

EDUCATION FOR WOMEN'S EQUALITY

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Education policy at this point of time has to face two challenges - (a) to prepare people for the future - the world of the 21st century, and (b) to complete the unfinished tasks, drawing on the lessons of the four decades since independence. The goals of women's equality - of opportunity and status - and their rights - to justice, dignity and freedom of choice - for which education is recognised as an essential vehicle, are significant among the unfinished tasks' that India must complete, for survival and further development. Without adequate measures for the spread of education, 'the chasm of economic disabilities, regional imbalances and social injustice will widen further, resulting in the building up of disintegrative tensions Human resources development has a multiplier effect on the utilisation of all other resources Education is the only instrument of peaceful social change".

I

THE CONTEXT

The goals have remained unchanged - not only since independence, but since 1931 when they were built into the Fundamental Rights Resolution of the Indian National Congress. But 1985 represents a very different situation from that of 1950. The commitments made to women at that time have been renewed, deepened, and spelt out much further - before national forums pledged to women's equality in its Constitution, India played a leadership role - within the United Nations and the Non-aligned Movement - in the global debate on the women's question during the last decade. Within the nation, too, the pledge has been renewed through resolution of Parliament and other policy statements, executive directions and legislative amendments.

A. Present State of Knowledge

The state of knowledge of the situation of women in the country. the impact of the processes of change and development - planned or unplanned - on the condition and status of different sections of women, is investigations of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (1975) and continued research during the last decade has altered our

level of awareness and understanding of the interconnection between women's status and the current processes of social change.*

The CSWI's Report documented that the large masses of Indian women continue to be victims of a process of marginalisation - economic, social, political and intellectual - which began long before independence, but has, in fact, accelerated during the period of planned national development. Demographic trends like the declining sex-ratio in the population and the work force, growing gender disparity in Life expectancy, death rate, literacy and migration rate, and escalating social evils like dowry, traffic in women and crimes of violence against women, are indicators of increasing devaluation of women, and portray a process of social change which is moving in a different direction from the goals set before the nation. Industrialisation and technological change, preferred instruments of national progress - have displaced millions of women from their traditional sources of livelihood, without offering adequate alternatives. Deforestation and other forms of ecological degradation have affected many adversely - but their impact on women is far worse. Reduced access to fuel, fodder, food, water and a livelihood have increased women's poverty and work burden, and handicapped their capacity to rear their children as well as their access to education and other benefits of development.

The general assumption that most women's roles in society were confined to childrearing and home-making has given place to the awareness that the majority have, always, played active, multiple roles in economic, social, even political activity. The myth of women's passivity, apathy or backward consciousness has been successfully challenged by evidence from the present and the past. Another assumption, that women's views or responses to issues affecting the wider society always echo those of men is also now shaken. The Chipko movement is but one example - of substantial differences in the collective reaction of men and women to major developmental issues - of deforestation or afforestation and the choice of species. This kind of research has identified that the same process of development has a differential impact on different groups of women, depending on their class, caste, community.

Finally, such studies point to an increase in gender asymmetry, or disparity among groups where such disparity was far less, or virtually nonexistent before. A significant example of this can be seen in the sex-ratio (no. of women per 1000 men) among the illiterate population. Upto 1931, there was near parity in the sex distribution among illiterates, the ratio being 1058 women per 1000 men. By 1981 this ratio had increased to 1322. Still more significant is the fact that this ratio is even higher in areas with a record of higher educational development - Kerala (1428), Maharashtra (1482), Tamil Nadu (1521). On the other hand, some of the States classified as educationally backward have an illiteracy sex-ratio lower than the national average - Andhra Pradesh (1278),

* Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective. Ministry of Education. Government of India. August 1985. p.4-5, para 1.11).

Rajasthan (1278), Uttar Pradesh (1241), West Bengal (1288), Meghalaya (1073), Nagaland (1142).

Other examples of this trend can be found in the erosion or loss of women's customary rights - to land and other productive resources, to freedom of choice in marriage and divorce among certain communities, especially from the scheduled tribes, or the penetration of dowry among the opposite custom of bride-price. The impact of modernisation among the men of matrilineal communities has shaken even the traditionally superior position of women in these communities.

B. Sources of Earlier Mistakes, and Present Resistance to Women's Equality

Various experiments in women's development - initiated by Government or non-governmental groups, have also helped to identify the sources of mistakes, resistance, or obstacles - as lessons that need to be noted in planning strategies for the future.

The CSWI accused planners and the bureaucracy of urban and middle class bias and wrong assumptions regarding women's roles, needs and priorities. The educational bureaucracy, in particular, was charged of ambivalence regarding the purpose and necessity of educating women - reflected in continued practice of differentiation of curricula - in violation of national policy - neglect of the widening gender gap in elementary, adult and vocational education, and reinforcement of "traditional" sex-stereotypes, reflecting middle class values and realities through the educational system. The academic community in general (along with average opinion among the educated classes) share these biases. Even voluntary organisations, including women's organisations are not altogether free of such attitudes. Government as a whole has displayed a lack of political will in not addressing the growing gender gap in all aspects of development (including education), in spite of the recommendations of various National Committees. The educational system - instead of being an instrument for promoting the new values of social and gender equality has become a powerful instrument of the sanskritisation process - i.e. of penetration of traditional elite values (which link women's subordination (patriarchy) with higher social status of the families) among non-elite groups.

Empirical studies, and dialogues since the CSWI's Report have further substantiated these charges but have noted some recent changes among certain sections of public opinion - e.g. women's organisations, some academics, a minority of bureaucrats and judges, and some sections of the media. Such changes in awareness are due to the reopening of the social debate on the women's question (which had disappeared from the public arena since the fifties), the availability of research based information from the field with the growing evidence of women's marginalisation, and the increasing visibility of the revived women's movement.

"Traditionalism" in upholding patriarchal values has always been there among the strongholds of religious and cultural conservatism, and revivalist movements of various kinds. Recent experience - in India and many neighboring countries indicate revival of such attitudes among certain political groups which seek to use religion, culture, or

ethnicity as instruments for mobilising people. In the Indian context, this attitude also characterises certain defenders of minority rights. The Report of the Women NGO (National) Consultation reviewing the achievements of Women's Decade in India (Delhi, April 1985) drew pointed attention to this problem.

"Cultural and religious traditions that resist women's and children's rights also affect the educational process manifesting themselves in sex stereotyping, and derogatory attitude to women. New values that need to be promoted for the peaceful coexistence of all kinds, such as the values of secularism, equal rights of participation of all citizens and of social and economic justice at national and international levels, usually run counter to some of these deeply entrenched traditional, cultural identities. Similarly the new knowledge that needs to be promoted among all citizens for a 'scientific temper', population, health, nutrition and other issues of survival also get obstructed by the perpetuation of traditional sexist biases and attitudes to children. The common theme that unites the need for such values and knowledge are the rights of all deprived groups, particularly women and children, who form the majority among the powerless in all societies. Education can be a powerful tool to remove these obstructive attitudes and to develop more positive, humanist outlook among all".

