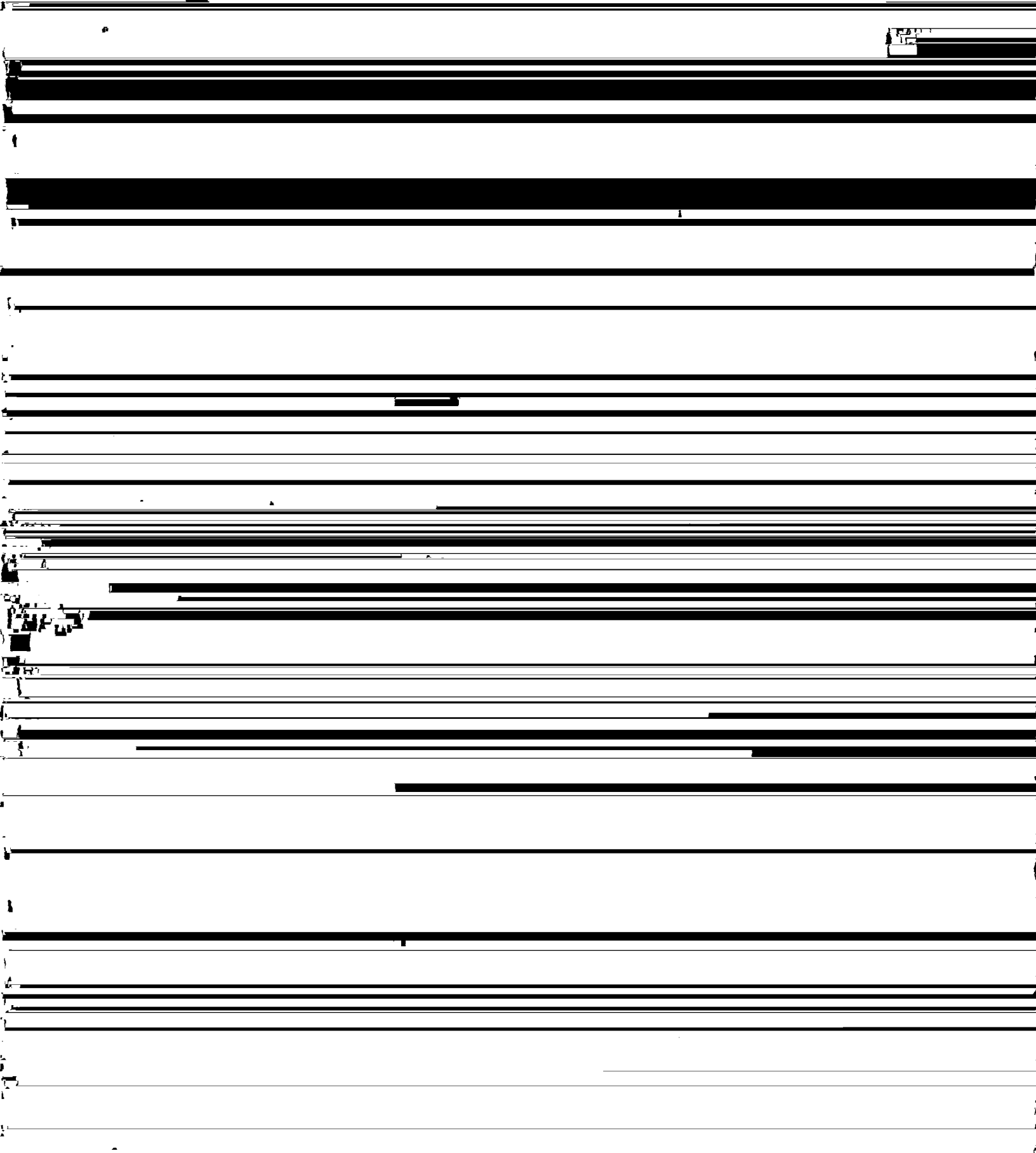


Mr. Chairman,

We thank the JIN Secretary General for his reports on the ...



Plan (2007-2012), for the first time in the history of Indian planning, focus has shifted focus from mere empowerment of women to recognizing women as agents of sustained socio-economic growth and change. Gender, therefore, has been made a cross-cutting theme; not confined to a single chapter on Women and Children. The Plan also endeavours to guarantee the rights and entitlements of all women, and has recognised that their requirements differ based on their locations within various castes, communities, religions, geographic and development zones.

Mr. Chairman,

Political empowerment is also an essential prerequisite for attainment of progress
or women's issues. One of the landmark achievements for the

Empowerment Measure for India and States under the GOI- UNDP Project of 'Promoting Gender Equality'.

Our approach to educating women has stemmed from our basic belief that if you educate an individual, you are enlightening an individual, but if you educate a woman, you are enlightening a family. In order to achieve equality in the field of literacy, special emphasis has been given for education of the girl child. Considerable progress has been made and recent data shows that the ratio of female to male students at primary school level has increased in the last 15 years from 0.7: 1 to 0.88:1 and in the secondary school level from 0.5:1 to 0.7:1. Similarly, overall, female literacy rate has increased at the rate of 14.4% in the last 15 years, whereas, male literacy grew only 11.1%.

Mr. Chairman,

Another related issue is the exploitation of women as a result of trafficking of

women for various unlawful purposes. Government of India recently amended appropriate provisions in the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act to enable more stringent punishment

