

(b) simplification of passport and miscellaneous services forms; (c) issue of passports without any further wait for clearance in cases where police verification reports are not received within the prescribed time limit of four weeks; (d) thorough scrutiny of application at the acceptance stage itself to check their completeness and correctness in all respects; (e) augmentation of staff strength to reduce and clear pendencies; (f) provision to issue passports in cases of emergency/urgency on out of turn basis on the strength of Verification Certificate issued by an authorised official; and (g) expansion of the list of officials authorised to sign verification certificates.

In Addition, certain further efforts to streamline the issue of passports are being taken such as setting up Passport Advisory Committees, opening new offices and collection centres and increasing the size and validity period of passports.

National Commission of Women

2907. DR. C. SILVERA : Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to adopt a policy for empowerment of women in near future;

(b) if so, the details thereof with objectives;

(c) whether the National Commission of Women had submitted some demands for reservation of seats in teaching profession and in decision-making bodies of the country;

(d) whether the proposed policy will cover these demands; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A copy of the draft National Policy for the Empowerment of Women is attached as statement.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e). Paras 6 and 7 of the Draft Policy provide for taking measures and actions for empowering women and for their full participation in decision making.

STATEMENT

Government of India Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Women and Child Development

**National Policy for the Empowerment of Women
1996**

(Draft)

Introduction

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the

Indian Constitution in its Preamble. Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles.

Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-78) onwards, there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development. In recent years, the empowerment of women has been recognised as the Central issue in determining the status of women. The National Commission for Women was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1990 to safeguard the rights and legal entitlements of women. The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Constitution of India have provided for reservation of seats in the local bodies of Panchayats and municipalities for women, laying strong foundation for their participation in decision making at the local levels.

India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights for women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW-1979) in 1993.

The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the platform for Action (1995), have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up.

The women's movement and a wide-spread network of non-Government Organisations which have strong grass-roots presence and deep insight into women's concerns have inspired many initiatives for the empowerment of women.

However, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other. This has been analysed extensively in the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. "Towards Equality", 1974, and highlighted in the National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000 and the Shramshakti Report, 1988.

Gender disparity manifest itself in various forms. the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and societal levels are some of the other manifestations. Discrimination against girl children adolescent girls and women still persists.

Consequently, the access of women - majority of whom are in the rural areas and in the informal, unorganised sector.. to education, health and productive resources, among others, is inadequate. Therefore, they remain largely marginalised, poor and socially excluded.

In this background, having taken stock of national and international developments and after a series of

consultations with Members of Parliament, State Governments, non-Governmental Organisations, Womens' Organisations, social activities, researches and other experts in the country, this Policy Xhabeen drawn up. The goal of this Policy is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. This is to be achieved by changing societal attitudes and elimination of all forms of gender based discrimination, active participation of women in all spheres of life, incorporation of gender perspective, translation of de jure equality of women into defacto equality and affirmative action, as necessary.

The positive features of Indian culture and tradition which reiterate the dignity of and respect for women, will be reinforced in the endeavour to achieve social harmony. Through appropriate programmes, women and men will be made aware of their social responsibilities as change agents, their role as promoters of progressive values and respect for humanity will be emphasised therein.

The Policy will be widely disseminated so that a meaningful partnership is established with all sections of civil society, to achieve its goals.

2. Human Rights & Fundamental Freedoms

The de jure and defacto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women on an equal basis with men shall be ensured both in letter and in spirit and all factors which impede the realization of such rights and freedoms eliminated.

3. Elimination of Violence against Women

All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, particularly sexual abuse and violence, including through recourse to customs, traditions or practices, shall be eliminated. Mechanisms/schemes for assistance will be created and strengthened for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence. Institutions and mechanisms responsible for elimination of violence against women and taking action against the perpetrators of such violence will be strengthened.

4. Ending Discrimination Against Women

Recognising the equal entitlement of women and men to human rights and fundamental freedoms in all spheres, political, economic, social, cultural, civil etc. no discrimination shall be allowed in law or practice against women. Equal rights for women will be ensured in respect of access to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office.

5. Elimination of Discrimination against and Violation of the Rights of the Girl Child

All forms of discrimination against the girl child and

violation of her rights shall be eliminated by undertaking strong measures including punitive ones. These relate to strict enforcement of laws against pre-natal sex selection and foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child abuse and child prostitution. Removal of discrimination in the treatment of the girl child in the family and outside and projection of a positive image of the girl child will be actively fostered. There will be special emphasis on the needs of the girl child and earmarking of substantial investments in the areas relating to food and nutrition, health and education, including vocational education. In implementing programmes for eliminating child labour, there will be a special focus on girl children.

