



Research Article

প্রতিধ্বনি the Echo

A Journal of Humanities & Social Science

Published by: Dept. of Bengali

Karimganj College, Karimganj, Assam, India

Website: www.thecho.in

Women in twelfth five year plan in India: An Analysis Satarupa Pal

Assistant Professor in Political Science, Rampurhat College, Birbhum

Abstract

The significance of the role women in development had been recognized by the government of India right from the first five year plan (1951-1956). However, women in these earlier plans were considered as subjects of 'welfare' and category of disadvantaged groups such as destitute, disabled, aged etc. As a category women had been gained special importance since the sixth five year plan. It is noteworthy that seventh and eighth five year have emphasized on 'development' and 'empowerment' respectively. With the passage of time, 11th and 12th five year plan have focused on inclusive growth. In other words, 'women' as a category must be included in the development process. Despite the various discrimination faced by women, the 12th five year plan has emphasized on single women by providing 'quota' in jobs. Moreover, women's inclusion in inclusive growth is only then possible when inclusive democracy turned to be reality not the myth. With the help of secondary materials, this paper attempts to show the position of women in 12th five year plan in India.

Women are the most disadvantaged sectors in Indian democracy. They are politically powerless, economically dependent and socially subjugated. In the Ancient Age, ¹ they enjoyed

higher status in society. They moved everywhere without fear. Later on, in the Mughul era, women were under the veil. In other words, they remained secluded in the *purdah pratha*. In



the post Vedic period, women status had been deteriorated in the Indian society. Male chauvinisms subverted women's right in various aspects. In the same connection, we may be mentioned that before independence, women took participate nationalist movement. But soon after the independence, women's voice suppressed under the nationalist project. After the 1950, planning commission initiated five year plan which has been started to look after the various aspects for accelerating our democratic country. It is noteworthy that women's role have been counted in the country's development process in the present era and considered as a parameter of inclusive democracy. Keeping this view in mind, twelfth plan also has included women as a category of inclusiveness. In this context, this present paper is divided into three sections. First paper presents a brief review of past five year plan with special emphasis on women. Second part deals with women in twelfth five year plan. Third part concludes the paper and suggests some way forwards for making a gender-inclusive society in near future.

Women in five year plan

The importance of the role women in development had been recognized by the government of India right from the very first plan (1951-1956).² However, women in these earlier plans were considered as subjects of 'welfare' and clubbed together under the category of disadvantaged groups

such as destitute, disabled, aged etc. The second five year plan (1956-1979) i.e. all the plans till the early 70s thus continued to reflect the very same welfare approach, providing priority to women's education, their rights and status of women in the fast changing socio-economic condition of our Indian society. In 1974, the **Towards Equality Report** saw a significant change in the government's policies for women. Women were viewed as critical groups for development. This was, reflected in the 6th five year plan (1980- 1985) where strategies for women's employment and economic independence, education, health care and planning and the creation of a supreme legal and institutional environment were conceived. In the 6th plan a new chapter was introduced on 'Women and Development'³. In the seventh plan (1985-1990), the developmental programmes constituted with the major objective of raising the economic and social status of women and bringing them into the mainstream of national development. This plan also emphasized on 'Beneficiary Oriented Schemes' (BOS) in various development sectors which extended direct benefits to women. The thrust on generation of both skilled and unskilled employment through proper education and vocational training continued. In the year, 1985, the Department of **Women and Child Development**⁴ was set up as a part of the Ministry of Human



resource development. Apart from that the department plans and implements certain innovative programmes for women and children. The department has been implementing ICDS (Integrated Child Development Programme) which providing a package of services comprising themselves and that of society with regard to women's traditional roles. This plan has also focused on Mahila samakshhya as a programme of women's empowerment through education. In eighth plan (1992-1997) with human development as its major focus, played a very important role in the development of women. The ninth plan (1997-2002) which came into force in the post – Beijing period. Firstly, this plan laid importance on 'empowerment of women' as one of the primary objectives of empowerment of women.

The approach of the ninth five year plan have made an enabling environment where women could –freely exercise their rights both, within and outside home, as equal partners along with men. This plan also stressed the importance on 'Gender Development Index' to monitor the impact and implementation in raising the status of women from time to time. However, participatory planning adopted to formulate the ninth five ⁵ year plan at the grassroots level in Kerela has motivated elected women representatives to attend gram sabha meetings and also to contribute to the preparation of the

development plan for the panchayats. It is noteworthy that Women's Component Plan (WCP) ⁶ has been adopted both the centre and state which refers to not less than 30 per cent of funds /benefits flow to women from all the general development sector. However, the year 2001 has observed as the year of 'Women Empowerment Year'.

