Gender Audits as an Input to Engender Governance: Vibhuti Patel

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SECTION: V

ASSESSMENT OF GENDER SENSITIVITY IN GOVERNANCE
INTRODUCTION

A ‘gender audit’ is referred to as ‘mainstreaming’ public policy, including legislation, regulations, allocations, taxation and social projects, from the point of view of their effect on the status of women in a given society. Gender audits also analyse the income and expenditures of the government from a gender perspective. The basic assumption of a gender audits is that public policy impacts differently on men and women. The variance stems from the different roles of women and men in the family and from the lower economic status of women. The purpose of gender audits is to lead to changes in public policy that contribute to an increase in gender equality (Swirski 2002).

The concept of gender audit has gained popularity among development economists, social scientists, policy makers and practitioners in the new millennium. It is perceived as crucial from the point of view of equity and efficiency. Increasingly, scholars and the decision makers in the government as well non-government organisations are accepting that gender bias is not only harmful and costly for women, but also for children and households. If women were given equal opportunities, treatment and remuneration/share in property, it would be possible for the country to have more output, more development of capacities, more well-being and more leisure due to combined contribution of men and women. Gender audit does not consider women as passive beneficiaries, but as active participants in the development process and as citizens. For healthy governance, therefore:

‘We need a vision of mankind not as patients whose interests have to be looked after, but as agents who can do effective things—both individually and jointly. We also have to go beyond the role
of human beings specifically as ‘consumers’ or as ‘people with need’, and consider, more broadly, their general role as agents of change who can given opportunity think, assess, evaluate, resolve, inspire, agitate, and through these means, reshape the world’. (Sen 2000)

Gender audits as an input to engender governance must be made an integral part of all development efforts by state and civil society initiatives. In this chapter an effort is made to give an overview of gender audits of policies and programmes that have deconstructed and reconstructed gender relations in India in the post-independence period, and that have implications for engendering governance. It is divided into seven sections. After the introduction, there is a discussion on gender audit of constitutional guarantees followed by gender audits of macro policies within which economic reforms, globalisation and structural adjustments programmes are discussed in detail. This is followed by gender audits of mega development schemes. The fifth section deals with gender audits of several state policies that have implications for women’s empowerment and gender equality. This is followed by section on gender audit of budgets. The last section provides some concluding remarks.

GENDER AUDIT OF CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES

In 1972 the government of India constituted a Committee on Status of Women to examine multifaceted problems of India at every stage of their life cycles. This was the first comprehensive gender audit of the constitutional guarantees in the context of unfolding issues facing women in India such as poverty and deprivation, participation in the workforce, political governance and decision-making processes, access to justice, personal laws, sex ratios, lack of social security and exiting legal framework. The report of the committee, in 1974, titled Towards Equality, touched upon all issues concerning women’s survival struggle but violence against women (Government of India 1974) ....

Articulation of the demands and alternatives suggested by the women’s movement constantly refer to the Fundamental Rights in the Constitution of India, such as:

1. Article 14: Equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the political, economic and social sphere.
2. Article 15: Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex, religion, caste, etc.
3. Article 15(3): The state shall take affirmative measures for women.

When the government of India signed the UN Charter on Equality, Development and Peace in 1975, the process of gender audit in governance got an official stamp. In 1976 the Equal Remuneration Act was enacted to provide equal opportunities, equal treatment and equal wages for work of similar nature. NGOs have been consistently doing public scrutiny of the Maternity Benefit Act of 1961 and specific provisions for
women in general in case of labour laws, The Factories Act, 1948 Section 34, provides that the state government can lay down rules prescribing weights that may be carried by men and women, The Contract Labour (Abolition and Regulation) Act and Rules separate provision of utilities for women and fixed working hours.

Though these laws have proper implementation mechanisms, there is no provision for monitoring them effect on women. Allowance for special provisions for women has often proven to be detrimental to their employment opportunities. Participation of working women in the decision-making processes in the industrial and agrarian relations is abysmally low. Women’s access to legal service largely remains inadequate in spite of the Legal Service Act, 1987 (Women Networking 2004).

For past two decades women’s groups providing support to women in distress have been demanding gender-just family laws (Patel 2002). In India the majority of secular women’s groups support reforms in family laws to ensure gender justice to women of different religious groups (Agnes 2003). Some organisations are demanding a uniform civil code. Due to pressure of women’s groups, there has been reform in the antiquated Christian Divorce Act. The Hindu Undivided Property Act has been reformed to give a share in ancestral property to daughters. The state of Andhra Pradesh has granted land rights to women. In the post-independence period the only Act passed directly concerning Muslims is the notorious Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986. The Act takes Muslim women out of the purview of Section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code that ensures maintenance to a divorced wife. ‘The 1986 Act empowers the magistrate to order mehr, maintenance during iddat (3 months following divorce) and a fair provision to be paid within a month of application. Following this payment, the husband is absolved of any financial responsibility and the onus of maintenance of the woman falls on the parental family, or as a last resort on the Wakf Board’ (WRAG 1997). Hence, the secular women’s rights groups have evolved a slogan: ‘All women are Hindu, all minorities are men, but some of us are brave.’ It signifies double burden of ‘patriarchy that controls women’s sexuality, fertility and labour’ and ‘communalism that brutalises minority and dalit women’, shouldered by women in the identity politics. The current debate on triple talaq has made progressive forces take a public position in favour of gender justice.

There have been suggestions made by women scholars and activists lately to strengthen the personal laws of all communities to make them more gender just and weed out gender discrimination. Similarly the Protection of Right on Divorce Act of 1986 for Muslim women should be strengthened to uphold positive and gender-just interpretation.

The Domestic Violence Bill, 2002, generated heated debate on whether casual/occasional beating should be considered as ‘domestic violence’ (Basu 2003). During last two decades a set of legal provisions (Table 13.1) to deal with violence against women have been debated threadbare.

There has been consistent gender audit of the following legislations:

2. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, to take action
against sexist portrayal of women in the audio-visual, print and electronic media, pornography and cyber porn.


6. The Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Amendment Act, 2002, to stop sex selection at preconception stage as well as of an unborn foetus.

As a result of the pressure of women’s groups and judicial activism, new legal provisions such as recognition of the right to residence of a woman in the parental or matrimonial homes, provision for the appointment of protection officers and the recognition of service providers, gender sensitisation trainings for protection officers and judges with regard to the criminal legal system—substantive law, procedural law, rules and infrastructure—and budgetary allocation for strengthening the structures and mechanisms for implementation of laws have been provided.

Gender Audits of the Five-Year Plans of the Government of India

Gender audits of Five-Year Plans have been done by women's studies scholars to identify conceptual and operational biases in the approach, design and implications. It is important to understand historical evolution of gender concerns in the planning process in the independent India.
The First Five-Year Plan (1951–56) set up the Central Social Welfare Board in 1953 to promote welfare work through voluntary organisations, charitable trusts and philanthropic agencies. India was the first country to introduce family planning programmes during the First Five-Year Plan. Jawaharlal Nehru, then prime minister of India, who had only one daughter was a role model and men were encouraged to take the lead in birth control practices.

