equity can be conceptualised in two main ways: first, that either women or men do not receive less or inferior treatment by virtue of their sex. An example of this is that rates of TB are similar in both women and men but data on attendance at health facilities from a number of countries show that women are much less likely to go for treatment. This can lead to the erroneous assumption that TB rates are lower among women. Second, gender equity also entails that health needs which are specific to each gender receive appropriate resources. In particular, women and girls have reproductive health needs which carry additional resource implications. They may also have other special needs, for instance relating to their greater vulnerability to gender violence.

Mortality Pattern: In all age groups the number of female deaths are higher than that of male especially between the age of 0-9 and 15-29 years. This is obviously due to discrimination in care, food intake and health care. The higher death rates in young age could be attributed to the high maternal mortality rates, bride burning and suicides related to dowry.

As per the State Bureau of Health Intelligence Commissionerate of Health Medical Services and Medical Education, MMR of Gujarat was 450 per 100,000 live births in 1984 and which declined to 310 in 1993 (Commissionerate of Health Medical Services and Medical Education 1996) which is on higher side.

Complications such as bleeding, sepsis, eclampsia, obstructed labour and severe anaemia account for at least three-fourths of obstetric deaths. Many of these for instance, anaemia and sepsis, can be prevented by such measures as therapeutic/prophylactic doses of iron, safe delivery by trained personnel and regular ante natal check ups and referral support in time of emergency/difficult deliveries.

On an average, Indian women are about 100 times more likely to die of maternity related causes than their counterparts in the developed world. It is important to note that 72% of the maternal deaths are easily preventable with timely antenatal care, referral and rapid transportation.

A total of 65.0% of deaths among women are caused by diseases that are predominantly infectious and 2.5% are related to childbirth. Among women in the reproductive age group, 2.6% of deaths are caused by major infectious diseases, like Tuberculosis (TB), malaria, cholera, pneumonia, diarrhea, dysentery and jaundice, and 12.5% are due to childbirth and associated conditions. The deaths in the younger age group, that is, girls under 15 years of age, contribute 28.4% of the total mortality among women in India.

Female Child Survival: More number of female than male children die, between age one and five mainly due to the neglect of the female child within the household. That is, boys receive preferential treatment in terms of health care, nutrition, and related needs. It is critical to recognize that *“the social practices that lead to excess female mortality are far more subtle and widespread than the graphic stories of infant drowning, poisoning or asphyxiation that periodically make headlines in the newspapers”* (Dreze and Sen 1995).

The mortality rate in the age group 3-5 years was higher among the females (129) as compared to the males (119) in Gujarat in 1981. Both these rates declined in 1991 with the below five mortality for females declining to 104 and for males to 97. District wise child mortality figures show that on the whole, below five mortality was higher in the districts of Mehsana, Kheda, Banaskantha, Dangs, Panchmahals, Sabarakantha and Gandhinagar. of these, female mortality is much higher than male mortality in two districts, Banaskantha and Mehsana. In Dangs, male mortality was higher than female mortality under age five. In some other districts also, namely, Bharuch, Surat, Amreli and Kachchh, the under 5 male mortality was higher than female mortality. In nearly half the districts, namely, Rajkot, Surendranagar, Kachchh, Sabarakantha, Gandhinagar, Panchmahals, Surat, Valsad and Dangs, the under 1 mortality for males, that is the male IMR was higher than the female IMR. It is important to note

that in the districts of Banaskantha, Mehsana, Kheda and Vadodara, the female IMR was much higher than the male IMR. This suggests that in the three districts, namely, Banaskantha, Kheda and Mehsana, there is greater discrimination against female infants as well as female children. It appears that severe discrimination against women, resulting in even reduced survival rates of female children, must be a strongly entrenched cultural practice among the social groups dominating these three districts.

Women's Morbidity Patterns: Vulnerability to illness increases in a person who is physically, emotionally and socially weak . This could be a man or woman, girl or boy. However, it is a reality that women suffer much greater morbidity than men do. Due to social conditioning in a patriarchal structure, women usually do not complain about their illness and therefore their illness largely remains unnoticed.

Starting from anaemia to complications of the reproductive tract, women are constantly under health stress. Women's health problems are broadly affected by two factors, biological (natural) and socio-economic and cultural (human-made), besides the individual attributes and the availability of health and nutritional services.

From the adolescent phase, the biological factors too start asserting on women's health status. All through her life cycle, the socio-cultural factors determine major part of a woman's physical and mental health status including access to health and nutritional services.

During childhood, women are subjected to discriminatory childcare, sex selection and even sexual abuse. During adolescence, women are exposed to sexual abuse, early marriage

and associated physical and mental health risk, abortions for unintended pregnancy, RTI, STD's and AIDS and drug abuse. During her reproductive years, unplanned pregnancy and unsafe delivery, unsafe abortions, pregnancy related complications, reproductive tract infections, STD, AIDS, and malnutrition are the major health problems. Problems of malnutrition get compounded in the event of malaria, hookworm and tuberculosis. Pregnancy exacerbates certain conditions such as anaemia, malaria, PEM. Due to biological factors women have a higher risk than men of becoming infected by STD's and HIV. The incidence of genital cancer is observed to be higher in women than on men. In the post-reproductive years, there are many physical conditions caused or aggravated by menopause. In India, breast cancer is second commonest cancer in women. However in cities like Ahmedabad, breast cancer is the leading cancer among women. Breast cancer is more common among women, compared to rural women. The rate of breast cancer in urban women is 22-28 per 100,000 per year. In rural women it is 6 per 100,000 per year.

At all stages of her life, a woman is exposed to or is under a constant threat of gender violence and mental disorders of depressive and post-traumatic stress. Therefore, suicide rates among women are higher among women than among men. Besides that, women are exposed to environmental and occupation health problems as much as men, but severity of the same is much more in women than in men because of malnutrition. Women suffer from the impact of indoor air pollution, which causes lung and heart diseases including cancer. Smoke, if inhaled during pregnancy, leads to either low-weight babies or stillbirths (Smith and Yochang 1993). Women's health status should be monitored keeping their special conditions in mind.

Communicable Infections: In the changing scenario in India, communicable diseases have escalated to epidemic and endemic proportions. Intestinal, respiratory and skin infections are the most common among women due to inadequate and unsafe water, air and sanitation. Malaria and TB are the other two major communicable diseases that affect the overall health of the majority of Indian women. AIDS may become a major threat to women, as it will escalate the occurrence of TB. NFHS 1998-99 reports that there is higher rate of malaria among women (4842 cases) compared to men (4079 cases).

Repeated episodes of malaria lead to severe anaemia and even death. Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), contracted through sexual transmission, during abortion or childbirth or from contraceptive intervention, especially the Intra Uterine Device (IUD), is increasing. Among the complications, PID leads to infertility, which can sometimes be socially calamitous for Indian women.

Stress Disorders: Rapid urbanization and modern civilization lead to toxic pollution and mounting stressed, which in turn lead to increased incidence of cancer, cardiovascular and auto-immune disorders, as well as emotional and mental stress. Women experience more anxiety, panic and sleeplessness, inviting various bodily ailment, accidents and self inflicted violence. Postnatal depression is common, as women's physical demands are compounded negative social pressures. The stigma of childlessness, physical disability or widowhood can also lead to imbalance and illness. Persons with conditions like schizophrenia or major depression, who need treatment, either get neglected or tortured. Due to disasters including human made and nature made women are victim and suffers major loss. To cope up life they face tremendous pressure which leads stress and other mental health problems.

Occupational Health: Women assume multiple roles and do more activities than men. Besides working at the workplace women are also involved in activities like housework, fuel, fodder gathering, carrying water from long distances, cooking (in villages most of the women use fire-wood or cow-dung cakes for cooking which are hazardous to health). Further, biologically they are the child bearers and responsible for lactation and thus take up the burden of child-care. They perform multiple roles of a daughter, wife, daughter-in-law,

mother, which is more stressful than the male roles. Thus the hazards that women have to face due to their multiple roles and activities affect their health negatively.

The formal sector offers better working conditions and facilities in the State as compared to the informal sector. However, women are not preferred in the formal sector as employers deny women's basic needs such as maternity leave, crèches etc. Another aspect is that women are thought to be a misfit in industry which is male dominated. Therefore they are shifted to the unorganized sector where they mostly do arduous, monotonous work such as transplanting, threshing, bidi making, tobacco processing, assembling electronic circuits etc.

About 80% women are employed in the agriculture and informal sector of the Indian economy. They are less paid as compared to their male counterparts (for the same job) despite such laws as Equal Remuneration Act, primarily because it is believed that they do less work compared to male workers. Also, they are the most vulnerable section of the workforce which can be easily exploited. This sector lacks unionism and therefore women workers cannot bargain better working conditions and wages.

Specially Hand Picked Seeds (HPS) of groundnut, in Jamnagar, that earn a high rate of foreign exchange are opened not by nutcrackers but by women's teeth. Each piece is carefully cracked by the women leaving their mouth so sore that during the season, they cannot even drink a cup of tea, exposed to mud directly in their mouth can cause worm infection which results in anaemia. Cottonpod unshellers suffer finger cuts, an irregular menstrual cycles. Lacemakers of Narasapur and embroiders of Kutch are forced to wear spectacles before the age of 40 years.

Occupational health problems due to poor working conditions in the many industries, such as chemical units, tanneries, thermal plants, textile units, potteries, asbestos industries, saw mills etc. and units undertaking extraction and harvesting of natural resources, such as mining activities (open and closed mines) are known. There is a long list of hazardous industries whose working conditions pose health hazards to the workers, besides posing health hazards to neighborhood. Besides that, those engaged in the petty service sector, such as vending and repairing by the roadside, are constantly exposed to the motor vehicle fumes.

In the transplantation of rice, continuous stooping posture is required. Women engaged in this activity, face back problems. Those carrying heavy head loads, especially rural women fetching water or collecting fire wood, have back problems. Women also suffer from induced abortions and reduced fertility due to carrying heavy head loads. Those working in full sun during the summer months often suffer from sunstroke and dehydration, which can even lead to death.

Fertility and Contraception: High birth rates reflect the insecurity of poor women with low child survival and precarious health. The consequences of having no children or only girls make women even more vulnerable to violence and neglect of their health. Although India was the first country in the world to implement the family planning programme, the problem of population growth still exists. Lack of involvement of men and the community and lack of quality care are some of the major reasons. There is also evidence that the family planning follow-up is very poor. Women suffer from various problems due to IUD insertion. Also, very few efforts are made to inform women about the side effects of contraceptives and what needs to be done to overcome them.

Aging Women: All through the life cycle, elderly females are subject to various kinds of discrimination, oppression and exploitation, despite being central to the family and society. All these have an adverse impact on their well being particularly in later life. (Bali Arun P, 1999)

“The influence of psychological factors such as fear, worry, anxiety and loneliness have been shown to affect not only actual dietary intake but also utilization of nutrients. In studies with older women, Swanson reported negative nitrogen and calcium balances during anxiety episodes over the terminal illness of a relative and during periods of living alone.” (Kumari Asha,1999). CHETNA study in Sabarakantha revealed that major problems faced by Aging Women were related to vision, bones, teeth, breathing, digestion and urinary tract. Problems such as osteoporosis and osteoarthritis are included in the orthopaedic problems.

The morbidities in their old age have accumulated from the various stages of their life spectrum. Morbidity acquired at each stage accentuate those in the next, the old age being the manifestation of all the morbidities compounded with each other. In addition, the tell-tale signs of old age impairment of vision and hearing, osteoarthritis with impairment of morbidity and osteoporosis with vulnerability to hip and femur fractures are the common complaints among aged women.

A study by Vijay Kumar states that health problems of elderly women were urinary incontinence, utero-vaginal prolapsed, breast cancer, osteoporosis, postmenopausal morbidities. Depressions and dementia are widely prevalent among elderly females.

About 15% of the ageing Women in Sabarkantha district are addicted smoking bidi, chewing tobacco, using snuff, applying snuff to their teeth, consuming country liquor and eating beetle leaf with tobacco.

Violence: Violence contributes significantly to illness episodes resulting in poor quality of life. Violence that women face is closely linked to their social status and affects their well being and health status as well. Up till now, all violence was viewed merely as a law and order problem. However, recent attention has focused on its implications on health. Both tolerance of and experience of violence against women are significant barriers to the empowerment of women, with consequences for women's health, their health-seeking behaviour, their adoption of a small family norm, and the health of their children.

Violence against women is present throughout the life cycle. Women experience violence in different ways and magnitudes. A girl first encounter with violence may occur even before she is born. Misuse of the amniocentesis test to determine the sex of the child is often used to prevent the birth of a girl child. It is important to note that Government of Gujarat has officially banned the amniocentesis test for use in sex determination, however this test is still being performed illegally.

Thirty-six percent women in Gujarat accept at least one reason as justification for wife-beating. The reason such as suspicion that the wife is unfaithful (27 percent), if wife neglects the house or children (23 percent), if she goes out without telling her husband (21 percent) or if she shows disrespect for in-laws (15 percent). Or if a wife does not cook food properly (12 percent). Rural women are much more sufferer of domestic violence (45 percent) than urban women (25 percent), (NFHS, India, Gujarat 1998-99).

3 : Food and Nutrition Security of women in Gujarat

Despite the fact that food production has increased over the decades, the nutritional status of the Indian women has virtually remained poor and is much lower as compared to the standard requirement. Within households, the food available is distributed according to the status of the individual in the family rather than the nutritional requirements,. Due to their secondary status, women and girls in most families usually eat what is leftover and that too after all the family members have consumed. Due to three consecutive years of drought in

Kutch, Saurashtra, Panchmahal districts affected the food availability and food consumption in quantity and quality wise. Earthquake and riots made the situation worse.

Food and nutrition security in a life cycle approach:

Infancy: From the day that babies are born, social customs and tradition dictate differential attitudes, behaviour and practices related to boys and girls food entitlements. Viewed as a burden rather than a blessing, girl babies in Gujarat tend to be breast-fed for less duration and later they receive smaller portions and poor quality food in comparison to boys. From the early years, girls are socialized to deny their own needs.

