

Block

# 2

## **WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

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## Expert Committee

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Prof. Surendra Singh  
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Kashi Vidhyapeeth  
Varanasi

Prof. Thomas Kalam  
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New Delhi

Dr. Beena Antony  
University of Delhi  
New Delhi

Prof. Patricia Lager  
Florida State University  
USA

---

## Block Preparation Team

---

Units 1 & 2 Dr. Tripti Bassi,  
Assistant Professor,  
Lady Shri Ram College for Women,  
University of Delhi

Unit 3 Ms Lalhmingmawii Gangte,  
Assistant Professor,  
Department of Social Work,  
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

---

### Course Editor

Prof. Anu J. Thomas  
IGNOU, New Delhi

---

### Course Coordinator

Dr. Sayantani Guin  
IGNOU, New Delhi

---

## Print Production

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Mr. Kulwant Singh  
Section Officer (Publication)  
School of Social Work  
IGNOU, New Delhi-110 068

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## BLOCK INTRODUCTION

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This block on “Women and Development Initiatives” is the second block of MSWE-002. It has three units.

The **first unit** on “Global Initiatives and UN Safeguards for Women’s Development” will enable you to trace the women’s suffragette movement demanding voting rights and the Conventions on maternity benefits, equality in education and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in advocating women’s rights. You will also be able to examine the role and functions of United Nations agencies like UNIFEM, DAW, CSW, among others in empowering women.

In the **second unit** titled “Policies and Programmes for Women Empowerment in India”, the meaning of women’s empowerment including social, economic and political dimensions and the status of women vis-à-vis the indicators of women’s empowerment have been discussed elaborately. You will be able to evaluate the programmes for women in India implemented to fulfil policy commitments.

The **third unit** on ‘Gender and Development’ deals with the process of development affecting women and men in different ways. The gendered impact of sudden economic change and various approaches to gender and development have also been discussed in this unit.

After going through all the three units you will be having a basic idea of the various initiatives regarding women and development.

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# UNIT 1 GLOBAL INITIATIVES AND UN SAFEGUARDS FOR WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

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Global Initiatives and UN Safeguards for Women's Development

## Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Right to Enfranchisement
- 1.3 United Nations World Conference on Women
- 1.4 Millennium Development Goals
- 1.5 United Nation Agencies
- 1.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7 Further Readings and References

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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The aim of this unit is to discuss the global initiatives and UN safeguards that have been introduced for women's empowerment.

After studying this Unit, you will be able to:

- trace the women's suffragette movement demanding voting rights and the Conventions on maternity benefits, equality in education and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women in advocating women's rights
- describe the four United Nations World Conference on Women highlighting ideals of 'equality, development and peace'
- explain the progress made in the Millennium Development Goals with regard to gender
- discuss the role and functions of United Nations agencies like UNIFEM, DAW, CSW, among others, in empowering women

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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Women constitute over half of the world's population. Their basic rights were denied to them for a long period until growing conscientization in society brought justice to them. The focus was more on protecting women in the beginning where some people considered them to be weak and vulnerable and others wanted to give women a special consideration for bearing different kinds of burden compared to men and for their maternal role. Only later there was a shift to equal rights of women. Then in place of protectionism, equal opportunity received emphasis (Giele and Stebbins 2003:58). In the international forum, gender issues gained attention for varied contexts be it human rights concerns, equity or women's integration into the processes of social and economic development. Global initiatives along with United Nations safeguards across the world have come a long way in advocating women's rights. Gender issues are a critical input for development. Women contribute a lot to a nation's wealth. If women are empowered through investment

in education and skill-building, it will enable them to exercise decision-making power in their own lives benefitting society (ICPD 1994).

In this Unit, we will discuss women's struggle for suffragette rights in different parts of the world, access to education without discrimination, maternity rights and various conventions demanding equal status for women in various fields. The United Nations with its focus on gender equality gave an impetus to the development of women-related issues. The specific agencies of UN play an important role in this regard.

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## 1.2 RIGHT TO ENFRANCHISEMENT

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The right to vote holds a lot of significance for women since it gives them recognition as citizens. This right has a long history of struggle. Political philosophers like Socrates and Plato observe that "women should also be taught the art of war, which they must practice like men". At that time, only citizens who could bear arms had political rights. Still, women were not given their due rights and were assigned to the private sphere to fulfill their duty of child-bearing and child-rearing. The French revolution of 1789 with ideas of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' garnered support for women's political rights. However, the revolution could not ensure enfranchisement for women. In 1790, Condorcet, a philosopher and a revolutionary wrote an essay "The Admission of Women to Full Citizenship" supporting women's rights. Politics remained a male domain. The 1791 Constitution declared people who were 'active' citizens as sovereign and possessing the right to vote leaving out 'passive citizens' that is, women and poor working class men. In England, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote a book "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" inspired by the French revolution and argued for equality of women. She hardly received any attention. Forty years later, in England the Chartist movement again provided a momentum to women's political rights. This movement was led by the working class men and it believed that constitutional reforms would also be accompanied with socio-economic welfare. It advocated proper working conditions for the workers. Women wanted to utilize this opportunity to assert their rights. In a small town -Elland- north of England women gathered to protest against the new poor law introduced in 1834 in place of the old poor law. This new law reduced welfare provisions to the poor and directed them to go to the workhouses splitting their families. Women joined the Chartist movement to struggle for enfranchisement so that they could vote out this law. Women's demands went unheeded and the movement came to a standstill in 1850.

In France, the 1848 revolution brought with it a new constitution that declared adult male suffrage and abolishment of slavery. A famous French Socialist Charles Fourier (1772-1837) favoured women's right to vote. He also coined the term 'feminist' in the early nineteenth century. Liberal philosophers like John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) with Harriet Taylor in an article "Enfranchisement of women" supported women's right to vote and criticized women's isolation in the private sphere. Mill also wrote a book "Subjection of Women" in 1869 advocating emancipation of women through introduction of reforms. Meanwhile, in USA the organized movement to ban slavery led to the first organized movement for women's rights. USA, being a model of democracy, was expected to implement the policy of Universal Adult Franchise and advocate for it. However, the franchise rights there were based on specific criteria and only a selected few could avail of it. Even if women fulfilled the established criteria they were excluded. The suffrage movement asking for amendments was joined by Black women. In 1870, Lottie Rollins, a Black woman stated that "we ask suffrage not as a favour nor as a privilege, but as a right based on the ground that we are human beings and as such entitled to all human rights". Women in Australia and New Zealand also were struggling to get the right to vote much like the suffragist movement in England,

France and USA. Ultimately, women in South Australia and West Australia got provincial suffrage in 1899. In Scandinavian countries, the suffragette movement was continuing, be it in Finland, Norway, Sweden or Denmark. In Asia, due to monarchies or colonial rule of the European empire, there was absence of such a movement. In these countries such as India, Nationalist movements took the form of struggle for independence and universal suffrage gained importance. These countries supported women's right to vote from the time they began their freedom struggles. New Zealand became the first country to grant women the right to vote in the nineteenth century. Scandinavia became the first region to enfranchise women. In 1906, women in Finland got the right to vote, Norway soon followed. However, unlike Finland where right to vote was extended to all women, in Norway women got the right to vote, on the basis of income, for parliamentary elections in 1907 and after three years got voting rights in the municipal elections of 1910. This was continued in the parliamentary elections of 1913. Russia extended the right to vote to all women after the 1917 revolution. In 1919, Austria, Germany, Netherlands and Poland granted women the right to vote after sustained efforts of women suffragists. In the US, the suffragist movement gained momentum in all the states. Finally, in 1920, through the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment voting rights were extended to women. In Canada, by 1940 all the provinces had given right to vote to women, Quebec being the last. In 1928, Great Britain assured full political equality to women along with the right to vote. In Greece, women got these rights in 1952, in Romania 1946 and in India 1947 (Varma 1997).

Now, we will discuss the conventions for women advocating maternity rights, equality in education and finally the convention that aims to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women. The World plan of action recognizes women's role in population policies.

**International Convention concerning Maternity Protection** came into force in 1955 and the Convention was revised in 2000. The International Labour Organization convened a conference at Geneva in 1952 in which certain proposals with regard to maternity protection were adopted. This Convention applies to women employed in industrial undertakings and in non-industrial and agricultural occupations, including women wage earners working at home. Article 3 states that a woman on the production of a medical certificate stating the presumed date of her confinement be entitled to a period of maternity leave. The period of maternity leave shall be at least twelve weeks, and shall include a period of compulsory leave after confinement. Article 4 states that while absent from work on maternity leave, the woman shall be entitled to receive cash and medical benefits. Article 6 states that while a woman is absent from work on maternity leave it shall not be lawful for her employer to give her notice of dismissal during such absence, or to give her notice of dismissal at such a time that the notice would expire during such absence. Later on, this led to policy formulation in various countries for development of women.

**Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960:** The Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts the principle of non-discrimination and proclaims that every person has the right to education. On this basis, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), met in Paris to further among nations universal respect for human rights and equality of educational opportunity. According to Article 1, the term 'discrimination' includes any distinction, exclusion, limitation or preference which, being based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic condition or birth, has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education. The same article states that the term 'education' refers to all types and levels of education, and includes access to education, the standard and quality of education, and the conditions under which it is given. The goals of education for all and equity in education adopted were to be met by various countries.

**World Population Plan of Action (1976)** was adopted by the World Population Conference in Bucharest, 1974. *The recommendations on reproduction, family formation and the status of woman are important*, upholding the principle of equality. The Plan of Action did not make any world-size family norm and recognized the right of a couple to choose the number and spacing of their children. It realized that the following development goals generally have an effect on the socio-economic context of reproductive decisions that tends to moderate fertility levels. Some of these are the reduction of infant and child mortality, particularly by means of improved nutrition, sanitation, maternal and child health care, and maternal education; the full integration of women into the development process, particularly by means of their greater participation in educational, social, economic and political opportunities, and especially by means of the removal of obstacles to their employment in the non-agricultural sector. In this context, national laws and policies, as well as relevant international recommendations, should be reviewed in order to eliminate discrimination in, and remove obstacles to the education, training, employment and career advancement opportunities for women, among others. It recommends that the economic contribution of women in households and farming should be recognized in national economies. Women should be actively involved both as individuals and through political and non-governmental organizations, at every stage and every level in the planning and implementation of development programmes, including population policies. Improvement of the status of women in the family and in society can contribute, where desired, to smaller family size, and the opportunity for women to plan births also improves their individual status. The Recommendations for Further Implementation of the Plan (1984) states that if desired fertility and mortality levels are to be achieved, the national and international policies should endeavour to redirect a larger share of the world's resources to the very poor. An integrated approach, based on an understanding of the interrelationships between population, resources, environment, and development, is urged. Population and development policies should mutually reinforce each other, focusing on family and community levels and specific areas like educational attainment of women, control of infectious and contagious diseases.

