
UNIT 18 METHODOLOGIES OF NEED ASSESSMENT

Methodologies of Need
Assessment

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18.1 INTRODUCTION

Need assessments are critical not only to developing relevant and effective education and training programmes, but also in preparing policy documents relating to developmental issues. Need assessment is also supportive to assess and to incorporate gender concerns in all programmes and policies. The findings from these assessments can be used by government/development organizations as well as researchers, activists and policy-makers for conducting programmes and formulating policies to ensure gender equality and gender justice.

18.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- define need assessment;
- describe the methodology used to conduct need assessment;
- analyze tools of need assessment; and
- distinguish gender concerns in need assessment.

18.3 DEFINITION OF NEED ASSESSMENT

Need assessment is a process for determining and addressing needs or “gaps” between current conditions and desired conditions, often used for improvement in individuals, education/training, organizations or communities. The need can be a desire to improve current performance or to rectify existing deficiency. The idea of a need assessment, as part of the planning process, has been used to frame objectives and action-oriented gender-aware assessment tools with the following core principles:

Equity in Approach and Service Provision to: (a) increase equality between women and men and boys and girls; (b) broaden opportunities for women and girls within the larger society; and (c) improve opportunities for men and boys from marginalized communities.

Participatory in Approach to: (a) engage in substantive consultations with women and men, government mechanisms and NGOs working on women's, gender and youth issues during the assessment process; and (b) involve women and men in the Assessment Team.

Relevancy of Service Provision to: (a) design projects that are informed by the articulated needs, priorities and interests of women, men, boys and girls from the targeted area; and (b) deploy and use appropriate resources to address the specific and differential needs of females and males.

Adequacy of Service Provision to: (a) provide resources in amounts that will enable women and men to improve their well-being; (b) discourage dependency; and (c) facilitate a smooth transition from survival to development.

Efficiency of Service Provision through the: (a) use of context-specific delivery mechanisms; (b) involvement of INGOs and local NGOs with demonstrated experience working with and for, women and girls and men and boys from marginalized communities; and (c) use of goods and services that are easily obtainable.

18.4 CONDUCTING A NEED ASSESSMENT

Conducting a need assessment is often a long and carefully worked out process. It is important that a need assessment should not be an “empty” exercise, but should be geared towards getting information that is both essential and adequate to bring about the necessary change.

Let us now go through some tips towards conducting a successful need assessment.

This is a twelve-step process encompassing planning, data gathering and analysis.

Step 1 Confirming the Issues and Audience

In this step the purpose of the need assessment would be established, determining if it is a legal requirement, a requirement that is a felt necessity or simply desired for general knowledge. Need assessment should always address the goals and objectives in synthesis. An executive summary is often helpful for carrying out the exercise. Is this a new issue or something that is already known to be a concern? Is there widespread agreement up the organizational chain or among the policy makers that this issue needs to be addressed?

Step 2 Establishing the Planning Team

In this step, the planning team would be established while also determining the resources available for conducting the need assessment. This includes:

- Time;

- Money;
- Number of individuals required for the need assessment;
- Research or prior studies available on the issue; and
- Expertise of researchers.

It is important that all components of the need assessment should be conducted as part of a group effort and in the form of a planning team. The planning team ideally should consist of members from different stakeholder groups, as well as individuals with expertise in the area of research being conducted. Effective communication between members of the planning team is essential. The team must establish protocols and specific roles right at the beginning to be able to get maximum data through the needs assessment.

Step 3 Establishing the Goals and Objectives

In this step, based on the available resources confirmed in step two, the planning team will establish goals and objectives. This step has three phases:

- Identifying the optimum (desired) and actual levels of knowledge or skill;
- Identifying the cause(s) for the lack of knowledge or skill; and
- Devising a solution or series of solutions.

Ensuring goals and objectives will drive the outputs (statistical analysis and reporting). This will prioritize the rest of the steps and determine the amount of effort to be spent on the need assessment.

Step 4 Characterizing the Participants

The most important people in the need assessment are the people who participate in this exercise. In this step person carrying out need assessment will determine the following characteristics of the population among whom the need assessment is being done:

- Number of individuals present (i.e. sample size);
- Skill and knowledge level of the participants;
- Educational level of the participants;
- Organizational niche ;
- Cultural characteristics and possible biases towards the subject;
- Attitudes and biases among the population;
- Ability to access or attend training programmes or any other programme to bring about a change in the existing situation; and
- Ability to use or access services.

Step 5 Conducting Information and Literature Search

In this step, information and literature regarding the issue would be reviewed by looking at studies based on development plans, public records, strategic plans, reports and articles on the subject. Surveys are often used to clarify or answer questions that have surfaced through reviewing existing reports and data.

Step 6 Selecting Data Collection Methods

Deciding how to collect data from choices ranging from personal interviews to written tests is significant in this step. This is a very important decision as it not

only will affect much of the time and resources of a particular project, but will also affect the kind of data that the team has to collect during the need assessment.

Step 7 Determining Sampling Scheme

Sample size should exceed the projected number or stated requirement. The biggest threat to a survey is that the results are inaccurate because the sample size was not representative enough. Also respondents should be chosen from a variety of groups of people. This will get you information that is more accurate and more in tune with the existing situation.

Step 8 Designing and Piloting the Collection Instrument

Before commissioning the final need assessment survey, conducting a pilot survey will be helpful in identifying the gaps and can incorporate more questions wherever needed. Sometimes one can remove irrelevant questions. Piloting the questionnaire is essential. It is futile to go into the field with a questionnaire that the respondents are not interested in answering either because they do not understand it or because they find it irrelevant to the issue at hand. Also, one has to assure the respondents that confidentiality will be maintained through out the project and anonymity would be ensured. This is necessary to get more accurate answers through the needs assessment.

Step 9 Gathering and Recording Data

It is very essential to record all the data that is collected during the need assessment. One may have to go back to the data again and again during the course of the project.

Step 10 Analyzing Data

All data that has been collected during the need assessment has to be analyzed systematically. This is essential to devise future programmes to address the existing gaps. Where logistics permit, it is important to have a data analyst who is different from a data gatherer. It is vital how non-responses to individual questions are dealt with during the analysis.

Step 11 Managing Data

This step involves determining how data will be organized and archived.

The significance of this step is often not recognized until it is too late. It is also important that the data is preserved right to the end of the project in order to measure the visible changes that have occurred due to the project. It is also important at this stage to determine who owns the data once it is collected.

Step 12 Synthesizing Data and Creating Reports

To begin with, one has to determine whom the final report is intended for, what hope the final report will give and the expectations from the findings of the need assessment. We have to always address the goals and objectives in the data report. The data report must include problems or errors with the design and the implementation of the survey. An executive summary is often helpful.

18.5 TOOLS OF NEED ASSESSMENT

The key to any successful needs assessment project is the gathering of complete and accurate data and information regarding the target audience. There are **seven** basic need assessment methods that can be used to gather data and information. Each has its own set of benefits and limitations. Depending on time and other logistic issues one may not be able to utilize what might be the first choice of

method. Often one will need to use more than one method to obtain the information needed. The following are the tools of need assessment:

1) **Observation**

Observation means method of data collection based on watching a process or skill and systematically recording the events.

2) **Interviews**

Interviews mean one or more series of active interchanges between two or more people. They can be conducted either face-to-face or via technology.

3) **Focus Groups**

A focus group is an interactive exchange between an interviewer/facilitator and a group of people. Typically the discussion is guided by the facilitator according to a pre-planned set of questions.

4) **Oral Surveys**

Oral surveys are an interview where closed questions are used in order to elicit “yes” or “no” answers to a set of pre-selected questions.

5) **Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are a survey instrument through which individuals respond to printed questions.

6) **Existing Data**

Observations of existing data mean looking at information already gathered by the organization or sourced from elsewhere. By existing data, we are referring to existing information in the form of reports, work samples, historical data, planning and budget reports, organizational structure charts, evaluations, career development reports that can be reviewed and analyzed.

7) **Tests**

A test means simply an exam that assesses knowledge or skill level. Testing the knowledge and/or skill levels of the target audience will give a good idea of the knowledge gaps that exist.

18.5.1 Factors Influencing Need Assessment

There are several factors that need to be taken into consideration while planning the need assessment.

- *Audience Characterization*

Characterizing the audience means figuring out the essential traits, abilities and knowledge of the audience. Conducting a target audience assessment will help you decide the mode and tools to be used during the need assessment. The information in this discussion on audience characterization details the types of questions and information one may ask in characterizing the audience.

- *Knowledge*

While testing knowledge, one may ask questions such as: What degree of knowledge does the target population have relating to the particular issue? Do they have an understanding of current events related to the issue? Are they familiar with any special terms or acronyms?

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- *Training*

What type of prior training or skills do the respondents have in relation to this issue?

- *Tools and Techniques*

What tools and techniques do the respondents currently use or have access to in relation to the subjects discussed during the need assessment?

- *Benefits*

What are the personal benefits to the respondents in learning about this issue or changing tools/techniques?

- *Attitudes and Biases*

What attitudes and biases do the respondents have towards the issue?

- *Ability to Attend or Access*

Are there any factors that will affect the ability to access, attend or utilize any training or programmes or services offered to the respondents after holding the need assessment?

- *Cultural Characteristics*

Are there any cultural issues? How do those cultural issues or practices affect the respondents' view of the existing situation and the possible solutions to existing problems?

The purpose of the need assessment as we have already seen is to get enough and accurate data on an issue. Therefore, it is essential to be able to hold successful interviews with the respondents to get the required data.

The key components of holding a successful interview are as follows:

- 1) Asking the Right Questions; and
- 2) Active Listening.

Let us discuss each of these in detail.

1) Asking the right questions

There are two ways of asking questions:

- **Face-to-face questions**

When one has been given the opportunity to ask questions in person, face to face, one has to make sure they are focus directly on issues or problems. Interviewing someone in person permits us to adjust wording, clarify meanings and ask additional questions to elicit more detail – things that are not possible using written instruments or web surveys.

- **Written Questions**

Written questions present unique challenges but at the same time can be advantageous. One can test multiple iterations of questions to ensure there is no bias and can elicit complete responses from the first time itself as well as improve the grammar and sentence structure as well.

2) Active Listening

Active listening means focusing both on the words being spoken and on the person herself/himself in order to better understand what she/he is saying. The interviewer should also communicate understanding and show non-judgmental acceptance of what is being stated. The following are some tips for active listening:

- Asking non-leading questions: “can you tell me more about that”?;
- Rephrasing what the speaker said in the researchers own words;
- Reflecting underlying feelings: “when that happens to me, I feel really bad”;
- Avoiding analyzing what was described;
- Using personal disclosure: “I’m not sure I fully understand what you are saying”;
- Avoiding using probing questions;
- Facing the speaker;
- Watching the speaker and listening; and
- Focusing on what the speaker is saying.

18.5.2 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of questionnaires, interviews, surveys, etc. one will distribute or conduct during the need assessment process. Having large enough samples to prevent one sample from skewing the results is important. But, the size of the sample is not nearly as important as the proper design of the survey instruments. However, if there is bias in the data, it is unlikely to go away as you collect more data.

It is more important to obtain a representative sample than a large sample. Identifying the groups that researchers need to study and putting more effort into getting a high response rate (e.g. by phoning or sending reminders) is crucial. Sending out huge numbers of questionnaires and letting a few undefined volunteers return them should be avoided.

18.5.3 Need Assessment Methods: Advantages and Disadvantages

Table 18.1 summarizes the key advantages and disadvantages of major methods of assessing training and performance needs. Using a blend of methods helps to give a balanced perspective and offset the disadvantages of some methods.

