

PART - II

PART-II

5. EXAMINATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR):

1. TOR-I: To identify and prioritise areas for speedier socio-economic development of women and suggest requisite remedial measures

1.1 The recommendations of the Working Group on the Empowerment of Women, and the roadmap for Gender Equity given in the XI Five Year Plan, aim at creating an environment to:

- realize the full potential of women
- provide them equal participation in decision making,
- ensure that women have equal access to healthcare, education, career and vocational guidance, employment, health and safety and social security,
- further strengthen the legal system and change societal attitude for elimination of all forms of discrimination and social evils perpetrated towards women.

Thus the overall objective of mainstreaming gender participation for women empowerment has been specified and several socio-economic development programmes have been planned and are being implemented in the country. Nevertheless, there are certain key thrust areas which need to be identified and addressed with a sharper focus. These areas can be classified into two broad categories viz:

- (i) Social and Educational Empowerment
- (ii) Economic Empowerment

It has also been realized that since these two areas are deeply intertwined, they will have to be addressed simultaneously and made compatible with each other if holistic empowerment of women has to be achieved. The specific areas of action under these two categories are discussed below in detail.

1.2 **Social and Educational Empowerment:**

1.2.1 The basic parameters of health (declining sex ratio, IMR, MMR, immunization levels, morbidity, mortality, etc.), nutrition (Mal-nutrition, under weight anaemia etc.), education (low literacy levels, poor enrolment, drop out etc) employment and training (unorganised, discrimination in wages, poor skill development, drudgery in areas of occupations such as agriculture, construction) reflect the continuing dismal status of women in the country. Some of the indicators are given below:

- MMRs 301 per lakh live births, highest even amongst the South Asian countries; IMR is 61 per 1000 births.
- Child Sex Ratio is 927 per 1000 males in 2001. It was 945 in 1991.
- Nearly 58% of pregnant women are anemic and over 40% girls are married off before the age of 18.
- The gross Enrolment Ratio for girls in schools is only 34% in secondary schools and the drop-out rates are as high as 65%.
- The female literacy rate is still low at 54.16%.
- Women, who comprise 48.3% of the population, have only 26.1% share in the number of persons employed.

- The female labour force participation rate across all age groups is 25-30% of the male labour force participation rates in urban area and 35-40% in rural areas.
- Crimes against women increased from 1,28,320 in 2000 to 1,64,765 in 2006.

1.2.2 **Gender inclusive Social Empowerment:**

Historically, gender discrimination has been intrinsically linked with the generally experienced low status of women in society, as a result of which social evils such as female foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, dowry and domestic violence have been perpetrated against women. The four essential areas for gender inclusive social empowerment of women include:

(i) **Health and wellbeing:**

Inaccessibility to health services and low priority attached to women's health is the major cause of morbidity and mortality among women. The unacceptably high MMR, IMR, increasing rate of anaemia, has a direct correlation with lack of accessibility to health care facilities. Absence of toilets, drinking water, sanitation and sewage disposal further adversely impact on their health. NFHS -3 data reveals that only 27.9% households in rural areas and 70% in urban areas have access to piped water. Only 25.9% households in rural areas have access to toilets. Provision of safe drinking water, sewage disposal, toilet facilities, sanitation facilities within accessible reach of women is thus a requirement and should be given immediate attention. In fact, at the planning and

39

decision making stages of water supply and sanitation projects, participation of women would be extremely useful and must be ensured.

There is also an urgent need for spatial mapping to be carried out in order to determine gaps in these infrastructure facilities so that the deficiencies can be bridged in a time bound manner.

Programmes under the National Health Policy 2002 mainly target the reproductive Health of women. The policy could perhaps look at the need to address all health issues of women through a life cycle approach. Programmes under the NRHM which include measures to tackle diseases such as TB, vector borne diseases etc. have no specific gender component though it is universally acknowledged that women are doubly disadvantaged and discriminated when they suffer from these diseases. Affirmative action needs to be built in schemes for each of these categories as well as for programmes related to mental health and geriatric care of women.

In certain States like Himachal Pradesh, web enabled software have been developed whereby health profiling of women and children in the area has been made possible and has greatly helped in improved health services. This experience could be replicated in other States for better healthcare.