Support of patriarchy, however, is not a monopoly of traditionalism. Investigations across the world have also identified the methods by which modern business interests promote sex-stereotypes and sexist biases in the new culture of 'modernity' and consumerism - in which women are projected either as glamorous housewives or as sex-objects. The recent Ministerial Level Conference of Non-aligned and other Developing Nations on the Role of Women in Development (Delhi, April 1985) blamed educational systems for having played "a subtle and more powerful" role (more than the media and art and literature) in promoting this culture.

"Through myths like the supplementary nature of women's work in reality there are extraordinarily few areas or circumstances where women's 'economic' contribution could be dismissed as merely supplementary or optional or dispensable. But this myth has been very successfully practised increasingly over the ages to keep women under subjugation politically, economically and socially".

Forty years after independence, field evaluations report that the nations of women's and children's rights have not penetrated the consciousness of the majority of people in India - educated or uneducated. Compared to that - the rights of citizens, of workers, of scheduled castes and tribes are far better known as integral features of the Indian political system. Knowledge of their rights under law have not reached women - even educated women are unaware of their rights. Demands for the extension of legal literacy have mounted during the decade - from the women's movement and from committed judges and social action groups. It is important to note here that while the Women's Bureau in the Ministry of Social Welfare and the National Committee for the Implementation of Legal Aid Schemes have been trying to promote legal literacy among women through social action groups, the National Adult Education Programme has failed to transmit this essential component, in spite of repeated policy directives.

Rights to education and legal equality, guaranteed by the Constitution, failed to transform women's status, or to reduce the strength of patriarchal values - (a) because of their poor outreach, and (b) because neither of these sub-systems made any attempt to transform society's consciousness and values in these matters. Instead, both the systems were influenced greatly by the forces of patriarchy - most deeply entrenched among the elite, or upper strata of Indian society, and cultural or religious conservatism. The colonial system of education built on this structure - and strengthened it for its own ends. The initial reaction to colonial education in its twin forms - of social reform and cultural nationalism, while advocating education for women, did not question patriarchy. They did not seek to promote women's equality but to make them more willing and efficient subordinates within the family with no claim to play any role in the wider society.

The notion of equality emerged only out of the radical imperatives of the freedom struggle. Unfortunately, educational planning in the post-independence period neglected to promote the ideological foundations of the new political system. Planning for women's education, or the status of the women's issue within the educational system, till now, has not gone beyond the perspectives of the 19th century movements for social reform or cultural nationalism.

C. The New Awareness, and the Current Women's Movement

The context for education policy in 1985 is, however, marked by the rising tide of the renewed women's movement, which has earned significant responses from different sections of public opinion. Women activists and a section of people within academic institutions - men and women, are questioning the actual contribution of education of social development. Dowry was supposed to disappear with the spread of education. Instead, down escalation has followed educational development. Higher the education and its labour market value, higher is the groom's price in the marriage market. From ill-treatment of brides who carried small dowries, we have moved to down murders and down suicides. Domestic violence has reared its ugly head among the educated classes. Eve-teasing is becoming a prominent phenomenon in university campuses of metropolitan cities. It is the educated middle class which is now accused of using women - not excluding women from their own families - as commodities to assist the family's climb up the social ladder.

The revival of the women's movement is spearheaded by educated women - young and old - from affluent and hard up families, with or without a general political ideology. It is, as yet, a confused mass of various groups, but certain trends are significant. Class interests are being jumped on occasions. (The first major explosion in 1979-80 took place because two policemen raped Mathura, a Harijan girl who was an agricultural labourer). New organisations of poor working women like Self Employed Women's Association or Working Women's Forum have demonstrated that with a little support from educated women - as correspondents, accountants, trainers - basically intermediaries - such organisations can effectively articulate the development needs of the most exploited and vulnerable groups of women workers in the unorganised sector and may, occasionally, even upset established local power balances. Partial success in bringing policy change or

legislative reform is making many women's groups realise that they can exercise more political power if they act together. Some of them acknowledge that they have potential allies within the Government, the media, the judiciary, academia, political parties, trade unions, student groups etc., in persons who believe in the imperative necessity of changing the status-quo in the direction of a genuinely democratic, egalitarian and a just social order.

Unlike the women's liberation movement in the West, the mainstream of the women's movement in India is not separatist in its ideology, nor exclusive in its demands for change. Its initiative and commitment to democratic and humanist values is a powerful resource for national development.

D. The Imperatives of Women's Development

Efforts to expand opportunities for women's development during the last few years have experienced great difficulties in finding enough people sensitive to women's needs and aspirations at different levels of planning and administration, in education, financial and other development institutions, in employment, even in social work oriented organisations. Policies directing greater attention to women's requirements of development assistance, legal protection, education, information and other support services have remained unimplemented - because the agencies responsible for implementation are not free of the biased attitudes referred to earlier. Even voluntary organisations committed to women's equality find it difficult to enough qualified workers with the required managerial or supportive skills and adequate sensitivity to organise and maintain their action programmes - to expand women's economic independence, education, skills and participatory competence.

In the short-run, this gap may have to be met by special training, but the needs of the future calls for internalisation of the needed values and attitudes by people. The education system of the future must, therefore take on, as some of its imperative tasks - that of changing -

- (a) "attitudes and values regarding women's roles and rights in society to one of equal participation in all social, economic and political processes and national and international development:
- (b) to promote awareness among women and men, of the need to develop and utilise women's full potential as resources for national development in its economic, political, social and cultural aspects and of the need to question existing values regarding their social responsibilities;
- (c) to counter the reactionary forces emanating from certain sections of the media, economic social and political institutions that encourage the demotion of women from productive to mere reproductive roles;
- (d) to revitalise education, bringing it closer to burning social issues, to work towards their solution, and to produce sensitive persons able to play more

- committed and meaningful roles in development activities for women in all sectors; and
- (e) to produce, for all levels of the educational system, teachers who are aware of the need for a non-sexist education and who would actively pick up the challenge to promote values of social equality, including gender equality, secularism, socialism and democracy". (*Report of the National Workshop on Women's Studies in Indian Universities, Delhi, April 1985*).

The Non-aligned Conference of Ministers on Role of Women in Development (Delhi April 1985) echoed support for the same strategy :-

"Structurally, pedagogically and philosophically education institutions need to play a far more active role in the development of a new cultural ethos that can contribute to the realisation of the goals of comprehensive development of human material. This also requires that they internalise the concerns for the equality of women and the enhancement of their role - in their curricula, pedagogic method, organisation and research agendas The promotion of new knowledge about women and new perceptions of the role of women in development should be viewed as an instrument for educational and cultural development for younger generations".