Tenth plans (2002-2007) emphasized on women component plan (WCP) and gender budgeting which complementary each other to secure women's interest all over the world. Apart from that various measures had been taken in order to eradication of atrocities against women and girls on India. The measures are as follows:

1. To set up women's police station, family court, mahila court, legal aid centre etc.
2. To conduct awareness programmes of women's rights, legal literacy etc.

The Eleventh plan approach paper (2007-2012) says it is about to change all that. The document reads; "An important divide which compels gender special focused efforts will be made to purge society of this malaise by creating an enabling environment for women to become economically, politically and socially empowered." ⁷ But it is interesting to note that in a unique move, the government has constituted a committee of feminist economist to ensure gender sensitive allocation of public resources in the 11th five years plan, a step it hopes will promote gender



equality⁸ and more inclusive growth.

Women in 12th five year plan

Twelfth plan year plan entitled as 'Faster, Sustainable and More Inclusive growth'. In previous plans, there was not much more attention on women's cause. But it is widely believed that men enjoy all the power, position and privileges women were treated as second rate and lower human spheres. The theory of patriarchy puts the question of women in a proper perspective. 12th five year plan of the Government of India (2012-2017)⁹ had decided for the growth rate at 8.2% but NDC on 27th December 2012 approved 8% growth rate for 12th five year plan. The Planning Commission is pushing for special dispensation for single women, particularly those who are single by choice, under various government schemes in the 12th year plan. In addition to reserving a certain percentage of jobs for single women under centrally sponsored schemes, the plan has proposed promoting and strengthening federations of single women at the block and district level.¹⁰

While the Ministry of Women and Child Development¹¹ has been taken on board on this, other, Ministries and States will be asked to add gender component in their schemes if the proposals of the Approach Paper of the 12th Plan are approved by the full Planning Commission this month and the National Development Council sometime next month. It may be mentioned that the figure will

increased if the number of 'customarily' separated women and those whose husbands are missing added. Low income single women are vulnerable and victims of the patriarchal structures that deprive them of inheritance and other rights.

The Census of 2011 estimates that 833 million people continue to live in rural India. A very large proportion of them are either wholly or significantly dependent on their livelihood on farm activity be it crop agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry or fisheries.

Women participation in favour related work, both in agriculture and in animal husbandry In framing policies/ schemes for the 12th five year plan, the special needs of women must be taken due care of. The Mahila Kisan Sahakatiaran Pariyojana (MKSP) which is a sub-component of NRLM (National Rural Health Mission) was recently launched to meet the specific attention needs to be given to leverage the enormous potential of empowering rural women in the farm sector, and also in the rural sector, and also in the rural non-farmer sector. However, *Civil Society Approach Inputs for the*¹² *Approach Paper-12th Five Year Plan* published by UNDP, focusing women labour has been surviving from feminization of poverty. With traditional occupations eroded and wiped out, women are now being forced to enter new markets, where labour was not enforced. Mushrooming of special

Economic Zones and Free Trade Zones are live examples of what is happening to the labour market. This is the result of the neo-liberal policies that have only helped in widening the gap between the rich and the poor, with the poorest of the poor being women. Wage disparities should be removed. Proper implementation of wage act should be ensured. Minimum Wages Act as well as the Equal Remuneration Act must be implemented. In both of the informal and formal sector, women have faced discriminations in terms of wages. In the formal sector, the labour laws are not implemented. While in the formal sector, there is a glass ceiling that does not allow women in high level decision-making positions.

It is noteworthy that the *Equity Unaddressed: A Civil Society Response to the Draft Approach Paper of the 12th five year plan*¹³ has identified inclusiveness issues an integral part to achieving faster but sustainable growth in the face of wobbly world economic situations. However, whether it is inclusive in real terms and whether it follows a pro-poor and pro-women approaches needs to be detailed. The focus is on the following four key aspects of the 12th five year plan viz., health, education, urbanization, governance.