Table 18.1: Advantages and Disadvantages of Need Assessment

Methods of need assessment	Advantages	Disadvantages
Analyzing organizational documents	• Relevant, quantifiable data • Shorter period of time in obtaining results • Inexpensive	• Build stakeholders involvement • Not necessarily focused on human resource development so there is less

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	• May build management involvement	opportunity to improve human resources • May not identify causes of the particular problems • May not provide visibility
Questionnaires & Surveys	• Reach many people in shorter period • Build involvement among beneficiaries as well as implementers • Relatively inexpensive • Yield relevant, quantifiable data that are easy to summarize • Anonymity may encourage honesty	• Require time and skill to develop • Low response rates or inaccurate responses • No opportunity to clarify • May restrict freedom of response • May lead to unrealistic expectations
Individual Interviews	• Build involvement and support • Allow for clarification • Provide relevant data • Easier to conduct than group interviews • May uncover information that would not be brought up in a group.	• Moderately time-consuming (but less so than individual interviews) • Moderately expensive • Difficult to conduct • May be difficult to analyze and quantify data
Advisory Committees	• Build management involvement and sponsorship • Provide visibility • Inexpensive synthesis of opinions of key stakeholders • Allows decision-makers to participate • Can help identify resources	• Time-consuming and difficult to manage logistically • Fails to build lower-level stakeholders involvement • Poor source of quantifiable data • May lead to “group think” or conflict over areas of control

Observation of Work Situations	• Builds stakeholder involvement • Provides excellent information when coaching an individual • Builds credibility • Generates relevant, quantifiable data • May provide excellent documentation	• Requires skilled observers • Does not involve management • Time-consuming • May change performance or be perceived as spying • May be logistically difficult
Benchmarking and Independent Research	• Learn from in-the-field leaders and competitors • Can build credibility • Availability of free data on internet • Avoid rediscovering what is known	• Does not build involvement • May not be directly relevant • Data from different organizations may be misleading • Requires significant analysis

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

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

b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the Unit.

1) Define need assessment.

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2) Explain any one of the tools used in need assessment.

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18.7 GENDER AND NEED ASSESSMENT IN SECTORAL AREAS

Effective need assessment is the first step towards finding solutions and formulating policies to change the existing gender discrimination. Gender issues can be classified broadly into the following sectoral areas:

- Food security;

- Health;
- Education;
- Economic – self-reliance/employment opportunities;
- Social justice – harassment, sexual abuse, rape etc.;
- Conflict – war;
- Poverty; and
- Violence.

18.7.1 Food Security

Most studies have shown that due to sequential eating deriving from male preference, adult women of the household eat less and last. One of the reasons why girls and women are undernourished is the deeply entrenched belief that men do more work and hence need more food. Even in situations where calorie output in daily activities is higher or when there is shortage of food for various reasons, both men and women believe that it is women who must do without. This disadvantage for women starts out from the moment she is born. The very birth of a girl child is seen as a calamity. This is reflected beginning with the feeding of the newborn. Besides breast milk, all other forms of nutrition are given grudgingly, whereas a male baby is received with joy and is fed to the best of his parent's abilities. This is continued into later childhood, adolescence and adulthood – all through the woman's life. Qualitatively and quantitatively, her nutritional requirements are subordinated to those of her brother/s', father's, husband's – and finally, her son's.

18.7.2 Health

Poor health status always had been one of the critical indicators of women's low status in Indian society. Until the 1990s, virtually every gender related health statistics for the country showed discrimination against women. Some examples include higher female infant mortality, high maternal mortality, higher general mortality and morbidity rates in most age groups and lower life expectancy at birth. This trend persists in the 2011 census data of Government of India also. With regard to sex ratio, according to 2011 census, it is 940 females per 1000 males. But in developing countries like Indonesia it is 988 females per 1000 males in 2011. In Bangladesh it was 978 per 1000 males in 2011. (Census of India, provisional population totals, office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner). Women's health is always a low priority, both in the family and in society. Parents hesitate to take their girl children to doctors – both for the fear of spending money, as well as ruining the chances of getting her married. Nobody wants an 'ill' daughter-in-law. In her marital home also she is expected to be a care giver and not a care-seeker. The needs of her family always come before her needs. This is specially so if she does not have an income of her own.

18.7.3 Education

Drop-out rates for girls are far higher than for boys. Girl children are expected to lend a helping hand at home and care for the siblings. Lack of schools in every village/town etc. also means that very often students have to travel to schools in other places. Post-puberty, the concern for the girls' safety is so high that parents are reluctant to risk potential sexual violence on the way to school and back. Hence education takes a back seat.

To begin with girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve good performance in education. Education helps men and women claim

their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girls' development towards adult life. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address gender-based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies. The following points will further explain the necessity of girls'/women's education:

- Education is a right;
- Cultural changes;
- Better health and awareness; and
- Poverty reduction.

Right to Education

Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The right to free and compulsory primary education, without discrimination and of good quality, has been reaffirmed in all major international human rights conventions. Many of these same instruments encourage, but do not guarantee, post-primary education. These rights have been further elaborated to address issues like quality and equity, moving forward the issue of what the right to education means and exploring how it can be achieved. As a minimum level, states must ensure that basic education is available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable for all. (4A scheme) The right of girls to education is one of the most critical of all rights – because education plays an important role in enabling girls and women to secure other rights.

Cultural Changes

Cultural and traditional values stand between girls and their prospects for education. The achievement of girls' right to education can address some of societies' deeply rooted inequalities, which condemn millions of girls to a life without quality education – and, therefore, also all too often to a life of missed opportunities. Improving educational opportunities for girls and women helps them to develop skills that allow them to make decisions and influence community change in key areas. One reason for denying girls and women their right to an education is rarely articulated by those in charge: that is their fear of the power that girls will have through education. There is still some resistance to the idea that girls and women can be trusted with education. Education is also seen in some societies as a fear of change and now with globalization, the fear becomes even greater – fear to lose cultural identity, fear of moving towards the unknown or the unwanted, fear of dissolving in many others.

Better Health

Basic education provides girls and women with an understanding of basic health, nutrition and family planning and giving them choices and power to decide about their own lives and bodies. Women's education leads directly to better reproductive health, improved family health, economic growth for the family and for society, as well as lower rates of child mortality and malnutrition. It is also a key in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Poverty Reduction

Educating girls and women is an important step in overcoming poverty. Inequality and poverty are not inevitable. "The focus on poverty reduction enables the right to education to be a powerful tool in making a change in the lives of girls and women. Poverty has been universally affirmed as a key obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights and it has a visible gender profile. The main reason for this is the

fact that poverty results from violations of human rights, including the right to education, which disproportionately affect girls and women. Various grounds of discrimination combine trapping girls in a vicious downward circle of denied rights. Denial of the right to education leads to exclusion from the labour market and marginalization into the informal sector or unpaid work. This perpetuates and increases women's poverty".

18.7.4 Economic Participation

Women's autonomy cannot be addressed without addressing their economic status. Patriarchal ideology not only is creating intra-household divisions of labour, but increasing the burden of household responsibilities falling on women. Most of the time women find it difficult to take up outside jobs. But when the financial situation of households deteriorates, responsibilities will fall on women. We have learnt about the triple burden of women in the previous courses. In this context we can recognize that most of the women have very little choice about their work. They are forced to undertake work outside the households. In order to bring changes, self-reliance/employment opportunities are also an option. The need for a woman to have some source of earning – to take care of herself and her children – cannot be overstated. That is the key to her empowerment in her adult life and for the next generation of girls who will go on to grow up into womanhood.

18.7.5 Social Justice

Abuse of women is seen as a weapon in society. The abuse can take the form of mental or physical harassment. The harassment again may be classified as purely physical assault or an assault of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment might manifest itself in the form of molestation on the lower end of the scale, to rape at the other end. The extreme manifestation of sexual violence takes the form of organized trafficking of women for monetary gain or sexual slavery.

18.7.6 Conflict

Although entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex. In all situations of social unrest and disruption of everyday law and order, it is the women and by extension, the girls who have to bear the worst consequences. From the point of being physically weaker to resist assault and battery, to being the target of rape, gang-rape and mass-rape etc. women are the most vulnerable in all situations of conflict. It is estimated that close to 90 per cent of current war casualties are civilians, the majority of whom are women and children, compared to a century ago when 90 per cent of those who lost their lives were military personnel. Parties in conflict situations often rape women, sometimes using systematic rape as a tactic of war. Other forms of violence against women committed in armed conflict include murder, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and forced sterilization.

18.7.7 Poverty

Women bear a disproportionate burden of the world's poverty. Statistics indicate that women are more likely than men to be poor and at risk of hunger because of the systematic discrimination they face in education, health care, employment and control of assets. Poverty implications are widespread for women, leaving many without even basic rights such as access to clean drinking water, sanitation, medical care and decent employment. Being poor can also mean they have little protection from violence and have no role in decision making. According to some estimates, women represent 70 per cent of the world's poor. They are often paid less than men for their work, with the average wage gap in 2008 being 17 per cent. Women face persistent discrimination when they apply for credit for business or self-

employment and are often concentrated in insecure, unsafe and low-wage work. Eight out of ten women workers are considered to be in vulnerable employment in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with global economic changes taking a huge toll on their livelihoods.

Financial crisis is likely to affect women particularly severely. In many developing countries where women work in export-led factories or in countries where migrant women workers are the backbone of service industries, women's jobs have taken the greatest hit. The International Labour Organization estimated that the economic downturn could lead to 22 million more unemployed women in 2009, jeopardizing the gains made in the last few decades in women's empowerment.

In many countries, however, the impact goes far beyond the loss of formal jobs, as the majority of women tend to work in the informal sector (for example as domestic workers in cities) and do not show up in official unemployment numbers. Economic policies and institutions still mostly fail to take gender disparities into account, from tax and budget systems to trade regimes. And with too few seats at the tables where economic decisions are made, women themselves have limited opportunity to influence policy.

18.7.8 Violence

Violence affects the lives of millions of women worldwide, in all socio-economic and educational classes. It cuts across cultural and religious barriers, impeding the right of women to participate fully in society. Violence against women takes a dismaying variety of forms, from domestic abuse and rape to child marriages and female circumcision. All are violations of the most fundamental human rights. In a statement to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in September 1995, the then United Nations Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, said that violence against women is a universal problem that must be universally condemned. But he said that the problem continues to grow. The Secretary-General noted that domestic violence alone is on the increase. Studies in 10 countries, he said, have found that between 17 per cent and 38 per cent of women have suffered physical assaults by a partner. In the Platform for Action, the core document of the Beijing Conference, Governments declared that "violence against women constitutes a violation of basic human rights and is an obstacle to the achievement of the objectives of equality, development and peace".

18.7.9 Fighting Hunger

Women have a crucial role to play in the fight against hunger. As mothers, farmers, teachers and entrepreneurs, they hold the key to building a future free of malnutrition. Here are ten reasons why empowering women is the key to development.

- 1) Women make up a little over half of the world's population but in many parts of the world, especially in Asia and South America, they are more likely to go hungry than men.
- 2) Following natural disasters, women and girls suffer more from shortages of food.
- 3) A large body of research confirms that putting more income in the hands of women yields beneficial results for health, education and child nutrition.
- 4) Closing the gender gap in agriculture by giving women farmers more resources could bring the number of hungry people in the world down by 100-150 million people.
- 5) Surveys in a wide range of countries have shown that women provide 85-90 per cent of the time spent on household food preparation.

