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## UNIT 4 DISCRIMINATION IN PLANNING AND POLICIES

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### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

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India has a long history of addressing gender issues through its policies and programmes. The country has also brought laws to address gender-related issues through its legislative bodies. It constituted Planning Commission to develop five-year plans.. Five-year plans were part of the planning process until the 12<sup>th</sup> five-year Plan. It has changed its approach after that. It has given impetus to the priorities, sectors and strategies based on broader consultation and scientific studies with the active involvement of States at present after doing away the five-year plans. The issues of women and their low status and position in both public and private spaces became prominent after the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women (1974). The 'Towards Equality Report gave the impetus for mapping and incorporating gender perspectives in public expenditure. This unit will look at the significance of formulating gender-sensitive policies and India's approach towards strengthening Gender and Science.

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### 4.1 LEARNING OUTCOMES

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After studying this Unit, you shall be able to:

- Trace India's approaches to formulating policies and programmes through five-year plans and current approaches;
- Discuss the significance of formulating gender-sensitive policies and programmes; and
- Explain the existing policies and programmes in the areas of Gender with specific reference to science.

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## 4.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF FORMULATING GENDER-SENSITIVE POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

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There are different ways in which gender can be present or absent in policy interventions. A greater awareness in policy formulation requires recognizing gender differences in society. The differences between females, males and other genders and the low status and position of women can be established through empirical reality and constantly checks our assumptions with this reality. The existing feminist studies and theories established women's low status and position in public and private spaces. The low status of women further contributed to their poor representation in various sectors, especially health, education and science and technology. One of the effective strategies to improve women's position and status at every level is to formulate appropriate policies and programmes for ensuring women participation at all levels and creating a space for the women in decision making bodies. Feminists, specifically liberal and socialist feminists, have contributed for bringing perspectives and theoretical understanding to include a gender-sensitive approach in public policies and programmes. According to **Naila Kabeer** (1994) greater gender awareness may lead to three alternative approaches to policy. They are gender-neutral policies, gender-specific policies and gender-redistributive or transformative policies.

India, like most of the countries in the world adopted the Gender Blind approach till 1975. According to the Gender Blind approach, policymaking agencies or organizations do not understand the existing gender differences in society. After getting towards gender sensitivity, the policymaking bodies may formulate policies based on the Gender-Neutral approach or Gender Redistributive or Gender Specific policies.

After 1975, the interventions of feminists made countries formulate and implement new policies on women's development. The success of these policies depends on increased gender awareness among policymakers (Longwe, 1991). If policymakers have gender awareness, that brings recognition of gender issues. There are three essential elements in gender awareness in policy making:

“first, the recognition that women have different and special needs; second, that they are a disadvantaged group in terms of their welfare and access to and control over the factors of production; third, that women's development entails working towards increased equality and empowerment for women, relative to men” (Longwe, 1991)

Here, the significant issue is women's development, which must be equal to men in the society. When we talk about equality between men and women, we need first to identify various inequalities in various forms existing between men and women in society. Addressing the various inequalities between men and women and bringing women on par with men constitutes development. Here, there is a question that may arise in your mind. Why do we need to look at “gender with development” rather than women in

isolation? When women were identified as the focus of the planning exercise, their problems were perceived in terms of their gender.

As you know, sex refers to their biological differences compared to men, while gender focuses on the socio-cultural relationships between men and women, the foundation for their subordination. As Moser puts it: "Gender-aware approaches are concerned with how such relationships are socially constructed; men and women play different roles in society, their gender differences being shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural determinants". In most developing countries including India, gender issues have not been satisfactorily incorporated because of various reasons including lack of recognition of gender as an essential planning issue, male domination in decision-making, and their use of gender-blind approaches, and lack of methodological tools enabling practitioners to translate gender awareness into practice. After realising need for incorporating gender concerns in the existing planning, feminists try to incorporate gender as a cross-cutting concern. There continues to be confusion even in terminology. Feminists are also concerned about the homogenisation of women as a category. There are differences among women based on their location, caste, ethnicity and class and other factors. Hence, we should emphasize using the term "gender interests" in the gender planning context.