Anyone working with the community can vouch for the discriminatory feeding practices among girl children both, in terms of quantity and the quality of food offered. The lion's share is given to the men, the boys and leftovers to the girl's and the women, who eat last. (CHETNA 1995)

It has been scientifically proved that the effect of breast feeding for a shorter span leads to earlier onset of ovulation. Thus less amount breastfeeding to a girl child gives rise to the possibility of subsequent conception by the mother. The resultant shorter birth intervals after female births compared with male births, increase the risks of malnutrition and mortality among female children and also contribute to "maternal (nutritional) depletion."

Girl Child: Undernutrition among children is a major concern of the country including the Gujarat state. Considering poverty as a major reason affecting nutritional status of children, for girl child the problem of undernutrition is more complex due to the added dimension of gender based discrimination. According to Dr. Shanti Ghosh's study-April 1991 conducted in Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi found higher incidence of severe undernutrition among girls in the age group of 1-5 years, 43% among males and 54% among females.

Adolescent: Adolescence is the most vulnerable period during the growth and development of the girl. Adolescent girls face the discrimination in food intake, which worsen her health status, the adolescent girls are burdened with the household work and childcare responsibilities. She spends energy in fuel collection and fetching water which is not compensated by her food intake as she is viewed as an economic burden to the family. Girl child in India: the Situation analysis) India Country Paper, DWCD 1999 point out that a large number if adolescents are under nourished and the problem is more among girls (45%) than boys (2%), primarily due to deep rooted gender discrimination. Girls need 10% more iron as a result of menstrual blood loss, but their consumption is much less. The most visible manifestation of nutritional deficiency is the high prevalence of anemia and stunting among adolescent girls.

Dr. Shubhada Kanani (1995) found that the average weight of adolescent girls of Vadodra in Gujarat was only 60-70% of the standards. Majority of girls (above 80%) are anemic and about 10% were severely anaemic. The inadequacy of the diet is reflected in their calorie intake which meets only about 40-70% of the requirement, average intake being 60%. Carotene intake is dismally low at just 10-20% of the recommended allowances.

Nutrition in Adult women: National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB) surveys show that even after 50 years of Independence, average intake of calories is substantially below the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for men and women. The largest deficits are in the case of pregnant and lactating mothers.

It is commonly observed in the Indian society that a woman prepares the food but, is the last to eat herself. Also religious rituals lead to excessive observance of fast which are detrimental to their health. This explains both the physical and social reasons for women's

poor health. The quantity and quality of food that women and therefore the least, but are the ones who often consume stale food which is never offered to male members of the family.

Studies on energy expenditure and calorie intake show that women spend 53% of human energy on survival tasks while men spend 31% and children 16% respectively. Mean intake of 2100 calories by women suggests that 50% of the population is subsisting on deficit which is less than 2100 calories. Any decrease in calorie intake results in weight loss or decrease in the activity patterns to conserve energy. Chronic low level of energy intake and increase in the work demand obviously effects women's health and nutritional status negatively.

Das et al. 1996 compared "privileged" and "underprivileged" males and females and found that 24% of females were malnourished in the privileged group while 74% were malnourished among the underprivileged. The percentages for males were lower in both cases-----14% among the privileged and 67% in the underprivileged.

Food Security state responsibility:

In Gujarat, over the last one and half decades, area under cultivation foodgrains has declined whereas that under non-foodgrains has increased. Stagnation in the agriculture sector is because, on the one hand, about a quarter of the gross cropped area is irrigated and on the other, subsistence agriculture practices have not remained sustainable mainly due to environmental degradation and to some extent, land transfers for the non-agriculture. Industrial development has formed the backbone of the state's economy leading to the neglect of environment and agriculture.

The discussions on food security in the context of economic liberalization generally focuses on increased cost of inputs to agriculture as a result of withdrawal of subsidies, export-orientation that leads to replacement of food corps by cash (export) corps by the farmers, shift to unsustainable agricultural practice in attempt to increase the yields through intensive farming and the management of PDS. In Gujarat, besides dominance of cash corps, shift in cultivation from traditional coarse cereals to high yielding variety (HYV) cereals and degradation of land and water resources have been observed since the decade of the eighties. By the beginning of the decade of the nineties, Gujarat State was already a net importer of food grains.

After the onset of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1991, the state has committed itself to increasing the pace of industrialization. In 1991, the state was the second most industrialized in the country having followed industrialization with great zeal. Of the total proposed investment between 1991 to 1997 in India, about 15 percent has come to Gujarat (GOI 1997). The increased pace of industrial investments, nature of industrial development, and continued degradation of environment and as a result, decline in the availability of water for irrigation as well as drinking water have had implications on food security.

The agriculture in Gujarat is also commercialized. While the gross cropped area (GCA) under food grains have declined form 48 percent in 1960-65 to 42 percent in 1994, an all India average showed a decline from 75 percent to 68 percent during the same period. The share of cash crops in Gujarat increased form 52 percent to 58 percent whereas that in India it increased form 25 percent to 32 percent during this period (Patel 1996). Gujarat has also been experiencing a decline in the traditional crop production due to switch of area in favour of crops like fruits and vegetables, rice, sugarcane, cotton and spices. The only saving trace for Gujarat is that its cropping pattern is still one of the most diversified perhaps due to the agro-climatic conditions of the state. The PDS caters to between 30-35 percent of the food and other essential commodity requirements of the poor households (Morris 1995). The area under HYVs is also largely made up of cash food crops and the progress of HYV seed

adoption has been quite slow in crops like jowar and maize which are the staple food grains of the poor in the state.

Looking at the environmental aspect of food security, one-third of Gujarat's forest area is degraded. Further salination, over exploitation of groundwater, and water logging emerge as the major problems particularly in areas like Bhal, and Kachchh where they are even perpetuating migration trends. A household level survey in Kachchh region revealed that most of the landless labourers, and marginal and small farmer were suffering from under nutrition as well as malnutrition in terms of calorie consumption and the quality of diet. the consumption of pulses was particularly low across all households in the regions (Purohit et. Al. 1997).

There are inherent paradoxes in the water dynamics within the State. While on the one hand there are parched lands in the dry regions and population facing severe water crisis, on the other, there are lush fields of sugarcane and other cash crops which require large quantity of sweet water. Prior to the SAP, the rich farmer's lobby dominated and dictated the state's water policy. After SAP, the mega industries which has larger political clout is now dictating the term. In the race between irrigation demand and industrial demand, drinking water (which is part of food security) demand is relegated to a poor third position (Hirway et.al. 1994).

Parthasarthy (1994) in his study on artisans of Gujarat showed that 13 percent of the artisans' households did not get two square meals a day throughout the year, particularly during the monsoon season. The incidence was much higher (20 percent) among the total population. The extent of food insecurity ranged from 8 percent in the case of tailors to 60 percent among basket weavers. The problem of non-availability of food twice a day for all members of the household was much widely prevalent among basket weavers, tailors, shoemakers, potters, and blacksmiths. The visible reason was the non-viability of their traditional occupations and lack of diversification of activities. Another study of the Nalkantha region depicted that villages suffering from soil and water salinity and inadequate rainfall, reported that the calorie as well as protein consumption per person declined in the early 1990s compared to that in the early 1980s. this was accompanied by a decline in both earnings per person and cultivated land per person (Desai et. al. 1995).

The peripheral areas consisting of regions of Saurashtra, Kachchh, northeast Gujarat, and the southern district of Dangs present a grim picture. This region is predominantly agricultural and has three-fourths of Gujarat's forest resources. Although, it had almost three-time higher agricultural production as compared to the heartland (rest of Gujarat), the per capita output was only half of that of the heartland. But, in the absence of significant presence of another sectors i.e. manufacturing and services, this region is least developed (Patel 1991).

4: Safe Water and Sanitation

The availability of drinking water, sanitation facility, garbage collection and disposal are the prime concerns of women. In Gujarat women are responsible for the collection and transportation of water, storage and management in the home, the use of water in cooking and home hygiene, the cleanliness of children and training the young in hygienic practices.

However in rural areas, access to safe water and sanitation is extremely poor. It is the women who bear the burden of fetching water, By the time they fetch water for their entire family for drinking, for cattle, bathing, washing and other household work, they get so exhausted that most of the times, they themselves do not take bath for 3-4 days at a stretch, which results in skin diseases,

The World Health Organization (WHO) considers 18-20 liters per person per day as the minimum acceptable quantity of drinking water to maintain health. This meant that a woman carrying water for a family of six would carry between 108 and 120 kilograms each day, if she could obtain such a quantity of water. Both acute and chronic health problems frequently result. For pregnant women and mothers of young children, the health impact of water bearing is particularly severe: oxygen and calorie consumption incurred can affect the growth of the foetus and after the birth when women are forced to resume water bearing the quantity the quality of breast milk may be impaired. The effects of the burden of water are clearly inter-generational.

Skeletal damage is a second major health problem. Over time, the burden of water carrying will often result in damage to the vertebral column. When children carry water, their growing bones are particularly vulnerable to deformity. Deformed pelvic bones incurred in child hood may cause severe problems when a women gives birth to her own children. Women carrying water are also at risk of incidents causing injury: one study suggested that 50% of people treated for broken necks in Bangladesh had fallen while carrying a heavy load on the head. The situation is not different in Gujarat.

A study found that a reduction of three hours work of fetching water resulted in a saving of 350 kilo calories. Bringing water sources closer, therefore, has important nutritional and other health benefits, especially for the poorest people who are also most likely to be malnourished or susceptible to illness.

Water resources are also getting scarce because of various reasons: shift from rainfed farming (course grains, pulses, etc) to irrigation farming, (groundnut, cotton, tobacco) and increase in demand for water for industrial purpose, agriculture and to meet domestic needs. The excess use of ground water resources for agriculture and industrial purpose at the cost of local people (as they do not have money to buy water) is becoming a dangerous phenomenon as it leads to indiscriminate and excessive withdrawal of ground water which is impossible to recharge. It also creates problems like salinity, sea water intrusion (in coastal areas). Poor management of pesticides and industrial and human wastes is also a major problem.

There is serious ground water depletion in Gujarat.

Do women have a say?

Since the beginning of the "international Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, " in 1981, the basic role of women as users and managers of water has been emphasized. The need for women's participation not only as passive beneficiaries but as active agents in planning, maintenance and effective management has been recognized. In practice, water management systems fail to involve them in any meaningful way.

A study by the Self-Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad in the drought-prone areas of Santalpur and Banaskantha districts of Gujarat, found that women had to make do with meager water supplies for cooking, drinking, washing and irrigation. Women are not involved in the decision making process on site, in deciding the budget and in maintenance of water supply or sanitation schemes. It has been indicated that most of the times, for the installation of handpumps, women's opinions are not considered before selecting drilling sites.

The Girl Child: The absence of adequate, accessible supplies of water or absence / dirty toilets may directly inhibit or curtail girl's enrollment in school within the school compound especially after the onset of menstruation, when the need for privacy is more acutely felt.

Another issue which may play a major role in keeping girls out of school is the need for them to participate in, or even take responsibility for carrying water to home apart from the significant negative health impact.

Sanitation: Due to lack of proper sanitation, about 105 million children below five years of age die each year. The most widespread diseases are transmitted due to lack of sanitation are diarrhoea, typhoid and cholera.

Only an estimated 14 percent of India's rural household have access to latrines. Most people in rural India defecate outdoors, near the village itself or in the fields, on a river bank or on the edge of a road. The majority of people who defecate outside do not cover or dispose of their excreta. This may not be particularly problematic in sparsely populated areas where the excreta dries quickly. But with the expansion of towns into the country side, these areas are more and more rare. It is difficult to defecate outdoors during the rainy season or at night.

For women everywhere in the rural countryside, privacy is a major consideration. Many women must go early in the morning before it is light or wait till night time to urinate or defecate to ensure privacy. Some women avoid drinking during the day even in the scorching summer months, because they have no place to urinate in privacy. And harassment of women who walk out in their own is sometimes a problem. Waiting to urinate or defecate is not just uncomfortable, but can cause serious health problems like urinary tract infections.

The water crisis in Gujarat: Insufficient and/or contaminated drinking water and the absence of or unhygienic sanitation are largely responsible for high morbidity and mortality. An estimated 80% of all diseases and one third of all deaths in developing countries are caused by the consumptions of contaminated water and at least 10% of productive hours are lost due to water and sanitation related diseases.

The whole of Gujarat, except some pockets, faces any of the following types of water crisis:

1. There is an over all shortage water of appropriate quality.
2. Most river courses around large towns and cities have, in effect, become drains for sewage and industrial effluents, causing pollution of surface and ground water. Sabarmati river, passing through Ahmedabad is one of the fourteen most polluted rivers in the country.
3. Over-exploitation of ground water largely to meet agricultural requirements has led to a steady decline of water table between 3m to as much as 50m in different parts of the state. This has resulted in increased cost of pumping, abandoning of shallow wells and tubewells, shortage of drinking, agriculture and industrial water.
4. In intensely agricultural canal irrigated areas, we see logging, salinisation of soils, pollution of ground water due to use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
5. The coastal aquifers are facing large scale sea water intrusion.
6. Fluoride concentration has been increasing in ground water in large parts of the state during the last 2-3 decades leading to increased incidence of fluorosis both in human and cattle population.
7. Inadequate sanitation and waste water disposal is leading to increased incidence of malaria, falciparum and several water borne diseases.

Environmental pollution and degradation

Environmental health is emerging as a new area of concern. Environmental pollution and degradation have important implications for the health status of a population particularly women. Urban areas in Gujarat have pollution problems largely because of inadequate infrastructure including the infrastructure to deal with waste and uncontrolled and unregulated industrial activity. Rural areas are also affected now by industrial pollution.

Urban environment related health problems – Health problems emanating from urban environment are basically of two types; problems relating to air and water pollution, and problems relating to the lack of adequate sanitation. The first victim of industrialization, urbanization, and modernization is usually the urban environment. With a continuous high rate of urbanization, provision of basic services such as, water supply and sanitation do not keep pace with the rate of urban growth. The access to serviced urban land by new migrants and the poor is also limited. Adequate sanitation or water supply also are not available and solid wastes are not collected regularly. All these factors lead to pervasiveness of water-borne infectious diseases. Women are more prone to such infections due to their lower nutritional status. The population not having an access to adequate water does not maintain proper personal hygiene, which increase the incidence of skin diseases.