40

(ii) **Wholesome and adequate nutrition:**

Discrimination in the provision of adequate and timely nutrition is a persistent problem as a result of which women and children suffer from various problems like underweight, malnutrition, anaemia, micro nutrient deficiencies, etc. These need to be addressed through proper convergence of various services reaching the target groups.

Since malnutrition is a key problem both for women and children and has a long term effect if it is not taken care of from the time of pregnancy and early childhood, the Malnutrition Treatment Centres need to be strengthened. Women SHGs in association with the ICDS can be actively involved in the Supplementary Nutrition Programme through the Anganwadi Centres.

XI Plan aims to strengthen the PDS system and revise BPL census norms to ensure that women in vulnerable situations, particularly widows, single women, internally displaced women, and women in conflict situations are fully covered. This needs to be ensured in a time bound manner.

The problem of malnutrition is very acute in the tribal areas. Mobile ration shops, if made available in these areas would provide succour to a vast population of tribal women beneficiaries to a large extent.

(iii) **Education and Literacy:**

Sensitization about gender equality should begin from early childhood itself and textbooks should include syllabus to help

41

inculcate a sense of equality among boys and girls. The poor rate of enrolment and drop out of girl children especially at the elementary and secondary stages of education is an issue that needs to be addressed on priority. Some of the causes include girl children being involved in house keeping, (especially because of feminisation of agriculture), absence of separate toilets in the school premises, distance from school coupled with poor roads, transport, infrastructure and lack of adequate female teachers. Though the Ministry of Human Resource Development has many schemes for providing girl's hostels and for creating exclusive infrastructural facilities like common rooms and toilets in educational institutions, a lot of concerted action is still required to be taken to reduce gender differential in education.

Incentives to parents and teachers for promoting primary education to girl children could be a remedial measure. Improving infrastructure as has been recommended in the health sector is required to attract and retain girls in schools and prevent dropout. It is also suggested that there should be flexibility in school syllabus with about 15% to 20% course/syllabus, being worked out at local levels so that children, especially girls, can participate more actively in the process of education. At the level of higher education, dropouts are mainly due to the practice of early marriages, economic reasons, distance to the educational institution, lack of hostel facilities, inadequacy of scholarships, lack of awareness on such scholarships, etc. Gender inequality in accessing professional education like engineering, medicine

and other vocational training is quite sharp. To improve presence of girls in higher education subsidised education for needy girls at graduate and post graduate levels may be introduced. A special funding scheme may also be introduced for prosecuting education in private professional institutions to reduce the burden of heavy fees. Skill upgradation and skill development should form an integral part of empowerment and hence special vocational training programmes for women in emerging sectors have to be provided on a priority.

Specially designed leadership training programmes for female students should form part of the curriculum. There should be leadership camps, physical training camps, arranged every year specially for girl students to enable them gain leadership and expertise in self defence. They should be motivated to come forward to prove their physical prowess and mental agility.

(iv) **Legal Empowerment:**

The concept of Gender Equality is enshrined in the Constitution of India and Articles 14, 15, 15 (3), 16, 39, 42, 51A (e) provide specific rights to women. The Indian Penal Code and various Judgements of the Supreme Court also provide protection and rights to women. But much more has to be done to uplift their dignity. Women's Empowerment and gender equality are heavily dependent on women specific laws, their periodic revision and enforcement. The National Commission for Women (NCW) has reviewed as many as 44 Central Acts which are women-specific or having provisions

substantially affecting women, with the objective of effecting appropriate amendments in them. It is recommended that the State governments review the Acts and Rules of their respective States. As has been stated elsewhere, promulgations of laws is not sufficient. Awareness about them by the society is critical for their effective implementation. The Ministry of Women and Child in coordination with the National Legal Services Authority may organize countrywide awareness programmes from time to time. Apart from creating awareness about the legislations in place, the ill effects of social evils on the individual, the family and the society should be brought about through imaginative IEC Programmes. Besides the need for sensitizing Government officials, Police, Judiciary and other law enforcing agencies about effective enforcement of these legislations has been emphasized elsewhere in the report.

1.3 **Economic Empowerment:**

Economic empowerment is the key to the economic identity of women. It is considered to be the mainstay for the holistic empowerment of women. The major issues relating to economic empowerment were dealt with in detail in Part I of the Report of the Committee.

