REPORT ON THE WESTERN REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL MISSION FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN ON "ACHIEVING CONVERGENCE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN" 23-24 April, 2012, Mumbai, Maharashtra

Organized by
the National Mission for Empowerment of Women,
Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India
In collaboration with
Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai
&
Department of Women & Child Development
Government of Maharashtra
REPORT ON
THE WESTERN REGIONAL CONSULTATION
OF
THE NATIONAL MISSION FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
ON
"ACHIEVING CONVERGENCE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN"
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India’s rapid economic growth since the 1990’s has earned for it a global reputation of being one of the fastest developing countries in the world. This development seen in terms of a steady growth in India’s Gross Domestic Product has improved the standards of living of a very small section of the population considerably, whereas the living conditions of the remaining majority are increasingly being defined by a disturbing pattern of vulnerability which can be traced back to this new development paradigm. Human development indicators reveal that a large segment of this population lives in absolute destitution while another merely survives at the margins. The development programmes that have been designed for this vast majority of the poor have largely remained focused on poverty alleviation and provision of welfare rather than enabling real growth and long term sustainable development for them. Among the many determinants of this vulnerability which assume regional, geographical, casteist, classist, ethnic and religious undertones, Gender forms a key dimension upon which disparities are found to exist.

Despite the goal of Gender Equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution and the affirmative actions taken by the Central Government and various State Governments in the form of legislations, policies and programmes, we have not been able to free our women from the shackles of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, overwork, malnutrition, debt, slavery and violence. Socially constructed gender differences continue to assign stereotypical roles for men and women, confining women to subordinate and inferior positions in society. The mechanisms adopted by the Government to enhance the status of women have not made any dent in the situational reality of most women in our country who have had to bear the brunt of gender discrimination and its intersections with other dimensions of discrimination such as caste, class, religion etc. The new era of globalization and industrialization has only exacerbated these existing inequalities and today women are made to shoulder a disproportionate share of the adverse impacts of this new development.

Over the years it has been recognized that programmes to enhance the status of women in society can only realize its goals when women are themselves empowered to gain control over their lives. Women’s Empowerment therefore refers to a process of building the physical, psychological, emotional and intellectual capacities of women for greater participation and effective decision making by enabling them to have a notion of dignity and self worth, bodily integrity, freedom from coercion and control over resources. It was realized that the plethora of schemes and programmes initiated by the government and other organizations for the empowerment of women had not had the necessary impact because of its segregationist and fragmented approach. Empowerment of women is therefore seen as a holistic concept which requires an integrated focus on all areas of her life. For example empowering women to improve their health status would only be effective if all the inter-related factors are also addressed such as increasing their access to nutrition supplements and subsidized food, clean drinking water and sanitation, health services, education, promoting growing of local crops, enhancing the economic status of women and ensuring a violence free environment for them. The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) was thus constituted with the goal of promoting the holistic empowerment of women by developing effective mechanisms for convergence on systemic issues and facilitating convergence in flagship programmes of the Government as has been emphasized in the 12th Five Year Plan Approach Paper. The role of the NMEW was envisaged as that of creating an enabling social, institutional and policy environment for the empowerment of women by coordinating with State Governments, administrations of Union Territories, Non-governmental organizations, Civil Society bodies etc and achieving inter-sectoral convergence in the activities of a wide range of stakeholders in order to strengthen efforts for women’s empowerment.

The Western Regional Conference brought together NMEW and its various stakeholders onto a common platform to focus on the issues, challenges, best practices, strategies and mechanisms for convergence in key areas of women’s lives namely livelihood, education, health & nutrition, gender based violence and law enforcement. Other thematic areas for convergence towards women’s empowerment were explored in the realms of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting, the impact of media and the role of information...
technology in awareness generation, advocacy and mass communication. The importance of doing away with
the notion of women as a homogeneous group and the need to identify the specific vulnerabilities of
marginalized and vulnerable women belonging to different social groups was stressed during the conference.
The need to recognize and respond to the inter-sectionalities of discrimination that women faced was another
area that was discussed.

The different sessions articulated the need for the Government and its partner organizations to work at the
individual as well as structural level which included a spectrum of activities such as specialized services for
direct intervention, building support systems, transferring skills through training and education, building the
capacities of functionaries on aspects of gender and women’s rights, coordinating and negotiating with various
stakeholders, generating awareness through effective advocacy campaigns; and undertaking research,
documentation and policy analysis. There was a common understanding of the inter-relatedness of different
aspects of women’s lives and the need to incorporate gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting into the
plans and policies of the Planning Commission and the different ministries such as those of Human Resource
Development, Finance, Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Department
of Agriculture and Cooperation, Health & Family Welfare, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Law & Justice,
Environment & Forests, Labour & Employment, Social Justice & Empowerment etc. in order to address these
inter-connected issues that impact the quality of women’s lives. It was also discussed that convergence
mechanisms would need to be devised to coordinate and negotiate between the activities of these various
departments for effective implementation of development programmes for women. It was recommended that
for NMEW to play this coordinating role, it would need to bring on board the strengths of various organizations
and departments and see how each one could take forward their mandate and benefit from being a part of the
coodination and convergence efforts of the Mission.

The session on Access to Justice identified that Violence against Women was not recognized as a serious issue
either by society or by the system and hence it was critical to politicize the issue by generating awareness
through advocacy campaigns, empowering both women and men through gender sensitization; and working
with the criminal justice system namely the police, judges and the advocates to train them on issues of gender
and women’s rights and creating spaces within the legal system for women through pro-women laws and
women friendly procedures. It was important to ensure that legal empowerment was made an integral part of
all rights based programmes and this rights orientation percolated to every woman, functionary and other
stakeholders at the implementation level.

Women’s Health was viewed in a holistic sense aiming at their complete physical, mental and social well-being
which implied that there were several other services, goods, facilities and conditions that needed to be
attained in order for women to enjoy their Right to Total Health. It was discussed that efforts to increase
women’s access to health and health services would need sustainable mechanisms for coordination between
various stakeholders and agencies. Health interventions would need to be people centred and involve
community participation especially engagement with men. In order to be effective, field interventions would
also need to support capacity building and gender sensitization of all health professionals and functionaries on
the field. The Life-cycle Approach to women’s health was stressed upon and it was realized that the preceding
and succeeding life stages of women influenced one another and hence there was a need to focus on girl
children, adolescent girls and menopausal women while addressing the issue of women’s health.

The session on Empowerment of Marginalized and Vulnerable women and those in Difficult Circumstances
focused on the specific forms of vulnerabilities and violence experienced by women from certain social groups
and regional locations. Structural barriers such as restricted mobility, exclusion from public spheres and
political participation, unequal access and control over resources, lack of access to information and the
freedom to make informed choices and so on located these women at a more disadvantageous position in
comparison to women from other social groups. While working with women, it was therefore important to
understand the complexities of their life situations and social conditions; and structure responses to address
their specific issues of marginalization and deprivation. For e.g. it was discussed that the efficacy of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan had been impacted by its failure to achieve the fundamental integration required in terms of understanding and assimilating the local cultures, life histories etc. of the children from marginalized communities in the implementation of the programme.

While discussing Women's Education, attention was drawn towards the concept of instrumentalism that currently governs the concept of women's education and the need to work towards looking at education as being empowering in itself. It was noted that higher Female Literacy Rates had not translated into better status for women in society and many States had registered declining child sex ratios inspite of the increased female literacy rates in their regions. A direct correlation was found between the mother's educational status and the performance and aspirations of girl children in schools which revealed how critical it was to empower women through education. The manufacturing of consent with regards to the inefficacy of public education and the benefits of private education was expressed as a grave concern because of its impact on the large majority of children in our country who would be barred access to an education.

Many Government programmes to enhance the livelihood opportunities for women were found to be welfare oriented in nature. Economic empowerment of women was put forth as a multifaceted concept which would entail addressing the practical needs of women through training, capacity building and skills transfer as well as addressing strategic issues like access to land, gender discrimination etc in order to create an enabling environment for the entrepreneurial development of women. The focus of programmes for economic empowerment of women should be to make women independent and build long term sustainability. While discussing the merits of the Self Help Group movement in India, it was pointed out that while these were very strong initiatives to build women's social capital it could not be expected to create entrepreneurs out of individual women.

Gender Mainstreaming is a critical component of women's empowerment and the importance of incorporating gender focus into all plans, programmes and initiatives of the Government was highlighted. A successful model of Gender Budgeting as a powerful tool of Gender Mainstreaming was presented as a Best Practice by the State Government of Rajasthan who stressed that it was imperative for State Governments to push for it in the place of special women component plans. This would require the decision makers and functionaries of every department to be oriented and sensitized towards gender specific issues.

Discussions about the impact of mass media on generating awareness at the grassroots level pointed to the need to create non-technological forms of communication using simple and effective messaging techniques because of the sudden transformation of mass media in the recent past and the overload of information that existed in the public space. Community Radio and Community Video were found to be powerful means of empowering people because of its potential to give a voice to the marginalized and redefine issues from their perspective.

In conclusion, it can be agreed that all the components of women's empowerment are interrelated and cannot be addressed in isolation of one another. Effective implementation of programmes for women's empowerment would therefore call for a critical understanding of the operational patterns on the ground and a need to identify the missing links in order to establish convergence mechanisms to coordinate the diverse efforts at various levels of operation within a department as well as processes between various departments. In addition to convergence in action, there is a critical need for a convergence of mindsets, perspectives and thoughts because while devising relevant schemes and programmes is one aspect of empowerment, the other important link is to look at the violence and discrimination that surrounds the usage and access to these schemes. It was recommended that NMEW should undertake capacity building of various functionaries across government departments to enable them to better understand these social complexities and its processes; and institutionalize appropriate response mechanisms in order to achieve a larger impact of various empowerment programmes for women and make it more meaningful.
1. INTRODUCTION TO THE REGIONAL CONSULTATION

The National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) was launched on 8th March 2010 in order to strengthen the overall processes that promote the all round development of women. In order to engage with various stakeholders to achieve the desired convergence required for taking women's empowerment to a level of scale, the National Mission for Empowerment of Women conducted six Regional consultations in different geographical clusters across the country. The Western Regional Conference towards "Achieving Convergence for Empowerment of Women", for the states of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Goa, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli was held in partnership with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai on the 23rd and 24th of April 2012.

The objective of the two days Regional Conference “Achieving Convergence for Empowerment of Women” was to provide a platform for stakeholders from different State Government departments, institutions, civil society organizations, academia and other professions to come together to share and learn from the experiences of one another in their efforts towards empowering women. The Conference aimed to arrive at an inclusive and comprehensive definition of women's empowerment and an understanding of what convergence efforts would entail for each stakeholder. The mandate of the National Mission as communicated to the forum was aimed at understanding the region specific issues concerning women in order to put in place a coordination mechanism and establish appropriate levels of convergence in all activities among different players at the Central and State level of governance so as to benefit women in a more holistic manner. The Regional Conference was aimed at bringing to the forum various challenges and road blocks faced by each regional partner so that the National Mission along with State Governments and National Line Ministries could facilitate convergence mechanisms address the same and achieve the desired results.

The Agenda for the two days Regional Conference covered discussions around the key focus areas for the National Mission. On Day One the Principal Secretaries of the Department of Women and Child Development from six different States/UTs - Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Goa, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli shared the various measures and strategies being adopted by them to implement development programs for women in their respective States. This was followed by a sharing of Best Practices from a pilot convergence model implemented in Pali District in Rajasthan. The two Technical Sessions of the Day included Key issues and mechanisms for convergence with respect to Access to Justice and Women's Health and Nutrition.

Day Two included four Technical sessions on Empowerment of Vulnerable & Marginalized Groups and Women in Difficult Circumstances, Women's Education, Economic Empowerment of Women and Achievements and challenges with respect to Gender Budgeting & Gender Mainstreaming. This was followed by a session on the Impact & Importance of Mass Media for convergence and raising awareness at grassroots level. The conference was concluded by a Wrap-Up Session that summarized the discussions that took place in the two days and it ended with a presentation on the Way forward for the National Mission.

The Regional Conference was inaugurated by an address from Ms Varsha Gaikwad, Minister for Women and Child Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, and it was facilitated by NMEW officials and resource persons from different disciplines. The speakers and discussants for each session and the participants were drawn from a diverse pool of Central and State Government officials, district and village level functionaries, State resource centres, representatives from non-Governmental organizations and civil society organizations, activists, advocates, researchers, NMEW officials and academia from various educational institutions.

The Complete Agenda of the two days conference and the List of Resource Persons and Participants is attached as Annexures.
INAUGURAL SESSION
2. INAUGURAL SESSION

The conference was initiated with a formal inauguration by Smt. Varsha Gaikwad, Minister for Women and Child Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, who lit the inaugural lamp on this occasion. This was followed by an address by the following distinguished panelists:

Dr. Lina Kashyap, Deputy Director, TISS, spoke about the institute's commitment to assist the Central and the State Government in reaching its developmental goals especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups and those in difficult situations such as women, children, persons with disability and the elderly. She traced the genesis of the Special Cell for Women and Children at TISS and the efforts of the team to upscale the model in other parts of Maharashtra and other States in the country.

Smt. Rashmi Singh, Executive Director, NMEW introduced the mission's understanding of the notion of empowerment and convergence and the context for the regional conference, saying that it was a forum where different partners could share experiences and seek convergence on various programmes/activities. She said that the journey towards women's empowerment would involve expansion in a woman's ability to make strategic life choices, to be able to take social, political & economic decisions, secure access to opportunities and resources and acquire a better status in society. She spoke about the need to keep women at the centre of all convergence efforts which would require the handholding of multiple stakeholders and the integration of the efforts of various Government departments, NGOs, academia, media, community leaders, PRIs and Local Self help groups, corporate houses and technical experts. She said that though multiple schemes for women's empowerment existed across multiple agencies, there was a problem of exclusion amidst this plenty, which led to many women being deprived of the benefits of developmental programmes.

She drew a clear picture of the structure of NMEW and described that it was spearheaded at the Central level by the National Mission Authority chaired by the Prime Minister and Ministers from 14 key Ministries (a few of them being the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Panchayati Raj etc), the Central Monitoring Committee headed by the Minister for Women and Child Development, the Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, a Mission Directorate and a National Resource Centre for Women. At the State level, the structure was to include the State Mission Authority chaired by the Chief Minister and the State Resource Centre for Women. She stated that the endeavour of NMEW would be to seek convergence among the different segments in order to break down various barriers including procedural bottlenecks to optimize impact and increase the access of women to these programmes. The three pronged strategy for convergence evolved by NMEW would include the following:

- Generating awareness and making the programmes demand driven, identifying the most vulnerable, establishing identity and facilitating access to entitlements at household and community level.
- Strengthening implementation and delivery mechanisms at State, District, Block & Panchayat/Ward level.
- Formulation of gender friendly policies, strengthening the enforcement of Law, Gender-Budgeting, rationalization of schemes and programmes at the National & State level and effective monitoring & evaluation of programmes and strategies.

Sharing the Key Action Points for convergence, Ms. Singh said it would include building Convergence Forums and Plans at the District, Block and Gram Panchayat level, providing Integrated Service Delivery through single window information cum facilitation centres for women like the "Nari ki Choupal" and “Convergence Mela” as initiated in Pali, Rajasthan and undertaking leadership, capacity building & gender sensitization of Government functionaries, PRI members, and other stakeholders. Other action points would include creating user friendly compendium of schemes for women and undertaking impact assessment/gap analysis of schemes, programmes & laws impacting women in different sectors, Gender Budget analysis of various departments and
laying adequate thrust on sustained advocacy for line departments & other stakeholders to work together to optimize resource utilization for better outcomes through collective action.

Shri. Neeraj Pawan, District Magistrate & District Collector of Pali District in Rajasthan, shared best practices from 'Mission Poorna Shakti', a pilot project of the empowerment and convergence model of the NMEW, which has been initiated in 150 Gram Panchayats in Pali District and spoke about the practical initiatives undertaken under it at the grassroots level. "The launch of the project was done in a mega way such as never seen in Pali before and we made sure that every woman in the area was given free bus transport so that she could attend the event." The two key issues taken up for implementation through the convergence model included the issue of child marriages and that of declining Child Sex Ratio which is very widespread in Rajasthan. Mr. Pawan drew attention to the use of flexibility and innovation in coordinating the activities of various stakeholders in order to achieve the convergence goal of women’s empowerment. "The model consists of a Poorna Shakti Kendra in every village through which community workers are trained as “Gram Samanvyaks” to bring about integration of all schemes and laws pertaining to women’s empowerment in order to achieve the desired outcomes. So for example, if a woman has to avail of the RTE or widow's pension or other employment schemes she has no idea about what needs to be done or who will be able to help her. Even if she finds out, she is unable to fill in the documentation required because she is illiterate. The role of the community worker is to thus facilitate all these processes for her."

Mr. Pawan put thrust on bringing about convergence of initiatives at the village level by generating awareness through trainings, increasing access by capacity development and enhancing opportunities for economic development. He laid emphasis on rigorous and micro level tracking systems to address the issues of women, be it the issue of child marriages, retention of girl children in schools or achieving health outcomes for women and adolescent girls. "We realized that our objectives could be achieved only if we engaged all the people involved. So for example to stop child marriages we held a big campaign in which we involved the police, judiciary, all the service providers such as those supplying the tents, flowers, sweets etc. and even caught hold of the priest who would conduct the marriage. We then had the High Court Chief Justice explain to them the laws against child marriages and that Rs. One lakh penalty and jail imprisonment would be imposed on them if they were involved. We have seen positive results after this." Thus the success model of women’s empowerment implemented in Pali was underlined by comprehensive systems of convergence between multiple stakeholders at the local level and institutional mechanisms that were based on rights based gender perspectives.

Prof. Varsha Gaikwad, Minister for Women and Child Welfare, Government of Maharashtra, spoke about the critical need for convergence at various levels in all initiatives and efforts. She expressed her appreciation for making an attempt to operationalizing the convergence on the field. She said this was essential so that the numerous Central and State level schemes that had been launched could percolate down to the women they were meant to benefit. She noted that empowerment initiatives initiated in different States were shaped by the region's historical context and the prevailing socio-political environment in the region. She stressed the need for convergence with the different Government departments and industries in order to make the various laws that had been enacted for women's empowerment a reality. Giving examples of such convergence she said it was important for the WCD and other women's organizations to work with the Home Affairs Ministry to address the issue of dowry, with the Labour Ministry to address issues of sexual harassment at workplace and forge partnerships with various industries to open up entrepreneurial opportunities for women Self Help Groups.
3. INTRODUCTORY SESSION:

Empowerment of Women: Achievement, Issues, Challenges and Convergence: Experience from States

Chair: Shri Nilanjan Sanyal, Additional Secretary & Mission Director, NMEW

Speakers:
1. Smt. Vandana Krishna, Principal Secretary, DWCD, Government of Maharashtra
2. Smt. Sangeeta Singh, Principal Secretary, DWCD, Government of Gujarat
3. Dr. Sarita Singh, Secretary-cum-Commissioner, DWCD, Government of Rajasthan
4. Ms. Alka Dewan, Secretary-cum-Commissioner, DWCD, Administration of Dadra & Nagar Haveli; Administration of Daman & Diu
5. Shri. Sanjiv M. Gadkar, Director, DWCD, Government of Goa

This session was aimed at learning the experiences from each State of their efforts towards women’s empowerment. In this session, the representatives from each State presented an overall picture of the implementation of various schemes directed towards women’s empowerment in their respective States, giving a brief about the responses to these schemes, the achievements made as a result of these schemes, the various convergent efforts and strategies undertaken by them and the challenges faced by them in the process.

3.1 Overview of Presentations:

3.1.1 Address by the Chair:

Shri Nilanjan Sanyal started the session by welcoming all the Principal Secretaries and Secretaries of each State Government, the Commissioners and Directors of various programmes, the academicians, development practitioners and all the participants present at the Conference. He elaborated that the Regional Conferences were aimed at taking forward the agenda and mandate of the Mission i.e the holistic empowerment of women.

He then went on to define the concept of Women’s Empowerment as the process of enabling a woman to be endowed enough with all the necessary attributes that would contribute to making her a person in her own right. Empowering a woman would therefore mean enhancing a woman’s social position, her economic condition, instilling enough confidence and ability in her to enable her to make decisions for herself as well as her family. He identified that there were many gaps in this respect especially for women from the lower strata and marginalized sections of society which were reflected in their low income, literacy, health indicators etc. The programmes under the aegis of the Central and State Government as well as those run by several non-Governmental organizations and community service organizations were aimed at addressing these gaps and the problems faced by women from these marginalized sections of society.

He said that the Mission’s mandate for Women’s Empowerment was to facilitate a common platform where all the stakeholders could come together and work in unison to the maximum extent possible and establish appropriate levels of convergence in order to impact women in a meaningful and beneficial manner. Other facets of the Mission’s mandate would involve advocacy efforts for generating awareness on issues, knowledge of rights, entitlements, the endeavours of various organizations; and creating platforms for women to articulate their needs, grievances, views etc through the formation of self help groups, federations and other collectives which has already been initiated through several programmes of the WCD, NRLM, educational department etc. He expressed his view that collectivization and group formation was crucial in building upon individual abilities in order to make a larger impact in the implementation of policies, programmes, strategies and so on.
He further elucidated that the Mission was active in eight Key Focus Areas towards the empowerment of women which included poverty alleviation for their economic advancement, health & nutrition, social empowerment and education, ensuring proper accountability and governance in relation to development programmes through gender mainstreaming and gender auditing, advocacy and intervention in areas relating to gender rights and gender laws by collaborating with various rights based groups and law commissions working in the area; working with marginal and vulnerable women in areas of relief and rehabilitation; media and communication to increase awareness levels and carry message across to all sections of society, use of Information Technology in carrying all these activities forward.

Talking about the structure of NMEW, Mr. Sanyal said that the Mission was introduced two years ago and while the central structure was more or less in place with respect to the budget, personnel etc, the same could not be said in terms of setting up corresponding State structures which was envisaged as consisting of two bodies - one being the State Mission Authority involving political executives headed by the Chief Minister and the other being the State Resource Centre that would function as a Secretariat for servicing the Mission Authority and the WCD in areas relating to women’s empowerment. He further reiterated the role of the Mission saying that unlike other Missions, the NMEW would not deliver any services or goods to the targeted beneficiaries but their role would be to set up necessary coordination mechanisms so that other programs could be implemented successfully. In this sense, the approach of the Mission would be more holistic and integrated in nature. The NMEW would play the role of a coordination entity and it would also take up advocacy and other innovations on the field to generate greater knowledge and other replicable models for development.

