

Engendering the Eleventh Five Year Plan Approach Paper

A Presentation by the Think Tank

January 13, 2006

February 28, 2006

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Who we are

We are gathered today as the Think Tank - a group of representatives of women's organisations, activists, researchers, and academicians - to present to the Planning Commission our concerns on the inclusion of gender in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, and more pertinently, the Approach Paper under discussion.

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ENCOUNTERING THE ELEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN

THINK TANK MEMBERS

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History of the Think Tank

- It was first formed in 1996, at the initiative of UNIFEM, South Asia and the UN system in India. Fresh from the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in China, Indian women, the government, and the UN system were keen to see women as an integral part of the policy process.
- For the first time, consultations were designed to factor in voices of grassroots women as well as interactions between them and state and national policy makers. Towards this, four regional consultations were held in the North, East, West and South of India. Issues related to policies and programmes were discussed at each of these meetings, attended by grassroots women, representatives of women's organisations, researchers, planners and representatives of the state and national planning commission.
- The proceedings and recommendations were then presented to representatives of the Planning Commission in a national consultation and incorporated into the 9th Five Year Plan. Members of the Think Tank also gave inputs to the Ministries.

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Process for the 11th Five Year Plan

- ☐ Work for this Plan is a civil society initiative, being coordinated by the National Alliance of Women (NAWO), and supported in the endeavour by DWCD, UNIFEM and UNDP.
- ☐ There will be 5 regional consultations in the year 2006. The objective of these will be to have on board the voices of grassroots women. This will be followed by a national consultation, and interaction with the Planning Commission. The recommendations from these will once again be forwarded to the Planning Commission.

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This presentation is:

- A work in progress
- A lead into the issues
- A flagging of some central ideas
- Not comprehensive

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Approach and Objectives

Sectoral Issues

- Survival and Health
- Employment and Work
- Education
- Agriculture and Land Management
- Agriculture and Land Management
- Environment, Forests, Energy and Disaster Management
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Law Reform and Implementation
- Areas of special concern
- Finance and Budgeting

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Engendering the Eleventh Plan Approach Paper A Presentation by the Think Tank

"A reality check of the growth of a nation lies in the status of its women"

Approach and Objectives

- The idea of equal rights for men and women is embedded in Constitution of India. But gender equality, which is more than equal rights, has not been integrated into India's Five Year plans.
- The approach to gender equality in the plan documents has remained piecemeal and fragmented.
- Gender equality is a constituent of development as well an instrument of development.

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• A country cannot be deemed developed if half its population is severely disadvantaged in terms of basic needs, livelihood options, knowledge access, and political voice.

• Without gender equality other goals of development will not be achievable.

• Poverty exacerbates gender disparities.

• Gender inequalities hinder development.

• There is extensive evidence on the effects of institutional reforms, economic policies, and active policy measures to promote greater equality between women and men.

• To enhance development effectiveness, gender issues must be an integral part of policy analysis, design, and implementation.

• Societies that discriminate by gender tend to experience less rapid economic growth and poverty reduction than societies that treat males and females more equally.

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• To promote gender equality, a 3 pronged strategy is essential:

- institutional reforms that promote equal rights for women and men;
- policies for sustained economic development; and
- active measures to redress persistent gender disparities

• It is time to place the achievement of gender equity as a clear objective in the Eleventh Plan's approach paper as well as build it into the Plan's policies, programmes, strategies, and targets.

• Gender mainstreaming should be one of the objectives of the Plan.

• The Approach Paper should enable the Eleventh Five Year Plan to address crucial issues facing the majority of women in the country.

• Today 75% of all female workers and 85% of all rural female workers are in agriculture.