As we have already seen through figure 1 above, once planners recognize the gender sensitivity in planning and policies, three approaches will address the same. Gender neutrality in policy relies on accurate information about the existing gender-based division of resources and responsibilities to ensure that policy objectives are met in the most efficient way possible. Gender-neutral interventions are intended to leave the distribution of resources and responsibilities intact. Advocacy on behalf of women and recognition of the past neglect of women's gender-related needs gives rise to gender-specific policies which favour targeting activities and resources that women are likely to control or benefit from. Gender-specific policies seek to transform existing gender relations in a more democratic direction by redistributing more evenly the division of resources, responsibilities and power between men and women. Gender redistributive policy is the most politically challenging option that requires men to give up certain privileges and take on specific responsibilities to achieve more significant equity in development outcomes. Gender-specific interventions are intended to meet the targeted needs of one or another gender within the existing distribution of resources and responsibilities. Gender-redistributive policies are interventions intended to transform existing distributions more egalitarian direction. The approaches adopted and the intervention they give rise to will depend on the analysis used to identify the problem and seek solutions. Thus, while analyzing an intervention, the gender-aware policy approach must consider the gender relations of the relevant institutional context within which specific activities are currently undertaken. Also, such an approach should analyze what aspects of these relations need to be challenged or reproduced before determining the possibilities for designing more gender-sensitive policy responses. It should focus on gender-linked implications of production and distributional

practices. Such an analysis will help clarify the extent to which institutional processes and outcomes are efficient and equitable (Kabeer, 1994).

### Check Your Progress Exercise I

Note: I. Use this space given below to answer the question.

II. Compare your answer with the Course material of this Unit.

1. What is understood by Gender- Aware policy planning?

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2. What is understood as Gender Blind Approach in policy making?

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### 4.3 PLANNING AND POLICYMAKING PROCESS IN INDIA

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The planning process in India based on five-year planning started in 1951. Indian Government addressed the needs and issues of women, especially single, deserted, divorced and others, through welfare approach. Indian Government changed its approach from the sixth five-year Plan from welfare to development, and women were considered development constituents rather than beneficiaries. The Seventh Five Year Plan concentrated on improving women's socio-economic development. The ninth and tenth Plans concentrated on empowering women by adopting empowerment approach. The eleventh Plan concentrated on gender equity, gender equality and considering women as change-makers. The twelfth five-year Plan wanted to bring 'Faster sustainable and inclusive growth'. Indian Government adopted new long term sustainable plan approaches from five-year plans after completing the 12<sup>th</sup> five-year Plan period. It has changed its approach in 2017. The planning commission has been transformed and renamed NITI Aayog. NITI Aayog will facilitate the Government to develop a Plan for the Country based on sectoral significance, promote cooperative federalism. It will concentrate on Plans at the village level by strengthening gram panchayats. It will facilitate the government policies to achieve its long-term goals by encouraging innovation and entrepreneurial skills. It did not mention gender inclusion as its one of the specific objectives. By looking at the transition from gender blind planning to a gender-sensitive approach, the

Indian Government travelled long to include gender concerns in its Plan and policies. It has included Women's Component Plans and Gender Budgeting over the last two decades by allocating 30 per cent of budget resources to address gender issues. India's planning process has increasingly recognized the need to address gender inequalities. Formal earmarking of funds for women began with Women's Component Plans in 1997-98. However, gender sensitivity in the allocation of resources started with the Seventh Plan. Over the years, the plan documents reflect the evolving trends (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1: Historical Trajectory of Indian Planning**