### **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 18 December 1979. It holds a significant place in bringing human rights of nearly half of the female population into prominence. This convention is popularly referred to as the *International Bill of Rights for Women*. In the Preamble, the convention acknowledges the existence of 'extensive discrimination against women' violating 'principles for equality of rights and respect for human dignity'. The Convention discusses civil rights, legal rights in detail and unlike other human rights treaties focuses on reproductive rights and also the effect of cultural factors on gender relations. Ever since the adoption of the Convention on the political rights of women in 1952, greater attention has been paid to legal rights of women. Article 7 of the present Convention reiterates some of these concerns. Women are guaranteed the right to vote, to participate in all policy-making and hold public offices. This also includes the right to represent their countries in the international forums (Article 8). Article 9 provides citizenship to women, irrespective of their marital status, in accordance with the Convention on the Nationality of Married Women, adopted in 1957. Often women's legal status is linked with marriage making them dependants on their husband's nationality and not treating them as individuals in their own right. Women's right to equality in education, employment, economic and social activities is guaranteed in Articles 10, 11 and 13. The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work is included in Article 11 d. The struggle of rural women and their contribution to the economic domain need special attention especially in policy-making as mentioned in Article



14. Finally, giving attention to the arenas of family and marriage, Article 16 affirms equality of women in the choice of spouse, parenthood, personal rights and control over property.

The Convention focuses on reproductive rights of women and states that women's procreative role should not become a ground for discrimination against them. The Convention mentions "the social significance of maternity" (Article 5) requiring child-rearing to be the responsibility of both the parents. Maternity protection and child care recognized as essential rights are a part of rights related to employment, family laws, education and health. The Convention affirms "women's right to reproductive choice". The Convention also recognizes the effect of cultural influences on restricting women exercising their fundamental rights. It highlights the need to challenge various stereotypes, norms and customs that lead to various economic, legal and political constraints in women's progress. Social and cultural practices have to be changed in order to remove "prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women" (Article 5). Article 10c directs the revision of textbooks, school programmes and teaching methods with a view to eliminating stereotyped concepts in the field of education. Lastly, cultural patterns that define the public sphere as a man's world and the domestic realm as women's domain are strongly targeted in all of the provisions. Equal responsibilities of both sexes in family life and their equal rights with regard to education and employment are emphasized. The Convention believes that "...the full and complete development of a country, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace require the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields".

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Discuss in brief women's suffragette movement in different parts of the world.

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- 2) Describe the important provisions of CEDAW.

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## 1.3 UNITED NATIONS WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

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The Charter of the United Nations was signed on 26 June 1945, in San Francisco and it came into force on 24 October 1945. The Preamble of the United Nations

Charter reaffirms 'faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women'. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted and proclaimed on 10th September, 1948 also proclaims that the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The International Covenants on Human Rights provide for the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights.

The United Nations has held four International Conferences on Women to discuss women's advancement and remove constraints. The First World Conference on Women was held in Mexico City in 1975, the Second World Conference on Women at Copenhagen in 1980, the Third World Conference on Women at Nairobi in 1985 and the Fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995. These World Conferences held principles of 'equality, development and peace'. Equality means not only legal equality, the elimination of de jure discrimination, but also equality of rights, responsibilities and opportunities for participation of women in development as beneficiaries and as active agents. Development is total development, including development in social, economic, cultural, political and other dimensions of human life, as also development of economic and other material resources and also physical, moral, intellectual and cultural growth of the human person. Women's development should not be viewed as an issue in social development but as an essential component in every dimension of development. For development to take place, peace and stability are important. Peace will not be lasting without development and elimination of inequalities and discrimination at all levels (UN Copenhagen 1980).

The Declaration of Mexico on the Equality of Women and Their Contribution to Development and Peace, 1975, states that women have a vital role to play in the promotion of peace in all spheres of life: in the family, the community, the nation and the world. Matthew Arnold said that "if women of the world will once unite, there will be a power which the world has never seen". This Conference wanted to create a just society where women, men and children live in dignity, freedom, justice and prosperity. Some of the salient features of the plan of action are equality between women and men to mean equality in their dignity and worth as human beings and all obstacles that stand in the way of enjoyment by women of equal status with men must be eliminated; the State to create necessary facilities so that women may be integrated into society; non-governmental organizations should contribute to the advancement of women by promoting education and information about women's rights, and by co-operating with their respective Governments; equality between women and men should be guaranteed in the family; the right of women to work; to receive equal pay for work of equal value; and all other women's rights to full and satisfying economic activity are strongly reaffirmed; all means of communication and information as well as all cultural media should help to remove the attitudinal and cultural factors that still inhibit the development of women and project women in positive terms; women and men together should eliminate colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, foreign domination and occupation, Zionism, apartheid, racial discrimination, all forms of repression and inhuman treatment of women, men and children; and women as well as men should promote real, general and complete disarmament under effective international control, starting with nuclear disarmament to achieve and maintain international peace.

In 1980, the midpoint of the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985), a conference was held at Copenhagen to review and assess the progress in implementation of the recommendations of the World Conference of International Women's Year. The aim was to discuss the obstacles faced and the present international consensus on measures adopted for advancement of women. In order to promote the achievement of 'equality, development and peace', a sub-theme of 'employment,

education and health' was chosen to design action-oriented plans so as to integrate women in the development process. It was also realized that human beings cannot attain full potential without integrated socio-economic development. The objective was to encourage women to participate in economic activities and employment opportunities, at par with men. This was to be ensured through provision of education and health facilities. The review of the first half of the decade shows that planners and decision-makers have become sensitive to the needs of women, research and building of a database on the women has begun, many governments have introduced women's integration into development process as a planning objective, many legislative and constitutional provisions were initiated emphasizing equal rights of women and men. However, enforcement machinery and mechanisms have to be made efficient for achievement of targets. The Conference made resolutions and decisions for migrant women, elderly women, battered women, displaced and refugee women, among others.

The Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies Conference for the advancement of women, during the period 1986 to 2000, suggests concrete measures to overcome the obstacles faced in the achievement of the Decade's goals and objectives for development of women. This conference came at a critical point for developing countries. When the UN Decade for Women was launched, it was believed that with the high rate of economic growth coupled with international trade and technological developments, there would be an increase in the participation of women in economic and social development of these countries. This perspective changed due to persisting economic crisis in developing countries that hindered introduction of new programmes for women and made it difficult to continue the earlier ones. The forward-looking strategies suggest measures to deal with existing and emerging obstacles and achieve equality, development and peace for advancement of women. In accordance with the recommendations of the Commission on Status of Women, it focuses on vulnerable and underprivileged sections of women.

The Beijing Conference in 1995 focused on 'Action for Equality, Development and Peace'. The declaration was committed to guaranteeing equal rights and inherent human dignity of women and men; ensure the full implementation of the human rights of women and of the girl child as an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms; and the empowerment and advancement of women. It believes that women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society are important for achievement of equality, development and peace; women's rights are human rights; equal rights, opportunities and access to resources, equal sharing of responsibilities for the family by men and women is important for the well-being of the family and for consolidation of democracy; eradication of poverty based on sustained economic growth, social development, environmental protection and social justice requires the involvement of women in economic and social development; the explicit recognition and reaffirmation of the right of all women to control all aspects of their health, in particular their own fertility, is basic to their empowerment; it is essential to design, implement and monitor, with the full participation of women, effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programmes, including development policies and programmes; and need to ensure the participation and contribution of all actors of civil society. The Conference states its determination to ensure the full enjoyment by women and the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and take effective action against violations of these rights and freedoms; promote women's economic independence, and promote people-centered sustainable development, among others. Adopted unanimously at the Fourth World Conference on Women along with the Beijing Declaration, the Platform for Action constitutes an agenda for women's empowerment. The Beijing Platform for Action defines a set of strategic objectives

and spells out actions to be taken by the year 2000 by Governments, the international community, non-governmental organizations and the private sector for the removal of the existing obstacles to women's advancement. The twelve critical areas of concern represent the main obstacles to women's advancement. These are based on the review of progress since the Nairobi conference. They are poverty, education, health, violence, armed and other conflicts, economic participation, power-sharing and decision-making, human rights, national and international machineries, mass media, environment and development; and the girl child.

A special session of Beijing + 5: Process and Beyond; "Women 2000: Gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" was convened in 2000 to review progress in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This process showed that despite much progress more work needs to be done with regard to implementation of the Platform for Action. Two major areas of violence and poverty continue to be major obstacles to gender equality worldwide. Globalization has added new dimensions to both areas, creating new challenges for the implementation of the Platform, such as trafficking in women and girls, changing nature of armed conflict, growing gap between nations and genders, the detachment of macroeconomic policy from social protection concerns. There had been no major breakthrough with regard to equal sharing of decision making in political structures at national and international levels. The session adopted new targets and reconfirmed the need to achieve the earlier ones. It recognized that efforts for women's advancement needed to combine a focus on women's conditions and basic needs with a holistic approach based on equal rights and partnerships, promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Kofi Annan (2002), United Nations Secretary-General, said that "The commitments made by governments in Beijing reflect the understanding that women's equality must be a central component of any attempt to solve the world's social, economic and political problems. Thus, where once women fought to put gender equality on the international agenda, gender equality is now one of the primary factors shaping that agenda".

Box 1.1 shows the status of women in politics in the world. These indicators show that still there is a long way to go for women's empowerment.

**Box 1.1: Global Status of Women in Politics**

- Women ministers remain concentrated in social areas (14%) compared to legal (9.4%), economic (4.1 %), political affairs (3.4%) and the executive (3.9 %);
- 7 % of the world's total cabinet ministers are women;
- There are 9 women ambassadors to the United nations: They are from Finland, Guinea, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Somalia and Turkmenistan;
- In the United Nations system, women hold only 9% of the top management jobs and 21% of senior management positions, but 48% of the junior professional civil service slots;
- In 1893, New Zealand became the first nation to grant women full voting rights;
- Among the countries in the developing world that were the earliest to grant women the right to vote were Finland (1906), Albania( 1920), Mongolia (1924), Ecuador (1929), Turkey (1930), Sri Lanka (1931);
- Some of the latest countries to grant women suffrage are: Switzerland (1971), Iraq (1980), Namibia (1989), Kazakhstan ( 1994);
- In the 21st century, some countries still do not have universal suffrage. Among them are Brunei Darussalam, Kuwait, Sultanate of Oman, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates;

- Among the developing nations who have not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) are : Bahrain, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and
- The United States is the only industrialized nation that has not ratified CEDAW

Source: Kaushik, P.D. 2007: 19

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Explain the strategies outlined for achievement of goals of the United Nations World Conference on Women.

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### Millennium Development Goals

The UN Millennium Declaration was adopted in September 2000 at the Millennium Summit, the largest gathering of world leaders in history, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015, that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UN Millennium Project 2002-2006). The eight Millennium Development Goals are to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS; malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development (UNMDGs 2008).

The third goal that aims to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015 is to be assessed on the basis of indicators like ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education, share of women in wage employment and in the non-agricultural sector, proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (UN-mdgmonitor 2008). Of the 113 countries that failed to achieve gender parity in primary and secondary school enrolment by the target date of 2005, only 18 are likely to achieve the goal by 2015. Girls account for 55 per cent of the out-of-school population. Since 2000, the proportion of seats for women in parliaments only increased from 13.5 to 17.9 per cent. Women occupy at least 30 per cent of parliamentary seats in 20 countries, although none of these countries are in Asia (MDGs Factsheet 2008).