While making recommendations on the issue of economic empowerment special emphasis was made on universalising the SHG movement to cover all eligible women in the country under SHGs and to link them to micro credit facilities by 2015.

47

Other major aspects which affect economic empowerment of women are as follows:-

(i) **Women in Agriculture:**

With the increasing feminisation in agriculture, 75% of the female workforce is engaged in agriculture. Hence it is necessary to examine how far the female agricultural labour has benefited from traditional issues like land reform and emerging issues like impact of globalisation etc. Access of women to agriculture inputs, credit, marketing facilities, infrastructure support, technology and skill enhancement are some of the very important issues which need to be given priority attention in the changed scenario. Since any decision pertaining to land and agriculture taken by the government tends to have a direct impact on rural women Gender Impact Assessments should be carried out prior to taking any decisions on Agricultural Land.

(ii) **Women in the unorganized sector:**

Most of the female population working in the unorganized sector needs social security in terms of leave, wages, maternity benefits, child care, pension, insurance, occupational healthcare, safety, protection from sexual harassment etc. Hence appropriate policies and programmes for women in the unorganized sector have to be framed to ensure a secured future, which is a legitimate right.

(iii) **The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme** is a scheme which ensures assured livelihood in rural areas and is a potential tool of empowerment for women as it protects them from economic insecurity. This scheme has to be made more women friendly by providing facilities such as insurance, maternity benefits, shelters, crèches for children of workers, separate toilet facilities, etc. at the work site.

(iv) **Engendering Poverty Eradication Measures:**

Eradication of poverty has been the prime concern of the Central Government as well as the State Governments. Of the estimated 27 crores people below the poverty line, approximately 8.5 crores are women and girls. The implementation and monitoring of gender equality and rights based policies and programmes with a view to transform the feminisation of poverty into a "gender inclusive growth" has to be given due attention. The impact of macro economic policies on the incidence of poverty should be ascertained through gender assessments in various sectors. Similarly, Female Headed Households (FHH) bears the increasing burden of poverty. Around 30 to 35% of households are found to be female headed. Accurate data on FHH, their prevalence amongst different incomes, religious and caste groups etc. are essential to understand the relationship between FHH and poverty.

(v) **Women and Workplace Environment:**

Many a time women are unable to take up jobs because of their commitments to demands from their families. A major hurdle in the economic empowerment of women is the unsafe working conditions at work place. A comprehensive legislation in this regard is much desired and should be strictly enforced both in the private and public sector. The employers' positive response for effective implementation of the 'Prevention of Sexual Harassment of Women in the Workplace Act' and ensuring security and safety of women employees in the work place will go a long way in promoting greater participation of women in the workforce.

Ec
G
re
in
pa

2. TOR -II: To identify gaps in the ongoing programmes aimed at socio-economic development and empowerment of women and suggest requisite remedial measures.

India is committed to meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is a signatory to many other international conventions, including the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 1993. Of the eight MDGs, two are explicitly gender specific, viz. Goal (iii) to promote Gender Equality and Empower Women – the target being to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education not later than 2015, and Goal (v) to improve maternal mortality, the target being (a) to reduce by three quarters the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) and (b) to achieve universal access to reproductive health. The other related targets are:-

- (i) to half by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation,
- (ii) to have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS,
- (iii) to ensure that by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all including women and children.

The Global Gender Gap Report 2008 brought out by the World Economic Forum ranks each country's overall performance in closing the Gender Gap on a 0 to 1 scale and its rank out of the 130 countries reviewed. This report places India in the 113th rank with a score of 0.606 in terms of Gender Gap Index and 125th rank (0.399) in terms of economic participation and opportunity, 116th (0.845) on educational attainment,

128th (0.931) on health and survival and at the 25th position in terms of political empowerment of women.

The Report of the Working Group on Empowerment of Women for the XI Plan states – ‘a situational analysis of social and economic status of women reflects less than satisfactory achievement in almost all important human development indicators, the maternal mortality rate is estimated at 301 per one lakh live births (2000) in India compared to 92 in Sri Lanka, 56 in China, 130 in Vietnam; the growing female face of HIV/AIDS is reflected in the fact that the number of pregnant women (between 18 and 24 years) with HIV prevalence comprise 0.86% in 2003 of the total pregnant women compared to 0.74% in 2002, the child sex ratio declined from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001, economic empowerment as reflected in the work participation rate shows that the percentage of women in the workforce increased by only 3% (from 22.5% to 25.7%) between 1991-2001. The average wage differential between men and women showed a marked deterioration between 2000 and 2004 for both rural and urban areas. The violence against women continued unabated with the absolute number of crimes against women increasing from 1,43,795 in 2001 to 1,55,553 in 2005.

