

The Empowerment of Women Through Planning and Budgeting in India with Special Reference to Five Year Plans

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to outline different provisions made towards development, advancement and empowerment of women in planning and budgeting under the different Five Year Plans of India after independence.

KEYWORDS

Constitution of India, Constitutional Provisions, Articles, Fundamental Rights, Directive Principles of State Policy, Fundamental Duties, Panchayats, Municipalities, Legislative measures, Acts, Welfare Schemes, Five Year Plan, Reservation, Policy, Report, Committee, Commission, Board, International Convention, Declarations, empowerment of women.

1. INTRODUCTION:

In consideration and pursuance to the Constitutional mandate in the interest, benefit, security and welfare of women, the Government of India through its Planning Commission created provisions in the first as well as all subsequent Five Year Plans. In fact, in all the policy decision reflected in budgeting and planning, there had been due consideration of gender equality and protection of women. However, there has been a shift in policy approaches from the concept of 'welfare' in the seventies to 'development' in the eighties and 'empowerment' from the nineties. In recent years, the concept of empowerment of women has been recognized as the central issue in determining the status of women.

Table : The Constitutional Mandate in favour of women in India

In addition to the principle of gender equality enshrined in its Preamble, the Constitution of India empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women towards neutralization of the cumulative socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them (Sewa, 2019). The Fundamental Rights of India ensures that the state shall not deny to any person equality before the laws or equal protection of the laws (Article 14) and also do not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them [Article 15 (1)]. Further the state is required to make any special provision for women and children [Article 15 (3)]; there shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State [Article 16 (1) & (2)] and prohibition of human trafficking and bonded labour [Article 23]. The Directive Principles of State Policy stipulates state to direct its policy towards

securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood [Article 39(a)]; secure the health and strength of workers, men and women, and the tender age of children are not abused and that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength [Article 39(e)]; make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief [Article 42] and promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation [Article 46].

In view of all these Constitutional provisions, the empowerment of women in India has been reflected in the five year planning and budgeting undertaken.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE PAPER:

This paper is an attempt to review on the Five Years Union Budgets of India bearing provisions made as policy decision towards development, advancement and empowerment of women, for which main objectives designed are as follows:-

- (a) To find out provisions made towards development, advancement and empowerment of women in planning and budgeting under the different Five Year Plans of India after independence.
- (b) To find out the Five Year Plans of India specifically related to the gender budgeting.
- (c) To summarize those provisions made for protection of women's interest in Planning and Budgeting.

3. METHODOLOGY:

This is an exploratory study conducted from the secondary sources of data. The data collection comprises of plan and policy documents, annual and other reports published by the Government of India or/and its agencies uploaded in their websites, the books, journals, etc. The findings and discussions of this paper are categorized as per the objectives and presented under different heading in the paragraphs that follows here-below.

4. PROTECTION OF WOMEN'S INTEREST IN PLANNING AND BUDGETING:

The Government of India has been invariably considering aspect of women development and advancement by earmarking budget in each Five Year Plans as described here-below:

GENDER BUDGETING

The Government of India has been invariably considering aspect of women development, advancement and empowerment in planning and budgeting with Five Year Plans. The gender budgeting proposes to monitor public expenditure and service delivery from a gender perspective, as a means of mainstreaming women's concerns in all activities and improving their access to public resources. The Gender Budget Statement first introduced in the Union Budget 2005-06 indicates the budget provisions for schemes that are substantially meant for benefit of women. The programmes and schemes of the ministries and departments were reviewed periodically to address the quantum of resources having budgetary potential to impact and cater the developmental needs of women.

4.1 The Gender Sub-Plan: The report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India gave new impetus towards gender perspectives on public expenditure. For the first time, the Planning Commission

of India highlighted the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general developmental sectors to that of women under Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97). It has a view that benefits of development from different sectors should not bypass women's aspect and the special programmes on women should complement the general development programmes. Whereas, the latter was intended to reflect greater gender sensitivity as not much progress was made in terms of ensuring adequate flow of funds and benefits to women.

The Women Component Plan: Introduced in the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) to adopt "Women Component Plan" as one of the major strategies of planning and budgeting, this concept was mandated by Ministries to indicate and ensure the flow of benefits to women's development, with not less than 30 per cent of the funds/benefits earmarked in all the women's related sectors. The special care has been taken on the flow of the earmarked funds/benefits through an effective mechanism to ensure that the proposed strategy brings forth a holistic approach towards empowerment of women. The Twelfth Five Year Plan focuses on women's agency through identified strategies to address the challenges posed by traditional determinants of women empowerment comprising economic empowerment, social and physical infrastructure, enabling legislations, women's participation in governance and engender national policies and programmes.