He concluded by urging all the speakers to share the various innovations undertaken by them on the field and put forward suggestions on how changes could be brought about in the delivery of the programmes at the ground level.

### 3.1.2 Summary of Presentations:

1) **Smt. Vandana Krishna (MAH)** started her session by informing the audience that the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) in Maharashtra were hopeful of getting an approval for the establishment of the State Mission for Empowerment of Women in Maharashtra as soon as possible. She said that the location of the State Resource Centre needed to be carefully decided as its role would be more policy oriented and would entail interacting with various departments on women’s issues which cut across various departments at the policy level; therefore ideally it would need to be closer to the secretariat to facilitate daily interaction between the two on various issues. She stated the possibility of a partnership with the Women’s Commission in Mumbai to set up this resource centre.

Moving on to her presentation, she mentioned that the Chief Secretary of Maharashtra had set up three important Key Result Areas for the DWCD which included reduction in child malnutrition, women’s empowerment and skill development of women. Other broad areas of concern that required focused intervention included Violence against Women (VAW), Women’s Right to Work, Property Rights and Investments in building women’s economic status.

Ms. Krishna mentioned that the first focus area of the DWCD in Maharashtra was working with different women’s rights groups, High Court PILs, Women’s Commission and Human Rights Commission. Some of the issues addressed currently by them were:

- Inviting proposals from various NGOs in the districts for providing vocational training for sex workers
- Registration of under-18 marriages - Ms Krishna said that this practice was still prevalent in many parts of Maharashtra and they remained invisible because parents and village level functionaries were both reluctant to register them for fear of being held accountable and action being taken against them. She suggested that a directive to register under 18 marriages should come from the top so that the girl’s rights could be protected under law.
• Sex ratio issues - She spoke about keeping an eye not only on sonography clinics but also on abortion clinics as late stage abortions were suspected to be the result of families getting to know the sex of the child in the third month of the pregnancy and opting to go in for selective abortions.

• The formation of Sexual Harassment at Workplace committees was becoming an issue as many organizations/institutes were setting up committees more out of formality than to really address the issue and often turned in nil reports to the WCD. Ms Krishna suggested that these countless independent committees should be combined into district level and block level committees as it was also getting difficult to find NGO representation on these committees as required under the Vishakha Guidelines. Because of the prevalence of a strong hierarchy in government departments the recommendations of junior level NGO representatives were not taken seriously and were not binding on HODs. She also questioned the effectiveness of conducting a second round of Department Enquiry and said that the committee should be vested with the powers to pass the final orders or judgement on cases.

• Rape/Assault Cases: Ms Krishna reiterated that seeking justice for rape victims in our country was a huge task and to ensure that cases were followed up and concluded, the roles of the National Women’s Commission and the Women’s Mission needed to be delineated. Ms Krishna suggested that the role of the Mission should be envisaged as providing support to district officers and other officials in answering the questions that the NCW raised and in helping the government in investigating cases by pointing out legal issues to the Commission.

- She also suggested the setting up of specialized courts to fast track cases of rape/assault of women. This would entail training and sensitizing judges to specialize in women and gender issues such that all such cases would be referred to these specialized judges. In Maharashtra, she said that such an approach had led to larger number of convictions. For e.g. Maharashtra was the only state that has been able to convict more than 30 doctors under the PCPNDT Act.

- Ms Krishna said that there was a need to amend the Evidence Act for rape cases so that women did not have to face the humiliation of cross examination and could give her evidence through teleconferencing facilities from a more comfortable environment rather than the intimidating environment of the court. In this way, one could ensure that the follow up process was smoothened by saving the women the discomfort and inconvenience of repeated instances of long distance travel and it would also enable us to use technology to benefit women.

- Regarding the monetary compensation of Rs 2 lakhs for rape victims, Ms Krishna expressed her view that the amount was very high and thus posed the risk of misuse by many women. She cited the example of the misuse of Section 498A by many women and cautioned that a similar thing could happen here as well. She said that the government should reduce the compensatory amount but could instead support the victim by ensuring monetary assistance for medical treatment; provision of jobs etc and the Mission could play this coordinating role.

The second focus area centred on Health related issues of women included:

• Preventing female feticide by training the communities to track and counsel families with 1 or 2 daughters who are to be seen as ‘high risk’ cases.

• Changing dietary patterns of women by transforming social attitudes and promoting the custom of women eating meals with men.

• Making pap-smear tests free and easily accessible for early detection and treatment. Women patients to be exempted from service/user charges in Public health institutions.

• Preventing maternal deaths by posting gynecologists/surgeons and anesthetists at same hospital for full caesarian services. Making available nutrition counselors, young mothers support groups to support child care & nutrition.
In the third focus area of Women's empowerment, Ms Krishna suggested the following measures:

- Strengthening counseling-cum-legal aid centers at the level of Zilla Parishads and at Police stations by accessing the state government funding and increasing the honorarium from Rs. 6000-8000 to at least Rs. 12000-15,000. She shared the plans of adding 64 new counseling centres at police stations all over Maharashtra in the coming years. This will enable women coming to police stations to be referred to the counseling centres so that they can discuss their problems and can receive proper guidance for their cases.
- Providing vocational training to girls above the age of 14 to prevent early marriages. She shared that her department had a target of providing training to 1 lakh girls. She suggested that for this girls hostels & stipend for vocational training courses should also be provided in addition to providing higher education. She suggested implementation of a dedicated budgetary scheme for opening Girls hostels (8th to 12th class) at taluka places and providing free ST transport.
- Providing crèches/ day care centers for working women.

The next focus area, Life Skills education, focussed on the following initiatives:

- Sex Education/ Life skills education to be included as part of the regular school curriculum and school textbooks to be checked for gender bias. Gender training to be provided in colleges regarding women’s rights, DVA, Hindu Succession Act (equal inheritance rights to sons & daughters), property rights etc.
- Scholarships for medical, engineering etc to be provided to meritorious girl students and training to be provided to all girls in self-defence, cycling, yoga/ sports.
- Income Generation activities- make agricultural/wasteland available to SHGs for cultivation on lease/ rent and train SHGs in product quality/ packaging/ standardization, marketing, networking to enhance their earning capacities. To provide them forward/backward linkages with private companies for assured marketing of products. To also make provisions for exempting SHGs from VAT.

In the area of providing protecting to women from harassment and enhancing implementation of laws and police assistance, Ms Krishna spoke about strengthening the State Women’s Commission by giving them powers to issue warrants/summons and to penalize the guilty; providing training to sexual harassment complaints committees; and making provisions to check on moral policing and judgemental attitude of the police.

With regards to Gender Budgeting issues, she said the focus was on investigating if the government departments were keeping a track of the number of women beneficiaries, physical coverage & financial expenditure on women. The focus was also on ensuring that women farmers were recognized and rendered visible, women headed households were given benefits of schemes, e.g. in cases where their husbands had migrated, credit was made available to women when assets were in their husband's name. Ms Krishna mentioned that the plans to have a Gender Budgeting Cell have not materialized till date but she expressed the need to have the same in the Planning Department. "As Women and child department, when we pursue with other departments, we find that they don't respond very well because they don't give much importance to our department so we feel that if we want gender budgeting to be mainstreamed it should be taken up through the planning department".

Ms Krishna also raised the question if women’s welfare schemes that the government was promoting were itself entrenched in traditional gender roles and raised the need to provide training to women as masons, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, drivers etc. She said that it was high time that women's different needs were recognized and acted upon by offices by providing for flexi hours, reconsidering transfer orders for women. Government documents should incorporate mother’s name/caste in the forms. She ended by saying that every government department would need to look at how women’s issues/needs are incorporated and responded to within their offices itself more seriously in terms of providing facilities for young mothers, reserving atleast 30%
of posts for women etc. Ms Krishna concluded by saying "Gender is every department's concern not just that of the women and child department and we are hoping that with this new Mission we will get support to pursue important issues with all other departments".

2) Smt. Sangeeta Singh (GUJ) started her session by saying that "the Western regional conference is a very important occasion because we are debating a very central issue where the agenda extends beyond narrow departmental policies and focuses on what is to be done to enable us to achieve a broader goal which extends right down to basic health, nutrition, position of women in society, their participation in the mainstream workforce; and the effectiveness of reaping the demographic dividend which is talked about as being India's greatest strength is going to be questionable given the kind of support system and structures in which most of our women live. Hence, this is an area of great priority and so convergence to achieve all this is part of the agenda". She proceeded to draw a picture of the social and political milieu in Gujarat and stated that it was a state with very strong social capital. "Gujarat was among the first states to go in for PRIs, we have very strong cooperative structures, very strong institutions at grassroots level such as NGOs, CSOs and a host of people working to build bridges. When we have so many active stakeholders it is an opportune moment when we can achieve a lot of things in this direction".

Ms Sangeeta Singh then briefed the conference participants about the goals, achievements and the processes followed by the Gujarat State’s Policy for Gender equity called the "Nari Gaurav Niti". The policy which has been operational since 2006 is aimed at the overall development and empowerment of the women of Gujarat and is based on gender mainstreaming and convergence. Its guiding philosophy is that women and men have equal rights and opportunities to contribute to the well being of a society. The policy has been constituted under the State level Monitoring Committee which is chaired by the Chief Minister and it undergoes regular reviews at the Chief Secretary level.

The goals of Nari Gaurav Niti aimed at creating an enabling environment for personal, political, economic, social, cultural and civil rights for women by eliminating all forms of prejudices and violence against women and girl children both within the household and in the public sphere; and mainstreaming gender perspective in development processes, policies and programmes. The goals include strengthening of legal systems and enhancing participation of civil society by the active participation of both men and women.

The approach followed by the state included processes of Gender planning, Gender sensitization, Gender mainstreaming, Gender analysis - audit and Gender convergence. The operational strategies included holistic approach to priority cross cutting issues; Institutional mechanisms, area wise action plans and monitoring indicators.

The Institutional Mechanisms that were set up to achieve the goals of gender equity included setting up of the following bodies : Women and Child Development Department Gujarat (2001), Gender Resource Centre, Ahmedabad (2003) to ensure that gender equity and equality was accepted in the overall development process of the State, Gujarat State Commission for Women (2005) was set up to provide support and guidance to women in difficult situations, Gujarat Women Economic Development Corporation (1981) was set up for improvement of economic condition of women through financial support, training and marketing support, Multi Purpose Women Welfare Centers (MPWWCs) were initiated in 2006 and currently 260 at District and Taluka level Centers have been established to support women in addressing social, legal and employment related concerns. The Centers also work as service providers under PWDVA 2005.

The responsibilities of the individuals departments included prepare detailed plans for mainstreaming gender issues in their programs/schemes which included planning implementation strategies, monitoring mechanisms and reporting structures and setting up task forces to coordinate with DWCD and achieve convergence wherever necessary. The individual departments were to ensure equal representation of both women and men in all departmental policy making committees and decision-making management boards as envisaged in the policy.
The eight key sectors of concern under the policy included the following areas: Economic Environment, Governance and decision Making, Health and Quality of Life, Violence against women, Natural Resource Management, Education, Women related laws and Advocacy and capacity Building. Ms Singh reported that under these key areas 116 Total Action Points were recorded out of which action was taken against 84 points. While considerable success has been achieved in areas of Economic environment, women’s health and Violence against women; the performance of initiatives under women related laws has been very disappointing with only 2 action points implemented as against the target of 12 action points.

Initiatives undertaken under each of the Key result areas included the following:

- **Economic Environment**:
  - Facilitating entrepreneurial development and employment generation by supporting the sustained development of Sakhi Mandals through interest assistance on bank loans, providing linkages with ‘Mission Mangalam’, and making available 50% of PDS shops permits for Mahila Mandals.
  - Providing Vocational and skills training for women - This included reserving 50% seats for women under the Craftsmen Skill Development Programme, providing agricultural training for women farmers and setting up schools/colleges with special career guidance cells.
  - Providing financial assistance and facilities for women under various schemes such as Garib Kalyan Melas (10.38 lakhs women beneficiaries), widows monthly pension of Rs 500/- each (1.23 lakh widows), 100% increase in seats of working women's hostels.
  - Building asset ownership of women through the Indira Awaz Yojana and Sardar Awaz Yojana (1.4 lakh houses in each scheme allotted in the name of the women) and Property registration fees worth Rs. 363.46 crores were exempted by Government for registration of property.

- **Governance and decision making**: This involved increasing women’s power and decision making in Local Self Governance by the formation of 251 all women Mahila Samras Gram Panchayats and providing financial assistance of Rs 7.56 crore to these Panchayats. Initiatives to support women candidates in Panchayat election also included providing leadership training to Mahila Sarpanches and running women specific information centres. Other initiatives included 30% reservation for women in Government jobs with an increase in age limit by 5 years for women, Increasing Women’s Participation & Decision Making in Village Committees & Cooperative Sector (such as water, health and sanitation committees, participatory forest management committees and Women Milk cooperatives) and providing administrative support for women in need by establishing 25 Mahila Police Stations and 9 Mahila Police Cells.

- **Health and Quality of Life**: This included multifaceted health and nutrition initiatives such as services to increase institutional deliveries, promoting a rights based perspective in health, improving quality of public health centres and access to grassroots health workers (appointment of ASHA workers, providing PHCs with water and sanitation facilities), providing supplementary nutrition to women and adolescent girls, increasing community participation for nutrition (through a fixed day, fixed time, fixed site complementary feeding and counseling strategy, participation of self help groups, encouraging corporate social responsibility to adopt Anganwadis and malnourished children), strengthening of fully equipped Anganwadi Centres and provision of mobile Anganwadi vans for migrating workers and tribal people.

- **Violence against Women**: Several actions and initiatives have been undertaken by the State to create a violence free environment and support women who have faced violence. These include counseling, police support, registration of cases, legal aid and assistance to women prisoners, initiatives of State Legal Authority Cell, committees & boards for action against sexual harassment & rape, initiatives under PWDVA 2005 and training of officers, service providers, police, judiciary and other related agencies on PWDVA and other forms of violence.
• **Natural Resource Management**: This includes increasing women’s participation and decision making through implementation of laws such as the new Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) Act that has provision for non-landowner water users (mainly women) to become members of CIS societies, compulsory membership of women members in Joint Forest Management Committees and Pani Samitis. Other initiatives include employment of women in natural resource management through formation of SHGs in women-nursery development, vegetable growing, animal husbandry etc; reducing unpaid work of women through provision of smokeless chullas, gobar gas plants, solar cookers and solar fans to women; and empowering women by providing training through Panchayat training centres and other resource centres.

• **Education** initiatives have included a special focus on girl child education, review and development of gender sensitive curriculum and providing gender sensitization training to teachers, providing alternate schooling centres to cover for out-of-school children and enhancing the quality of education.

• **Women related laws**: Ms Singh said that the policy document for gender equity had recommended amendments additions/revision/deletion of certain sections in various women related acts. She urged that for amendments in GoI laws, the matter may be considered by the regional consultation of NMEW for follow up with various departments as nodal organization and as a convergence measure.

• **Advocacy** measures included training on gender sensitization, gender budgeting and gender integration carried out by bodies such as SPIPA, SIRD and Panchayat Training Centers, GCERT, Gender resource centre, forest department, Home department and Agricultural & Cooperatives department.

Concluding her session, Ms Singh said that the new items on the agenda for women’s empowerment included a Women Specific Economic Zone, Provision of infrastructural assistance to Milk Cooperatives, provision of Rs 1.25 cr to establish five new Women ITI’s in the State and provision of Rs 5.37 cr for Agricultural Skill Development Training Programme for women farmers. A special mention was made of the state’s initiative to promote Nari Adalats for women as an alternative system of justice, to give the poor, marginalized and minority women a voice and an identity and it was run by and for women to obtain speedy justice. An allocation of Rs. 3.58 cr has been made by the Gujarat state government for establishing 42 new Nari Adalats across 17 districts in the year 2012-13.

3) **Dr. Sarita Singh (RAJ)** in her presentation focused on the processes followed by the DWCD in Rajasthan in building the necessary institutional mechanisms to ensure that women were made the prime agenda and mainstreamed in all the Governmental programmes. She started by outlining a brief situational analysis of the State of Rajasthan in terms of its high rates of MMR (318), IMR (55), Prevalence of anemia among women (53%) and children (79.6%), juvenile sex ratio (883) which had fallen twenty six points, increasing gender disparity in literacy with female literacy rate still at only 52.6% and the average age of marriage of girls at 17.7 years with forty one percent of them still getting married below the age of eighteen years. These were cited by Dr Singh as the stark reality and major areas of concern which were to be taken as an important issue for all departments in the Government.

She then went on to say that the DWCD had taken a number of initiatives and said that "I personally believe that the WCD is more of a convergence department. It cannot do anything on its own. We do have the ICDS programme but even under this programme we have institutionalized mechanisms by which we are trying to involve the other departments and make it their agenda as well". She said that given the situational analysis in the State the most important programme of the DWCD in Rajasthan was the Chief Minister’s Seven Point Programme for Women’s Empowerment which was based on the Life cycle approach of women. She explained that women faced a number of life cycle barriers such as high Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR), high Infant Mortality rate (IMR), high Crude Birth Rate (CBR), early marriages leading to early pregnancy, low literacy rate, domestic violence and other atrocities which led to a cycle of dependency and powerlessness for most women. Therefore the Seven Point Programme was aimed at a life cycle strategy to empower women by focusing on initiatives for Safe Motherhood, Reduction in IMR, Population Stabilization, Prevention of Child Marriages.
through various campaigns with the District Collectors, Retention of girls at least upto Class Xth, Providing safe environment to women and Economic Empowerment of women.

The institutional mechanisms to follow through on this programme included the constitution of a State level coordination committee under the Chief Secretary that met on a bimonthly basis to discuss how the targets were being achieved by all the concerned departments who follow a work plan that had been devised keeping the above objectives in mind. There was also a State level policy planning committee under the Chief Minister wherein all the concerned Ministers were members and who gave policy directions to the various departments.

Dr. Singh then spoke about the Women Development Programme which she said was the second most important programme of the DWCD. She explained that development of women was a step leading towards their empowerment. The process here involved is mobilizing women to sit together and talk about the various issues impacting them. The programme focussed on a three-fold objective - the first being enhancing their social /economic awareness, secondly empowering women to access the various Government programmes and lastly involving them in developing village level sub plans.

The Rajasthan Community Marriage Regulatory Act and subsidy rules have been enacted to promote community marriages through provision of subsidies to the marriage couple. But certain conditions such as regulating the marriages through registered NGO’s and obtaining District Collector’s permission for conducting the marriages have been made mandatory to keep a check on the problem of child marriages in various districts. Out of the subsidies provided to each couple (currently Rs 6000/-), seventy five percent of the amount is invested in a fixed deposit in the name of the bride. This she said was an example of convergence between the NGO and the Governmental departments and was effective in controlling early marriages, the incidence of dowry and also ensured that the marriages got registered. Convergence efforts with the Education department included programmes such as Sabla that provided life skills education to young girls through the formation and capacity building of adolescent girls groups, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) that aims to increase the retention of girls in schools through provision of infrastructure and capacity building of teachers to ensure gender sensitive schools and an environment that encourages girls to continue their education, Kasturba Gandhi Awasiya Balika Vidhyalya and Tribal Area Development Hostels that provide residential school facilities for girls.

Dr. Singh spoke about the efforts for inter-sectoral convergence for livelihood/economic empowerment of women which included programmes such as Shilpi which was a partnership for skills training and marketing of handicraft products through a partnership with the Commissioner Handicrafts and Khadi Village industries Corporation, Godhan which was a partnership with the Department of Animal Husbandry for providing cattle upkeep skills and Gramya, a partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Department of Horticulture/Floriculture for skill upgradation in Agriculture. The strategy for working with SHGs focused on providing capacity building and linkages to livelihood programmes rather than providing subsidies as the focus was on empowerment rather than poverty alleviation. Therefore Dr. Singh reiterated that the SHG strategy involved micro grouping to micro credit to micro enterprise.

Dr. Singh spoke about efforts for preventing child marriages in Rajasthan which included devising a micro-plan in each district and working with the Sarpanches/Wardpanches of twenty villages in each district to ensure that their villages are made child marriage free. Efforts towards this included tracking and creating a database of all the eligible girls and boys in the age group of 11-18 years and regular monitoring of the status of these children by a core village group which included the Saathin, the AWW, the Patwari and education personnel. Regular mass media campaigns and village level activities by the District Collector also formed part of the efforts to eliminate child marriages in villages and it has seen considerable success.

Another programme which has seen remarkable success as a convergent effort with the Medical and Health department is Kaleva, a scheme that has been adopted as an integral part of the Janani Shishu Suraksha Yojana and is aimed at reducing MMR & IMR and increasing institutional deliveries by providing free medicines and free nutritional & quality food through local SHGs to women after delivery.
Initiatives for the protection of women include a multi sectoral convergent effort involving the Home department, the Police department and the NGOs to set up Mahila Suraksha Evam Salah Kendra which has been setup as a mechanism to provide expert advice and counselling to the aggrieved woman who is a victim of harassment, violence or atrocity; and to provide help and assistance including legal advice and protection, where ever necessary. Each NGO is provided with a grant of Rs three lakhs by the DWCD to provide their services to the women in need.

Additional protection measures for women include the Zila Mahila Sahayta Samiti which has been constituted in each district under the Chairmanship of the Zila Pramukh with the District Collector as the Deputy Chairman of the committee and the CJM/Judge of the Family Court, Superintendent of Police, legal experts and persons from non-Government organizations and WCD serving as members of the committee. Another example of a successful convergent effort, the Committee has been constituted for providing immediate relief and proactive counselling to women who are victims of an atrocity and/or exploitation/sexual harassment. Additionally, Mahila Surksha Kosh in each district has also been set up for providing financial assistance to the needy women.

The functioning of all the departments at the grassroots level had been transferred to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Therefore the WCD, agriculture, education, social justice, medical and health departments all function in an inter-sectoral manner. Dr. Singh concluded her presentation by talking about Gender Responsive Budgeting and said "Earlier we had conceived the Woman Component Plan but ultimately we realized that unless the concerned departments were made stakeholders in the process, it would only be inputs given from the top.” So now, a high level committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary with the Principal Secretary Plan, Principal Secretary Finance and the WCD as members. All the Government departments are now required to present before the committee the action taken by them over the years to ensure gender budgeting and reveal the GPI of their various schemes and identify the barriers and strategies to overcome these barriers. Because of this high level committee, Gender Responsive Budgeting has now been incorporated into the Integrated Financial Management Plan of the State. This has helped the departments to identify the gaps between physical and financial targets and take corrective measures to ensure appropriate fund flow towards women empowerment schemes.