Therefore, it is amply clear that if the MDGs and Gender Equity is to be achieved in a true sense within the time-frame set out, the ongoing programmes aimed at socio-economic development and empowerment of women have to be critically examined and remedial measures taken expeditiously. The legislations, policies, institutional mechanisms, programmes and delivery mechanisms have to be further reviewed to ensure that they have incorporated gender requirements completely or whether there are gender gaps. Many a time while policies and programmes are comprehensive and gender sensitive, their

implementation and monitoring leaves much to be desired resulting in the benefits not fully or effectively reaching the target groups. There is also a need to study these frameworks to ascertain their convergence and coordination with each other as well as the extent and efficacy of networking of all the service providers implementing them.

A brief review of the impact of sectoral policies and programmes pertaining to Demography, Health and Nutrition, Education, Women and Economy and Violence against Women is given below.

(i) **Demography:**

The declining Child Sex Ratio in the country is a matter of great concern. The Child Sex Ratio (0-6 years) fell from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001. During 1991-2000, 70 districts in 16 States and UTs recorded more than 50 points decline in sex ratio. This draws serious attention to the need to effectively enforce the legislations related to sex selection and illegal Medical Termination of Pregnancies. (MTPs) Schemes and programmes implemented by the State Governments against female foeticide are required to be upscaled on a war footing.

(ii) **Health and Nutrition:**

There are several major programmes of the M/o Health and Family Welfare, M/o Rural Development and the M/o Women and Child Development which cater to the health and nutrition aspects of women and the girl child. In spite of these programmes India continues to grapple with unacceptably high MMR, IMR and increasing rates of anaemia, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS amongst women.

40

As a result of the intervention made through various programmes more importantly the Reproductive and Child Health Programme, the National Rural Health Mission, the Janani Suraksha Yojana etc. substantial decline in MMR and IMR has been noticed. However, the indicators of health depend on crucial determinants such as safe drinking water, nutrition, female literacy, early childhood development, sanitation and allied factors. The flagship programme of National Rural Health Mission has adopted a convergence approach, to effect deeper impact on health indicators with the support of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Geographical difficulties in accessing health care facilities is an important factor, along with gender discrimination, that contribute to higher maternal mortality in women who live in remote areas. Despite the fact that manpower has substantially increased after the NRHM, a lot more is still required to meet the shortage of doctors, nurses and other paramedical professionals. In spite of the implementation of large-scale family welfare programmes, the level of health awareness on diseases and overall health has not picked up, especially in rural areas. Lack of convergence at the grass-root level amongst the various actors is another reason for poor implementation of scheme.

(iii) Education:

The status of education and literacy is given elsewhere in the Report under gender inclusive social empowerment. The National Policy on Education, announced in 1986 (revised in 1992) talks of providing basic education for all. A high literacy rate, especially in the case of women, correlates with improvement in several socio-economic indicators, namely, low birth rate, low IMR and increase in life

expectancy. The recognition of this fact has created awareness on the need to focus on improving literacy and universalizing elementary education programme. With these programmes substantial achievements like increase in literacy rates, increase in the enrolment ratio have been achieved. The challenge in the XI Plan is to retain girls in schools and to bridge gender disparities in access to education, specifically for SC, ST and Muslim communities through allocation of greater resources and more context specific programming. While the policy and programmes are broadly gender inclusive the problem of retention of girls in schools demands special attention.

The major education related programmes are being implemented by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Ministry of Minority Affairs. Convergence of programmes of these Ministries and the State Governments at the grass root level has to be further strengthened for better results.