6. Empowerment of Women

A synergy of development measures will be effected and affirmative action designed for the holistic empowerment of women. Women will be given complete and equal access to and control over factors contributing to such empowerment, particularly, health, education, information, life long learning for self-development, vocational skills, employment and income earning opportunities, technical services, land and other forms of property, including through inheritance and matrimony, common property resources, credit, technology and markets etc.

7. Women in Decision Making

Women's equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, including political decision making at all levels and in all processes will be ensured for the achievement of the goal of empowerment. All measures will be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in all decision making bodies at every level, in the private and public sectors, including the legislative, executive, judicial, local, corporate, statutory bodies, as also advisory Commissions, Committees, Boards Trusts etc. Affirmative action, such as reservation/quotas including in higher legislative bodies, will be considered whenever necessary, on a time bound basis.

8. Women and the Development Process

Policies, programmes and systems will be established to ensure mainstreaming of women's perspectives in all development processes, as catalysts, participants and recipients. Co-ordinating and monitoring mechanisms will be devised to assess from time to time the progress of such mainstreaming. Women's issues and concerns will as a result be specially addressed and reflected in all concerned laws, sectoral policies, plans and programmes of action.

9. Sensitization to Women's Issues

Specially planned and Well funded sensitization programmes will be conducted on a regular basis for all sections of society. There will be special focus on

functionaries of the State in the executive, legislative and judicial wings and in all development agencies, governmental and non-governmental. These programmes will be, in a phased manner, integrated as part of all on-going training programmes, both in the public and the private sectors.

10. Women and Mass Media

Media will be used to portray a positive image of girls and women. It will strive to remove demeaning, degrading and negative, conventional stereotypical images of women and violence against women. Legislation media policies and regulatory mechanisms, including codes of conduct etc. will be put in place to address these aspects.

11. Eradicating Poverty and Ensuring Provision of Women's Basic Needs :

11.1 Poverty Eradication

Since women comprise the majority of people below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macro economic policies and poverty eradication programmes will specifically address the needs and problems of such women. There will be improved implementation of such programmes as are already women oriented or have special targets for women. New programmes will be devised, based on mobilization of poor women and convergence of services, by offering them a range of economic and social options, alongwith necessary support services to enhance their capabilities.

11.2 Food Security

In order to satisfactorily cater to the nutritional needs and requirements of households, the Public Distribution System will be strengthened. Intra-household discrimination in this regard vis-a-vis girls and women will be sought to be ended through appropriate strategies. Women's participation will also be ensured in the planning, superintendence and delivery of the system.

11.3 Housing and Shelter

Women's perspectives will be included in housing policies, planning of housing colonies and provision of shelter both in rural and urban areas. Special attention will be given for providing adequate and safe housing and accommodation for women including single women, heads of households, working women, students, apprentices and trainees. This will be in the form of special facilities such as hostels, dormitories, short stay homes and reservation in housing colonies and townships etc.

11.4 Education

Equal access to education for women and girls will

be ensured. Measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalise education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation/vocation/technical skills by women. Sectoral time targets in existing policies will be achieved, with a special focus on girls and women.

11.5 Health

A holistic approach to women's health will be adopted and special attention will be given to the needs of women throughout their lives, including in terms of nutrition and basic services during infancy, childhood, adolescence, reproductive years and services during old age. Sectoral time targets in existing policies will be achieved with a special focus on girls and women.

11.6 Women and the Economy

Women's perspectives will be included in designing and implementing macro-economic and social policies by institutionalizing their participation in such processes.

Women's contribution to socio-economic development as producers and workers will be recognised in the formal and informal sectors and appropriate policies related to employment and other working conditions will be drawn up.

There will be reinterpretation and redefinition of conventional concepts of work wherever necessary e.g. in the Census records, to reflect women's contribution as producers and workers.

Satellite Accounts will be prepared by Government, consistent with National Accounts to highlight women's work. This will be done by the development of appropriate methodologies.

11.7 Support Services

Support services for women, like child care facilities, including creches at work places and educational institutions, homes for the aged and the disabled will be expanded and improved. Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process.

11.8 Drinking Water and Sanitation

Special attention will be given to the needs of women in the provision of safe drinking water, sewage disposal, toilet facilities and sanitation within accessible reach of house-holds. Women's participation will be ensured in the planning, delivery and maintenance of such services.