II

BASIC ISSUES

If education is to play its due role in translating women's equality from the pages of the Constitution into actual reality, then education policy must address the basic issues of:

- (a) Access, or reduction/elimination of gender disparities within the educational process, and its reflection in employment, socio-political participation, opportunities for personal growth and competence - which alone can build defense against degradation, exploitation or oppression and lead to the "development of a self-confident individual, with a strong commitment to democratic values, concerned with the creation of a nation united in purpose out of people speaking different languages, professing different religions, and rooted in a variety of cultures' (Challenge, para 1.8); and
- (b) Changing social/cultural values which obstruct women's equality and development. The w are not mutually exclusive but closely inter-related and support each other.

A. Gender Disparities in Access to Elementary Education

Gender disparities in access to literacy and elementary education is well known and has been described in the document already placed before Parliament. The appalling consequences of a female literacy rate of less than 25% do not need reiteration in this paper. It is however important to note that the dimension of the problem continues to grow from the failure to universalise elementary education for the appropriate age-groups, as well as the failure in reaching basic education to adult women. According to 1981 figures over 45% of girls in the 6-11 age groups, over 75% of the 12-14 age groups and over 85% of the 15-17 age group were out of school, as compared to 20%, 57% and 71% of boys in the respective age groups. "The main problem of universalising elementary education, in fact, is the problem of enrolment of girls. Girls constitute 80% of the total non-enrolled children in age group of 6-14 (*Challenge - Appendix I, Para 4.6, See Table I in Appendix*).

The possibilities of this gap being reduced drastically in the immediate future are extremely poor *unless the problems of non-enrolment and dropout can be resolved through supportive strategies*. Retention rates of girls in various classes across the elementary school stage have been persistently lower than that of boys and decreases systematically from class II to class VIII. Over a period of two decades, there has been virtually no improvement in this situation. Out of 10 girls who join class I, barely 2 reach class VIII (see Table II in Appendix I). With the exception of Kerala and the Union Territories of Delhi, Chandigarh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, retention rates are below 50% in all areas, and less than 25% in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Dadra & Nagar 1. Though the sex-ratio in enrolment at the elementary stage has improved from 36 in 1950-51 to 67 in 1984-85 "glaring inequalities are the characteristics of Hindi speaking States". In Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa enrolment ratio among girls in the 11-14 age-groups is less than 30%.

Apart from the CSWI, several other studies* on the causes of non-enrolment and dropout have identified poverty and the involvement of girls in activities necessary for the survival of their families as the primary reason such activities include domestic work - a large component of which is looking after younger siblings (for all girls) and in rural areas, also fetching water, fuel and fodder for the family - and gainful labour. 9% of the rural female labour force consist of girls below 14. The highest incidence of dropout is among scheduled castes and tribes in rural areas and among Muslims in urban areas.

In spite of the persistent emphasis on universalising elementary education during each five year plan, annual growth rates in enrolment in the two stages of elementary education has shown a tendency to slow down since the first decade after independence. The growth rate in girls enrolment, because of its initial backwardness, was substantially

* Study of Special Programmes for Girls' Education. Planning Commission. 1978, J&K Survey of Non-enrolment and Dropout (1977-78) UP Study (1982).

higher in the fifties, then began to decline, reaching the lowest level in the seventies (See Table 111 in Appendix 1).

Significant trends in gender disparities in adult illiteracy have been pointed out earlier. Such secular trends over time have to be kept in view to determine the specific nature and thrusts for policy intervention.

B. Secondary and Vocational Education

Girls constitute only 34.65% of the total enrolment in high schools, and 32.1% of enrolment in higher secondary schools. As indicated in Table I, the coverage of the population is much lower at the state for both sexes. Consequently the gender disparity is less.

This is however not the case of vocational education - where the disparity is high both in terms of numbers and content. In spite of national policies to the contrary, educational and training institutions continue to adopt restrictive policies in providing vocational courses or work experience for girls. Tailoring, dress-making and secretarial practices dominate such courses, irrespective of their employment potential. Even the co-educational Central Schools in Delhi encourage an automatic segregation of girls into meal planning and boys into photography etc. for SUFW.

While the low enrolment of girls in technology oriented courses is often quoted as an evidence of difference in choice and aspiration such a statement really hides the subtle discrimination practised by the institutions/authorities. A large number of institutions catering only to girls deliberately do not offer science or mathematics courses at the secondary level, thus culling off all options. (This is happening in many Government controlled schools in Delhi, but unfortunately no comprehensive data is available on this problem).

Even the compulsory mathematics and general science recommended for all students upto class X by national policy, is evaded in the case of girls by many state school boards - which continue to encourage girls' schools to teach domestic science as the substitute.

Apart from sexist bias, a major reason for the absence of science based courses in girls' secondary and vocational schools is the lack of investment in physical facilities. It is significant that, because of preferential treatment given to girls' colleges to develop facilities for science education by the UGC during the sixties and seventies, the gender disparity in this sector was reduced substantially. In fact, women's enrolment in science courses at the University level in India is one of the highest in the world - being nearly 40% of total science enrolment.

C. Higher Education

The trend in higher education is similar to secondary education. Higher education eaters to a small minority. Only 4.8% of the relevant age-group is enrolled at this stage. Women constituted 28% of the total enrolment of 31.3 lakhs in 82-83. Women's share in

higher education enrolment has, however, registered a steep increase - from a little over 10% in 1950-51. 77% of this enrolment, however, is concentrated in Arts (56.54%) and Science (29.59%) courses, with Commerce (11.49%) and Education (4.57%) accounting for another 16%. Consequently, the sex-ratio (number of women per 1000 men) in the professional courses is exceedingly poor - Medicine - 354, Law - 75, Engineering/Technology - 47, Agriculture - 36, Veterinary Science - 45. In fact, the last decade encouraged women's debut in some of these courses.

The cases of medicine and law however call for some investigation. Women entered these courses much earlier. In medicine particularly there was a system of reservation of seats for women, as national health development required more women doctors. It is not clear why enrolment of women in medicine should have declined during the seventies. One hypothesis relates this to the expansion of private medical colleges with high capitation fees and the escalation of dowry. A combination of these factors, it is argued, results in parental reluctance to invest so heavily in the education of daughters. The minimal enrolment in law is equally strange, and perhaps relates to the adverse reputation of the legal profession vis-a-vis women, till recently. There is no dissent in acknowledging these areas as critical for women's development, and it may be necessary to think of special measures to increase women's enrolment in needed areas like these and Agriculture, Technology.