(iv) **Women and Economy:**

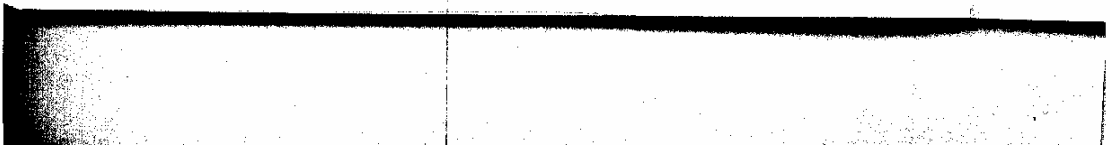
The vision of the XI Plan is to end the multi-faceted exploitation and discrimination faced by women and children; to ensure that every woman and girl child in the country is able to develop her full potential and share the benefits of economic growth and prosperity. However, poverty is increasingly getting feminized. Globalization and liberalization has brought about a paradigm shift in the economy which is skewed towards technology dominated sectors, rendering traditional sectors like agriculture and traditional village industries unviable without adequate security cover. Lack of alternate employment, skill training and access to

credit facilities are factors that continue to retain women in poverty. Traditional, patriarchal systems too play their part in keeping women at a lower rung in the social and economic hierarchy by denying them basic rights to land, assets etc. The high prevalence of female foeticide, female infanticide and child marriage is a fallout of these factors.

It is estimated that 118 million workers or 97% of the female work force are engaged in the unorganized sector in which the average wages are one fourth of the wages in the organized sector. Agriculture and construction sectors are the main employers of women informal workers. The seasonality of work and the lack of alternate avenues lead to exploitation and ensure that these women remain the poorest. More than 3 million women or over 12% of all women workers in urban India are domestic servants, who are poorly paid and often are forced to work under hard conditions.

Agriculture specific scheme have to be devised for identifying and helping women in States, where agrarian crisis has affected families. Vulnerability of women resulting from farmers' suicide due to crop failure and inability to pay loans will have to be addressed through anti-poverty programmes, resettlement schemes, credit support, legal support for inheritance rights, incentives and subsidies on women owned land. In times of agricultural stress, it is the non-farm activities of programmes like Swarna Jayanti Swarozgar Yojana (SJSY) which support the family. Therefore, the requirements of women in this sector needs to be identified and appropriate support facility in terms of access to raw materials, micro credit, skill development, training, market linkages etc. have to be ensured. The need for skill formation is acute and the activities of the National Skill Development Mission has to be expedited with the gender concerns factored in. There exists a need for upscaling the various programmes like Swayamsidha (IWEP) scheme of Ministry of Women

i
(
£
r
h
re
a
fi
o
e
ir
ta
3.
ec
re
(R
dc



and Child Development as this scheme is moving towards its long term objective of all-round empowerment of women by ensuring their direct access to control over resources through a sustained process of mobilization.

(v) **Violence against Women (VAW):**

Despite improving education levels and consistent economic growth, every form of violence against women including female foeticide, rape, abduction, trafficking, dowry death, domestic violence, witch-hunting, etc. has been increasing. Though a large number of women related legislations are in place, it is seen that the efficacy of these laws are not felt primarily on account of poor implementation. A major reason for this is the legislations and inadequacy of gender sensitivity on the part of functionaries such as police, prosecution, medical profession, judiciary etc. For this purpose, awareness generation and dissemination of information on a sustained basis will have to be carried out with modules targeting specific regions and groups.

3. **TOR-III: To recommend approaches for bringing about convergence in the implementation of various ongoing women's development programmes being implemented by the State Governments; including Central and Centrally Sponsored schemes**

It is realised that empowerment of women is determined by her economic, social and political identity. These factors are interlinked and require to be addressed simultaneously through an inter sectoral approach. (Refer TOR I). As many as 14 Ministries/Departments at the Centre dealing with different aspects/sectors are involved in taking affirmative

action for the empowerment of women. They run approximately 129 schemes/programmes where women are the major beneficiaries. Some such centrally sponsored schemes are *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Education for all), the *National Rural Health Mission*, the *Expanded Midday Meal Scheme*, *Integrated Child Development services*, *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana*, *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)* etc.

A large number of State Government Departments and their agencies are also involved in implementing these schemes apart from their own schemes. The Panchayati Raj Institutions, Self Help Groups, civil society groups, Khadi & Village Commission, Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, NABARD, Banks, Cooperatives, State Women Economic Development Corporations etc. are engaged in the pursuit of Women Empowerment.