4) Mr. Sanjiv M. Gadkar (GOA) said that in the beginning of 2012-13 the Chief Minister of Goa had announced new schemes for the empowerment and development of women. This included doubling women's pension amount and financial assistance allocated for children with disability. Efforts to improve the girl sex ratio included financial contributions up to one lakh for the marriages of twenty five thousand girl children. He reported that the female literacy rate had increased by almost five points over the last ten years. However the child sex ratio had gone down from the last census and currently stood at nine hundred and thirty and innovative ideas were required to improve this status.

Mr. Gadkar said that Goa has an active State Mission Authority under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister and all the Cabinet Ministers are a part of this Mission. He said that the law Commission was working on various laws related to women and the Government was in the process of examining the recommendations of the Law Commission to ensure benefits for women.

He said that the data on child marriages reflected that no child marriages were taking place. In Goa, registration of marriages was compulsory so no one could get away with under age marriages and not have them registered. He expressed his view that he did not agree with the recommendation of DWCD Maharashtra to facilitate registration of under-aged marriages. He informed that there are Special Police Stations for women to address crimes against women and all the relevant crimes are being registered in these Stations. Another women’s Police Station was due to be set up in South Goa soon. He also said that the experience of women with regular courts had paved the way for establishment of fast track courts exclusively for women which would be set up soon.
A few important points raised by Mr. Gadkar included the need for convergence with other departments as it was not possible for WCD to single-handedly take up all issues relating to women's empowerment. He informed that the Gender budgeting was taken up along with the Finance, Planning and Statistics department with the WCD secretariat in charge of the processes similarly the sensitization of judiciary and the police through trainings to get speedy convictions in cases of violence against women which was on the rise in Goa due to tourism was carried out. He also spoke about the SHG scheme that focused on the strategy of teach-learn-earn by imparting various trainings to SHGs according to their area of interest after which the trained groups could take up trainings for other groups and earn in the process. The WCD also provided the SHGs with subsidized loans at less than two percent interest to enhance their earning potential.

5) Ms. Alka Dewan (DIU & DNH) initiated her session by giving a brief on the administrative and political structure of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and a brief on the socio economic development indices, and demographic and health indices which included the IMR, MMR and Institutional delivery rates.

The schemes being implemented for the welfare of women included the following:

- Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK) for pregnant mothers accessing the Public Health Institutions and the sick newborn till 30 days after birth.
- Dikri Development scheme which was aimed at reducing the Maternal Mortality Rate, the infant Mortality Rate and improving the Sex Ratio
- Save the Girl child scheme - a fixed deposit to be made for the first two girl children born
- Matru Samrudhdhi Yojana scheme started to reduce Maternal Mortality Rate and to encourage Institutional deliveries. Cash assistance of Rs 5000/- given to the mother for delivery at Government Health Institutions.
- The School Health Programme to support communities in their efforts to meet the health services and health education needs of their children in a school setting.
- Women awareness camps organized to provide social education programmes, Seminars, Symposia, Discussion and elocution Competitions, Publicity through media and celebration of National Day and Events
- Under the Scheme of Saraswati Sadhna Yojana bicycle are provided to SC/ST girls students studying in Std. VIIIth by the Social Welfare Department to facilitate them to attend school regularly and which would ultimately help in increasing enrolment of girls and also reduce dropout rate.
- Scheme for incentives to Girls students for pursuing professional course at Graduate & post Graduate level. Under this scheme 50% of fees (Tuition and Hostel fees) will be reimbursed to Girl Students who are pursuing professional courses in recognized University / Institutions and un-aided Colleges whose fees has been approved by state/UT fee fixation committees.

Ms Dewan also discussed the various issues and challenges faced in the implementation of schemes for empowerment of women. She said that though provisions such as Women's commission, Sexual Harassment at workplace committees, trainings to sensitize police etc were put in place women were not coming forward to access these facilities. Due to Gujarat being a liquor prohibition state, alcohol trade was booming in the region. She said that even after providing vocational training to women and tying up with various industries for ancillary jobs and providing various incentives, women were not taking up jobs as they were stuck in their traditional gender roles of child rearing and housework.

3.2 Participants’ Views:

1) Ms Indu Capoor, CHETNA said "If I understood correctly the mission machinery is supposed to focus on innovation and advocacy. I think that government should focus on monitoring and constant administration."
Innovation is difficult to do in government as it requires a lot of flexibility. Launching of schemes is not equivalent to implementing of schemes. What we’re really weak in is not exciting schemes but regular monitoring. So I don’t think either innovation or advocacy can be viewed within the government when the government itself needs advocacy as there is no one seeing the outside field to tell you what is really wrong. The criteria therefore should be effective governance from outside who can demand some accountability.

2) Dr Hina Shah, ICECD addressed the panel saying that the presentations made by the various speakers were excellent and very enlightening. She said she would like to know what would be the State Governments’ agenda to implement these various plans and programmes and if there was a certain percentage of the programme that the government wanted to implement on their own and how much of the programme did they want their convergent partner, be it NGOs or corporate, to implement on their behalf?

3) Dr Meera Chatterjee, World Bank said "The presentations were very enlightening as I can see that the government has a plethora of schemes and is doing a large number of things. My question is whether we should be going beyond convergence to consolidation. What has happened is that the whole focus on the rights of women and the core needs of women have been dissipated across a large number of programmes, approaches, methods etc. and almost every state is doing so many things. So it may be well to think about consolidating and evaluating and this is where I see the GoI has a role. The sub-theme of this would also be to evaluate the intended or unintended impact of the schemes. For e.g. through the programmes that promote community marriages are we inadvertently placing an emphasis on caste marriages or sanctifying dowry by saying that if the families can’t give dowry the government would be giving it instead. So we need to look at these programmes both from a social as well a gender perspective."

4) Dr Shewli Kumar, Assistant Professor, TISS expressed her concern about the overall approach of woman as a homogeneous category as all the schemes approached women and girl children from that perspective. She said that the problematic elements of public violence or community led violence against specific women had been completely left out in all the presentations and there was a whole new dimension to it when it came to dalit or tribal or Muslim women. She said that working on the concept of empowerment would need one to deal with the specifics of caste, religion etc because empowerment was a process and not an end in itself and it was important for organizations working on women’s issues to examine which women were they leaving behind in this process of empowerment and what were the empowerment dimensions that were being emphasized by their work.

5) Ms Flavia Agnes, Majlis added further that each state had its specific mechanisms for inclusions/exclusions. "We have a common denominator of women as homogeneous which is reflected in child marriages, violence against women, Domestic violence, rape etc. But the specificities are somewhere getting lost. For e.g. in Rajasthan the programmes on promoting community marriages excluded a whole set of women who desperately need state support. In my view the presentation should have included the marriage arrangements that were being followed for dalit/tribal women. The one on Gujarat should have spoken about the rehabilitation measures that have been taken by the state for Muslim women post the Gujarat riots. Just like the presentation on Daman & Diu was able to recognize alcoholism as an emerging problem, each state has to identify its own specificities and where women are located otherwise a whole set of women will fall out of its net. To do this, it is important to fine tune the overall programmes with its region’s specific problems so that it reaches people."

6) Dr Shaila Desouza, Goa University, felt that NMEW should separate out empowerment from welfare. She said that NMEW could focus on empowerment programmes that dealt with the strategic needs of women and improving their position in society and leave the welfare programmes to the state Commissions to deal with the practical needs of women. She shared her experience of being on the Sexual harassment committee of her university and said that in Goa, the recommendations of the committee were taken as final and binding. Thirdly she also said that she disagreed with Ms Vandana Krishna’s suggestion that the monetary compensation should
be reduced from Rs 2 lakhs to Rs 50,000 as she felt that in cases of rape there often is a tendency to not trust the rape victim and that attitude needs to change.

7) Dr Nandita Shah from Akshara said that it was important for organizations to look at diversity within their own contexts when they are defining women and empowerment. Talking about convergence from different perspectives, she said that she sees advocacy as a separate body that is required to highlight the importance of women. She also said that for convergence efforts to be effective it was important for the government to see other organizations as not merely implementers but as partners. The government in this sense should be open to taking on suggestions from partner organizations even when it came to the monitoring role and not just expect them to implement the programmes. She said that there was a sense of discomfort and feeling of threat on the part of government bodies to take on partner organizations in the monitoring capacity as well.

8) Ms Payal from NMEW asked Dr Sarita Singh about the programmes being implemented in her state to retain girl children in schools upto Class Xth. She asked if there were plans to bring on other stakeholders to work towards this goal.

9) Ms Jyoti Nagarkar from YUVA asked why NMEW was placed under WCD and not under the planning commission.

10) Ms Meeru Sharma from WCD, Maharashtra said that convergence efforts needed to be interstate and not just between the centre and the state or between departments within the state. She cited the example of women and children trafficked across states saying that when women are rescued and sent back to her home state she often comes back so it is important for states to have an information and data sharing mechanism between them so that such issues can be tackled effectively.

Responses from the Panel:

Mr Sanyal responded to Ms Indu Capoor’s question by saying that he partly agrees that perhaps innovation and advocacy should not be concentrated in the Government. "As we’ve been saying let us try to think a little differently, maybe that itself is innovation. In fact this whole concept of empowerment could itself be categorized as an innovative effort, as it has not been attempted earlier. So anything new that is being attempted can be categorized as innovation whether it is inside the Government or outside of the Government. So let us not work in watertight compartments. I agree that coordination and monitoring would be our prime focus but there is scope for innovation and advocacy as well in all structures." Ms. Rashmi Singh added that the Mission’s mandate for convergence involved not only the Government but it involved using the strengths of various partners like NGOs, CSOs, academicians etc rather than being a singular entity within the Government.

Responding to Ms. Jyoti question, Mr. Sanyal said that Planning Commission had not identified focus on women as their key thrust area so it would have taken more time to implement measures for women if it had been left to the Planning Commission. Ms Rashmi Singh said that NMEW was in the process of preparing a report of recommendations that would go to the Planning Commission.

Mr. Morris Babu, IG, Government of Rajasthan responded to Ms Meeru Sharma’s question saying that trafficking of women was a very serious matter that had been taken up by the Government of Rajasthan. Twelve anti-trafficking units in Rajasthan had been set up, sixteen brothels had been raided as a result of which four hundred and fifty girls had been rescued and two hundred and fifty six persons had been arrested. There was also a mechanism set up for inter-State cooperation and regular meetings were held with neighbouring States of Delhi, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana. Mr Sanyal added that the Ministry of Home Affairs was allocating resources and putting in place incentives and trying to have a separate communications system to address this issue of inter-State and inter-Police cooperation.

Dr. Sarita Singh said that women are definitely not a homogenous category and the aim of setting up village level sub-plans was to ensure that different categories of women get represented and their needs are
incorporated in the sub-plans. She said that mainstreaming of tribals were going to be taken by the Tribal Area Development Plan which were being implemented and closely monitored by the High level Committee. She said that gender focus on all new programmes is constantly reiterated by the WCD to the Government and they have asked for certificate from each department to this effect.

Addressing the question on the specificities of violence against women she said that they were in the process of presenting the Prevention of Atrocities against Women Bill in the assembly. She said this was in response to specifics of violence against women at the village level foreexample instances of women being made to parade nude in public, being subjected to Dain violence etc which needed to be tackled. Special courts for women would now deal with cases relating to violence against women.

Responding to the question on retention of girl children upto Class Xth, she said that Rajasthan now has an Integrated Child Tracking System to track children till class (to be specified), right from their birth to immunization to their nutritional needs etc and the initiative of shifting ICDS facilities to the school premises was aimed at providing continuity and ensuring that the girls remained in school. She said that there was a lot of NGO and corporate involved in educational and health initiatives and a lot of flexibility was provided to different bodies to be able to implement the programmes.

Ms Sangeeta Singh from Gujarat said that there was active participation from both NGOs and corporate in many of the programmes. For example in the ICDS programme, corporate have supported in building ICDS structures, adopting a number of Anganwadis and providing nutritional support. The PPP model has also been successful in providing gas stoves to many villages. The Gujarat Livelihood Promotion company aimed at providing marketing linkages to many SHGs with many corporate as a part of entrepreneurial development. NGO partnerships examples were the Mahila Kalyan Kendra which had an active participation from the NGOs. Responding to Dr Chatterjee’s suggestion of moving on to consolidation efforts, Ms Singh said that convergence was a strength of PRIs and having strong institutions at the village level but a certain thrust was required for convergence at the level of line departments since they operated in silos and didn’t talk to each other. She said that consolidation was a part of the process and would happen as convergent efforts progressed.

Responding to the comments on the Government encouraging caste marriages, Ms Singh said that there was a bigger incentive offered for inter-caste marriages which were all a part of the attitudinal changes that they were trying to bring about. She said that marriage as an institution with its own validity and the Government’s efforts at providing subsidies was a way of sharing the burden of expenses that poor families had to commit in the society. Regarding the specificities of different categories of women, she said that schemes need to be much more specific catering to differing women. She said that much work needs to be done in that area though initiatives have begun but efforts would need to be built up in the next phase of Nari Gaurav Niti. Commenting on the discussion regarding patriarchal models, Ms Singh said that within the social welfare schemes itself there is a gamut of evolution. It starts with access and moves on to redistribution which is the key thrust area where women are being organized to claim their share of redistribution. She said that she would not look at programmes as welfare verses empowerment because empowerment is important for women to be able to utilize the schemes properly and unless there is organization and mobilization of women, access is insufficient.

Ms Nirmala Sawant Prabhawalkar from the NCW mentioned that when we talk about access to justice for women there is a need to provide permanent incentives including shelter to women from lower and backward classes who are deserted or face violence and have to seek justice. She also said that there was a need to evaluate the incentives that are being doled out as part of the various schemes to assess its effectiveness and necessity.

3.3 KEY EMERGING POINTS:

- Women’s Empowerment was defined as the process of enabling a woman to be endowed enough with all the necessary attributes that would instill enough confidence and ability in her to enable her to make decisions for herself as well as her family and make her a person in her own right.
• The Mission’s mandate for Women’s Empowerment envisaged a common platform for all stakeholders to work together in order to establish appropriate levels of convergence in order to impact women in a meaningful and beneficial manner where NMEW would play a coordinating and monitoring role as well as undertake advocacy and innovation on the field.

• The eight key thematic areas for Convergence that NMEW would overlook were Economic Empowerment, Health & Nutrition, Social Empowerment and Education, Gender based Violence and Law Enforcement, Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting, Vulnerable/Destitute Women, Media for Awareness Generation, Advocacy and Mass Communication and Use of Information Technology.

• The State of Maharashtra highlighted the need to register under eighteen marriages, monitor abortion clinics for female foeticide and set up a community tracking system as a prevention measure, set up centralized committees at the district and block level for sexual harassment at workplace cases. With reference to rape cases suggestions were made to set up fast track courts and train specialized judges to deliver quicker convictions, amend the Evidence Act and relook at the two lakh monetary compensation for rape victims.

• Measures for Women’s Empowerment included increasing the number of counselling cum legal aid centres at Police Stations at Zilla Parishads, providing vocational training to girls above the age of fourteen to prevent Early Marriages and Sex Education/ Life Skills Education to be included as part of the regular school curriculum and school textbooks to be checked for gender bias. Gender Budgeting measures were to include access to credit and special provisions for women farmers and female headed households.

• Gujarat State’s Policy for Gender Equity called the "Nari Gaurav Niti" was aimed at the overall development and empowerment of the women of Gujarat and included processes of Gender planning, Gender sensitization, Gender mainstreaming, Gender analysis - audit and Gender convergence. Institutional mechanisms were set up in the Key Focus areas of economic environment, governance and decision making, health and quality of Life, VAW, natural resource management, education, women related laws and advocacy.

• Some of the key initiatives included providing vocational and skills training for women and facilitating entrepreneurial development by supporting the sustained development of Sakhi Mandals through interest assistance on bank loans, increasing women’s power and decision making in Local Self Governance by the formation of Mahila Samras Gram Panchayats, promoting multifaceted health and nutrition initiatives with a rights based perspective, emphasizing on girl child education, recommending amendments in various women related acts and training on gender sensitization, gender budgeting and gender integration carried out by various bodies.

• The State of Rajasthan cited anemia, declining child sex ratio, gender disparity in education and low female literacy rates as major areas of concern to be treated as an important issue for all departments in the Government.

• The Chief Minister’s Seven Point Programme was aimed at a life cycle strategy to empower women by focussing on initiatives for Safe Motherhood, Reduction in Infant Mortality Rate, Population Stabilization, Prevention of Child Marriages through various campaigns with the District Collectors, Retention of girls at least upto class X, Providing Safe Environment to women and Economic Empowerment of Women.

• The Women Development Programme of the DWCD in Rajasthan focussed on a three-fold objective of enhancing women’s social /economic awareness, empowering women to access the various Government programmes and involving them in developing village level sub plans.

• Key initiatives under this included the Rajasthan Community Marriage Regulatory Act and Subsidy Rules, programmes such as Sabla to provide life skills education to young girls, economic empowerment programmes such as Shilpi, Godhan and Gramya to encourage women enterprise, creation of a child tracking system to prevent child marriages, setting up of Mahila Suraksha Evam Salah Kendra and Zila Mahila Sahayta Samiti as protection measures for women. One of the best practices shared by the Rajasthan Government was the constitution of a high level committee under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary to incorporate Gender Budgeting into all department plans and programmes.
4. TECHNICAL SESSION I:

Access to Justice: Key issues and mechanism for convergence

Chair: **Ms. Flavia Agnes**, Majlis, Mumbai

Speakers:
1. **Ms. Anjali Dave**, TISS and Mr. Ravi Patil, DWCD, Government of Maharashtra for Special Cell for Women & Children
2. **Dr. Nandita Shah**, AKSHARA, Mumbai
3. **Ms. Audrey D’mello**, Majlis, Mumbai

Key Discussants:
1. **Mr. Morris Babu**, Government of Rajasthan
3. **Ms. Nirmala Sawant Prabhawalkar**, National Commission for Women, Delhi

This session attempted to highlight the need for consistent and rigorous convergence of mechanisms in programmes, departments and institutions as an important step in the direction of elimination of all forms of violence against women. The organizations working on issues of violence against women shared their best practices in terms of convergent efforts to incorporate the strengths of multiple stakeholders in the implementation of their programmes and drew attention to the fact that the elimination of violence against women cannot be addressed without radically altering the prevailing approaches of the political and legal institutions thereby enhancing the accessibility of rights and opportunities by women.

4.1 Overview of Presentations:

1) **Ms Anjali Dave** - Presenting the work done by the Special Cell for Women and Children on behalf of herself as well as Mr. Patil, Ms. Dave said that this initiative was born in 1984 based on the demands of women's movement' for the criminal justice system to respond to Violence against Women (VAW). She quoted a statement made by the DIG-PAW (MS) at a conference in Brazil in 2003 in which he had stated that the rationale for the Maharashtra Police’s strategic alliance was based on the police’s felt need to bridge the gap between women’s needs and the inadequate resources and services provided by the Police and other agencies to respond to VAW, the prevalence of a Police subculture that viewed women as low priority and women’s issues as a soft sector that did not necessitate urgent attention, the lack of specialized training to deal with violated women in terms of low counselling skills, insufficient patience and inadequate listening abilities to deal with specific cases of violence related to trauma, family, and emotional strengthening; and lastly a comparative critique of other efforts present on dealing with VAW namely those of the Mahila Suraksha Samiti, Grievance Redressal Cells, All Women Police Stations, and Crime Cells for Women revealed that this initiative where trained social workers would be working within the Police premises would add value to the ongoing police work on addressing the issue of VAW.

Stating the USPs of the initiative, Ms. Dave said that the specific thrust that this initiative brought about was enabling focused work on VAW and children within the pro-woman framework of the feminist approach, facilitating spaces for women within the Criminal Justice System specifically the Police system, being able to work with women and the Police at both the structural and an individual level to deal with VAW and children which included training, research, and documentation; dealing with a large number of potentially socio-legal cases of Violence against Women and Children and last but not the least the availability of full time trained personnel to deal with violated women. Ms. Dave stated that she essentially envisaged the role of the Special Cell as facilitating socio legal services for women in the Police system to access justice with the necessary involvement of the Police because violence was a subject of the Police system.
She further shared the structure of the Special Cell in terms of the personnel and resource allocation at each unit between the Special Cell and the Police department, stating that presently it was a WCD scheme with the organizational development being the shared responsibility of TISS, Police and State level Monitoring Committee (chaired by the Additional Chief Secretary (Home), members are from DWCD, Police Officials, NGOs & TISS). The process of work at the Special Cell covered provision of a spectrum of focussed specialised services such as emotional support and strengthening of the psychological self, negotiating for non-violence with various stakeholders, building support systems, engaging Police help, providing legal aid, development counselling, undertaking advocacy for group entitlement, re-establishing women’s relationships with their economic assets; arranging shelter and working with men in the interest of violated women.

Highlighting the impact of this initiative, Ms. Dave reported that the Special Cell’s work had reached out to a large and varied community of violated women, the partnership was an effective demonstration of interdisciplinary work essential to the area of VAW, the initiative had defined the role of trained social workers in the work with VAW and had established a rightful space for them to work within the Criminal Justice System, community institutions and with families on issues of Violence against Women. The UN Special Rapporteur on VAW in 2003 had reported that such partnerships were an effective response to VAW where multiple stakeholders such as Civil Society and the State came together to resolve the issue.

The evaluation of the work of the Special Cell in 2004 formed the basis for the Government of Maharashtra to take this programme into their fold. Since then the programme has been extended to every district in Maharashtra and there are further plans to constitute three cells in every taluka in the State. The model has been replicated in other States of Rajasthan, Haryana, Delhi and is currently being demonstrated in Gujarat, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Ms Dave noted that though the core approach and strategy of the Special cell could be used in replication models, the socio political climate of each state changed the nature and scope of the work that Special Cell could achieve. "So for example in Haryana the work has dovetailed with the Domestic Violence Act but in Delhi it has become part of the Crime Cell" she said.