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- We need to look at the entire economy where these upheavals are taking place and then trace the connections between them and the present series of crises affecting entire families and then to the ways in which women (in their gendered position and context) are responding to these at the cost of their own health and well being.
- The Eleventh Plan needs to give priority to the entire set of issues revolving round economic changes and their adverse effect on poor women.
- This needs a shift in the approach to planning, where causal connections are made; where there is a systemic approach, starting with root causes, and grappling with the enormity of the problems facing the great majority of women in the country.
- India is a signatory to the Beijing Platform for Action, which requires Governments "to review, adopt and maintain macro-economic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty".
- This requires analyzing the macro picture from the gender perspective so that the Plans can then move towards "more equitable distribution of productive assets, wealth, opportunities, income and services".

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- In the 11th Plan, specific strategies for achieving each target that is set up must be outlined. The outcome assessment should critically look at the achievement of the target, the efficacy of the strategy and suggest mid course correction as necessary.
- There is a large gap in the understanding of the concept of gender mainstreaming. The Planning Commission should therefore identify specific action for each Ministry/Department in order to explain the strategies required in that sector for the purpose.
- There is also a need for greater fund allocation and monitoring of physical targets.
- In the context of women's empowerment, the 11th Plan should prioritize the most important goals which would have larger relevance for the empowerment of women and percolate to various areas of development.

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- Women need to be at the centre of the development paradigm.
- Health, education and skill development are of primary importance and science and technology for this purpose is critical.
- The plans have not been able to ensure the social, physical and economic security of women.
- A major challenge of the Eleventh Plan is to enable the creation of an environment for women that is – first and foremost – safe and free from violence. Only then is it possible for women to be true partners in India's democracy at the social, economic and political level.

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2. Survival and Health

Demographic Change

- declining sex ratio
 - devaluation and mal-treatment of the girl child
 - female feticide and infanticide
 - increase in trafficking, child labour, child marriage, dowry related violence
 - Focus must be primarily on raising the value of the girl child within the family and society.
 - Need for incorporation of the effects of the existing sex ratio into planning for the future.
- There is urgent need to increase both access to education and health services, employment opportunities, especially for girls and women, if demography is to provide a dividend rather than a threat.


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- A need to adopt a life cycle approach to women's survival and health issues

- Poor women have no or very poor access to health care, especially in remote areas. Lack of roads, non-functional public health centres (PHCs), and inadequate medical staff is routine. A great deal of rural indebtedness in poor rural families is linked to health costs, as often private health care is the only way out for them.




- The importance of public provisioning of quality health care to enable access to affordable and reliable health services cannot be overestimated in the context of preventing the non-poor from entering into poverty or in terms of reducing the suffering of those who are already below the poverty line.

- Women with especially prone to anemia and malnutrition, which then perpetuate a cycle of poor health. Aging women with those with disabilities also need special attention.

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HIV/AIDS

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- In India, the HIV virus is spreading from high risk population to the general population in many areas, and from urban to rural areas.
 - Testing for the HIV virus is rare till symptoms set in. The numbers suffering from HIV/AIDS are therefore likely to be far higher than estimated.
 - Once HIV/AIDS enters the home families sell the meagre assets they own and additionally borrow money in order to try and save the patient.
 - The major impact of HIV/AIDS is of financial deprivation due to the loss of income earning opportunities for the spouse on the one hand and expenditure on medical care on the other.
 - Women are the major care givers in most cases.
 - There is increasingly, a female face of HIV/AIDS as women are particularly prone to the virus.

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- Information for prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS is crucial.

- Training and infrastructure needs of health care providers at all levels need to be identified and met with.

Behavioural and attitudinal change all levels is an important intervention and can be achieved through training sensitisation workshops and follow up.

- Counselling and access to condoms and microbicides are needed for women to reduce the risk of exposure in situations where they do not have money to even buy food.


- Given the nature of the epidemic, education on HIV/AIDS must be introduced into the school curriculum.

- Funds must be allocated for information, voluntary testing, counselling, treatment and anti-retrovirals.

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3. Employment and Work



- Employment implications of certain macro policies - in place or being contemplated - and their particular effects on women workers are important. Therefore such measures should be undertaken with extreme caution and only after weighing all the options.