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- 6) Women in Africa work an average of 50 per cent longer each day than men.
- 7) Worldwide, for every 100 boys out of school there are 122 girls. But in some countries the gender gap is much wider. For every 100 boys out of school in Yemen there are 270 girls, in Iraq 316 girls and in India 426 girls.
- 8) Educated mothers have healthier families. Their children are better nourished, are less likely to die in infancy and more likely to attend school.
- 9) Around half of all pregnant women in developing countries are anaemic. Iron deficiency causes around 110,000 deaths during child birth each year.
- 10) Malnourished mothers often give birth to underweight babies who are 20 percent more likely to die before the age of five. Up to 17 million children are born underweight every year.

Table 18.2 will give us an idea of the gender disaggregated indicators and data which should be collected for the need assessment.

Table 18.2: Proforma for collecting of gender-sensitive baseline demographic data¹	
Name of village, town, district, city, sub-region, etc.	
Type of local government organization	
Total area	
Area of Land	
Area of Water	
Population density	
# of inhabitants	
# of HH	
Average # of individuals in HH	
# of Females (18-60 yrs)	
# of Males (18-60 yrs)	
# of Females (5-17 yrs)	
# of Males (5-17 yrs)	
# of Females (under 5 yrs)	
# of Males (under 5 yrs)	
# of Elderly (over 60 yrs)	
¹ Sources of baseline demographic data include, the national census, UNDP's national human development reports, and the World Bank.	

Median income of HH	
Median income for female-headed HH	
Median income for male-headed HH	
# of HH living below the poverty line	
# of female-headed HH living below the poverty line	

of male-headed HH living below the poverty line

Note: HH stands for household

Gender sensitive baseline livelihoods (agricultural and non-agricultural) data ²	
Cost of food-basket	
% of HH w/FT secure agricultural employment	
Monthly average income	
% of females w/FT secure agricultural employment	
Monthly average income	
% of males w/FT secure agricultural employment	
% of HH w/FT secure non-agricultural employment	
Monthly average income	
% of females w/FT secure non-agricultural employment	
Monthly average income	
% of males w/FT secure non-agricultural employment	
% of HH w/PT secure agricultural employment	
Monthly average income	
% of females w/PT secure agricultural employment	
Monthly average income	
% of males w/PT secure agricultural employment	
% of HH w/PT secure nonagricultural employment	

Monthly average income

² Sources of baseline employment and livelihoods data include the census, FAO statistics, ILO reports, economic ministries, and the World Bank.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

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

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Why should we conduct need assessment for policy making in the area of health?

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18.8 SUMMING UP

This Unit dealt with defining need assessment and different approaches in need assessment. It also discussed different methodologies to conduct need assessment. Not only methodologies, tools of conducting need assessment were also described. Lastly, it explained the importance of bringing gender concerns in the need assessment process and the areas of concern for conducting need assessment to formulate gender-sensitive policies.

Need assessment is a process for determining and addressing needs or ‘gaps’ between current conditions and desired conditions, often used for improvement in individuals, education/training, organizations or communities. Conducting information and literature search; selecting data collection methods; determining sampling scheme; designing and piloting collection instrument; gathering and recording data; analyzing data; managing data; synthesizing data and creating reports.

Some of the tools used for need assessment include observation; interviews; focus group discussion; oral surveys; questionnaires; existing data and tests.

Factors influencing need assessment include audience characterization; knowledge; training; tools and techniques; benefits; attitudes and biases; ability to attend or access; and cultural characteristics.

Gender and need assessment in sectoral areas such as food security; health; education; economic self-reliance/employment opportunities; social justice; conflict; poverty; violence; fighting hunger. Table 18.2 summarized the gender disaggregated indicators and data which should be collected for need assessment.

18.9 GLOSSARY

Gender-aware needs : Gender-aware needs are those that are specific to female or male members of the population and partially result from women’s and men’s positions in the family and larger society.

Gender-aware assessment : A process within which the specific needs of women and girls and men and boys are identified and analyzed.

Gender-aware priorities : Gender-aware priorities are those that reflect the main concerns of either women or men and are

information

informed by their roles in the household and public spheres (commonly referred to as gender roles).

Gender-aware qualitative : Gender-aware qualitative information reveals data on the quality of the daily realities of women, men, boys and girls, as well as the quality of their participation in different sectors.

Sex-disaggregated data : Statistical information that differentiates between females and males.

18.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Need assessment is a process for determining and addressing needs or “gaps” between current conditions and desired conditions, often used for improvement in individuals, education/training, organizations or communities. The need can be a desire to improve current performance or to rectify existing deficiency.
- 2) Observation – Observation is a method of data collection based on watching a process or skill and systematically recording the events.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Poor health status always had been one of the critical indicators of women’s low status in Indian society. Until the 1990s, virtually every gender-based health statistic for the country showed discrimination against women. For example, higher female infant mortality, high maternal mortality, higher general mortality and morbidity rates in most age groups and lower life expectancy at birth. This trend persists in 2011 census data of Government of India also. With regard to sex ratio, according to 2011 census, it is 940 females per 1000 males. But in developing countries like Indonesia it was 988 females per 1000 males in 2011. In Bangladesh it was 978 per 1000 males in 2011. (Census of India, provisional population totals, office of the Registrar General and census commissioner). Women’s health is always a low priority, both in the family and in society. Parents hesitate to take their girl children to doctors – both for the fear of spending money, as well as ruining the chances of getting them married. Nobody wants an ‘ill’ daughter-in-law. In her marital home also she is expected to be a care giver and not a care-seeker. The needs of her family always come before her needs. This is specially so if she does not have an income of her own.

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18.12 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

- 1) How can we conduct need assessment? Explain with suitable examples.
- 2) What are the advantages and disadvantages in carrying out need assessment?
- 3) Analyze the significance of need assessment in formulating gender-sensitive policies. Explain with a few selected indicators.

UNIT 19 FOUNDATIONS OF GENDER-SENSITIVE PLANNING

Foundations of Gender-sensitive
Planning

Structure

- 19.1 Introduction
- 19.2 Objectives
- 19.3 Definitions
- 19.4 Foundations of Gender-sensitive Planning
- 19.5 Reasons for Gender-sensitive Planning
- 19.6 Need for Gender-sensitive Planning
- 19.7 Indicators of Empowerment
- 19.8 Indicators and Development Objectives
- 19.9 Summing Up
- 19.10 Glossary
- 19.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 19.12 References
- 19.13 Questions for Reflection and Practice

19.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 18 we learnt about need assessment as the foundation of efforts to promote gender equality through policy making and planning. In this Unit we will deal with the foundations of gender-sensitive planning and policy making. The foundations of gender-sensitive planning and policy making is intended to: (i) facilitate the identification and evaluation of existing needs, capacities and capabilities of women, men, boys and girls in all situations; (ii) promote the identification of programmatic gaps and shortfalls; (iii) anticipate future short-term needs and potential response gaps; and (iv) facilitate multi-sectoral and collaborative planning and programming. It aims to promote gender equality in all policies.

19.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- analyze the foundations of gender-sensitive planning and policy making;
- examine the reasons for gender-sensitive planning and policy making;
- explain the need for gender-sensitive policy planning; and
- describe the indicators for women's empowerment.

19.3 DEFINITIONS

The difference between sex and gender was explained in Block 1 of MGS-001. As we have already explained, sex is defined by the gonads either phenotypically or genotypically. It is generally assigned at birth by external genital appearance. Gender, on the other hand, is identified by one's own identification as male, female or intersex. Gender may also be based on legal status, social interactions, public

persona and experiences. In short, sex is biologically determined, whereas gender is socially and culturally determined.

Gender sensitivity is the awareness and insight gained with reference to historical roots of sexist stereotyping, discrimination and violence. Another definition would be the awareness and acceptance of the roles and duties of each, as expected from them and from the people that they work with. It acknowledges the different roles and responsibilities of women and men in the community and the relationships between them. Men and women are situated and governed by different socio-cultural contexts and norms. Therefore their experiences, needs, issues and priorities are different. Strategies to achieve equitable outcomes for women and men may also vary. Sensitivity towards any one's sexual or reproductive differential capability and roles while actively trying to remove all types of discriminations and stereotypes that affect the growth of a person, particularly, female could be called as gender sensitivity.

19.4 FOUNDATIONS OF GENDER-SENSITIVE PLANNING

Emergencies affect women and girls differently from men and boys. In wartime, men are often primary casualties, while women in situations of armed conflicts, civil strife or natural disasters often lose the capacity to sustain their family's livelihood. Increasing global instability manifested in political, religious and socio-economic scenarios, as well as natural disasters, periodically afflict various regions. Women are often more vulnerable because of lower socio-economic standing to men, in terms of access to necessary resources and ability to gainfully provide for their families. They lack influence due to inequality and disempowerment and have less decision-making power and control over their lives.

Gender sensitivity is considered an integral part of decision making in industrialized countries where there is a growing number of female-headed households, especially in the urban setting. In less developed countries, these issues are aggravated by gender insensitive alternatives which cause stress and discomfort especially among females whose needs greatly differ from that of men. However, gender sensitivity is not about pitting women against men. An education that is gender-sensitive benefits members of both sexes. Sexism creates bias and promotes an unjust society. It exists both among men and among women. It does not respect individuals according to their aspirations, potential or abilities.

Some of the roles that are defined by gender include:

Productive – comprises the work done by both women and men for payment in cash or kind.

Reproductive – comprises the childbearing responsibilities and domestic tasks required to guarantee the maintenance and well-being of household members. It includes not only biological reproduction but also the care and maintenance of the persons who comprise the household.

Community management role – comprises activities undertaken at the community level to contribute to the development or political organization of the community. It is usually voluntary, unpaid work.

19.5 REASONS FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE PLANNING

The female sex has traditionally been perceived as inferior to men. In several

places in the world, the birth of a male child is a cause of celebration but girls are considered as a financial burden. Women have the traditional role as mothers and housekeepers, helpers, passive onlookers, care providers and carriers, while men are depicted as decision-makers, businessmen and doctors. Attitude or mindset which “justifies” men’s control over women, headship for men and subordination for women – often justifies discrimination and violence against women, restricts perception of dignity and worth of women, denies their contribution to society and makes their rights and opportunities conditional, resulting in their vulnerability. In the workplace, denial of employment to women due to women’s reproductive role or rigidity in attitude hinders the reproductive role of women – eg. non-flexible work hours and timings, non-availability of day care services, lack of maternity leave. However, global development aims to improve the life of every person, regardless of ability, age, sexual orientation, gender, race, class or ethnicity. Therefore, it becomes imperative that barriers to personal development and economic success created by sexism are reduced and respect for individuals, regardless of sex, is generated.

In all societies men and women play different roles, have different needs and face different constraints. Gender roles differ from the biological roles of men and women, although they may overlap in nearly all societies. Gender roles are socially constructed. They demarcate responsibilities between men and women, social and economic activities, access to resources and decision making authority. Biological roles are fixed, but gender roles can and do change with social, economic and technological change. Social factors underlie and support gender-based disparities.

These factors include:

- Institutional arrangements that create and reinforce gender-based constraints or, conversely, foster an environment in which gender disparities can be reduced.
- The formal legal system that reinforces customs and practices giving women inferior legal status in many countries.
- Socio-cultural attitudes and ethnic and class/caste-based obligations that determine men’s and women’s roles, responsibilities and decision making functions.
- Religious beliefs and practices that limit women’s mobility, social contact, access to resources and the types of activities they can pursue.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

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

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

1) How do you explain gender-sensitivity?

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19.6 NEED FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE PLANNING

Gender-sensitive planning ensures that gender issues and considerations identified in gender analysis are taken into account in the planning, design and implementation

phase of any project. This includes the process of formulating appropriate gender equality goals and developing corresponding strategies and activities.

Why?

To ensure equitable opportunities and equal outcomes

How?

By addressing specific gender issues and gender-based inequalities identified in gender analysis.