The Progress of the World's Women (POWW) 2008/2009 report states that four new targets were added to the MDGs in 2007, three of them bringing a sharper focus on gender equality. The targets are to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health; achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it; reduce biodiversity loss, achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the rate of loss (POWW 2008). Under MDG 1 that is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, a new target added in 2007 addresses productive employment and decent work for all, including women

and young people. This focus on female productive employment acknowledges the contribution of female employment to poverty and hunger reduction at the household level. The connection between poverty and employment is particularly relevant when considering those in *vulnerable employment*, defined as self-employed workers or those contributing to family work with little or no pay. These informal work arrangements usually lack social protection, and pay is usually too low to generate savings. Vulnerable employment has decreased globally by three percentage points since 1997. But about 1.5 billion people are still in this category and the share is larger for women at 51.7 per cent. This discrepancy is worse in some regions: Eight out of ten women workers are in vulnerable employment in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. For MDG 2 to universalize Elementary education there can be an increase in enrolment of girls only when national governments are keen to invest in women's rights and girls' rights. The gender gap in enrolment has shrunk in most regions, and the gender gap in literacy is also narrowing. Still, much remains to be done in relation to girls' education to ensure that girls finish primary and secondary school, to eliminate violence against girls in school, and to bring more non-enrolled girls into school. Of the estimated 72 million primary-age children that were not in school in 2005, 57 per cent were girls, and this may be an underestimate.

MDG 3 to promote gender equality and empower women is central to the achievement of all the other MDGs, yet it has only one target, educational parity. While there is a commitment to track, there are no targets for women's share of wage employment and women's share of representative seats in public decision-making. At the current rate of increase, few countries will reach a critical mass of 30 per cent by 2015. As of June 2008, women's share of seats in national parliaments (lower or single house) was only 18.4 per cent-that is, one out of every 5 parliamentarians is a woman. At the present rate, it will take another 40 years for developing countries to reach the parity zone between 40 and 60 per cent. Research shows that quotas and reservations play a positive role in accelerating the rate at which women move into public decision-making. Gender equality in primary and secondary education is a goal within reach by 2015. Parity in primary schooling has already been reached in Latin America and the Caribbean, East Asia and the Pacific and CEE/CIS. Parity will be more challenging but is achievable in secondary and higher education, where the positive impact of female education has been widely demonstrated. Tertiary education - essential for women's leadership roles in politics, the economy, and administration - presents a different picture, with ratios of 0.6 and 0.7 in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, respectively.

Under MDG 4 to reduce child mortality, we realize that the mortality of girl children is a good indicator of gender equality and women's rights. Not only are the causes of child mortality (disease, malnutrition) linked to women's health and education, but if girls do not survive at equivalent or higher rates than boys, this can be a sign of specific gender-based discrimination. Child mortality has decreased globally from 106 per 1,000 live births to 83 in 2005. The mortality rate must drop to 31 per 1,000 live births by 2015. There are significant regional variations in infant and child mortality rates particularly from a gender perspective. In South Asia and in East Asia and the Pacific, more girls die before their fifth birthday than do boys. There has been little deviation from this gender gap since 1990. According to Action Aid, various factors are behind the missing millions of girls and women, including sex-selective pregnancy termination, as well as neglect and discriminatory access to food and medicine. Women's education levels - especially secondary and higher - significantly affect child survival and well-being. There is a link between under-five mortality and immunization coverage for measles and women's education. The fifth goal to improve maternal health is of significance for women. The Safe Motherhood Initiative which is a global campaign to reduce maternal mortality was launched in February, 1987 to raise awareness about the numbers of women dying each year from complications of pregnancy and childbirth, and to

challenge the world to act. Later, the inclusion of this goal as one of the MDGs was an achievement for women's cause.

Globally, over half a million women every year die during pregnancy or childbirth, and over 90 per cent of these largely preventable deaths occur in developing countries. There has been a decrease of less than 7 per cent in maternal deaths between 1990 and 2005. This translates into a decrease in the global maternal mortality ratio from 430 (deaths per 100,000 live births) in 1990 to 400 in 2005. According to the recent estimates by the World Health Organization (WHO), this rate (roughly less than 0.4 per cent per year at the global level) falls far short of the 5.5 per cent annual reduction in maternal deaths required to achieve the global target. There are striking regional differences in maternal mortality ratios, which are disproportionately high in sub-Saharan Africa at around 920 (deaths per 100,000 live births) in 2005, down only slightly from 1990. On average one in 22 women dies in this region from pregnancy-related causes. High maternal mortality ratios are also prevalent in South Asia, but an important decrease has occurred in this region, from 650 (deaths per 100,000 live births) in 1990 to 500 in 2005. Currently, one in 59 women in the region faces a risk of dying from maternal causes during her lifetime. By contrast, developed regions have a lifetime risk of maternal death of one in 8,000 women.

For Goal 6 to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other such diseases, efforts are in full-swing. Recent estimates show that there has been a steady increase in the number of HIV-positive women and men. Among all adults living with HIV/AIDS, the share of women living with HIV has increased from 45 per cent in 1990 to 50 per cent in 2007. Goal 7 to ensure environment sustainability is also being followed. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Principle 20 states that women have a vital role in environmental management and development. Their full participation is therefore essential to achieve sustainable development. Data is scarce on the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on poor women, but as women often ensure household food security and do the bulk of water and household fuel collection, their time burdens will increase if drought, floods, erratic rainfall, and deforestation undermine the supply and quality of natural resources. Women and children are usually in charge of fetching and carrying water, an activity that is among the most time- and energy-consuming of household tasks, especially in rural areas. It is estimated that women and children in Africa alone spend 40 billion hours every year fetching and carrying water—a figure equivalent to a year's labour for the entire workforce of France. MDG 8 to develop global partnership for development is integral to development. With uneven progress of the gender equality dimensions of all of the MDGs save education, and significant regional disparities, the message for developing country governments and international aid institutions is clear: investment in gender equality and women's empowerment is vital for improving economic, social and political conditions in developing countries within the framework of sustainable development.

### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) What do you understand by the 'Millennium Development Goals'? Discuss the progress made so far in achieving these goals.

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## 1.5 UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

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The agencies of the United Nations are committed to empower women. We will discuss the role and functions of UNIFEM, DAW, CSW, UN-INSTRAW and OSAGI to highlight the efforts made so far to advance women's rights.

**UNIFEM** is the women's fund at the United Nations. Established in 1976, it provides financial and technical assistance to innovative approaches aimed at fostering women's empowerment and gender equality. UNIFEM also helps make the voices of women heard at the United Nations by highlighting critical issues and advocating for the implementation of existing commitments made to women. Placing the advancement of women's human rights at the centre of all of its efforts, UNIFEM focuses its activities on four strategic areas-reducing feminized poverty, ending violence against women, reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS among women and girls, and achieving gender equality in democratic governance in times of peace as well as war. To pursue these goals, UNIFEM is active in all regions and at different levels. It works with countries to formulate and implement laws and policies to eliminate gender discrimination and promote gender equality in such areas as land and inheritance rights, decent work for women and ending violence against women. UNIFEM also aims to transform institutions to make them more accountable to gender equality and women's rights, to strengthen the capacity and voice of women's rights advocates, and to change harmful and discriminatory practices in society. Two international agreements that frame UNIFEM's work are the Beijing Platform for Action resulting from the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 and CEDAW. The spirit of these agreements has been affirmed by the Millennium Declaration and the eight Millennium Development Goals for 2015. In addition, Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (2000) is a crucial reference for UNIFEM's work in support of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. This resolution mandated the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution.

### **Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)**

Grounded in the vision of equality of the United Nations Charter, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) advocates the improvement of the status of women of the world and the achievement of their equality with men as equal actors, partners, and beneficiaries of sustainable development, human rights, peace and security. The main responsibilities of DAW are to support formulation of policy, global standards and norms on gender equality and women's empowerment at the global level; to promote, support and monitor the implementation of international agreements on gender equality and empowerment of women; to support the implementation of CEDAW and its Optional Protocol; and to promote the mainstreaming of gender perspectives across all sectors, both within and outside the United Nations system.

### **Role of the Commission on the Status of Women**

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a functional commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Commission was established by ECOSOC resolution 11(II) of 21 June 1946 with the aim to prepare recommendations and reports to the Council on promoting women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields. It is dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women. Every year it evaluates progress on gender equality, identifies challenges, sets global standards and formulates concrete policies in this regard.



The Commission also makes recommendations on urgent problems requiring immediate attention in the field of women's rights. The fifty-second session of the CSW took place in 2008 in which the Commission deliberated on "Financing for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women". The Commission recognizes the importance of gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality and, to that end, the need to promote the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres. It aims to strengthen the capabilities of the United Nations system in the area of gender equality.

United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW)

Following the recommendations of the First World Conference on Women for the creation of a research and training institute dedicated to the advancement of women, the ECOSOC created the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in 1976.

In collaboration with governments, civil society and the United Nations System, UN-INSTRAW has carried out research and training activities on different topics at the national, regional and international levels. The Institute highlights gender perspectives as an essential element in the analysis and implementation of programmes and projects aimed at achieving peace, sustainable development and good governance.

It has developed conceptual frameworks and methodologies for measuring and valuing women's household production, for looking at women's access to credit and water in Africa, Asia and Latin America; and for monitoring governance and women's political participation at local, national, regional and international levels.

Many of the studies conducted by UN-INSTRAW have highlighted the gendered effects of globalization in processes such as migration, the impact of structural adjustment policies on women's access to work, health and education, and violence against women as an obstacle to development and the achievement of international commitments. UN-INSTRAW's work has also focused on human rights, gender-based violence and the role of women in conflict-resolution and peace processes through different research and training projects.

Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI)

The Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) was created on 1 March 1997. The Office's main objective is to promote and strengthen the effective implementation of the Millennium Declaration, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) held in Beijing in 1995 and the Outcome Document of the special session of the General Assembly on Beijing+5.

OSAGI does this through provision of oversight and policy guidance to the Division for the Advancement of Women, ECOSOC, the Commission on the Status of Women, the CEDAW Committee regarding women's rights, gender analysis, advisory services and outreach. It ensures mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the work of programmes and activities of intergovernmental forums, entities of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental bodies and Member States. OSAGI is responsible for development of an intergovernmental agenda and framework for "women, peace and security"; development of strategies and policies for the achievement of gender balance within the Secretariat and the UN system and increased efficiency and effectiveness of inter-agency collaboration related to gender equality.

**Check Your Progress IV**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Discuss the function and role of UN agencies like UNIFEM, DAW and CSW.

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### 1.6 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit, we have discussed the global initiatives and UN safeguards for women. The Women’s suffragette movement brought focus on women’s role in politics. Various conventions on education, maternity rights and on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women have strengthened action for gender equality and women’s empowerment. The role of UN in promoting women’s issues is significant. The UN Decade for Women 1976-85 and the International Women’s Year made various countries adopt a gender-inclusive approach in decision-making and planning of policies and programmes. The World Conferences on Women held in Mexico city, Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing based on ideas of ‘equality, development and peace’ helped in framing a strategy to address women’s issues in the field of politics, economy, media, environment, education, and health, among others. The Millennium Development Goals have adopted a gender-lens to analyze performance in various goals. The effort of UN agencies in promoting women’s issues is substantial and pathbreaking. These are UNIFEM, DAW, CSW, UN-INSTRAW and OSAGI. They are mainstreaming gender issues in various fields and assisting governments in achieving the goal of gender equality.