Summing up her presentation, Ms. Dave said that engagement with the State was a necessity for any social change and allies in the system and power leverage from the outside was effective in sustaining and scaling up efforts. She said it was crucial to be persistent with the ideological premise of feminist understanding and women centred work; and such negotiations were possible only if equal partners sat across the table to take the initiative forward. The continuity of the interventions had allowed for tweaking of systems and inter-department work with the Police, law & judiciary; and Women and Child Department. She stated that "Only government can go to scale/ mainstream it in the System and if multidisciplinary, multi agency/ co-ordinated responses is the need of the issue; and also if ideology has to be sacrosanct it needs to be main-streamed and trained personnel is an increasing requirement to work with Formal systems." She concluded by saying "It is not an easy job to work with the state department and the police, but it is something that needs to be done if we are to address the issue of Violence against Women."

2) Dr Nandita Shah spoke about the convergence efforts undertaken by her organization Akshara, lessons learnt and challenges faced in responding to VAW and providing women access to justice in the city of Mumbai. The starting premise of her argument was that violence and especially street Sexual Harassment was not seen as a serious crime either by society or by the system. Because of this trivialization, it was up to the women’s organizations to politicize the issue. She said that to work on issues of VAW it was important to start talking to men and bringing about behavioral and attitudinal changes in them as had been incorporated into Akshara’s work.

Highlighting the need for new strategies, Dr. Shah said "We realized that the women’s movement and women organizations had to position themselves within the system of Police. As women’s organization we did not have the right to punitive action which itself gives limited scope to what we can do especially in cases of violence and street sexual harassment." She said that today there was greater willingness on the part of the State to find collaborations and work together with different organizations though ironing out differences, negotiating
spaces and roles with the State was a constant struggle. "Today the challenge that one faces is to constantly find innovative ways to work with State and non State actors"

Dr. Shah shared with the forum her 'Triple A' strategies of Awareness-Assistance-Advocacy in working for VAW. Awareness generation through multiple methods like games, research, publications, using different forms of mass media and online education was necessary to drive home the point that violence was unacceptable. Assistance was provided to women to access their rights by building their capacities and working with men to prevent violence by helping them recognize their own privileges and at the same time recognize the rights of women. The third strategy was taking on an advocacy role with the Police, Municipality, State Government and Educational Institutions. Giving an overall picture of the dimension of convergence undertaken in her work Dr. Shah said "It is important to bring in a synergy of different actors to address an issue and make an impact in a city. What we have tried to do in our work is to bring in collaborative support from various partners such as the Police system, the Municipal Corporation, IAS and IPS academies and other educational institutions. We have built partnerships with media houses such as the Hindustan Times, Leo Burnett, Grey, various celebrities and received pro-bono support from BEST, Cinemax, PVR theatres, Cable Operators, Getty images etc."

She cited an example of a successful collaboration with the Mumbai Police in initialing a 24 hour emergency 103 helpline number for women facing crisis. Dr. Shah said that the mechanism of directing the calls through the centralized control room setup of the Police had proven very effective in being able to deliver immediate responses to cases of VAW. Media campaigns to promote the helpline not only ensured that women were given information about how to access help but it also helped in spreading the message about VAW. "The 103 campaigns were also effective because we were providing a service along with generating awareness" she said. Talking about creating spaces for convergence, she said that each platform could be used to generate awareness and action on multiple issues like domestic violence, sexual harassment etc therefore brining about convergence of issues within the various forums itself. The challenge faced in this initiative was that the collaboration had not yet been institutionalized by the Mumbai Police and there was no monitoring mechanism in place to assess its effectiveness. Dr. Shah suggested that "Like we have 100, we could have the 103 helpline as a National number used across the country to respond to women in distress." Dr. Shah shared that another area where Akshara was trying to create synergies was in working with the Municipal Corporation to set up a resource centre dedicated to violence against women in order to create a gender friendly city. Here different organizations would come together under the one roof to provide different kinds of services to women and also take up preventive work through various advocacy measures.

Dr. Shah ended by sharing the experience of the Safe City Campaign which had been the culmination of various VAW campaigns done in collaboration with pro-bono support from an advertising agency who had designed the entire campaign and Hindustan Times that had conducted the study along with Akshara along with running the entire campaign free of charge for two weeks. "It's not about money but about how each partner is able to benefit from the partnership. So convergence is really about how we are bringing in the aspects of each of our strengths onboard for a particular issue." Dr. Shah concluded by saying that NMEW would thus need to bring on board the strengths of various organizations and departments and see how each one could take ahead their agenda and benefit from being a part of the coordination and convergence efforts of the Mission.

3) Ms Audrey D'Mello from Majlis highlighted her organization's convergence efforts with the courts to help her access the criminal justice system by creating spaces for women within them and making the environment pro-women. "Our work starts at the point where a woman needs help to access court to be able to get justice" she said. Apart from helping women access the legal system, Majlis also works towards evolving women oriented legal strategies, pro-women laws and making the court respond to women's need by training and sensitizing the judiciary on aspects of gender and women's rights. Majlis's convergence efforts also involve working with other organizations to provide the necessary information and support in terms of Police Station based, hospital based and community based support.

As an all women team comprising of lawyers and social activists, Majlis has a network of district lawyers across
Maharashtra with whom they engage on a comprehensive women's rights programme. This included initiatives such as the Women District Lawyer's programme that aimed at training and building the capacities of women lawyers at the district level on legal rights and gender perspectives. Annual fellowships to selected women lawyers from diverse backgrounds were awarded to help them bring about social change in their area. "The significant aspect of this programme is that while it helps the community, it also transforms these women into confident and independent lawyers capable of helping women even beyond the period of their fellowship" said Ms. D'mello. The district women lawyers had worked on campaigns against child marriages; trafficking; exploitation against dalit / tribal women; campaigns against sexual abuse; atrocities against women with HIV; muslim women's rights in their areas.

Responding to the need for a coordinated effort between agencies that extended support to victims of violence in a local area in the form of counselling, shelter, medical aid, educational help for children and skill development programmes, in 2010 Majlis attempted to create a Local Area Network of organisations as a convergence initiative in three areas in Mumbai namely Bandra, Kurla and Vikhroli. The network organised awareness programmes in colleges and communities. Majlis also undertook training and capacity building of the network by designing a comprehensive course to help stakeholders deal with legal and non legal agencies to negotiate the best settlements for women.

4.2 Points Raised by the Key Discussants:

1) Mr Morris Babu shared the mechanism for empowerment of women followed by the Rajasthan Police. Special initiatives taken by the State to address crimes against women included the Mahila Suraksha and Salah Kendra which were special crime cells for women, installing lady constables as well as a women’s desk at all Police Stations; and anti-human trafficking units working in various villages particularly in the border areas of Udaipur, Bundi, Sawai Madavpur etc. A particular system had been put in place for dealing with investigation of cases dealing with VAW. Each case had to be looked into immediately and closed within fifteen days of starting the enquiry to avoid the cases being kept pending due to negligence or indifference. Special permission had to be sought in order to continue investigating the case, the point being that there was close monitoring of all cases pertaining to crimes against women. Special attention was paid to rape cases where standing orders had been issued for charge sheeting rape cases within seven days of the complaint being filed. He said that this had helped in getting more number of convictions. Sharing the effective practices followed by the Rajasthan Police, Mr. Morris said that it included successful counselling services, financial assistance, victim compensation, transparency and sensitivity in dealing with women's atrocities etc.

2) Advocate Sapna K Patel expressed her view that apart from the Police system that could help an aggrieved woman access justice, even the lawyers could play a major role in getting a woman access to legal aid. Sharing her experiences of working in Dadra & Nagar Haveli she said that a group of lawyers were working with para legal volunteers at the village level and training them on legal knowledge and gender rights to be able to in turn approach Village Panchayats and provide legal aid services to the women in the villages. This intervention model had proved very successful in getting women in the villages access to justice through the courts in the area. She added that courts could be made accessible to women but this depended on the motivation and commitment of the advocates along with other mediators.

3) Ms Nirmala Sawant PrabhaValkar focussed on the idea behind the constitution of the NMEW and the need for every stakeholder to identify how it could integrate with the Mission in its efforts towards empowering women. While appreciating the efforts put in by the NGOs and other agencies, she said that there was a need for initiatives to be spearheaded at the level of NMEW and for NCW to play a lead role in taking it forward. She said that NCW's role should go beyond that of playing the role of a watchdog or merely that of a monitoring or coordinating role but that their role should be expanded to supplement and complement all the activities that fell under the umbrella of women's empowerment. The key would be to activate the legal system mechanisms to increase the accessibility of women to the justice system, especially those women who are most deprived and in need of free legal aid, and this could be achieved by taking the help of and working with other
stakeholders like NGOs, CSOs etc. She quoted that eighty percent cases that were registered in the courts were family related cases which could be settled through arbitration therefore she envisaged the role of the NMEW to involve empowering of Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats at the village level so that cases could be followed up speedily and women could get justice without any delay. She said for this to happen it was imperative for the Planning Commission to play a key role and Gender Budgeting to be implemented so as to enable State Women’s Commissions to take this forward.

4.3 Concluding Comments from the Chair

Ms Flavia Agnes concluded the session with her comments, one being the existence on one hand of a consistent demand for laws to be enacted for women and on the other hand of an apprehension that the Courts, Police and the Criminal Justice System did not work for them. She said several schemes of the Government were working at the grassroots level focussing on various models of empowerment and welfare services for women which centred around specific schemes for education, housing, SHG etc but the key focus on ensuring that the rights of women actually filtered down to them at the grassroots level along with women’s rights orientation to the Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha would decide the nature and outcomes of legal interventions at the village level.

Ms. Flavia urged that in order to enable laws to converge at the local level there was a need to intervene with the local mechanisms that existed in the villages, many of which were anti-women in nature and to raise consciousness about women’s rights by making the local authorities like the Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha responsible for delivering justice for women. Therefore there was an urgent need to make rights based programmes a part of village development programmes. "Unless the education system does not teach women to value herself and her dignity, she will continue to face domestic violence, irrespective of being economically or educationally empowered" stated Ms. Agnes, and pointed out that in addition to economic and social empowerment, legal empowerment should be integrated into every intervention. Every State would need to identify its own specific issues of exclusion and address them by devising mechanisms to integrate them into the overall development and empowerment plans for women.

4.4 KEY EMERGING POINTS:

- Violence against Women is not taken seriously either by society or by the State, thereby calling for strategic interventions to address the same.
- Interventions to address the issue of VAW require inter-disciplinary work in terms of direct work with communities, training, research, social action, advocacy as well as convergence with the criminal justice systems and social institutions both at the structural as well as at an individual level.
- Women’s access to justice would require convergence efforts to build local area networks with the community, hospitals, police, and courts. Some successful convergence models are The Special Cell for Women and Children that works with the police, Majlis that works with the courts and that of Akshara which works effectively with the media and the corporate along with other key stakeholders.
- Engagement with the State machinery is critical as violence is a State subject and justice is a matter of the courts hence the key lies in creating spaces for women within these systems by incorporating feminist understandings through gender sensitization trainings and pushing for pro women laws and women oriented legal strategies.
- Development programmes need to be designed on rights based rather than a welfare model and an orientation on women’s rights should percolate all the way down to not only the woman but also to all the functionaries and other stakeholders, thus incorporating legal empowerment into every intervention.
- Capacity building and training on aspects of gender and women’s rights call for behavioural and attitudinal changes in individuals in order to impact structural and systemic changes.
- Convergence models are successful when each stakeholder brings in their strengths and benefits from the partnership that is addressing a particular issue.
5. TECHNICAL SESSION II:

Women’s Health and Nutrition: Issues and Efforts for Convergence

Chair: Dr Meera Chatterjee, World Bank

Speakers:
1. Dr. R. R. Dighe, Rajmata Jijau Mother-Child Health & Nutrition Mission, DWCD, Government of Maharashtra
2. Ms. Indu Capoor, CHETNA, Gujarat
3. Ms. Sangeeta Rege, CEHAT, Mumbai

Key Discussants:
1. Dr. S.C Vashishtha, Gandhinagar
2. Dr. Suhash Solanki, Directorate of Medical & Health Services, Daman & Diu

The primary focus of the Health and Nutrition domain of NMEW is to formulate activities targeted at strengthening the processes of inter-sectoral convergence at the National, State and District Level to improve access of women to affordable and quality healthcare with a focus on maternal and child health, formulating strategies to combat poor nutritional status and working towards bringing balanced child sex-ratio. This session aimed at getting together practitioners from different domains in the health sector to discuss the issues and challenges that come in the way of achieving the desired health outcome and suggest required mechanisms for convergence of different efforts.

5.1 Overview of Presentations:

1) Dr R R Dighe shared the best practices of the Rajmata Jijau Mother – Child Health and Nutrition Mission by giving a brief outline of the initiatives undertaken by the Government of Maharashtra to address the issue of Women’s Health and Nutrition and the convergence achieved between the various departments for the successful implementation of these interventions. He explained that the genesis and need for the Mission was based on the third NFHS survey of 2004 -05 which revealed very alarming figures of the nutritional status of women and children in Maharashtra (49% women and 58% pregnant women in the age group 15-49 were found to be anemic) which drew attention to the immediate need to address the health and nutritional status of women and children in the State.

The first phase of the Mission focused on improving survey efficiency & weighing efficiency, increasing focus on children suffering from Grade 3 & 4 of malnutrition especially those in the 0-3 age group, and paying special attention to pregnant and lactating mothers and monitoring the feeding practices of mothers & children. Efforts were also made in the plan to cover adolescent girls. The State ensured the successful implementation of the Mission by conducting social audits of Anganwadi Centres and providing nutrition trainings in 29 districts. This timely intervention by the State helped in reversing the situation of women and child malnutrition to a considerable extent in many districts.

The success of the first phase of the Mission motivated the Government to approach the second phase with a renewed focus and commitment concentrating efforts in capacity building of various stakeholders, generating awareness and encouraging community participation for effective policy interventions, undertaking convergence and coordination among various departments and suggesting policy shifts wherever necessary.
Special emphasis was placed on effective monitoring and evaluation of these efforts. In the second phase of the Mission, the State identified five key areas of Government functioning or programmes to work in convergence with one another and these were Health, Nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities. Accordingly each department’s roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms were finalized.

Dr. Dighe said that based on the learnings and successes of the first two phases of the Mission, the Government would now undertake Mother & Family empowerment, initiatives for adolescent girls, urban campaigns and nutrition surveys with UNICEF to take forward the Mission of empowerment of women.

2) **Ms Indu Capoor** shared the work done by her organization towards health and nutrition of women in Gujarat. She said that their mission was to strive for people centred, gender sensitive nutrition and health policies and programmes at the State, National, Regional and International levels; and to bring partners together in a convergent mode to develop strategies by facilitating dialogue among key stakeholders. She explained that they adopted the ‘Lifecycle Approach’ that worked with children, adolescents and women, to address the nutrition and health needs of women as each lifecycle influenced the other. “So the work of women’s empowerment should start very early on in the lifecycle of the woman”. Ms. Capoor emphasized that sustainable health outcome for women could only be achieved by involving community participation and empowering both men and women in the process to promote gender equality and equity.

Putting forth a holistic definition of women’s health, Ms. Capoor explained that it was critical to address three major factors that impacted women’s health, those being under-nutrition, overwork and the violence that women faced in their daily lives. “To work on women’s empowerment, it is important to break the vicious cycle of violence and facilitate an environment for women which is violence free and where the women are free to choose the right options for herself and her body.” To challenge the vicious cycle of violence, Ms. Capoor said that it was important to empower women and girls which involved addressing all the inter-related factors such as increasing their access to nutrition supplements and subsidized food, clean drinking water and sanitation, health services, education, promoting growing of local crops, enhancing the economic status of women and ensuring a violence free environment for women. She further stated that convergence was required between various Government departments for the successful implementation of women’s health interventions namely that of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, Agriculture, Food and Civil Supplies, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Education, Rural Development, Social Justice and Empowerment etc”. In addition to Government departments, there are of course other players also involved who need to be brought into the convergence efforts” she added.

Ms. Capoor shared CHETNA’s experiences of working on a project to improve access to maternal healthcare services in the Navsari district in Gujarat. Vansada and Chikhali which were tribal blocks were found to have the poorest maternal health indicators with low institutional deliveries and low birth weight babies. The awareness of JSY was very low among the people here and the lack of awareness about pregnancy care had led to poor pre and postnatal care. While conducting a base line study of the health and nutritional status of the blocks, they found very low indicators in other development areas such as poor land holdings, high number of BPL families, and abysmal literacy rates among both men and women. These factors also impacted the health and nutritional conditions of women and children and needed to be addressed if health interventions were to be successful.

CHETNA then had to expand the scope of their work to include convergence strategies with not only the Department of Health and Family Welfare but also the Department of Women and Child Development, Department of Rural Development and the Milk Cooperative Board. They also launched field level
interventions which included training of Female Health Workers (FHWs) to make maternal health services accessible to women, training of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) to act as a link between the village and health facilities, training of Panchayati Raj members, Self Help Groups and Secretaries of Milk Cooperatives to make health providers accountable and ensure access to health services, mentoring of Anganwadi workers to ensure nutrition to the pregnant and lactating women and to impart health and nutrition awareness; and coordination with local private transporters to provide transport access to health care facilities. These interventions by CHETNA had led to increased institutional deliveries from 68% to 82%, deliveries by ANMs had increased from 4.4% to 40% and the uptake of JSY had increased multifold in just five years.

Ms. Capoor made the following suggestions for an effective convergence model at the State level to ensure effective health interventions:

- A need for stronger collaboration between the Department of Women and Child Development, Department of Health and Family Welfare and Panchayati Raj Institutions to improve maternal health scenario at the community level.
- A joint plan of action to be developed at district level with clear role and allocation of funds by different departments.
- Efforts to work on the socio economic issues especially early marriage and livelihoods
- Importance of reviewing the implementation of various government schemes to ensure effective convergence.
- Coordination among and within the departments.
- Maintenance of village level birth and death registration to measure the progress in health status of the community.
- Generating awareness and capacity building of various actors.
- Communities to be made aware of all the health and development entitlements listed under the government programmes and schemes
- Inclusion of skill enhancement during the capacity building of grass root workers like ASHA, Anganwadi worker.
- Recognition and strengthening of TBAs/Dais.
- Dissemination of behavioural change communication, health education material and information about maternal health entitlements in the community.

3) **Ms. Sangeeta Rege** shared CEHAT's experience of institutionalizing a public hospital based crisis center with a focus on addressing the issue of VAW which stands as a successful example of feminist counselling practices in the country. She said that the rationale for the initiative - Dilasa - was based on studies which revealed that most women within the first five years of their marriage faced some kind of abuse. It was gathered that since many of these women were in their reproductive age they were likely to use health facilities often which meant that health professionals had primary access to these abused women and could thus reach out to them and provide the timely help if they were sensitized and trained to recognize and respond to issues of abuse and violence that women suffered. "We felt it was important to sensitize professionals at health setups so that they would be able to identify signs of violence and investigate the real reasons behind women's injuries or illnesses. The detailed medical records could also provide strong evidence in medico legal cases" said Ms. Rege. Since most women use public health facilities, a public hospital was selected as the location for this initiative.

Ms. Rege said that since most hospitals had social work departments with trained social workers and clinical psychologists, "We realized that if we could train them to provide feminist counselling services, then they
would adequately be able to respond to the issue of violence.” Hospitals were also seen as secure sites that could provide temporary shelter to women who needed a safe place to get away from an occurring instance of violence and plan her next course of action. Thus the medical professionals were identified as the ones who could play a very crucial medico-legal role, both in terms of therapeutic and forensic interventions in responding to VAW.

Highlighting the work of Dilasa, Ms. Rege said the aim was to establish this crisis centre as a department within public hospitals that would cater to survivors of violence. The two main elements of this intervention included gender sensitization of health professionals across the board so that domestic violence and VAW came to be recognized as a public health issue and necessary referrals could be made to the crisis centre. The second was a convergence strategy which involved collaboration with the public health centre that were required to lead the initiative and undertake ownership towards the project and tying up with other NGOs like Majlis to provide legal aid to women facing violence. One of the key outcomes of this initiative has been that currently there is a strong cadre of gender sensitized health professionals trained to provide healthcare, counselling and legal aid to women facing abuse both in terms of domestic violence as well as sexual assault. “One of the successes of the programme has been the institutionalization of the training cell that has been created under the municipal corporation. A comprehensive training curriculum has been developed to provide gender sensitization training to health professionals. The doctors have been deeply involved in evolving the whole process and today it is the certified doctors and nurses who deliver this training.” Initially started in one municipal hospital in Mumbai, the model has now been replicated in other hospitals in Mumbai and in other States. The effectiveness of this collaboration with the public health system has been that a large number of women from economically marginalized backgrounds have been provided early help and the intervention has been able to reach out to many more women than community based organizations or NGOs are able to cover, because of the referral system existing within the hospital.

Other challenges being addressed by this initiative include interventions to develop gender sensitive proformas and protocols to respond to sexual assault survivors in terms of doing away with references to past sexual conduct of the victims, the two finger test etc; budget allocation for creation of counselling departments within hospitals so that it is recognized as an important healthcare need and not as an add-on service and increasing the jurisdiction of the medico social work departments to overlook the counselling department within the hospital. Other areas that are also being looked into are the establishment of protocols both for medical institutions to respond to the requirements of the PWDV Act and for standardizing comprehensive protocols for linkages between police, medical authority and law. Policy related interventions would require the inclusion of VAW in the National Health Policy and inclusion of DV policy in within medical, paramedical and nursing curricula as a public health issue.

As a way forward, Ms. Rege suggested seizing the opportunity provided by the Planning Commission and the budget allocated by them to establish similar crisis centres in public health institutions all over India so that there was atleast one crisis centre within each district, addressing the need for inter-sectoral coordination at policy level, changing the methods of assessing the survivors of sexual assault by addressing gender in medical institutions which would involve the unlearning of several myths; and integration of domestic violence and gender in the pre-service training curricula of all health professionals.