D. Research on Women/Women's Studies Forestry and Veterinary Sciences

A significant development during the decade has been increasing involvement of Women in research, and of university students/teachers in general in research/debate on women's issues. The CSWI's enquiry stimulated the Indian Council of Social Science Research to sponsor a research programme on women's encourage policy analysis in different sectors of development. This began a period of women and development research, undertaken by both men and women, which has contributed substantially to the stock of knowledge, particularly as much of it deliberately focussed on the situation of non-elite women, hitherto neglected in social research.

Apart from increasing awareness of women's marginalisation (referred to earlier), this type of research has raised some basic questions regarding the organisation, content and results of higher education. Why had the expanding opportunities for education made so little impact on changing sex-stereotypes, which reflected only conservative middle class views, and no realities of today or the majority? Why had the evidence of marginalisation of women, visible from Census data attracted no concern from social scientists or the government? Why had women's issues remained visible in research and teaching for so long? Such invisibility in the curricula promoted distorted and false views about society and women's roles, and strengthened the forces of inequality.

The first National Conference on Women's Studies (Bombay 1981) observed that in order to develop objective consciousness about women's inequality and problems to influence attitudes and to strengthen the data base for better analysis and more effective policies

“higher educational institutions had to assume some responsibility and accept women’s studies as a serious area for academic concern. The larger number of students - both men and women - who pass through the universities need to receive sustained, continuous exposure to women’s issues and women’s roles in society through teaching and research. Neither sporadic research nor occasional media coverage could be a substitute to this. In order to obtain a better insight and understanding of the position of women in its historical and contemporary context, it is necessary that women’s studies becomes a part of the curriculum”.

Apart from its potential force for questioning some entrenched attitudes and values, women’s studies has also questioned the academic validity of some theories of social behaviour and change, claiming that they reflect the organisational mores of highly industrialised monolithic societies of the West, and are inapplicable to the predominantly agrarian, multicultural society of India. (*Sec Appendix II for objectives of Women’s Studies as defined for Asia - UNESCO 1982*).

Recognising the validity and significance of these challenges for academic as well as social development, the UGC addressed Universities in 1982 to consider appropriate ways of incorporating women’s issues in their teaching, research and extension activities. The National Workshop sponsored by the UGC in Delhi (1985) carried the dialogue further. Participants in the workshop - some Vice-Chancellors and senior academics - men and women - observed that introduction of women’s issues as an integral part of the curricula of different disciplines would fulfill both ‘academic and social’ objectives. The social objectives - of value change - have been mentioned earlier. The academic objectives are:

- i. to revitalise university education;
- ii. to update curricula by incorporating the results of new scholarship, as they challenge some established theories, analytical concepts and methodologies of various disciplines;
- iii. to promote interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching, curriculum designing, research and extension activities since women’s studies are interdisciplinary by nature;
- iv. to generate new and organic knowledge through intensive field work - which would help generate data for better evaluation, and correction of development policies/programmes and in extending academic analysis into neglected sectors;
- v. to promote closer involvement of universities in action to assist women at grassroots through extension activities; and
- vi. to contribute to the global debate on the women question through rediscovery of the debate in Indian literature.

III

PRIORITIES, STRATEGIES AND INSTRUMENTS

“While the content and methodology of education can be determined on a priority basis for the development of individual personality, in so far as the specific tasks in respect of technological, economic and societal goals are concerned, education must respond to the imperatives flowing from the nature and direction of national development” (Challenge, Para 1.18).

Women, and their right to equality and justice are not abstracts detached from the perspectives of national development. They form an integral part of that development in its social, economic, political and cultural dimensions. Specifically, too, women’s development has clear links and mutually supportive relationship with certain national developmental issues.

A. Population

The population question, tied up with people’s reproductive behaviour - represents a major part of the constraint on development of the nation, and of women. Women were the first to advocate, and seek safe contraceptive services to control their fertility. Unrestricted pregnancies continue to impose obstructions to women’s health, education, training, rewarding employment and effective political participation. At the same time, inadequate access to and lack of control over contraception restrict women’s capacity to avail of contraception.

Women’s roles and status represent a vital link between trends in development and population. There appears to be a fine balance between women’s productive and reproductive roles. Decline in one trends to increase the weight of the other. This connection is supported by demographic trends in India and other countries.

Population research during the last two decades has identified links between the spread of women’s education/literacy and slowing down of population growth. Kerala’s population miracle is generally attributed to its high level of female literacy/education.

Similar attempts to link fertility behaviour with women’s employment has, however, produced conflicting results, leading to a conclusion that it is not employment, per se, but the type of employment that influences fertility. Employment in household industry may encourage fertility - (a) because children assist the mother to manage her workload, and (b) because household industry isolates the woman from the wider society or her peer groups - thus restricting the growth of her consciousness, courage and choice in decision making.

Field workers at the grass roots have identified another critical connection between growth of a woman’s consciousness and assertive power (which often results from her participation in organisational activities, through a sense of collective solidarity) and her ability to obtain contraceptive services.

All these links provide the same message - success in our population policy is dependent on a genuine transformation of women's roles and status. Such a transformation needs to be based on three firm foundations : (a) economic independence through involvement in productive work; (b) education; and (c) participation in decision making within the outside the family - which contribute to an overall development of a woman's personality, consciousness and pride in her capacity and dignity.

B. Poverty

Poverty eradication is another critical area of national concern. Women constitute the overwhelming majority of the rural poor and a substantial section of the urban poor. They have less access to resources, work longer and receive less in wages and other rewards. It is now well known that opportunities for women to earn an independent livelihood has not expanded adequately, and in some sectors has actually declined. Since households below the poverty line depend on earnings from men, women and children, shrinking economic opportunities for women (which is compounded by their lack of literacy, education and the needed new skills, or lack of access to new technology) contributes to increasing the poverty of the households, thereby increasing the size of the population below the poverty line. A critical evidence of women's poverty may be seen from the fact that while female headed households constitute approximately 10% of all households in the country, among the poor they constitute about 35%.

Research has also proved that improvement of women's earning power among the poor directly benefits the children's nutrition, health and access to education. On the other hand increase in men's employment or wages in such families often increases leakages through alcoholism, gambling and indebtedness. Direct impact on poverty is thus much more with economic improvement of the women.

Improved access of young women to wage employment tends to delay their marriage and thus supports two other national objectives - raising the age of marriage and reducing early pregnancies. It does not, however, automatically improve their status within the family and community. Some of the dowry victims in the metropolitan cities were working women. Another study on the Kandla EPZ reports that attempts by the young women workers in the new factories to improve their working conditions were suppressed by an unholy alliance of the employers, the local Panchayats (who acted as recruiting agents) and the families of the young women (because the latter's survival depended on the girls' earnings).