12. Women and Environment

Women will be involved and their perspectives

reflected in the policies and programmes for eco-systems management. Considering the impact of environmental factors on their livelihoods and the distribution of labour and time within households, in connection with the collection of fuel and fodder, women's participation will be ensured in the conservation of the environment and control of environmental degradation.

13. Women and Science

Programmes will be strengthened to bring about a greater involvement of women in science and technology. These will include measures to motivate girls to take up science and technology for higher education and also ensure that development projects with scientific and technical inputs involve women fully. Efforts to develop a scientific temper and awareness will also be stepped up.

14. Needs of Specially Disadvantaged Women

In recognition of the diversity of women's situations and in acknowledgement of the needs of specially disadvantaged groups, measures and programmes will be established to provide them with special assistance. These groups include women in extreme poverty, women in conflict situations, women affected by natural calamities, women in less developed regions, dalits, tribals, minorities, the disabled, widows, elderly women, single women in difficult circumstances, women heading households, those displaced from employment, migrants, the internally displaced and prostitutes etc.

15. Resources

Additional resources for expanding and strengthening the existing institutions/mechanisms for women's development and empowerment will be provided. There will be an enhancement in the budgets for the Department of Women and Child Development and earmarking of funds for women in the budgets of Ministries/Departments implementing development programmes in different sectors like education, health, welfare, rural development, urban development, labour, agriculture, industry, science, and technology etc.

A synergistic modality of resource mobilisation will be effected to ensure flow of funds and related services from banking/financial institutions, corporate bodies and community organisations at the grass-roots level.

16. Involvement of NGOs

The involvement of voluntary organizations, associations, federations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, women's organisations, as well as institutions, dealing with education, training and research, will be ensured in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and review of all policies and programmes affecting women. Towards this end, they will be provided with appropriate support related to resources and capacity building and facilitated to

participate actively in the process of the empowerment of women. Their participation in effecting societal reorientation towards women will also be ensured.

17. Gender Development Indices

Gender Development Indices will be developed by Government by networking with specialised agencies and be based on specially established criteria to support planning, implementing, monitoring, review and evaluation of laws, policies, plans, programmes and for determination of resource devolution from a gender just standpoint.

18. Gender Disaggregated Data

Gender disaggregated data will be collected by all primary data collecting agencies of the Central and State Governments as well, as Research and Academic institutions in the public and private sector. Data and information gaps in vital areas reflecting the status of women will also be filled in by these Agencies.

All Ministries/Departments/Corporations/Banks and financial institutions etc. will collect, collate and maintain/publish data related to programmes and benefits on a gender disaggregated basis.

19. International Cooperation

International, regional and sub-regional cooperation towards the empowerment of women will continue to be encouraged, through sharing of experience, exchange of ideas and technology, networking with institutions and organisations and through bilateral and multi-lateral partnerships.

PART-II

Strategies and Action Points

1. Grass-Roots Level

At the grass-roots, women will be helped by Government through its programmes to organize into self-help groups at the Anganwadi/Village/Town Level. Existing women's groups and women's organisations working at the grass-roots level will also be appropriately strengthened. The women's groups will be helped to institutionalize themselves into registered societies and to federate at the Panchayat/Municipal level. These societies will bring about synergistic implementation of all the social and economic development programmes by drawing resources made available through Government and non-Government channels, including banks and financial institutions and by establishing a close interface with the Panchayats/Municipalities.

2. District and Sub-District Levels

At the District and Sub-District levels, the services of the existing agencies, Zilla Parshads/District Rural Development Agencies/Municipal Bodies will be

available to the womens' groups for co-ordination and facilitating smooth flow of resources for the advancement and empowerment of women.