### 5.2 Points Raised by the Key Discussants:

Dr. Vasishtha and Dr. Solanki both the point that empowerment of women encompassed both facilitating access to health services for women at the village level as well as building the capabilities of the village workers who are the links to providing this service.
Dr. Vasishtha drew attention to the fact that NRHM had undertaken the nutrition mission in a big way by investing money, flexibility and innovation into its programmes. In order for these programmes to be successful, mechanisms needed to be put in place through mapping and research to monitor the quality and coordinate the work of FHW/AAW to empower them to work more efficiently. Community participation through education and capacity building was critical in order to implement the new paradigm shift that focused on reproductive health of women and young girls. He said that initiatives to address the health of adolescent girls should be strengthened through bottom to top planning as part of the lifecycle approach. Family Planning should be implemented as a method of empowering women so that women are able to make informed sexual and reproductive choices in order to avoid unwanted pregnancies. He concluded by saying that the key was to strengthen the missing links and therefore focus was to be directed to preventive and diagnostic services.

Dr. Solanki reinforced the lifecycle approach mentioned by the earlier speakers by adding that anemia was a problem that began in Indian women during their pediatric age but became visible only during their adolescence due to the increasing nutritional requirements of their body and this worsened by the time girls entered their reproductive age period and most Indian women suffered from low hemoglobin which affected their health drastically during pregnancy. To counter this, he said that interventions to provide supplementary nutrition should target school going and adolescent girls. Highlighting the success of the mother-child tracking system which had been implemented in Dadra & Nagar Haveli, an intervention in which the AWW/FHW monitor the quality of post natal care in terms of child immunization, breast feeding techniques of women etc., Mr. Solanki said that the phenomena of migration posed a big challenge in sustaining this tracking system. "This is where we need to have a convergence between the health and other departments of different States to keep track of this migratory population and continue to provide them health services." Dr Solanki also brought in the dimension of geriatric issues suffered by women in their peri-menopausal age period such as stress, psychiatric issues; osteoporosis etc which he said was a blind spot in health policies and needs to be given urgent attention.

5.3 Participants’ Views:

1) Mr. Sanyal wanted to know if CEHAT had approached a bigger body like the Medical Council of India to get a wider reach for their training curriculum.

2) Another participant said that the Anganwadi workers were paid very nominal honorariums so one couldn’t expect them to be motivated unless their needs were addressed.

Responses from the Panelists:

1) Ms. Rege responded to Mr Sanyal’s question by saying that because it was taking a long time to get approval from the Medical Council, CEHAT had approached the Maharashtra University for Health Sciences in the interim to introduce the curriculum in six medical colleges across Maharashtra at the undergraduate level and across six disciplines in medical schools at the PG level hoping that the Medical Council would then absorb certain elements of it into the medical curriculum. She stated that currently they were fighting a PIL battle to introduce uniform protocols for sexual assault and it was tough enough convincing the panel of highly renowned forensic doctors to look at international WHO standards, so bringing changes to the medical education was really a long way away.

Dr. Meera Chatterjee added by saying that in the context of the National Mission it was upto the Government to decide a strategic approach that would help scale up the interventions of violence against women such as introducing VAW in medical curriculums and police trainings and so on.
2) Dr. Dighe responded to the second comment by saying that his experience of working with AWW in Maharashtra was that they were very motivated and effective workers and all efforts were being made to address their concerns. To this Dr. Chatterjee responded that we needed to recognize that our frontline workers like ASHA, AWW, ANM etc were the most hardworking and that we needed to relook at the system which paid them virtually nothing but at the same time put a lot of responsibility on them.

5.4 Concluding Comments from the Chair

Dr. Meera Chatterjee noted that it was important for NMEW and the SMA to assess how structures that are set up actually begin to function and this would need to be facilitated through training, capacity building skills, behavioural and attitudinal changes. She reiterated her view that the Government could not get down to doing everything. She said that many of the issues such as Health and Nutrition which one would think to be institutional or medical related were really societal issues so the Government should think about how to facilitate households, families etc to take the necessary actions. She then spoke about the need to look at women’s empowerment as a continuous process which should be done throughout the life of a girl and pointed out that the whole process of socialization was very instrumental and critical to the question of whether a woman felt empowered or not and said "You can't ignore children because most of the behaviours are inculcated by the age of seven. Similarly you can’t ignore the adolescent age group either as all reproductive and violence related behaviours are acquired during this stage. That is why it is most important not to leave out boys." She said that men were only seen as perpetrators of crime and not as participants in the process of solutions and we had to begin to think of them in terms of the latter.

Commenting on the issue of continuity, Dr. Chatterjee said that training needed to be a continuous process and that we would need to think of strategic ways in which we were going to achieve the objective of conducting continuous trainings for grassroots workers, doctors, police etc to make them think about gender and women’s issues. She concluded by reiterating that we should move away from not looking at family planning as an act of population stabilization as it was actually a means to empower women.

5.5 Key Emerging Points:

- The health and nutrition status of women are intermeshed with other aspects of their lives such as lack of access to land and livelihood opportunities, low educational outcomes, disproportionate allocation of intra-household resources and violence resulting from gender relations in society. Health and nutrition policies and programmes should therefore be people centred and gender sensitive.
- Women’s health as a holistic concept calls for empowerment of women in all areas of their lives and necessitates a focus on the 'lifecycle approach' to cover girl children from a very young age as well as attention on peri-menopausal women.
- Sustainable health interventions should aim at opening up dialogue among key stakeholders which should include community participation and working with men. Field interventions would also include capacity building and gender sensitization of all health professionals and functionaries on the field.
- Convergent efforts for favourable health outcomes require working with multiple government departments and external stakeholders. A successful convergent model presented was institutionalization of feminist counselling, health care services, legal aid and temporary shelter within hospitals to address violence against women.
6. TECHNICAL SESSION III:

Empowerment of Vulnerable & Marginalized Groups and Women in Difficult Circumstances: Issues & Challenges; and Strategies for Mainstreaming through Convergence

Chair: Prof. Kanchan Mathur, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur

Speakers:
1. Prof. Kanchan Mathur, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur
2. Dr. Shaila Desouza, Centre for Women Studies, Goa University, Goa

Key Discussants:
1. Shri. Kuldeep Singh, Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society, Government of Daman & Diu
2. Ms Anita Kaushik, Government Representative, Rajasthan
3. Ms Ramya Subrahmanian, UNICEF, Delhi

This session aimed at exploring the vulnerabilities created due to the intersections between gender and other marginalized identities and the need to understand the fractured realities of oppression that influence the life choices women make in different contexts and situations. The key points explored in this session included the identification and mapping of marginalized women with special focus on homeless/destitute; single women; women affected by violence, trafficked women, women in conflicts/insurgency areas; differently-abled women etc., the issues and challenges related to Policies, Institutional Mechanisms and Service Delivery in the different regions, best practices being followed in different states and recommended strategies for convergence.

6.1 Overview of Presentations:

1) Ms Kanchan Mathur set the tone of the session by stating "There is a need to expand the definition of women's empowerment by looking at it as a process to enable women to have a notion of dignity and self worth, bodily integrity, freedom from coercion and control over resources." She reiterated that the session would lay special emphasis on the most vulnerable groups and women within these groups, be it dalit, tribals, minorities, women with disabilities, women from poor communities, women working in the unorganized sector, women who are vulnerable or victims of violence, abuse and exploitation with a special emphasis on single, widowed and separated women etc.

She argued that while there are several forms of discrimination and gender based violence that are faced by all women cutting across caste, class, religion etc, these same vulnerabilities are manifested multifold when it comes to being faced by women from these specific marginalized groups. This is seen in the structural barriers and constraints faced by them such as restricted mobility, exclusion from public political spheres, unequal access and control over resources, little/no freedom to make informed choices regarding sexual and reproductive health and so on that render specific groups of women as more disadvantageous in comparison to other groups.

She continued to say that the unequal economic and social status, which is deeply entrenched in socio cultural stereotypes about women, is also perpetrated by laws, regulations, and policy, which do not sufficiently address the subordinate status of women, this calls for a need to address the structural barriers that women face and a need to put in place support structures and institutional mechanisms.

Sharing statistics of sex ratio and child sex ratio for the different States in the western region, Prof. Kanchan Mathur said that sharp regional variations, interstate variations and also intra-State variations were witnessed.
There were also inter and intra-district variations with respect to women and particularly those belonging to
vulnerable groups which called for context specific discussions on these issues and devising of institutional
mechanisms for specific groups instead of adopting the one size fits all model when it comes to these specific
marginalized groups.

With regards to female literacy rates, Prof. Mathur said that there were huge gender gaps between male and
female literacy rates in all States despite the huge investments made in programmes like the Sarva Shiksha
Abhiyan. In Rajasthan, the female literacy rate continued to be the lowest and the State ranked thirty-third out
of a total of thirty five States and UTs. There were similar disparities with regards to the MMR and IMR where
Rajasthan continued to show very high rates in comparison to the National average and the other States.

Following this, Prof. Mathur quoted the findings from four studies conducted recently by her institute
specifically on vulnerable groups that reflected certain vulnerabilities that were specific to the State of
Rajasthan.

i) The first study was conducted on the tradition of labeling women as dakhans and dains. Out of a total of sixty
three case studies done in six districts in Rajasthan it was found that fifty five of them belonged to SC/ST group
and they had been made to suffer extreme forms of violence such as being made to eat their own excreta, being
dragged by tractors, their heads being shaved off, raped, burnt with burning sticks etc

ii) The second study focused on trafficking of women for sex work which is common in the western region. But it
was found that in Rajasthan, there was a community sanction for sex work among certain communities like
Naths, Bedia, Kanjars, Sathias - all belonging to SC/DNT communities which showed a clear linkage between
women belonging to vulnerable groups and suffering the forms of violence that they do.

iii) Another study was conducted on land rights in two districts, one in a largely SC district and the other in
Udaipur which had a predominantly ST population. It was found that firstly there was no sex disaggregated data
when it came to land and secondly women's access to land was almost abysmal in these regions. The social
system was structured in such a manner that inspite of laws like Equal property rights having been enacted for
women; they do not claim their share from their natal family and relinquish land to their brothers for fear of
losing her support system. The case was once again replicated when it came to women claiming land from their
marital homes. This was particularly true in the case of SC/ST women.

iv) The fourth study was conducted in relation to women and governance. One was done in collaboration with
TISS and another one is being conducted with UN women. These studies clearly show that women suffered
overt forms of violence in the first and second round of local governance. The patriarchal nature of society in
Rajasthan was reflected in instances where women from marginalized communities were not allowed to unfurl
the National flag, they were beaten and raped. In Gram Sabha meetings it was found that a dalit woman would
not be allowed to sit on a chair, to speak, she would face lewd remarks from the men present; she would not be
allowed to articulate her views in public and would have no role to play in decision making. In another study
conducted on social exclusion within schools, the same pattern is seen to be repeated where there are
exclusionary practices followed for SC/ST girl children.

2) **Dr Shaila Desouza** initiated her presentation by focusing attention on the need to move away from the
categorization of women for intervention and instead focus on a better understanding of the causes of
marginalization, vulnerability and disempowerment of women. Drawing on her work with women in Goa, she
said that women in Goa were reputed to be very empowered but gender blind planning in the State had led to
their disempowerment and marginalization. The impact of State promoted tourism had an adverse effect on
the women in Goa and the reality of women's experiences were coloured with instances of domestic violence
that arose from off season unemployment in tourism destinations and resulting alcoholism among men. Goa is reputed to have a very high human development index in terms of high per capita income, high literacy etc but one would be surprised to know that only twenty eight percent of women in Goa are part of the paid workforce. The education of women had not led to the economic independence of women especially in the tourism areas. The fact that women did not voluntarily choose to remain unemployed was reflected in the high registration rates by women for jobs in the employment bureaus. Despite high levels of education, statistics projected a declining sex ratio. The Government attributed this to the migration of women out of Goa for work but even the child sex ratio showed unfavourable trends for girl children which in fact reflected the low social status of women in the State.

Goa has had a different set of family laws from the rest of India since 1867 which assured equal property rights to women both in their natal and marital homes. Dr. Desouza said that her research showed that till before tourism was given a boost in Goa, there were very few property disputes registered. However in recent years, despite an equitable legal framework, there has been a huge rise in the cases of property disputes, disinheritance of women, violence against single women in families, crimes against the elderly, abandonment of widows by their families, increase in the number of homeless and destitute women. This was because the prices of land shot up in Goa due to the demand for land by hotels, restaurants and other tourism sectors leading to it being now viewed as an economic asset.

The tourism industry has also had a direct adverse impact on the health of women in Goa which was reflected in the high anemic rates revealed by the NFHS survey. This was because the huge inflow of tourists into the State had led to demand not only for land, space and water but also for food and commodities which had drastically altered the consumption basket of locals in the State. The low status of women in the society meant that women got a smaller share of the already decreasing food consumption basket. The demand for land has led to a decline in the cultivation of rice and the displacement of fishing communities due to the operation of luxury cruises has knocked off fish from the staple diet of the locals in the tourist areas especially the women, impacting their nutritional intake and health status.

Dr. Desouza suggested that the Government should initiate the following measures to restore the status of women in the State namely encouraging agriculture by supporting local produce, curtailing agricultural land conversion for tourism, initiating supplementary nutrition in low BMI areas, providing nutrition education for women, controlling food prices, making basic food accessible to all, providing food cards for local residents to purchase food at a lower price than tourists. She concluded by saying that education and favourable laws were not sufficient for the empowerment of women unless there was a culture that truly accepted women and the need for their empowerment. She said that the Government needed to set an example by absorbing more women into the Government structures and reserving jobs for them. The Children’s Act that was passed in 2003 had been successful in incorporating the needs of children in development programmes and a similar Act should be introduced for women. The Government would need to focus on rights and equality of women, incorporate gender analysis into all its development plans and focus on improving the position of women in society and not just on improving the condition of women’s lives. She reiterated her view that there was a need to separate empowerment programmes from welfare programmes to be able to focus on strategic versus practical needs of women. She ended her session by stating "The convergence I hope to see NMEW coordinate is in terms of collating information from a variety of sources for a better understanding of the causes of the disempowerment of women and intervention to check these causes rather than consolidating existing programme implementation."

6.2 Points Raised by the Key Discussants:

3) Shri. Kuldeep Singh reiterated that the principle of Gender equality was enshrined in the Indian Constitution
and it was imperative to create a favourable environment for the empowerment of women. But the declining sex ratio was a glaring indicator of the low status of women in the country and the causes were found in the underlying socio-economic structures in society. In patriarchal societies women were kept busy with housework and therefore given unequal opportunities for progress.

He said that the convergence look into the nature of response to the social complexities that is seen on the ground and focussed on government programmes which she said were important because it had the capacity to achieve scale and presence on the ground. She said that the existence of numerous binaries in the policy domain on various issues was problematic. Taking the example of the issue of social groups, she said that the approach towards social groups had become very segregationist. Many schemes were devised for different social groups and different departments and ministries had been constituted to overlook the welfare of different categories defined under these social groups and had now even become implementing bodies for these welfare programmes. This segregation had led to a binary between welfare and the rights of SC/ST. Ms Subramanian explained that in her view Social welfare programmes addressed programmes for SC/ST as deficits rather than from a rights perspective and overlooked the discrimination that formed an integral part of the social fabric. So even if opportunities were made available for girls from marginalized communities and they were able to achieve something in life, the stigma of discrimination would never leave them. Therefore discrimination cannot be looked at just as a legislative issue but should be seen as a fundamental behavioral issue that needs a drastic transformation. Ms Subramanian said that this is where she differed with Dr Shaila Desouza in saying that welfare cannot be made separate from empowerment as this separation would create further problems. This binary approach was also the reason why many schemes had very little transformational impact as the underlying core issues of discrimination were not addressed.

Ms Subramanian brought to focus other sets of binaries that existed when one spoke about programmes for access on one hand and programmes for justice on the other. She said that the issue of access to justice should cover not only access of women to courts and legal redressal but also their access to basic amenities like water, health, housing etc, the denial of which were a denial of their basic rights which impacted the fundamental way in which these women lived. Similar binaries existed when one spoke about welfare and empowerment. Citing the example of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, she said that the programme had tremendously expanded educational access but it had not achieved the fundamental integration required in terms of understanding and assimilating the local cultures, life histories etc. This brought up another binary that existed in terms of equity vs inclusion where there were many programmes initiated for children from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes but no monitoring or evaluation of the effectiveness or quality of the same. This lack of attention was evident across civil society as well as in government simply because it was difficult to keep track of so many programmes which then excluded it from the overall commitment to the RTE.

Concluding her remarks, Ms Subramanian said that what was required was a convergence of mindsets, perspectives and thoughts rather than a convergence of action because one could have a number of schemes but it was important to look at the violence and discrimination that surrounded the usage and access to these schemes. Therefore a larger debate was needed on how to structure the response to address these issues. She ended by saying that the NMEW should look at capacity building of the various functionaries to enable them to better understand these issues to achieve a larger impact of various programmes and relook at the evaluation indicators to make it more meaningful.

6.3 Participants' Views:

1) Ms Indu Capoor from CHETNA shared her experience of having worked on issues of MMR in Gujarat. She said that they tried to find out what was it that helped some women from the marginalized groups to survive when
the others had not and they had found that it was the behaviour and attitude of the men be it the husbands, sarpanches, gramsevaks etc that made the difference. Therefore in gender sensitization programmes it was important not to exclude men. She gave an example of a village Sarpanch who after having understood the impact of MMR took the lead in mobilizing support and help to address the issue of MMR in his village. Therefore in women's empowerment programmes, it was important to sensitize those in leadership positions while implementing programmes.

2) Dr Meera Chatterjee from World Bank said that there was a need to strike a balance between what is found when studies are done and the policies and programme dimension. This was because there were limitations as to what policies/programmes could do. She said that disaggregated data was important in order to understand the target group and the various issues but devising policies by using that data was not a practical solution. Instead village level planning should be used as a means of incorporating the needs of specific groups and for this it was important to build the capacities and sensitize the functionaries and community groups who are part of the planning process. She also raised the point that many of the issues being debated were issue related to stigma which required fundamental behavioural changes and for this a strong pitch should be made to the media to highlight these issues as part of the sensitization agenda.

3) Ms Jyoti Nagarkar, YUVA raised the point that women's empowerment was a multifaceted issue and in addition to building the woman's identity and empowering her in different ways, what was also required was capacity building of all members who are part of institutions such as PRI, judiciary etc and work towards strategically creating space for women within all these institutions.

4) Ms Vaishali Kolhe, TISS highlighted the degree of marginalization faced by women with disabilities. She said that there was no affirmative action available in police stations or courts for such women and these places were inaccessible to women with disabilities and they were almost invisible to the judiciary. She also suggested special cells in every state to cater to the needs of women with disabilities who were facing crime and violence.

5) Mr Viju Abraham from ACT shared his organization's experience of working with sex workers and said that many girls after being rescued from sex work returned to the sex trade because of the gender discrimination and violence that they faced within their homes at the hands of their family members. He also highlighted the point that the police and the government legislators collaborated to ensure that women were entrapped in this trade.

Response from the Panelists:

Dr Shaila Desouza reiterated her point that NMEW should initiate a Women's Act on the lines of the Children's Act that had been very successful in protecting the rights of children in Goa. This act included all kinds of vulnerabilities faced by children from various social groups and as part of the intervention process involved consultations at the taluka and district level to implement various measures. Ms Ramya Subramanian stressed on the need to have a more preventive approach to combat discrimination. She also expressed her concern that micro planning could have a fragmented approach and hence outcome.

6.4 Concluding Comments from the Chair

Prof. Kanchan Mathur highlighted some of the successful models for empowerment of women from marginalized and vulnerable groups that were being implemented currently in some states which could be replicated in other regions as well. These included the Mahila Salah Suraksha Kendra initiated in Maharashtra and then replicated in Rajasthan which were first run by NGOs but later taken on by WCD and scaled up to now function in every district, the Nari Adalats functioning within the Mahila Samakhya programme that deal with
issues of violence and discrimination of marginalized women, Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan which started in Rajasthan and has now spread to a number of states which cater to single, widowed, deserted women and address issues of land rights, the public hearings which were a huge success in Rajasthan and later in Himachal Pradesh. She said that it was important to understand what was working within these success models and try to replicate those successful elements.

6.5 **KEY EMERGING POINTS:**

- Extreme and multiple forms of gender based violence and discrimination are experienced by women from marginalized and vulnerable groups and those in difficult circumstances in the form of structural barriers, social exclusion and unequal access to and control over resources.
- Support structures and Institutional mechanisms to address these specific forms of discrimination should be context driven.
- The three structural issues highlighted were the issue of patriarchy, social analysis of gender in understanding specific social groups and the interplay of macro-economic processes with women from certain groups.
- The state of Rajasthan reflected specific forms of violence on women from vulnerable and marginalized groups in the form of witch hunting, deprivation of land rights, community sanction for sex work and exclusion from participation in the community and decision making.
- In the state of Goa, gender blind planning had led to disempowerment and marginalization of women. A high literacy rate had not translated into economic independence for women and the tourism policy had led to dispossession of land, rise in prices and seasonal unemployment which had resulted in alcoholism, domestic violence and low nutritional status for women.
- Recommendations included enacting a Women’s Act similar to the Children’s Act of Goa that protected the rights of children.
- Intervention programmes have become very segregationist with no attempt to incorporate their cultures or life histories thereby undermining its commitment and effectiveness.
- There is a need for a better and rigorous understanding of the complexities and processes that form part of the convergence efforts and structure responses accordingly to address these various dynamics. Education and favourable laws need to be accompanied by a culture that truly accepted women in society. Having sex aggregated data is not an end but just the beginning of understanding specific issues of women in different circumstances.
7. TECHNICAL SESSION IV:

Women’s Education: Issues and Efforts for convergence

Chair and Speaker:  Dr. Nandini Manjrekar, TISS, Mumbai

Speaker:
1. Dr. Farida Lambay, Pratham, Mumbai
2. Mr Srinivasan, UGC, Higher Education, Delhi

Key Discussants:
1. Ms. Aditi K Maula, Sr. Post Graduate Teacher, Dadra & Nagar Haveli
2. Ms. Trupti Sheth, Mahila Samkhya, Government of Gujarat

As an important means of improving women’s capabilities and the overall quality of their life, access to education and the quality of education has become an essential dimension in understanding the extent of women’s empowerment. This session was aimed at understanding the ground realities related to women’s discrimination in education and the impact of women’s mobilization groups in changing community perceptions and enhancing girls’ access to education. It also explored the changing trends in educational investments by the government and its long term impact on the educational status of children from marginalized communities. NMEW through its Social Empowerment and Education domain ensures gender mainstreaming in the education sector in-order to empower women holistically and through her the nation building. Social Empowerment and Education domain aims at converging and linking various schemes of Government of India focusing on women.