The Second Five-Year Plan (1956–60) supported development of *mahila mandals* for grassroots work among women. It also introduced barrier methods of contraception for both women and men.

The Third, Fourth and Interim Plans (1961–74) made provisions for women’s education, prenatal and child health services, and supplementary feeding for children, nursing and expectant mothers. In this plan, women’s health needs were merged with their children’s needs. Invasive methods of contraception and reversible (IUDs) and irreversible (sterilisation for men and women) methods were promoted.

The Fifth Plan (1974–78) marked a major shift in the approach towards women from welfare to development. It acknowledged the fact of marginalisation of women from the economy and also accepted the need for special employment generation programmes for women in the poverty groups. In terms of population policy, this period proved to be disastrous because forcible vasectomy of men during the emergency rule of 18 months generated permanent erosion of faith in the top-down and bureaucratically managed population policy.

The Sixth Plan (1980–85) accepted women’s development as a separate economic agenda. It allotted a separate chapter to focus on women’s concerns in the economic development. A multidisciplinary approach merged with a three-pronged thrust on health, education and employment. It introduced family welfare policy that targeted women for birth control. Promotion of male contraception was found politically harmful by the ruling party. It also netted unpaid family work of women that augmented family resources due to women’s efforts of collection of fuel, fodder, water, kitchen gardening, livestock rearing and work in the household enterprise.

The Seventh Plan (1985–1990) declared as its objective to bring women into the mainstream of national development. On the population control front, clinical trials of long-acting and hormone-based oral and injectable contraceptives were targeted to women from marginalised communities.

The Eighth Plan (1992–97) projected a paradigm shift from development to empowerment, and promised to ensure flow of benefits to women in the core sectors of education, health and employment. Outlay for women rose from Rs. 40 million in the 1st Plan to Rs. 20 billion in the eighth Plan. Anti-pregnancy vaccines, Estrogen-Progesteron (E-P) combinations, Depo-provera, Net-O-en were introduced with blessing of USAID and WHO in the form of a ‘cafeteria approach’ to birth control.

The Ninth Plan (1997–2002) stated that empowerment of women was its strategic objective. It accepted the concept of the Women’s Component Plan to assure at least 30 per cent of funds/benefits from all development sectors flow to women. Gender audit of the budget during the 9th Plan period has revealed that the budgetary allocation for women-specific schemes increased only in the area of family planning. The family
planning schemes got additional Rs. 7 billion in the budget (Patel 2002). The strategy of organising women in self-help groups during this plan period paid good dividends for expanding micro-credit. This should be extended not only for reaching out to larger numbers of women, but also for increasing awareness of and access to social development, apart from encouraging a process of convergence in the delivery of services in a decentralised set-up.

The 10th Five-Year Plan (2002–9) has suggested specific strategies, policies and programmes for empowerment of women. They are as follows:

1. Measurement of development has to go beyond achievement of GDP growth to indicators of distributive justice and their monitoring.
2. Women-headed households have to be specifically targeted, identifying added disadvantages in rural and urban locations with reference to different parameters of deprivation.
3. Formulation of gender development indicators to measure human development and their use as a tool for monitoring development needs to be hastened.
4. The component plan approach, which did not address compartmentalisation of government functioning, should be replaced with a mandated approach of convergence of services at all levels of governance, through inter-sectoral committees of all ministries/departments at the centre and the states, with specific responsibility given to the panchayats and municipalities to administer at the grassroots level.

Women’s groups have demanded allocations for women-specific programmes of strategic nature to arrive at the desired goals in a shorter time span. They should target women of different age groups in terms of strategic interventions to take specific notice of adolescent girls, older women and women in difficult circumstances. Strategic gender tools such as gender audits, gender impact assessments, gender analysis and gender budgeting to monitor implementation and impacts must be developed. Gender audit of plans, policies and programmes of various ministries with pro-women allocations has to be part and parcel of the monitoring process.

There is a need for provisions in composite programmes under education, health and rural development sectors to target them specifically at girls/women as the principal beneficiaries and disaggregated within the total allocation. It may also be necessary to place restrictions on their reappropriation for other purposes.

To effectively attain population stabilisation, policies and plans need to empower women, promote their reproductive rights and involve men in reproductive decision making and household responsibilities. Particular attention should be given to improving women’s access to quality reproductive health services, including adolescent girls to counselling on reproductive health and sexuality issues.

Professional organisations including universities should be included for the purpose of undertaking monitoring, evaluation and research studies for identifying issues requiring special attention. The Five-Year Plans prior to 1975 treated women as supplementary earners, while in the post-1975 period women have been treated as active economic agents.
GENDER AUDIT OF MACRO POLICIES

The purpose is to improve women’s living standards and their prospects for economic empowerment. In 1991, at the behest of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, India adopted the New Economic Policy (NEP) that has intensified the processes pursued in the last decade and a half (mainly in the post-emergency period), as a result of a new international division of labour between the advanced capitalist economies and the post-colonial economies of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the late 1970s, transnational and multinational corporations in the USA and Europe realised that the best way to reduce the wage bill and to enhance the rates of profit was to move industrial plants to poorer countries like India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. The cheap labour of ‘docile’, ‘nimble-fingered’ and ‘flexible’ Asian women was found to be a most attractive step to enhance profit margins. This policy was given the appealing title of ‘Integration of Women in Development.’ In 1993, systematic critique of this policy was made by the Indian Association of Women’s Studies (IAWS) and women economists prevailed upon the architect of the NEP, Professor Manmohan Singh, to make the provision of a safety net for women and children.

Gender audits of statistics and indicators provide visibility to women’s contributions and stakes, and a realistic picture for allocation of resources for women-specific projects and gender-neutral projects. Gender audits of documents of state and central governments such as Towards Equality (1974), Shram Shakti Report (1988), National Perspective Plan for Women (1988–2000), State Policies for Women, Women’s Empowerment Policy, 2001, amendments in the panchayati raj institutions act to grant 33 per cent reservation of seats for women, II National Commission of Labour (2002) and Various Human Development Reports have to a great extent sensitised administrators, politicians and social movements to women’s needs, aspirations and demands.

Economic Reforms, Globalisation and Structural Adjustment Programmes

In response to a mounting burden of debt leading to a balance of payment crisis, the Government of India adopted a structural adjustment programme (SAP) in 1991. It included reductions in public investment, devaluation, cutting food and fertiliser subsidies, the reduction of budgetary provision for developmental planning, capital-intensive and hi-tech productive activities, economies in government expenditure, and an increase in the bank rate, insurance charges and rail tariffs. Simply put, the policy aimed at capital, energy and import-intensive growth with the help of the form ‘Ds’—devaluation, deregulation, deflation and denationalisation. Integrating women into development implied engaging them in some income generating activities, integrating them into market-oriented production, and thus integrating them into the world market economy. It was not meant that women should expand their subsistence production and produce more for their consumption - for their own food and their clothes. Income generation in this approach meant money income. Money income
could be generated only if women could produce goods to be marketed in developed countries or export-led production.