The technical and political processes and procedures necessary to implement gender-sensitive policy and practice need to be identified. The purpose of gender planning is to ensure gender-sensitive policy outcomes, through a systematic and inclusive process. If gender policy has transformatory goals, then gender planning as a process will necessarily be a political one, involving consultation with and participation of, different stakeholders. There is a variety of gender planning frameworks based on differing approaches to gender analysis, each with its own planning principles and tools. For example, Caroline Moser (1993) developed a gender planning framework consisting of gender planning tools, gender planning procedures and the components of gender planning practices.

The gender planning tools include gender roles identification; gender needs assessment and the collection of disaggregated data at the household level. The gender planning procedures involve the diagnosis of the gender problem; formulation of gender objectives; procedures for monitoring and evaluation; gender-based consultation and participation and identification of an entry strategy. The final aspect, practice, identifies the need to institutionalize gender planning and to operationalize this through recognized procedures. Building capacity amongst planners is necessary to ensure that policy is transformed into practice with the minimum of dilution.

The social relations approach differs in its focus on power in gender relations. This approach uses an institutional framework for the analysis of gender inequalities as a tool for gender-aware planning. It recognizes that the means through which needs are met is as important as the planned ends of any intervention. The planning process is conceived as participatory and constituted by an analysis and evaluation of causes, effects, means and ends. A seven-point 'Gender audit for development interventions' supports this framework (Kabeer and Subramanian, 1996).

While gender-transformatory policies are increasingly being generated, concerns are focusing on the 'misbehaviour' of such policies, i.e. a tendency to slip in implementation, from transformatory objectives to outcomes that fail to challenge existing gender relations. It has been recognized that GAD approaches are constrained by resistance and subversion, from within both implementing organizations and targeted communities. Gender planning needs, therefore, to be part of an on-going process of gender mainstreaming, backed up by sufficient resources, commitment and authority. Gender planning procedures need to involve the participation of stakeholders and must have clear lines of accountability.

At the project level, a variety of planning tools are used to operationalize gender policy, including general and sector-specific checklists and guidelines. Logical Framework Analysis is an example of a planning tool which, if used in a gender-sensitive manner, can help to ensure accountability, participation of various stakeholders and ensure that relevant monitoring and evaluation procedures are implemented.

Some of the gender issues that should be taken into consideration while planning include:

- Poverty;

- Inequality in education;
- Inequality in employment;
- Inequality in health care;
- Inequality in politics;
- Violence and abuse against women; and
- Child marriage.

Poverty

More than one billion people live in poverty around the world and a great majority of them are women. Women's poverty results in widespread violations of their human rights. When a woman faces a lack of access to adequate housing, food or health care, her human rights are violated. When she lives in an unsafe and unhealthy environment or lacks access to clean water, she is not enjoying her fundamental human rights to a life of dignity and to an adequate standard of living.

Poverty can also be caused by violations of human rights, particularly women's human right to non-discrimination. When women are denied equal access to employment opportunities, are paid less than men for equal work or are prevented by law or custom from owning or inheriting land, they are made vulnerable to poverty. When women are denied equal access to education, when they do not have the equal right to decide on the number and spacing of children or when they have an unequal share of the responsibility for raising children, their ability to earn an income and to be protected from poverty is greatly compromised.

Inequality in education

Access to education has been one of the most pressing demands of these women's rights movements. Women's education in India has also been a major preoccupation of both the government and civil society as educated women can play a very important role in the development of the country.

Box 19.1: Status of Women in Education

Women's education got a fillip after the country got independence in 1947 and the government has taken various measures to provide education to all Indian women. As a result, the women's literacy rate has grown over decades. The growth of female literacy has, in fact, been higher than that of male literacy rate. While in 1971 only 22% of Indian women were literate, by the end of 2001, 54.16% female were literate. The growth of female literacy rate is 14.87% as compared to 11.72 % of that of male literacy rate.

Women's education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover, educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population.

Gender discrimination still persists in India and much more needs to be done in the field of women's education in India. The gap in the male-female literacy rate is just a simple indicator. While the male literary rate is 82.14 per cent according to the 2011 census, the female literacy rate is 65.46. Prevailing prejudices, low enrollment of the girl child in schools, engagement of girl children in domestic work and high drop out rate are major obstacles in the path of making all Indian women educated.

Inequality in employment

Women in the workforce constitute an integral part of the total workforce in India. In 2004, women constituted 19 per cent of the total workforce. The participation of women in the labour force has always been lower than that of men, in the rural as well as urban areas. The work participation rate for women has increased significantly. In 1981, work participation rate for women was only 19.67 per cent which increased up to 22.73 per cent in 1991 and 26.68 per cent in 2001.

While there has been progress in recent decades in engaging women in the global workforce, there has been considerably less progress in improving the conditions under which they work, recognizing their unpaid work, eliminating discriminatory practices, enacting laws related to property and inheritance rights and providing childcare support. Ensuring that men and women have equal opportunities to generate and manage income is an important step towards realizing women's rights and enhancing their development, self-esteem and influence both within the household and in society. Moreover, children's rights are more likely to be fulfilled when women fully enjoy their social and economic rights.

Whether they live in industrialized or developing countries, in rural or urban settings, in general, women work longer hours than men. While data on the way men and women use their time are sparse, surveys conducted in recent years confirm the validity of this assertion across developing countries. Oxfam estimates that women work around 60 to 90 hours per week and time-use surveys reveal that across a selection of developing countries in Asia, Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, women's working hours exceed those of men, often by a wide margin. For many women, unpaid work in and for the household takes up the majority of their working hours, with much less time spent in remunerative employment. Data from urban areas in fifteen Latin American countries reveal that unpaid household work is the principal activity for 1 in every 4 women; the corresponding ratio for men is 1 in every 200.

When women work outside the household, they earn, on the average, far less than men. Although disaggregated data on nominal wages are scarce, the available evidence shows that, across regions, women's nominal wages are roughly 20 per cent lower than men's. While the data show that gender wage gaps exist across countries, these can vary significantly and can even be inverted. In Brazil, for example, women under the age of 25 earn a higher average hourly wage than their male counterparts. Since much of the work women do is underpaid and because they often perform low-status jobs and earn less than men, women's per capita average earned income is far lower than men's earned income.

Inequality in health care

It is reported that about 40 million Indian women die due to non-availability of proper healthcare every year. Some of these women remain so malnourished that they die soon after they reach a health centre or hospital for treatment of disease. Many of our women who exist today are surviving because they have escaped out of the death trap either when they had been in embryonic stage in the wombs of their mothers or after they came out and journeyed through the vulnerable years of their childhood. Many of these women could see the world just because the chemical administered against them while they had been inside their mothers' body, could not work properly. Such girls or women could be living with some or the other type of physical or mental deformities.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released its Asia Pacific Human Development Report entitled "Voice and Rights: A Turning Point for Gender Equality in Asia and Pacific" on March 8, 2010. It reflects women "outnumbering and outliving men in many countries". The population of women in these countries

is a little more than half of the total population. In India, the case is different and painful. Here, women constitute about 48.2 percent of the total population. In Pakistan, their percentage is 48.5, a little better; and 48.8 in Bangladesh, still better. A number of reports published from time to time have been revealing that only female embryos, girls and women are being eliminated and societies in some developing countries like those of India and China are demonstrating increasingly skewed sex ratios.

Inequality in politics

Women's participation in politics and government, however, remains limited. Although their parliamentary representation has steadily increased over the past decade, gender parity in politics at all levels is still a long way off. By July 2010, women accounted for just fewer than 17 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide. Ten countries have no women parliamentarians at all and in more than 40 others, women account for less than 10 per cent of legislators. At current annual rates of growth in the proportion of women members of national parliaments – about 0.5 per cent worldwide – gender parity in national legislatures will not be achieved until 2068.

The under-representation of women at the ministerial level and in local government is even more marked than in national legislatures. As of January 2009, women accounted for just over 14 per cent of government ministers worldwide. Nineteen governments had no women ministers at all and among those governments that did include women, most had a token presence of around one to three women ministers.

Violence and abuse against women

Violence against women is a technical term used to collectively refer to violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. Similar to a hate crime, this type of violence targets a specific group with the victim's gender as a primary motive. The United Nations General Assembly defines "violence against women" as "any act of gender-based violence that results in or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life". The 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women noted that this violence could be perpetrated by assailants of either gender, family members and even the "State" itself.

The World Health Organization reports that violence against women puts an undue burden on health care services with women who have suffered violence being more likely to need health services and at higher cost, compared to women who have not suffered violence. Several studies have shown a link between poor treatment of women and international violence. These studies show that one of the best predictors of inter- and intra-national violence is the maltreatment of women in the society.

Child marriage

Child marriage usually refers to two separate social phenomena which are practiced in some societies. The first and more widespread practice is that of marrying a young child (generally defined as below the age of fifteen) to an adult. Due to women's shorter reproductive life period (relative to men's), perhaps, the practice of child marriage tends to be of young girls to fully-grown men. The second practice is a form of arranged marriage in which the parents of two children from different families arrange a future marriage. In this practice, the individuals who become betrothed often do not meet one another until the wedding ceremony, which occurs when they are both considered to be of a marriageable age. An increase in the advocacy of human rights, whether as women's rights or as children's rights, has

caused the traditions of child marriage to decrease greatly as it was considered unfair and dangerous for the children. Child marriages may have many purposes. The aristocracies of some cultures tend to use child marriage among different factions or states as a method to secure political ties between them. For example, the son or daughter of the royal family of a weaker power would sometimes be arranged to marry into the royal family of a stronger neighbouring power, thus preventing itself from being assimilated. In the lower classes, if they were fortunate, families could use child marriages as means to gain financial ties with wealthier people, ensuring their successions.

Once some or all of the above factors are taken into consideration depending on the context, programmes should be planned in such a way as to ensure empowerment of women and allow them a possibility of achieving the same level of success, despite their gender.

19.7 INDICATORS OF EMPOWERMENT

Quantitative indicators can be defined as measures of quantity, such as the number of people who own land in a village.

Qualitative indicators can be defined as people's judgments and perceptions about a subject, such as the confidence people have in land as an instrument of financial independence.

While this definition is relatively simple, it hides some of the more complex ways in which these two types of indicators are used. For example, "quality of life" indicators, such as those that measure changes in a population's health, education or employment, are often confused with qualitative indicators, because both appear to refer to "quality". In fact, health, education or any other subject can be measured by either qualitative or quantitative indicators. Also, there is sometimes considerable overlap between quantitative and qualitative approaches, making it difficult to tell one from the other. Two ways of distinguishing between these two types of indicators is by their source of information and the way in which this information is interpreted and used.

Source of information

One useful way to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative indicators in the development field is by the different sources of information they use. Quantitative indicators focus on areas that are easy to quantify, such as wage rates or education levels. Because of this, quantitative indicators are usually drawn from censuses, enumerations and administrative records. That is, quantitative indicators are extracted from more formal surveys. On the other hand, because they are people's perceptions and viewpoints, qualitative indicators are typically obtained from sources such as public hearings, attitude surveys, interviews, participatory rural appraisal, participant observation and sociological or anthropological field work. That is, qualitative indicators are extracted from less formal surveys.

Use of gender-sensitive indicators in planning

Gender-sensitive indicators have the special function of pointing out gender-related changes in society over time. Their usefulness lies in their ability to point to changes in the status and roles of women and men over time and therefore to measure whether gender equity is being achieved. Use of indicators and other relevant evaluation techniques will lead to a better understanding of how results can be achieved. Using gender-sensitive indicators will also feed into more effective future planning and programme delivery.