7.1 Overview of Presentations:

1) Dr Nandini Manjrekar raised a few broad conceptual issues pertaining to women’s education. She said that while we needed to recognize and accept that there had been changes in terms of women’s education in the past many years, one of the things that we had failed to look at and reexamine was the issue of what we wanted from women’s education. While stating that we needed to explore how we could approach empowerment through education, Dr Manjrekar said it was also important to look at education in itself and not just as a determinant of empowerment. Having said this, she also said that the very concept of empowerment needed to be discussed in greater detail in an honest and reflective manner.

She pointed out that it was a tragedy that we indexed women’s education only by statistical data and even this macro data that indicated increasing levels of women’s education over the last 20-30 years had in fact not translated into increased status for women in society and the most glaring evidence of this was in the declining sex ratios in our country. She noted "In many places where we have seen a constellation of indicators related to so-called development such as high female literacy rate, urbanization etc, it directly correlated with negative sex ratios especially child sex ratio in those places."

Dr Manjrekar focussed on the way women’s education was viewed in India. She said that we had been trapped in instrumentalism for far too long instead of looking at education in relation to the women themselves and the way with which they actually dealt with their own lives. She referred to how women’s education in the 19th century was related to recasting them according to male norms in society; in the post independence period it was instrumental to achieving lower fertility, better nutrition, better mothering etc where as in the contemporary context it was clearly associated with their involvement in the larger economic space. She said
that today the focus was on women’s access to education but not on the processes and outcomes after they accessed education. Expressing her view that the National Mission for Empowerment of Women would need to question what would be the ends of women’s education and their relation to knowledge, Dr Manjrekar said "We find that the image of person to be educated is far from the poor, dalit and adivasi woman, it is the urban, middle class, male child persona which is at the centre of how we imagine knowledge. We need to therefore question if knowledge is actually empowering for women".

Pointing to the contemporary context, Dr Manjrekar said "We are talking about the convergence of different government programmes in a context where education is today exacerbating social inequalities in a scale like never before. In India a consensus has been built around the inefficacy and sheer worthlessness of public education especially at the school level at a time when there is a huge demand for education among the rural and urban poor and the government is rolling back on public education. In this context where education becomes a choice between private or low paying schools, we find that more girls are being sent to low quality school resulting in new kinds of gender divides." She ended by saying that after 60 yrs we have large numbers of marginalized groups of young people actually accessing higher education through affirmative action and reservation policies which forces us to think about education seriously as there were lots of gaps in our understanding.

2) Dr Farida Lambay raised the point that women’s education could not be seen in isolation of the socio-economic realities in which women lived in this country. Therefore the issue of girl’s education was intrinsically related to the issues pertaining to the status of girl children right from their birth to what happened to them in the process of becoming a woman.

While quoting the trends witnessed in female literacy rates, Dr Lambay noted regional discrepancies within the western region. She said that while progressive states like Maharashtra and Gujarat posted an increase in female literacy rates, states like Rajasthan continued to show a low rate in this respect. Even within progressive states, disturbing trends were witnessed in terms of systemic issues related to the urban - rural divide and discrimination related to intersectionalities of class/caste/gender as certain pockets displayed problems of physical access to schools especially for girl children from the Muslim, Dalit and Adivasi communities. The three key reasons that accounted for these girl children being left out of the education system in both urban and rural areas were the cultural context, the lack of availability of middle and secondary schools in the area, and the issue of language. For e.g. lack of schools in Urdu medium of instruction after the 7th standard led to many Muslim children dropping out. At this point Dr Lambay drew attention to the educational achievement of Muslim children as reported by the Sachar Committee and as witnessed while working on the ground, which revealed that only about 2% of Muslim children even reached graduate studies.

Dr Lambay said that the two major trends witnessed today in the education sector was that almost 54% of children, both girls and boys but mostly boys were opting for private schools both in urban and rural areas. But these were not the best quality schools so it didn’t translate into higher educational outcomes for these children. The second point that emerged from the first one and which posed a serious concern was that most government schools were then actually attracting children who were the missing children or nowhere children - the residual group that had no economic power to send their children to private schools. Dr Lambay said that in her experience of working at the grassroots she had seen that the poor would prefer to spend whatever little money they earned on the education of their children and would therefore spend it on private schools as they felt it would assure them returns. The demand from parents therefore was for quality education. "The major concern today therefore is that government schools need to be strengthened and we can’t afford to close them down because if we do then the poorest of the poor will have no education." Further Dr Lambay pointed to the Gender parity Index and linked it to the declining child sex ratios in the country. "If we look at Maharashtra today which is the most progressive state, the CSR has come down and it is worse if you look at the 3-6 years age group."
Among the barriers to education, Dr Lambay focussed on the health issue as the major concern in terms of low nutrition, malnutrition and the incidence of HIV. "Therefore instead of only looking at midday meals schemes in schools, one also needs to look at school medical programmes. For this a convergence is required between the education and the health sector." Other barriers included gender bias that a girl child experienced not only at school but also at home in terms of attitudes, behaviours and allocation of resources which could be attributed as violence against the girl child. This would require a more strategic intervention. In addition to economic barriers in terms of poverty and hunger, the cultural contexts such as child marriages and female feticide which takes place in many parts of Maharashtra even today contribute to lower educational achievement for girls.

Referring to the findings of the ASER study conducted by Pratham every year in 633 districts in India, Dr Lambay highlighted the direct correlation between the mother's education and the child's performance in school. Apart from the fact that many of the mothers of girl children dropouts had not advanced beyond primary schooling, their aspirations for their girl children were very limited in terms of focussing on their marriage rather than their education. Pointing to the challenges faced by national strategies for girl's education, Dr Lambay said that KGBV was a good scheme but it didn't cover education after the 8th standard. There were also many administrative issues hampering the implementation of the programme.

Dr Lambay shared some successful models of intervention that have been used to address some key issues:

- Lack of access in rural/remote areas and dysfunctional schools - Interventions include running non-formal schools/alternative schools in rural/remote areas; Residential schools for tribal children and/or children of specific communities/erstwhile child workers; Short-term bridge courses followed by admissions into residential schools.
- Community apathy towards girls' education - has been addressed through community mobilization especially of women and youth; Campaign against child labour; Mother-daughter fairs/girls' education and health fairs to kindle interest in education and provide advice/ counselling; Special Programmes with adolescent girls.
- Irrelevant curriculum - Interventions include developing relevant curriculum and providing training to teachers in both formal as well as alternative streams.
- Non-availability of women teachers - Several programmes tried to provide intensive, good quality education for school dropouts and never-been-to-school women, thereby creating a pool of educated and confident women in rural/remote areas.
- Low morale among teachers and lack of motivation - Joyful learning activities; Teacher training and motivation; creating forum for teachers; Working with teachers on a continuing basis.
- Reducing sibling care burden of girls - Linking early childhood education centres to primary schools, creche / day care programmes

In conclusion, Dr Lambay said that in order to concentrate on learning outcomes of girls, one would need to look at pockets within districts and devise intensive strategies to address the discrepancies. There is a need for holistic planning of education wherein early child education to middle and secondary education should be covered under one department instead of addressing it in a fragmented way.

3) Mr Srinivasan spoke about how discrimination against women in India was directly linked to their lack of access to higher education. He viewed discrimination prevailing at a larger scale in rural areas than in urban areas. He said therefore there was a need to focus on higher education of women as a necessary function of women's empowerment which would call for a focus on primary education as well. Shifting focus to the status of women within higher education, he pointed to the fact that there were not more than 20 women Vice Chancellors present within the almost 500 universities for higher education existing in the country which itself
revealed how women were treated in our country. He also added that these women Vice Chancellors were mostly part of Women-only universities where there was a statutory compulsion to appoint women vice chancellors. A similar situation existed in the 30000 colleges in our country. Talking about the initiatives undertaken by UGC he said that they had initiated a skills development programme for women managers to enable them to take up leadership roles. UGC also supported the construction of women's hostels to help them undertake higher studies. He ended by inviting suggestions for the strengthening of the UGC programmes in the future.

7.2 Points Raised by the Key Discussants:

1) **Ms Aditi Maula** agreed to Ms Farida Lambay's views about the mindset that prevailed in society about sending children to private schools as against government schools. She disagreed that government schools were not capable of delivering the same quality of education as private schools. The focus needed to be on plugging in the missing elements she said. Reinforcing Dr Manjrekar’s view that education in the real sense entailed transformation of mindsets she said "The mindset that free education means cheap education needs to be changed because there is someone afterall who has paid for this public education." She said that an educated woman made a lot of difference to the well being and productivity of her family.

2) **Ms Trupti Sheth** started her session by sharing the challenges of implementing the SSA in Gujarat in terms of scaling up the programme from the 2000 schools in which DPEP operated to the 33000 schools under SSA and the apprehensions that lay in implementing the gender concept of the SSA programme. She said that initially the teachers refused to accept this holistic concept of education and it was only after the organization conducted a series of gender trainings for teachers and other officials in collaboration with the government and other NGOs in many of the districts that the teachers slowly started accepting the programme. Ms Sheth also drew attention to the challenges of gender sensitization in terms of the sheer difficulty in explaining the idea of gender even to the top most officials as the idea of implementing gender equality is largely seen in terms of introducing facilities such as girls toilets, incentives etc and not as a change in attitudes towards the status of girls and women.

Ms Sheth shared that the initiatives started for enhancing girls education in the Gujarat villages as part of the KGBV programme which included community mobilization, literacy campaigns, gender trainings, enrollment drives etc in the community. "One of the reasons why the programmes made headway and succeeded was because of the enthusiastic participation of the government officials in it." She said. The focus on quality of education in the government schools has seen an overall 20% improvement in quality across schools in Gujarat. Sharing the magnitude of the tasks involved, Ms Sheth said, "In order to enroll 900 girl children, we conducted 1622 community seminars. In the process we also encountered many caste problems. If we enrolled a girl from the Harijan community, girls from the Darbar community would disappear and vice versa. The biggest achievement of the KGBV programme has been that we have been able to overcome these caste issues. We did the same thing under the ECC programme and later the ICDS programme where the focus was on developing the programme keeping the needs of the dalit and marginalized children in mind."

Describing the work of the Nari Adalats under the Mahila Samakhya programme, Ms Sheth again drew attention to the support of the government departments which formed part of the convergence efforts "The Gujarat government agreed to pay the travelling costs for women who would come to the Nari Adalats to seek justice. The convergence efforts with the state included the referral system whereby the courts started sending women to the Nari Adalats for speedy justice and conclusion of their cases. We take up around 1500 cases every year." The government strategy now includes starting 42 Nari Adalats in different districts in Gujarat. Ms Sheth also spoke about another convergence effort initiated with the Election commission that involved the survey and enlisting of 35000 voters from the nomadic tribes who had become invisible after independence.
Highlighting the problems and challenges that exist in the education system, Ms Sheth suggested that work needs to be done in the area of filling in the gap between the academicians and the government system. She also said that in spite of the efforts of so many years, the understanding of gender perspective was still not clear. And most importantly she said "When we talk of women's empowerment we largely talk about microfinance, SHGs etc but we need to look at where the identity of women in all of this is. We need programmes to cater to women as an identity rather than women as different categories".

7.3 Participants’ Views:

1) **Prof Ram Babu** raised the point that UGC should look at remedial classes for students coming from marginalized sections as reservations was just the starting point and did not ensure that they did well after they got access to education.

2) **Dr Shewli Kumar** shared some reflection points saying that transformative education in India had not yet begun as we still followed what Paulo Freire termed as 'Banking Concept of Education where students were just fed with a lot of information. She said the discrimination reflected in textbooks was not just gender blind but also blind in terms of reflecting dalit and tribal histories which should be taught to all children in schools. Finally, she said that the administrative system in schools needs to become more non hierarchal amongst the people in the system.

Responses from the Panelists:

1) **Dr Lambay** said that curriculum had not been dealt with in this session as it would need more intensive deliberation. She mentioned that under the RTE now, there is much more scope to look at including texts related to different groups in the mainstream education especially with respect to teachers training. But we have to ensure that the provisions made in RTE are optimized.

2) **Mr Srinivasan** responded that in the 11th plan, UGC had brought out remedial coaching programmes for students related to their education as well as for entry into services. They have been subsequently strengthened and have been found to have made an impact.

7.4 Concluding Comments from the Chair:

Dr Nandini Manjrekar referred to the presentations made and said that each presentation had looked at the issue of women's education in particular ways which itself required a debate and interrogation. She questioned if educating women so that they could educate their daughters or including women as managers to change the system etc were not also instrumental as well in one way or the other. She said that today we were up against difficult questions of privatization, new economic contexts and changing aspirations of young people, women being brought into debates of SHGs to bail out a state that was not working for them etc, so there needed to be a conceptual change when we thought about women in education. She ended by saying that what was required was a convergence in people's thinking and mindset about what we wanted to achieve from women's education before we got down to convergence of different government programmes and functions.

7.5 Key Emerging Points:

- Increased privatization of the education sector and the subsequent withdrawal of the state from public education is exacerbating the already existing socio economic inequalities and poses a huge threat of depriving a large majority of children in our country access to an education including the creation of new kinds of gender divides with girls being sent to lower paying schools.
Women’s education cannot be seen in isolation of the socio economic and cultural context in which they live. Women’s inferior status in society and the intersectionalities of caste/class/gender/religion therefore impact women’s access to and outcomes of education. Muslim, dalit and adivasi girl children are largely left out of the education system owing to the cultural context, language issues and lack of availability of middle or secondary schools in their area.

Similarly, high female literacy rates in a few progressive states have been found to directly correlate with decreasing child sex ratios which indicate that increased education status has not resulted in increased status for women.

Key issues to be addressed with respect to women’s education include societal issues in terms of community’s apathy towards girl’s education and discrimination in allocation of resources; structural issues in terms of non-availability and low motivation of teachers and bad quality education; and systemic issues in terms of lack of access to schools in rural areas.

Discrimination against women is prevalent within higher education institutions as well.

While revolutionizing education can be seen as a means to women’s empowerment debates should also begin to address education in itself and look at what we want to achieve from women’s education other than trapping it in instrumentalism. This would call for convergence of people’s minds and thinking.

The challenges of implementing the gender component within SSA has been that it is largely seen as introducing facilities for girls rather than changing attitudes towards girls and women.

The Mahila Samakhya Programme and the Nari Adalat component within it has been successful models of women’s empowerment.
8. TECHNICAL SESSION V:

Economic Empowerment of Women: Strategies for Convergence

Chair: Dr. Padmini Swaminathan, TISS

Speaker:
Dr. Hina Shah, International Centre for Entrepreneurship & Career Development (ICECD), Gujarat

Key Discussants:
1. Mr. A D Kale, MAAVIM, Government of Maharashtra
2. Dr. Meera Chatterjee, World Bank, Delhi

Economic empowerment of women as envisaged under the National Mission for Empowerment of Women would focus largely on institutional capacity building for women's development through strengthening of SHGs and the NGOs/line departments to provide better services to poor women, while ensuring provision of skill training, technology transfer, technical support and promotion of market linkages.

8.1 Overview of Presentations:

8.1.1 Address by the Chair:

Dr Padmini Swaminathan introduced the session on strategies for convergence in the context of economic empowerment of women by giving an example of a study of the noon meal programme in Tamil Nadu. The original mandate of the programme had been to retain children in schools and reduce the dropout rate in Tamil Nadu schools but later a lot of additional objectives got overloaded onto the programme without a clear mechanism for achieving these additional objectives and there was no convergence between these various elements. It was also found that after 25 years of implementation of the programme the state continued to have high dropout rates. The study also revealed that the high dropout rates had to do with school related factors such as lack of teachers, infrastructure and so on than with the provision of meals. Related to this example, another point cited was that to address one of the school related factors for drop out which was the transport costs, the Tamil Nadu government provided all children with a bus pass but the pass was of no use because there was no bus service in the area.

Drawing an analysis from the above examples, Dr Swaminathan said that to operationalise the concept of convergence in the implementation of a scheme, one would need to understand the operational factors on the ground where convergence does not happen and find out what stopped schemes from becoming operational on the ground. She said that a lot of micro level research had pointed out that the reasons why schemes were sub optimal in their operation and do not work most often was because there was no mechanism within the government to centrally address the different aspects that contribute to successfully implementing a scheme. Therefore convergence in the above example would require a mechanism to bring all school related matters together otherwise one would be left with a situation where a noon meal programme becomes a model for the rest of the country and yet u have a high dropout rate.

8.1.2 Summary of Presentations:

1) Dr Hina Shah started by saying that empowerment was a very complex process. "When we talk about women's economic empowerment we focus on enabling a woman to earn, become independent thinking that
this will empower her. But I’m not sure if economic independence really leads to her empowerment.” Dr Shah then gave an example of a woman who had started a successful business only to have it taken over by her husband. She said that there were no direct answers to holistically empowering women but it was important to focus on economic empowerment of women through equal economic rights and access to resources.

Dr Shah shared the various success models implemented by her organization in their mission to develop women entrepreneurs. She emphasized on a development model to promote the value based socio economic development of women and make them leaders. This would involve identifying and fostering skills that are outside their traditional gender roles through training; and opening up different opportunities for enterprise. As the first organization in India to have started entrepreneurial development training for women, ICECD has trained around 1000 women entrepreneurs in Gujarat and around one million women in India and other countries indirectly. Dr Shah said that the large pool of women that required to be targeted were the uneducated, unregistered and self employed women who were part of the unorganized sector.

With respect to convergence Dr Shah said that the focus should not be to start new policies but to rethink and rework on the existing ones. Efforts should also be made to free women from the various hurdles that come in the way of her economic empowerment such as illiteracy, debts, corruption, inefficiency of government processes and the existing feudalism and gender bias in various institutions. It is important to create an environment that accepts women as entrepreneurs. She said there was a need to design interventions to develop skills of women according to their specific circumstances and shared the ICEDC model that works with widows, disabled women, develops skills in mothers to eradicate child labour and so on.

Dr Hina Shah pointed out that there were several government schemes for economic empowerment of women that were limited to distribution of kits and equipments to the beneficiaries but no efforts were made to ensure that skills percolated to the grassroots level or mechanisms were put in place to monitor the effectiveness of these schemes. She said that there was a need for a change in the welfare oriented attitude and hand-to-mouth approach of the government machinery towards economic empowerment. “The National Mission should ensure that the government processes do not make women dependent. They should not be at the end of the process and be spoon-fed. Empowerment calls for independence of women.” said Dr Shah. “Today there is a lot of focus on SHGs but only 10% of them are working successfully. The SHG model has not become entrepreneurial. Many of them work only where an NGO is involved to provide sourcing or marketing support.” Dr Shah said that the convergent policies of the government should focus on transferability of skills and sustainability. Only then would women become economically empowered. She also pointed out that the attention should be on tribal, rural and women who lived in slums.

Dr Hina Shah urged that there was a need for a shift from the survival economy to micro economy in order for empowerment initiatives to be sustainable and this called for training and education. Further training curriculums should be made uniform and disseminated widely across microenterprise development and employment generation programmes. Microenterprise development also called for attitude development across all levels. She pointed out that the socialization of women was such that they chose to become entrepreneurs only out of need and desperation. Therefore there was a need for change in the mindset which government and other NGO programmes should focus on.

8.2 Points Raised by the Key Discussants:

1) Mr A D Kale shared the work done by his organization towards women’s empowerment. One of the strategies undertaken for empowerment of women was the mobilization of women to form SHGs. It was recognized that women were disempowered due to their lack of access to credit, lack of access to knowledge and information, unequal distribution of power and prevalent gender biased norms. Stating that women
empowerment was a holistic concept which included economic, social as well as political dimensions, he said that for women's social empowerment two fold strategy was being used in implementation. One was enhancing the capacities of women and second was creating enabling environment for women. In capacity enhancement, the core focus areas were legal awareness, awareness of health issues (reproductive health) and functional literacy. The convergence strategies recommended by him were organization of convergence workshops organized at various levels, use of advanced technology such as E sharing, blog sharing etc, exploration of different the areas of collaboration, conducting pilot projects and sharing the success and learning of pilot initiatives with all the partners to replicate or expand the scale of convergence activities.

2) Dr Meera Chatterjee reflected that the SHG movement was started in a big way about 20-25 years ago in the context where women didn’t have much social capital in the form of village level organizations; the SHG movement was seen as a very powerful force then and it continues to be so. Dr Chatterjee recalled a World Bank supported project called the Swashakti Project which was a model to bridge the gap between women’s lack of economic power and economic development in the form of entrepreneurship development. She said that entrepreneurship development had not really evolved in India even after so many years. She commented that the National Rural Livelihood Mission Programme had been struggling with the question of entrepreneurship and the discussions about convergence would need to explore how to bridge this gap between SHGs and enterprise.

Dr Chatterjee added ”Today 25 years hence we have a global opportunity, a global India, an India that is growing at the top and we’re still talking about papad and pickles at the bottom. We cannot continue to relegate poor women to that end of the spectrum.” She said that the Mission’s role would be to figure out how to achieve this by bringing the several ministries that it relates to into the fold of working for women’s economic empowerment. Dr Chatterjee further drew attention to the concept of feminization of agriculture and noted that though women were increasingly involved in forestry and agriculture, they still remained outside the fold because of land issues, technology issues, and other dimensions of discrimination that they faced and stated that all these dimensions would need to be considered when we’re talking about economic empowerment. "When it comes to economic empowerment, the situation is complex. There are three types of capital involved. One is Human capital which involves skills, health, nutrition, education; Social capital in the form of SHGs, family, household and other community level capital like institutions; and thirdly financial capital like assets, credit etc. Unless we work on all three kinds of capital we will not get economic empowerment for women." She said that we would have to work on strategic issues like access to land for women by ensuring the enforcement of existing laws and advocacy for new ones.

Dr Chatterjee stressed upon the fact that in the field of economic empowerment we couldn’t take a welfarist approach and we would have to talk about engagement with markets and corporates. She said that enterprise and entrepreneurship was not a group activity. When one moved from a SHG model to an enterprise model one would have to talk about individual oriented activity. For economic empowerment one would also need to look at the better educated middle class woman who was heavily involved in unpaid work. She concluded by saying that consolidation of programmes along with convergence was the name of the game.