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## UNIT 2 POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN INDIA

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### Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Meaning of 'Empowerment'
- 2.3 Constitutional Safeguards and Legislation for Women
- 2.4 Women and Plans
- 2.5 Policies for Development & Empowerment of Women
- 2.6 Programmes for Women
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Further Readings and References

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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The aim of this Unit is to discuss the major policies and programmes for the empowerment of women in India. Women who constitute 48 percent of India's population, according to the 2001 Census, remain unequal to men in our society. This contradicts the principle of gender equality enshrined in the Indian Constitution and calls for reflection and action. In response, various policies and programmes are made to empower women.

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the meaning of women's empowerment including social, economic and political dimensions;
- analyze the status of women vis-à-vis the indicators of women's empowerment;
- describe the Constitutional safeguards and legislation for women;
- analyze the plans and policies introduced for women in India; and
- evaluate the programmes for women in India implemented to fulfill policy commitments.

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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In this Unit, we are going to deliberate on the policies and programmes introduced for empowering women. The transition to the concept of 'empowerment' from the idea of 'welfare' and then to 'development' explains that women's diverse roles are being recognized. To go back to history, it is interesting to note that in pre-independent India, though provisions related to health and education were demanded from the State yet, these social welfare programmes were the concern of voluntary agencies. There was hardly any nation-wide programme to provide such welfare services. After Independence, the State realized its role in strengthening welfare services provided by voluntary agencies. This led to the formulation of Central

Social Welfare Board in 1953 which was to provide welfare services to women, children and other deprived sections of society. This Board sought to improve welfare programmes, introduce them in remote areas and assist the voluntary agencies (CSWI 1974). We have moved far ahead from those times when the programmes emphasized acquisition of knowledge and skills to become better mothers and housewives to the present times when the focus is on making women conscious of their own rights.

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## **2.2 MEANING OF ‘EMPOWERMENT’**

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Power is ‘the ability to control people or things-right or authority of a person or group to do something’, according to the Oxford Dictionary (2000), and empowerment is ‘to give somebody the power or authority to do something; to authorize; to give somebody more control over their own life or the situation they are in’. It gives a sense of control to women over their own lives whereby they are able to weigh choices, make decisions and act accordingly. However, distinctions of caste/ class/ ethnicity constrain them from getting access to resources. Panda (2007) states that empowerment as a term is being used since the 17th century and it is now being treated as an enabling factor unlike earlier when it meant ‘to invest with power and authority’. In the year 1611, women got the right to vote in the American State of Massachusetts. Another significant event was on March 8, 1857 women workers of garments and tailoring factories of America went on strike demanding fixed hours and equal remuneration. This struggle continued until their voices were heard. That is why we celebrate March 8 as International Women’s Day every year. In the 1970s the concept of empowerment grew out of the relationship between feminism and popular education in Latin America. The United Nations declared the year 1975 as the International Women’s Year and decade 1975-1985 as Women’s Decade (Naqvi 2008: 27). Later, empowerment got linked with Paulo Freire’s idea of conscientization and Gramsci’s conception of democratic and participatory institutions. In India, in the 1980s empowerment began to be used for women’s development and for analysis of women’s subjugation in society. Thus, empowerment emphasizes the need to be conscious of one’s position in society and to change it by fighting for one’s rights. As Albert Camus said “Don’t walk behind me, I may not lead. Don’t walk in front of me, I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be a friend”.

In the Programme of Action 1992, women’s empowerment is considered primary for social change. Giving importance to ‘collective reflection’ and ‘decision-making’, it enlists parameters of empowerment, which are as follows-building a positive self-image and self-confidence; developing ability to think critically; building up group cohesion and fostering decision-making and action; ensuring equal participation in the process of bringing about social change; encouraging group action in order to bring about change in the society; providing the wherewithal for economic independence.

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## **2.3 CONSTITUTIONAL SAFEGUARDS AND LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN**

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The Constitution upholding the principles of equality, justice, liberty and social justice for the citizens of India is the basis of formulation for laws. Box 2.1 below shows the fundamental rights, which if violated, a citizen can move to the High court or the Supreme Court. The directive principles though not justifiable are to be kept in view by the State while formulating policies and programmes. Both safeguard Indian women and empower them to play their roles effectively in society, polity and economy.

Box 2.1 highlights important legislation enacted to empower women. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 was notified on the 26th of October 2006. This law, for the first time, recognizes a woman's right to a violence-free home. In doing so, this law provides a comprehensive definition of domestic violence, recognizes a woman's right to reside in the shared household, provides for reliefs that she is entitled to in cases of violation and lays down a mechanism to facilitate her access to justice and other support services. This law is a first step towards bringing women's human rights into the home (Lawyer's Collective, Women's Rights Initiative 2007).

The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 came into force from 9th September, 2005. This Act removes gender discriminatory provisions in the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 to give equal rights to daughters as provided to sons in ancestral property. The property here includes agricultural land also (Joshi 2008: 8). The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 came into force on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006 in 200 districts and is due to be extended to the whole of rural India within five years. The objective of the act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It is an important initiative for sustainable development of an agricultural economy. Through the process of providing employment on works that address causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion, the Act seeks to strengthen the natural resource base of rural livelihood and create durable assets in rural areas. The salient feature of the Act is that at least one-third beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested work under the scheme. Work site facilities such as crèches, drinking water, shade have to be provided (NREGA 2008). The Immoral Traffic Prevention Act is being amended to make the law enforcement machinery strict in punishing the traffickers and save girls likely to be forced into prostitution.

#### Box 2.1: Legislation for Women

**Equal Remuneration Act of 1976** provides for equal pay to men and women for equal work.

**Hindu Marriage Act of 1955** amended in 1976 provides the right for girls to repudiate a child marriage before attaining maturity whether the marriage has been consummated or not.

**The Marriage (Amendment) Act, 2001** amended the Hindu Marriage Act, Special Marriage Act, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, the Code of Criminal Procedure providing for speedy disposal of applications for maintenance; the ceiling limit for claiming maintenance has been deleted and a wide discretion has been given to the Magistrate to award appropriate maintenance.

**The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of 1956** as amended and renamed in 1986 makes the sexual exploitation of male or female, a cognizable offence. It is being amended to decriminalize the prostitutes and make the laws more stringent against traffickers.

An amendment brought in 1984 to the **Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961** made women's subjection to cruelty a cognizable offence. The second amendment brought in 1986 makes the husband or in-laws punishable, if a woman commits suicide within 7 years of her marriage and it has been proved that she has been subjected to cruelty. Also a new criminal offence of 'Dowry Death' has been incorporated in the Indian Penal Code.

**Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1976** raises the age for marriage of a girl to 18 years from 15 years and that of a boy to 21 years and makes offences under this Act cognizable.

**Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971** legalizes abortion by qualified professionals on humanitarian or medical grounds. The maximum punishment for unauthorized abortion may go upto life imprisonment. The Act has further been amended

specifying the place and persons authorized to perform abortion and provide for penal actions against the unauthorized persons performing abortions.

**Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act of 1986** and the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 have been enacted to protect the dignity of women and prevent violence against them as well as their exploitation.

**The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005** provides for more effective protection of the rights of women guaranteed under the Constitution who are victims of violence of any kind occurring within the family and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. It provides for immediate and emergent relief to women in situations of violence of any kind in the home.

Source: Ministry of Women and Child Development 2006

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Discuss in brief the constitutional safeguards and the legislative measures for women's development..

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## 2.4 WOMEN AND PLANS

India was one of the first countries to highlight women's issues in development planning, according to Devaki Jain (2007). She states that women's development received attention from the 1960s onwards, especially in the 1970s, after the first UN International Women's Year 1975 and a UN World Conference on Women in Mexico in 1975. Since then continuous forward movement has led to the inclusion of women in whatever measure it exists today. The history of growth of India's political economy and women's role in the development process are special. Political economy is preferable to development because "development happens through political negotiations, political restructuring and politically guided institutions, then only economics can grow with justice" (2007: 73).

The emergence of Gandhi in the freedom struggle added an interesting dimension to the history of India's political economy. His ideas for revival of India like non-violence and his own simple living caught the attention of women in large numbers. The notable faces like Dr. Sarojini Naidu, Kamala Devi and the ones not so visible like Chameli Devi along with many other women actively participated in the freedom struggle. Even before this, women of the reformist families had begun to question and challenge the prevailing customs that subordinated women in society. Swarnakumari Devi started the Sakhi Samaj in Bengal in 1882, Pandita Ramabai the Arya Samaj in 1882 and Bharat Sri Mahamandal 1910, Sarla Devi Chaudharani began the first all India women's organization. Such women initiated the process of women's development much before international organizations began. The social reform movements that began to challenge the divisions in society on the basis of caste, class and religion also had women's participation. This was due to the efforts of reformers like Periyar, E.V. Ramaswamy Naicker, Jyotibai Phule, Babasaheb Ambedkar, Narayan Guru among others. Women questioned the spaces created and dominated by men.



Later on, after independence in 1939 a sub-committee on women called Women's Role in Planned Economy (WRPE) was established as part of the body called the National Planning Committee to decide the future course of planning in India. The sub-committee dealt with issues like the position of women in the planned economy constituting the family, employment, education also analyzing the social customs that inhibit women from contributing to the economy. Rani Lakshmbai Rajwade, the chairperson of the committee and other famous women of that time included civil rights, economic rights, property rights, education, marriage and also other concerns such as widowhood, prostitution etc. In spite of that, the first five year plan (1951-55) did not include most of these concerns. It did set up the Central Social Welfare Board in 1953 spearheaded by Dura Bai Deshmukh to encourage welfare work through voluntary organizations, charitable trusts etc. The Second Plan promoted the mahila mandals or women's clubs to begin work at the grassroots level. The focus was on intensive agricultural development. It felt the need to organize women as workers and realized the need to counter the social prejudices they face. This plan stated that women should be protected from hazardous work, be given maternity benefits and crèche facilities for children (National Population Policy 1988). The Third, Fourth and Interim Plans (1961-1974) promoted women's education, pre-natal and child health care services, supplementary feeding for children, nursing and expectant mothers (Jain 2007). The Third plan specifically highlighted female education as a welfare strategy which continued in the Fourth Plan (1969-74). The Report of the National Committee on Women's Education (1959) had a strong effect on the Third Plan. Rural welfare services, condensed courses of education for adult women, Bal Sevika training and child care programmes received foremost attention. Along with these measures, subsequent plans continued incentives like free textbooks and scholarships for girls. In the Fourth plan, the expenditure on family planning was increased to reduce birth rate through mass education (NPP 1988).

During the period 1951 to 1975 women remained invisible both as citizens and as leaders since the welfarist strategy towards women continued. With International Women's Year and UN Decade for Women, women in India gained focus. Two important documents were written at this time-'Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on Status of women In India' and a volume on 'Indian Women' which was discussed at the UN World Conference in Mexico. A bureau was started to deal with women's issues and now it is referred to as Ministry of Women and Development. The Fifth Plan (1974-78) adopted a development-centred approach rather than a welfarist one for women thus bringing a significant change. This was an outcome of the 'Committee on Status of Women Report 1974' which highlighted the unfavourable impact of the development process on women (Das and Mishra 2006: 25). This plan wanted to achieve equality of educational opportunity to fulfill the aim of social justice and to enhance the quality of education. It encouraged enrolment and retention in schools in backward regions and amongst the deprived sections of community. It also realized that low enrolment of girls was the result of lack of women teachers among other reasons. Therefore, scholarships were given to girls to finish their education and become teachers (NPP 1988). The Integrated Child Development Services Scheme was started at an all India level in 1977. It looked after health and nutrition of pregnant mothers and nursing mothers belonging to socio-economically vulnerable groups, though it was meant for children (NPP 1988:102). Soon, the National Plan of Action (1976) was drawn which identified areas of education, health, employment, nutrition, legislation, social welfare and family planning to conduct action programmes for women and through this intervention to improve their status (NPP 1988).