- Internal short-term migration for work, which may be seasonal or simply for very short periods regardless of seasonality, has recently emerged as a widespread feature of rural India.

- Since the consequences of such migration are highly gendered, policies generating greater and more prolonged job opportunities within particular rural areas must be considered.

- Comprehensive data on women's paid and unpaid work, women's asset ownership and sex segregated data in other areas needs to be collected.

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- In planning for women's additional employment, women must be treated as entities in their own right and not just as a resource for the family.
- This is also relevant for the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) where their right to employment must not be subsumed within the family card.
- It is important to integrate the implementation of the NREGA with the planning process in general and specifically with other requirements of rural development, especially those with direct impact on women and girls. Thus, schemes and projects initiated under NREGA could include those which would dovetail with other plans such as provision of universal schooling.
- It is important that careful attention is paid in designing, implementing and monitoring the Act to take care of the interests of women.
- Attempts should be made to maximise the involvement of women but not at the cost of creating a double burden of work and unpaid work.

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A. Unorganised sector

- Unorganized workers number nearly 37crores in India, of which substantial numbers are women. This sector contributes 65% of the GDP.
- Hence there is an urgent need for ensuring the measures of regulation of employment, conditions service, social security and welfare for this segment of workforce in the country.
- A) Social Security encompasses the right to Health and Medical Care, employment injury benefit, maternity benefit, group insurance, housing safety measures, and Gratuity and Pension benefits.
- b. In order to provide social security, a Social Security Fund should be constituted, wherein grants from the Central Government, contribution from Employers and Workers could be collected .

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B. Formal Sector

- Despite the fact that more women are in the informal sector, the goal would be to have more women in the formal sector, and access to productive and decent work. For this, issues of child care and technology or home making tasks is essential.



C. Unpaid work

- Women are predominantly engaged in unpaid economic and non-economic work, this work makes it impossible for them to participate in economic or social activities and thus they are severely constrained to take up other developmental activities.
- The Eleventh Plan should address the unpaid work of women in an explicit manner through a well-designed strategy.

D. Access to assets and resource

- Ongoing schemes for giving women access to productive resource fall short of making them economically independent.

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Education

- The UPA government has committed to substantial increases in public expenditure on education (up to 6 per cent of GDP) and health. Such expenditure should be undertaken with a strong gender perspective, such that existing gender inequalities in indicators in access to such public services can be reduced.
- These affect not only the expenditure themselves, but also the requirements for complementary investment. For example, to ensure that more girls attend school, features such as separate toilets for girls in secure locations within or near the school, schools located within reasonable distance from villages and well-lit roads may all be required, which require certain types of physical infrastructure in addition to the direct investment for teachers, etc. Further, special incentives for girls to attend secondary schools, such provision of bicycles, may be considered
- Hierarchies with regard to access are being created, with poor quality government schools becoming the option for girls. With increasing state withdrawal from education and few quality controls on private schools the impact on girls and the poor will be tremendous.
- The effort in the earlier Plan periods for increasing literacy, enrolment and retention in schools has to continue.

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- Emphasis needs to be given to skill development in a massive way to survive in the global market and avail of increased market opportunities.
- Both teacher's training programmes as well as school curricula need to include women's rights as well as legal literacy.
- As many children drop out of school and particularly girl children, some provision needs to be made for their training and income generation.

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5 Agriculture and Land Management

- Recent government emphasis on the agricultural and rural sectors ignores critical links between gender equality and the fulfillment of important interrelated goals - increasing agricultural productivity, reducing poverty, and generating gainful employment.
- Enhancing women's direct access to land in the rural economy and improving women farmers' infrastructural access will prove critical for meeting goals
- To enhance women's land access from all three sources, a range of policies and programmes are needed,
 - including land titles to women in government land transfers,
 - credit support for enabling women to purchase or lease in land from the market,
 - legal awareness raising and legal support, recording of women's inheritance shares,
 - recording of women's inheritance shares, etc.