Air pollution, caused by vehicular traffic, thermal plants within the cities, industrial units is the other major environmental health problem. Studies show that in the India metropolises, the air pollution levels far exceed the WHO standards (Environment 1988). Air pollution damages human respiratory and cardio-respiratory systems. The elderly, children, smokers, and those with chronic respiratory and cardiovascular problems are more susceptible to damages because of air pollution.

Malaria is also common in our urban areas due to stagnant pools of water, water storage systems in the houses, dark and damp houses in the slums. It has been estimated that 68.7% households in Gujarat use biomass and kerosene, which are highly polluting fuels, for domestic use. Indoor pollution levels are higher in the households using biofuels and coal than those using petrofuels. In Ahmedabad City, yet another survey was carried out in the industrial areas among the households with low socio-economic status. It showed that in the households using cattle dung, the indoor levels of TSP, CO, HCHO, NO and SP₂ were higher by a factor of 6, 10, 10, 3 and 3 respectively. Among the biofuels used in these households, cattle dung is the most polluting fuel.

Note: TSP – Total Suspended Particulate; CO – Carbon Monoxide; HCHO – Formaldehyde; NO₂ – Nitrogen Dioxide; SO₂ – Sulphur Dioxide

A medical check-up of the women in the age group 12-60 was carried out in the surveyed households to assess their Pulmonary Function Tests (PFT's) like Vital Capacity (VC), Forced Vital Capacity (FVC), Peak Expiratory Flow Rate (PEFR), two hours after the cooking was over. In the households using the traditional fuels, the values of the pulmonary functions tests, VC, FVC and PEFR were lower than in the households using modern fuels. That means, that the pulmonary functions deteriorated in the women when the households used polluting fuels. As a result, the prevalence of respiratory complaints (common cold, cough, breathlessness etc.) was higher in the households using traditional fuels (Patel and Raiyani, 1997).

Rural Environmental health problems – Urban activities affect the rural environment as well. Industrial wastewater is often released untreated in the river systems. In addition, the untreated sewage water is released in the river systems. This affects the agriculture down stream. If the river water is the source of drinking water then it affects the health of the rural

populations down stream. Due to concentration of organic matter in the sewage waste, rural populations residing down stream are susceptible to water-borne diseases. In many industrial estates in Gujarat untreated waste water is released in low-lying areas and in nearby ponds. Untreated water leaches in the soil and pollutes the ground water streams.

Situation is serious when untreated chemical wastewater is disposed in this manner. As high as 77% of the domestic and industrial water demand in the state is met by the exploitation of group water (Hirway and Patel 1994, 18), the chemical wastes reach the human body directly through drinking water or indirectly through the food chain. Another major problems in the rural areas is air pollution due to location of thermal power plants and resultant respiratory problems.

Environmental degradation leading to malnutrition causes one set of health problems while environmental pollution leads to another set of problems such as respiratory problems, skin problems, cancer, gynecological disorders among women, vector diseases etc. It may be appropriate to develop indicators of not only health status based on the reporting of certain health conditions but also epidemiology related indicators, or factors causing health problems to be able to use the social indicators on health for policy formulation.

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Group 2 - Advocacy for Gender Equity through Media

Gender refers to women's and men's roles and responsibilities that are socially determined. Gender is related to how we perceived and expected to think and act as women and men because of the way society is organized, not because of our biological differences.

Gender and development (GAD) approach shifts the focus from women as a group to the socially determined relations between men and women. A GAD approach focuses on the social, economic, political and cultural forces that determine how men and women might participate in, benefit from and control resources and activities differently.

Empowerment of women through media.

The term "empowerment" has been widely used in relation to women in recent times. Earlier it was either "welfare" or "development". Empowerment, as a term has no fixed or authoritative definition, but is frequently used to describe a process wherein the powerless gain a greater share of control over resources and decision-making.

Control over resources like Physical, Human, Intellectual, Financial and the Self. Control over ideology means the ability to determine beliefs, values, attitudes. Control over ways of thinking which governs both- private and public life.

Empowerment thus refers to a range of activities from individual self-assertion to collective resistance, protest and mobilization that challenge basic power relationships.

Women's empowerment is an uneven process. It is externally induced. The ideology of gender inequality is inculcated in both men and women from birth. Religion, mythology, social and cultural taboos, superstitions, behavioural training, veiling, distribution of work, rewards and punishments are all used to socialise girls to accept and participate in their own oppression. Chances are that if you are poor and a woman, you have never been allowed to think for yourself or create your own alternatives.

Discrimination against women is not simply a matter of law, earnings and poor working conditions. It is a deeply-rooted cultural pattern which affects every aspect of women's being. It is not, therefore, something which any single set of measures will change. What is needed is a comprehensive and fundamental effort to free women from the ideological strait-jacket in which they are held. As a group, women are the main target of proponents of the dominant ideology. Deeply implicated in the propagation of existing beliefs and attitudes are the main agents of socialization. They are

1. Family, where girls are learn to serve the men of house.
2. Education system, where concepts of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are transmitted to children through text books.
3. Mass Media, whose contents reflect and perpetuate the differences in treatment, value, and status which women and men are allotted in society.

There is a bridge that is yet to be crossed. A lot of women are abused, used and misused. Despite international efforts to promote the status and well-being of women, the results have not been too promising. In a world, where women's economic, social and political roles are still narrowly defined and limited, the media are instrumental as socializing agent.

Hence external agents are necessary to initiate the process of empowerment. They can be activists, women's organisations, NGO's, educationists and Mass Media.

Empowerment means having choices – which can be made within the known or experienced possibilities. Media can make women enable to discover new possibilities, new options. With the flick of a button or the stroke of a pen, a thousand minds across hundreds of countries can be influenced in a second. Such is the power of the mass media – written, spoken and visual.

The new woman is in the role of a housewife, a mother, a friend, a supporter, a career woman. She cherishes the values of the past and has emerged strong, confident, resourceful – able to meet challenges.

Yes, there is a definite connection between the two. Media content has influenced this woman, by creating “Role Models”. Mass Media play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion.

While the media can serve to perpetuate and reinforce the status quo through selective dissemination and presentation of ideology and information, they can also be mobilized to serve as agents of change; to reflect, if not initiate, changes in the role and status of women.

Media Scenario in India

In India there is no Communication policy. In the name of policy there are three words - information, entertainment and education. Education in its broad sense is development, as development is possible through education in terms of liberating the people's minds by sensitizing them, by creating awareness so that they can live in own environment more effectively.

Healthy competition amongst various T.V. channels improves the quality, leads to something nice. We should be equipped ourselves to confront this kind of media onslaught. We should have a ground level communication media put in such a frame work which can fill the gap created otherwise.

Radio is a potent medium. Unfortunately not fully exploited for development purpose. Folk forms of communication can be utilised effectively. Some of them should be brought in T.V and Radio. Street Theatre also can be used by taking messages to the doorsteps of the people. In India, with a stupendous reach of about 110 million radio receivers strewn across urban as well as rural areas, its penetration is matchless. All India Radio offers services in 24 regional languages and 146 dialects. The primary channel network comprises 105 stations. There are 70 Low Relay Stations. Each one serves a small area reaching right into the heart of the community. Vividh Bharati comprises 31 centres, 7 more operating on FM stereo.

History of television is not very old. The arrival of television in India had a very noble cause to serve the society. There are nearly 70 million television households in the country today. In the early years T.V was an urban medium but with the expansion of Doordarshan network, today there are more T.V viewers in rural areas.

1. T.V. homes - 36.9 million in urban & 32.2 million in rural area
2. Total Viewers – 226.4 million in urban & 253.1 million in rural area
3. DD 1 – 1308 transmitters, reaching 89 % of population
4. DD Today – 21 channels, 56 programme production centres

Every new technology catches its age unprepared. T.V. audiences are the largest ever known in the history of communications. T.V as an art form offers greater possibilities – unique qualities of intimacy and immediacy. Radio and T.V. involve the whole person – kinesthetically, emotionally as well as intellectually.

Gender Research

There are two major concerns related to women in media.

1. Low employment of women in media particularly at decision-making levels, &
2. Image of women projected through media.

In general, inadequate attention is paid in media to issues of specific importance to women ; to the activities of the women's movements or to social contribution made by independent and gifted women, mostly projected as self – deprecating, dependent, irrational, superstitious and over-emotional. Basically shown as decorative pieces and as marginal to national growth and development. The plural nature of Indian culture & diverse roles that women play is neither acknowledged nor communicated. On the other hand, when women assume positions in media, they subject themselves to the harsh glare of public opinion. A successful media woman is not just a woman who writes objective, correct and readable copy, but one who is also a catalyst of social change. A sense of great maturity on her part is expected. On a grander scale, women in media have the option to control, besides their own lives, humanity at large.

Actions needed

1. Research should be conducted to examine the social and cultural factors influencing women's status in the society.
2. Workshops, Seminars, Training Programmes should be organised on gender sensitization both for men & women, students & professionals, government & privately owned media.
3. Implication of existing laws regarding the portrayal of women should be effective.
4. Directives for media education should be imposed. Syllabus must contain gender issues. Teachers' training also should be conducted for the same.
5. Trainers' training for Capacity Building in using media should be arranged for local groups & by local tools.
6. Communication strategy should be locale specific- keeping in mind the urban & rural realities.
7. Media Advocacy should be monitored regularly ,for which the indicators should be set.
8. Success stories of individuals, movements (like milk cooperatives) should be highlighted through media for women's economic empowerment.
9. A media cell should be established for adequate & in-time supply of information to various media houses/news papers.
10. Fellowships/Scholarships should be provided for research in media advocacy.
11. Networking with NGOs should be created to plug the regional variations, to avoid duplications of efforts in reaching out to the people & to supplement information on real time basis.
12. Encourage media –traditional & modern, to foster new values of gender justice.

Role of mass media is specified in the National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001 as following....

Media will be used to portray images consistent with human dignity of girls & women. The policy will specifically strive to remove demeaning, degrading and negative conventional stereotypical images of women & violence against women. Private Sector Partners and media networks will be involved at all levels to ensure equal access for women particularly in the area of information and Communication technologies. The media would be encouraged to develop codes of conduct, professional guidelines and other self regulatory mechanisms to remove gender stereotypes and promote balance portrayals of men & women.

Group 3 - Capacity Building

Gender equity is one ideal which we have inherited in legislation, but not achieved in practice. In the last decade many conscious attempts have been made to ensure that this equality is achieved. Maharashtra was the first state to frame and adopt a gender policy for itself in the 1990s. In 2001 National Policy for Empowerment of women was formulated. Subsequently other states have also been formulating gender policy.

The aim of gender policy at state level is empowerment of women and providing equal opportunities to women. However, in spite of affirmative action it has been found that women are not able to benefit from it to the optimal level. Therefore, there is now a realization that along with this, we need to increase women's capacity to the level where they are able to take advantage of the positive policy environment. In this regard, capacity building of women plays an important role.

By capacity building we mean all the processes that facilitate women's empowerment by strengthening their inner capacities. This capacity building is mainly at the level of increasing women's awareness, knowledge and skills. The term awareness encompasses a number of processes which increase women's knowledge of self and therefore strength; awareness of society, including awareness of processes leading to their exploitation.

Another area of capacity-building is in skill-training. When external factors such as credit, marketing, tools or a reservation for women in jobs are provided to women, unless they are able to acquire competitive skills, these aids do not result in income generation or empowerment.

Women's participation in political life has been again strong in principle. Women acquired right to vote as soon as the country became independent. However, in the parliament only 8.9% of seats are held by women. A progressive step to increase women's participation is attempted through reservation in panchayat seats for women. Women coming up in the political arena from the grassroots level will make their position much stronger in the long run. However, women can assert this political right only if they are able to learn about their rights and responsibilities. Also, they need to acquire the confidence in themselves that they will be able to handle the position. At the local level there are forces who gain by not allowing women to gain this confidence. Therefore capacity-building efforts by government and NGOs in this area are pertinent. There are 50,000 new women elected representatives but there is no statewide capacity building programme to reach out this mass of women leaders.

For poor women, organizing is a powerful means of capacity-building as it gives voice to women's concerns and also makes it possible to achieve what they can not achieve individually. This has been evident from the experience of a number of grass root level initiatives in organising women.

Goals of Capacity-building for Gender Policy in the State:

1. Gender equity
2. Empowerment of women
3. Provide equal access of opportunities to women

The three goals mentioned above seem obvious but they need to be reiterated here. Empowerment processes seek to bring about changes in the distribution of material and symbolic resources and also increase opportunities between women and men within the development process. Capacity-building therefore is an integral part of empowerment. Only when women are able to understand themselves, the society, social relations and the economy, can they influence and change the situation for

better. This would be achieved through gender sensitive & gender redistributive policies

4. Mainstreaming gender concerns by greater sensitivity to gender relations amongst the concerned institutions. The gender policy will attempt to ensure in various development sectors, women get equal participation. If this goal is achieved successfully over a large period of time and with considerable no. of women in the mainstream, it would also alter the nature of the mainstream organization itself.
5. Create enabling environment for gender sensitive programmes and activities. For this, firstly, its essential to develop a social commitment to gender equity. This is attempted through formulation of gender policy with a clear mandate and be in a decision-making position. To make these work in practice, it is necessary to facilitate and support gender sensitive institutions. An enabling environment is also most essential for bringing women in the mainstream.

To achieve the above goals, we need to understand some aspects of women's reality today. The capacity building and gender policy recognizes the existing gender relations in our society. These are summarized below.

- Women perform productive, reproductive and community management roles. Therefore any programmes designed for women will have to consider their existing roles and constraints arising from these. Gender transformative policies will recognize these to enable women's participation, but will also be proactive and work in the direction of changing gender stereotypes. It will provide opportunities for women to have a greater freedom in choosing their role and activities.
- Although gender neutral policies have existed for a number of years, in the absence of recognition of women's constraints, these policies end up being gender blind. The proposed policy will overcome this limitation. For example, if a training programme with women does not provide crèche or convenient location, it will result in lower participation by women.
- At the entire state level women do not form a homogenous group. They belong to different caste, class, religious, urban/rural groups. The capacity building programmes have to be inclusive and also be relevant to all these women. For example the training programmes designed for women is based on an urban, middle class woman in mind will not recognize multiple roles of women and that they are not free to participate during peak harvesting season.