The next two decades 1981-2001 and four plans saw gender issues being highlighted in the form of a chapter. The Sixth Plan (1980-85) acknowledged women's development as a distinct economic issue. With regard to health care for women,

both sixth and seventh plans focused on expanding physical infrastructure, increasing trained health workforce, strengthening control over communicable and other diseases and focusing on maternal and child health care (NPP 1988). Through a multi-disciplinary approach, the sixth plan emphasized health, education and employment for women. Until the sixth five year plan, women's role was understood to be a social and welfare issue. The Seventh Plan (1985-90) tried to get women into the centre of national development. It showed concern for equity and empowerment of women. The emphasis was on 'inculcating confidence among women, generating awareness about their rights and privileges and training them for economic activity and employment' (NPP 1988). The Women's Component Plan was outlined this time by designing a system to recognize and monitor schemes that benefitted women directly (Das and Mishra 2006: 25). The Eighth Plan (1992-97) witnessed a shift from development to empowerment. In the sectors of education, health and employment there was a focus on women. The outlay for women arose from Rs. 4 crore in the first plan to Rs 2,000 crore in this plan. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) focused on attaining empowerment of women. It also brought convergence of the ongoing services in both women-specific and women-related sectors. The Centre and the States followed the approach of Women's Component Plan (WCP) to ensure that at least 30 percent of funds/benefits from all development sectors reach women (Chattopadhyay 2006: 30; Jain 2007). The Tenth Plan (2002-2007) consists of definite strategies, policies and programmes for empowering women as agents of social change. The National Policy on Empowerment of Women 2001 shaped the Tenth Plan. This plan has a sector-related three-fold strategy- social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice (Chattopadhyay 2006: 30; Jain 2007: 75). Incorporating gender conscious planning, this plan envisioned "immediate tying up these two effective concepts of WCP and Gender Budgeting to play a complementary role to each other, and thus ensure both preventive and post facto action in enabling women to receive their rightful share from all women-related general development sectors" (Das and Mishra 2006: 26). Along with the Women's Component Plan, Gender Budgeting which is a much broader approach of making gender responsive budgets and public policies was adopted. Gender budgeting is not about a separate budget for women, but a process whereby budget-related allocations, policies and their implementation are analyzed using a gender lens (Das and Mishra 2006). It was introduced by Finance Ministry in the Union Budget 2005 to ensure equitable allocation of resources (Yojana 2007: 28)

Jain argues that mere inclusion of a chapter on 'Women and Development' enlisting goals to be achieved by various departments and ministries is an inadequate way of including women. She says that

*Women's Gyana*, their knowing and the body of knowledge they have released, which challenges most facts, most classificatory systems, including the measuring of the GNP, and the dichotomies of home and work place etc have to be forged into alternative development theories, underpinnings of planning development, designing the political economy rather than knit the gender thread into an already designed fabric (Jain 2007: 76).

Jain (2007) states that the planning process should recognize the presence of women in all ways-be it in the logic behind plan goals; women's status in agriculture and tiny sectors; address basic needs of water, health, food and also the effect of privatization policy etc. Basically, to put together women's experiences of development in the chapters discussing various sectors like defense, science and technology and so on. This kind of linking up between women and development will shift the women out of the basket of women's chapter changing the policy to a large extent giving voices to many women. In order to realize this in the Eleventh Plan (2007-2012), the government constituted a committee of feminist economists to ascertain gender-sensitive allocation of public resources to achieve the goals of

gender equality and inclusive growth. The committee suggested how schemes across sectors need to weave gender into the planning process (GOI 2007).

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Examine the approach followed by the Five-Year Plans for women's development.

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## 2.5 POLICIES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

In this section, we will discuss the policies made for development and empowerment of women in India. Policy directions emerge from the Committee on the Status of Women in India 1974, National Policy on Education 1986, National Perspective Plan 1988-2000, Shramshakti Report 1988 and National Policy on Empowerment of Women 2001.

**The Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India 1974** is a radical document considering the times in which it was formulated. The Committee made various recommendations with regard to the socio-cultural aspects. It suggested changes to be brought about in social attitudes and institutions through a planned process and concerted effort. There was a need to mobilize public opinion and create awareness on issues like dowry, polygamy, conspicuous expenditure on weddings, child marriages, and lead a campaign on legal rights of women. For this the Government would need to collaborate with the voluntary organizations working on women's issues.

On Women and Law, the committee recommended such marriage laws that provide equal footing to women. This was to be done by eradicating polygamy in Muslim Law, enforcing provision against bigamy under Hindu Marriage Act, restraint of child marriage which is still prevalent in rural areas and to provide the right to repudiate marriage on attaining majority to be made available to minor girls from all communities whether marriage was consummated or not. It states the importance of registering marriages, establishment of family courts to resolve matrimonial matters in a conciliatory manner, adopting a Uniform Civil Code (Article 44) valuing secularism, science and modernization since the continuity of personal laws causes inequality between women and men, among others.

In the economic sphere The Committee said that women are to be involved in national development. This requires extension of Maternity Benefits Act 1961 to other arenas of the economy, provision of crèches for working women, equalization of wages and its incorporation in the Minimum Wages Act, training programmes for women in industries to avoid their retrenchment, part-time employment for them, national employment service to assist women by providing them requisite information, provision of special leave without pay up to five years to enable women to take care of the family, setting up of women's wings in trade unions to highlight women's problems.

The Committee emphasized equality of educational opportunities. It recommended that co-education should be followed; common curricula should be followed for both girls and boys. It recommended three years of pre-school education for all children through balwadis in rural areas and urban slums; universalization of elementary education for children in the age-group of six to fourteen years; introduction of sex education middle school onwards; free secondary education for girls; gender equality to be woven in the curriculum, along with others. The gender gap in literacy can be reduced by involving the community in creating awareness among women.

In order to ensure women's participation in the political system of the country, the Committee suggests reservation of seats in municipalities for women as an interim measure, political parties to adopt a definite policy with regard to the percentage of women they would sponsor for elections to Parliament and state assemblies and inclusion of women in all important commissions formed to discuss socio-economic issues. The committee recommends a separate budget for maternity and child health care services, campaigns for family planning to also bring about a change in notions on fertility where women are blamed for the sex of the child, changes in the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act providing women control over their lives, along with other provisions. It suggests that in place of focusing on curative services, preventive and promotive health care should receive attention (NPP 1988).

**The National Policy on Education 1986** emphasizes on the need to equalize educational opportunities by removing disparities that exist in society. Under the section 'Education for Women's Equality' the policy observes that "education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of woman...The National Education system will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women" (1986: 6). This will be done through curricula, teacher training and active participation of the educational institutions. It also promotes women's studies and also encourages educational institutions to initiate programmes for women's development. Women's literacy will be encouraged and any hurdles in obstructing their access and retention in elementary education will be identified and tackled. Moreover, gender stereotyping in vocational and professional courses will be eliminated giving way to woman's participation in modern occupations.

**The National Perspective Plan for Women 1988-2000** perceives women in a holistic manner and assesses the effect of development plans and programmes on women. It aims at economic development and integration of women into the mainstream economy and equity and social justice for all women. The plan suggests measures to be adopted in the fields of agriculture, employment and training, supportive services (fuel, fodder, water, crèche, and housing), education, health and family welfare so that women could reach a level comparable to men by 2000. In agriculture and allied services, women-related development dimensions need to be discussed and women should be provided productive resources. The plan states that new avenues of employment have to be made available for women, improving their present working environment, employment and productivity potential, enabling them to become an 'articulate and conscious workforce', thus assuming the status and recognition of a worker. The supportive services provided to women would help them focus on work, at the same time reducing the daily drudgery they have to undergo. Issues of fuel, fodder and water are directly of concern to women so they should be included in the programmes designed on these aspects. The Plan envisages involving community members in girls' education and making them realize its importance for strengthening women's role in society and for socio-economic development of the nation. The National Literacy Mission should also involve women's organizations. Health is an important indicator of well-being for women's development. The Plan recommended that the amniocentesis tests be banned. There is a need to encourage parents to have female children. Health services should cater to women's health problems.

The Plan recognizes that the women's movement has struggled to get equal legislation. In spite of the constitution and various laws, equality has not been extended to women in society. Still, there is a greater incidence of violence against women in various forms. Thus, a multi-pronged group is required that monitors drafting of legislation, judicial decisions and such matters at Centre and State level. It is important to generate legal literacy among women so that they are able to exercise their political rights. Media and Communication play an important role in changing attitudes towards women and their support has to be sought in this regard. Voluntary action can also improve the status of women, particularly in rural areas. It can enable women to become self-reliant and act as a catalyst in organizing them for collective action. Such agencies can be involved in the Government-run employment and support services for women.

**Shramshakti: Report of the National Commission on Self-Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector 1988** was set up to study in a comprehensive manner the working and living state of poor women. It includes unprotected labour, those who are self-employed, engaged in wage labour, paid or unpaid, and contract labour. Though women contribute to family and national economy, their work gets no recognition. Thus, "women worker" should be defined in a broad manner to include work, whether paid or unpaid, which she does within the household or outside as a worker or on her own account. It suggests that a multi-pronged approach that is flexible, integrated and area-specific should be adopted by planners. The ongoing exploitation and uneven control of resources cause women to survive in extreme poverty and destitution. Lack of knowledge, skills and resources makes them feel powerless. The existing development schemes do not overtly discriminate against women. Yet at the same time they do not also empower them. This feeling of powerlessness is the outcome of the subordinate status accorded to women in implementation of the policies which then makes men chief beneficiaries in any development project. Moreover, certain vested interests keep women subordinated to get cheap and docile labour. In such a situation, the commission recommends introduction of new packages and programmes that assist the poor and vulnerable women. The areas of employment need to be enlarged for women. Working conditions have to be improved, drudgery could be reduced and they be provided with social security. The Commission advocates adoption of a holistic and integrated approach.

**The National Policy for Empowerment of Women 2001** states that the judicial legal system will be sensitized towards women's needs. Old laws will be changed and new ones be made stringent to ensure punishment to offenders in accordance with the offence. Personal laws related to marriage, divorce, maintenance and guardianship will be changed to ensure equality for women. Alongside at the political level, women will be made partners in the decision-making and power-sharing process.

This policy realizes the need to mainstream gender perspectives in the development process. Women can act as catalysts, participants and recipients. For this, women's issues and concerns need emphasis in all plans, policies, laws and programmes of action. The strengthening of women's role in social, economic spheres and through institutional mechanisms would lead to empowerment. Box 2.2 discusses some of the salient features of this policy.

**Box 2.2: NPEW 2001: Salient Features**

- i) Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential
- ii) The *de-jure and de-facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres - political, economic, social, cultural and civil

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- iii) Equal access to participation and decision-making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation
- iv) Equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public office etc.
- v) Strengthening legal systems aimed at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women
- vi) Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women.
- vii) Mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development process.
- viii) Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- (ix) Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations.