**Budgetary Allocations and Women in the Post-reform Period**

Post-1991–92 budgetary allocations have had a direct bearing on women's survival struggle. Fiscal and monetary policies pursued under the stabilisation programme demand ‘item-by-item’ closer examination in terms of their gender implications.

**Prices of Essential Commodities and the Public Distribution System (PDS)**

An IMF survey in its report on Asian Developing Countries commented that South Asia recorded the highest inflation rates in the region, with Pakistan in particular, plus Bhutan, India, Myanmar and Nepal all recording higher inflation rates during the last decade. India had faced a steep rise in the price of essential items. Women being caretakers of the households are adversely affected due to inflation.

**Health Care**

Studies on intra-household distribution of resources reveal that among the poorer households with gross malnutrition and nutritional deficiency, the deficiency among girls and women was 25 per cent more than among men. For every three men using health care facilities in India, only one woman does so. According to the 2001 census, the child sex ratio showed there were 927 women for every 1,000 men in India, the lowest in the history of censuses in India. Economic reforms have made import of portable ultrasound machines very easy and the techno-docs throughout the country are identifying the sex of foetuses and facilitating selective abortion of female foetuses.

In the 0 to 19 age group, the death rate of girls is higher than boys. In this context, budgetary cuts in public health expenditure will have dire consequences for women and girls in India. In the budget, funds for the treatment of tuberculosis, malaria, phyleria and goitre eradication programmes have been reduced compared with previous years. Inadequate funds for the rural sanitation programme in each and every budget throughout the 1990s for provision of clean water, toilets and sewerage has given rise to higher incidents of water-borne diseases and has increased the burden of women in terms of nursing. Also, the reduction in the quota of clean water resources by 38 per cent in the urban areas and 36 per cent in rural areas has increased the drudgery of working-class women who have to stand in long queues for many hours to obtain one bucket of water. Concrete programmes for water management have to be given top priority in the annual budget.

The only items, for which budgetary provision has increased in the post-1991–92 period have been family planning (34 per cent), defence expenditure (7 per cent) and the police force (14 per cent). It is justified in the name of cross-border terrorism. Much has been documented on the coercive aspect of population control programmes that force poor women to adopt contraceptives without informed consent or proper follow-up by medical staff.
Educational Facilities

As per 2001 Census, the literacy rate for women and girls have improved to 54.16 per cent which 227 million Indian women literate. However, with privatisation of educational institutions promoted by the SAP, it makes education an expensive proposition for poorer households who are already disinclined to allow their girls to pursue higher education instead of helping in domestic chores and/or earning. Cuts of 17 per cent in budgetary provision for non-formal education has forced the closure of many night schools and adult education programmes in which working-class women participate. Quality of education is extremely poor in the non-formal educational institutions. It badly needs an introduction of new information technology and distance education by television and radio programmes. According to the 2001 Census, 51 per cent of Indian women are illiterate. In 1998–99 the school enrolment ratios for primary classes were 100.86 for boys and 82.85 for girls, and for secondary classes it was 65.27 for boys and 49.08 for girls. Privatisation in education promoted by the SAP will increase the dropout rates for girls. In higher education women are segregated into traditional streams such as humanities, arts and commerce. Women constitute 43 per cent of the total faculty enrolment in arts and only 6 per cent in Engineering. Reduction in government expenditure on higher education and encouragement towards private colleges will reduce women’s opportunities for higher education, as private education promotes only the more lucrative professional and technical courses. Special scholarships, fellowships and study grants for women and girls are needed.

Poverty Alleviation Programmes

Economic reforms rest on feminisation of poverty. The poorest of the poor households are female-headed households. Still, the budgetary provision for poverty alleviation programmes and for the welfare and economic security schemes for working people have been slashed by 12 per cent. In drought-prone districts and desert areas various schemes for poverty alleviation are not finding better budgetary allocation. In an appeal to Members of Parliament on the NEP prepared by economists, trade unionists, social scientists, mediapersons and social activists, this was the most criticized aspect.

Employment of Women

The 2001 Census showed the work participation rate (WPR) of women as 23 per cent. For rural women it was 27 per cent and for the urban women 10 per cent. Compared to the 1971 and 1981 Censuses, the rise in WPR is considerable.

A sectoral profile shows that most women workers in rural areas are in occupations such as weaving, handicraft, tailoring, forestry, sale of fish, silk and poultry farming. In urban areas the majority of women workers are either in the construction sector, or in the nursing and teaching professions, working either on a contract basis or are self-employed. The rise of work participation rate is not a sign of empowerment, but a sign of sheer helplessness and economic distress. Subcontracting, home-based production, family labour system and the payment of wages on a piece-rate basis are
 earmarked for women. According to the 1991 Census, 19 per cent of the total female workforce constitutes unpaid family labour. Even in a state like Kerala, only 17 per cent of the women are gainfully employed (see Table 13.2).

In the unorganised sector 94 per cent of the total women workers are in the ‘informal’ (dependent) sector. Economic reforms reinforce the trend of informalisation and flexibalisation for the female workforce. The formation of a ‘flexible’ labour force is the key concept of the NEP. A shift from a stable/organised labour force to a flexible workforce has meant hiring women on a part-time basis and the substitution of highly paid male labour by cheap female labour. The NEP provides congenial state support for the large corporate houses that are closing down their big city units and using ancillaries that employ rural and tribal girls (without responsibilities for families and children) on a piece-rate basis. In the name of increase in ‘efficiency’ and ‘productivity’ of labour, home-based work by women and girls get easily legitimised.

In the name of increasing marginal efficiency of financial capital, there have been attacks on women’s access to credit, extension services and input subsidies. The same concern for efficiency and the proper management of public funds, however, was not to be seen when it came to stock market speculators. The banks that were indicted in the country’s biggest financial scam talked of increasing their interest rates to the detriment of self-employed women who are dependent on loans. This had affected the small businesses of self-employed poor women. To continue their business, these women now have to approach private moneylenders who charge compound rates of interest.

The liberalisation of the economy has not liberated working women. The elimination of 7,000 licences, the scrapping of MRTP limits and the reduction in customs duty on capital goods has given free grazing grounds to foreign capital. Following the liberalisation of the economy, the right to fish in Indian waters has been given to several foreign firms, including Union Carbide. As a result, 50,000 fisher families have lost their jobs. Food processing industries with foreign collaboration are being established.

Use of women in the informal sector of electronics, diamond, garment manufacture and pharmaceutical industries has increased. Here, again, the underlying reality is disturbing. With globalisation of production and the introduction of assembly-line production, research and management is being controlled by the first world, while

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Female WPR %</th>
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<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>33.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>27.96</td>
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<td>1971</td>
<td>11.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>14.44</td>
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<td>1991</td>
<td>22.69</td>
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strenuous, monotonous, ‘unskilled’ or ‘semi-skilled’ work is being done by third world women. Commenting on this situation, the UN report, *Third World Women, 1970–90*, states that: ‘The informal sector is by no means a panacea for women. It is far less secure than formal sector work and it generally pays less than the minimum wage.’