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- A "group approach" in land cultivation and investment in productive assets is essential.
- Creation of productive assets in women's hand.
- Recording women shares: There is a growing emphasis the government on computerizing land records.
- Legal Reform: The inheritance law governing Hindus has recently been reformed in a major way through the Hindu Succession Amendment Act 2005. This has brought woman on par with men in relation to agricultural land.
- However, the inheritance law governing Muslim women needs amendment in relation to agricultural land, and laws for tribal women need codification and formalization, in keeping with the principle of gender equality.
- Comprehensive directive: There needs to be comprehensive directive across the country that in all government land transfers, women's claims are directly recognized, be they transfers for poverty alleviation, income generation (crop cultivation, fish cultivation), resettlement, etc.

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6 Environment, Forests, Energy and Disaster Management

- Women are major stakeholders in the protection of the environment, especially forests.
- Rural women are centrally involved in the institutions set up for forest management across the country. This includes forest protection initiated under the Joint Forest Management (JFM) programme launched in 1990; van panchayats, and groups initiated by NGOs, etc.
- Also these groups should have at least one third and, if possible, 50% women in their executive committees.
- Where there are well-functioning non-JFM community forestry institutions, such as van panchayats in Uttaranchal, they should be strengthened rather than replaced by JFM, and made more gender equal.
- Fifty percent of the land pattas given to forest communities should go to women, under any land enactment, including under the proposed Scheduled Tribes (recognition of forest rights) Bill, 2005. Rather than giving joint pattas, however, women and men should be given individual pattas. Also any new land so distributed should be in terms of group rights.

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Access to water and Sanitation

The current situation of water and sanitation in rural India is

- 54% of households do not have water supply in or near their homes.
- 74.8 million Households spend 107 billion hours per year to collect water from outside home. Only 7% of households are connected with sewerage facility.
- Only 10 % of households have toilet facility inside the house.
- 1% of households use community toilets.

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Access to energy

The 2001 census finds that

- Nearly 700 million people without access to modern energy.
- Nearly 300 million people do not have access to electricity,
- Even larger number i.e. 625 million does not have access to modern (cooking) fuels.

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Time spent

- In rural India nearly 3 billion days are spent in gathering fuels
 - 700 million days in processing them i.e., chopping, drying, turning, storing, stacking and handling.
- About 800 million days are wasted due to health issues.
- A comprehensive policy is needed for domestic energy, covering a range of solutions rather than single source options.
- In addition, the promotion of non-biomass sources of energy, including solar, for small production units would save firewood for domestic use.

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Disaster Management

- Disasters, however, 'natural' are profoundly discriminatory
- Wherever they hit, pre-existing structures and social conditions determine that some members of the community will be less affected while others will pay a higher price.
- Among the differences that determine how people are affected by such disasters is that of gender.
- The re-construction of the fisher communities should suit the livelihood needs of coastal communities.
- Targeting highly vulnerable women such as single mothers, widows, below-poverty and unemployed women and socially marginalized women for employment options in reconstruction of damaged and new houses is another crucial expectation.

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Information and Communications Technologies

- Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are now widely seen as an important tool for empowering the poor and disadvantaged.
- Since women constitute greater numbers of both, they have a particularly high stake in having adequate and timely access to ICTs. Additionally, developments in the ICT sector must reflect women's needs and aspirations.
- Policies must be especially designed to ensure that women's access to ICTs is facilitated and obstacles removed. Gender issues in telecommunications can be addressed through a number of measures such as:
 - Monitoring gender dis-aggregated parameters of access to ICT infrastructure, content, etc
 - Using ICTs to modify and enhance existing services that can empower women (health, micro credit, literacy services, training)
 - Capacity building to enable participation by women in ICT work and businesses

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- Addressing issues such as discrimination, harassment of women and girl children through abuse of ICTs
- Support to women working in ICT-based services
- Representation of women in important ICTs areas including management, regulation and policy making
- Ensuring that ICT markets can address the needs of women
 - through specific products, services, pricing schemes, and support for investment and innovation.