Another issue which needs to be noted is the sociological impact of poverty eradication through only men's earnings in rural areas. The continued power of the sanskritisation process tends to compel such upwardly mobile families to withdraw their women from wage work to establish their claims to a higher social status. First generation adult women who are affected by this process do not obtain access to any other channel for self-development but lose their earlier contacts with the wider society. They are even more oppressed, and forced to frequent pregnancies and ill-health. Such families are also willing victims of the dowry trap, as they begin to regard their daughters as

liabilities. Down penetration into such households can and often do push them back below the poverty line. Also, their total dependence on one person's earnings leaves them without any security in case of accidents or death.

Critiques of the household approach to poverty eradication programmes have been pointing out that part of their failure is due to ignoring the inequalities - in distribution of nutrition, education, health care and power in decision-making - within the households. Male dominance and male preference is a social fact. If escape from poverty is to be achieved only through men's earnings - then the gender disparities will continue to increase, and the explosive pressure on population growth will not show the desired change.

Poverty eradication approaches, in today's context - must draw strengths from and support other national imperatives - reduction of inequality, illiteracy and population pressure, and overall development of all human and social resources. They must address the structures of women's subordination along with economic growth, if we are to avoid the mistakes of the past and move towards a new type of social development.

C. Ecological and Environmental Degradation

All the critical issues of ecological and environmental degradation, which constitute pressing challenges for national development at this juncture - soil erosion, water scarcity, deforestation and environmental pollution - affect people in general, but women are greater victims of these processes as they are the primary consumers and purveyors of water, fuel, fodder, health care and nutrition of the family. It has also been found that their approach to the solution of these issues is often different from men's. When women plant trees under afforestation programmes, if they are given the option to choose the species, they prefer trees which would meet their daily household requirements of energy, fodder, food or a livelihood for themselves and the family. The while debate on the commercial value versus the long term damage done by eucalyptus to soil and the environment has gained great momentum from the sharp rejection of these species by rural women.

When the Forest Department plants trees, their survival record is less than 50%. When women plant trees of their own choice, they nurture them as they do their own children and maintain a much higher survival rate.

Here too, the structures of subordination prevent women from exerting any effective influence on community behaviour. In the Himalayan region of U P. after nearly a decade of the Chipko Movement, women are unable to influence the Gram Panchayats or the Vana Panchayats they say having one nominated woman on the panchayat does not ensure consideration for the women's point of view, or their needs, by these bodies, or the State Government. It is only the collective voice of women that can indicate to the community how women suffer from deforestation and water scarcity. Even the essential cover for their daily toilet and washing is considered low priority by the local bodies.

The Prime Minister has said that increasing women's participation in the political process is essential for national development. An educational process and institutional devices that can reduce the power of the existing structures of women's subordination and invisibility will not only increase their participation, but will provide positive support for policies to control ecological degradation and environmental pollution.

D. Distributive Justice to Reduce Qualities in Resources and Power

Notwithstanding democratic laws and policies for distributive justice acute imbalance in power and resources, particularly in rural areas - continues to affect our development objectives, the powerlessness of the poor obstruct them from enjoying even their legal rights and their lack of purchasing power is one of the major causes for stagnation in industrial development. Amongst the powerless, women and girls constitute a majority. In addition to their powerlessness vis-a-vis the more powerful sections of society, their subordination within the family and kinship structures constitute an additional burden. Particularly in rural society women's lives and behaviour are controlled by a hierarchy of social formations, class, caste, family/kinship, religious laws/rituals and prevalent social values, these manifest themselves through various restrictions on women's behaviour, work, access to education, health-care and political participation. Neither legal nor political rights to equality have affected the strength of these structures of subordination. 40 years after independence, the sanskritisation process still remains more powerful in our rural society and in certain sections of urban society than the ethos of equality that our political and legal systems uphold.

Attempts by the rural poor to assert their rights invariably provoke attacks from the power hierarchy in which molestation and victimisation of women is an important tool. During recent years figures of atrocities against harijans have shown a steep rise in violence against women. Rape, gang rape and murder of women have all increased. A similar trend has been noted in slum studies of power tussles using terrorism and goondaism as their instruments.

When slum women in Bombay asked for a school, as their children were getting involved in criminal activities, the goonda gangs prevented the school from functioning. Appeals by the women's organisation running the school to the municipal and other authorities did not result in any protection for the school. Attempts to run adult education centres for women in rural areas have also experienced similar opposition and hostility from local powerful elements in many places. Usually the local police, instead of action on the report of physical assaults on the instructors and the women, forced the closure of the school. It was only after the intervention of senior officers from Delhi and the Prime Minister himself that the police suggested reopening of the school.

Women activists have been protesting repeatedly against the indifference, even hostility of the police force in cases of violation of women's rights.[♥] It appears that their training, particularly that of the constabulary, does not include any exposure to the laws upholding women rights.⁷ Responsibility for the failure, to communicate the substance

[♥] This was clearly demonstrated in Asha Kapoor's case in Delhi. The Police who assisted Asha's brothers to manhandle Saheli volunteers and ransack their records, claimed that Saheli had violated the law in helping Asha. According to the police, an unmarried girl had to accept the control of her family. Mercifully the Supreme Court thought otherwise.

and implications of these laws to the general public and the law enforcement agencies must be shared by government and the educational system.

E. National Integration, Secularism - Links with Women's Rights

The acceptance of women's equality, like the guarantees against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in the Constitution demonstrated a political imperative for the building of the Indian nation. Unfortunately, the promise of legal equality could not be fulfilled for women of the minority communities, nor have we achieved the Uniform Civil Code. A common pattern in most of the regional, communal or ethnic movements (which have posed threats to national integration) has been an attempt to dilute, if not to depress or eliminate women's potential equality, conservative leadership and religious fundamentalism of various communities have persistently opposed attempts by women to obtain equality under the law and justice for themselves.

Recent attempts of the Supreme Court to provide some justice to minority women has provoked a sharp debate, with some impressive defence of women's rights coming from certain sections of these communities - both men and women. This is a very healthy and positive development. The voice of minority women has seldom been heard before in this country, because of their powerlessness. The fact that so many of them have been willing to brave the displeasure and reaction of their conservative leaderships needs to be taken note of positively, as an indication of a potentially powerful force for national integration and secular values in social relations.

If national policies for development in the future ignore these close links between some of the critical issues of national development and women's rights to equality and justice, it is not only women who will be affected adversely but also the objectives of the policies themselves. The recent expert group meeting convened by Unesco (Lisbon 17-20 September 1985) to reflect on women's problems in research and higher education recommended that "national governments should as a preliminary but essential step - articulate specific directions to examine and transform women's situation in national policies for education, scientific research and technological development, so that these sectors recognise this as an important area of their responsibility". Strategies which do not take note of previous failures will fail again if we do not address the structures of subordination that deny women access to resources, rights and services to which they are entitled. Merely increasing investment of resources will not alter the uneven contours of existing power structures. Economic development per se will not ensure women's economic independence. More schools and literacy centres or more contraceptive services by themselves will not improve women's access to them, and attempts to increase women's participation in the decision making bodies of the political process will continue to fail without supportive strategies. What is needed is an integrated strategy in which education must have a high priorities.

