Appendix – II

PART – B

(I) PERSISTING PROBLEMS REQUIRING PRIORITY ATTENTION

The Mid-Term Appraisal (MTA) of the Ninth Five Year Plan (2000) while appraising the progress of the implementation of policies and programmes of the Ninth Five Year Plan (2000) has also surfaced certain Critical Issues and Persisting Problems that were standing as the major obstacles for the advancement/empowerment of women, including the Girl Child. The same are discussed below:

(A) Declining Sex Ratio

Despite the marginal improvement shown in the over-all sex ratio from 927 in 1991 to 933 in 2001, the sharp decline in the juvenile sex ratio from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001 bear the evidence of the incidence of gender discrimination besides reflecting the survival scene of both women and the Girl Child in India.

The adverse sex-ratio and its decline since 1901 can be attributed mainly to higher mortality among females, as compared to males, in all age groups right from childhood through child-bearing ages. Limited access to health care
services contributing to high maternal mortality and relative deprivation of the female child from nutrition, health and medical care have also been identified as some of the other contributory factors. Interventions to this effect have already been in action.

Related to the problem of gender bias and the persistent discrimination against the girl child are the harmful practices of female foeticide and female infanticide leading to the un-wanted abortions and the present high rates of IMR / MMR. While the female foeticide is widespread in a most rampant form in the urban areas, female infanticide continues to be prevalent as a localized/community-based phenomenon in the States of Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab and Haryana.\textsuperscript{210} In 73 districts of the country only, the sex-ratio is in favour of females.\textsuperscript{211} The long-term measure of sensitizing the society to change their mind-set, which is negatively disposed towards the girl child - as unwanted, neglected and discriminated both within and outside her home, is also very important.

(B) \textbf{Inaccessibility to Health and Nutrition} : Although, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Child Mortality Rate (CMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) have been showing a very steady declining trend during the last decade, yet they still stand very high when compared to many other developing countries. In respect of individual States, 10 major States viz. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat,

\textsuperscript{210} as shown by the sample studies sponsored by the Department of Women and Child Development in 1993
\textsuperscript{211} as per Census 2001
Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Punjab have also shown an increasing trend. This demands careful investigation of the factors responsible for such a situation and effective action to intensify those measures of newborn care and institutional delivery systems. MMR, which also stands at a very high rate\textsuperscript{212} needs special attention on priority basis through a wide-spread coverage of RCH services.

Mental health continues to be a neglected area, despite it being recognized as a major health concern in the context of the discriminatory practices against women. The present health care delivery system remains ill equipped to tackle these problems especially in rural areas.

Women and girls as in their traditional gender roles they are responsible for caring for the sick experience the burden of AIDS disproportionately. This enhances their risk and susceptibility to the disease. The issue on women's control over their bodies also needs to be addressed in that context.

Women's reproductive health continues to be the focus of policy and programmes in the limited context of maternity at the cost of reproductive choices and other health aspects. Given the swelling numbers of women in the older age group as well as the large adolescent age group it is necessary to move to a broader range of services and problems to be served by the health care system.

\textsuperscript{212} 407 maternal deaths per 1,00,000 live births (1998)
Women's Access to Health Care Services for treatment continues to be neglected due to their low mobility and the fact that their health needs remain low priorities in the household. The decision to access health care for them seems to be determined by the perception of health, permission or decision for seeking health care, the availability of alternatives and costs involved and the ability to access place. Several studies have indicated inadequacy in the delivery of even primary health services by the Government adversely affecting women's health status. Faith and emphasis in traditional and alternative health systems is also reduced due to which women's access to health care is further adversely affected.

The National Population Policy has set a target free approach, but the State Population Policies do not seem to reflect a similar perspective. Linking up incentives/disincentives with social security measures and socio-economic development plans further reduce women's freedom and choices in these domains. Indiscreet introduction of contraceptives in the name of cost effectiveness, at the cost of women's health reflects an approach of negating the value of women for achievement of family planning goals.

(C) Inaccessibility to Education & Training: As the female literacy rate as per 2001 census still stands at 1,89,554,886, almost half of the female population is still illiterate. The euphoria of women's high participation in literacy camps of the initial phases of the TLC campaign and significant gains of the TLC may be
lost unless the follow-up and CE phase are not undertaken with renewed energy and focus.

Women's education is not given the priority it deserves despite the commitments of the Government in the National Policy on Education and the International Convention of Education, which incorporate the provision of educational opportunities and removal of gender discrimination.

The Mahila Samakhya continues to be the only programme that focuses exclusively on women's education. Its strength lies in the approach to address women's education in a responsive framework while creating opportunities for women's empowerment. It is important that the programme is strengthened and its learnings are incorporated in the framework of other initiatives to enhance educational opportunities for women.