The main components of capacity building programmes are briefly mentioned below:

I. Content:

The contents would vary according to the clientele, their level and needs.

Broadly Capacity building needs to be done in three major areas;

- a. Gender training for policy makers and staff at various level
 - Awareness of gender relations and social relations
 - Gender sensitivity for functionaries – men and women – who will deal with a large number of poor men and women under development programmes.
 - Understanding to of approaches to gender planning for senior level policy makers

- b. Major development programmes and the training organized under these. e.g. SHG, economic programmes, watershed development, etc.
 - Gender training mentioned above
 - Gender issues relevant for that sector, for example, women's role in decision making on watershed measures
 - Strengthen and gender sensitise the existing institutional structures – e.g. SHGs, ICDS functionaries and their infrastructure.

The content, language and methods of capacity building will vary for the different segments given above, however the goal of the capacity building should be gender-redistributive in the long run. The other common elements could include

- Specific skills training to enhance their capacity
- Training in leadership development for enabling women's greater participation.
- Literacy, numeracy and functional skills
- Organizing skills
- Training for political participation

II. Clientele & Levels at which CB to be targeted:

The capacity building has to be done with three major segments –

- women and men
- People's organizations, units for political participation (gram sabha and Panchayat members)
- the development agencies involved in dealing with women. Within these agencies programmes need to be designed for various levels-
 - grassroots level functionaries
 - middle level personnel with significant say in enforcement of policies
 - senior level bureaucrats involved at policy making level.

III. Structures for widespread capacity building:

As seen above, the content, the number and the type of human resources to be involved is large and widely different. Therefore a large number of resources need to be deployed to strengthen capacity building state-wide. The institutes mentioned below are not exhaustive, but indicative of the organisations that can definitely be involved in capacity building.

- State level Training institutes like Public Administration institute (SPIPA).
- State level institutes for economic sectors and development programmes – eg. training institutes for nationalized banks, NABARD, Industrial development Corporations, state handicrafts Board, KVIC etc.
- Training or organisation structures of the above organisations at district or block level.
- Universities and deemed institutes, colleges
- DRDAs and other district and block level institutes can be used for hosting and coordinating these programmes. They may not be able to have the human resource required for training.
- Educational network of schools and health personnel
- District level technical training institutes.
- NGOs in the state with expertise in the content matters mentioned above.

Action Points:

Monitoring and linkages with other programmes:

- There needs to be a monitoring mechanism / cell which monitors the implementation of the policy from the perspective of capacity building of women. This cell can be in-house or could consist of an advisory committee with expertise on the issue.
 - It could monitor the coverage of capacity building (area/people).
 - This cell could monitor the presence of and content of training programmes of other development sectors.
 - This cell could also carry out research to monitor effectiveness and quality of the programs.
 - The cell could devise the curriculum for training programmes.
- A special emphasis has to be given to capacity building through collective action and training in the subject as this has been found a more viable approach for poor women.
- To ensure that in all the sectors where capacity building is needed (for example, women and political participation) the organization/ programme is supported by adequate funding and staff to translate the capacity building goals into action.

Group 4 - Legislative Action for Gender Equity

From Manusmriti to Beijing, through Nairobi, has been long walk towards equality and Justice for the Indian women.

There have been several milestones that the women's movement, both at the national as well as the international level has to its credit. To start with the recognition of women's rights at the international level as human rights was the most important contribution that was made to improve the status of women. Also worth noting is the change in attitude from viewing the women as recipients of welfare measures to viewing them as contributors to the development world. The way the problems of domestic violence and sexual harassment of women have been brought out side the four walls of the house into the public area as social issues that need solutions is yet another step in the direction of ensuring a life full of safety and dignity for the women.

At the national level also the state's efforts towards achieving gender justice have been constantly on.

A bird's eye view of the legislative attempts in the last decade and a half would indicate positive state action in response to the lobbying by various women's groups in the form of multiple legislations dealing with various issues concerning women. The major legislative contribution during this period were the Sati (Prevention) Act, amendment to rape laws, addition of sections in the Indian Evidence Act to benefit the women in certain cases, the indecent representation of women act, prenatal diagnostic techniques act etc.

Similarly, the response of the higher judiciary to women's issues has been more often than not, commendable. One comes across a series of judgments pronounced by the High Court and the Supreme Court that tilt the balance of justice in favour of women.

At the policy levels also, there have been several policies formulated by the state as well as central governments to uplift the status of women. These include health schemes, maternity benefit schemes for the women workers, free education for women, widow pension schemes etc.

Yet, some where, there is a need to address the issue as to whether the lives of women at ground level are changing at all. There is a need to formulate the guiding principles which will govern the government actions relating to women.

The department of women and child has constituted a working group to propose the state's policies on various aspects affecting women's lives. One such group has been assigned the task of looking at the legislative changes that are required to improve the status of women.

As part of the assignment, the group is supposed to accomplish three tasks:

1. Preparation of a status report on the issue
2. Preparation of action points
3. Suggestions for the proposed policy.

In order to make the process meaningful, it will be important to get the view points of a cross section of society, the people working on the experience on the women's issues etc.

In order to make the study comprehensive, it is suggested that the following areas be included:

1. Women and economic rights

2. Women and governance
3. Women and health
4. Women and violence
5. Women at work place
6. Miscellaneous

The following areas are proposed to be looked into under the above heads :

Women and Economic Rights :

- (a) Maintenance
- (b) Right to matrimonial home and property
- (c) Co parcenary rights
- (d) Joint ownership of certain property

Women and family related laws :

- (a) Custody adoption and guardianship
- (b) Restitution of conjugal rights
- (c) Family courts
- (d) Grounds of divorce
- (e) Domestic violence

Women and health :

- (a) Maternity benefit
- (b) Women & Disability

Women at workplace :

- (a) Various labour legislations affecting women

Others :

- (a) Laws related to sexual offences
- (b) Equal right on parental recognition
- (c) Indecent representation of women
- (d) Panchayat
- (e) Governance
- (f) Sexual harassment at work place
- (g) Creation of a statutory body to look after the development of women
- (h) Women in disaster and internal displacement situations
- (i) Immoral trafficking
- (j) Juvenile Justice (Girl Child)
- (k) Custodial care
- (l) Women in detention

The recommendations have to be a step towards India's larger commitment to the women's issues which it has undertaken by being a signatory to the CEDAW. It has to keep in mind the recommendations given by the National Commission For Women from time to time as well as the National Policy On Women. It can draw upon the other state amendments and state policy on women.

The present committee members may be asked to submit their suggestions in the prescribed format under various heads. The same could be collated and converted in the form of a draft. There could be a two day structured workshop where we could invite leading women activists apart from the existing committee members to finalise the draft.

During this workshop, there will be a brief presentation of the issue, the existing debate, critique of previous Bills and existing provisions followed by finalization of recommendations.

In order to ensure public participation and debate, it is suggested that the committee circulate the draft for comments. This could be in the form of a work book with the proposed amendments on one side and a column for remarks on the other.

After taking due consideration of the suggestions, the report may be finalized.

Group 5 - Crime against women & Legal support to women in distress

I Background

Figures of crimes recorded by the Police in Gujarat State (app.1) could be seen as indicators of increase or decrease in crimes. The records list offences against women which include murder, hurt, grievous hurt etc. which are offences that could occur against human beings. Women-specific crimes are here sought to be separated on which issues are raised and action points suggested.

Women-specific crimes are listed below :

1. Rape (376 IPC), 2. Kidnapping (363 IPC), 3. Dowry death (304-B IPC) 4. Torture (498-A IPC), 5. Molestation (354 IPC), 6. Eve-teasing ,(509 IPC) 7. Abetment to suicide (306 IPC), 8. Suicide deaths (174 CrPC), 9. Accidental deaths (174 CrPC).

Registration in most of the crimes over last five years (from 1997 to 2001) appears to have decreased; while in two instances it has definitely increased. Complaints of Torture have increased from 2419 in 1997 to 3542 in 2000 though in 2001 the total number of complaints registered is 3191. Suicidal deaths registered in 1997 were 1476 while the number rose to 1774 in 1999 but in 2001 the number was 1632. A gradual decline appears to be the trend.

II Issues

1. Juxtaposing the figures of complaints of Torture registered and those of Suicide and accidental deaths as shown in the table below it appears that increase in number of registration of complaints of torture by women shows decrease in number of deaths, either by suicide or by accident.

Table showing registered offences against women in years 1997 to 2001					
Registration under Section	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Torture 498-A IPC	2419	2989	3365	3542	3191
Suicide Death 174 (CrPC)	1476	1638	1774	1668	1632
Accidental Death 174 (CrPC)	3077	3767	3378	3029	2750

So, the conclusion is that the higher the number of registration of complaints of torture by women, the lesser number of deaths occurring within homes.

That leads us to the following:

(i) In the years 1997 to 2000 a campaign of sensitising police force on gender issues was taken up by an ngo, AWAG and the police across the State were urged to register complaints of torture and to guide rape victims in providing evidence, by way of medical examination or by way of submitting clothes of the victim in police custody etc. Registration did increase. The police responded as is obvious from the figures cited above.

This was calculated to have consequences like less deaths. Once a tortured woman finds response from the society, she gives up thoughts of death. The figures cited above show the consequences of increased registration of 3365 complaints of Torture in 1999 as against 2419 in 1997, and decrease in number of deaths, 3029, in 2000 from 3378 in 1999. Gain of 350 lives in a year and year after year is valuable to Gujarat's sex ratio.

This could be reinforced and extended by providing gender sensitisation of the present employees and by including gender issues in the curriculum of recruits.

- i. A large number of Counsellors and Social Workers working in all districts and commissionerates of Gujarat assisted women in distress in getting their complaints registered. This was and is necessary to break the patriarchal bastions within male mentality at all levels in police stations.

The effort of these young persons in providing legal support to women in distress is highly valuable. No gender sensitisation effort could reach each employee, hence the need of support to the complainant.

Active police combined with active ngo support to complainants could help decrease the number of deaths within families in suspicious circumstances.

2. Deaths as and when reported to police are primarily registered as ADs i.e. Accidental Deaths under Section 174 of Criminal Procedure Code. Then, during investigation if evidence is found of murder or of suicide or of abetment of suicide the case is designated as such under appropriate sections. All other cases remain referred to as accidental deaths.

It was found in a study¹ done in the year 2000 that of such deaths approximately 15% were of accidents proper. Any human being could die of falling from a high wall or by being run over by a vehicle. But the other 85% did not appear to be 'proper' accidents. Approximately 57% women had died within their kitchens, more than 23% had died of poison within their homes. Investigating officer could not have found evidence to prove any crime or even suicide and so these remained dubbed as accidental deaths.

Ordinarily the cause of death noted is described by four phrases : 'Died while making tea', 'Died while heating water for bath' ' Died while cooking' and 'Died while placing a lamp at a height'. These do not sound convincing. Such accidents taking place within homes and causing death by burns or poison need to be investigated more thoroughly. At times an investigator while investigating suicide comes across the cause of death which makes the loss of life over a triviality ridiculous affairs. The cause of death could be cited as : ' . . . because she was not allowed to go to her brother's home or ' . . . because she was asked not to go to her parents till children's exam was over'. Ordinarily human beings do not give up life for such causes, there must be something more to it. This something more has to be investigated. Police ordinarily, does not have time to go into further details. But this has to be done, history of a case is important to understand social forces. Once data is gathered, it could be reflected upon to reduce the number of such deaths.

3. Mahila Suraksha Samitis

Established in 1991 by a government resolution (bearing no PRCH-2290-1864-N dated 7.3.91). The Mahila Suraksha Samitis were nominated both at State and district / commissionerate levels. Political party members, ngo representatives and women in education were invited to be in the Samiti headed by District Superintendent of Police. Women were not well versed in law, nor knowledgeable about police procedures but they attended because they were interested in understanding the legalities attendant on women's sufferings. The Samitis established rapport with police officers and mutual cordial relationships developed. Eventually the Samitis empowered women to a certain extent through the information they received and the insight they gathered in the actions of the police.

With changes in governments the Mahila Suraksha Samitis have taken a beating. These need to be revived and a permanent structure has to be devised. In doing so the State will have an informed discussion on dealing with women's deaths in course of time which could eventually lead to saving lives of women.

4. Public Prosecutors do not seem to offer any assistance to women complainants. Women, when they attend courts do not know that there is someone around whose duty was to help the case of the complainant. In the court it is the case of the State and the complainant is the chief witness.

The arguments in defence of the Public Prosecutor are stated below :

- i. The Public Prosecutors are overburdened. They have to deal with a large number of cases.
- ii. The Public Prosecutors do not have facilities to enhance their knowledge of case law since good libraries are not available to them.

These arguments must be true in all cases whether of men or women. We are perpetuating an inefficient system knowing that it is so. Add to this the insensitivity that most men have to women's issues and we have a system that does not help women complainants at all.

It is the duty of the State to provide assistance in such cases to women in distress. Ways and means must be found to provide legal support to women. The cure of the problem is quickly granted hearing.

5. Women complainants, having registered their complaints In police stations wait for the courts to call them to hear their side and to get justice. Unfortunately this is delayed much more than any other complaint¹.

A study² revealed that all cases registered under Section 498-A (IPC) were heard in courts only after these were compromised. As it is, a complaint under Sec. 498-A (IPC) is not compoundable but other sections which are usually clubbed with this section like Sec. 114, could be compounded. Soon as the court receives information on that, cases are heard within 3 months, 6 months or whatever time of the first complaint, compromise takes place. **In such cases, 'delay due to heavy pressure of work' is absent. On the contrary, here the principle of 'quick disposal of cases' applies.**

This is important for women in distress. Their complaints are heard after compromise is arrived at. Why not before they are pressurized into submission by social forces around them ? Just as the petitions of maintenance are to be heard within six months of filing them, could the complaints under 498-A be heard within the same period ? If that happens women will have the assurance of getting justice with reference to their complaints and not getting a seal on the compromise arrived at through subordination of their will.