The objectives of universalising elementary education, eradicating illiteracy and reducing gender disparities across the educational process must, of course, remain the first priority. However, the entire argument of this paper has been to demonstrate the

need for supportive strategies to bring this goal within our grasp. Such supportive strategies have already been identified in various discussions.

E. Supportive Strategies

I. **Child Care Services** - to enable girls to come to school and adult women to receive literacy and other skill training. While the significance of this strategy has been accepted at national level for some time, there is continued resistance from educational authorities to accept this as their responsibility. The argument is that schools cannot take on such added responsibilities. We would like to put forward two imperative reasons for entrusting this responsibility to educational institutions.

(a) This would bring educational institutions face to face with one of the burning social and human problems and make them recognise their responsibility for the survival and growth of the future generations. If a forward looking strategy for families of the future is for parents of both sexes to accept their responsibilities for child-rearing, where else can this value be inculcated better than in the school? We have been trying to provide education regarding nutrition and health care, physical and mental growth, the population question and life sciences, particularly the biology of reproduction and growth through the school system. Most such lessons remain abstractions in the class room with very few institutions being able to provide any live demonstration or practical application. Child care centres would meet many of these needs. In fact many of the home science colleges have already taken this on to improve the quality of their training in child development, nutrition etc. The crisis in values that we seek to combat through our new education policy - where should we find a better starting point than emphasising the value of protecting the survival and health growth of our children?

(b) The second is a more pragmatic argument. Locating child care centres in schools would promote substantial saving of resources in establishment of the basic structures and enable us to utilise our scarce resources on the quality of services and the manpower needed for that purpose. This does not mean that no additional physical facilities will be needed, but the required investment will be substantially less than the multiplication of buildings with other facilities. There has been already substantial discussion on utilising the Anganwadis created under the ICDS as potential locations for non-formal education for women and girls. The schools network is far more extensive than the Anganwadi network and commands resources of a somewhat higher order. Coordinating these structures will help to maximise utilisation of scarce resources. If child care centres are to become a reality in the immediate future, then attaching them to schools offers the only possibility. Neither voluntary organisations which do not exist everywhere, nor ICDS which fulfills a limited objective for a limited period in limited areas can be a substitute.

2. Provisions of mid day meals, school uniforms and books have already been introduced in some states as special programmes. It is reported that the mid thy meals

programme in Tamil Nadu which has also expanded the Balwadi network near their schools has had a very positive effect on the enrolment of girls. However, the studies commissioned by the Planning Commission and various state governments provide an overwhelming response in support of financial incentives. We would like to recommend two possibilities for such financial incentives :-

- (a) enrolment and retention scholarships; and
- (b) utilisation of services of girl students as Pupil teachers, (which will help substantially to expand the size of the teaching staff, certainly in single teacher school) and assistants in the child care centres. While initially this may be limited to girls, it may eventually be possible to utilise this approach for all students who require financial support which will go a long way in breaking traditional forms of the sexual division of labour.

3. The Government of India has recently initiated a programme of *special awards to States for better performance in improving the enrolment of girls*. We would support this strategy, particularly as it provides some additional resources to the States to improve their educational schemes. We would, however, *suggest that the performance be judged not merely on the basis of enrolment but also retention and innovative approaches to improving girls access to schools and literacy centres.*

4. *The special support programme for training and recruitment of women teachers*, also initiated recently is a step in the right direction and needs to be continued. In addition, we would recommend *revival of the institution of School Mothers*, introduced in some States in the 50s, since this practice had produced definite improvement in parental attitude in sending girls to school.

5. *Improving working conditions of women teachers*. This has been identified as essential to improve the quality of women teachers, particularly in rural areas. Basically this relates to housing and security. For security reasons in particular, the provision of working women's hostels in rural areas has been advocated by the Seventh Plan Working Group on Women's Development, with more flexible requirements than in the case of the urban working women's hostels. Such a measure could help greatly the availability of women teachers for rural schools.

The argument that the best way to resolve this problem is by making use of the services of local educated women needs to be considered with some caution. While we do not advocate total rejection of this approach, it has to be kept in mind that at the present juncture, educated women in rural areas, by and large, come from the upper strata of rural society, who are imbued with the biases, the prejudices and the class interest of that section. There have been reports of such women being averse to the entry of scheduled caste students into their school. *We feel it is important to introduce a test of their social attitudes in the recruitment of all teachers.* Field workers involved in development of poor rural women often report that the latter find it easier to place their trust on outsiders who are committed to women's equality than the locally educated persons - male or female - who often have alliances with the rural power elite.

F. Earmarked Special Assistance to State Governments and Monitoring Mechanism

The CSWI had pointed out that acceleration of the progress of women's education took place in the first half of the 60s as a result of the policy of earmarked special assistance to State Governments and the appointment of special officers in the States to promote girls education, on the basis of the recommendation of the National Committee on Women's Education (1958-59). The declaration of this trend from the second half of the 60s coincided with the abandonment of the policy of special assistance and gradual disappearance of the special officers in the States.

The administrative innovation introduced during the last decade, of establishing units with special responsibilities to initiate and monitor special programmes for women's development in the Ministries of Social Welfare, Rural Development, and Labour and Employment has already justified itself. Surprisingly, no such unit was established within the Educational Ministry or in the State education departments - Amongst specialised agencies for educational development the NCERT began such a Cell during the Decade and would it up before it had been able to make an impact. The University Grants Commission never established such a Unit and the women's studies lobby attribute the UGC's failure to implement its programme of women's studies to the absence of such a Unit. The Indian Council of Social Science Research established such a cell which developed and implemented a programme of research on women with considerable success for 5 years. The abandonment of the Unit has coincided with the declaration of ICSSR's concern in this field.

An essential strategy therefore would be to establish such units at different levels of the educational administration, with clear functions, powers and resources. Monitoring the improvement of girls' access to education through the implementation of special support strategies, and introducing further remedial measures would be part of their functions. The order part would have to be devoted to monitoring changes in curricula to remove sexist biases and to promote new values. The third function would be to keep in touch with the results of research and development to improve the quality of data and to maintain liaison with non official groups who are anxious to play a role in women's education.

We would like to enter a note of caution here about the policy of encouraging the private sector in educational expansion. This channel has often been used to promote divisive and reactionary ideologies through educational institutions as well as the dualism between more privileged and less privileged groups. It would be difficult to promote the new kind of values and attitudes that we have been pleading for if such tendencies are not carefully watched. For example, mans of the exclusive institutions for girls run by different communities have earned a reputation for reinforcing traditional sex stereotypes or new model of glamorous house wives.