Source: NPEW 2001, p.7

According to the Policy, **economic empowerment** of women is essential for any change in their status. Since women form a major segment of those below the poverty line, hold low intra-household position and face ongoing inequity, policies and poverty-eradication programmes should cater to their needs. Such measures would help them build requisite capacities. In order to assist them in starting new enterprises, micro-credit would be made available to them from finance institutions. Women's viewpoint has to be included in the macro-economic policies. Their contribution to the formal and informal sector has to be acknowledged and the concept of work in the census records has to be revisited. Studies show that advantages of globalization have been unevenly distributed leading to economic inequalities, feminization of poverty and growing gender inequality. To address this, policy recommends strategies to be designed to empower women. The policy also recognizes the role of women in agriculture, information technology, electronics, food processing, agro-industry and textiles. It recommends provision of crèches at workplaces and educational institutions to enable women to participate fully in the social spheres. It suggests women-favourable personnel policies.

**Social Empowerment** can be ensured by focusing on education, health, nutrition, housing and shelter, environment, science and technology, combating violence and harnessing and regulating the mass media. In the arena of education, the policy assures equal access to girls/women by removal of discrimination, universalization of elementary education, increase in enrolment and retention of girls, improvement in quality of education, gender-sensitive curriculum and education system, also reduction in gender gap in secondary and higher education and to achieve sectoral time targets for vulnerable women belonging to SC/ST/OBC and minorities. The Policy envisions a holistic health perspective for women with focus on nutrition. It aims to achieve the national demographic goals for infant and maternal mortality rates, mentioned in the National Population Policy 2000. Women will also be enabled to exercise their reproductive rights. Registration of births, death and marriages will be made compulsory to strategize and deal with the problems that women face. Moreover, women face malnutrition in infancy/ childhood, adolescence, and reproductive stages and also face intra-household discrimination. Toilet facilities and safe drinking water has to be made available in urban slums and rural areas.

The policy aims to involve women's perspective in designing policies and programmes for conservation and restoration of the environment. Women will also be motivated to take up science and technology in higher education. The policy

recognizes the need to pay attention to the women in critical circumstances such as those in destitution, conflict situations, affected by natural calamities, widows, elderly women etc. Moreover, women facing continuous violence, both physical and mental, at home or in society will be able to approach institutions thus created to eliminate such acts. Mass media will be regulated to depict images that portray women in diverse roles and do not hurt their dignity. The Policy realizes the significance of gender budgeting to make the planning process gender conscious. It discusses the Women's Component Plan and assigns the Department of Women and Child Development, being the "nodal ministry", to monitor and review the progress of the implementation of the Component Plan from time to time, in terms of both quality and quantity in collaboration with the Planning Commission".

**Political Empowerment** of women is essential to enable them to play an effective role in the political system. Universal Adult Suffrage (Article 326) ensures that all the citizens of India 18 years and above have the right to vote irrespective of caste, class and gender. The 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendment Acts 1993 are inserted in Parts IX and IX-A of the Constitution. Part IX relates to Panchayats containing Articles 243 to 243-O and Part IX-A relates to Municipalities containing Articles 243P to 243 ZG. Article 243 D states that not less than one-third of the total number of seats to be filled by direct elections in every Panchayat shall be reserved for women. Of the total seats reserved for the scheduled caste/ scheduled tribe in proportion to their population, one-third are to be reserved for SC/ST women (Basu 2004:275).

### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Discuss the main policies for women's development.

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## 2.6 PROGRAMMES FOR WOMEN

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched many programmes for women in the field of education, health, employment so as to enable them to become self-reliant. Some of the major programmes are discussed in this sector.

### Mahila Samakhya

Mahila Samakhya has taken the shape of women's movement changing the lives of women in 14000 villages in 60 districts of nine states namely Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal says K.K. Khullar (2007). It started in response to the National Policy on Education 1986 and its Programme of Action in 1992. Now, along with women's non-formal education it centres on health issues, human rights and governance where its objective is to create a gender-just society by empowering women. This scheme has also encourages women in other states to struggle for issues close to their lives e.g. in Haryana women protested alcoholism, in Himachal Pradesh they stood against polygamy and in Tamil Nadu they resisted the practice of devdasis. Dowry, violence against women, infanticide, foetus death, child labour are issues of ongoing struggle. Didi Banks (Sister's Banks), Kishori Sanghas, Jago Behan (Arise, Sister)

are auxiliaries of the Mahila Samakhya programme. This programme has empowered women through education enabling them to assert their rights, becoming visible in family and community and also demanding accountability from the government bodies. Based on Gandhian philosophy, it believes in principles of volunteerism, community participation, decentralization and mass mobilization.

The nodal units of Mahila Samakhya are the Mahila Sanghas which run schools, dispensaries, markets, banks and also participate in Panchayati Raj Institutions. HERS, Sakhis or Sahyoginis work as catalysts facilitating formation and functioning of the Sanghas. They usually work in around ten villages to organize women. The Nari Adalats, started by Gujarat initially have been adopted by all the Mahila Samakhya States to organize collective action against violence. These are also spaces available for discussion to women. Kishori Sanghas engage adolescent girls and create awareness on health issues and natural resources. These Sanghas train girls to play active roles in communities. In Bihar and Jharkhand, the graduates of Mahila Shikshan Kendras mobilize the community to get children back to school, especially girls. They act as role models, also ensuring universalization of elementary education for girls.

### **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)**

This Programme was launched in 1987 to provide updated skills and new knowledge to poor and asset-less women in the traditional sectors such as agriculture, animal husbandry, dairying, fisheries, handlooms, handicrafts, khadi and village industries, sericulture, social forestry and wasteland development for enhancing their productivity and income generation. This would enhance and broaden their employment opportunities, including self-employment and development of entrepreneurial skills. A comprehensive package of services, such as health care, elementary education, crèche facilities, market linkages etc. are provided besides access to credit.

During the Ninth Plan period, about 255635 women beneficiaries were covered under 66 projects implemented in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and West Bengal. The Tenth Plan period has provided training to 215651 women beneficiaries under the scheme.

### **Hostels for Working Women**

The scheme of assistance for construction or expansion of hostel buildings for working women with day care centres for children is in implementation since 1972-73. Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to non-governmental organizations, cooperative bodies and other agencies engaged in the field of women's social welfare, women's education, etc., for construction of buildings for Working Women's Hostels. It envisages provision of safe and affordable hostel accommodation to working women (single working women, women working at places away from their home-towns, widows, divorcees, separated women etc.) and women being trained for employment and girl students. Trainees are permitted to stay for a period of one year and girl students for a period of five years, but with the conditions that first preference would be given to working women. It is also stipulated in the scheme that the category of women who are being trained for employment and girl students should not exceed 30% of the capacity of the hostel.

Till now (upto 2007) only 876 hostels have been sanctioned throughout the country. Since the demand for Working Women Hostels is on the increase due to increasing number of women in employment, a Committee was set up to revamp the scheme so as to make it more viable.



### **Swadhar: A Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances**

This scheme was launched by the Ministry during the year 2001-2002 for the benefit of women in difficult circumstances with the following objectives: to provide primary need of shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances; to provide emotional support and counselling to such women; to rehabilitate them socially and economically through education, awareness, skill up-gradation and personality development through behavioural training etc; to arrange for specific clinical, legal and other support for women/girls in need of those interventions by linking and networking with other organizations in both Government and Non-Government Sectors on case-to-case basis; to provide help-line or other facilities to such women in distress; and to provide such other services as will be required for support and rehabilitation of such women in distress. The target group comprises of widows deserted by their families, women prisoners released from jail and without family support, women survivors of natural disasters, trafficked women/ girls rescued, women victims of terrorist/ extremist violence, mentally challenged women, women with HIV/AIDS and similarly placed women in difficult circumstances. The implementing agencies are the Social Welfare/Women and Child Welfare Department of State Governments, Women's Development Corporation, Urban Local Bodies and reputed Public/Private Trusts or Voluntary Organizations. In 2008, a total of 208 Swadhar Shelter Homes and 210 Women Helplines are functional across the country.

### **Prevention of Trafficking of Women and Children for Commercial Sexual Exploitation**

Trafficking in human beings is an organized crime violating all basic human rights. India has emerged as a source, transit and destination country. It is estimated that there are three million sex workers in India, of which 40 percent constitute children, as young as 10 years old. Most often these victims are trafficked through means like duping, luring, fake marriages, abducting, kidnapping and manipulating social and economic vulnerabilities and sold to brothels where they are continuously subjected to abuse, violence and exploitation by perpetrators of the crime.

The main legislation "Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956" lays down provisions for providing stringent punishment to the perpetrators of such crime. In addition, the Indian Penal Code also provides provisions for crimes related to trafficking. India is also signatory to various International and regional Conventions such as UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (with its protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons especially women and children), SAARC Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in Prostitution, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **Scheme for Relief and Rehabilitation of Victims of Rape**

The Scheme for Relief and Rehabilitation of Victims of Rape, 2005 provides for constitution of Criminal Injuries Relief and Rehabilitation Board at each and every district to award compensation to rape victims; and District Monitoring Committees to provide shelter, protection, legal and medical aid and other rehabilitative measures for the victims. The Scheme has been included in the Report of the Working Group on Empowerment of Women for the Eleventh Plan. An amount of Rs.1 crore in the year 2007-08 has been allocated for the new scheme.

### **Swawlamban**

Swawlamban scheme, previously known as NORAD (Norwegian Agency for International Development) / Women's Economic Programme, was started in 1982-83 with the objective of providing training and skills to the poor and needy women and women from weaker sections of the society such as Scheduled Castes and

Scheduled Tribes, etc. to facilitate them in obtaining employment or self-employment on a sustained basis. There are 36 traditional and non-traditional trades for which assistance is provided under the scheme. The State Women's Development Corporations (WDCs) are the nodal agencies for implementation of the scheme mostly through voluntary organizations in the States.

### **Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH)**

Promotion of maternal and child health has been one of the most important objectives of the Family Welfare Programme in India. The current Reproductive and Child Health Programme (RCH) was launched in October 1997. The RCH Programme incorporates the components covered under the Child Survival and Safe Motherhood Programme and includes an additional component relating to reproductive tract infection and sexually transmitted infections. In order to improve maternal health at the community level a cadre of community level skilled birth attendants who will attend to the pregnant women in the community is being considered. The need for bringing down maternal mortality rate significantly and improving maternal health in general has been strongly stressed in the National Population Policy 2000. This policy recommends a holistic strategy for bringing about total inter-sectoral coordination at the grass root level and involving the NGOs, Civil Society, Panchayati Raj Institutions and women's groups in bringing down Maternal Mortality Ratio and Infant Mortality Rate.

#### **Check Your Progress IV**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answer

- 1) Discuss the programmes for women's development.

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## **2.7 LET US SUM UP**

In this Unit, we have discussed various policies and programmes that aim to empower women. There are various constitutional safeguards and legislations that guarantee women's equal status. Policies like CSWI, National Policy on Education, National Perspective Plan for Women, Shramshakti Report, and National Policy on Empowerment of Women recognize women's contribution to society and suggest ways to empower them. They consider women as participants in the development process and not mere beneficiaries of welfare programmes. In the light of these policies, various programmes were started. These empowered women in developing their potential to lead a dignified life.