Justice delayed is also justice ridiculed. The hearings take place in magistrate's Courts after compromise is arrived at between parties. The public prosecutor does not exert himself. So the procedure in magistrates' courts appears as a farce.

Since compromised cases are largely heard, the magistrates accept witnesses turning hostile. This is done in the name of saving the family. But this shows the police in poor light. One arm of law i.e. the police presents evidence which is negated by the other arm of law i.e. the court. This contradiction turns the hearing into farce. No statement made earlier before the investigating police officer is taken seriously and the magistrate notes that for lack of evidence the accused is not proved to be guilty.

The courts are places to get justice and ought not to be ridiculed. Such farcical procedures must be scrapped. Legal opinion on this should be sought.

In the final analysis, it could be stated that if courts did not delay hearings of complaints under section 498-A (IPC) indefinitely, such situations, would not arise. When complaints are heard before compromises were arrived at, the legal process has supported the woman victims's pleas.

6. In the study³ (mentioned before) it was noticed that chargesheets of certain cases were not what these should have been. The chargesheet did not take cognizance of deaths of women nor did the orders. This amounts to travesty of justice.

A system to monitor chargesheets is in place now. It needs to be strengthened.

7. Post-mortem reports do not state the cause of death clearly. These hardly support the case of the prosecution. These require to be done in better ways. Fresh system / procedure has to be devised.
8. When a complaint is registered under section 498-A, the law requires that the accused should be arrested. Within 24 hours he is granted bail.

This accused with the criminal tendency of subjecting spouse to torture should be subjected to counselling by competent persons. This must be made mandatory to reduce the incidence of torture later.

9. The government officers announce that the ceiling of maintenance to be paid (under section 125 of Cr.PC) to the applicant spouse is raised to Rs. 2,000/- from Rs. 500/-. However, this is not reflected in the orders passed by the courts. The lacunae has to be plugged.

III. Action Points

- I. 1. Provide gender sensitisation to all ranks of Police, Judiciary, Prison officers, officers of Women and Child Development Department, Samaj Suraksha Department, Public Prosecutors, Executive Magistrates who take DDs, Health officials who make post-mortem reports, FSL Officials who help investigate ADs etc.
 1. Include gender issues in the trainings of recruits in police force, Executive Magistrate cadres, Public Prosecutors, Judiciary and Medical Curriculum.
 2. Make awareness of gender issues important qualification for those who seek appointments as Public Prosecutors, magistrates (Judicial & Executive) Medical Officers (i.e. Doctors esp.) Police officials etc.
 3. Provide motivation to the counsellors in FCC and Social Workers in Legal Aid Centres to continue in their jobs so that their training and experience are not wasted.
- I. 1. A new system for investigating deaths of women taking place within their homes which usually are recorded under Sec. 174 Cr.PC. but are not results of pure and simple accidents should be devised.

History of such cases of 'Accidental Deaths' should be closely looked into so that the actual causes of death could be made clear.

1. Appoint a separate investigating agency to investigate deaths of women in each commissionerate and each district. This could be headed by a DySP under the Commissioner / DSP. The head of such an agency could become a point of reference for such crimes.
- I. Nominate Mahila Suraksha Samitis in each Commissionerate and District which could monitor the functioning of the officers with reference to crimes against women and their deaths in suspicious circumstances.

The Samiti could have a permanent structure, (as against the prevalent one of dissolving it as government changes) it could be headed by a DM and a DYSP HQ could be its permanent member Secretary by way of holding the rank. Of the definite numbers of members chosen from (i) the leading females living within the district / Commissionerate (ii) the representatives of ngos active in the area, (iii) representative officials from Women and Child Development Department / Samaj Suraksha Department and (iv) Experts / Researchers / Professors / Consultants.

- II. Appoint a separate prosecuting agency to look after women's complaints and crimes against women including Murder or Abatement of Suicide or Dowry Deaths.
- III. To provide justice to women complainants whose cases are registered under section 498-A and to save the trials of these hearings from ridicule a system through which women's complaints under section 498-A are tried within six months of filing the same is to be devised.

This could be done in the same way as the order in maintenance cases (section 125 Cr.PC) is to be made within six months).

- IV. Vigilant monitoring of charge sheets and its relevance to stated facts is necessary. The present system has lacunae in it which has to be plugged in order to ensure justice to women. The orders of Magistrates also need to be monitored in this respect.
- V. New formats sent by NHRC should be used in making post mortem reports as well as in making medical reports in case of rape or in those of other injuries sustained by women.
- VI. Counselling system should be devised to provide counselling to the accused in complaints registered under section 498-A. A procedure has to be devised in which mandatory counselling is provided to the person who tortures his spouse.
- VII. If the government has really raised the ceiling in maintenance cases decided under section 125 (Cr.PC) from Rs. 500/- to Rs. 2,000/- the courts have to be informed as soon as possible.
- VIII. If the government has not raised the ceiling in maintenance cases maintenance cases decided under section 125 (Cr.PC) from Rs. 500/- to Rs.2,000/- it should raise the same to keep its promise to women of Gujarat.

Cultural shows licensing Board nominated under Bombay Police Act

1. It is necessary to add a point of reference in the four point reference formulae of providing licenses to stage plays by Cultural shows Certification Board appointed under Bombay Police Act and looked after by the Department of Youth and Cultural Affairs.

The four points are :

The plays should not

- i. incite communal hatred
- ii. promote alcoholism
- iii. be obscene
- iv. disturb law and order situation

This can be construed to mean that the plays which are not obscene and which promote communal amity, prohibition of alcohol and peace within the state could be provided with license.

The concern with the above issues is valuable. We think that preserving the dignity of woman in a society is also valuable. All remarks and actions derogatory to woman do not fall within the meaning of 'obscenity'. Therefore an additional term of reference has to be added, viz.

- v. The plays / shows should not be derogatory to woman

Women's campaign on this issue uses section 292 and 499 of IPC, effectively. So the onus is upon the state to provide pro-woman action.

In addition the suggestions are that :

2. The Board must have 50% women members
3. The Board must have members who live in Ahmedabad who could scrutinise the shows as these are presented with reference to the script of the play submitted to the Board.
4. The Board must have powers to withdraw license if the play is not presented as per the script submitted by the license seeking person.

Group 6 - Economic Empowerment of women

ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

A From Women Welfare to Women Empowerment

The concept of women empowerment has evolved during the last three decades. It started as welfare initiative and grew as “women development”. Today it has shaped itself into empowerment.

Empowerment implies the strength from within. Such strength can be acquired from external sources as well as an effort by the self. Economic empowerment of women means mainstreaming gender into the economy. This implies that men and women participate in economic activities in a way that both have equitable access to and benefit from society’s resources, opportunities and rewards, and equal participation in influencing what is valued and in shaping directions and decisions. Such an empowerment acquires greater significance in the context of weaker sections including Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/ Other Backward Classes and minorities.

Majority of such population live in the rural areas and they belong to the informal, unorganised sector of the economy. Women constitute a majority of such population and they remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded.

B Dimensions of Economic Empowerment

The major components of economic empowerment are given below

1. Poverty eradication.
2. Equal access to economic opportunities.
3. Equal sharing of total work.
4. Equal access to infrastructure facilities, financial services like micro-credit.
5. Equality of employment.

From sectoral point of view, economic empowerment can be classified as (a) women in agriculture, (b) women in industry and (c) women in services and support services. Factors like globalisation and technology play important role in deciding effectiveness of above components.

C Women in Economy

India is the home of 400 million women. The country that is marked by plurality of traditions, customs, and culture; has varied images of Indian Woman. Therefore, painting a generalised picture will not help.

Indian Women represents the largest section of population living in poverty. She has heavy work responsibilities in agriculture, animal-husbandry and other traditional sectors. She also has the responsibility of reproduction and nurturance. But her contribution remains “invisible”. She continues to be marginal employments and low level of skills. In spite of that she is paid low or remains unpaid totally, and she remains excluded from decision-making process. This exclusion pervades at levels i.e. government, corporate, societal and household. In a way, woman in India is excluded in the overall development process.

She does not have access to social entitlements which further results in poverty. She is subjected to gender discrimination and violence; social as well as domestic. She has low self-esteem and is ignorant of laws. She is subjected to institutionalised subordination in society. Lack of education, training and information become the causes for exclusion from economic social, political and knowledge power.

Measures Towards Women Development

Government and various NGOs are actively involved in working for women's development. During the first two decades of Post-Independence Era, government policies and programmes reflected the concern for overall economic growth. During the Third Decade, attention was mainly given to poverty alleviation. Gender issues caught attention of policy makers only during last 20 years or so. NGOs and donor agencies also have become aware of women's problems during last two decades.

In 1971, Gol appointed a Committee on Status of Women in India (CSW). Indian Planning Commission has followed women's development strategy which has five dimensions viz. (a) employment for economic independence, (b) education, (c) access to healthcare and family planning, (d) support services for meeting practical gender needs and (f) creation of suitable policy, institutional and legal environment.

The current thinking on assisting women has two characteristics. (i) Shift from welfare to development and (ii) move away from special programme for women to the systematic incorporation of gender perspective into the development portfolio across all the sectors of the economy. As a result, ***Indian women are slowly emerging as active agents participating in and guiding their destinies. Immediate need is increasingly felt to capture women's insight for solving basic problems of poverty, illiteracy, environmental degradation and violence.***

However, there are certain global developments which threaten to marginalise women economically and technologically. These are (a) international economic order which is reversing flow of resources from poor South to rich North, (b) globalisation of media, (c) global technical revolution and (d) economic restructuring process that accompanies the race towards a free market economy. These factors have the potential of imposing a disproportionately high burden on poor women.

D Women in Agriculture

- A. Traditionally, Agriculture Sector provides employment to women as agricultural labourers and as workers in agro-based industries e.g. tobacco processing, bidi rolling, cotton processing. Some of the labour inputs in this Sector do not go on record and remain unrecognised socially as well as economically.
- B. During the recent past, agriculture in Gujarat is affected by adverse impact of frequent draughts, scarcities and water shortages. The other trend is shift in pattern of agriculture in favour of cash crops and horticulture.
- C. Gujarat Agro Vision-2010 aims at 6.8% growth rate per annum in Agriculture Sector. This provides an opportunity as well as challenge for economic employment for women. Animal husbandry, dairy and poultry farming offer good scope for capacity building and economic empowerment. Horticulture & spices farming and trading also has good potential. In coastal areas, fisheries offer scope in street vending as local trading for women. Economic empowerment of

women can sharply increase productivity and incomes, generate employment and promote rural regeneration.

- D. Voluntary organisations and educational institutions have a key role to play in the process of capacity building among women in the above activities.

Forests

In India, Gujarat is considered to be a progressive state so far as forestry is concerned. Social Forestry is considered to be one of the major successes in comparison to other states.

In Gujarat, women in tribal areas and other rural areas are engaged in collection of firewood and water for domestic use. They are economically engaged in collection of gum, herbs, leaves etc. forest produce. Traditionally, women do not have any role in economic decision-making. Some of the tribal women are also engaged in FFW programmes and various developmental work initiated by Government and various funding agencies.

During 1991 to 1999, Gujarat forest cover has increased by 1058 KMs. Policy should take advantage of afforestation programs. These activities offer good potential for sustainable livelihood. But it calls for strong capacity building against exploitation by middleman. There is also considerable scope for entrepreneurship development programmes and business perspective building.

E Women in Industry

- A. Historically Gujarat has been leader in industrial growth. State GDP and tax collection use to be one of the highest in the country. During last few years, Industry Sector is passing through a lean phase, due to global scenario and domestic factors like natural/man-made disasters. This is a temporary phase but it should be recognised in General Policy Formulation for the State.
- B. Industry structure is changing.
- C. Traditional industries of Gujarat and their structure are history now e.g. Textiles. New industries are based on petro-chemicals and gas. They are chemicals, plastics, fertilizers. The second category includes engineering, pharmaceuticals, textile processing and Gems & Jewelleries (Diamond Polishing). The new industries include electronics, their applications in all various industries and Information Technology (IT). Advertising, Journalism, Customer Service Industry and Professions like Architects and Teaching also offer good scope for women employment.
- D. The business/industry management systems are undergoing a change. Business practices are also changing.
- E. It is said that the emerging trends in technology, particularly IT put women to a disadvantageous position. Generally speaking, women have been almost absent in Industry Sector. Some of them provide jobs as for manual labourers, peons, housekeeping, messenger services etc.
- F. Tiny industries and micro-enterprises offer good scope. Government should encourage **collective** effort through SHGs, co-operatives and other forms of economic organisations.
- G. Some of the State initiatives include projects in Science and Technology. These are Infocity, Science City, Gujarat State Wide Area Network (GSWAN) and DAICT.

- H. Gujarat New Industrial Policy – 2000 aims at technological improvement, productivity enhancement and global competency development. The Policy objective is to facilitate steady economic growth and to make the State more attractive for external capital investment inflows. The Policy gives higher weightage to encouragement to Service Sector and SSIs.
- I. New industries like Electronics, IT offer good scope. But exploiting such opportunities would require educational background and information base on the part of women. Gender Policy should encourage women participation and strengthen their contribution in this Sector. It will be necessary to link this with State Education Policy & Strategy.

EMERGING ISSUES (POINTS FOR DISCUSSION)

Some of the issues related to gender policy are presented below for discussion.