The resurgence of the women 's movement and the role being played in it by educated women offers some opportunity for a close alliance between educational institutions, the monitoring units within government and non-official groups outside for more effective and vigilant monitoring as

well as more innovative inputs in transforming the educational process into a more dynamic and meaningful activity.

G. Role of Women's Institutions

We have a large network of educational institutions which cater exclusively to girls. In the early years of women's education in this country, these institutions played a pioneering role in working for women's advancement and in convincing the community of the need for educating girls. This role ceased to exist after independence. The first National Conference on Women's Studies discussed the role of these institutions and found that they had not adequately tried to promote the value of women's equality or independence but had often been responsible for reinforcing traditional values. However, the experience of the adult education and the NSS programmes, as well as contact with the women's movement has moved some of these institutions to a desire to play a more active role in women's development. The experiment initiated by the Women's Bureau of the Ministry of Social Welfare towards the end of the Sixth Five Year Plan of utilising some women's colleges as women's development centres shows some positive results. The National Workshop on Women's Studies in the Universities also identified this trend and recommended to the UGC *a special programme of support to selected women's colleges to play a more dynamic role in women's development through teaching, research and extension type of activities.* A similar policy was recommended for selected Universities also.

It may be noted here that this strategy is based on the actual experience of some educational institutions, which tried to translate into action some of the recommendations of the Indian Education Commission regarding colleges and universities playing a more active role in the development of the community around them. A similar experience is reported by a few specialised research institutes. We feel that this model offers scope for improving the quality of education, making it more relevant and purposive, and ensuring better utilisation of existing resources.

H. Incentives to increase Women's Enrolment in Critical Disciplines/courses/training

The critical importance of increasing women's enrolment in vocational and professional fields like medicine, law, agriculture, technology, forestry, veterinary sciences etc. call for some promotional incentives in the way of special scholarships. Another demand that has been voiced by the women's movement is for disseminating knowledge about legal rights or legal literacy through the educational system.

As for vocational, especially technical training courses, the Working Group on employment of Women (1978) had recommended two steps which require serious consideration.

- (a) An authoritative list of occupations which should be regarded as hazardous for women health and reproductive functions - instead of leaving the authority to

employers and training institutions. This would help to control the operation of individual biases which are not backed by scientific research.

- (b) Introducing a quota for women in fringe training courses - in service or pre-service - omitting the occupations listed as hazardous, and providing incentives, through scholarships, hostels and awards for better institutional performance in training women in 'non traditional' courses.

I. Development of Women's Studies as an Instrument for Improving the Quality of Education and Transformation of Values.

Recommendations of UNESCO

Earlier sections have presented the state of the present debate on the need to integrate women's studies within the educational process. The Lisbon Report of Unesco, referred to earlier, states that the **process of rethinking or reevaluation of women's situation and roles must begin from the earliest stages of education, but to achieve that, equal efforts have to be mounted to reorient the higher stages.** "This calls for (a) higher level of investment in research on women's issues; (b) inclusion of women's issues as an integral part of the teaching curriculum in various disciplines; and (c) increasing women's participation as central to these activities. The Group believes that this will also facilitate needed reforms in education systems. While priority in the effort to understand and change the situation of women will have to be given to the Social and Human Sciences, the Group is of the view that including women's concerns and interests in the activities of other sciences, specifically the exact sciences and technological fields is of prime importance. The fundamental changes that are taking place all over the world resulting from developments in sciences and technology have yet to be studied for their social and ethical implications.

Examining these issues from a women's perspective is critically needed and planning for this should be immediately undertaken if women are to be prepared for the rapid transformations taking place in their professional and private lives, and be able to effectively influence decision making in this regard". (*See Appendix II*).

The recent Technology policy statement and the recommendations of the Working Group on Personal Policies for bringing greater involvement of Women in Science and Technology (1981) call for greater responsiveness and understanding from practitioners in science and technology to women needs and problems. Unless this sensitivity is developed during their training period it is doubtful if these policy statements will produce any better results than our previous policies in this field.

Promotion of a concern for women, the need for their equality, and understanding their experiences in contemporary and historical perspective will not only help to break the present resistance, but would help to develop a new perspective on our cultural heritage. All of us recognise the need to promote amongst the younger generation a pride in our heritage but we must be clear that we are not advocating the perpetuation

of all traditional values. There are elements in our traditions which deny human rights and justify exploitation. What is often projected as our traditional culture is the culture of the upper levels of our social hierarchy, which maintained its monopoly of power through control over economic resources, political power, and knowledge. The new India that we are trying to build has challenged each of these monopolies. An important strategy for achieving our goal is to identify the links between the imperatives of national development and the equality, and creativity of hitherto subordinated and oppressed groups.

A powerful instrument to achieve greater support for women's equality would be to project before the younger generation the role played by women in our society down the ages - its creativity, its resilience, its continuity. For example, do we invoke an attitude of support for women's right to equality and justice (from the youth) only by emphasising their vulnerability, their weakness, the need to 'uplift' them, or bringing evidence that when women enjoyed equality in earlier periods of our history, they were creative enough to discover agriculture, spinning and weaving and pottery? Would not the latter approach help raise the question in the students' mind - why then are they so down-trodden and backward today? Belief in the immutability of tradition needs to be broken by facts, not by moral exhortations only.

The new Education Policy should articulate clearly that education must play an active role in promoting the new values of equality in the division of roles, rights and responsibilities between men and women in every sphere. It must specify the special strategies and instruments to reduce gender disparities in access to all types of education and provide directions for institutionalising women's problems and concerns as a component within the educational system. Such a clear articulation and direction will go a long way to reassure the growing women's movement of government's political will.

Some Basic Statistics

Table - 1 (a)

Percentage of Children out of School in the Age Groups 6-11, 12-14, & 15-17 by Sex

Year	Primary Education		Middle Education		Secondary Education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1971	23.31	54.04	63.03	82.31	77.08	90.44
1981	20.16	45.68	57.12	75.68	71.38	85.94

Source: Census of India 1971 & 1981 and Ministry of Education.

When we examine the representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes among these non-enrolled children the picture becomes even shorter.