As tools for measuring social change, indicators are subject to political forces. It is important to recognize before using indicators that all indicators have their own political heritage and bias. This is important because certain types of indicators, particularly so-called quantitative indicators, receive legitimacy as they are considered 'objective'. However, gender specialists have pointed out that the use of economic indicators, for example in relation to employment, has until quite recently been used in a way which has excluded women's work from analysis. This serious omission has been seen as a consequence of the fact that most censuses and large-scale surveys, particularly in developing countries, are organized and carried out by men and for male policy-makers. There have been two responses to this gender-bias. Firstly, gender specialists have promoted the collection of sex-disaggregated data which has been used to challenge gender bias in indicator use and to advocate for policy changes. Perhaps the best known example of this is the UN publication *The World's Women 1970-1990*, the preface of which states that its central concern is to (UN 1991: xi): "provide(s) concerned men and women with information they can use to inform people everywhere about how much women contribute to economic life, political life and family life and to support appeals to persuade public and private decision-makers to change policies that are unfair to women". The 1995 UNDP Human Development Report makes similar statements about the need to bring gender-sensitive indicators to the attention of policy-makers as a first step towards changing policies biased against women. Here, gender-sensitive indicators are not ends in themselves but a political tool to be used to challenge the status quo.

19.8 INDICATORS AND DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Since indicators are tools to promote achievement of desired results, they are tied to the objectives with which a development initiative begins. When using indicators, objectives must be clearly articulated. Objectives should be determined in relation to baseline studies, against which results can be measured. A baseline study, which should include data disaggregated by sex, socio-economic grouping and ethnicity, will reveal the situation in the project area before any kind of intervention and this study can be used for comparison when using indicators through the project cycle.

Clear objectives as critical anchors

Setting clear objectives is crucial to the functioning of results-based management because objectives have considerable influence on the way policy is implemented. Like indicators, objectives should be developed with inputs from all stakeholders in an iterative fashion.

Objectives also serve as "anchors" through the project cycle in two important ways:

- They provide a statement of the principal contributions that a programme or project will make in influencing a particular condition and,
- They act as a set of "information handles" to assess progress during implementation and evaluation.

Objectives may be organized in various categories and given different labels (goals, targets, purposes, etc.). However, regardless of how they are grouped or termed, the following five critical tests of a clear statement of objectives can be applied.

Critical tests for setting clear objectives

Some of the critical tests for setting clear objectives include:

1) **Explicitness**

Objectives should explicitly state intended results and not just refer to resources to be used and activities to be performed.

2) **Clarity and precision**

Terms and concepts that are used should be clearly defined and the statement of objectives should be understood by anyone who reads or hears it and its meaning agreed upon by all stakeholders.

3) **Feasibility or realism**

Realistic objectives should be established, which take account of available resources, the external environment, as well as actual and potential constraints, obstacles, risks and enabling factors.

4) **Measurability and verifiability**

Objectives must be crafted in a way that includes operational criteria that would allow verification of the achievements during implementation and upon completion.

5) **Time-frames**

The statement of objectives should include realistic deadlines, time-frames (or even specific dates) punctuated by intermediate targets.

In sum, objectives must be realistic, operational and measurable. They must also be tied to a credible implementation plan that links courses of action and intermediate targets to the expected final outcomes.

Implementing Gender-responsive Planning

Some of the ways to implement gender-responsive planning include:

- Addressing issues facing the planning and development of communities, cities, regions, states and the nation related to the changing roles of women and men as a means of promoting social equity;
- Creating a national network of planners, decision makers and persons actively involved in organizations which are concerned about women's empowerment;
- Promoting professional growth of women in planning and advocate for equitable treatment and advancement of female planners at all stages of their careers;
- Recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of women in planning;
- Advancing technical knowledge and improving techniques of dealing with the issues of gender and planning; and
- Promoting the analysis and examination of the issues of gender and planning at every level of government and in colleges and universities.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

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

b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the Unit.

1) Explain empowerment indicators.

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19.9 SUMMING UP

In this Unit we have explored the foundations of gender-sensitive planning and policy making. After explaining the foundations of gender-sensitive planning, the reasons for gender-sensitive planning and policy making were analyzed. Women are considered inferior to men in societies. Women's needs and priorities are rarely analyzed and hence are often not reflected in the planning and policy making process. So gender-sensitive planning needs to be highlighted. This should influence the planning and policy making process as well. Tools and techniques of gender-sensitive planning need to be employed. For carrying out gender-sensitive planning, important areas were identified and the status of women in those areas was discussed with macroeconomic data. Lastly, indicators for women's empowerment and indicators for development objectives were discussed.

Gender planning needs to be part of an ongoing process of gender mainstreaming, backed up by sufficient resources, commitment and authority. Gender planning procedures need to involve the participation of stakeholders and must have clear lines of accountability. If gender policy has transformatory goals, then gender planning as a process will necessarily be a political one, involving consultation with, and participation of, different stakeholders. The gender planning tools include gender roles identification; gender needs assessment; and the collection of disaggregated data at the household level. The gender planning procedures involve the diagnosis of the gender problem; formulation of gender objectives; procedures for monitoring and evaluation; gender-based consultation and participation and identification of an entry strategy.

At the project level, a variety of planning tools are used to operationalize gender policy, including general and sector-specific checklists and guidelines. Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) is an example of a planning tool which, if used in a gender-sensitive manner, can help to ensure accountability, participation of various stakeholders and ensure that relevant monitoring and evaluation procedures are implemented.

Some of the ways to implement gender-responsive planning include: addressing issues facing the planning and development related to the changing roles of women and men as a means of promoting social equity; creating a national network of planners, decision makers; promoting professional growth of women in planning; advancing technical knowledge and improving techniques of dealing with issues of gender and planning.

19.10 GLOSSARY

Gender-aware qualitative information: Gender-aware qualitative information reveals data on the quality of the daily realities of women, men, boys and girls, as well as the quality of their participation in different sectors.

Gender-aware priorities: Gender-aware priorities are those that reflect the main concerns of either women or men and are informed by their roles in the household and public life (commonly referred to as gender roles).

Gender-aware needs assessment: A process within which the specific needs of women and girls and men and boys are identified and analyzed.

19.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Gender sensitivity is the awareness and insight into the state of the other sex, with reference to historical roots of sexist stereotyping, discrimination and violence. Another definition would be the awareness and acceptance of the roles and duties of each, as expected from them and from the people that they work with. It acknowledges the different roles and responsibilities of women and men in the community and the relationships between them. Men and women are different; therefore their experiences, needs, issues and priorities are different. Strategies are also different to achieve equitable outcomes for women and men. Being sensitive towards any one's sexual or reproductive differential capability and roles while actively trying to remove all types of discriminations and stereotypes that affect the growth of a person (particularly female) could be referred to as gender sensitivity.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Quantitative indicators can be defined as measures of quantity, such as the number of people who own sewing machines in a village.

Qualitative indicators can be defined as people's judgments and perceptions about a subject, such as the confidence those people have in sewing machines – as instruments of financial independence.

While this definition is relatively simple, it hides some of the more complex ways in which these two types of indicators are used. For example, "quality of life" indicators, such as those that measure changes in a population's health, education or employment, are often confused with qualitative indicators, because both appear to refer to "quality". In fact, health, education or any other subject can be measured by either qualitative or quantitative indicators. Also, there is sometimes considerable overlap between quantitative and qualitative approaches, making it difficult to tell one from the other. Two ways of distinguishing between these two types of indicators is by their source of information and the way in which this information is interpreted and used.

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Foundations of Gender-sensitive Planning

19.13 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

- 1) Write a short note on the foundations of gender-sensitive planning.
- 2) Why should we undertake gender-sensitive planning?
- 3) Analyze the need for gender-sensitive planning. Explain highlighting key issues.

UNIT 20 ANALYSIS OF EXISTING POLICIES

Structure

- 20.1 Introduction
- 20.2 Objectives
- 20.3 Goals and Objectives of Policy Analysis
- 20.4 Judicial and Legal Systems
- 20.5 Decision Making
- 20.6 Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in the Development Process
- 20.7 Economic Empowerment of Women
- 20.8 Social Empowerment of Women
- 20.9 Institutional Mechanisms
- 20.10 Resource Management
- 20.11 Legislation
- 20.12 Gender Sensitization
- 20.13 Summing Up
- 20.14 Glossary
- 20.15 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 20.16 References
- 20.17 Questions for Reflection and Practice

20.1 INTRODUCTION

Gender sensitivity is the ability to recognize issues and problems related to the way in which societies look at gender. Gender-sensitive policies should particularly look at how women act and are treated and the different ways in which women understand their roles. They should respond to the need for combating stereotyping and discrimination and the potential adverse influences of gender roles. The status of women in India has been subject to many great changes over the past few millennia. From equal status with men in ancient times through the low points of the medieval period to the promotion of equal rights by many reformers, the history of women in India has been eventful. In modern India, women have adorned high offices including that of the President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Leader of the Opposition, etc. The women's movement and a widespread network of non-governmental organizations which have strong grassroots presence and deep insight into women's concerns have contributed in inspiring initiatives for the empowerment of women. In 2010 March 9, a day after International Women's Day, the Rajya Sabha passed the Women's Reservation Bill, ensuring 33.3 per cent reservation to women in Parliament and state legislative bodies.

However, there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the ground realities about the status of women in India on the other.

Gender disparity manifests itself in various forms, the most obvious being the trend of continuously declining female ratio in the population in the last few decades. India has a highly "masculine" sex ratio, the chief reason being that many

women die before reaching adulthood. Tribal societies in India have a less “masculine” sex ratio than all other groups in spite of the fact that the tribal communities have far lower levels of income, literacy and health facilities. It is, therefore, suggested by many experts that the highly “masculine” sex ratio in India can be attributed to female infanticides and sex-selective abortions.

All medical tests that can be used to determine the sex of the child have been banned in India, due to incidents of these tests being used to get rid of unwanted female children before birth. Female infanticide is still prevalent in some rural areas. The abuse of the dowry tradition has been one of the main reasons for sex-selective abortions and female infanticides in India. Social stereotyping and violence at the domestic and societal levels are some of the other manifestations. Discrimination against girl children, adolescent girls and women persists all over India. The underlying causes of gender inequality are related to social and economic structure, which is based on informal and formal norms and practices. Consequently, the access to health and educational services of women belonging to weaker sections including Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other backward Classes and minorities remains poor. The majority of them are in the rural areas and they belong to the informal, unorganized sector. Access to the services provided by the government in the rural areas in education, health and productive resources are inadequate. Therefore, they remain largely marginalized, poor and socially excluded. It becomes essential that policies which are enacted should ensure that women are encouraged and empowered enough to become active and productive members of society, thereby contributing to the growth and development of the community and nation.

It is in this direction that India has ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committed to securing equal rights for women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993. The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Sessions (UNGA) on Gender Equality and Development and Peace for the 21st century, titled “Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action” have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow-up.

20.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- describe goals and objectives of policy analysis;
- explain economic and social empowerment of women;
- examine the institutional mechanisms for policy analysis;
- explain resource management in policy analysis; and
- analyze gender sensitization in legislative, executive and judicial wings with regard to policy analysis.

20.3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF POLICY ANALYSIS

The primary goal of policy is to promote the advancement, development and empowerment of women. Policies need to be widely disseminated so as to encourage

Gender Considerations in Need Assessment

active participation of all stakeholders for achieving the intended goals. Specifically, the objectives of policy include:

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women enabling them to realize their full potential;
- Promoting the *de-jure* and *de-facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women on an equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil;
- Enhancing equal access and participation in decision making in social, political and economic life of the nation;
- Providing equal access and participation of women in all sectors. Promoting interventions such as: Ensuring quality education to women at all levels; facilitating women in choosing their career; providing women with vocational guidance, employment opportunities and ensuring equal remuneration to women on par with men; ensuring women's occupational health and safety; enacting appropriate laws to provide social security for women and ensuring that more women occupy public offices;
- Strengthening legal systems which should aim at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women;
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in all development processes;
- Elimination of discrimination all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations to ensure speedy implementation of women-related programmes and policies.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

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

b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the Unit.