- A. Rapid industrial development in Gujarat has not integrated the poor, particularly poor women into the development process. In order to integrate women into the industrial development process in Gujarat special steps and policies are required. New environment has not been supportive to women's employment in their traditional occupations. Though all traditional economic activities could not be expected to survive in the new environment, there is a good scope for promoting traditional employment of women in several sectors, some of which could be even export oriented.
- B. Defining and calculating contribution of women e.g. pregnancy, rearing, cultivate manners and good conduct, duties towards family, confidence and family commitment etc. How to carry out a qualitative assessment of such contribution and how to recognise it.
- C. State Industrial Policy will be a major tool for implementing economic empowerment initiatives for women in Gujarat. How to integrate-gender related issues in the Industrial Policy. What structural and cultural changes should be made in the public administration set-up for the Industry that will recognise gender equality and women empowerment.
- D. As a strategic response to emerging global business environment, women's education with thrust on economic empowerment will have to be given priority. What changes should be made in Gujarat Education Policy and the system.
- E. Women play a very important role as producers as well as workers. How to ensure that women participate in these activities as equal partners.
- F. Emerging trends in small-scale work have increased flexibility in home-based work. It has increased global production chains and reorganization of work, increased casualization and contractualization of work. This trend has affected the quality of employment adversely for women.
- G. Women are engaged mainly in low skilled jobs, which have marginalized their position. Most of them are not in a position to take advantage of high skilled jobs. How to enable women to take advantage of the new opportunities offered by emerging economic activities and professions.
- H. How to improve the quality of employment of their present work by ensuring them good wages and social protection.
- I. Women have poor access to credit, markets, technology and other infrastructural facilities.
- J. What should be policy and expectation with regard to NGOs and community based organisations. How to involve employers' organisations in the process of economic empowerment of women e.g. CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, Chambers of Commerce.
- K. It is important to identify the right kind of economic activities which will have strong backward and forward linkages with the economy and which would help diversification of the economy. There are several models of generating such

employment. It is important to adopt such approaches rather than generating scattered group enterprises.

- L. Environment and women are closely connected in many ways. Degraded environment increases the burden of work of women in collection of fuel wood, fodder and water, which has implications for women's health, safety as well as the time available for employment in productive activities. Prevention of environment degradation and ecological regeneration of land, water and vegetation will go a long way in empowering women economically. How to bring congruence in various sector-specific policies on this issue.
- M. How to ensure effective implementation of the Policy.

(Any other issues of relevance could also be taken-up for the discussion)

SUGGESTED APPROACH TO ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN GUJARAT – POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Survey in Gujarat has shown that the division of work, SNA and extended SNA work, between men and women in Gujarat is highly unequal, with women doing mainly unpaid work in low skilled activities. This survey has important findings about the gaps between men and women in economic work, domestic work, rest health, education, etc.

Strategic Themes

- A. We should remember that national average as a benchmark is not advisable. It is desirable that we develop independent indicators and standards of gender equality and its various dimensions.
- B. Peculiarities and local needs of the State must be considered while formulating the Gender Policy.
- C. Goal to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women should be widely disseminated.
- D. Institutionalise gender perspectives in all education and training programmes, and communication media.
- E. Women associated with agriculture, building construction, domestic work, village industry etc. are directly affected by several policies e.g. forest policy, agriculture policy, water policy, land policy, technical and industry policy etc. These will have to be changed so that they do not exert any negative impact on women.
- F. Create an environment for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential. Here education, HRD and mind-set development will have the key role to play in the Women Empowerment Strategy Implementation.
- G. Strategy for implementing the policy must be clearly chalked out. Such a strategy should cover the following.
 - 1. Institutional Mechanisms
 - 2. Framework for Resource Mobilisation and Monitoring of Utilization
 - 3. Statutory Framework
 - 4. Sensitisation of various groups about the Gender Issues & Policy
 - 5. Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions
 - 6. Role of Voluntary Sector Organizations & employers organisations
 - 7. Exploiting the Scope for Technical and Financial Cooperation from International Bodies
 - 8. Action Plan, calendar for implementation and roles and responsibilities of various agencies
 - 9. System for monitoring the implementation process

Group 7 - Literacy & Education

Education, in general and especially education of girls is high on the national agenda. With the phenomenal expansion of the formal education system since independence, there has been considerable progress in female literacy. Special commissions and committees are set up from time to time, to assess the progress of girls' education and propose suitable interventions to promote their participation in education. The major thrust of the government's education policy is on extending equal educational opportunity to all those who have been denied access to education so far.

The progress made in education of women may be looked at in two ways; one by statistical indicators and other by its quality. In this exercise of drafting a policy on women, it is only appropriate to reflect upon both these aspects of education for women so far.

Statistical Indicators

In Gujarat, efforts for expanding education to girls/women were made and are still being continued. Gujarat, one of the leading states in terms of industrial development has not been able to demonstrate similar development in the education sector, some highlights of the status of women's education in the state provide useful insights.

- The net enrolment rate of Gujarat is amongst the highest in the country. Despite this, the literacy level has not increased to commensurate levels.
- This may be attributed to high drop out rate, which is pegged at 48 percent and is incidentally also among the highest in the country.
- Forty six percent of females and 23 percent of males age six and above are illiterate. Comparable figures from NFHS-1 are 49 percent of females and 25 percent of males, indicating a marginal decline in illiteracy in six years (NFHS-2, Gujarat 1998-1999).
- Examining the differences in educational level by age can also see the increase in educational attainment over time. For example, the proportion of males completing at least high school rises from 22 percent at age 50 and above to 41 percent at ages 20-29. For females, the proportion completing at least high school is only 6 percent at age 50 and above but reaches a level of 30 percent at age 20-29 (NFHS-2, Gujarat 1998-1999).
- In the state as a whole, 78 percent of children age 6-14 are attending school, up slightly from 76 percent in NFHS-1. The attendance rate drops off sharply at age 15-17. For the age group 6-17, the attendance rate is 75 percent for males, 63 percent for females, and 69 percent for the state as a whole. Attendance rates are higher in urban areas than in rural areas. There are substantial differences in the attendance rate between males and females both in rural and urban areas. At all ages males have higher attendance rates than females in both urban and rural areas.
- Gujarat has high per student expenditure, an area of concern that emerges is the high expenditure has apparently yet to translate into results viz. high literacy.
- There is vast regional disparity in the level of literacy across various districts of Gujarat. There is also an apparent rural-urban divide. Districts like Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad have literacy rates, which are double than those of districts like Banaskantha (Department of Education, Government of Gujarat, 2000).
- Net enrolment has increased by 211 percent, from 1960-61 to 1990-91; it increased only by 60 percent, from 1990-1991 to 1998. As a result enrolment drive has increased substantially by the state government.

- While increasing the enrolment, care must be taken to improve retention and reduce dropout. The dropout rate has come down from 35.4 percent in 1996-97 to 22.3 percent in 1999-2000.

All these statistical indicators are meant to provide a concrete measure of the progress made, in access to education over the years since independence. Though we believe and know that education brings about and has brought dynamic changes, and the progress has been made, there is still a lot of scope to do better.

Quality of Education : Some Reflections

Observing and critically reflecting upon the processes of education, can measure women's progress, in terms of quality. The crucial task is to go behind these indicators and confront the "real" constraints and issues.

- Deep-rooted gender inequalities are reflected in purpose of education. Traditionally the purpose of education was to develop a good, moral character and to discipline children. However, even then, and more so now the underlying reason behind education is to gain status in the society and get a good job. However, this purpose which education fulfills, leads to gender discrimination in education. Men have higher status in the family and they are customarily the bread winners/earners of the family. Therefore, priority is obviously given to their education. Further, the lower status of women and their vulnerability to physical dangers reduces the scope of their education.
- The unequal educational status of men and women is both cause and consequence of a wider gender inequality. Gender inequality is difficult to define, partly because it is not easily quantifiable and partly because gender inequality gets manifested in different forms, overtime. It is therefore difficult to measure it. It is manifested in several ways;
 - In absence of Support institutions for families care of siblings is one of the main tasks of young girls, and a major factor in limiting their participation in schools.
 - Parental perception about the irrelevance of formal schooling for girls is a major factor in withdrawing girls from schools. Parents believe that education is of little value for girls and that is more practical to save money for their dowry rather than spend it on their schooling.
 - Preoccupation with marriage. Marriage of the daughter is considered as the most significant responsibility of the parents. Since it is customary to find bridegrooms who are more educated than the bride, parents fear that higher education of the girls make it difficult to find a match for her. Also, higher the education of the bridegroom for an educated bride means more dowry. This double expenditure acts as a deterrent to girl's education.

(That probably is the reason why we tend to focus on more visible and measurable manifestations of gender inequality).

- Apart from the family/ parents biased attitude, many other agencies – formally/ informally inculcate gender bias in the boys and girls. Education is one of them. The language and content of text books are overwhelmingly male centred. According to Dighe and Patel (1993), learning materials of literacy and other women-centred programmes seldom address the question of gender equity or women's subordination in society. It is rather unfortunate that in a country where 40% of women of textbooks are in the labour force, and about 30 million women are working, we find that women in picture books are depicted only as mothers and wives (Chaudhary, p. 113).
- A gendered culture exists in the classroom, in terms of structural arrangements, work assignment and teacher-student transaction. The teacher confirms the preceding

socialization process that children have experienced. Lack of girls school and female teachers particularly in rural areas are reasons for low enrolment and high dropout rate of girls in school.

- The government has made policies for compulsory education to both boys and girls. The policy of compulsory education pressurizes parents to enroll their daughters in schools but does not motivate them to send their daughters to school. There remains a wide gap between laws and reality. There is a gender bias in the attitude of parents. They extend more value to the roles of their sons than of their daughters. It is here that lies a major challenge.
- Among other things, these efforts reflect the underlying assumptions that education of girls/women is an integral part of planned socio-economic development of the country and that educational process can be and has been used as a tool to promote equality between men and women in every sense of the term. Moreover, a mere increase in the number of educated women does not guarantee greater participation in labour force. Today's education is not job-oriented, this has affected the empowerment process of women negatively. Among the educated class too, social stigmas against educated women continue and because of this many educated women have to suffer. **Education has not achieved women's emancipation, the desired changes expected in a society.** As Krishnamurthi states, "we may be highly educated, but if we are without deep integration of thought and feelings, our lives are incomplete, contradictory and torn with many fears; and as long as education does not cultivate an integrated outlook on life, it has very little significance (p.11)."
- It is important to remember that changes in the level and quality of education cannot by itself bring about sustained social and economic change. But it is an essential part of such a process. There are limitations in using education as a tool for change/ growth. Because, education targets an individual attribute while the underlying determinants of inequality are more often structural in nature. Education can become an instrument of change only if the educational processes are made friendlier to the recipients. It is observed that, placing high priority to women's education in policy statement does not ensure provision of adequate resources, and facilities to women. One may conveniently state that, gender gap in the educational status is reflected.
- Broader issues, which affect the society at large, such as child labour and child marriage, indirectly influence education of girls. Data shows that there is a correlation between drop out rate and child labour. In areas where incidence of child labour is high, school attendance/ enrolment tends to be low. Although the Marriage Act was passed back in 1929, case of child marriages are widely prevalent. For the country as a whole, the mean age of marriage of currently married women has gone up from 13 years in 1900 to 19.5 years in 1992, so that educating girls at least up to primary school level is more feasible now than it was some decades ago. Legal restraints on child labour and child marriage already exists. What is needed is a further sustained advocacy in those areas where such practices are established rather than macro initiatives.
- Inadequacy of facilities particularly distance of schools, lack of separate and closed toilet facilities for girls, irrelevance of content of education are hindrances in girls' availing of education.

There are many economic and social factors which constrain girls from becoming literate or getting enrolled and going in for school education, at least, up to school leaving stage and then pursuing higher studies.

Possible Directions

The education/ literacy for women must be viewed within a cultural context of the state. Some simple but significant points must be dealt with for this:

- Several strategies need to be adopted to promote education of girls as an integral part of socio-economic development.
- In the last decade a major conceptual shift was noticed in approaching this issue. Education of girls is increasingly being seen as a basic human right and a crucial input for national development.
- There is a need to critically look back and reflect upon the progress made so far; the strong and the weak points of the present system and address, forces that adversely influence participation of girls and women in education system. The piecemeal and ad hoc intervention has not and is not likely to make a difference. We need to think of a policy, which assumes that improving the access of girls, and women to education eliminating gender bias in school curricula without changing institutionalized practices and vocational education and training would bring about profound changes in the status of women.
- To develop an understanding towards socio-cultural prejudices and practices that seems to perpetuate and plan out policies based on them.
- To understand complexities underlying gender inequality and discrimination and try to view its subtle manifestations. In India there is considerable debate and discussion on the adverse impact of new economic reforms on women. It is observed that structural adjustment policies negatively affect women, by increasing their drudgery. For example, a high demand for women's cheap labor, in face of the need for economic concerns, survival issues and livelihood presumes that participation in education takes a back seat. There is a need to examine economic reforms and implications for structural adjustment for education of girls/women.
- There is a growing emphasis on promoting females' education, with focus shifting from higher to basic education. However, development planners for educations instrumental value in controlling population growth and reducing infant mortality advocate education of girls and women. There is a need to scrutinize this and make a case for education of women for its intrinsic value of empowering them to get access to power and resources.
- To focus on special problems and issues related to women in disadvantaged groups. Example, providing provisions such as centers for care of children, flexibility in managing time for work, and household chores.
- A resocialization of all the actors involved in education of girls is required. To start with improving the quality of class transactions wherein the teacher can play a major role. Teacher serves as a catalyst in the young children's education. He/she can act as an agent of resocialization by;
 - Advocating change in teacher's role as an agent of socialization, primarily changing her own beliefs, attitudes and values.
 - Sensitize with regards to gender related issues.
 - Orient teachers to practical classroom strategies for avoiding gender discrimination

Thus, are we not deluding ourselves? In the ultimate analysis, what matters is not the extent of knowledge acquired, but the extent of implementation of that knowledge. As Krishnamurthi states, the function of education is, "to create human beings who are integrated and therefore intelligent. We may take degrees and be mechanically efficient without being intelligent. Education, in the true sense is the understanding of oneself, for it is within each one of us that the whole existence is gathered." (p.14-17). Where does this leave a women?

There is hardly any option left for her, but to acquire knowledge to try to subvert the society and take the initiative to change the attitudes of men. But unfortunately, many women become part of the vicious circle and instead of being instrumental in bringing about changes, they unknowingly contribute towards their own derogation or downfall largely due to the conditioning of many centuries. The emphasis should therefore be on providing appropriate opportunities to make them realize their self-esteem, develop self-respect and greater appreciation of their role in the progress of the society. This change has to begin within the family and become a relentless movement pervading society.

To conclude, gender discrimination in education does exist, but the specific features vary across areas. What needs to be done is to gather relevant facts and cultural beliefs and formulate a policy that is relevant and practical in implementation.