The employment profile in the public sector shows that the NEP has declared 200 public sector units ‘economically unviable’ and ‘sick’. Consequently, millions of workers have lost their jobs. Disinvestments in public sector units, closures and retrenchment rendered 6.6 million workers (7 to 9 per cent women) unemployed within a year of the introduction of SAP, according to the *Annual Survey of Industries, 1991*. Around 50 per cent of the factory employees who were supported by the National Textile Corporation are now unemployed. New job opportunities are provided by the information technologies. The information technology (IT) profession has created an army of tele-workers.

Reduction in educational funds by the government has created job-redundancy in the teaching profession, where women constitute 22.8 per cent of the total. Encouragement to the private sector in education has eroded the rights provided by the labour laws, as private institutions hire teachers on a contract basis and often terminate employment before staffs become legally entitled to a permanent post. In the organised sector of the overall economy and in private enterprise the growth rate of employment during 1980–90 was 2 per cent and 1.5 per cent respectively. At present it has been reduced to 0.60 per cent.

The employment profile in agriculture shows that the employment elasticity of output in agriculture has reduced to 0.64 per cent. Reduction of subsidy and credit in agriculture has affected small and marginal farmers negatively. Unemployment and underemployment in the rural areas have gained serious proportion because in the NEP schemes for rural development and rural industrialisation have not been given any importance. As per the *Economic Survey 2000–2001*, budgetary allocation under several employment schemes has to absorb the backlog of the unemployed and the new additions to the labour force.

There has already been a major shift in the cropping pattern from subsistence production like rice, millet, maize, wheat to cash crop production such as fruit, mushrooms, flowers and vegetables. This process has affected women’s employment in the agrarian sector. Several studies have shown that a shift from subsistence to cash crop production invariably leads to women being the first to lose their jobs. As a result of shrinking self-employment prospects for women, the large majority of them join the rural and urban reserve army of labour. In rural India 31 per cent of the total female population is employed as per the 2001 Census. The opening up of market since 1 April 2000 for 729 new commodities (240 are agrarian products including rice, meat, milk powder and fruits) that can be imported unrestrictedly have resulted in enormous tragedies, and into suicides and starvation deaths among farmers and weavers. Prices of rubber, cotton, coconut, coffee, cardamom, pepper, tomatoes, sugarcane and potatoes have crashed. Urban poor women in Kerala and Karnataka are fighting desperate struggles against imports of these items to express their solidarity with their rural and tribal sisters.
In case of urban unemployment, at present India has 34 million registered unemployed and every year it increases by 12 per cent to 13 per cent. The number of professional women workers, such as executives, decision makers in government departments, lawyers, doctors and engineers has increased and will continue to increase, but their strength in the overall economy is miniscule.

The government finds it difficult to dismiss permanent staff in public sector enterprises as they are well organised, vocal, articulate and visible. To create an ideological justification for segmentation in the labour market on the grounds of gender relations, a debate on the issue of part-time work for women employees has begun.

Environment and Forest Development

The most ironic impact of the SAP is on the environment and forest development. In last the past few years the environment has become one of the most debated political issues. At the Rio Summit, government organisations and non-government organisations from India made their presence felt by making passionate presentations. In reality, however, there has been an overall budgetary cut of 18 per cent for the environment and forest development.

Women are employed in wasteland development, social forestry and desert development programmes on a large scale. In these areas the budget has been cut by 23.5 per cent. Smokeless stoves (chulhas) have been enthusiastically promoted among rural and urban poor women because they are less harmful to health. The government’s budget for funding this project has reduced by 18.5 per cent.

In the context of a wood fuel crisis, alternate energy resources such as biogas and solar energy equipment gain major importance. The government, however, has reduced the budget for these alternate energy sources by 26.3 per cent and 25.4 per cent respectively. Further funds allocated for research on alternate energy resources have been reduced by 26.3 per cent. On the one hand a resource ‘crunch’ is created where environmentally regenerative programmes are concerned, while on the other hand millions of rupees are made available for controversial mega projects like the Sardar Sarovar, Dabhol Power Plant and Narmada Dam. The Morse Committee, noted environmentalists, most NGOs outside Gujarat, within India and internationally have criticised the projects that are supported by the World Bank. This is because they will harm 240,000 people and create major environmental problems.

Female-headed Households (FHHs)

Studies have shown that the burden of poverty falls more heavily on women than on men. Of the total households, around 11 per cent are supported by women’s income alone. In other words, they are female-headed households, households supported totally by widows, single unmarried women, and deserted or divorced women. Feminisation of poverty has been enhanced due to the combined effects on these households of price rises, reduced quotas for PDS, and reductions in health care and educational facilities.
Children of FHHs suffer more from nutritional deficiency, inadequate primary health care facilities and cuts in expenditure for primary and non-formal education. State support to FHHs had been one of the central demands of the women’s movement since 1975. In the National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Women (1988–2000) and Women Empowerment Policy (WEP), 2001, of the government of India there was great concern expressed for FHHs. But economic reforms have worked against the objectives of the NPP and WEP. SHGs of women are supposed to be the solution as per the World Bank-promoted agenda for women in poverty groups.

Sex Tourism as an Integral Part of Globalisation

Sex-Tourism in India has reached massive proportions with globalisation. A new type of publicity material for foreign tourists show scantily dressed women waiting for tourists at the beach or in the foyer of five-star hotels. Worsening economic conditions force young, poor and lower-middle-class women to become prostitutes—either for survival or by brute force. Child prostitution has drastically increased due to pauperisation of rural and urban masses caused by economic reforms 3

SAP VS. SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991–2000): In terms of educational opportunities and health care, SAP has done great damage to female children. During the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child, millions of young girls were forced to do back-breaking work in hazardous and inhuman conditions.

1. **Girl child labour and globalisation:** Nearly 10 per cent of girls were never enrolled in schools due to paid and unpaid work they had to do in homes, fields, factories and plantations, and in the informal sector. Sexual abuse at the work place is a hidden burden that a girl worker endures. Child labour policies, however, do not spell out anything specific to girl child workers. There is no implementation of prohibition of girls working in hazardous occupations as per Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. About 6 per cent of the males and females in rural areas and about 3 per cent males and 2 per cent females in age group 5 to 14 in urban areas were found to be working during 1993–94.

2. **Declining juvenile sex ratio:** The declining juvenile sex ratio is the most distressing factor reflecting low premium accorded to a girl child in India (Patel 2003). As per the Census of India, juvenile sex ratios were 971, 945 and 927 for 1981, 1991 and 2001 respectively. In 2001 India had 158 million infants and children, of which 82 million were males and 76 million females. There was a deficit of 6 million female infants and girls. This is a result of the widespread use of sex determination and sex pre-selection tests throughout the country (including in Kerala), along with high rates of female infanticide in the Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, rural Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. Millions of girls have been missing in the post-independence period. Around 70 districts in 16 states and Union Territories recorded more than a 50-point decline in the child sex ratio in the last one decade (UNFPA 2003).
To stop the abuse of advanced scientific techniques for selective elimination of female foetuses through sex determination, the government of India passed the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Miscues) (PNDT) Act in 1994. But the techno-docs based in the metropolises, urban and semi-urban centres, and parents desirous of begetting only sons have subverted it.