1) What are the goals and objectives of policy analysis?

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The policy also prescribed some changes in various arms of the state to ensure a just and gender-friendly system. Some of these prescriptions include strengthening the systems of:

- Judicial Legal Systems;
- Decision Making;
- Mainstreaming Gender in Development Perspectives;
- Economic and Social Empowerment; and
- Institutional Mechanisms.

In the following sections we will discuss these in greater detail.

20.4 JUDICIAL LEGAL SYSTEMS

Legal-judicial systems should be made more responsive and gender-sensitive especially domestic violence and personal assault cases. New laws should be enacted and existing laws should be reviewed regularly to ensure speedy justice. Justice should be delivered quickly and the punishment given to the culprits should be commensurate with the severity of the offence. With the initiative of Government and participation of all stakeholders including community and religious leaders, policies should aim to encourage changes in personal laws such as those related to marriage, divorce, maintenance and guardianship to eliminate discrimination against women. The evolution of property rights especially land title in a patriarchal system has also contributed to the subordinate status of women. Policies should aim to encourage changes in laws relating to ownership of property and inheritance by evolving consensus in order to make them gender-just.

20.5 DECISION MAKING

Women's equality in power sharing and active participation in decision making, including decision making in the political process at all levels will be ensured only after achieving empowerment of women. All measures should be taken to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in decision making bodies at every level, including the legislative, executive, judicial, corporate, statutory bodies, Advisory Commissions, Committees, Boards, and Trusts. Affirmative action such as reservations/quotas (including in higher legislative bodies), should be considered whenever necessary on a time-bound basis. Women-friendly personnel policies should be drawn up to encourage women's participation effectively in the developmental process. After gaining independence in 1947, India adopted a republican Constitution, based on universal adult suffrage and a parliamentary form of democracy. Subsequently, the country has been governed by a central government and 30 state governments. Their functions, jurisdictions and powers are clearly demarcated by a division of powers under three different lists – union, state and concurrent – by the Constitution itself (seventh schedule). To its credit, India has had regular elections to the central parliament and state assemblies. This coupled with an independent election commission that conducts them systematically and a vigilant public opinion, has kept the executive and legislature in check. In recent years, the Indian federation is coming into its own with an increased articulation of regional aspirations, and the increase in popularity of regional parties.

The states are acquiring more power and there has been a decline in the dominance of any single party. Coalition governments at the centre have become common. However, not much attention was given to the district level and below. It was only after 1957 that the districts and villages attained political importance, but continued to fall under state control. It was not before 1992, with the promulgation of the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendments that the urban and the rural local government emerged as the third tier of government of India.

In the Indian Constitution there is an emphasis on gender equality, which enables the state to undertake special measures for women, when it proclaims under article 15 that the state can make any special provision for women and children. So, several laws were introduced. Among them, fifteen were listed in the India Country Report presented in the Beijing Conference of 1995. Some of them are the Maternity Benefits Acts, of 1961, the Equal Remuneration Act of 1961, the Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Act of 1976, the Hindu Succession Act of 1956, the Hindu Marriage Act 1955, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971, the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961, the Rape Law Amendment 1983, the Prevention of Atrocities Act of 1989 and the Protection of Civil Rights Act of 1955.

The National Perspective Plan for Women was drawn up as a long-term action plan but women's groups have pointed out several shortcomings in its approach, coverage and methodology. Likewise, the National Commission for Women, set up in 1992, following an Act of Parliament, can only take up specific complaints of discrimination against women, but has no power to award punishment.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of India provides ample opportunities for women to assume power at the grassroots level. But the participation of women in local governments in India can be traced back to the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee Report in 1957. It has recommended that besides the 20 members of the Intermediary Local Government body there should be two women "who are interested in work among women and children" as co-opted members. A similar provision was suggested with regard to the village level body. Following this, a few states did make provisions for women's representation. The Maharashtra Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti Act of 1961 provided for the nomination of one or two women to each of the three bodies, in case no women were elected. The nomination as a principle, however, was highly questionable within theory and practice. The Ashok Mehta Committee Report (1978) provided for women's representation. Only the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts of India reserved seats for women. The salient features of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts are:

- i) Not less than one-third of the seats will be reserved for women (including that of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) and these may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies or wards of the local government bodies;
- ii) In proportion to the total population of SCs/STs to the population of the area, seats will be reserved for SCs/STs; there will be reservation for women in the seats allotted to SCs and STs to the extent of not less than one-third of the total SC/ST seats;
- iii) Not less than one-third of the total numbers of seats for the office of the Chairpersons at each level will be reserved for women. This will be rotated among different local government bodies at each election; and
- iv) In addition, the women can take advantage of the general seats for members and chairpersons for open posts at all the levels.

Participation of women at the grassroots has opened up opportunities for women in decision making.

Case Study 1

The Importance of Assets and Opportunity Structure in Effective Political Choice in India

Elected representatives who are landless participate in local elected body meetings to a significantly lesser extent than those who own some land. As the landless are dependent economically, they are therefore less likely to raise dissenting opinions against their potential employers in the village – a conclusion that is also supported by case study data. Education and access to information are also significantly associated with participation among elected representatives. Every additional year of education tends, on an average, to raise representatives' participation by more than two-and-a-half percentage points. A representative who has ten years of education scores on an average 27 percentage points higher on this scale compared to another who has no formal education. Similarly, higher access to information is associated with greater participation among representatives by almost three percentage points, on average, for each additional source of information that they consult. Respondents stated that individual benefits (from the elected body – the Panchayat) could be accessed only by people who had a relationship with the Sarpanch's (president's) family. Such relationships were based on frequent labour

work for the Sarpanch and kin, purchasing goods from shops owned by them, and voting in their favour. A scheduled tribe (low social status) wardpanch said that she/he had no powers, but that she/he “and other wardpanches have to go along with whatever the Patidars (the caste group of the Sarpanch) decide in the Panchayat as many of them are dependent on the Patidars for labour.... Many village people are dependent on the Patidars for their livelihoods”. The people who feel that they are excluded from the individual benefits of the Panchayat say they lack the awareness of what to do to change the situation and do not know to whom they should turn outside the Panchayat.

Source: Alsop, Sjoblom, and Krishna (2001), *Measuring Empowerment in Practice: Structuring Analysis and Framing Indicators*, World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3510, February 2005

20.6 MAINSTREAMING A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Policies, programmes and systems should ensure the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in all developmental processes. Wherever there are gaps in policies and programmes, women-specific interventions can be undertaken to ensure that the needs of women are incorporated. This will bridge the gaps in the policy making process and government can bring effective legislation which will reflect gender perspectives. Coordinating and monitoring mechanisms were dealt with in Unit 8 of MGS-004. These also help to assess progress from time to time. As a result, gender issues and concerns can be addressed and reflected in all laws, sectoral policies, plans and programmes of action. Apart from these actions, there is also an increasing realization that economic self-reliance is not the only the most important step, but often the only step towards ensuring gender justice.

20.7 ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Empowerment means the process whereby people attain the capacity to make decisions concerning their lives. Most women are denied this right. Empowerment means enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes. Practitioners engaged in the analysis of projects and policies that have empowerment components should analyze different sectors with regard to empowerment.

Poverty Eradication

Since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macroeconomic policies and poverty eradication programmes should specifically address the needs and problems of such women. Improved implementation of already existing women-oriented programmes is necessary and steps should be taken towards mobilization of poor women and convergence of services by offering them a range of economic and social options, along with necessary support measures to enhance their capabilities.

Microcredit

As per the policy decision, in order to enhance women's access to credit for consumption and production, the establishment of new, and strengthening of existing microcredit mechanisms and microfinance institutions will be undertaken so that the outreach of credit is enhanced. Other supportive measures would be taken to ensure adequate flow of credit through extant financial institutions and banks, so that all women below the poverty line have easy access to credit.

Economy

Women's perspectives should be included in designing and implementing macroeconomic and social policies by institutionalizing their participation in such processes. Their contribution to socio-economic development as producers and workers will be recognized in the formal and informal sectors (including home-based workers) and appropriate policies relating to employment and to her working conditions will be drawn up. Such measures could include:

- Reinterpretation and redefinition of conventional concepts of work wherever necessary e.g. in the Census records, to reflect women's contribution as producers and workers;
- Preparation of satellite and national accounts; and
- Development of appropriate methodologies for undertaking the other measures mentioned here.

Globalization

Globalization has presented new challenges for the realization of the goal of women's equality, the gender impact of which has not been systematically evaluated fully. However, from the micro-level studies that were commissioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, it is evident that there is a need for re-framing policies for access to employment and quality of employment. Benefits of the growing global economy have been unevenly distributed leading to wider economic disparities, the feminization of poverty, increased gender inequality through often deteriorating working conditions and unsafe working environment especially in the informal economy and rural areas. Strategies are being designed to enhance the capacity of women and empower them to meet the negative social and economic impacts which may flow from the globalization process.

Agriculture

In view of the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied sectors as producers, concentrated efforts will be made to ensure that the benefits of training, extension and various programmes will reach them in proportion to their numbers. The programmes for training women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and other occupations allied to agriculture like horticulture, livestock including small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries etc. will be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.

Industry

The important role played by women in electronics, information technology and food processing and agro industry and textiles has been crucial to the development of these sectors. They should be given comprehensive support in terms of labour legislation, social security and other support services to participate in various industrial sectors. Women at present cannot work in night shift in factories even if they wish to. Suitable measures are being taken to enable women to work on the night shift in factories. This needs to be accompanied with support services for security, transportation etc.

Support Services

The provision of support services for women like child care facilities, including crèches at work places and educational institutions, homes for the aged and the disabled will be expanded and improved to create an enabling environment and to ensure their full cooperation in social, political and economic life. Women-friendly personnel policies will also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process.

20.8 SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Economic empowerment often leads to social empowerment. Any kind of social empowerment begins with education. It is seen that girl children in rural areas do not go to school as they begin to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of younger siblings and helping with the housework from a very young age. Even in cases where they are sent to school, they very often drop out after puberty. In situations where the parents are keen on getting their girl child educated, the lack of schools close by, the distances that have to be covered to reach school, lack of motorable roads contribute towards the girl child/women remaining uneducated. It is in this context that any policy that aims at promoting gender equality should pay special attention to education.

Education

Special measures should be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrollment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupational/vocational/technical skills by women. Reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area. Sectoral time targets in existing policies will be achieved, with a special focus on girls and women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes/Minorities. Gender-sensitive curricula should be developed at all levels of the educational system in order to address sex stereotyping as one of the causes of gender discrimination.

Health

A holistic approach to women's health which includes both nutrition and health services is being adopted and special attention is being given to the needs of women and girls at all stages of the life cycle. The reduction of infant mortality and maternal mortality, which are sensitive indicators of human development, is a priority concern. Women should have access to comprehensive, affordable and quality health care. Measures should be adopted that take into account the reproductive rights of women to enable them to exercise informed choices, their vulnerability to sexual and health problems together with endemic, infectious and communicable diseases such as malaria, TB, and water-borne diseases as well as hypertension and cardio-pulmonary diseases. The social, developmental and health consequences of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases should be tackled from a gender perspective.

In order to effectively meet problems of infant and maternal mortality and early marriage, collecting accurate data and making them available at micro-level on deaths, births and marriages will assist government to bring appropriate policy interventions. Strict implementation of registration of births and deaths will ensure proper implementation of policies. Registration of births and deaths has been made compulsory in India. But due to a lack of awareness there is a gap in existing practice. Local bodies and women's groups can be trained to create awareness among communities.