3. State and National Levels

- 3.1 At the National and State levels there will be Councils for the Empowerment of Women to review implementation of recommendations of National and State Commissions for women and to give broad policy advice, guidance and direction; these National and State Councils will also oversee the operationalisation of the Policy on a regular basis. The National Council will be headed by the Prime Minister and the State Councils by the Chief Ministers. The Councils will be broad in their composition, having representatives from the concerned Departments/Ministries, National and State Commissions for Women, Social Welfare Boards, representatives of Non-Government Organisations, Womens Organisations, Corporate Sector, Trade Unions, financing institutions, academics, experts and social activities etc.
- 3.2 All Central and State Ministries will draw up time bound Action Plans for translating the Policy into a set of concrete actions, in consultation with Centre/State Departments of Women and Child Development and National/State Commissions for Women. These Action Plans will be reviewed at regular intervals. The Plans will specifically include the following.
- 3.2.1. Commitment of resources for women in key sectors relating to education, vocational training, employment and income generation, health, all support services, gender sensitization programmes and information dissemination etc.
- 3.2.2. Time targets to achieve the mandates, strategies and action points of the Policy, for the short term and the long term after determining relevant priorities.
- 3.2.3. Fixing up responsibilities for implementation of action points.
- 3.2.4. Structures and mechanisms to ensure efficient implementation, monitoring and review of action points.
- 3.3. To ensure mainstreaming of women's concerns and issues, every Ministry/Department of the Centre/State will provide for the equal participation of women in their programmes/activities, as catalysts, participants and recipients.
- 3.4. The National Development Council will review all development programmes and targets on the basis of gender disaggregated data and ensure, with the support of the Planning Commission, flow of funds for programmes undertaken for women in various sectors.
- 3.5. Planning Commission/State Planning Boards/Commissions, will ensure that the Central and State Governments identify separately, specific physical and financial resources for women and men, in all sectors, particularly in health, nutrition, education, housing, water, sanitation, environmental conservation, training, skill development and employment/income generation in agriculture, industries and allied sectors.
- 3.6 Every Ministry/Department at the Centre/State will ensure equal flow of benefits in physical and financial terms to women, including specially disadvantaged groups of women, through their different plans and programmes, executed directly, or through autonomous organisations and public undertakings working under it and will report annually to Parliament/State Legislatures in this regard.
- 3.7 To affirm the full and equal participation of women of all sections and categories and to ensure their rights, equal access and equal control over resources, the following will be undertaken :
- 3.7.1. All existing laws, including personal, customary and tribal laws, subordinate legislation, related rules as well as executive administrative regulations, will be reviewed in consultation with the National/State Commission for Women.
- 3.7.2. All new laws, subordinate legislation, related rules as well as executive and administrative regulations will be formulated with a gender perspective.
- 3.7.3. All existing policies, including sectoral policies, plans and programmes will be reviewed.
- 3.7.4. All new policies, including sectoral policies, plans and programmes will be formulated with a gender perspective.
- 3.8 The contribution of all sectoral policies, plans and programmes to the development, advancement and empowerment of women, will be subject to Parliamentary and Legislative review by appropriate mechanisms and structures to be created in Parliament and in State Legislatures. Suitable structures and processes will also be created in Panchayats and Municipalities to enable them to oversee and monitor the implementation of sectoral policies on women.
- 3.9. Women's rights will be guaranteed by strict enforcement of all relevant legal provisions and speedy redressal of grievances, with a special