Since the PNDT Act passed by the centre, similar Acts followed by several state governments and Union Territories of India during 1988 (after the Maharashtra legislation to regulate prenatal sex determination tests) as a result of pressure created by the Forum Against Sex Determination and Sex Pre-selection. But there was a gross violation of this central legislation. In response to the public interest petition filed by Sabu George at the Centre for Inquiry into Health and Allied Themes, Mumbai, and MASUM, and fought on their behalf by the Lawyers Collective, Delhi, the Supreme Court of India gave a directive on 4 May 2001 to all state governments to make an effective and prompt implementation of the PNDT Act (enacted in 1994 and brought into operation from 1 January 1996). Now, it stands renamed as ‘the Preconception and Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 2002’, which is stricter than the previous one. It has received the assent of the president of India on 17 January 2003. The Act provides ‘for the prohibition of sex selection, before or after conception, and for regulation of pre-natal diagnostic techniques for the purposes of detecting genetic abnormalities or metabolic disorders or sex-linked disorders and for the prevention of their misuse for sex determination leading to female foeticide and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto’. Under the Act, a person who seeks help for sex selection can face, at first conviction, imprisonment for a three-year period and be required to pay a fine of Rs. 50,000. The state medical council can suspend the registration of the doctor involved in such malpractice and, at the stage of conviction, remove his/her name from the register of the council.

Displacement in the Name of Development

Throughout the 20th century urban poor women have been employed in food, beverage, tobacco, textiles, wood/bamboo/cane and ceramics industries. Here, too, they have been targets for retrenchment and forced to join the unorganised sector. Women are squeezed out of the marketing and vending spaces because global traders have made local labour and skill obsolete. A sizeable section of the informal sector’s goods and services is produced by means of contracting and subcontracting, for which payment is based on piece-work rather than a time-rate basis. Much of the economic activity in the informal sector is founded on capital from the formal sector and, given the low cost of labour and taxed minimally or not at all, return to where it came from with tidy profit. Primitive accumulation in its classical form included plunder, slavery and colonialism, while primitive accumulation in the contemporary period includes sweatshops, labour concentration camps and criminalisation of the working class. In 1998 the world economy had 1.2 billion poor, that is, population with an income of less than US$ 1 per capita per day.
Labour Standards by ILO

The ILD’s have been violated resulting in erosion of workers’ rights and collective bargaining process due to informalisation, casualisation and marginalisation of the working class due to economic liberalisation policies adopted by the nation-states in the nation states in Asia. Trade union workers from all Asian countries expressed their anxiety about countries competing with each other to cut costs by compromising labour standards. In the name of labour flexibility, exploitation of the workers is enhanced and feminisation of poverty has taken place. Social action groups must demand of uniform labour standards for all countries that are part of World Trade Organisation so the nation-states stop competing for cutting cost by violating workers rights.

GENDER AUDITS OF MEGA DEVELOPMENTAL SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES

Gender audits of mega development schemes have been extremely useful to seal leakages that disempower women and bring to the fore women’s component in terms of employment, educational opportunities, skill development, entitlement and assets ownership. Capital-driven growth has perpetrated tremendous human miseries by resorting to forced eviction of poor people from their dwellings and workplace. While commenting on the forced eviction to accommodate mega projects, the UN Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, 16th Session, 1997, stated:

‘Women and other vulnerable individuals and groups suffer disproportionately from the practice of forced eviction. Women in all groups are especially vulnerable given the extent of statutory and other forms of discrimination which often apply in relation to property rights (including home ownership) or rights of access to property or accommodation, and their particular vulnerability to acts of violence and sexual abuse when they are rendered homeless.’

Women are victims of natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes and social disasters such as caste, communal and ethnic conflicts, and war and economic disasters in the name of development (for example building 350 flyovers in Mumbai, mega plants and shopping plazas, all displacing people). They need rehabilitation in terms of proper housing, civic amenities, safe transport and work.

Similarly, tourism driven by globalisation has promoted sex tourism and child prostitution. Tourists seeking uninfected short-term sex partners increasingly pursue young girls based in the urban centres as well as on the national highways, and have paid sex with child prostitutes. Young girls may be forced into prostitution or otherwise have little power in sexual relationships to negotiate condom use, particularly if their sexual partner is older—a double risk since older men are more likely to be infected. Belief that sex with virgin girls cures STDs among men has intensified trafficking of girls from rural hinterland to urban redlight areas.
Women Beneficiaries of the SAP

In India upper-middle-class, educated, city-based women with substantial salaries were very enthusiastic with the new budget as it gave more tax exemption to them. These women—in the higher echelons of the public service, top executives in private business, local agents of foreign business, partners and consultants to foreign businesses, MNCs and TNCs, advertisement industries, owners of export industries (such as government, diamond and food processing units who get benefits of the higher producer prices, low wage policy and privileged access to state-provided infrastructure services and inputs) have definitely benefited from SAP. Wide ranges of consumer goods from the international market have pleased these women (both middle-class housewives and professional women). Thus, austerity for a majority of Indian women has existed side by side with higher luxury consumption of a few rich women.

As already mentioned, SAP has increased women’s drudgery and hardship in the struggle for survival. The inflationary impact of SAP reduces the purchasing power of a household, which in turn increases unpaid labour of women.

GATT’s pressure to amend the Indian Patent Act that is based on process patenting will make essential drugs very expensive. Poor women will find it impossible to avail themselves of medical facilities. Finally, 10 case-studies based on the experiences of Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Ghana, Jamaica, Peru, Philippines, Korea, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe suggest that unless the governments ensured compensatory policies in terms of public works, nutritional support and public education alongside SAP, women suffered the most.

ICE policy, that is Information, communication and entertainment, in favour of economic reforms has nothing to offer the common woman except deprivation, degradation and dehumanisation. Free play of market forces unleashed by the economic reforms have made the majority of Indian women more vulnerable in the factor, labour and product markets. The government of India appointed the second National Labour Commission (NLC) in 2000 to focus on five aspects—review of law, social security, umbrella legislations for the unorganised sector, impact of globalisation on women workers, and child labour and health care. Its recommendations serve the interest of economic reforms that benefit world capital, MNCs and TNCs.

GENDER AUDITS OF STATE POLICIES

Housing Policy

Housing rights have been major concern of the women’s movement in India for over two decades. When women’s groups started providing support to women in distress, it was relatively easier to find jobs and school admission for children. The most difficult task was to get accommodation for women victims of violence, desertion, rejection from natal or matrimonial family and cheating by their relatives. Question that need answered in gently are:
1. Do women utilise space differently?
2. Can we create environments that are more gender sensitive?
3. Can we make policy makers and planners who are working at the state level understand the politics of built environment and gender rules?
4. What are our alternatives to the existing approach adopted by Sight and Service Schemes (SSS) and Slum Rehabilitation Schemes (SRS)?
5. What interventions can we make in city planning that involves physical, economic and social access?