While the common thread that runs through all these schemes is that they target disadvantaged groups including women. However, their delivery mechanisms are independent of each other. As a result often they operate without coordination with the services of the other related schemes thereby resulting in duplication of activities and waste of resources. At times the essential inter sectoral concomitant services for the beneficiary are not forthcoming and the outcomes are not fully achieved or fall short of the goals. Since each programme has its own monitoring and evaluation system it may not take into account a holistic requirement of women. The need for convergence of various programmes particularly at the grass root level is thus of prime importance if the ultimate goal of empowering women has to happen. The activities of such a multi-disciplinary nature have to converge and synergise harmoniously to reach the intended beneficiary. For example, the *Integrated Child Development Schemes (ICDS)* and the *National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)* both

aim at reducing maternal and infant mortality. At the community level, informal collaboration exists between the ANM, ASHA and the AWW, given that the target group of these functionaries substantially overlaps. In a number of States across the country, ICDS and the State Departments of Health and Family Welfare have integrated health and nutrition interventions at the village, block and district level through a series of operational processes. However, no systematic institutionalised mechanism exists at the local level to ensure that ICDS and NRHM work together in a collaborative manner, especially in nutrition related matters. Similarly in the SHG formation and development, many programmes have to come together to offer a consolidated basket of services to the women beneficiaries. For example, the SHGs promoted by Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), and Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE) etc demand similar services. It would be desirable if the linkages are established between these Ministries at all levels so that they can access services like vocational training, skill building, micro finance market linkages without duplication, reaping manifold benefits through synergies.

Apart from convergence at various operational levels effective and regular coordination between Central and State governments is also required to monitor the centrally sponsored schemes. To achieve this, a suitable mechanism should be chalked out in the backdrop of the federal nature of our polity.

Since cross cutting holistic sectoral policies need to converge effectively and synergize harmoniously to reach the women beneficiaries and in turn to improve the human development indices a Mission Mode approach would be most effective as has been demonstrated in several other National Missions under the Govt. of India. Hence it is proposed

that an Umbrella Mission viz. the "National Mission for Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women" (NMSEW) may be set up for proper coordination and better synergy between the participating Ministries/Departments. Various schemes related to socio-economic development and empowerment of women can be channelised and implemented under its aegis in a holistic manner. It would strengthen the efforts of various anchor Ministries and Departments of the Government of India and the State Governments to focus on the singular target of women empowerment. A conceptual frame work for such a National Mission is placed at Appendix. The framework may be suitably developed to meet with the administrative and operational requirements. This initiative by the Central Government would encourage the State Governments to invest in women empowerment programmes in a more pro-active manner.

4. TOR-IV: To recommend administrative arrangement for effective coordination between the central and state governments in the implementation and monitoring of schemes for women's development and gender equality

Recommendations on this TOR appear in Part I of the Report of the Committee of Governors (Para 4).

5. TOR-V: To recommend methods for better integration of civil society activities for socio-economic development of women.

Involvement of civil society and other private sector players has been accepted as an effective collaborative method for social mobilization, pooling of resources, talent and expertise in converging benefits to women. The recent attempts in Public-Private-Partnerships, (PPP) bring under one umbrella, the government, NGOs, corporate sector,

chambers of commerce and international organizations working in tandem to tackle issues relating to empowerment of women. To institutionalize such attempts, every State should set up a Public-Private Partnership Forum. PPP is a practical method of delivering services commonly provided by local governments and is generally applicable to most components of service delivery. The types of services that could be provided through PPP will, however, vary from one area to the other based on their local needs and priorities.

The NGO sector has been a very important service provider for grassroot schemes. While many of the Central Government programmes are implemented through NGOs, the State Governments role in monitoring their performance or their bonafides is minimal. The States have to take a more responsive role in identifying and building capacities of NGOs and to maintain their database. A system of accreditation of NGO can also be introduced so that the programmes are serviced by those who have the ability and credibility to perform and deliver.

While formulating schemes by the government, flexibility should be offered to accommodate local needs and innovations enabling greater role for the civil society organizations. Implementation of the schemes through civil society and leaving the monitoring role to governmental agencies would be an acceptable model. Involvement of Gram Sabhas, Panchayat Committees, and Civil Society in social audit would help in mid-course correction in the implementation of the schemes and ensure transparency.