Table 1 (b)

Percentage of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Children Out of School in the Age Group 6-11 and 12-14 years by Sex (1979-80)

	Primary Education		Middle Education		Primary Education		Middle Education	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
INDIA	2.10	47.80	60.60	85.2	7.10	54.70	73.70	90.00
Andhra Pradesh	*	5.5	75.30	87.9	7.50	46.80	88.30	96.90
Assam	*	20.30	29.40	55.40	22.50	44.80	48.80	72.30
Bihar	19.60	79.30	81.40	97.30	*	52.30	75.60	91.70
Gujarat	*	5.80	30.40	70.30	0	30.70	67.40	86.70
Haryana	21.60	73.30	61.50	94.80	0	0	0	0
Himachal Pradesh	*	32.80	38.90	82.60	*	52.00	39.5	83.90
Jammu&Kashmir	4.10	57.50	52.90	84.70	0	0	0	0
Karnataka	50.80	58.00	64.20	81.10	*	*	16.30	54.00
Kerala	*	*	*	2.40	*	11.20	40.10	53.10
Madhya Pradesh	17.00	69.80	62.20	92.50	39.70	80.10	83.40	96.60
Manipur	*	*	36.20	55.70	*	*	22.50	66.00
Maharashtra	*	*	20.20	68.48	*	39.20	76.80	91.40
Meghalaya	0	0	0	0	*	*	45.80	61.50
Nagaland	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	27.30
Orissa	*	44.80	76.50	93.40	12.20	59.00	81.20	95.70
Punjab	*	*	41.10	70.10	0	0	0	0
Rajasthan	20.90	86.20	68.00	98.00	26.60	89.70	73.90	98.90
Sikkim	*	*	64.70	79.00	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	*	*	43.40	65.10	54.60	68.30	84.10	91.90
Tripura	*	23.10	83.70	81.50	21.20	65.40	75.60	91.90
Uttar Pradesh	17.20	74.70	60.90	94.60	9.10	62.50	59.10	91.10
West Bengal	18.80	59.80	77.90	90.90	34.20	70.30	79.30	93.30

Source: Selected Education Statistics - 1979-80 Planning, Monitoring and Statistics Division, Ministry of Education & Centre, Department of Education, Govt. of India, 1981.

0 Data not available

* Enrolment exceed 100% in this age group indicating that children belonging to higher age group are enrolled at this level.

DEFINITIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

Extracts from the Report of a Meeting of Experts on Women 's Studies and Social Sciences in Asia Unesco, Office of Regional Adviser for Social Sciences in Asia and Pacific. Bangkok, 1983.

The meeting felt that women's studies should not be narrowly defined as "studies about women" or 'information about women" but should be viewed as a critical instrument for social science development in the context of Asian social reality. They should help in better understanding of inequality and imbalances in the social system.

The group recommended the following objectives for women s studies programme:

1. To promote better and balanced understanding of our societies and how they are responding to the processes of change.
2. To contribute to the pursuit of human rights.
3. To assist both men and women in understanding, recognizing, and giving due importance to the roles actually played by women and men.
4. To investigate the causes of disparity analyzing structural factors in addition to attitudinal and cultural factors.
5. To empower women in their struggle for equality and for an effective presence in all areas of society and development.
6. To render "invisible women "visible", and in particular the women of the most underprivileged strata.

In achieving these aims and objectives research alone will not be sufficient, the group felt. Teaching was recognized as a basic instrument. Two models exist for the inclusion of women's studies in teaching:

- (i) the integration model by which separate disciplinary or interdisciplinary courses are established, with the possibility of pursuing a specialisation in this field for a degree programme in certain rare cases.
- (ii) the incorporation model which accepts the existing pattern of courses and attempts to introduce components related to women within the already existing syllabi.

Depending on the specific situation, any of the t models or a combination of them may be attempted but it seems more likely, at this stage, to obtain success through the incorporation model.

The meeting was of the view that women's issues should be seen in the overall context and not as a separate issue. The overemphasis on separatism may only result in isolation and defeat the very purpose of obtaining a proper balance in the society and securing legitimacy for this area of studies. Women's studies should not be viewed as a preserve for women only.

The above definition was developed further by a group of Indian scholars at a later date and has been accepted by Unesco. It is reproduced below:

Women's Studies is the pursuit of a more comprehensive critical and balanced understanding of social reality for academic development. The objectives of women's studies are

- i. Women's contribution to the social process;
- ii. To promote better understanding of processes of social, technological and environmental change;
- iii. To contribute to the pursuit of human rights;
- iv. To investigate the causes of gender disparity - analysing structural, cultural and attitudinal factors;
- v. To empower women in their struggle against inequality, and for effective participation in all areas of society and development;
- vi. To render 'invisible' women 'visible' in particular women of the underprivileged strata; and
- vii. To help develop alternative concepts, approaches, and strategies for development.

TABLE II**Retention Rates of Elementary Stage**

Survival rates in subsequent classes in subsequent years

Basic Cohort		Survival rates in subsequent classes in subsequent years							
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
1960-61	Total	100	61	50	49	37	30	27	24
	Girls	100	59	47	39	33	25	22	18
1965-66	Total	100	59	48	40	33	28	24	21
	Girls	100	57	45	36	28	22	18	16
1970-71	Total	100	62	52	43	37	31	26	23
	Girls	100	61	50	41	34	27	22	18

Source: A Handbook of Educational & Allied Statistics; Ministry of Education, 1983.

TABLE III**ANNUAL GROWTH RATES OF ENROLMENT AT
PRIMARY & MIDDLE LEVELS OF EDUCATION
IN INDIA DURING 1950-51 TO 1980-81**

Year	I-V Classes			VI-VIII Classes			I-VIII Classes		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1950-51 to 1960-61	5.5	7.6	6.2	7.0	11.8	8.0	5.8	8.2	6.5
1960-61 to 1970-71	4.2	6.5	5.0	6.4	9.1	7.1	4.7	6.8	5.4
1970-71 to 1980-81	2.3	2.8	2.5	3.5	5.4	4.1	2.5	3.2	2.8
1950-51 to 1980-81	3.8	5.6	4.4	5.6	8.7	6.4	4.2	6.0	4.8

Source: A Handbook of Educational & Allied Statistics: Ministry of Education (1983).

Extracts from the Reports of the Meeting of Experts on
**“Reflection on Women’s Problems in
Research and Higher Education”**
Convened by Unesco, at Lisbon

17-20 September 1985.

The process of rethinking or reevaluation of women’s situation and roles has to begin from the earliest stages of education. In order to achieve that, however, equal efforts have to be mounted to reorient higher stages. This calls for (a) higher level of investment in research on women’s issues; (b) inclusion of women’s issues as an integral part of the teaching curriculum in various disciplines; and (c) increasing women’s participation as central to these activities. The group believes that this will also facilitate needed reforms in education systems.

Women’s studies, and Research from women’s perspectives in recent years has already challenged many of the established theories and paradigms. However, such challenges remain inadequately reflected in the teaching curricula and research planning of institutions of higher education, and all other bodies responsible for research policy and investment. Where they have entered, they are tolerated as adjuncts, or marginal courses. It is important that they influence, and interact on equal terms, with the main disciplinary courses, and establish parity in the direction and quantum of research activity.