<b>Plan Period</b>	<b>Focal Areas</b>
First Five-Year Plan (1951-56)	The welfare of women from disadvantaged groups like the needy, disabled, aged, etc.
Second to Fifth Five Year Plans	Besides prioritizing women's education, the welfare approach improved maternal and child health services, supplementary feeding for children, and expectant and nursing mothers.
Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85)	The shift in the approach from 'welfare' to 'development' of women. Multi-pronged approach with thrust on health, education and employment
Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90)	They aimed to raise women's economic and social status and bring them into the mainstream of national development. The thrust was on the generation of skilled and unskilled employment through proper education and vocational training.
Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97)	Emphasis on the development of women; continued with its strategy of empowering women as agents of social change and development.
Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002)	There is a significant change in the conceptual strategy of planning for women's development. It is an attempt a focus on 'empowerment of women. The Plan also aimed at 'convergence of existing services available in both women-specific and women-related sectors' programmes.
Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07)	Continues with the strategy of 'empowering women' as an agent of social change and development through social empowerment,

	economic empowerment and gender justice
Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12)	Emphasis on gender equity, gender budgeting and creation of an environment free from all forms of violence against women

**Source:** Singh, et.al (Year)

Twelfth five year plan has concentrated more on sustainable inclusive development. Apart from the above explained perspectives, planning and policymaking in India included various approaches such as: welfare, equity, equality, empowerment and rights based approaches in its planning and policymaking process.

### **4.3.1 Policies and Programmes after the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan**

It is important to have a plan with perspectives into the future, concerns for the disadvantaged sections of the society (especially women and children) and an understanding of the linkage between different sectors. Hence, we will discuss the government perspectives for formulating policies and programmes after the 12<sup>th</sup> five-year plan in this section. The Government of India relooked the entire planning process after the 12<sup>th</sup> five-year plan and it has taken a different approach and reconstituted the planning commission into NITI Aayog with a different set of priorities. The government has decided to go for 15 years of planning instead of existing five-year plans after the completion of the 12<sup>th</sup> five-year plan. It has asked NITI Aayog to come up with a 15-year plan as a "National Development Agenda" on the completion of the 12<sup>th</sup> five-year plan. The 12<sup>th</sup> five-year plan ended in March 2017.

The new institution 'NITI Aayog' has been established with the objectives of evolving a shared vision of national development with the active participation of both state and Central governments. It has decided to give special attention to the specific sections of our society like women and marginalised by formulating appropriate policies and programmes to address their needs and concerns for their progress. Since the constitution of NITI Aayog, the government has planned policies in which it has targeted individual beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) rather than implementing policies and programmes for a group of individuals like Self-help groups.

The government has further decided to improve women's status and position by addressing the Practical and Strategic Gender Needs (PGNs and SGNs) of women. Before we know a few government programmes let's know what are Practical Gender Needs and Strategic Gender needs.

Based on the role performance of women and men in society, the needs of women and men differ. Thus, the roles further categorized as gender needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical Gender Needs (PGNs) do not challenge, although they arise out of

gender divisions of labour and women's subordinate position in society. PGNs are a response to an immediate and perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical and often concern inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment. Strategic Gender Needs (SGNs) are the needs of women who identify because of their subordinate position in society. They vary according to particular contexts, related to the gender division of labour, power and control, and may include issues such as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies. Meeting SGNs assists women to achieve greater equality and changing existing roles, thereby challenging women's subordinate positions. They are more long-term and less visible than practical gender needs. The government has formulated necessary policies to address both PGNs and SGNs. Let us discuss a few government policies which target women to address their financial needs for drudgery reduction.

### ***Pradha Mantri Mudra Yojana***

The term 'MUDRA' in this scheme is "Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd.". It has been established as a financial organization to enhance and rehabilitate various micro/small non-corporate and non-farming firms ([mudra.org.in](http://mudra.org.in)). The aim of the 'MUDRA is to refinance major last mile financial institutions such as SFBs (Small Finance Banks), NBFCs (Non-Banking Finance Companies), MFIs (Micro-Finance Institutions), RRBs (Regional Rural Banks), Societies registered under Section 8 Companies (formerly Section 25), and "Trust" consciously involved in the business of lending to such micro/small enterprises embroiled in trading, manufacturing, etc. including allied agriculture activities up to a maximum limit of Rs. 10 lakhs. The government has created an office platform as part of the MUDRA scheme through which various lending agencies advertise their activities, which are then consolidated by the system to generate reports for assessment ([mudra.org.in](http://mudra.org.in)).