8.3 Participants' Views:

1) Mr Sanjiv Gadkar wanted to know the process followed for identification of beneficiaries for entrepreneurial training by ICECD

2) Dr Meena Gopal from TISS commented that she was a little disturbed by the view proposed by the panel about the need to move from the collective SHG model to individual enterprise work. She said that SHG was already taking on a lot of functions that the government used to do earlier. The women’s movement had always
spoken about strength coming from collectivity and inspite of that women faced a lot of violence in villages. And now the stress on individuation would not help the situation. Secondly she said that the NRLM was working towards centralization and homogenization of government programmes which one had to be wary of especially when there were different models already working across states responding to the regional needs and specificities.

3) Dr Ritu Diwan raised a concern about the concept of SHGs and the concept of micro. She said that there was a tendency to link marginalized women with marginalized components hence associating them with the concept of micro which strengthens the issue of inequality and access to resources.

4) Ms Jyoti Nagarkar said that economic empowerment should be inclusive in the sense that it should also include entitlements. For e.g. including women’s name on the ration card, bank account and other official documents etc.

Response from the Panelists:

1) Dr Hina Shah responded that they follow a scientific selection process in order to select women who can be trained for entrepreneurial development and only women who have been identified with the potential can be trained. This would call for certain competencies such as an attitude of working for yourself, taking initiative, setting goals, seeking information and being able to identify opportunities. The focus is to move women from a survival economy to a growth oriented entrepreneurship by opening up opportunities for them.

Responding to the second question, she said that taking a group of 20 women in a SHG group, even if we want each woman to take home Rs 2000/- every month, they need to make a profit of Rs 40000/- which means that their turnover should be at least 8 lakhs. However, SHGs do not make this kind of turnover and hence SHGs remain unviable for economic empowerment. She also pointed out that when some groups do start making more money, disputes break out among the members which make collective working a problem.

2) Dr Meera Chatterjee clarified that she was not saying that one should move from collective to individual model but it was important to understand that they had different roles to play. Successful enterprise was actually an individual thing and not a group thing. She said that one could continue with the SHG movement but it was important to recognize that those would always remain pickle and papad unless something bigger was done. She said that the social capital and advocacy dimensions of SHGs were done in their voluntary capacity because of the advantage of having a collective at the village level but that didn’t mean that one would want the government to insist that the collectives take over their functions. To the point about SHGs doing what the government was doing before, Dr Chatterjee responded saying the question to ask is was government doing what private citizens were supposed to be doing before.

Responding to the comment on entitlements, Dr Chatterjee agreed that women should get their name on ration cards and bank accounts. But it was important to remember that men also had rights. So the question should be whether every wife should have her name on her husband’s bank accounts or should she have her own bank account.

8.4 Concluding Comments from the Chair:

Dr. Padmini Swaminathan concluded by saying that the session was unable to flesh out the meaning of economic empowerment of women because of debates getting caught between the question of how to make entrepreneurs of our citizens and the question of SHG versus enterprise. She said that SHGs were poverty alleviation programmes and to expect that these would make women into successful entrepreneurs was not
viable. Therefore the session had not been able to address the fundamental question about why we continued to emphasize on more poverty alleviation programmes in an economy that was growing at a rate of seven to eight percent every year and why was such a high growth economy not able to generate decent employment for all its citizens.

8.5 KEY EMERGING POINTS:

- The challenge is to converge economic independence with empowerment for women
- Economic empowerment of women is a holistic concept with social and political dimensions as well which require not only building capacities of women but creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurial development by addressing strategic issues like access to land, gender discrimination etc
- Development models should focus on building women’s enterprise through value based skills training and education to build sustainability. Entrepreneurial development would require attitudinal changes to build leadership in women
- A key target group for economic empowerment should be the large pool of women in the unorganized sector and homemakers
- Implementation of convergence strategies would require a critical understanding of the lacunae in operational patterns on the ground
- Government mechanism to centrally address the different aspects of a programme is missing
- Government programmes should move away from a welfare oriented approach and focus on making women independent
- The self help group movement was an important means of building social capital but its capacity to evolve into entrepreneurial development of women is questionable as they are largely poverty alleviation programmes. Convergence for economic empowerment would need to bridge the gap between SHGs and enterprise
- Moving from a SHG model to an enterprise model would also require individual oriented activities and engagement with markets and corporate. A contested view to this was that individualism was a threat to the collective spirit of the feminist movement which would undermine the empowerment for women as a whole.
- In a fast growing economy like India, poverty alleviation programmes as a substitute for meaningful employment itself should be questioned.
GENDER BUDGETING & GENDER MAINSTREAMING – ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES
9. TECHNICAL SESSION VI:

Gender Budgeting & Gender Mainstreaming – Achievements and Challenges

Chair: Dr. Ritu Diwan, Centre for Women Studies, University of Mumbai

Speaker:
Ms. Anita Kaushik, DWCD, Government of Rajasthan

Key Discussant:
Ms. Sangeeta Singh, DWCD, Government of Gujarat

Women’s empowerment necessitates that a gender focus be made an integral part of the planning process. Gender budgeting is an important tool to analyze the steps taken by the Government in securing gender equality through public resource allocation and to assess the impact of Government budgets on the most disadvantaged groups of women. The need for gender mainstreaming in our policies and plans also arises out of the increasing evidence of linkages between women’s absence from governance and the feminization of poverty. While the efforts towards Gender mainstreaming has resulted in setting up of Gender Budget Cells by various Ministries and Departments, a lot of work still remains to be done towards this end in planning, implementation and review of policies and programmes.

9.1 Overview of Presentations:

9.1.1 Address by the Chair:

Dr Ritu Diwan touched upon the several issues involved in the entire debate on Gender Budgeting and Gender Mainstreaming which included issues of mainstreaming gender into ongoing issues, processes and factors; also looking at mainstreaming it in different types of processes such as plan process or budgetary process; and making gender an integral part of the convergence concept at all levels and functions. She drew attention to the marginalization of gender issues in the areas of justice, health, education, etc as discussed in the earlier sessions and pointed out that there was a need for people from all departments and all sectors to be part of the debate on gender mainstreaming and not just assign the role to the Women and Child Department. Gender should also be mainstreamed into broader processes without seeing it as an exclusive factor. Dr Diwan said that this was a long process but it needed to be recognized in a definitive organized and systematic manner.

Congratulating the Government of Rajasthan for having done a remarkable job on gender budgeting, Dr Diwan said that Gender Budgeting had largely become more of an audit than how it had been envisaged in the original sense of the word. Gender Budgeting would need to include overview of the expenditures and allocations at one level but it needed to go way beyond that in terms of analyzing how much percentage of the total budget was allocated to the mainstreaming of gender, assessing how the allocated money was being used; and evaluating if the objectives of incorporating gender into the allocations was being achieved. Giving an example of a study she had done on the analysis of gender budgeting in Maharashtra, Dr Diwan said "It was found that the expenditure allocated for gender budgeting turned out to be just 0.01% of the annual plan. Therefore though Maharashtra is talked about as the first state in which women worked in industries etc, the way the state reflects the interests of the women in actual expenditure is what needs to be looked at."
Dr Diwan also pointed out that there was a total lacuna in another aspect of gender budgeting in terms of only focusing on the expenditure component and nothing on the revenue component which reflected how women were segregated and relegated to a micro status. “So SHGs, micro enterprises are seen as okay for women but when it comes to the revenue/monetary/fiscal policies, there is a segregation made.” Giving an example of how allocations were made in the process of financial inclusions, Dr Diwan spoke about the process of lending money to women through banks whereby in terms of physical targets the numbers were high but in terms of the amount lent to each woman it was very low. She said that there needed to be equilibrium between the total amount lent and the number of women targeted. Finally Dr Diwan mentioned that many state governments had not taken the issue of workshops on Gender Budgeting seriously at all. Some of them had not conducted a single workshop and many others had just done one as a token. She said surprisingly, Jammu & Kashmir had been very proactive and had conducted the maximum number of workshops, almost 19 in every district, which had made a remarkable difference.

9.1.2 Summary of Presentations:

1) Ms. Anita Kaushik said that Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) had been adopted by the Government of Rajasthan and recently incorporated into its new Integrated Financial Management System not only from the view of mainstreaming gender and promoting women’s empowerment but also for translating good policies and practices into concrete sustainable realities on ground.

The specific initiatives and interventions that made the mainstreaming of gender concerns possible were the setting up of a High level Committee on GRB under the Chief Secretary; setting up of Gender Cell to provide logistic support to this High Level Committee and to work as a Secretariat, with the twin goals of women empowerment for protection, promotion & empowerment of Women and for ensuring equitability in allocating financial resources, cross-cutting gender barriers; analysis and review of the budgets of the key departments and placing it before the high level committee for further interventions to implement GRB process in the state, setting up of a Gender Desk in every department to act as a focal point & to monitor and supervise GRB & Gender related issues. Other interventions included engendering the district level Sub-Plans and conducting awareness & orientation programmes for officials across all levels.

The process involved conceptualizing a Gender Budgetary Statement (GBS) including four category framework for categorization of Government schemes, projects, programmes and services based on percentage of budgetary allocation for women vis-à-vis men and testing the efficacy of this concept, performa and the process through workshops before incorporating the statement into the Integrated Financial Management System. A Budget Circular was issued to all departments directing them to formulate GBS with Gender perspective and the GBS proposals of all departments were scrutinized before making it an integral part of the Budget document, thereby internalizing this process within all departments. Ms Kaushik observed that gender mainstreaming was possible because of the intersectoral convergence achieved between various departments and stakeholders in Rajasthan such as The Women Empowerment Gender Cell, the Finance Dept, the Planning Dept, all others department through the recommendation and intervention of the high level committee, Researchers/statisticians/Economists, Elected Representatives such as PRIs , Media and the women & men for whom the specific policy, programme or budget was intended.

Highlighting some of the issues and challenges, Ms. Kaushik said that during the process it was found that the bulk of public expenditure and policy concerns were in gender neutral sectors and in the absence of sex-disaggregated data capturing the benefits of scheme in gender neutral sectors was difficult. Hence there was a need for institutionalization of sex-disaggregated data. A need was also recognized for developing gender-
sensitive indicators of inputs, output & outcomes which meant that allocation & spending was not as important as how it was being spent and the qualitative changes it had brought about.

9.2 Points Raised by the Key Discusant:

Mrs. Sangeeta Singh summarized the efforts taken in Rajasthan saying that the three crucial parameters that had contributed to the gender budget mainstreaming in Rajasthan were the constitution of the High Level committee, the four category framework that required every department to become gender oriented and the Gender Desk that signaled the continuity of the position and not of the person.

9.3 Participants' Views:

1) Dr Meera Chatterjee wanted conceptual clarity on whether in gender mainstreaming we were looking only at sex aggregated budgeting or was there a dimension of gender in terms of gender roles budgeting as well?

2) Mr. Sanjeev Kumar from the Govt of Gujarat enquired if the four category categorization adopted by Govt of Rajasthan was only for beneficiary oriented schemes or whether it was for all schemes?

3) Ms Lata P.M. shared that the implementation of the FRA had led to restoration of tribal land back to the Adivasis. But when it came to the issue of forest produce, there was no concept of gender budgeting applicable. She also enquired about the response of the Planning Commission to the GRB initiated by the Govt of Rajasthan and if there was any scope for such a process to be incorporated into every sector.

4) Ms Vaishali Kolhe wanted to know the challenges that the Govt of Rajasthan had faced in operationalising the GRB.

Response from the Panelists:

1) Mrs Sangeeta Singh shared the challenges faced by them in implementing the GRB. She said that she had to oppose the Special Woman Component Plan that the Plan department had proposed and push the agenda of having a gender focus within plans because now we had come to a stage where we were talking about women’s empowerment and not welfare oriented schemes. So there was a need to build-in the capacity building components like asset creation, infrastructure etc within programmes keeping women as the focus. She then invited an official from the Planning commission to talk to the Principal Secretaries and chief Secretaries of various departments which finally led to the constitution of the High Level Committee.

She said that she was clear from the beginning that the High Level Committee had to be held by the Chief Secretary because only then would all the departments fall in line accordingly. Today the Chief Minister is reviewing the implementation of the GRB himself. She added that it was not easy and that she would not vouch for the credibility of all departments but atleast a mechanism and process has been put in place to get it started.

2) Ms Anita Kaushik GBS responded to the second question saying that the GBS included those schemes which were 100% women specific and was reflected in A category. The B/C/D category reflected those schemes that directly and indirectly reflected women.

She responded to the question on efficacy of workshops held to orient departments about the GBS stating that not only all the officials but even the HODs went through the orientation as a result of which there was more confidence in the GBS.
9.4 **Concluding Comments from the Chair:**

Dr Ritu Diwan said that the process of gender mainstreaming had started with the 11th Plan but there was still a long way to go. She said that it was difficult enough to get the expenditure component into Gender Budgeting at the state level therefore to get the revenue aspect would be even more difficult but it was starting in small measures. She quoted the example of the differential property tax introduced in some places which can be seen as an indirect form of economic empowerment as it motivates families to buy property in the woman’s name which increases her control over assets. Another aspect that needs attention is concessions in various areas for Female Headed Households.

Dr Diwan said that the main issue in mainstreaming was to ensure that gender was not isolated from different paradigms of growth and the need to look at women’s issues in the overall context of development. For e.g. when we talk of SHGs we also had to look at what else could be done along with that. She drew attention to the triple burden that women were experiencing today in the context of the current pattern of growth and the subsequent withdrawal of the state from the public sphere which was a major concern. Similarly, the impact of international trade, international financial institutions, price movements etc were all taking place in a gendered context which was leading to phenomena such as the feminization of agriculture and feminization of poverty. Dr Diwan ended by saying “Convergence efforts should look at integrating central schemes with specific aspects/areas at the grassroots level for women. For e.g. NREGA and PMGSY are two very impactful schemes that need to be integrated closely with the PRIs to make it even more effective”.

9.5 **KEY EMERGING POINTS:**

- There is a need to incorporate a gender focus within ongoing issues, processes and factors so as not to isolate gender from the overall growth paradigm.
- Convergence of all departments are required for mainstreaming of gender issues.
- Expenditures allocated for gender budgeting needs to be seen within the context of the total planned expenditure.
- The challenge is to overcome the lacunae of gender allocations in the revenue component of overall macro and fiscal policies.
- A successful model of Gender Budgeting has been implemented by the Govt of Rajasthan.
- Differential property tax for women and concessions for female headed households could be seen as examples of measures for incorporating a gender focus within policies.
IMPACT & IMPORTANCE OF MASS MEDIA FOR CONVERGENCE AND RAISING AWARENESS AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL
The session brought forth the power of effective means of communication in mobilizing people at the grassroots level and generating awareness on gender specific issues. The changing trends in mass media over the recent years pose a huge challenge for development professionals to reach out the mass at the grassroots and to mobilize action for social change by using media as a communication tool. The present day demands creative and innovative forms of expression that are accessible to the large majority of people and a means of empowerment for the most marginalized.

10.1 Overview of Presentation by the Chair and Speaker:

Mr. Kumar Ketkar spoke about the changed nature of mass media and communications in today's age. He said that what used to be mass media earlier has become a semi-individualized media in the sense that today communication takes place on an individual to individual basis which tends to influence the thinking and the responses of people more than the earlier mass media which used to address a major chunk of people together. Due to the advancement in technology the whole pattern of reaching out to people through the television medium has been replaced by mobile and internet communication. Mr. Ketkar also pointed out that what earlier used to be within the control of the national government or private sector has today become global in nature. Hence every single person who tunes into information through the television or mobile is a globalised individual. This sudden transformation that has taken place over the last 10 years and has transformed not only communication systems but also created a new consciousness about information.

Mr. Ketkar related the trends in changing consciousness to the changing concepts in feminism and women's empowerment over the last three decades. He recalled that the decade from the 70s to the 80s had witnessed a women's movement that had been ideologically driven, giving rise to the concept of individualism which then finally came to dominate the ideology of empowerment. However individualism at that time did not percolate down to the last woman as an ideology which today it has because of the impact of individually mediated communication. Giving an example of daily soaps which are seen to have conservative and reactionary messages from the conventional point of view, he said that the message that goes out to the viewers need not necessarily be such or even one uniform message because the recipient and not the giver decides the content of the message. Therefore the entire character of a message changes for each person according to the generation and the influences that one is shaped by.

Focussing on the impact of mass media for convergence and raising awareness of those at the grassroots level, Mr. Ketkar said that the grassroots population for this purpose was divided into many categories. One was the grassroots mass population who were tuned into television, the grassroots neo-literate who had access to television, print and mobile; the educated grassroots person who read newspapers, books, magazines etc and
the grassroots activists or NGOs. In order to have effective convergence and impact for raising awareness, there was a need for a mediated communication between the grassroots NGO and the grassroots mass so that the message that was sent out did not get obfuscated. Therefore it was important for activists to develop instruments to reach out to this mass and use a direct medium which was non-technological in nature and human expression in orientation.

10.2 Points Raised by Key Discussants:

1) Dr Nandita Shah took off from where Mr. Ketkar left and spoke about the whole dimension of finding that space in-between all the cacophony of mass media in today's age. She said that on one hand we had mass media occupying every moment of our time and space as well as our imagination; and on the other side we had the grassroots population who were mainly seen as consumers of this media.

Sharing her organization’s work of working with communities, Dr Shah said that the challenge they faced was to create a media in which the voice of the marginalized could be enhanced and to find a space for this voice within the existing mass media. This led to the journey of setting up the Community Video Unit where girls and boys from different sections of the community were trained to handle the video-making process right from learning to write, identifying an issue, researching on that issue right down to articulating that issue in a video format. Dr Shah said that this whole journey had been impactful in two ways - one, it had articulated the voice of the marginalized within a perspective that was defined by the marginalized itself and secondly, the confidence that came with the handling of technology had given a sense of empowerment to these young girls and boys. The idea of the video unit was not only to produce material but to distribute it within the same community. She gave an example of a video made on the success story of a rag picker who later went on to study and become a teacher. "When the video is shown in front of the entire community it gives a definite sense of empowerment not only to the person whose story it is but also to the entire community of rag-pickers".

Referring to the issue of convergence and the changed consciousness of consumers of communication, Dr Shah said that today media was not only creating a globalised individual but it was also creating expectations of a high level of sophistication in communication. Therefore even as NGO activists, one had to work on communication medium and strategies. In this context, she said that Akshara had found ways to communicate with young people who were their primary stakeholders through the medium of interactive games. "These games are the ones that we all have played as children, but we turned them around to incorporate the message of gender discrimination and gender equality. This way we were able to reach out to the young crowd in a meaningful way." She ended by playing a community video made by the youth on sexual harassment in public places which had made a lot of impact because it had focussed on talking to boys about their feelings, experiences and reasons for indulging in this activity, and they had also been able to capture success stories of boys who had given up doing this.

2) Ms Sushma Kapoor reiterated upon the extensive reach that mass media had across different sections of the population but pointed out that at the same time it was not possibly the only medium for putting across the messages for raising awareness at the grassroots level. She said that the existing medium being used for social awareness had a limited reach because a large part of the rural population was still disconnected from access to certain kinds of communication and technology. Underlining the power of the community video in capturing and articulating the voice of the marginalized, Ms Kapoor said that the process itself was so empowering that apart from highlighting the message it also helped leaders to emerge from the community. "Similarly, the community radio is a powerful media that can be used to redefine issues and give a voice to the most
marginalized as it is accessible, lively, mobile and inexpensive.” suggested Ms Kapoor and shared how UN Women was using community radio in their current project with the elected women leaders of the PRIs. She said that in recent times, new communication tools such as the new mobile applications, the internet, social networking sites and blogs had led to profound changes and so NGOs should be careful not to leave out these spaces in their advocacy efforts. She stressed on the need for NGOs to develop their websites and connect them to these social media sites.

While citing a few successful campaigns that were examples of effective messaging, Ms Kapoor said that the key was in having messages that were simple and had an action point to it. Additionally if there was one unified national level of messaging that could be recognized and recalled by one and all, it would have the power to reach out to all sections of the population. She said that the Bell Bajao Campaign of UN Women had a simple but very powerful message which said "Ring the Bell and interrupt the violence." The campaign was successful also because it was easily doable and it involved even young boys and men who went up to ring the bell. Another dimension of the campaign included travelling on mobile vans into rural communities and holding workshops and other public education activities as part of the advocacy measures. Sharing the lessons she had taken away while being part of the campaign, Ms Kapoor said "We learnt that the quality of the ads were very important not only in terms of the content of the message but also the sophistication of the visuals and the way in which it was put together. And this is where we have to involve the private sector”.

She also gave the example of the Red Ribbon Express Campaign which was an AIDS/HIV awareness campaign run by the Indian Railways in association with NACO. This advocacy campaign was successful as it was able to rope in a large number of young people from across the country. "Therefore involving people is the key to changing mindsets which is the most difficult thing to do and hence the biggest challenge before us“ ended Ms Kapoor.

10.3 Participants’ Views:

1) Dr Shewli Kumar raised the point that popular soaps on television projected images of stereotypical women and there was a need to engage with this aspect.

2) Ms Lata P.M. commented that earlier there was an era of art films that represented the grassroots people and their issues which is rarely seen in today's mainstream cinema. People's issues are however being represented in vernacular media as a result of which they are getting recognized in international forums. Why is this point not getting reflected in feminist criticisms?

Response from the Panelists:

1) Mr Ketkar reiterated his earlier point that the message given through mass media doesn't get decoded by all the recipients in a similar manner. Just as the giver and the receiver are not on the same wavelength, different viewers are also on different wavelengths and therefore receive the message differentially.

2) Dr. Nandita Shah added that while there should be a debate on whether we should get into issues of censorship, at the same time there is a dilemma when we consider the communicator’s rights to creative expression. There is also a conflict within the feminist movement between objectification of women’s bodies versus women's assertion of their sexuality through the media. And we have not been able to adequately question or challenge this notion of choice.
3) Ms. Sushma Kapoor added that media can therefore be both empowering and disempowering. Responding to the comment on lack of feminist criticism post the 1990s, Ms. Kapoor pointed out that was also the time when liberalization opened up all these spaces. She also said that the mainstream media was therefore responding and catering to the global Indian and the elite section of the population who were products of this liberalized India. Corporatization of television has also taken rituals and festivals to an entirely new level.

10.4 Concluding Comments from the Chair:

Feminist discourse and praxis need to prepare better to identify and deal with three things - role of technology, role of the market and the influence of the ideology of individualism on women which has had an impact on the construction and disruption within the family.