6. TOR -VI: To recommend strategies for eliminating social evils which retard empowerment of women in particular and progress of the nation at large

Social evils have both social and economic impact. Therefore a major step towards gender inclusive socio-economic empowerment is to

eradicate social evils like dowry, child marriage, domestic violence, female foeticide, female infanticide, drug addiction, etc. It has to be ensured that the social fabric of the country responds to opening up of cultures and globalization of societies by accommodating new ideas. Community based strategies would have to be applied to change the mindsets of different sections of society towards women and it should be ensured that the relevant laws and legislations which are meant for prevention of these social evils are effectively enforced. Since legislations on most of the discriminatory practices already exist, it has just to be ensured that the justice delivery mechanisms are strengthened. Also women will have to be made aware of these legislations and their rights for which different methodologies including the mass media and traditional cultural forms of folk art and music may be harnessed.

Legal services are to be made available to women under the aegis of the National Legal Services Authority who are mandated to provide free and competent legal services to the weaker section of the society. Section 12 of the Legal Services Authorities Act 1987 specifically mandates, that women shall be entitled to legal services under the Act. However, it has been experienced that due to lack of awareness amongst the beneficiaries/stakeholders and shortage of infrastructure and manpower with the Legal Services Authorities, these services are not fully utilized. Hence by creating legal awareness campaign and by augmenting the facilities of the Legal Services Authority the gap in providing legal aid to women for their social empowerment can be bridged to a large extent. Apart from this, for all cases related to violence against women, it may be worthwhile to fix a time limit for judicial decisions, so that cases pertaining to women do not get unduly prolonged.



There is also a need to review existing laws related to marriage, divorce, maintenance and guardianship to avoid discrimination against women. The budgetary allocation, for publicity and infrastructure for effective implementation of protection of women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and other related legislations has to be enhanced. Awareness generation, training and capacity building of law enforcing authorities is also required for effective implementation of these legislations.

Female foeticide and infanticide are of major concern in certain States and for this purpose, Mother and child Tracking System at the village Anganwadi level may be widely introduced. A special tracking of those vulnerable women who have one or more girl children may be introduced. Similarly, tracking of female infants through the child tracking system would help in reducing female infanticide.

It is pertinent to recommend that zero tolerance should be promoted in respect of discrimination against women of SC/ST categories and against practices like untouchability, devdasi system and manual scavenging. Women in other vulnerable and marginalized categories including migrant women, urban poor and single women, will have to be specially protected from gender bias for which strict laws will have to be framed and enforced.

It is a general experience that legislation per se would not bring about changes. It has to be accompanied by creation of awareness about social evils and effective participation of people to fight them. There is therefore a need for developing well thought out Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Strategy to create public awareness against social evils. It is also recommended that the concept of 'Young men as partners against Gender Violence' should be promoted far and wide since

gender violence is not merely a women's issue but a community issue as well.

7. TOR-VII: To examine possibility of setting up a national level institutionalised mechanism to Monitor Effective Implementation of Programmes for Gender Equality and Overall Socio-Economic Development of Women

The importance of an institutionalised monitoring mechanism is imperative, if the programmes are to deliver effective outcomes. Certain institutional mechanisms in this regard have been suggested in Part I of the Report.

8. TOR-VIII: To provide a mechanism for Continuous Performance Appraisal and Audit of women's Development Programmes with a view to providing timely inputs for mid-course corrections in the implementation process.

Evaluation and monitoring of flow of funds to women's programme and outcome evaluation can be performed through gender budgeting and gender audit. In this context, the model implemented by the Centre can be adopted by the States. Gender budgeting is the incorporation of gender concerns at every level – right from policy formulation ,planning, project preparation, implementation and evaluation ensuring adequate resource allocation, leading to gender responsive budgets. For this purpose, the States may put into action the following:-

- (i) Incorporate a separate Statement in the State Budget which will report gender allocations of all schemes of all Departments under it.
- (ii) Set up Gender Budget cells in each Department headed by its Secretary to ensure that all the schemes, polices and delivery mechanisms have gender components.

- (iii) The activities of the Gender Budget Cells may be periodically reviewed by the Chief Secretary
- (iv) Independent bodies such as a Universities Academic Institutions or reputed Institutes with relevant expertise and experience may be engaged for gender audit on an annual basis.