The selected beneficiaries will get a MUDRA card under PMMY. MUDRA Card is a Rupay debit card that is employed to withdraw cash from Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) and perform other commercial functions. The loan facility under PMMY is categorized into three parts- Shishu (up to Rs. 50000), Kishore (from Rs. 50000 to Rs. 500000), and Tarun (from Rs. 500000 to Rs. 1000000) ([mudra.org.in](http://mudra.org.in)). PMMY has several key beneficiaries, including "Business loans for shopkeepers and traders (financial aid on lending to individuals for operating their shops/trading & business activities/service enterprises / non-farm income-producing activities with a loan size of up to Rs. 10 lakhs)", "Textile Manufacturing Activities (power looms, handlooms, chikan work, traditional embroidery and handwork, khadi activity, dying, apparel design, knitting, cotton ginning, and others)", "Social/Personal Activities (activities like as beauty parlors, salons, gymnasiums, tailoring shops, dry cleaning, photocopying facilities, cycle and motorcycle repair shops, medical stores, and so on)", "Food Products Sector (activities such as achaar making, papad making, sweet shops, jam/jelly making, agricultural produce prevention at the rural level, food stalls, cold chain vehicles, ice-cream stalls, biscuits making, and so forth.)", "Agro-allied

Activities (poultry, beekeeping, pisciculture, livestock rearing, dairy, agri-clinics, etc.) ", "Transport Vehicles (purchase of transport vehicles for goods and passengers such as auto-rickshaws, taxis, three-wheelers, small goods transport vehicles, tractors, trolleys, power tillers, etc.)" (mudra.org.in). The government has prioritized women applicants in the MUDRA scheme. Thus, the trained women entrepreneurs and Self Help Group (SHG) members can apply for a loan in the MUDRA scheme to start and expand their economic activities. In the earlier SHG scheme, the members of the SHG groups availed of loans as group activities. The group members take up economic activities together as a group or individuals may avail finance from the group to do economic activities. Unlike the SHG scheme, MUDRA targets individual beneficiaries. The learners must be wondering about the impact of the MUDRA scheme on women and children. The existing studies pointed out that, the economic empowerment of women has a direct positive impact on children's education, children's health, and enhancement of women's health and nutrition. It has also improved the overall well-being of women and children. Thus, it is imperative to empower women financially through various schemes and programmes

### ***Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)***

The Honorable Prime Minister (PM) of India announced the launching of the "Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana" (PMJDY) as a new scheme for financial inclusion on August 15, 2014. On August 28, 2014, it was dedicated as a national programme aiming at the financial inclusion of all. The scheme has targeted weaker sections of society specifically women to uplift and empowers them economically. It aims to ensure financial inclusion of weaker sections of the society by providing saving & deposit accounts in banks, facility of credit, Insurance and Pension benefits. The PMJDY tried to address the issues in the earlier schemes of financial inclusion. Unlike earlier schemes, PMJDY aims to give dignity, financial stability and financial freedom to the economically weaker sections. Before the scheme was launched, the PM wrote personal emails to the chiefs of all banks formally and ask them to be in a state of preparedness for opening bank accounts of over 6 crores (75 million) households. He declared that the enrolling and opening of such accounts for each household should be considered a "national priority". PMJDY is a national mission/ programme for the financial inclusion of every individual who does not have a bank account. The objective of the scheme is to ensure access to financial services such as savings and deposit accounts, credit, insurance, remittance, pension etc. in an easy and affordable mode. PMJDY is considered a flagship scheme of the Indian government. It is a huge step towards financial inclusion. The objective behind its launch is to provide banking coverage to all households. The accounts opened through PMJDY are zero balance accounts with other benefits such as accidental insurance cover, overdraft facility, life insurance, and debit card.