Women's traditional knowledge about health care and nutrition has been recognized through proper documentation and its usefulness should be encouraged. The use of Indian and alternative systems of medicine should be enhanced within the framework of overall health infrastructure available for women.

Nutrition

In view of the high risk of malnutrition and disease that women face at all the three critical stages viz., infancy and childhood, adolescent and reproductive phase

of her life, focused attention is being paid to meeting the nutritional needs of women at all stages of the life cycle by the government. This is also important in view of the critical link between the health of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women with the health of infants and young children. Special efforts were made to tackle the problem of macro and micronutrient deficiencies (especially amongst pregnant and lactating women) as these deficiencies lead to various diseases and disabilities. Widespread use of nutrition education is being encouraged to address the issues of intra-household imbalances in nutrition and the special needs of pregnant and lactating women. Women's participation has been encouraged in the planning, superintendence and delivery of the system.

Drinking Water and Sanitation

Special attention should be given to the needs of women in the provision of safe drinking water, sewage disposal, toilet facilities and sanitation within accessible reach of households, especially in rural areas and urban slums. Women's participation has been promoted in the planning, delivery and maintenance of such services.

Housing and Shelter

Women's perspectives should be included in housing policies, planning of housing colonies and provision of shelter both in rural and urban areas. Special attention is being given to providing adequate and safe housing and accommodation for women including single women, heads of households, working women, students, apprentices and trainees.

Women in Difficult Circumstances

In recognition of the diversity of women's situations and in acknowledgement of the needs of specially disadvantaged groups, measures and programmes are being undertaken to provide them with special assistance. These groups include women in extreme poverty, destitute women, women in conflict situations, women affected by natural calamities, women in less developed regions, the disabled, widows, elderly women, single women in difficult circumstances, women heading households, those displaced from employment, migrants, women who are victims of marital violence, deserted women and prostitutes etc.

Violence against women

All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs, traditions or accepted practices should be dealt with effectively with a view to eliminate their incidence. Institutions and mechanisms/schemes for assistance should be created and strengthened for prevention of such violence, including sexual harassment at the work place and customs like dowry; for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence and for taking effective action against the perpetrators of such violence. Special emphasis should also be laid on programmes and measures to deal with trafficking in women and girls.

Rights of the Girl Child

All forms of discrimination against the girl child and violation of her rights are being eliminated by undertaking strong measures both preventive and punitive within and outside the family. These would relate specifically to strict enforcement of laws against prenatal sex selection and the practices of female foeticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child abuse and child prostitution etc. Removal of discrimination in the treatment of the girl child within the family and outside and projection of a positive image of the girl child is being actively fostered.

Media is being used to portray images consistent with human dignity of girls and women. Private sector partners and media networks are being involved at all levels to ensure equal access for women particularly in the area of information and communication technologies. The media is being encouraged to develop codes of conduct, professional guidelines and other self regulatory mechanisms to remove gender stereotypes and promote balanced portrayals of women and men.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

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

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

1) Explain social empowerment of women.

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20.9 INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

Institutional mechanisms, to promote the advancement of women, which exist at the Central and State levels are being strengthened. These are being done through appropriate interventions and include provision of adequate resources, training and advocacy skills to effectively influence macro-policies, legislation, programmes etc. to achieve the empowerment of women. National and State Resource Centres on Women have been established with mandates for collection and dissemination of information, undertaking research work, conducting surveys, implementing training and awareness generation programmes, etc. These Centres will link up with Women's Studies Centres and other research and academic institutions through suitable information networking systems.

While institutions at the district level will be strengthened at the grassroots, women are being helped by the Government through its programmes to organize and strengthen self-help groups (SHGs) at the Anganwadi/Village/Town level. The women's groups are being helped to institutionalize themselves into registered societies and to federate at the Panchayat/Municipal level. These societies will bring about synergistic implementation of all the social and economic development programmes by drawing resources made available through Government and Non-Government channels, including banks and financial institutions and by establishing a close interface with the Panchayats/Municipalities.

20.10 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

It was decided that the availability of adequate financial, human and market resources to implement the policy will be managed by concerned departments including financial credit institutions and banks, private sector, civil society and other connected institutions. This process will include:

a) Assessment of benefits flowing to women and resource allocation to the programmes relating to them through an exercise of gender budgeting. Appropriate changes in policies will be made to optimize benefits to women under these schemes;

- b) Adequate resource allocation to develop and promote the policy outlined earlier based on (a) above by concerned Departments;
- c) Developing synergy between personnel of the State Health, Rural Development, Education and Women and Child Development Departments at field level and other village level functionaries; and
- d) Meeting credit needs by banks and financial credit institutions through suitable policy initiatives and development of new institutions in coordination with the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Transition to gender budgeting

In January, 2010, Planning Commission, Government of India, has stated that, “the concepts of Women Component Plan and Gender Budgeting are not complementary but often contradictory and the world over countries have moved to using Gender Responsive Budgeting as a tool for gender mainstreaming and ensuring gender equity” and has clarified that, “Women Component Plan should no longer be used as a strategy either at the Centre or at the State level. In its place as already initiated by the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Women and Child Development, we should adopt Gender Responsive Budgeting or Gender Budgeting only”.

A gender-responsive budget is a budget that acknowledges the gender patterns in society and allocates money to implement policies and programmes that will change these patterns in a way that moves towards a more gender equal society. Gender budgeting initiatives are exercises that aim to move the country in the direction of gender-responsive budgeting.

As elaborated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, “among the policies that budgets should follow is Government of India’s commitment to promoting gender equality.”

The Ministry mentions the varied purposes of gender budgeting including:

- Identifying the felt needs of women and reprioritizing and/ or increasing expenditure to meet these needs;
- Supporting gender mainstreaming in macroeconomics;
- Strengthening civil society participation in economic policymaking;
- Enhancing the linkages between economic and social policy outcomes;
- Tracking public expenditure against gender and development policy commitments; and
- Contributing to the attainment of the Millennium Development goals (MDGs).

The Ministry of Women and Child Development being the nodal Ministry will monitor and review the progress of the implementation of the Gender Budget from time to time, in terms of both quality and quantity in collaboration with the Planning Commission.

Efforts will also be made to channelize private sector investments too, to support programmes and projects for advancement of women.

20.11 LEGISLATION

The existing legislative structure should be reviewed and additional legislative measures should be taken by identified departments to implement Policies. This

will also involve a review of all existing laws including personal, customary and tribal laws, subordinate legislation, and related rules as well as executive and administrative regulations to eliminate all gender discriminatory references. The process was planned in the year 2000-2003. Specific measures were evolved through a consultation process involving civil society, National Commission for Women and Ministry of Women and Child Development. In appropriate cases the consultation process was widened to include other stakeholders as well.

Effective implementation of legislation should be promoted by involving civil society and community. Appropriate changes in legislation should be undertaken, if necessary.

In addition, other specific measures should be taken to implement the legislation effectively such as:

- a) Strict enforcement of all relevant legal provisions and speedy redressal of grievances should be ensured, with a special focus on violence and gender-related atrocities;
- b) Measures to prevent and punish sexual harassment at the place of work, protection for women workers in the organized/unorganized sector and strict enforcement of relevant laws such as Equal Remuneration Act and Minimum Wages Act will be undertaken;
- c) Crimes against women, their incidence, prevention, investigation, detection and prosecution will be regularly reviewed at all Crime Review fora and Conferences at the Central, State and District levels. Recognized local, voluntary organizations will be authorized to lodge complaints and facilitate registration, investigations and legal proceedings related to violence and atrocities against girls and women;
- d) Women's Cells in Police Stations, encouraging Women Police Stations, Family Courts, Mahila Courts, Counselling Centres, Legal Aid Centres and Nyaya Panchayats will be strengthened and expanded to eliminate violence and atrocities against women;
- e) Widespread dissemination of information on all aspects of legal rights, human rights and other entitlements of women, through specially designed legal literacy programmes and rights information programmes will be done.

20.12 GENDER SENSITIZATION

Training of personnel of executive, legislative and judicial wings of the State, with a special focus on policy and programme framers, implementation and development agencies, law enforcement machinery and the judiciary, as well as non-governmental organizations is being undertaken. Other measures which have been planned include:

- a) Promoting societal awareness on gender issues and women's human rights;
- b) Review of curriculum and educational materials to include gender equality perspectives in education and human rights issues;
- c) Removal of all references derogatory to the dignity of women from all public documents and legal instruments; and
- d) Use of different forms of mass media to communicate social messages relating to women's equality and empowerment.

Panchayati Raj Institutions

The 73rd and 74th Amendments (1993) to the Indian Constitution have served as a breakthrough towards ensuring equal access and increased participation in political power structure for women. The PRIs will play a central role in the process of enhancing women's participation in public life. The PRIs and local self governments will be actively involved in the implementation and execution of the National Policy for Women at the grassroots level.

Partnership with the voluntary sector organizations

The involvement of voluntary organizations, associations, federations, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, women's organizations, as well as institutions dealing with education, training and research will be ensured in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and review of all policies and programmes impacting women. Towards this end, they will be provided with appropriate support related to resources and capacity building and facilitated to participate actively in the process of the empowerment of women.

International Cooperation

The policy will aim at implementation of international obligations/commitments in all sectors on empowerment of women such as the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+5) and other such instruments. International, regional and sub-regional cooperation towards the empowerment of women will continue to be encouraged through sharing of experiences, exchange of ideas and technology, networking with institutions and organizations and through bilateral and multi-lateral partnerships.

National Commission for Women

The National Commission for Women was set up as statutory body in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 (Act No. 20 of 1990 of Govt. of India) to:

- review the Constitutional and legal safeguards for women;
- recommend remedial legislative measures;
- facilitate redressal of grievances; and
- advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women.

The objective of the NCW is to represent the rights of women in India and to provide a voice for their issues and concerns. The subjects of their campaigns have included dowry, politics, religion, equal representation for women in jobs, and the exploitation of women for labour. They have also discussed police abuses against women.

In keeping with its mandate, the Commission initiated various steps to improve the status of women and worked for their economic empowerment. The Commission completed its visits to all the States/UTs except Lakshdweep and prepared Gender Profiles to assess the status of women and their empowerment. It received a large number of complaints and has acted *suo-moto* in several cases to provide speedy justice. It has taken up the issue of child marriage, sponsored legal awareness programmes, Parivarik Mahila Lok Adalats and reviewed laws such as Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; PNDT Act, 1994; Indian Penal Code, 1860 and the National Commission for Women Act, 1990 to make them more stringent and effective. It organized workshops/consultations, constituted expert committees on economic

empowerment of women, conducted workshops/seminars for gender awareness and took up publicity campaigns against female foeticide, violence against women, etc. in order to generate awareness in the society against these social evils.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

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

b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the Unit.

1) Write a short note on National Commission on Women.

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20.13 SUMMING UP

In this Unit, we learnt about the framework, guiding principles and priorities for policy making, economic and social empowerment, institutional mechanisms for policy analysis, resource management in policy analysis and gender sensitization in executives, legislation and judiciary with regard to policy analysis. In the process of policy making not only government, but civil society organizations and the community should be involved. The Unit started with discussing the framework and guiding principles for policy analysis. It also gave an overview of the empowerment process and the significance of promoting the empowerment process through policy making.

20.14 GLOSSARY

Gender-specific policies : A policy that is gender-specific takes into account gender differentials, and targets women or men specifically, but leaves the current distribution of resources and responsibilities intact.

Gender equality : Equality between women and men, refers to the equal enjoyment by women, girls, boys and men of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male.