Programmes for women and girls' education still remain few. While various innovative education programmes are focusing on the needs of girls to enhance their access to education, there is little effort to engender systems. Incentives are also required to overcome the constraints that women experience in sustaining literacy. The gap between male literacy (75.85%) and female literacy (54.16%) remains high and regional disparities in female literacy remain stark.

\[213\text{ the proportion of resources allocated to adult education has decreased to only a 2.5% share of the education budget, compared to 65.7% for elementary education in the Ninth Plan Period.}\]
Efforts towards the integration of gender concerns in the framework of key education programmes including the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan, the District Primary Education Programme, Distance education, Operation Blackboard etc. while focusing on girls' participation are far from adequate to correct the gender imbalances; efforts towards integration of gender in curriculum and training of teachers remains inadequate. Even though enrolment among boys continues to be higher than girls, the gap is narrowing. As a result, in 1998-99, 74 % of girls and 83 % of boys between 6-14 years were attending school. There is much, however, that needs be done to improve the school infrastructure, access and retention of children in schools. For example, even though 94 % of India's rural population has a primary school within a walking distance of one kilometer, there are at least 1,00,000 habitations without this kind of physical access. Girl children remain particularly disadvantaged as a result. At the same time, efforts are required to improve the quality of education and improve learning achievements among children.

(D) Invisible Women's Work: Women workers continue to be the most 'invisible', despite their high levels of contribution to the national economy, especially to the informal/unorganized sector. Being predominant in the marginal workers' category, women's contribution in the informal sector is neither recognized nor finds a place in the official records. Impressive performance at macro economic level has not much improved the economic position of women.
specially women from rural areas. The lack of continuity of women in the employment market with a high rate of withdrawal and late entry in the labour market results in their confinement in lower levels despite their better qualifications in many areas. Post globalization women are also likely to be rendered jobless in traditional sectors in larger numbers. The prevailing social constraints of gender largely relegates women to the inside sphere. Adding to this are the dual responsibilities of women tagged with heavy work responsibilities in agriculture, animal husbandry and other traditional sectors, which create a syndrome of gender stereotypes, marginalisation, alienation and deprivation of women in the informal sector.

The rate of increase in women's employment in the organized sector has slowed down; so future opportunities for absorption of women workers will be fewer. The higher numbers of women in the category of wage labour and reducing numbers in the self employed category mark a further marginalisation of women as workers. There has also been an increase in casualisation of the rural women work force.

Programmes for women in agriculture that have been introduced remain marginal and despite creating access to information and resources their influence is negligible in the macro policy. Role of women remains unrecognized to the sector and its productivity. Labour and social legislation for safety net benefits for women workers like maternity benefit, childcare
support, safeguards from sexual harassment, etc. continue to exclude women in
the informal sector.

(E) Degradation of Natural Resources

Women have traditionally played an important role in managing and
protecting natural resources and their access to natural resources like land,
forest and water, especially for tribal and other disadvantaged groups of women
are significant factors. With increasing commercialization and corporatisation of
management of these resources, however, women are being marginalized from
their traditional roles and access, which very clearly has an adverse impact on
the sustainability of these resources themselves, apart from increasing women’s
vulnerability in the struggle for survival. The increasing pressure for access to
these resources also has an adverse impact on women in the family, with the
incidence of violence increasing.

Initiatives for the development of natural resources must not be at the cost
of livelihoods and means of survival of large number of indigenous populations
and communities' dependent on these resources. Women are major contributors
in these economies and bear the brunt of these developments. They are also
increasingly the victims of violence in instances of a conflict of interest between
the state and the users.
Current policy trends of joint management of resources have implied the intrusion of government departments in the traditional management systems. Women's roles are reduced to nominal in the management of these resources in these new systems. The processes of planning have thus currently become the means of women's alienation from their resources. Women's roles and community needs for fuel, fodder, water and other natural resources need to be strengthened with equity as the guiding principle.

(F) Land Rights for Women: Very strong gender inequalities exist in various inheritance laws, especially in land reform laws passed by various states. In a number of North Western States, including Haryana, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, the land inheritance devolves on male lineal descendants and consequently, widows and daughters inherit only in the absence of male heirs. In Uttar Pradesh section 171 of the Zamindari Abolition Act bars any female child from inheritance of agricultural land. In some States women cannot even buy agricultural land because of the absence of land records to prove their rights as Agriculturists.