As I have mentioned at the beginning of this section, NITI Aayog aims to facilitate the government to formulate appropriate schemes to reach individual beneficiaries directly. With this programme, the Government aims



to provide all monetary benefits directly to the beneficiary accounts. The government also implemented the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) by merging all accounts into a single mobile application. Thus, the government was able to address poor connectivity and technological problems. The user could access their accounts through the mobile device. The measures taken by the government have facilitated economically poor sections of the population and women in the informal sector to access various financial services. It made women economically empowered. It has covered women in both rural and urban areas. One of the significant indicators to make women financially empowered is financial literacy. The opening of bank accounts and accessing various financial benefits made women financially literate.

### ***Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana***

The PMUY scheme was launched in May 2016 to provide Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) connections to women from below poverty line (BPL) households. Under the scheme, the identification of BPL households is based on the Social Economic and Caste Census (SECC) data. The earlier studies pointed out that the women spent considerable time cooking in the households. The lack of a cooking stove with an LPG cylinder impact women in various ways including time spent cooking, and the negative impact on their health from using fossil fuel for cooking. The smoke emitted during the burning of firewood may affect the lungs of women and respiratory problems which lead to lung cancer and heart disease. There were many ocular injuries reported due to the burning of firewood. With the introduction of PMUY, the environmental impact of using fossil fuels is addressed. They showed the path for women to use safe and sustainable ways of cooking. It brings changes in the attitude of women and they get leisure to do various activities including personal and professional. PMUY has reduced the total cost to buy an LPG stove by 50 per cent.

The learners could able to understand that the above-mentioned three schemes were addressing the PGNs of the women.

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## **4.4 GENDER AND SCIENCE -A REALITY CHECK**

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The Government of India has various ministries. Each ministry has its objectives to bring positive changes in the lives and livelihoods of the people. Let us consider the Ministry of Science and Technology specifically as an example to know how far government ministries have gender-sensitive policies and programmes for inclusive development. The Ministry of Science and Technology has three departments, namely the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Department of Science and Industrial Relations (DSIR). Before we look into significant policies of the Ministry of Science and technology, Government of India, let us look into some gender-segregated data to make us realize the significance of formulating policies of science and technology from a gender perspective.

According to 2018 data, India had 3,41,818 scientists in Research and Development (R&D). Among three lakhs forty-one thousand eight hundred and eighteen scientists, 51.61 per cent of them employed in government institutions or higher education sectors. Among them, 20,351 women were employed in R&D in private companies. Twenty-three thousand eight women are in significant government scientific departments. They are also part of the R&D. When we look at the women's proportion as scientists compared to males, and there is one women scientist for every six scientists in India in the private scientific establishments. At the same time, there are one women scientist for every four scientists in government scientific establishments. Both male and female scientists are part of the engineering technology, followed by medical Science and natural sciences.

As per UNESCO data from 2014-16, around 30 per cent of female students select STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) related fields in higher education. The percentage of females in Information Technology is 3 per cent; there are 5 per cent in Natural Science, Mathematics and Statistics and 8 per cent in engineering and allied streams. According to UNESCO data on women and science in 2018, only 28.8 per cent of women are researchers.

We will further look into data on women Nobel prize winners. 334 Nobel Prizes have been awarded between 1901 and 2019 to 616 Nobel Laureates in physics, chemistry and medicine. Out of these prizes, 20 per cent of them are women. There is an Abel Prize for the mathematics profession. It is the Norwegian Prize, awarded annually by the King of Norway to one or more mathematicians in their field. In 2019 American Mathematician **Karen Uhlenbeck** became the first woman to win the Abel prize, followed by 16 male mathematicians. There are field medals in Mathematics to recognize outstanding contributions in mathematics once in four years. **Maryam Mirzakhani** from Iran was the only woman who received the award posthumously compared to 59 men who got the award since 1936.