Apart from the above, the establishment of Resource Centres on Women, recommended in Part I of the Report of the Committee (Para 4.2.2) both National and State levels may also be mandated with the responsibility of conducting audits of women's empowerment programmes.

The Comptroller and Auditor General in their periodic reports on various schemes give an analysis of their functioning. They also do an outcome audit to see whether the schemes are progressing towards achieving the intended objective. These recommendations should be acted upon proactively instead of dealing with them in a cursory fashion.

9. TOR-IX: To examine the possibility of setting up an apex body (whether incorporated or not) or to strengthen the existing agencies which can provide professional expertise and adequate financial support to women's self help groups besides facilitating backward and forward linkages to their economic activities.

This TOR has been examined at length in Part I of the 'Report of the Committee' (Para 4.3.10 to Para 4.3.13 refers).

10. TOR-X: To suggest how to utilize media, both traditional and the State of art, to instill a heightened sense of awareness in the society about gender equality and eradication of social evils.

Awareness generation and gender sensitization are of paramount importance in tackling issues related to women empowerment. The media can play a significant role in this regard. The issues like women's rights, health and education, access to resources, rights of girl child, success stories of women SHGs etc. can be packaged into viewer friendly programmes. Besides the opportunity for networking between the media practitioners and people working in the field of women empowerment would create a forum for meaningful interaction to translate the principles of gender equality into every day life.

The commercial media sometimes exhibit tendencies to sensationalise and picturize women in a less than dignified manner. The image of women and womanhood that is being projected through various serials and programmes is often not conducive to improve the social status of women. The present guidelines are not adequate to prevent such depiction of women in the media. This is a lacuna that warrants serious attention. The media approach should be one which would create positive awareness on gender issues and concerns so that the process of societal reorientation towards a "Gender Just Society" gets widely disseminated. The media, preferably on its own should develop a code of conduct for itself and a self regulatory mechanism so as to promote balanced portrayal of women issues.

As already mentioned a well thought out Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategy should be formulated to enhance public awareness on gender issues and eradication of social evils. This

strategy should also include imaginative use of Communications Technology (ICT). In fact, films and documentaries on various issues like dowry, sexual harassment and violence against women should be extensively used to sensitize general public. The role of mass and electronic media can be effectively supplemented by traditional forms of entertainment programmes, folk arts, street plays, puppetry etc. to spread the message of gender equality. There should be a conscious effort to encourage them for this purpose.

11. TOR-XI: To examine the possible role of Governors in promoting socio-economic development and empowerment of women

Governors, as Heads of States, can play a very constructive role in promoting socio-economic development of women, although it may not be possible for them to directly take up some role for themselves in the implementation of programmes. They can definitely use their good offices to influence the political executives of the respective State to formulate policies favouring women's empowerment.

The Governors can ensure that the gender issues find place in their policy addresses. They could also advocate inclusion of gender budget statements in State budgets, setting up of Gender Budget Cells in all Departments of the States and the importance of public-private participation in empowering women especially in imparting skill development and market linkages for SHGs. They can call for reports from their governments under Art 167 on the progress of specific programmes aimed at women empowerment and report to the President in their monthly reports. Besides, their interaction with the public and civil

society organizations can give a fillip to the cause of women empowerment programmes.

12. TOR-XII: To examine any other related issue and make recommendations:

(i) **Problem of prostitutes:** According to Human Rights Watch', there are approximately 15 million prostitutes in India. There are more than one lakh women prostitutes in Bombay itself which is considered as Asia's largest sex industry centre. The situation in which they are placed increases their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, forced abortions, and often expose their off-springs to child sexual abuse. Mainstreaming the children of these women is a major task and the Government could take upon itself the responsibility of uplifting the deplorable conditions of these women.

(ii) **Prevention of trafficking:** To prevent trafficking, a system of registration should be implemented especially in vulnerable States. In view of the seriousness of the problem, a proper guideline on securing of safe migration should be chalked out by the Central and State Governments with inputs from Intelligence and Security Agencies.

(iv) **Assets in joint name:** In all schemes where grants/assistance is given to beneficiaries, same should be given jointly to the couple. Any asset created or provided in the form of assistance by the government should be in the joint name of the couple.