- focus on violence and gender related Strocities. Measures will also be taken to the prevent and punish sexual harassment at the place of work.
- 3.10 Crimes against women. their incidence. prevention, investigation, detection and prosection will be regularly reviewed at all Crime Review Fora and Conferences at the Central. State and District levels and by the Home Ministry/Department.
- 3.11 Recognised, local, voluntary organisations will be authorised to lodge complaints and facilitate registration, investigation and legal proceedings related to violence and atrocities against girls and women.
- 3.12 There will be strengthening and expansion of Women's Cells in Police Stations, All Women Police Stations, Family Courts, Mahila Courts, Counselling Centres, Legal Aid Centres and Nyaya Panchayats, to eliminate violence and atrocities against women.
- 3.13 There will be widespread dissemination of information on all aspects of legal rights. human rights and other entitlements of women, through specially designed legal literacy programmes and rights information programmes. Legal literacy will also be included in the academic currucula of schools and colleges.
- 3.14 All steps will be taken to protect the interests of the girl-child and adolescent girls according to the Convention on Rights of the Child and the Decadal National/State Plans of Action for the Girl-Child.
- 3.15 There will be affirmative action, by way of reservations and quotas, as may be considered appropriate, in all bodies of the public and private sector, including the law making bodies, to facilitate active power-sharing by women and their meaningful participations in decision making at all levels.
- 3.16 Gender Sensitization programmes will include :
- 3.16.1 Training of personnel of executive, legislative and judicial wings of the State, with a special focus on policy and programme framers, implementation and development agencies, law enforcement machinery and the judiciary, as well as non-governmental organisations.
- 3.16.2 Societal awareness to gender issues and women's human rights.
- 3.16.3 Review of curriculum and educational materials to include gender education and human right issues.
- 3.16.4 Removal of all references derogatory to the dignity of women from all public documents and legal instruments.
- 3.16.5 Use of different forms of mass media to communicate social messages relating to women's equality and empowerment.
- 3.17 There will be strict enforcement of laws and codes of conduct relating to positive portrayal of women in the mass-media, so that commodification of women and demeaning images of women are effectively checked. Suitable measures will be considered to check public utterances derogatory to the dignity of women.
- 3.18 To ensure that women are provided with all support services, drinking water, and sanitation, sectoral policies will be suitable reviewed and amended.
- 3.19 To improve the nutritional status of girls and women and provide them and food security, awareness generation and other related programmes will be strengthened.
- 3.20 Women will be actively associated in the conservation of the environment and in the management of common property resources specially relating to fuel and fodder collections so as to utilise them optimally and in a sustainable manner.
- 3.21 Labour protection for women workers in the organised and unorganised sector will be ensured. There will be strict enforcement of relevant laws such as Equal Remfuration Act and Minimum Wages Act, scientific measurement of women's work for determination of their wages and review of all labour legislation from a gender just standpoint.
- 3.22 Skills related to technology management will be imparted to women through appropriate programmes, governmental and non-governmental so as to enable them to utilise effectively, among others, infrastructure/services provided by development projects, e.g. those relating to provision of drinking water, irrigation, non-conventional energy sources etc.
- 3.23 The progress in the advancement of the status of women will be reviewed once in five years. These reviews will be based on objective criteria and Gender Development Indices (GDIs), and also carry Situational Profiles on the status of women at the National and State levels. These reviews will coincide with the Five Year Plans. Appraisals at shorter interval than five years may also be undertaken, as may be required from time to time.
- 3.24 To analyse and study relevant Gender Development indices, gender auditing and evaluation mechanisms will be established information derived therefrom will be widely disseminated.

3.25 National and State Resource Centres will be established with mandates for collection and dissemination of information undertaking research work, conducting surveys, implementing training and awareness generation programmes, etc. These Centres will link up with Womens' Studies Centres and other research and academic institutions through suitable information networking systems.

3.26 Institutional mechanisms which exist at the Central and State levels, to promote the advancement of women, will be strengthened. These will be through interventions as may be appropriate and will relate to, among others, provision of adequate resources, staff training and advocacy skills to effectively influence macro-policies, legislations, programmes etc., to achieve the empowerment of women.

[Translation]

Dispute Over Irrigation Projects

2908. SHRI MOHAMMAD ALI ASHRAF FATMI : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the disputes among various States over some irrigation projects and also of the differences among various Departments of the Union Government;

(b) the reaction of the Government in this regard; and

(c) the action taken by the Government to monitor all the irrigation projects in the country?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) and (b). There are disputes on different issues among participating States over some Irrigation Projects. The Union Government makes efforts to resolve these disputes through negotiations and meetings at different levels. There are no differences among various departments of the Union Government in respect of Irrigation projects.

(c) All on-going major irrigation projects and some selected medium irrigation projects are monitored by the Central Water Commission of the Union Ministry of Water Resources.

Passport Office in Jammu

2909. SHRI MANGAT RAM SHARMA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to set up a permanent passport office in Jammu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) to (c). A Passport Office was opened at Jammu in March, 1993 and has been functioning there since then. The possibility of opening an office in Srinagar will be examined soon. In the meantime, a Collection Centre is functioning in Srinagar.

Use of Water in Maharashtra

2910. SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT : Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is a demand to make the Nar-Par West flowing rivers east flowing in Maharashtra as their waters goes waste unused in Arabian sea;

(b) whether the famine-prone areas will be benefited at large scale after making these rivers east-flowing by construction of big dams on these two rivers;

(c) the details of the action being taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) if no action is being taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) No such proposal has been received in the Central Water Commission.

(b) to (d). Does not arise.

[English]

Conversion of State Highway No.11

2911. SARDAR SURJIT SINGH BARNALA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received representations from Members of Parliament regarding conversion of State Highway No.11 from Rohtak to Luthiana via Jind and Sangrur as a National Highway;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) One representation in this regard has been received.

(c) Due to paucity of funds for the development of National Highway during the 8th Plan, it has not been possible to declare this road as a National Highway.

[Translation]

Inadequate Budget Allocations

2912. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether inadequate funds has been allotted for the Department of Defence in the Budget presented recently;