Group 8: Political Participation of Women

Understanding Empowerment

Empowerment may be defined as the process-and the result of the process-whereby the powerless or less powerful members of a society gain greater access and control over material and knowledge resource, and challenge the ideologies of discrimination and subordination which justify this unequal distribution. Empowerment manifests as a changing balance of power in terms of resource distribution, and changes in ideology, or ways of thinking.

Women empowerment is therefore, the process by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resource, and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender based discrimination against women in all institutions and structure of society.

The process of empowerment must address both the condition and position of women. Condition implies the material state in which women live, i.e. poor health, lack of education and training, low wages etc. etc. Position implies the social and economic status of women as compared to men.

Objective of the Policy:

To help facilitate the constitutional Right to Equality whereby women at different levels (household, community/ public associations like Gram Sabha, Board, Committees, work places and political leadership like Panchayats, Nagar Palika, Legislative assembly and Parliament) gain recognition and legitimacy without discrimination.

Enabling environment

India has ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments on equal rights to women. Prominent among them is the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women (CEDAW) in 1993 and the Beijing Declaration.

Since the Fifth five year plan (1974-78), there have been changes in the policy and programmes from welfare to empowerment to enable women's participation.

The National Commission for Women was set up by the Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendment (1993) to the Constitution of India has provided for reservation of seats to local bodies of Panchayats and Municipalities for women.

In all Government programmes and schemes, there has been a stated component on women's empowerment. The programmes like Swashakti and Mahila Samakhya has been able to demonstrate various dimensions of women's empowerment.

At the state level there are legal provisions which empower women at both individual and group level. Change in the 'burden of proof' in the rape law in the Indian Penal code, is an example of how women could be empowered by an intervention through legal provisions.

There are conscious civil society institutions seriously engaged in processes for empowerment of women. There are NGOs designing and implementing programmes with strong component for women participation and involvement.

Constraints

We live in a society, which is largely patriarchal. The age-old beliefs and practices, rules, norms and perceptions of women are very strong. Men dominate the public and private sphere, which leaves very little scope and space for women.

The Government and its policies at the implementation level have not been Pro women.

Issues in Political Participation and Empowerment of Women

Empowerment is understood here as a process by which an individual can critically analyze her/his social and political environment. Empowerment is closely linked to self-esteem and perceived competence which could lead to pro-active behavior and social change. The outcome of empowerment should manifest itself as a redistribution of power, no matter how subtle or limited, between individuals, gender, groups, classes, castes, races, ethnic groups or nations.

There are several structures and institutions through which the unequal control and distribution of resources is sustained, and the ideology of dominance perpetuated. Many of these structures and institutions are controlled by the state. Interventions at the state level, in these various structures and institutions, to release more resources into women's control, or to change ideological biases against women is also part of the process of empowerment.

The current Status of political participation of women in Gujarat

Participation of women as candidates in election has been low in Gujarat. There has been an increase from 1952-62 (2.3% to 12.9%). But it has been less than 5 percent of the total number of candidates. In 1996 out of 577 contestants only 18 (3.1%) were women.

In Gujarat since 1977 the number of male contestants in parliamentary elections has increased five times, whereas the number of women contestants increased from 2 to 18 in 1996.

Women elected to Parliament

Women's representation in the Lok Sabha is insignificant. In 1998 it was only 8 %. There were states, which did not even send one woman candidate to the Lok Sabha. Socially advanced states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu had just one member in Lok Sabha in 1998. Among the members elected from Gujarat in 1996 only 2 were women.

Representation of women in the state assembly has not been more than 8 percent at any point of time. There has been a decline from 9.7 percent to 1.64 percent. In Gujarat in the state assembly there are 3 women members (4.5 %) at present. In the previous state assembly, there were 4 members.

Women in Ministerial/ Sub Ministerial Positions

At no time women in ministerial and sub-ministerial positions has exceeded 10 percent. In 1965 there were no women ministers in the cabinet. Most of the time the portfolio entrusted with the women is welfare oriented like Women and Child Development, health, primary education, welfare of other sections etc. Occasionally there has been a minister of state for foreign affairs, finance etc.

In India, there have been no woman presidents, vice president or speaker and few women Governors.

Women in Rajya Sabha

The political participation of women in the upper house in terms of representation was also low. In 1996, total number of women in upper house was 19, which was 8.63 percent of total

members. Out of the 11 persons nominated to the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat, four were women.

Women in Panchayat

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment of 1992 provided for 33 percent reservation of seats for women in local bodies of panchayats and municipalities laying a strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local level. In Gujarat women representation in Panchayat was 33.4 percent. However the participation of women has been limited. Only a few women are able to participate effectively in the Panchayats and Nagar Palikas.

Elected Representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions in three tiers

	SC	ST	OBC	GEN	Total
District Panchayat Presidents					
Total	2	5	2	16	25
Women	1	2	1	4	8
District Panchayat Members					
Total	58	175	85	499	817
Women	19	59	29	167	274
Taluka Panchayat Presidents					
Total	18	43	21	143	225
Women	1	17	11	48	77
Taluka panchayat Members					
Total	270	794	429	2426	3919
Women	24	260	200	828	1312
Village Panchayat Sarpanch					
Total	1065	1895	1774	8981	13715
Women	355	620	443	3017	4435
Village Panchayat Members					
Total	9887	17285	12347	93961	123470
Women	3294	5765	4118	28033	41180

Women's participation in Voting

Women's participation in voting has been always less compared with men. In 1952 it was 37.1 percent and was 58.02 percent in 1998.

Women and Political Parties

The political parties have not given weightage to women contestant; their number still remained less than 10%.

Women hold only 11 percent of the party executive positions. Some political parties like the Indian National Congress and the CPI have considered women's issues and they have also constituted women's party wing.

Women and trade union movement

Even if with examples like Anusuyaben Sarabhai, who founded the first trade union of India in 1917 in Ahmedabad, the participation of women in leadership of trade union is also far

from satisfactory. There is poor representation of women and issues concerning women in formal and informal sector.

Strategies

Empowerment is a multi-layered process, and can be initiated and sustained through interventions at many different levels. Experiences indicate three basic levels of interventions, viz.,

1. the state,
2. the intermediary level and
3. the grassroots.

The Conventions on women's empowerment at the International level and the declared action plans in which Government. of India is signatory may be used as a guiding principle to shape our interventions.

Action Points

At the state level

- A) Wherever women have entered the political arena, the state needs to create mechanisms to recognize and legitimize women's leadership. This may include creating enabling policies for women's involvement in management of public institutions and political areas like Panchayats/ Nagar Palikas. Institutional mechanisms could be created to provide continuous training and social supports so that women in public positions receive social and legal legitimacy.
- B) Public awareness on gender justice principles to ensure reservation for women in jobs, bank loans, educational institutions, in government schemes and other development programmes, Boards of Public institutions can be taken up. Efforts should be made that society looks at these issues not as a tokenism but as a social commitment.

The image of Meena created by UNICEF has reached to the household level on the issue of gender discrimination at household level. Such Images creates community learning process. The Swashakti programme has created an Image of Bharti on economic empowerment. Such symbols need to be carefully designed and disseminated. Perhaps Meena can transform from a girl to adult women and issue of women's empowerment and political participation can be communicated through state and private media.

- C) Women's empowered image needs to be portrayed in textbooks and in the media. The public awareness programme by Government. and NGOs should also address issues of sex determination tests, female feticide, dowry harassment and bride burning.

The main methods, which can be used at this level, are

Awareness raising and information dissemination

Rallies, protests and demonstration

Signature campaigns

Lobbying and advocacy with political representatives, government officials and policy makers

Research (information gathering, case studies, primary and secondary research studies)

Legal interventions

Gender awareness and sensitization programme for bureaucrats, local administrators, the law enforcement machinery (police, lawyers, and judiciary) through training programmes, workshops, interactions with grassroots women and other methods.

The intermediate level

This refers to interventions aimed at institutions and sectors, which cannot really be considered part of the state, international bodies, or grassroots level. Specifically this category would include non-governmental organisations like voluntary agencies, trade unions, cooperatives, schools, colleges, universities (faculty, students and researchers) banks, financial institutions, and elected representatives of local self government bodies.

This represents vast constituency of people and forces who are very active players in the structures and systems of women subordination.

- D) Gender sensitization programme: training programmes, workshops etc. , can be made compulsory in institutions.
- E) Awareness raising and information dissemination through conferences, seminars, lectures, newsletter, journals
- F) Lobbying and advocacy to influence policy changes (allocation of more resources of the organisation exclusively for women, improving sex ratio within the organisation/ institution), and
- G) to create institutional mechanisms for dealing with sexual harassment, wife-beating, failure to provide financial support to wife and children.

The Grassroot level

The current empowerment programmes working at the grassroots level in South Asia follow three basic approaches:

- I. Empowerment through economic programmes
- II. Empowerment through conscious raising and organising women
- III. Empowerment through research, training and resource support

The above are not watertight or mutually exclusive compartments, as there is considerable overlap between different approaches. The purpose of these categories is only to facilitate our understanding of what each approach considers the root cause of women's powerlessness – and hence the strategies for empowerment; it also helps in analysis of the strengths and limitations of each approach.

Each of the above approach is to be seen from the following angles

1. The underlying analysis of women's situation and the understanding of the concept of empowerment
2. The strategies used
3. How empowerment is measured and assessed
4. The limitations and dilemmas of the approach

Political education for women

There can be two kinds of target groups for political education amongst women in the context of reservation for women in the panchayats.

1. Those women who have already entered the Panchayats through elections or otherwise and need to be politically educated and informed regarding the concept and relevance of panchayati raj, the Indian Constitution, nature of Indian democracy and the policies and programmes for women.
2. Women in the community who participate in elections, by way of contesting or voting. Political education would imply mobilizing them for campaign and questioning the candidates. Orientating women to the voting procedures.

Five key areas of political participation and empowerment of women.

I. Women's security and safety at household and community level

II. Women's dignity, decision making and disrespect/ violence against women.

- H) It is necessary to provide support systems to ensure security and safety for women who are willing to take public roles and responsibilities. Without this, women feel extremely vulnerable and are subjected to harassment, character assassination which results in confining them to household activities.
- I) It should be made mandatory that the police stations register and investigate cases of sexual harassment of women, specifically women holding public posts and treat them on priority basis.
- J) Awareness of legislation on sexual harassment at work place is to be made compulsory in all Women Groups, Panchayat leaders, SHGs, Cooperative Bodies, women working in agriculture, forest and other informal sector activities, through trainings and discussions in the group, and ensured of legal action on report of cases of sexual harassment.

Table showing registered offences against women in years 1997 to 2001

Registration under Section	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
Torture 498-A IPC	2419	2989	3365	3542	3191
Suicide Death 174 (CrPC)	1476	1638	1774	1668	1632
Accidental Death 174 (CrPC)	3077	3767	3378	3029	2750

It has been proven that higher the rate of registration of cases of violence against women, the lesser number of deaths occur.

K) It is recommended that gender sensitization trainings are built into Panchayats (legislators), all development activities taken up by the Government. so that the society, as well as the Government. machinery e.g. the police, courts and officials at the policy making level respond to cases of atrocities/ crimes against women.

III. Women's access/ representation in the social sector like health, education, employment level

As discussed before, the political empowerment of women has to be linked with economic empowerment. When women are able to run their own micro-credit activities, enterprises, self-help groups, and learn to address reality outside households, they will also gain the confidence to participate in Gram Sabha and Panchayat.

IV. Women's inheritance, ownership of assets and contribution of women at household and state level economy

V. Women's participation in Governance(Panchayat/ Nagarpalika), Trusts and Foundations, professional associations, corporate and public sector Boards, local and state level committees, political parties

- L) All the committees at the village level, social justice committee, committee to oversee the work of Panchayats should have women members.

To measure the impact of 33% reservation for women in Panchayats and Nagarpaliks, the Government is requested to prepare a different framework, for collection of data and developing indicators which would be able to look at this empowerment process from various angles and with sensitivity to women legislators coming to public domain for the first time. For example, information needs to be generated on how many no confidence motion have been passed, specifically in Panchayats which were headed by women.

- M) All the various user groups, e.g., SHGs, watershed committees, DWACRA groups etc. formed at the village level need to be linked with the Panchayats and its resources in order to strengthen the base of parliamentary democracy. By participating in these groups, women will gain confidence to take up and deal with higher order responsibilities in assemblies and parliament. Any committee appointed by the Government should have one woman.

One of the most serious shortcomings of the Panchayati raj institution has been their failure to deliver to the poor. It has often been reported that the village elites have captured the panchayats and are wielding actual power.

- N) Forum to discuss emerging issues and problems at the grassroots level. This can be an all women forum of panchayat leaders, NGOs and other actors.
- O) Women's empowerment and political participation is to be promoted and linked with Panchayats. There has to be devolution of funds to Panchayats to exclusively take up issues concerning women e.g. water and sanitation, income generation, agriculture, school enrollment of girl children, anti alcohol measures etc.
- P) Promotion of women cooperatives and women are to be ensured employment through reservation in nursery, forest cooperatives, animal husbandry, crafts, seed and fodder depot, food processing. Instead of the Forest department raising nurseries, the Panchayat can raise nurseries through women's groups.
- Q) To promote economic and political empowerment of women, local women management schools, local academy to impart computer skills, design laboratories, leadership development activities should be taken up. The focus of all these activities will be on poorest women to join these local schools. Social poverty orientation should be provided like training to all women, specially the middle and upper class/ caste women. The KVKs are to include women participants in their trainings.
- R) Women take up activities and are producers in many sectors but are not represented in the decision making boards, e.g. in Government Corporations on craft, forest produce etc. There should be space created for women in these boards so that they have access to decision making in terms of price fixing, minimum support price and other decisions taken by such Boards and Corporations. It is recommended that every third such appointment to higher positions should be a woman.

One needs to also plan for changes in the system. By only one-third reservation, women are expected to adapt themselves where the system stays intact. The government servants should be accountable to the tier of local government to which they are assigned. We need to make space for changes in the system.

Capacity Building for women

Women are to be trained in three aspects

- I. Earning skills
- II. Life education, i.e. about their body, reproductive functions and decisions, children etc.
- III. Democratic principles and practices

Group 9 - Natural Resource Management

Natural Resources may be viewed in various ways. We may view them from the traditional perspective of Water, Forests and Land (Jaal, Jangal, Jamin), or we may view them from the environmental or ecological angle which sees the interplay and relations between different natural resources, including flora, fauna and humankind. For the sake of simplicity and practicality this paper takes the traditional sectoral view of Water, Forests and Land.