In a nutshell, reproductive healthcare remains a significant challenge that needs attention. Maternal mortality is a grave issue that acts as an implement to move forward and address the

qualitative nuances of the problem. Schemes like Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) should be made with regard to education, there are multiple factor that hinder women and girls from developing their full potentials-lack of income, unsafe-environment in the schools, curriculum not attuned to women's needs etc. Gender studies should be incorporated into the academic curriculum. Committees against sexual harassment should be formed in schools and workplaces. In case of urbanization, there should be inclusion of women representatives in urban local bodies. However, it should also be kept in mind that managing urbanization is not just about including women in urban local bodies; it is also about problem that urban women face either or residents or as daily commuters in urban areas how these addressed managed. Women's role in governance is also very significant. While steps have already been taken for grassroots democracy by reserving seats, the de-facto impact on women's decision making must be revealed. Apart from that all women representatives must be treated as equal to their male counterparts by the local administration.

Conclusion

Women's discrimination is phenomenon in Indian society. In fact, still now they are ill treated by their family in terms of low intake of food, lack of educational attainments and exploitation both



in public and private spheres. Before sixth five year plan, there was no provision for women's cause. However, seventh and eighth plans emphasize on women's development and women empowerment. But since the 11th five year plans, women are considered as a category of the notion of inclusive growth as it is attached with the notion of inclusive democracy. We know that despite the half of the population, their voice was not counted in various decisions – making bodies. Democracy is based on the principle of equality. In this connection, Anne Phillips observes as “Democracy is never just a system for organizing the election of government. It also brings with it a strong conviction about the citizens being of intrinsically equal worth”.

However, Ms. Lakshmi Puri,¹⁴ Assistant Secretary General of the United Nations and acting head of UN Women pledged that India should become a democracy for women. She believed that progress has been made by women in India but it still lacks the critical mass of women representation in the Parliament. She also pointed that economic inequality and gender

inequality are the stumbling block in the way of women's development. She added that UN Women supported a right based approach to development.

Again, we see 11th and 12th five year plan both have stressed the importance on inclusive growth. In fact, women must be included in the development process for the country's progress. It is only possible when inclusive democracy will be reality not the myth. In the words of Takis Fotoupoulos¹⁵ “an inclusive democracy implies the abolition of the unequal distribution of political and economic power and the institutional structures which reproduce them, as well as the hierarchical structures in the household, the work place, the education place and the broader social realm. Planning should be made at abolishing poverty and caste discrimination in terms of the eradication the discriminatory status of women in the society. So, bringing Indian women in the mainstream is need of the hour. Provision of ‘quota’ for single women in jobs and some other positive discrimination for women may create a gender-just society in near future.

References

1. Hagaragi, Dr. Ambaraya. (2012) 'Policies Programmes, and Women's Status in India', *Third Concept*, Vol. 26, No. 302, April 2012, pp. 33-35
2. Planning Commission, Government of India: Five Year Plans in Planning commission.gov.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/default.html (accessed on 6th May 2013)
3. Planning Commission, Government of India: Five Year Plans in Planningcommission.gov.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/default.html (accessed on 6th May 2013).
4. Gender Budgeting - Ministry of Women and Child Development in wcd.nic.in/genbud.htm (accessed on 6th May 2013)
5. Mohanty, Bidyut, (1999) 'Panchayati Raj Institutions and Women' in Ray, Bharati and Basu, Aparna (eds), *From Independence Towards Freedom: Indian Women Since 1947*, Oxford university Press, New Delhi, p. 31.
6. Rajmannar, Indira. 'Women in Eleventh plan' in *Yojana*, May 200, p. 27
7. Rajmannar, Indira. 'Women in Eleventh plan' in *Yojana*, May 2007, p. 27
8. Approach to the Twelfth Five Year Plan - of Planning Commission in planningcommission.gov.in/plans/comments/inter.htm (accessed on 6th May 2013)
9. Good news for single women in 12th Plan - The Hindu www.thehindu.com/news/...news...women-in-12th plan/article3867569.ece (accessed on 14th May 2013)
10. Good news for single women in 12th Plan - The Hindu www.thehindu.com/news/...news...women-in-12th plan/article3867569.ece (accessed on 14th May 2013).
11. Civil society inputs for the approach paper - 12th Five Year Plan in 12th plan.gov.in/12fyp_docs/REPORT.pdf (accessed on 14th May 2013)
12. Equity Unaddressed: A Civil Society Response to the Draft Approach Paper of the 12th five year plan in www.undp.org/.../india/.../equity_unaddressed_a_civil_society_response_to_the_draft_approach_paper_12th_five_year_plan.pdf pdf (accessed on 6th May 2013).
13. 'Our Country should become a democracy for women', 14th April, *The Hindu*, Kolkata, p. 18.
14. Takis Fotopoulos (1997), *Towards an Inclusive Democracy: The Crisis of the Growth Economy and the Need for a New Liberatory Project*, Cassell: London & New York, p. 256.