(G) Ineffective Food Distribution: Despite the strides in agricultural production and food surplus and State intervention through Special Public Distribution System (SPDS) and various poverty alleviation programs, consumption levels are abysmally low due to poor distribution policies and low purchasing power of the poor. This has led to severe nutritional deficiency among
the majority of the people, especially among women and girls. States where the incidence of poverty is maximum are also the states where the PDS system is least developed. Studies have shown that only 15 per cent of the needs of rural poor households are in fact met by the PDS, and they are compelled to go to the open market for their needs. This has lead to severe nutritional deficiency among the majority of the people, especially among women and girls. Apart from the PDS scheme the ICDS and the mid day meal programmes are the 2 other schemes of the Central Government that address the issue of food security and seek to reduce household malnutrition. PDS schemes are limited in their impact due to operational mal-efficiencies. Large numbers of women continue to suffer from mal-nutrition as the distribution systems are not in sync with the regional requirements, and poverty ridden areas continue to be ill-served by the PDS system.

(H) Gender and Poverty: Several micro-studies have indicated that adverse consequences of SAP are disproportionately borne by women. Increased mechanization leading to displacement of female unskilled workers, increased movement of male workers into traditionally women dominated areas, increase in female headed households due to migration of males are some of the trends, established, indicating a growing incidence of the feminization of poverty. Even within households, which may otherwise fall above the Below Poverty Line (BPL) the situation of the women is known to be at levels below poverty. Female-headed households are among the most impoverished. The incidence of
landlessness and consequent impoverishment is highest among women headed households and is reported to be rising. The incidence of poverty is also known to be maximum in the states of Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh, which contribute more than a third of the country's poor and are known to be areas of male out-migration. These are also the states where the Public Distribution System (PDS) system is the weakest.

Despite the reported decrease in poverty, intra household disparities persist in the experience of poverty based on gender. Employment rates for women in the formal sector have reduced, and opportunities for self-employment have also diminished. Women continue to be the greater victims of layoffs and displacement, as men take over tasks traditionally considered women's tasks. Decreasing earning opportunities and the lowering Work Participation Rates and incomes having recorded no significant changes in relative and absolute terms in relation to the inflation rates, the reality for women is rather bleak. Studies reveal that only 15-17 per cent participants in the Poverty Alleviation programmes for wage employment through the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) Programme have been women, due to the lack of provision of services and support for child care, and no flexible hours.

The burden of poverty upon women has been increasing, as they are being more vulnerable to the extremes of poverty and its consequences as they push them to abject poverty. For poor households, women's capacity to work, her
health, knowledge and skill endowments are often the only resources to fall back upon for survival. In other words, poorer the family, more the dependency upon women's earnings. Women are thus critical to the processes of moving their families out of poverty. Therefore, they require special attention as extreme poverty by definition implies low absorptive capacity for development programmes.

(I) Media and Women: Current media trends indicate a strengthening of stereotypes, and reinforcement of traditional roles; the portrayal of women continues to be as objectification rather than rational human beings. Portrayal of violence and using women in negative sense create a mindset that only perpetuates discrimination and the exploitation of women through violence of various kinds.

Legislative Loopholes: Violence against women in the home is the most sinister and is the least likely to be reported or acknowledged. A review of the legislative framework and the law enforcement agencies of the country reveal an inherent gender bias. The law itself reflects assumptions of patriarchy, and girls continue to be denied the right to property in the inheritance of agricultural property, as also highlighted in the MTA report. In this direction, the National Commission already made some progress for Women and later by the Task Force on Women to review a majority of laws related to women as already mentioned in Chapter III. This process should be completed during the 10th Plan.
Inadequate Mechanisms: The infrastructure needs of women are related to their various roles. Women’s access to economic infrastructure such as capital and credit has increased over the last decade with the focus on micro-finance through the alternate institutions and to a lesser degree through mainstream financial institutions and commercial banks. Their economic viability however remains at risk with few channels of support for marketing and technological support. Apart from the burden of arduous domestic chores, women’s time is spent to a great extent on these tasks, denying them other opportunities and time for rest, reducing their role to low levels of efficiency. Recognition of women’s specific needs in the provision of social and economic sectors is still hardly recognized. Despite the recent initiatives to extend credit and micro finance to them, the follow-up requisites of support for raw material sourcing, marketing, etc are still to be addressed. Support to reduce the burden of drudgery of domestic chores and to create alternative opportunities for addressing their fuel and energy requirements, as well as childcare remain low developmental priorities. There are an increasing number of women workers attached with various agencies and needing suitable accommodation for single/married women. Location and construction of hostels to cater to their needs would reduce the risks and apprehensions of working women. The problem of shelter for homeless women below the poverty levels needs urgent attention.
Lack of Dissemination of Information: The developments of technologies that are women-friendly are few and far between and the investment in these activities remains marginal to the realm of Science and Technology. Women's access also remains constrained by low mobility and access to information and education attainment apart from the inherent gender based impediments. Efforts should also be made to assess the impact of new technologies on women, and to counteract the negative impacts through technological innovations or enhancement of women's skills. Women's Component Plan 5.30 Reports received hitherto from the various departments by the Planning Commission in response to its directions have indicated that the Women's Component Plan (WCP) Planning process is viewed as an extension of the Beneficiary oriented programmes of the PMO. Departments have in most cases included figures of women specific schemes as the WCP inputs, while some departments have declared that their schemes are gender neutral. This reveals that the concept of Women's Component Plan needs to be clarified and strengthened and streamlined for greater efficacy.