Women’s right to housing (WRH) is linked with women’s right to property, land and inheritance. As primary users of housing, women’s stakes and requirements are the highest in housing. For women, beyond shelter, a house is a place of employment, a place for social interaction, a place for childcare, and a refuge from social instability and sexual violence.

In the peaceful areas of India, a tenth of the households are headed by divorced, deserted and single women. In conflict-prone areas over 30 per cent households are headed by women. In WHHs women shoulder main economic responsibilities, including house hunting. Even if they have money, they face hurdles while looking out for a rented place or a house on an ownership basis. Nearly one-third of households worldwide are now headed by women; in certain parts of Africa and Latin America, as much as 45 per cent is FHH. Households headed by women tend to be poorer than male-headed households. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS Habitat) estimates that at least 600 million people in the cities of developing countries live in shelters that are life or health threatening.

In the last 20 years many women have filed petitions in the high courts and the Supreme Court of India demanding a wife’s right to live in the matrimonial home and daughter’s right to stay in the ancestral home. As per the Mitakshara laws applicable in the Hindu Code, only sons get coparcenary rights over ancestral property as they are considered *karta*. Lata Mittal challenged the Mitakshara laws applicable to Hindu daughters who are deprived of right to stay in the ancestral home.

A Woman’s identity is entwined with a house, but the housing identity as a capital investment and the largest outlay in the household budget lies with male head of the household. Whether women are property owners, their place of sphere is considered to be within the house. Even this cult of domesticity does not help women as it perpetuates the low status of women. Market economy devalues domestic work, and mainstream planners and policy makers consider it ‘non-work’ and subdue women’s housing concerns.

The gendered construct of social and economic relations within and outside the household and deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes in the civil society discriminate against women in virtually every aspect of housing, be it policy development, entitlement in government projects, control over household resources, right of inheritance and ownership and even the construction of housing.

There is a need to focus on housing in terms of ‘personal meanings as well as affordability, women’s role and the housing industry. The state must take affirmative
action to empower women in exercising their housing rights because men as property owners enjoy a privileged position and control the housing delivery system. Moreover, general subordination of women is also reflected in women’s lack of representation in the higher echelons of political bodies. Societal restrictions reinforce women’s status as second-class citizens. As a result, women professionals in the housing industry that is, engineers, architects and agents have to subserve the interests of the male-dominated construction industry.

A gender-neutral approach to housing goes against women’s interest. Hence, there is a need to introduce a gender-aware approach instead that takes women’s strategic and practical needs, concerns and rights into consideration. For that we will have to sensitize all stakeholders in the housing industry, that is, land surveyors, builders, developers, designers, financiers, mortgage bankers, lawyers, credit unions, government officers, material suppliers, real estate brokers, appraisers, contractors, interior decorators, gardeners, landscape architects and cooperative societies. In the language of economics, both supply-side production, construction, management, maintenance, rehabilitation, and demand-side community groups, consumer forums and cooperative societies.

International human rights law on security of tenure demands that a person has a secure tenure if he/she is protected from being removed arbitrarily and involuntarily from their homes and lands. Tenure is secure if it is protected by legislation rather than merely through customs and traditions.

Circumstances and conditions that threaten women’s security of tenure are as follows:

1. Gender-biased laws preventing women from owning, inheriting, purchasing, leasing, renting and bequeathing housing, land and property.
2. Judicial interpretation of the law where there is no explicit forbidding of WRH in gender-neutral laws, set there are obstacles for because of male biased interpretation of laws. General statements are considered to be applicable to only men.
3. Land and housing systems grant titles to private property to ‘heads of households’ who are often deemed to be men.
4. Many cultures and customs do not grant women’s independent existence, such women staying alone, without male protection, are punished severely due to sexist attitudes. Such laws are not codified. In polygamous and polyandrous communities, shared community values go against individual women leading independent lives.

Major hurdles faced by women in the housing market are due to gender-biased policies in financing of housing, availability of services, material and infrastructure, affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy to handle political economy of housing. Women face major difficulties in securing loans for purchase of quality housing. It is not easy for single women or WHH to get rental housing. Even if they manage to get rented homes, they have to face harassment of
various sorts. Unmarried single women are perceived as a threat to sexual morality. In the absence of old age homes for women, the plight of women senior citizens is deplorable.

Women’s housing needs must be understood from the point of view of women’s right to dignified life. They should not face any discrimination in exercising their housing rights due to their caste, race, age, religion and ethnicity. State and civil society initiatives must facilitate the process of women’s empowerment through guaranteeing housing rights. Local self-government bodies should reserve 10 per cent of all houses/flats/industrial units/shops in marketplaces for women. Schools of architecture, engineering colleges and institutions for interior designing should organise capacity building workshops and training programmes for women. Gender sensitisation of decision makers in the housing industry and the elected representatives of the mainstream political bodies should be given priority. For formulation of gender-sensitive policies, experts on the subject should be inducted in the apex bodies of urban, rural and tribal housing projects.

Energy and Environment Policy

In the 1980s governments and development agencies became much more aware of the need to consider gender issues in their environmental and natural resource management programmes. This led to changes in project design and implementation. Eco-feminists have played a crucial role in the evolution of a new gender-sensitive approach among policy makers (Shiva 1988). However, in actual practice economic vested interests have reigned supreme.

Water Policy

Gender audit of water policy has critiqued the watershed management and rainwater harvesting programmes that focus solely on water utilisation for agriculture and industry, even they rural and urban poor women have to spend many hours to acquire drinking water and water for household consumption. Policy makers first came to appreciate that women ‘play an essential role in the management of natural resources, including soil, water, forests and energy... and often have a profound traditional and contemporary knowledge of the natural world around them’ (World Bank 1991). The exclusion of women from environmental projects—through outright neglect or belief in the gender neutrality of projects—would thus be a recipe for project failure.

Subsequently, donor agencies have came to see women as especially vulnerable: ‘Their responsibilities as day-to-day environmental managers make women both victims of and contributors to the natural environment’s degradation and pollution.’