10.5 KEY POINTS RAISED:

- The varied impact of semi individualized media on individuals makes it critical to develop effective communication instruments to reach out to different categories of stakeholders especially the mass population at the grassroots.
- The globalised individual today expects high levels of sophistication in communication which poses a challenge for organizations and activists.
- Community Radio and Community Video have been successfully used by organizations as alternative mediums of communication to generate awareness about grassroots issues and as powerful tools for empowerment.
- There is a need to occupy new spaces for communication such as blogs, social networking sites, websites etc.
- Advocacy campaign messages should be simple and easy to follow up on for people.
- A revival of the feminist critique of prevalent portrayal of women in the media is needed.
11. WRAP UP SESSION

Ms Rashmi Singh concluded the conference by summarizing the Issues and Challenges which emerged within different domains during the two days of the conference, the Best Practices being implemented by various States and partners; and the Recommendation and the Strategies that were put forward and discussed.

The suggested focus areas for NMEW that emerged from the various discussions focussed on the following issues:

- The matter of amendments in Government of India's laws may be taken up by NMEW to follow-up with various departments as nodal organization to facilitate convergence. NMEW to consolidate the efforts of various organizations and departments with respect to programmes and schemes for women's empowerment by undertaking evaluation and impact assessment of Government of India schemes for women in India.
- Capacity development of functionaries of Government programs/schemes to better understand gender issues, social identity, women's rights etc.
- NMEW's role should go beyond that of being a watchdog; or playing a monitoring or coordinating role. Instead initiatives, i.e., all activities that come under the umbrella of women's empowerment should be spearheaded at the NMEW/NRCW level.
- **Activate legal system mechanisms to increase accessibility of women to the justice system by taking the help of and working with other stakeholders like lawyers, CSO's, etc.**
- NMEW should develop effective and measurable indicators of monitoring and evaluation to determine the accountability of each Government institutions to make convergence more meaningful and impactful.
- The success and learning of the pilot initiatives of the Mission need to be shared with all the partners to replicate or expand the scale of convergence activities. Convergence workshops could be held at various levels.
- There is a need to identify and evaluate existing successful models which are sustainable and strengthen them as well as scale them up.
- NMEW should bring onboard Ministries such as Ministry for Small and Medium Enterprise, Ministry of Agriculture and create long-term partnerships.
- There is a need to identify gaps and missing links in data on women and ensure the same are bridged.
- Use gender budgeting as a tool for gender mainstreaming.

Mr. Sanyal ended by saying that NMEW's endeavour would be to persuade different stakeholders and players to see the merit in working together to address the issues that are common to our population at large as well as certain regional peculiarities that would need the response of State mechanisms. He said that the task of coordination that NMEW would undertake was easier said than done but it was critical for the achievement of objectives for women's empowerment and to make a difference in the lives of women in our country.

A joint vote of thanks was extended by WCD Department, Maharashtra and NMEW, New Delhi.
## ANNEXURE I

### AGENDA

**“Achieving Convergence for Empowerment of Women”**

Western Regional Conference

(For the States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Goa, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli)

**Venue**: Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Deonar, Mumbai.

**Date**: 23rd -24th April 2012.

**Comperer**: Ms Joieta Roy, TISS

**Rapporteur**: Preetha Prabhakaran

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### Day 1: 23rd April, 2012, Monday

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<td>Registration and Tea</td>
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<td>10.00 – 11.30 a.m</td>
<td><strong>Inaugural Session</strong></td>
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<td>10.00 – 10.05 a.m</td>
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<td>10.15 – 10.25 a.m</td>
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<td>10.25 – 10.45 a.m</td>
<td>Presentation on NMEW</td>
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<td>10.45 – 10.55 a.m</td>
<td>“Mission Poorna Shakti” : Convergence Model in Pali, Rajasthan</td>
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<td>11.25 – 11.30 a.m</td>
<td>Vote of Thanks</td>
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<td>11.30 – 11.40 a.m</td>
<td>Tea</td>
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<td>11.40 – 1.10 p.m</td>
<td>Empowerment of Women: Achievement, Issues, Challenges and Convergence: Experience from States</td>
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**Speakers:**

1. **Smt. Sangeeta Singh**, Principal Secretary, DWCD, Govt. of Gujarat
2. **Smt. Vandana Krishna**, Principal Secretary, DWCD, Govt. of Maharashtra
3. **Dr. Sarita Singh**, Secretary-cum-Commissioner, DWCD, Govt. of Rajasthan
4. **Ms. Alka Dewan**, Secretary-cum-Commissioner, DWCD, Administration of Dadar & Nagar Haveli; Administration of Daman & Diu
5. **Mr. Sanjiv M. Gadkar**, Director, DWCD, Govt. of Goa

(15 mins. each)

**Chair**: Shri Nilanjan Sanyal, NMEW
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<td>1.10 - 2.00 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td><strong>Session 1:</strong> Access to Justice: Key issues and mechanism for convergence</td>
<td>1. Special Cell for Women &amp; Children, Govt. of Maharashtra (10 mins.)</td>
<td>Ms. Flavia Agnes, Majlis (10 mins.)</td>
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<td>2.00 - 3.00 p.m.</td>
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<td><strong>Speaker:</strong> 2. Ms. Nandita Shah, AKSHARA, Mumbai (10 mins.)</td>
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<td>3. Ms. Audrey D’mello, Programme Director, Majlis (5 mins.)</td>
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<td><strong>Key Discussants:</strong> 1. Mr. Morris Babu, IG, Govt. of Rajasthan</td>
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<td>3. Ms. Nirmala Sawant Prabhawalkar, Member, NCW, Delhi (5 mins. each)</td>
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<td><strong>Question &amp; Answer</strong> (10 mins.)</td>
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<td>3.00 - 3.30 p.m.</td>
<td>Tea</td>
<td><strong>Session 2:</strong> Women’s Health and Nutrition: Issues and Efforts for Convergence</td>
<td><strong>Speaker:</strong> 1. Dr. R. R. Dighe, Rajmata Jijau Mother-Child Health &amp; Nutrition Mission, WCD Dept., Govt. of Maharashtra</td>
<td>Dr. Meera Chatterjee, World Bank (10 mins.)</td>
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<td>2. Ms. Indu Kapoor, Founder Director, Chetna, Gujarat (10 mins. each)</td>
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<td><strong>Key Discussants:</strong> 1. Dr. S.C Vashishtha, Jt. Director, Gandhinagar</td>
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<td>2. Dr. Suhash Solanki, Medical Officer, Directorate of Medical &amp; Health Services, Daman &amp; Diu</td>
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<td>3. Ms. Sangeeta Rege, CEHAT (5 mins. each)</td>
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<td><strong>Chair:</strong> Dr. Meera Chatterjee, World Bank (10 mins.)</td>
<td><strong>Question &amp; Answer</strong> (15 mins.)</td>
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<td>Day 2: 24th April, 2012, Tuesday</td>
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<td><strong>Session 3:</strong> Empowerment of Vulnerable &amp; Marginalized Groups and Women in Difficult Circumstances: Issues &amp; Challenges; and Strategies for Mainstreaming through Convergence</td>
<td><strong>Speaker:</strong> 1. Prof. Kanchan Mathur, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur (10 mins. each)</td>
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<td>9.30 - 10.30 a.m.</td>
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<td>2. Dr. Shaila Desouza, Centre for Women Studies, Goa University, Goa (10 mins. each)</td>
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<td><strong>Key Discussants:</strong> 1. Shri. Kuldeep Singh, Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society, Govt. of Daman &amp; Diu</td>
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<td><strong>Chair:</strong> Prof. Kanchan Mathur, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur (10 mins.)</td>
<td><strong>Question &amp; Answer</strong> (15 mins.)</td>
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<td>10.30 - 10.45 a.m.</td>
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| 10.45 - 11.45 a.m.  | **Session 4:** Women's Education: Issues and   | **Speaker:** 1. Dr. Nandini Manjrekar, CSSE, TISS, Maharashtra  
|                     | Efforts for convergence                       | 2. Ms. Farida Lambay, Pratham (10 mins. each)                          |
|                     | **Key Discussants:**                          | 1. Ms. Trupti Sheth, SPD, Mahila Samkhya, Govt. of Gujarat  
|                     |                                               | 2. Ms. Aditi K Maula, Sr. Post Graduate Teacher, Dadar & Nagar Haveli  |
|                     |                                               | (5 mins. each)  
|                     |                                               | 3. Mr Srinivas, Higher Education, UGC (5 mins)                        |
|                     | **Chair:** Dr. Nandini Manjrekar, CSSE, TISS,  | Maharashtra (10 mins.)                                                  |
|                     |                                               | **Question & Answer** (20 mins.)                                       |
| 11.45 - 12.45 p.m.  | **Session 5:** Economic Empowerment of Women:  | **Speaker:** 1. Dr. Heena Shah, International Centre for Entrepreneurship & Career Development (ICECD), Gujarat (10 mins. each) |
|                     | Strategies for Convergence                    | **Key Discussants:** 1. Shri. A D Kale, Govt. Maharashtra  
|                     |                                               | 2. Government Representative - Goa  
|                     |                                               | 3. Dr. Meera Chatterjee, Sr. Social Development Specialist, The World Bank (5 mins. each) |
|                     | **Chair:** Dr. Padmini Swaminathan, TISS       | Maharashatra (10 mins.)                                                 |
|                     | **Question & Answer**                         | (15 mins.)                                                             |
| 12.45 - 1.30 p.m.   | Lunch                                         |                                                                         |
| 1.30 - 2.10 p.m.    | **Session 6:** Impact & Importance of Mass    | **Speaker & Chair:** Mr. Kumar Ketkar, Dainik Bhaskar, Maharashtra (15 mins.) |
|                     | Media for convergence and raising awareness   | **Key Discussants:** 1. Ms. Nandita Shah, AKSHARA  
|                     | at grass root level                           | 2. Ms. Sushma Kapoor, UN Women  
|                     |                                               | 3. Ms. Sona Sharma, PFI (5 mins. each)                                |
|                     | **Question & Answer**                         | (10 mins.)                                                             |
| 2.10 - 3.10 p.m.    | **Session 6:** Gender Budgeting & Gender      | **Speaker & Chair:** Ms. Anita Kaushik, DWCD, Govt. Rajasthan (15 mins.) |
|                     | Mainstreaming – Achievements and Challenges    | **Key Discussants:** Smt. Sangeeta Singh, Principal Secretary, DWCD, Govt. of Gujarat  
<p>|                     |                                               | <strong>Chair:</strong> Dr. Ritu Diwan, Centre for Women Studies, University of Mumbai (15 mins.) |
|                     | <strong>Question &amp; Answer</strong>                         | (20 mins.)                                                             |</p>
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<td>3.20 - 4.25 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>- Wrap-up: Taking the Women's Empowerment agenda forward through the Mission – Chalking out State Priorities and action ahead</strong></td>
<td>Smt. Rashmi Singh, E.D, NRCW/ NMEW</td>
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<td><strong>- Way Forward</strong></td>
<td>Shri Nilanjana Sanyal, AS &amp; MD, NMEW &amp; Principal Secretary, WCD Dept., Maharashtra</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>- Vote of Thanks</strong></td>
<td>Ms. Meenakshi Rathore and State Govt. Representative</td>
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## ANNEXURE II
### PARTICIPANTS' LIST

**RESOURCE PERSONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ROLE</th>
<th>ORGANISATION</th>
<th>CONTACT DETAILS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prof. Varsha Gaikwad</td>
<td>Chief Guest</td>
<td>Hon. Minister for Women &amp; Child Development, Govt. of Maharashtra</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Shri Neeraj K Pawan</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>District Magistrate &amp; District Collector, Pali, Rajasthan</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Smt. Sangeeta Singh</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Principal Secretary, DWCD, Govt. of Gujarat</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Smt. Vandana Krishna</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Principal Secretary, DWCD, Govt. of Maharashtra</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Dr. Sarita Singh</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Secretary-cum-Commissioner, DWCD, Govt. of Rajasthan</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Ms. Alka Dewan</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Secretary-cum-Commissioner, DWCD, Administration of Dadar</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mr. Sanjiv M. Gadkar</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Director, DWCD, Govt. of Goa</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Ms. Anjali Dave</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Associate Professor, School of Social Work, TISS, Mumbai</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mr. Ravi Patil</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner, WCD, Maharashtra</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Dr. Nandita Shah</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Director, Akshara, Mumbai</td>
<td>9821898676</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Ms. Audrey D'Mello</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Programme Director, Majlis, Mumbai</td>
<td>9820633222</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Mr. Morris Babu</td>
<td>Key Discussant</td>
<td>Inspector General, Govt. of Rajasthan</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Adv. Sapna K. Patil</td>
<td>Key Discussant</td>
<td>Advocate, Dadra &amp; Nagar Haveli</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Ms. Nirmala Sawant Prabhawalkar</td>
<td>Key Discussant</td>
<td>Member, National Commission for Women, Delhi</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Adv. Flavia Agnes</td>
<td>Chair Person</td>
<td>Founder, Majlis, Mumbai</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Dr. R. R. Dighe</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Rajmata Jijau Mother-Child Health &amp; Nutrition Mission, DWCD, Govt. of Maharashtra</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Ms. Indu Capoor</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Founding Director, CHETNA, Ahmedabad</td>
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<td>Dr. S.C Vashishtha</td>
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<td>Joint. Director, Gandhinagar</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Dr. Suhash Solanki</td>
<td>Key discussant</td>
<td>Medical Officer, Directorate of Medical &amp; Health Services, Daman &amp; Diu</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Ms. Sangeeta Rege</td>
<td>Key discussant</td>
<td>CEHAT, Mumbai</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Prof. Kanchan Mathur</td>
<td>Chair/Speaker</td>
<td>Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Dr. Shaila Desouza</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Centre for Women’s Studies, Goa University</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Mr. Kuldeep Singh</td>
<td>Key discussant</td>
<td>Secretary, Indian Red Cross Society, Govt. of Daman &amp; Diu</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Ms. Ramya Subramanian</td>
<td>Key discussant</td>
<td>Senior Policy Specialist, UNICEF, New Delhi</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ms. Nandini Manjrekar</td>
<td>Speaker/ Chair Person</td>
<td>Associate Professor, Centre for Studies in Sociology of Education, TISS, Mumbai</td>
<td>9324764425</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Dr. Farida Lambay</td>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>Founder, Pratham, Mumbai</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Ms. Trupti Sheth</td>
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<td>State Programme Director, Mahila Samkhya, Government of Gujarat</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Ms. Aditi K Maula</td>
<td>Key discussant</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Dr. Heena Shah</td>
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<td>Founder, International Centre for Entrepreneurship &amp; Career Development (ICECD), Gujarat</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Shri. A. D. Kale</td>
<td>Key discussant</td>
<td>Vice Chairman and MD, MAVIM, Govt. of Maharashtra</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Dr Meera Chatterjee</td>
<td>Chair/Key discussant</td>
<td>Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank, New Delhi</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Dr. Padmini Swaminathan</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Mr. Kumar Ketkar</td>
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<td>Chief Editor, Divya Marathi, Dainik Bhaskar Group</td>
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<td>Ms. Sushma Kapoor</td>
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<td>Deputy Regional Director, UN Women, New Delhi</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Dr. Ritu Dewan</td>
<td>Speaker/ Chair Person</td>
<td>Professor, Department of Economics, University of Mumbai</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Ms. Anita Kaushik</td>
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<td>37</td>
<td>Mr. G. Srinivasan</td>
<td>Key discussant</td>
<td>Union Grants Commission, Higher Education Department, New Delhi</td>
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<td>Ms. Aruna Gandhi</td>
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<td>Ms. Indu Pardesi</td>
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<td>Ms. Priyadarshini Kolapte</td>
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<td>Ms. Deepa Kedare</td>
<td>Special Cell, Kandivli</td>
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<td>Mr. Nutan Abhang</td>
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<td>Ms. Rupa Mistry</td>
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<td>Ms. Rani Date</td>
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<td>Ms. Bharati S. Shinde</td>
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<td>Ms. Caitlin Lesczunki</td>
<td>SIT world learning</td>
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<td>Ms. Nicc Gwillai</td>
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<td>Ms. Avi Ovenstein</td>
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<td>Dr. Meena Gopal</td>
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<td>Ms. Mohinee Gagurde</td>
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<td>Ms. Vijayata Vypari</td>
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<td>Ms. Jaywanti P. Raut</td>
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<td>Mr. A.K. Verma</td>
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<td>Mr. Rabindra</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Ms. Sunita Gal</td>
<td>Advocate</td>
<td>9321866153</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Ms. Nanda Ghoderao</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Ms. Ujwala Kadrekar</td>
<td>CEHAT</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>Mr. P.P. Waghmare</td>
<td>Special Home, Deonar</td>
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<td>Adv. Veena Gowda</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>Dr. Suhas Solanki</td>
<td>Daman</td>
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<td>Ms. Archana Nagpal</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Ms. Pula Kate</td>
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<td>Mr. S.R. Godbole</td>
<td>Mulund</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Dr. Sandhya Limaye</td>
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<td>Mr. Rajiv Singh</td>
<td>M Ward</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>Ms. Ujwala Patil</td>
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Annexure III

Brief Profiles of Key Resource Persons

(Please include in brief the background of each Resource Person)

Ms. Anjali Dave is currently associate professor at the Centre for Equity for Women and Children and Families in the school of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Dr. Nandita Shah, co-director of Akshara, a woman’s resource centre in Mumbai.

Ms. Audrey D’mello is the deputy director of Majlis, a legal aid and resource centre fighting for the rights of women and for the cause of gender justice.

Mr. Morris Babu is the Inspector General of Police, Rajasthan.

Ms. Sapna K. Patil is an advocate working at Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

Ms. Flavia Agnes, a women’s rights lawyer, is also the Director of Majlis.

Dr. R. R. Dighe, works at the Rajmata Jijau Mother-Child Health & Nutrition Mission which is a part of the Women & Child Development Department, Government of Maharashtra.

Ms. Indu Kapoor, a nutritionist is the Founder Director of Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA), whose activities were initiated in 1980.

Dr. S. C. Vashishtha works in the capacity of Joint Director Maternal and Child Health, Health and Family Welfare Department at Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

Dr. Suhas Solanki, is a medical officer at the Directorate of Medical & Health Services, Daman & Diu.

Ms. Sangeeta Rege, works in the capacity of senior research officer at CEHAT, Mumbai.

Mr. Vikas Kharge holds the position of Director at the National Rural Health Mission Government of Maharashtra.

Professor Kanchan Mathur from the Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur, is an expert on gender and development issues in India and the South Asian region.

Dr. Shaila Desouza is with the Centre for Women’s Studies, Goa University and has been for nearly 15 years involved in research, teaching/training, advocacy and extension.

Mr. Kuldeep Singh Moondra is the secretary of the Indian red Cross Society, Government of Damn & Diu.

Dr. Ramya Subramanian a social policy analyst is currently working at UNICEF.

Dr. Nandini Manjrekar is an Associate Professor Centre for Studies in Sociology of Education, Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

Ms. Farida Lambay is the Co-founder and Trustee Pratham. She is also the Vice Principal of College of Social Work, Nirmala Niketan.

Mr. Milind Toravane, is Managing Director of Gujarat Livelihood Promotion Co. Ltd., Government of Gujarat.

Dr. Heena Shah is a successful entrepreneur and the founder director of Centre for Entrepreneurship and Career Development (ICECD) in Gujarat.

Ms. Meera Chatterjee holds the position of Senior Social Development Specialist at the World Bank.

Dr. Padmini Swaminathan, is Professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad campus.

Mr. Kumar Ketkar, a journalist has worked with leading newspapers such as Loksatta and Dainik Bhaskar Group in the capacity of editor.

Ms. Sushma Kapoor, is Deputy Regional Programme Director UN Women, South Asia Regional Office.

Prof. Ritu Dewan heads the Centre for Gender Economics in the Department of Economics.
In your opinion, how would the objective of National Mission and State Mission for Empowerment of Women contribute towards Convergence of efforts for Empowerment of Women?

Several participants felt that the objectives of the National Mission and State Mission for Empowerment of Women would be achieved through effective collaboration with civil society organizations. A participant mentioned that there is a “need to articulate partnership with different stakeholders on a more equal term and to have institutional mechanisms for this partnership to sustain”. Another participant was of the view that, there is a need for “greater engagement with State departments and Ministries at Center and State levels to build systems of communication, dialogue, accountability. Also there should be great engagement, research and advocacy with CSOs, NGOs and movements at grassroots for gender equitable processes”. There is also a need for “open door policies, lessening of suspicion to partnership and cooperation”.

How has the Conference contributed to developing better understanding on issues which require Convergent action? If so, please give specific examples.

Participants overall gained a better understanding on the issue of convergence. One participant specifically mentioned that the presentations made by the Goa and Rajasthan State and NGO representatives were insightful. Several participants thought that the Impact & Importance of Mass Media for convergence and raising awareness at grassroot level session was imminent.

“Nari Adalat, Special Cells in Maharashtra, MSSK in Rajasthan are good models” is what one participant felt. Several participants mentioned that this platform created for several States to talk share their experiences was helpful and gave them an insight of implementation of various schemes across the West of India.

One of the participant’s said that the Conference did not contribute to his/her understanding and that there is a need to explain the contexts of the regions for a better understanding of the schemes. Another participant was of the view that there is a need to go beyond implementation of schemes and the challenge then, is to find convergence in the way we articulate issues.

Kindly put your recommendations regarding strategies for convergence which have not been covered by any of the sessions.

- PWDVA which speaks of convergence was not discussed at the Conference.
- Policy gaps.
- Cost of violence to be computed in economic terms.
- Emergency helpline and other services for crime against women.
- There should be a clear operational meaning of convergence.
- It should be rooted in a comprehensive women’s policy for empowerment.
- Political empowerment got missed out.
- There should be convergence of various individual beneficiaries, schemes run through various departments at initial level so as to avoid duplication and getting actual benefits from beneficiaries.

One participant suggested that Conferences of this nature should also be carried out in rural areas.
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THE WESTERN REGIONAL CONSULTATION ON
ACHIEVING CONVERGENCE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN,
TECHNICAL SESSIONS
ACCESS TO JUSTICE
WOMEN’S HEALTH AND NUTRITION
EMPOWERMENT OF VULNERABLE & MARGINALIZED GROUPS
WOMEN’S EDUCATION
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
GENDER BUDGETING & GENDER MAINSTREAMING

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