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# UNIT 3 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

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## Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Origin of Gender and Development
- 3.3 Gender and Development in India
- 3.4 Gender, Poverty and Budgeting
- 3.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.6 Key Words
- 3.7 Further Readings and References

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## 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- discuss how the development process affects women and men in different ways;
- explain gender roles;
- describe the gendered impact of sudden economic change; and
- distinguish between approaches to gender and development.

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## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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“Development cannot be achieved if 50% of the population is excluded from the opportunities it brings” Helen Clarke, UNDP Administrator.

The development process affects women and men in different ways. The after affect of colonialism, and the peripheral position of poor countries of the south and those with economies in transition in today's globalizing world, exacerbate the effects of discrimination on women. Modernization of agriculture has altered the division of labour between the sexes, increasing women's dependent status as well as their workload. Women often lose control of resources such as land and are generally excluded from access to improved agricultural methods. Male mobility is higher than female; both between places and between jobs and more women are left alone to support children. In some countries especially in the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America, women cannot do paid work or travel without their husbands or their father's written permission. Women carry a double or triple burden of work as they cope with house work, childcare and subsistence food production, in addition to an expanding involvement in paid employment. Everywhere women work longer hours than men. The pressure on gender relations of the changing status of women, and of rapid economic restructuring combined with growing impoverishment at the household level is a critical factor in survival.

Gender relations (the socially constructed form of relations between women and men) have been interrogated in terms of the way development policies change the balance of power between women and men. Gender roles (the household tasks and types of work/employment socially assigned to men and women) are not fixed and globally consistent and indeed become more flexible with the changes brought about by economic development. Everywhere gender is crosscut by differences in class, race, ethnicity, religion and age.

As we enter the new Millennium, the focus is on alleviating world poverty. The empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality is one of the eight internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) designed to achieve this. There is a great deal of evidence that societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay a price in more poverty, slower growth and a lower quality of life while gender equality enhances development. For example: literate mothers have better fed children who are more likely to attend school. Yet in no country of the developing world do women enjoy equality with men in terms of political, legal, social and economic rights.

**Box 3.1: Millennium Development Goal 3**

**Goal:** To promote gender equality and empowerment of women

**Target:** To remove gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015

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## **3.2 ORIGIN OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT**

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This approach originated in academic criticism started in the mid-1970s in the UK. Based on the concept of gender and gender relations, it analyzed how development reshapes these power relations. Drawing on feminist political activism, gender analysts explicitly saw women as agents of change. The movement also affirmed that giving women greater access to resources would contribute to an equitable and efficient development process.

The end of the 1970s ushered in the concern with gender relations in development. Micro-level studies drew attention to the differences in entitlements, perceived capabilities, and social expectations of men and women, boys and girls. Reflecting the norms, laws, and social values of society, the differences in the status of men and women have profound implications for how they participate in market or non-market work and in community life as a whole. In the 1980s and 1990s, research demonstrated that gender relations mediate the process of development. For example, analyses of stabilization and structural-adjustment policies showed that gender inequalities have an impact on the attainment of macroeconomic objectives.

The concern with gender relations in development has strengthened the affirmation that equality in the status of men and women is fundamental to every society. And this concern has prompted scholars and practitioners to refine the perspective on what development should be and how to bring it about efficiently. It was realized that development requires more than the creation of opportunities for people to earn sustainable livelihoods – it also requires the creation of a conducive environment for men and women to seize those opportunities. Development implies not only more and better schools but also equal access to education for boys and girls. Development requires good governments that give men and women equal voices in decision-making and policy implementation.

Concepts and ideas – such as feminism, gender analysis, diversity, and gender mainstreaming – that have become buzz words in the development circles need to be clarified and demystified. This will foster effective communication among development agents and result in a consistent view of overall development goals and in complementary, rather than contradictory, plans of action.

### **Gender and society before the development era**

It is important to recall the richness of the history of most developing countries before colonialism and the era of development. It is also important to understand the nature of social relations in the earlier periods of that history. Until recently, most of history was androcentric. It focused on the period after the encounter with Western Europe and emphasized male action or agency. In addition, it was often

first written in Western languages by Western male scholars who, with few exceptions, were Eurocentric and intolerant of the people they studied. As a result, our historical records are laced with racism, sexism, and imperialist sentiments.

Although development theorists paid little attention to the complexities of these societies before the era of development, social anthropologists did. However, they also took with them androcentric and ethnocentric biases that clouded their view of these societies and of gender relations in these societies.

In the heyday of Third World nationalism, in the 1960s and 1970s, indigenous historians sought to correct this wrong. Most of these historians were male or trained in the androcentric worldview. So knowledge of women’s experiences in pre-colonial society continued to be hidden. To counteract centuries of what Peter Worsley (1970) called “imperialist history,” nationalist historians often distorted this history to highlight a great and glorious past, stressing the kings and queens, wealth and empire. In so doing, they often ignored the traditional **egalitarianism** of many pre-colonial societies, in which women had greater power and autonomy and life was more in tune with nature and the environment, not based on its destruction.

Today, as feminist activists and other concerned scholars re-evaluate development and modernization, there is a renewed appreciation of the positive features of the ways of life in earlier societies. Also, understanding the need to preserve and protect the egalitarian and environmentally friendly practices that have survived in our societies and have been adapted to serve people’s needs, often outside mainstream political and economic structures.

**Gender relations and social change**

Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, social scientists have sought to develop a schema to explain the variety and differences in human experience. Today, although critical scholars no longer attribute value to societies in terms of progress or backwardness, they do recognize that pre-colonial societies may have been at different stages of social development. The stages are usually identified as follows: Hunter-gatherer or foraging societies, agricultural or agrarian societies, pastoral or herding societies, Industrial societies etc.

Feminist anthropologists have also argued that the organization of social and **production relations** – such as social **stratification**, the monogamous family, matrilineal/matrilateral descent ownership of property, and forms of work and production – has greatly influenced the differences in gender relations around the world.

In many situations, women have been able to create spaces and possibilities for autonomy within the structures of subordination existing in their societies. However, these strategies were complicated or removed by the imposition of assumptions about a woman’s or man’s place in the new systems of stratification that were based on notions of class and racial or ethnic superiority.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Space is given below for your answers.

- 1) State the relationship between Gender and development.

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### 3.3 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Out of the total population of 1027 million in India (2001 census), 495.7 million (48.3%) are women. During 1991, female population was 48%. Sex ratio was 933 in 2001 as against 927 in 1991. Female literacy rate was 54.2 percent in 2001 as against 29.8 in 1981. Life expectancy of females was at 65.3 years in 2001 as against 54.7 years in 1981. The work participation rate of women increased from 19.7 percent in 1981 to 25.7 percent in 2001. Similarly, maternal mortality rate (per lakh female population) decreased from 468 in 1981 to 407 in 2001. All these indicate that the gender indices, are gradually improving even though the present levels are still unsatisfactory. The Constitution protects the rights of women to develop the status of women in all spheres and empower them, the Government of India formulated a comprehensive National Policy for Women in 2001. Similarly Five Years Plans especially the 10th Plan stressed on social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice.

#### National Policy

According to UNDP Report 2001, India ranks 105th in Gender Related Development Index (GDI). India's position is below that of Srilanka but is marginally above that of Pakistan.

The approach on women's development changed from viewing women as beneficiaries of social services to contributors to the social and economic development of nations. The development approach has to address not only women's practical needs (immediate needs) but also their strategic gender interests addressing inequalities in employment, political participation and cultural and legal status).

#### Box 3.2: National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in 2001

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- The *de-jure* and *de-facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women on an equal basis with men in all spheres-political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
- Equal access of women to health care, quality education, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security, public office etc. "Women must not be regarded as mere recipients of public support. They are, first and foremost, economic agents".

#### Women's Development and Tenth Plan Strategy in India

*Social empowerment* has been a major focus. The planning effort sought to create an enabling environment through various affirmative developmental policies and programmes for development of women besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realise their full potential.

*Economic Empowerment* measures sought to ensure provision of training, employment and income-generation activities with both 'forward' and 'backward' linkages with the ultimate objective of making all potential women economically independent and self-reliant.

Gender Justice measures sought to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and thus, allow women to enjoy not only *de-jure* but also the *de-facto* rights and



fundamental freedoms on par with men in all spheres, viz. political, economic, social, civil, cultural etc.

### Indian Constitution and Women

- Article 14: Equal rights and opportunities for men and women in political, economic and social spheres.
- Article 15: Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the ground of sex, religion, caste etc.
- Article 15(3): Empowers the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women.
- Article 16: Provides for equality of opportunities in public appointments of all citizens.
- Article 39: Providing equal right to means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work.
- Article 42: Directs the state to ensure just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- Article 51 (A) (e): Mandates every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

In 1993 the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution were passed to build a political legitimacy for minority women in local governance. The participation of women in politics is a human right and a development goal. When women participate in politics, there are benefits for women, men, children, communities and nations.

### Women and Population

#### Quick Facts: Indian Census 2001

16.7% of world population in 2.4% of world surface area - India	933 females per 1000 males as against 927 in 1991 census
Only 75 males and 54 females literate out of every 100	29 lives added to the population every minute from 24.79 births and 8.88 deaths per 1000
Uttar Pradesh most populated, estimated more than Pakistan's population.	West Bengal most dense by populated and Arunachal Pradesh the least densely populated.

The United Nations "World Population Prospects" released on 24th February, 2005 in New York, estimates that there will be 1,395m people in India by 2025, and 1,593m in 2050. China will be populated by 1,441m by 2025, and 1,392 in 2050. India was the first country to launch a national programme in 1951, emphasizing family planning to the extent necessary for reducing birth rates but it did not show any change due to decline in death rates simultaneously. Women were the major targets of family planning programmes. The more the number of people, the lesser the rates of employment. The lesser the employment, the more the dependence. The more the dependence, the lower the standard of living. The lower the standard of living, the lesser the levels of well-being and happiness. Hence, by any means, rapid growth of population has to be checked, in India.

### Women and Ageing

The special features of the elderly population in India are: (a) a majority (80%) of them are in the rural areas, thus making service delivery a challenge, (b)

feminization of the elderly population (51% of the elderly population would be women by the year 2016), (c) increase in the number of the elderly (persons above 80 years) and (d) a large percentage (30%) of the elderly below the poverty line.

Life expectancy of women is longer than men. The implications of longer life of women are manifold. A larger proportion of older women is likely to become widows. In the case of men, many remarry but widow remarriage does not yet have a full societal acceptance in India. Elderly women are more in number in the aged population in comparison with their male counterparts, but old age social security and benefits are fewer for women. This is mainly due to non-availability of old age income security programmes for the workers in the large informal sector and the coverage gap in the formal sector. That is why there are more poor and needy among the female aged widows than among the male aged. They also suffer from more chronic diseases more intensely and also from disabilities. High female life expectancy indicates that the number of old women will be on the rise.

### **Women and Literacy**

Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world. Women's education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover, educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. According to the Census held in 2001, the percentage of female literacy in the country is 54.16%. The literacy rate in the country has increased from 18.33% in 1951 to 65.38% as per 2001 census.