On the other hand, gradually, awareness has been growing thanks to many grassroots success stories of women fighting to conserve local resources—such as greening of deserts in Rajasthan, Appiko in Karnataka, Chipko in Tehri Garhwal and Junagarh in Gujarat, and Narmada Bachao Andolan in Madhya Pradesh., Maharashtra and Gujarat.
Population Policy

The focus of health programmes should change from a population control approach of reducing numbers to an approach that is gender sensitive and responsive to the reproductive health needs of women/men. Women’s groups wondered have raised a hue and cry against sexist, racist and class biases of the population control policy, which perceives the uterus of coloured women as a danger zone. They have opposed genetic and reproductive engineering, which reduce women to reproductive organs and allow them to be used as experimental subjects by science, industry and the state. They believe that instead of abusing reproductive biology, responsible reproduction is an answer to overpopulation and infertility. Any coercion, be it through force, incentives or disincentives in the name of population stabilisation, should be rejected. Instead, enabling women to have access to education, resources, employment, income, social security and safe environment at work and at home are preconditions to a small family norm. Reproductive rights of women that guarantee healthy life, safe motherhood and autonomy in decision making about when, how many and at what intervals to have children are a central axis around which a discourse on population policy should revolve. Several groups have prepared manuals to assist women leaders to reach out to poor illiterate women and teach them about fertility and infertility, giving them knowledge of their anatomy, to teach them fertility awareness as a means of family planning and to use natural family planning, as an entry point to them health and development (Jagori 1995).

Scientifically accurate books for sex education and fertility awareness are now available (Nadedkar and Rajadhyaksha 1999). Sex education for women becomes meaningful only when it is linked with assertiveness training. Girls and women who are unable to handle gender-based power relations end up as victims even after receiving thorough physiological, anatomical, scientific and medical details of (Sadgopal 1995).

To address the problems concerning women’s health, a holistic life span approach is needed (Gupta 2001). Women as growing human beings, homemakers, workers, mothers and elderly citizens face different types of health-related issues. Women’s health is determined by the material reality generated by socio-economic and cultural forces, as well as gender relations based on subordination of women. It is important to make men aware of women-specific health needs. Improvement in women’s health is a precondition for the development of her family. For an effective public education on the above mentioned issues scholars with both scientific/medical knowledge and feminist understanding should teach the ‘Women and Health’ module. How to engender medical education is a question that needs to be addressed. There is also a need to make available gender-sensitive books for health practitioners.

Mental Health Policy

A fire in Moideen Badusha Mental Home in Erwadi, Tamil Nadu, on 6 August 2001 that killed 28 inmates who were chained and hence could not escape has once again invited attention of all concerned citizens to the condition of women in mental homes.
Surviving patients of the tragedy were transferred to the Institute of Mental Health in Chennai. Now they are no longer in chains, but their condition is not different from the earlier home (Krishnakumar 2002).

Pathologisation of women by using diagnostic labels is a major cause of stigmatisation and ostracism. Women’s groups are demanding that pigeonholing of people into set slots must stop. Interaction with the mental health professionals is used by family members and the community to declare the concerned woman unfit to live in the family, to be a parent, function as an autonomous individual or take up a job. The husband’s family uses ‘mental disorder’ to dispose of her or debar her from property rights or the right to live in a matrimonial or parental home. A certificate of insanity from mental health professionals is used by husbands/in-laws to divorce desert or throw out wives from their matrimonial homes. Women are admitted to mental asylums as per the directives of the Mental Health Act, 1987, and Lunacy Act, 1912.

Saarthak, a voluntary organisation has filed a petition in the Supreme Court (WP © 334/2001 with WP © 562/2001) requesting the apex court to issue directives banning direct electro-convulsive therapy (ECT), popularly known as SHOCK therapy, in the mental hospitals, psychiatric nursing homes and government/municipal hospitals with psychiatric wards. Several groups have started signature campaigns in support of the petition.

Once dumped in a mental asylum, it is impossible for women to get out, even after complete recovery.

‘Women in the mental hospitals have fewer visitors, are abandoned or tend to stay on longer than men within the institution. There are fewer voluntary patients among women than among men. Even in adjudication for a woman’s institutionalisation, the official discourses are often coloured by the sex role stereotypes that the judges, police officials and the staff in mental hospitals uphold’ (Pathare 2003).

The remarks of a social worker after a visit to a mental hospital are apt:

The interaction with female patients made me sadder. Almost all of them were abandoned/dumped by families or the police and court got them admitted after they hit the rock bottom. Most of them were forced to face violent situations in their lives and had painful and atrocious accounts to tell. In many cases, one could see (although without an in-depth study, one can not claim and prove) that the mental distress and ill health had its roots not in a person’s biology or psychology, but in society, in our social environment’ (Davar 2001).

The iron wall of secrecy about the administration of drugs, surgery and ECT, and their side effects needs to be condemned by citizen’s initiatives and ethical medical practitioners. Long-lasting side effects of the biomedical approach need to be highlighted. Mental hospitals need to pay attention to psychotherapy and counselling which involve therapies that produce positive results and no negative side effects. Long-term stay in mental hospital leads to chronicity. Hence, there is a need to promote “half-way homes, hostels and most importantly, the treatment of women patients in their family settings through follow up visits by nurses and social workers’ (Kapoor 2001).
GENDER AUDIT OF BUDGETS

Gender audit of budget provides policy framework, methodology and set of tools to assist governments to integrate a gender perspective into the budget as the main national plan of public expenditure. It also aims to facilitate attention to gender analysis in review of macro-economic performance, ministerial budget preparations, parliamentary debate and mainstream media coverage. It does not mean separate budgets for women, but that all budgets (Union, state and PRI) be analysed and constructed from a gender perspective, and that there is analysis of revenue and government expenditure on women and girls as compared to men and boys. Gender audit of budgets helps governments to decide how policies need to be adjusted and reprioritised for protecting and promoting women’s rights.

Understanding the relationship between macro-economic policies and the Union Budget, state budgets and the PRIS in the context of India’s economic reforms and globalisation is imperative as it influences women’s lives in several ways. It is good economic sense to make national budgets gender sensitive, as this will enable more effective targeting of government expenditure to women-specific activities and reduce inequitable consequences of previous fiscal policies. The Gender Budget Initiative is a set of tools to assist governments to integrate a gender perspective into the budget. The budget impacts women’s lives in several ways. It directly promotes women’s development through allocation of funds for women’s programmes and reduces opportunities for empowerment of women through budgetary cuts. So far the process of gender budgeting has been a post facto effort to dissect/analyse and thus offset any undesirable gender-specific consequences of the previous budget.

Due to consistent lobbying by gender economists and women’s groups, for the first time in 2000, the Ministry of Finance of the Indian government has given a mandate to all ministries to establish a gender budgeting cell by January 2005, and 18 ministries and departments have been asked to submit annual reports and performance budgets highlighting allocations for women. These budgets are expected to be placed before the Parliament along with detailed demand for grants for 2005–6.

There is a need to examine budgetary provisions for women during 2001–02 and 2002-03 within the matrices provided by the aforementioned policy documents. Women’s status and bargaining power in the economy have a major bearing in the budgetary policy. Therefore, a yearly analysis of the budget from the point of view of women is required to enhance women’s economic interest and socio-political standing in the economy. Analysis of the budget from a gender perspective gives an understanding of the nature, character and content of women’s share of the development cake.