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8.

Law Reform and Implementation

•In 2005, four major pieces of legislation being passed by Parliament, two of which are directly aimed at benefiting women and two have the potential for doing so.

•The Hindu Succession Amendment Act 2005 (HSA) and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. The latter includes the Right to Information Act 2005 and the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005.

•What is needed now is a comprehensive policy for ensuring the effective implementation of these Acts, as well as other laws.

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•Campaigns for raising awareness and providing information about existing laws are critical for making the laws effective. This should be done at several levels, such as:

(a) Training all levels of concerned government functionaries on given laws

(b) Providing information about the laws to anyone who needs it: this will need preparing written and visual material on such laws for dissemination in various languages;

(c) Introducing courses on laws of wide relevance as well as on the Constitution at the plus-two level in schools; and so on.

(d) Disseminating information about the laws through the popular media such as TV.

(e) Creating legal aid cells at the panchayat level where both information and support is provided to rural women, especially poor women, for exercising their rights. Here funds for legal assistance should also be provided to poor women seeking legal redress under specified laws, such as laws concerning inheritance, employment and domestic violence

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9 Areas of special concern

A. Dalits and other disadvantaged communities

- Dalits lag behind with respect to a number of development indicators.

Recent estimates of poverty of SC/ST and female headed households show that caste and poverty status go hand in hand.

- The 11th Plan could consider Dalit women as a special category, because of their marginalization, and evolve a comprehensive development policy for Dalit women which should spell out concrete and time bound strategies and programmes for the socio-economic and political empowerment

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B. The Urban Poor and their Settlements

- Urbanisation is an increasing phenomenon as the nature of activities pursued by an economy progressively shifts from primary to the secondary or tertiary sectors.

- Poor urban settlements in India are around 40 million and the average family size is 5.

- Women's rights to housing need to be understood in terms of their entitlements.

- There is a need for greater commitment to institutional re-orientation by adopting a more 'enabling' approach to the delivery of basic services accessible to the poor through the more effective mobilization of community resources and skills to compliment public resource allocations

- Improved access to social services would also help building up the capacities of poor and empowering them to improve their own living conditions and quality of life.

- There is a need for formulating a National Urban Poor Settlements Policy which would cover the above said components.

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C. Women in the North-East Region

- The conflict situation in the North-East is rooted in lack of income and employment.

- The Look East policy of the GOI could be a valuable device to open opportunities.

- Of special attention are issues related to introducing new avenues for non farming activities of women - food processing, bottling, canning and packaging.

- Enhance the utilization of the region's local and rich natural resources with appropriate technology for producing and marketing herbal products and processed food/fruits For example, establishing cold storages in appropriate areas of the region, to sustain perishable items before they are transported to larger markets.

- As a result of conflict in the area, trauma and the fear among women and children is high. There is evidence that homes and counselling centres in the region are mostly dysfunctional, and there is a need to revamp the existing night shelters and counselling centres for women.

- Violence against women has to be a public health issue because of its magnitude in the north east region and the apathy to such incidences.

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- Strict measures are set up by the government to safeguard visiting tourists, especially women, from sexual harassment.

- Sources of funding should incorporate in the planning process in order implement market concepts in real terms for the north east region.

- Attention should be given to 'Internally Displaced People' with special emphasis on women & children in conflict areas like Assam, Manipur, Nagaland and Tripura

- The north east region has a history of women's collective role in livelihood practices and social discourse. A group approach should therefore be adopted where women of the region, especially that of tribal and ethnic communities, can work together both in agricultural and non agricultural sectors.

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D. Minority Women

- Increased vulnerability of minority women

- especially Muslim women - in times of communal riots; high illiteracy poverty and backwardness in terms of social indicators, need special attention.

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10 Finance and Budgeting

- All plans should have adequate financing and utilisation.

- All budgets need to be gendered and processes put in place to ensure implementation-both at the central and state levels.

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