Consequent upon independence of country from British Rule, the planning and budgeting in India envisaged provision for welfare of women, later on a paradigm shift, it was focused on all round development of women and then finally as empowerment of women in current scenario. It may be construed that welfare, development and empowerment of women has been one of the focal point of planning and budgeting process in India, as analyzed and furnished in the Box: 3.2 below:-

Box: 3.2 Women Component under Planning and Budgeting in India since Independence.

1. **The First Five-Year Plan (1951-56)** envisaged a number of welfare measures for women comprising establishment of the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), the State Social Welfare Advisory Boards (SSWAB), organization of Mahila Mandals and the Community Development Programmes. The First Plan sought to 'promote the welfare of women' by helping them to play their legitimate role in the family and the community.
2. **The Second Five-Year Plan (1956-61)** retained the welfare approach to women's issues and envisaged for empowerment of women linked with the overall approach of intensive agricultural development programmes. To ensure better implementation of welfare schemes, efforts were geared to organize 'Mahila Mandals' (women's groups) at the grass root levels.
3. **The Third Five-Year Plan (1961-66)** envisaged female education as a major welfare measure with emphasis on rural welfare services and condensed educational courses. The health services were also strengthened for maternal and child welfare including health education, nutrition and family planning.
4. **The Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-74)** continued to emphasized women's education and the promotion of women's welfare within the family, bringing down the birth rate, and increasing expenditure on family planning.
5. **The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-1979)** was a new approach of integrated welfare with development services laying emphases on training of women thereby making a shift on the approach from 'welfare' to 'development'. This plan coincided with International Women's Decade and a report of

the Committee on the Status of Women in India was drawn. Women's Welfare and Development Bureau was set up under the Ministry of Social Welfare.

6. **The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-85)** materialized shift from welfare to development of women and included a separate chapter on women and development. The women was recognized as active partners in development rather than passive subjects for welfare and special institutions for women were set up like National Committee on Women. The focus was laid on extending assistance to women to overcome poverty, highlighted the need to improve their accessibility to assets and own joint titles to land and property. The low status of women was attributed to the lack of income-generating opportunities.
7. **The Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90)** laid emphasis on need for gender equality and empowerment, acknowledged the important role of women in agriculture and allied sectors. The strategy was adopted to bring women into the mainstream of national development and raise their economic and social status. A separate Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) was created under the Ministry of Human Resource Development for holistic development and advancement of women and children, social and economic empowerment of women and to ensure social equity and gender equality. The Women Development Corporations were established in all Indian states towards promotion of employment generating activities for women's group and women from the weaker sections.
8. **The Eight Five-Year Plan (1992-97)** brought a shift in emphasis from women's development to women's empowerment, to 'ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women and special programs are implemented to complement the general programs.' It focused on empowering women through Panchayat Raj Institutions towards decentralized planning and implementation at the grass roots level. It also emphasized the convergence and integration of services offered by health, education, employment and welfare programs.
9. **The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002)** adopted a special strategy of 'Women Component Plan' (WCP) through which not less than 30% of funds/benefits flow was earmarked for women-specific programmes from all the general development sectors. This plan made two significant changes in the conceptual strategy of planning for women as empowerment of women became one of the nine primary objectives and efforts made to create an enabling environment where women can freely exercise their rights both within and outside home as equal partners along with men.
10. **The Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-07)** made a major commitment towards empowering women as the agents of socio-economic empowerment and gender justice. The Department of Women and Child was upgraded into a full-fledged Ministry. The National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) was adopted for empowering the women as agents of socio-economic change, and ensuring survival, protection and development of women and children through rights based approach. The Plan also focused on programs for increasing the work opportunities and productivity of female farmers.
11. **The Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-12)** envisaged to end the multifaceted exclusions and discriminations faced by women and children; to ensure every woman and child to be able to develop her full potential and share the benefits of economic growth and prosperity. The plan not only recognized women as equal citizens but as agents of economic and social growth.
12. **The Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012-17)** envisaged to ensure improving the position and condition of women by addressing structural and institutional barriers as well as strengthening gender

mainstreaming. The Plan seeks faster, more inclusive and sustainable growth to make women from all sections of society as equal partners in the development process, thereby fulfilling their rights and meeting aspirations. It also focus on creating greater ‘freedom’ and ‘choice’ for women by generating awareness and creating institutional mechanisms to help women and men question prevalent “patriarchal” beliefs that are detrimental to women’s empowerment and developing strategies for dealing with the impact of economic reforms and progressive globalization/ liberalization of economy on the conditions of women and children.