Tables 13.3 and 13.4 provide details of allocations to programmes for women as well as those with indirect benefits for women, clearly indicating the shift in approach of the Union budget in India. Much of the change in approach can be attributed to the economists working on women’s issues and also the women’s movement. Systematic interventions of women’s organisations in the pre-budget sessions of the government have led to the fund allocation policy for ‘The Women’s Component’, in general schemes involving various ministries.
### Table 13.3: Union Budget, 2001–2002: Allocations to programmes for Women (Rs. million)

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<td>46</td>
<td>Mahila Samakhya Assistance</td>
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<td>for boarding /hostel facilities for girl students of secondary schools</td>
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<td>Reproductive and child health project</td>
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<td>Maternal benefit scheme and post partum programme</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>ICDS</td>
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<td>Day care Centres</td>
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<td>Balwadi Nutrition Programme</td>
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<td>Other schemes</td>
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<td>Balika Samridhi Yojana</td>
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<td>Mahila Samridhi Yojana</td>
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<td>Socio-economic programmes, CSWB</td>
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<td>Training-cum production</td>
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<td>Other programmes</td>
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Some of the long-standing demands of women economists and development organisations have been incorporated in the Union budget 2000–2001 in India. In his 2001–02 budget speech, the finance minister mentioned the women's agenda in point number 67 and stated:

‘The year 2001 is being observed as Women’s Empowerment Year. My colleague, the deputy chairperson of Planning Commission is heading a Task Force to review the programme for women. Meanwhile I propose to:

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<th>Demand name</th>
<th>Demand name</th>
<th>Demand name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>85 Social Justice and empowerment</td>
<td>Girls Hostels</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>190.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 Labour &amp; Employment</td>
<td>Special education programme for girls from SC and low literacy level groups</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>00.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Girls hostels</td>
<td>120.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>105.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>26,916.8</td>
<td>22,827.5</td>
<td>31,869.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Strengthen the Rashtriya Mahila Kosh for providing micro-credit to poor assetless women through NGOs.
• Launch an integrated scheme for women’s empowerment in 650 blocks through women’s self-help groups.
• Start a new scheme for women in difficult circumstances like widows of Vrindavan, Kashi and other places, destitute women and other disadvantaged women groups.’

But at the same time there are a few areas missing in the budget that are crucial for women’s day-to-day survival needs. A case study of the 2001 Budget reveals that in the section on ‘Quality of Life’ specific needs of women vis-à-vis health, education, drinking water, housing and roads have not been adequately addressed. There has to be coordination between launching of new schemes and budgetary allocation. It does not serve women’s interest if the funds are not available for an already launched scheme or funds are allocated for non-existing schemes. For example, in the absence of women-specific educational schemes, Rs. 1.6 billion allocated for the national programme on women’s education remained unutilised.

In case of PRIs, engendering budgets would imply analyses scheme-wise, sector-wise, category-wise and year-wise, with their estimates, revised estimates and the actual
expenditure. It is also important to make thorough study of the Economic Survey published by the government of India and state Human Development Reports, State Policies for Women and allocation of resources in the state plans published by the state governments that guide programmes and budgetary allocations. This exercise helps in understanding of the macro policies in determining women’s predicaments. Currently women’s groups are demanding that each and every ministry should allocate separate funds for women-specific needs (Kaushik 2002).

Each state has a detailed list of the programmes/schemes benefiting women under four categories:

1. Women-specific schemes where 100 per cent of the allocation is required to be spent on women.
2. Pro-women schemes where at least 30 per cent of allocation and benefits flow to women.
3. Gender-neutral schemes meant for the benefit of community as a whole where both men and women avail these benefits.
4. The residual state-specific programmes having profound effect on women’s position/condition.

In 2004, a review of women’s studies by the Economic and Political Weekly published articles based on UNDP-supported research reports on various schemes and programmes under the state government budgets. They have shown the means adopted by different states to finance budgets and the burden of indirect taxes mostly borne by common citizens (Banerjee and Roy 2004). Through case studies of the state budget of Maharashtra (Pandey et al. 2004), the midday meal scheme in Tamil Nadu, a bottom-up budget by involving elected women representatives PRIs in Karnataka, and a comparative analysis of development and social sector expenditures of 13 Indian states with that of West Bengal, they have succinctly shown gender-differential impacts of protective and welfare services (pensions for widows and destitute women, budget for shelter homes and rehabilitation centres for women victims of violence), social services (budgetary provision for education, health, crèche, working women’s hostels, fuel, fodder, water, housing, sanitation, nutrition and midday meal is) regulatory services (state commissions for women and women’s cells in the police stations and government departments) and awareness generation programmes (Banerjee and Roy 2004; Bhat et al. 2004; Swaminathan et al. 2004).

Budgets garner resources through taxation policies and allocate resources to different sections of the economy. The budget is an important tool in the hands of state for affirmative action for improvement of gender relations through reduction of gender gap in the development process. It can help reduce economic inequalities between men and women as well as between the rich and poor. Hence, the budgetary policies need to keep in considerations the gender dynamics operating in the economy and in civil society. There is a need to highlight participatory approaches to pro-poor budget, bottom-up budget, child budget, SC budget, ST budget, green budget, and local and global implications of pro-poor and pro-women budgeting, alternative macro scenarios
emerging out of alternative budgets, and interlinkages between gender-sensitive budgeting and women’s empowerment. Serious examining of budgets calls for greater transparency at the level of international economics to local processes of empowerment. There is a need to provide training and capacity building workshops for decision makers in government structures, gram sabhas, parliamentarians and audio-visual media. Women’s groups have demanded for the following:

1. separate listing of women-specific items in the budget;
2. no diversion of women’s component funds (30 per cent of the total) in different ministries and departments;
3. transparency about allocation and utilisation of funding;
4. right to information; and
5. inclusion of gender economists in pre-budget workshops that should be held around October so that their suggestions can be included.

For a widespread impact of gender audits on budgets, its analysis from a gender perspective should be introduced and promoted in all women’s groups, and an educational and research institutions. Public debate on gender-sensitive budgets will help the country tilt the balance in favour of area development and peaceful use of resources in the present atmosphere of jingoism.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Increasingly a realisation has come about that without engendering development is endangered. Gender audits of decentralisation of political governance has revealed that while elected women in PRI, legislative bodies and Parliament have played a positive role in addressing or attempting to address a range of practical gender needs (inadequacies in living conditions such as provision of fuel, water, health care and employment), their impact on strategic gender needs (affirmative action by the state, proactive role of employers to enhance women’s position in the economy, and social movements) is not remarkable (UNDP 2001).

Key indicators to address women’s strategic gender needs are gender balanced in decision making bodies, finance committees, in business and financial support share of expenditure devoted to women specific units, cells, departments and projects, share of women in education employment health, housing political participation and agenda setting power-blocks.

To engender governance, there is a need to provide training and capacity building workshops on gender audits as a tool to evolve a gender-aware policy framework for decision makers in the government structures, gram sabhas, legislative assemblies, Parliament, judiciary and legal system, educational institutions, corporate world, financial and funding institutions, local, national and international NGOs, human rights organisations and the audio-visual media.
NOTES


REFERENCES

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——. 2001 Economic Survey. Delhi University of Finance