Water

The predominant uses of water are in Industry, for Agriculture and for Domestic use, primarily Drinking Water, but also water for bathing, washing and livestock. I will not argue the relative importance of each of these sectors – let us assume they are all equally important. However I will restrict my foci to Agricultural and Domestic use of water, as these are the areas in which women have a significant role and stake.

Gujarat has a unique situation in regard to water. Generally in the southern and eastern hilly and forested regions there is high to adequate rainfall, while in the northern and western parts of the state there is inadequate rainfall. Historically too rainfall throughout the state has been highly erratic, leading to frequent scarcity periods. With a high level of industrialisation taking place in the state, the burgeoning population, and the struggle to grow more food, pressures on water for industrial and agricultural development and for domestic consumption have grown by leaps and bounds. In many parts of Gujarat, particularly in the north and west, more water is used each year than replenishes in the form of rainfall. This is clearly unsustainable and has resulted in ground-water levels declining to alarming levels, impacting not only on the availability of water, but also the quality of water, and subsequently health of the population.

These factors point to a problem of distribution on one hand, with some areas surplus in water while there is scarcity in others. While this problem is being tackled at the state level by major storage and redistribution schemes, such as the Narmada project, the problem is still far from being solved. At local levels the problem is being tackled by the creation of water storage and recharge structures such as check-dams. The popularisation of such structures has been a significant achievement of NGOs and Government, but as yet, apart from a few area specific examples, there has been no significant impact on water-table levels overall, which indicates that such efforts need to be further multiplied and sustained. Clearly the other side of the problem is the management of water use. In agriculture farmers use inefficient and wasteful systems to deliver water to their lands, while the scenario for potable drinking water and other domestic consumption in villages is constantly in a state of crisis, particularly in the northern districts and in Saurashtra and Kutch. In urban areas domestic systems are also inefficient and wasteful and users unmindful of the scarcity. While bringing in water charges to cover actual costs of water collection and delivery may have some impact on attitudes and practice, it can also have the opposite effect, with consumers feeling that as long as they are paying they can continue to use as much as they like. Clearly much more work has to go into changing prevailing attitudes, and here the role of women could prove crucial.

Women in Irrigated Agriculture

No one would deny the key role of women in domestic water use. However, their role and potential in agriculture is often under-valued or not recognised at all. Analyses of roles and work in agricultural operations throughout the state reveal that women's share of work is between 50% and 65% as compared to men's. It is a fact that women are at least equal partners with their husbands in management of the family livelihood of agriculture. Women are even involved in discussions and decisions about farming within their households, though this is rarely seen or recognised. In spite of this the perception persists that farmers are men and that women play a marginal role in helping them. The root of these perceptions lies in traditional attitudes and in actual ownership of land. While legal restrictions to women's title to land have been removed, traditional attitudes ensure that still only a tiny percentage of women agriculturalists have any actual legal right to land.

These traditional attitudes also manifest in government programmes aimed at agricultural development. In the area of HRD training programmes for agriculturalists have been traditionally targeted more to men. More recently there have been efforts to target women agriculturalists more, but these efforts need to be redoubled and sustained.

Also, while it is important to ensure that women gain equal access to new information and skills, it is equally important to recognize their existing knowledge accumulated through generations of experience rooted in local traditions. Women tend to view agriculture differently from men. While male farmers tend to favour cash crops, women's concern is to put food in the kitchen and they favour production of traditionally local crops and grains. Such cropping patterns are more sustainable from the environmental perspective. This is not argue for "women's agriculture", but simply to point out that equal empowerment of women in agriculture will bring about a more balanced and sustainable agricultural development.

While the government has made laudable efforts to empower farmers by giving them control over irrigation systems (notably Participatory Irrigation Management, or PIM), in irrigated agriculture there are still quasi-legal constraints to women's equal participation. Farmers need to be members of a registered Society to have access to benefits, and Society Rules state that only the actual land-holders can be members. While an amendment to these rules was made in 2000 which allowed wives of farmers to also be members of such societies, this has not been widely publicised, and women's right to vote in such forums was excluded. Some people argue that the involvement of women in irrigated agriculture while being desirable, is not essential, and that the primary aim of irrigated agriculture is to increase production. This prioretising of an economic or efficiency aim over a social aim is not uncommon, but I would argue that both can be equally met, and that indeed the involvement of women in a more significant way would actually enhance efficiency. Studies of women in agriculture, and indeed experience of NGOs in our own state (AKRSP and others) show that women tend to be better managers of irrigation assets and the financial resources necessary to manage them. At the very least we can give women agriculturalists an equal role with their male counterparts an equal role in irrigated agriculture, by giving equal rights and participation in Irrigation Societies. This would give women an ownership over irrigation assets, and give them an equal opportunity in decision-making over how these assets are used and managed, which would go a long way towards enhancing their status and ultimately lead to their empowerment. While emphasizing the rationale for equal rights of women farmers with their husbands, I must also emphasise that women's rights to water should

not be linked *only* to marital status. Women in a variety of personal circumstances (Widows, abandoned women, certain single women, etc.) should have the same entitlements. Rights to water should also not be linked exclusively to land ownership, as land can be accessed through renting, share-cropping etc. Once women have clear rights to water they can exercise diverse options to put these rights to productive use.

Women and Water Harvesting

There is a correct, albeit belated focus on water harvesting over the last decade. Such structures have some inherent problems such as answering the question of whether the structures should be exclusively for recharge of the underground water-table or for agriculture, or for both, and who should make such decisions and how they can be enforced. Other problems relate to maintenance of such structures. It is not uncommon for such structures to be the source of conflict between opposing interests, within a village or between villages, sometimes leading to physical aggression, willful destruction of structures, or litigation. Sometimes local politics enters these conflicts, aggravating the problem further. In a water scarcity situation such conflicts of interests and views are bound to occur. In these instances local conflict management and resolution mechanisms are preferable to external ones.

Such structures benefit both agriculture and domestic use, and women have a strong stake in both these areas. This suggests that women's participation in management of water harvesting structures would be highly beneficial. Indeed, experience bears this out. In Surendranagar villages where women are on management committees of such structures, they have been much more likely than men to point out transgressions of rules or theft of water. In cases where women's groups have been given actual ownership or control over such structures, not only have they been extremely well-managed, but the ownership has also enhanced their status in the community.

In terms of technical design too, it needs to be ensured that all water storage structures are sensitive to women's needs. Women's domestic responsibility also includes washing of clothes, and using water for livestock and bathing, and such structures can provide an ideal place for these kinds of activity if for example, the provision of a small ghat or platform is made.

Local Panchayats of course also have a stake in such structures, and therefore continually enhanced involvement of women in PRIs, and the PRIs' sensitivity to women's issues are essential needs. However, that is a subject for a separate paper.

Women and Domestic Water Use

Women's responsibility and roles in domestic water collection and use is universally recognised and accepted. Because of the water scarcity situation in many parts of Gujarat millions of women spend hours each day collecting this precious resource, whether in walking miles to the nearest resource, or in waiting for tankers to deliver, or in digging in river-beds. Apart from the obvious burden on women, this is a waste of human resources that could otherwise be used more productively. The need of the hour is to reduce this wastage by bringing water within or near to the household.

Wherever possible bores and hand-pumps are a good solution to this problem. However, their maintenance can be a problem, with technicians or spare parts being unavailable

when required. There are now numerous successful examples where local women's groups or committees have been trained to do repairs and maintenance and given kits for this. This should become a universal policy and practice. Roof rainwater harvesting is an old concept that is beginning to gain acceptance again. While this technology cannot provide enough water for the whole year to a household, at least it relieves women's burden for 2 or 3 months, and utilises rainwater that might otherwise go to waste. This technology needs to be promoted to women, through women's groups. Assets provided, such as pipes, storage tanks and hand-pumps, need to be given in the name of women. This will not only ensure their interest in maintaining them, but will also enhance their status.

In urban areas too, if some organisational base is provided, women can be given responsibility for repair and maintenance of public distribution systems, whether in bustees or in societies; recharge structures, both private and public, should also be encouraged with the same enthusiasm that they are in rural areas. In fact I would argue that in urban housing societies recharge systems should be mandatory. Traditional existing water-recharge bodies in urban areas are fast declining through encroachment. This has been well documented by organisations such as CEE and Viksat, and has been the subject of press coverage and even directives from the Courts, but with little positive impact. Urban Gram Panchayats need to be sensitised to this issue, and women's participation enhanced.

Issues for discussion:

- How to get recognition of women as equal partners in agriculture.
- Recognition of women's knowledge of agro-biodiversity and its management for household food security rather than exclusively for the market.
- Review of rules of agricultural societies to make them gender sensitive.
- Review of Agricultural Universities HRD services from a gender perspective.
- Women's role in protecting, maintaining and controlling recharge structures, in rural and urban settings.
- Gender sensitivity in Technical design and maintenance guidelines.
- Community assets in the name of women's groups.
- Enhancement of particularly poorer/resourceless women's role in Panchayats.

Land

The issue of agricultural use of land has been dealt with in the forgoing chapter on Water. In this section we look at other uses of land, particularly common lands. Common lands are decreasing in area throughout the state, both through illegal encroachment or official re-allocation. Common lands are traditionally seen as providing for villages' needs for grazing, fodder collection and to some extent for fuel-wood collection. I leave aside forested common lands, as that will be dealt with in the following section. Fuel-wood collection is almost entirely a woman's responsibility, while grazing and stall feeding of animals is also in many areas the responsibility of women and children. As such it cannot be denied that women have an important stake in management of common lands, and it therefore follows that any decrease in the area of common lands will have a negative impact on women's lives. The first priority then must be to protect and conserve common lands as a precious resource for the common good of all, especially women. This requires legal protection and recognition of gender sensitive common property rights. Ideally common lands legally classified as wastelands should

be reclassified as common lands based on their actual uses and functions in supporting rural livelihoods.

Common lands can be developed to provide more resources of fodder and fuel-wood, and also assist in the recharge of groundwater, if proper conservation and management techniques are adopted which are attuned to the natural ecosystems of which they form a part. However, many efforts in this direction come to nought because such lands are under dispute and litigation for years on end. The clearing of such cases needs to be taken up on a priority basis by courts and the Revenue Department.

The role of the Panchayat is crucial in control and management of common lands. Many of such lands would not have come under dispute if Panchayats were playing this role effectively backed by clear legal and jurisdictional control over them. Panchayat's hands need to be strengthened to play this role by transferring supposed "wastelands" to them and vesting them with the powers to enforce their authority over them, and recognizing existing user rights of resident as well as seasonal user groups. One of the more effective ways to do this will be to strengthen women's effective participation in hamlet based gram sabhas feeding into decision making by Panchayats.

Issues for discussion:

- Freeing common lands from disputes.
- Transferring so-called wastelands to gram sabhas/panchayats.
- Enhancing women's role in gram sabhas/ Panchayats, including through delegation of management authority to women's user groups by the panchayats.

Forests

The stake-holders in our forests are many, with the State having a strong interest for both revenue as well as in protecting the environmental integrity for the benefit of all. Many industries also depend on forests. But any rise or fall in forest coverage impacts most directly on the lives of people in villages. Studies of people's use of forests throughout Gujarat reveal that men tend to use forests for timber procurement, for house-building and agri-implements, and for sale. Women on the other hand use forests for fuel-wood collection - for domestic use, and sometimes for sale - for fodder, for medicines and for food supplements. This is also reflected in PRAs conducted to decide on species to be planted in forests. Men voice a preference for timber varieties, while women demand a wide variation of species to cater to their various needs. This greater diversity of dependence on forests by women needs recognition in our policies and practices. In general, the poorer families are, the more their men and women are dependent on forests for survival.

One of the most positive developments in forest policy at the National level has been the introduction of the Joint Forestry Management programme (JFM) under the National Forest Policy of 1988, which sought to give local stakeholders participation in management of forest assets. A new set of JFM guidelines, based on experience, were issued by the Centre in 2000. As JFM has been promoted by Guidelines rather than rules, individual States have taken up JFM each in their own way. One of the most important means which the GoG has adopted to promote and monitor JFM has been the constitution of a State Level Working Group (SLWG) on which NGOs are also represented. In the early years of JFM this body functioned effectively, but since almost a decade it has languished, with infrequent meetings and recommendations of the

SLWG not taken seriously. While the Departments own efforts to involve communities have to be welcomed, there are issues, particularly those related to gender, on which the Department has insufficient sensitivity. There is an urgent need to revitalise this body in order to further the objective of people's participation in forest management, and there is a further need to improve the composition of the SLWG to make it more gender sensitive through the inclusion of additional members that can represent women's forest interests.

There have been some positive gender experiences of JFM. These include the recognition of women's role in nursery raising and management. There are some organisations (e.g. SEWA) which argue for the exclusive role of women in this activity. A number of NGOs have experienced the positive role of women in protection of forests, so-called social fencing. On the other hand there have been instances of women being put to hardship by being denied their access to collect fuel-wood in protected areas near to them. Such cases arise because of inequitable distribution of forest lands around villages.

While the traditional role and stake of women in forests would seem to argue for equal representation of women in Forest Protection groups, the 2000 Guidelines of the Central Government recommend 33% representation in the Committee and 50% in the General Body. Implementation of these guidelines is again left to the discretion of the State.

The issue of non-timber forest produce (NTFP) also needs to be discussed. Women have a much greater stake in NTFP than men, and they are critical sources of subsistence and income for women in tribal/forest areas. With the aim of further empowerment of the people panchayati raj has been extended to scheduled areas. With this move NTFP ownership should logically come to the gram sabhas/panchayats. In Gujarat this power has been vested with the District level panchayats, which leaves NTFP collectors in the same position of dis-empowerment as before

Issues for discussion:

- **Revitalization of SLWG.**
- **Representation of women's interests in SLWG.**
- **Representation in FPCs and empowerment to gain an effective voice in decision making.**
- **Reservation of certain activities for women.**

Providing women's groups proportionate management control over budgets and clear entitlements and control over their share of benefits.