Historically, a variety of factors have been found to be responsible for poor female literate rate such as:

- Gender based inequality;
- Social discrimination and economic exploitation;
- Occupation of girl child in domestic chores;
- Low enrolment of girls in schools; and
- Low retention rate and high drop-out rate

The main strategies adopted by the Government for increasing female literacy in the country include:

- 1) National Literacy Mission for imparting functional literacy
- 2) Universalization of Elementary Education
- 3) Non-Formal Education

At the national level 45.8% of the female population is illiterate as against 12.4% in Kerala. Rajasthan has the highest percentage of illiterate women with 67.2%. The male-female literacy gap has reduced from 24.84% in 1991 to 21.59% in 2001. Mizoram has the smallest gap (3.97%) followed by Kerala (6.52%) and Meghalaya (5.82%). The 2001 Indian Census provisional results demonstrate the continued discrepancy between male and female literacy rates. For example, in Uttar Pradesh 70.23% of men are said to be literate in contrast to only 42.98% of women.

Indian women have high mortality rates, particularly during childhood and in their reproductive years. The health of Indian women is intrinsically linked to their status in society. The women of India are victims of prejudice from birth itself. They are not breastfed for long. For want of a son the women wants to get pregnant as soon as possible which decreases the caring period for the girl child whereas the male members get adequate care and nutrition. There is a strong son preference in India, as sons are expected to care for parents as they age. This son preference, along with high dowry costs for daughters, sometimes results in the mistreatment of daughters. Only a very limited number of Indian women have the opportunity to choose whether or when to have a child. Women, particularly women in rural areas, do not have access to safe and self-controlled methods of contraception. The public health system emphasizes permanent methods like sterilization, or long-term methods like IUDs that do not need follow-up and are thus felt to be more 'fool-proof' than other spacing methods. In fact, sterilization accounts for more than 75% of total contraception, with female sterilization accounting for almost 95% of all sterilizations (Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in India, 2001).

In changing society, women have to play multiple roles from child bearing and rearing, income earning to active partnership in development and governance. In India, mortality rate among females is greater than males at all stages especially in the age group 15-35 years. Generally in India, women are the one who eat last and least in the whole family. So they eat whatever is left after men folk are satiated. As a result most of the times their food intake does not contain the nutritive value required in maintaining a healthy body. This nutritional deficiency has two major consequences for women. First they become anaemic and second they never achieve their full growth, which leads to an unending cycle of poor growth as malnourished women cannot give birth to a healthy baby. Malnutrition results in poor health of women. Women are not given the right to free movement. This means that they cannot go anywhere on their own and they have to take the permission of male members of the family or have to take them along. This results in a decrease in women's visits to the doctor and she could not pay attention to her health as a result.

**Women and Violence**

Violence against women and the girl child, both at home and at the work place, has been showing an alarming trend in the country. Data from State Crime Bureau shows that the total number of crimes committed against women has increased from 1.13 lakhs in 1997 to 1.44 lakhs in 2001 at the national level. Amongst the states Uttar Pradesh reports the highest with 14.1 percent of total crimes, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh with 11.5% and 10.1% respectively. There is increasing evidence to show that all women, regardless of age, class, caste, and community are vulnerable to domestic violence - marriage, a joint family, education, economic security and social status do not provide any real protection. According to Visaria (2000), younger, lower caste, and less educated women in India are at greater risk of experiencing domestic violence.

Every five Minutes, a violent crime against a woman is reported. In certain societies, violence, such as wife beating, is perceived as "normal" or as a husband's right. However, violence against women is detrimental to economic development because it deprives women of the ability to participate fully in the economy by depleting both their emotional and physical strength. Violence against women also can have negative consequences for the children of the victims. The data that are available show that much of the violence to which women are subjected occurs in the home and/or is carried out by relatives. For instance, the majority of reported rapes are

committed by family members. Many of the victims are young women; 30 percent of all reported rapes happened to girls who were age 16 or younger. In the past few years, there has been an increase in the reported incidence of torture - cruelty by the husband and the husband's relatives.

**Check Your Progress II**

**Note:** Space is given below for your answers.

- 1) List the provisions for women in the Indian constitution.

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- 2) State the factors responsible for poor female literate rate in India.

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- 3) What are the inter-linkages between gender and health issues in India?

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### **3.4 GENDER, POVERTY AND BUDGETING**

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Six out of ten of the world's poorest people are women who must, as the primary family caretakers and producers of food, shoulder the burden of tilling land, grinding grain, carrying water and cooking. This is no easy burden. In Kenya, women can burn up to 85 percent of their daily calorie intake just fetching water.

Yet some 75 percent of the world's women cannot get bank loans because they have unpaid or insecure jobs and are not entitled to property ownership. This is one reason why women comprise more than 50 percent of the world's population but own only one percent of the world's wealth.

Equality between men and women is more than a matter of social justice - it's a fundamental human right. But gender equality also makes good economic sense. When women have equal access to education, and go on to participate fully in business and economic decision-making, they are a key driving force against poverty. Women with equal rights are better educated, healthier, and have greater access to land, jobs and financial resources. Their increased earning power, in turn, raises household incomes. By enhancing women's control over decision-making in the household, gender equality also translates into better prospects and greater well-being of children, reducing poverty of future generations.

Gender equality and women's empowerment is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet, while there are some positive trends in gender

equality, there are still many areas of concern. Girls account for the majority of children not attending school; almost two-thirds of women in the developing world work in the informal sector or as unpaid workers in the home. Despite greater parliamentary participation, women are still out numbered four-to-one in legislatures around the world.

Gender equality is a condition for inclusive, democratic, violence-free and sustainable development.

### Gender Budgeting

Gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. Gender budgeting should be a priority, since budgets are important as policy and planning instruments for governments.

Australia was the first country to develop a gender-sensitive budget, with the Federal government publishing in 1984 the first comprehensive audit of a government budget for its impact on women and girls. The gender budgeting initiative in India started in July 2000 when a Workshop on 'Engendering National Budgets in the South Asia Region' was held in New Delhi in collaboration with the UNIFEM, in which Government representatives, UN agencies, media, NGOs, research institutions, civil society and members of the Planning Commission in the South Asia region participated. In India, gender perspectives on public expenditure had been gaining ground since the publication of the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1974. The Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97) highlighted for the first time the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general developmental sectors to women. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), while reaffirming the earlier commitment adopted the Women's Component Plan as one of the major strategies and directed both the Central and the State Governments to ensure "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.

India has accepted the need for gender sensitivity in plans and has highlighted this aspect in the Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-07. Women's participation rate has increased every year in the Gram Sabhas. The quality of women's component plan has improved over the last few years. Decentralization has provided wider opportunities for the women to discover their potential, and provided scope for interaction. The transformative process has to go further. However, the spectacular change in welfare, efficiency, mobility and self-confidence of the women at grassroot level cannot be overlooked.

#### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** Space is given below for your answers.

1) How are gender and poverty related?

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2) What are the objectives of gender budgeting?

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### 3.5 LET US SUM UP

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Gender equality and women’s empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

There are two ways in which gender equality concerns can be mainstreamed. *Integration* aims to ensure that women’s concerns are integrated in the analysis of obstacles to development, and that these concerns inform the formulation of policy, programmes, and projects. Specific targets are set for outcomes, and the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes must capture the progress made in the achievement of gender equality. In contrast, the *transformation* approach aims to move beyond integrating women’s concerns relating to the demands of their daily lives, to focus on improving women’s position (status), and thereby transforming the agenda.

Despite the progress that has been made, six out of ten of the world’s poorest people are still women and girls. Less than 16 percent of the world’s parliamentarians are women, two thirds of all children shut outside the school gates are girls and, both in times of armed conflict and behind closed doors at home, women are still systematically subjected to violence.

Fifty years after the adoption of the Constitution, people are curious about the extent to which the Constitutional commitment to equality and freedom for women has been implemented. India has been one of the foremost leaders in ratifying the UN Conventions and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. In the last few years, as an outcome of affirmative policies and programmes, women’s position in Indian society has advanced. However, insidious gender-based gaps persist within Indian culture. The status of women falls short of standards put forth by the Indian government and its Constitution. India’s diversity is evident especially when examining the variation in health statistics across the country. For instance, the average life expectancy for women in Kerala is reported to be 75 years of age as compared to 57 in Madhya Pradesh. Life expectancy is determined by multiple factors - some of which include: level of income, access to education (literacy) and health care, urban vs. rural environment, nutritional status, prevalence of disease, issues of human rights, relational dynamics, workplace issues, gender-based violence, and decision-making abilities. Mother’s education, according to the NFHS, is highly correlated with the level of malnutrition among children. Children of illiterate mothers are twice as likely to be undernourished or stunted as children whose mothers have completed at least high school. The differentials are even larger when severely undernourished children are considered. Children of illiterate mothers are three times as likely to be severely undernourished as children of mothers with at least a high school education.

As UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has stated, “Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

This recognition is currently missing in India. Transforming the prevailing social discrimination against women must become the top priority, and must happen concurrently with increased direct action to rapidly improve the social and economic status of women. In this way, a synergy of progress can be achieved. As women receive greater education and training, they will earn more money.

As women earn more money - as has been repeatedly shown - they spend it in the further education and health of their children, as opposed to men, who often spend it on drink, tobacco or other women. As women rise in economic status, they will gain greater social standing in the household and the village, and will have greater voice. As women gain influence and consciousness, they will make stronger claims to their entitlements - gaining further training, better access to credit and higher incomes - and command attention of police and courts when attacked. As women's economic power grows, it will be easier to overcome the tradition of "son preference" and thus put an end to the evil of dowry. As son preference declines and acceptance of violence declines, families will be more likely to educate their daughters, and age of marriage will rise. For every year beyond 4th grade that girls go to school, family size shrinks 20%, child deaths drop 10% and wages rise 20%. As women are better nourished and marry later, they will be healthier, more productive, and will give birth to healthier babies. Only through action to remedy discrimination against women can the vision of India's independence - an India where all people have the chance to live healthy and productive lives - be realized.

"Empowering women is vital for achieving development goals overall, and for boosting economic growth and sustainable development," said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark.

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### 3.6 KEY WORDS

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- Gender** : "Gender" refer to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.
- Development** : Progression from a simpler or lower to a more advanced stage, gradual advancement or growth through a series of progressive changes.
- Egalitarianism** : Egalitarianism (derived from the French word *égal*, meaning "equal") has two distinct definitions in modern English. It is defined either as a political doctrine that holds that all people should be treated as equals and have the same political, economic, social, and civil rights or as a social philosophy advocating the removal of economic inequalities among people.
- Millennium Development Goals** : The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that all 192 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. They include reducing extreme poverty, reducing child and maternal mortality rates, promoting gender equality

and women's empowerment, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development

**Gender mainstreaming** : It is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

**Integration** : This approach aims to ensure that women's concerns are integrated in the analysis of obstacles to development, and that these concerns inform the formulation of policy, programmes and projects. For example, an agricultural development project might focus on ensuring that women involved in farming have equal access to technology and information

**Transformation** : This approach aims to move beyond integrating women's concerns relating to the demands of their daily lives, to focus on improving women's position (status), and thereby transforming the agenda. For example, if the key issue facing women in agriculture is lack of independent land rights, this approach would move far beyond ensuring that women have equal access to technology and information, to advocating for changes in inheritance practices and land ownership.

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