(J) Limited Representation in the Decision-making: Adding to the serious problems listed above, lack of education and training, information and awareness generation and low rates of literacy aggravate the situation of deprivation of women, thereby excluding them not merely from political, social and economic processes, but also from decision-making. As per 55th Round of NSSO, 1999-2000, women's work participation is as low as 20.3% as their contribution in the
informal sector is neither recognized nor finds a place in the official records. Further, while their representation in the organized sector is only 17.2% (1999), they are 14.5% (1999) in the public sector; 13.9% (1996) in the Government; and 7.6% (2000) in administrative decision-making. No doubt, they represent 26.7% (2007) in Panchayats against the 33-1/3 per cent reservation for women. When more and more women are positioned at various levels of decision-making, it is bound to have a definite impact on public policy in favour of women and thus, women's issues will get transformed into societal issues.

Besides the participation of women in local self-governance in the past decade, an equally significant factor is the extent to which the systems and institutions are geared to respond to the needs and issues that women are prioritizing in the governance agenda. While women have gained access to the Panchayats and Local bodies, the resistance from men to their leadership continues in various forms. Women in these positions have the disadvantage of a shifting constituency, which implies that reflection may only be possible on a general seat or after a rotation of a few years.

Representation of women in the Legislatures and Parliament is still very low, ranging between 4-8%. The number of women Members of Parliament has increased from 37 in 1952 to 70 in 2001. Party in the country also field very few women candidates in the general seats. Very few women are office bearers or occupy key portfolios in the major political formations of the country. There is
also resistance across party lines to the proposal to provide for reservation for women in the Parliament and state legislatures. Despite the gains in the political arena therefore there are still many frontiers that challenge women on the way to political empowerment.

(K) Violence against Women: The increasing violence against women is yet another manifestation of their low and unequal status and continues to be a big threat to their development. Violence against women and the girl-child, both domestic and at work-place, has been showing an alarming trend especially during the recent past.

Incidence of atrocities against women ranges from female infanticide, foeticide, molestation, sexual assault, sexual-harassment at the workplace to rape, caste-based violence, trafficking, forced marriage, domestic violence, dowry related murders, enforced sterilization and custodial violence. Physical, mental and psychological violence against adolescent girls is a growing phenomenon.

The National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), New Delhi in 1999 recorded an increase in the total number of cases of crimes related to women like kidnapping, abduction, dowry death, torture and molestation from 1,15,723 in 1996 to 1,35,771 in 1999. Out of the total cases related to women and registered under IPC in 1996, rape accounted for 14,846 (12.8%), dowry deaths 5,513
(4.81%) and cases of torture 35,246 (30.5%).\textsuperscript{214} Most rape victims are in the age group of 10 – 16 year and a significant number are under 10 years of age. The media plays a role in perpetuating the gender-stereo types, undermining the contribution of women to society.

There was an increase of 8.4 per cent in the total number of crimes committed against women between 1997 and 1999.\textsuperscript{215} While the total number of cases registered under IPC stood at 1.36 lakh, torture claims the highest share of 32.3 per cent; followed by molestation (23.8%); kidnapping and abduction (11.8%); rape (11.4%); sexual harassment (6.5%); and dowry death (4.9%). Amongst the States, while Madhya Pradesh reports the highest incidence of 12.6% of the total crimes, Uttar Pradesh (12.5%) and Maharashtra (10.0%) followed suit. Delhi which shares 1.3% of the country's total population, accounts for 1.8% of the total crime, and reports the fourth highest crime rate in the country with 17.9\textsuperscript{216}, while all India crime rate stands at 13.8.

\textsuperscript{214} In 1999, the corresponding figures rose to 15,468 (11.4%), 6,699 (4.9%) and 43,823 (32.3%), respectively.
\textsuperscript{215} As per NCRB 1999 data
\textsuperscript{216} number of crimes per one lakh population