Source: Compiled by researcher from 5 year Plan Books of Planning Commission of India (Retrieved from <http://www.nmew.gov.in> on July 6, 2017)

- 4.1 ***The First Five Year Plan (1951-56)*** was mainly welfare orientated having introduction of various welfare programmes related to primary health and child development.
- 4.2 ***The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61)*** focused to ensure better implementation of welfare schemes with “Mahila Mandals” and linking empowerment of women with overall intensive agricultural development programmes.
- 4.3 ***The Third Five Year Plans (1961-66)*** recognized the greater importance of education for women. It has programme to improve maternal and child health services, supplementary feeding for children, expectant and nursing mothers.
- 4.4 ***The Fourth Five Year Plan (1966-69) and Interim Plans (1969-74)*** laid emphasis on women education and promotion of women welfare within the family (including family planning).
- 4.5 ***The Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79)*** has shift on approach from ‘welfare’ to ‘development’ of women with emphasis on training. Women’s Welfare and Development Bureau was set up under Ministry of Social Welfare.
- 4.6 ***The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85)*** adopted a multi-disciplinary approach towards women development with focus on health, education and employment.
- 4.7 ***The Seventh Five Year Plan (1986-1991)*** gave promotion to beneficiary oriented programmes for women in different development sectors. It also emphasized on need for gender equality and empowerment.
- 4.8 ***The Eight Five Plan (1992-97)*** focused on empowering women and their participation in decision making process at local self government (both urban and rural areas) with reservation system. National Commission for Women was set up as first statutory body to deal with women issues.
- 4.9 ***The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)*** adopted a strategy of women’s component plan with minimum of 30% of fund allocation in women-specific programmes.
- 4.10 ***The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)*** made a major commitment towards empowering women through translating the recently adopted National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action thereby ensuring survival, protection and development of women and children.
- 4.11 ***The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12)*** undertook special measures for gender empowerment and equity. A scheme on gender budgeting was also introduced.
- 4.12 ***The Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17)*** proposes to ensure improvement in the position and condition of women by addressing structural and institutional barriers as well as strengthening gender mainstreaming.
- 4.13 **Gender Sub-Plan:** Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, in 1974 gave a new impetus towards gender perspectives on public expenditure. Under Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-

97), for the first time in India, Planning Commission high-lighted for the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general developmental sectors to that of women. “The benefits of development from different sectors should not bypass women and special programmes on women should complement the general development programmes. The latter, in turn, should reflect greater gender sensitivity” as not much progress was made in terms of ensuring adequate flow of funds and benefits to women.

- 4.14 **Women Component Plan:** Ninth five Year Plan (1997-2002) adopted “Women Component Plan” as one of the major strategies of planning and budgeting and directed both the Central and State Governments to ensure that ‘not less than 30 per cent of the funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women’s related sectors’. It also directed that a special vigil be kept on the flow of the earmarked funds/benefits through an effective mechanism to ensure that the proposed strategy brings forth a holistic approach towards empowering women.
- 4.15 **Scheduled Caste Plan/Scheduled Tribe Plan:** Strategies of the Scheduled Caste Sub Plan for the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Tribal Sub- Plan for the Scheduled Tribes (STs) were introduced in the Sixth Plan and Fifth Plan for channelizing to these categories of people their due share of plan benefits and outlays. It was based on the conviction of the Planning Commission of India that neither 50 years of planning nor thousands of crores of rupees allocated for ‘SC/ST Welfare’ had any substantial impact on the lives of these groups. Greater attention was paid to ensure convergence of Ministries/Departments and pooling resource together for common target groups.
Source of Data

5. CONCLUSION:

Though adequate provision and ample efforts had been made for the protection and advancement of women in different spheres, but there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislations, policies, plan, programmes, and related mechanism on the one hand and situational reality of the state of women on other hand, which has been analyzed and highlighted in various reports of committee and plan documents. In spite of all these efforts, the government has not been able to achieve the much as women have been exposed to greater insecurity, poverty, illiteraty, castism, traditionalism, backwardness, corruption, criminalization and dominance of male.

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