We have seen some data at the international level. Now let's look at some data related to India. According to NITI Aayog, in 2015-16, 9.3 per cent of female students in undergraduate programmes were enrolled in engineering courses compared to 15.6 per cent across genders. 4.3 per cent of female students were enrolled in Medical Science compared to 3.3 per cent across genders. As far as research in India is concerned, only 13.9 per cent of women work as researchers in India. Percentage of women at Masters and Doctoral programmes remain low. NITI Aayog further analyzed the presence of women in technical education. Women's presence in all 620 Indian institutes is only 20.0 per cent. Among these women in scientific establishments and technical institutes. 28.7 per cent are post-doctoral fellows, and 33.5 per cent are PhD scholars. In the Global gender gap index 2020, India's position is 112, which is lower than the 108th position it held in 2018. However there are signs of hope too. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report 2018-19, the gender gap in the country has reduced as compared to 2017-18.

We have seen various policies and programmes formulated by the Indian government to improve women's percentage in a STEM discipline. The entry, retention and improvement in careers for women in STEM are the concerns of policymakers and institutions. The mentioned policies and programmes in this Unit have been formulated to improve the percentage of women in STEM and retain and improve their careers. The existing gender socialization may impede women from entering the science field; once they enter, some scientists feel that the family as a social institution supports women in Science, and they are not facing many struggles from family. Still, a considerable percentage of women in Science felt that they face gender-based discrimination like refusal from the family to continue their career after marriage or childbirth, reproductive responsibilities, job location, the time commitment involved in the job, and travel. This was pointed out by the scientist working in the field as stated in the report 'Status of Women in Science among select institutions in India: Policy Implications.

This section provides suggestions to implement those policies in a gender-sensitive manner to increase and retain women in a STEM discipline. The study **Status of Women in Science among Select Institutions in India: Policy Implications** carried out by society for socio-economic services with the support of the NITI Aayog government in 2017 has come up with suggestions and policy prescriptions to implement policies related to gender and Science successfully. The study found that the present policies of the government of India are enabling factors for women in STEM related to career advancement and enhancement. Along with that, it is significant to improve the gender-sensitive working environment, access to laboratory facilities, infrastructure facilities, transportation, Flexi working hours, housing, improved restroom facilities, maternity benefits, improved canteen facilities, recreation facilities, and IT support are some of the areas need to concentrate and improved to retain women in the STEM field in India. Along with the overall academic facility, academic environment, mentorship, library facility, and exchange programmes are other enabling factors to retain women in the STEM field. The government must popularise the STEM field among school children to kindle their enthusiasm. Even if school children are interested in the STEM field, they may be unable to continue due to financial constraints. The government needs to design policies to address the concerns of school children. For working scientists, improving the overall quality of academic resources, improving resources, improvement in infrastructure and support services are significant. From female students to aspiring scientists, peer group support, family support, required financial resources, and improving infrastructure in schools and colleges are crucial. The government may consider formulating scholarships at school and college levels for women students to continue their careers in STEM field.

### Check Your Progress Exercise II

Note: I. Use this space given below to answer the question.

II. Compare your answer with the Course material of this Unit.

1. What is Women’s Component Plan?

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2. Why is women in STEMM an important area in policy making? Give two reasons in support of your answer.

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#### 4.5 LET US SUM UP

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The purpose this Unit is to make the learners appreciate the needs for increasing women’s percentage in the field of STEM. To do the same, we have first introduced the planning process in India. While discussing planning process, we briefly discussed about the existing status of women in STEM as well as we have introduced various approaches to planning. After explaining basic concepts about planning, we briefly discussed the existing government programmes to increase women’s percentage in science and technology.

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#### 4.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS

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1. Explain the process of formulating policies and programmes in India.
2. Why do we need to formulate programmes through Gender Aware policy approach? Explain.
3. Discuss the gendered realities in science with suitable data.
4. Discuss any two key programmes of government of India which have come into existence after the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

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