20.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1) The goal of policy making is to bring about the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The policy will be widely disseminated so as to encourage active participation of all stakeholders for achieving the intended goals. Specifically, the objectives of the policy include:

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women enabling them to realize their full potential;
- The *de-jure* and *de-facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedom by women on equal basis with men in all spheres – political, economic, social, cultural and civil;
- Equal access and participation in decision making in social, political and economic life of the nation;
- Providing equal access and participation of women in all sectors. Promoting interventions such as ensuring quality education to women at all levels; facilitating women in choosing their career; providing women vocational guidance; employment opportunities and ensuring equal remuneration to women on par with men; ensuring women's occupational health and safety; and enacting appropriate laws to provide social security for women and ensuring that more women occupy public offices.
- Strengthening legal systems which should aim at elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.
- Changing societal attitudes and community practices by active participation and involvement of both men and women;
- Mainstreaming a gender perspective in all development processes;
- Elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child; and
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society organizations, particularly women's organizations to ensure speedy implementation of women-related programmes and policies.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) Economic empowerment often leads to social empowerment. Any kind of social empowerment begins with education. It is seen that girl children in rural areas do not go to school as they begin to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of younger siblings and helping with the housework from a very young age. Even in cases where they are sent to school, they very often drop out after puberty. In situations where the parents are keen on getting their girl child educated, the lack of schools close by, the distances that have to be covered to reach school, lack of motorable roads contribute towards the girl child/women remaining uneducated. It is in this context that any policy that aims at promoting gender equality should pay special attention to education.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

- 1) The National Commission for Women (NCW) is a statutory body for women established in 1992 by the Government of India under the provisions of the Indian Constitution, as defined in the 1990 National Commission for Women Act.

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Analysis of Existing Policies

20.17 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

- 1) Write an essay on gender sensitization in executive, legislation and judiciary.
- 2) "Institutional mechanisms will help in bringing gender-sensitive policies". Comment on this statement.

UNIT 21 WOMEN BELONGING TO SPECIAL CATEGORIES

Structure

- 21.1 Introduction
- 21.2 Objectives
- 21.3 Status and Position of Women in Different Regions of the World
- 21.4 Women in Difficult Circumstances
- 21.5 Women with Disabilities
- 21.6 Women, Poverty and Survival
- 21.7 Other Areas of Discrimination
 - 21.7.1 Malnutrition
 - 21.7.2 Poor Health
 - 21.7.3 Lack of Education
 - 21.7.4 Overwork
 - 21.7.5 Mistreatment
 - 21.7.6 Powerlessness
 - 21.7.7 Violence against Women
 - 21.7.8 HIV and AIDS
 - 21.7.9 Women and Old Age
- 21.8 Gender-responsive Planning and Gender Responsive Budgeting
- 21.9 Summing Up
- 21.10 Glossary
- 21.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 21.12 References
- 21.13 Questions for Reflection and Practice

21.1 INTRODUCTION

The Government of India has undertaken many efforts like the National Perspective Plan for Women, a National Commission for Women, women-targeted programmes and many laws related to women's empowerment. Efforts have also been taken to collect gender disaggregated data in the Census and National Sample Surveys.

This Unit not only talks about women in general, it talks about women belonging to special categories. As we have discussed already, women belonging to special categories are disadvantaged in two ways. i.e. as women and as special categories like HIV+, physically challenged and women belonging to disadvantaged groups. This Unit will discuss these issues.

21.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- explain the situation of women facing difficult circumstances;
- examine issues related to discrimination against women with disabilities;
- analyze the situation of women in poverty;

- examine areas where women experience discrimination, and become victims of violence and crime; and
- explain the need for gender planning for women belonging to special categories.

21.3 STATUS AND POSITION OF WOMEN IN DIFFERENT REGIONS IN THE WORLD

Millions of women throughout the world live in conditions of abject deprivation of and attacks against, their fundamental Human Rights for no other reason than that they are women. Combatants and their sympathizers in conflicts and wars have raped women as a weapon of war with near complete impunity. Men in South Asia, South Africa, Latin American countries, Russia and Uzbekistan beat women in the home at astounding rates. Responses of governments vary. In some cases they refuse to intervene to protect women and punish their batterers or do so haphazardly and in ways that make women feel culpable for the violence. It has been reported that as a direct result of inequalities found in their countries of origin, women from countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, Nigeria, the Dominican Republic, Burma and Thailand are bought and sold, trafficked to work in forced prostitution, with insufficient government attention to protect their rights and punish the traffickers.

In some countries such as Guatemala, South Africa and Mexico, it has been reported that women's ability to enter and remain in the work force is often obstructed by private employers who use women's reproductive status to exclude them from work aided by discriminatory employment laws or discriminatory enforcement of the law. In the United States, there have been incidents of students discrimination against and attacking girls in school who are lesbian, bisexual or transgendered or do not conform to standards of female behaviour. Women in some countries such as Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia may face government-sponsored discrimination that renders them unequal before the law – including discriminatory family codes that take away women's legal authority and place it in the hands of male family members – and restricts women's participation in public life.

Abuses against women are relentless, systematic and widely tolerated, if not explicitly condoned. We live in a world in which women do not have basic control over what happens to their bodies. Millions of women and girls are forced to marry and have sex with men they do not desire. Women are unable to depend on the government to protect them from physical violence in the home, with sometimes fatal consequences, including increased risk of HIV/AIDS infection. Women in state custody face sexual assault by their jailers. Women are punished for having sex outside of marriage or with a person of their choosing (rather than of their family's choosing). Husbands and other male family members obstruct or dictate women's access to reproductive health care. Doctors and government officials disproportionately target women from disadvantaged or marginalized communities for coercive family planning policies.

Arguments that sustain and excuse these human rights abuses – those of cultural norms, “appropriate” rights for women or western imperialism – barely disguise their true meaning: That woman's lives matter less than men's. Cultural relativism, which argues that there are no universal human rights and that rights are culture-specific and culturally determined, is still a formidable and corrosive challenge to women's rights to equality and dignity in all facets of their lives.

The following horrifying statistics capture what it means to be a woman in today's world.

- 80% of the 50 million people around the world who are affected by violent conflicts, civil wars, disasters and displacement are women and children.

- According to the UNDP, Human Development Report 2004, 48.8% of the seats held in parliament in Rwanda were held by women. Contrast that to Cuba where 36% of the seats were held by women and the USA, where 14.3 % of the seats were held by women. Saudi Arabia and the Solomon Islands are just two countries where there are no women in parliament.
- In 76 countries, less than half the eligible girls are enrolled in secondary school and women own only 1% of the world's land.
- Over half a million women die in childbirth every year in Africa and Asia and nearly 1/2 of all Indonesian women have had their first child by the time they are 17.
- According to the World Health Organization, 40 per cent of girls aged 17 or under in South Africa are reported to have been the victim of rape or attempted rape.

Box 21.1: Initiatives on Gender and Protection

Experience shows that programmes that cut across sectors, promote discussion, debate and broad participation and successfully over time, generate consensus around human rights principles and corresponding social change, can lead to a decrease in harmful practices that predominantly affect women and girls. This directly results in greater equality between men and women, reduced child mortality and improved maternal health.

In Uganda, for example, Raising Voices and the Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention supported community initiatives designed to challenge gender norms and prevent violence against women and children. Their activities included raising awareness on domestic violence, building networks of support and action within the community and professional sectors, supporting community activities such as discussions, door-to-door visits and theatre, and using media such as radio, television and newspapers to promote women's rights.

In Senegal, a community empowerment programme supported by Tostan, a non-governmental organization that engages local facilitators to lead sensitization and awareness-raising sessions in villages, led to a 77 per cent decrease in the prevalence of female genital mutilation/ cutting (FGM/C). The community sensitization initiative also involves raising awareness of the negative implications of child marriage.

In Ethiopia, as a result of the KembattaMenttiGezzima-Tope (KMG) programme, which facilitated community dialogue and collective community decisions around FGM/C and alternatives, most families in the zone abandoned FGM/C. Whereas before the programme, which took place in 2008, 97 per cent of villagers were in favour of FGM/C, after it 96% accepted that it should be abandoned. Just as vitally, 85% of villagers believed that uncut girls were no longer "despised" in their communities.

Around 60 per cent of programmes combating child marriage are based on community sensitization of this kind. Other programmes aim to educate girls directly about the disadvantages of early marriage and offer incentives not to engage in it. The Government of Bangladesh, for example, has since 1994 been offering secondary school scholarships to girls who postpone marriage, while in the Indian state of Maharashtra, girls' participation in a life-skills education course has been demonstrated to delay their marriage by a year.

In other Indian states – Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu – both girls and their families are offered financial incentives to delay marriage until the age of 18.

Yet other initiatives against child marriage take a legal route. In Ethiopia, for example, the organization Pathfinder International takes action against proposed child marriages that come to its notice, employing a network of local partners to try to persuade the parents concerned not to go ahead. If this strategy is unsuccessful, the organization joins with the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association in launching legal action aimed at stopping the ceremony.

Initiatives to counter violence and sexual abuse cannot confine themselves to legal protection. Much of the sexual violence experienced by adolescent girls is at the hands of their male partner and may not therefore come to the notice of the police or other authorities. In addition, taking punitive legal action without addressing the underlying causes of the violence may have unintended consequences, such as pushing the problem further underground.

For this reason it is essential to take steps to raise the awareness of boys and men about gender relations and power. Program H, developed by four Latin American non-governmental organizations, trains facilitators to help young men consider the drawbacks attached to traditional gender roles and the unhealthy behavior attached to them. The aim of the programme is to foster more equitable relationships between men and women, and an evaluation of its effects in Brazil indicated that it had been successful in encouraging such gender-equitable behavior..

Source: State of the World's Children, 2011

21.4 WOMEN IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

If one takes a look at the statistics mentioned earlier, it would not be wrong to conclude that women in most parts of the world live in difficult circumstances. However, for the purpose of development of policies towards the empowerment of women, certain groups of women are said to be living under difficult circumstances. These include:

- Women in extreme poverty/deprivation;
- Destitute women;
- Women affected by terrorist/militant violence;
- Women affected by natural calamities;
- Women affected by riots;
- Women in conflict situations;
- Women in inaccessible and underdeveloped regions;
- Women with disability/special ability;
- Widowed women;
- Divorced/separated women;
- Women heading households;
- Single women in difficult circumstances;
- Women displaced from employment;
- Migrant women;
- Deserted women;
- Women who are victims of domestic violence.

- Commercial sex workers; and
- Women sold or trafficked or used for immoral purposes.

Let us discuss the conditions of women in some of these categories.

21.5 WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

Women with disabilities suffer double discrimination, both on the grounds of gender and of impairment. The social status of disabled women varies according to individual circumstances and to the community in which they live. There is ample evidence that women with disabilities experience major psycho-social problems. They have often been restricted to home-based activities, while men are likely to be supported in more public and outward-looking avenues. Being woman, they do not have access to better education nor do they find a suitable job. The society thinks that a disabled woman cannot be a “good wife” or a “good mother”.

Though women are presumed to be organized, in reality not even 1% of the disabled women get an opportunity to take part, to take action and to make changes in the larger social framework. They are often denied an opportunity to interact with others and gain skills to prove their ability due to discriminatory attitudes. Isolation and confinement based on culture and traditions, attitudes and prejudices often affect disabled women more than men. This isolation of disabled women leads to low self-esteem and negative feelings. Therefore, the needs of girls with disabilities may be more special than needs of any other group and have to be addressed in all spheres of education. Regarding education, boys with disabilities attend school more frequently than girls with disabilities.

Women with disabilities are twice to three times more likely to be victims of physical and sexual abuse than non-disabled women. Their access to reproductive health care is minimal and as a result they suffer greater vulnerability to reproductive health problems and sexually transmitted diseases. There is a lack of awareness regarding women with disabilities and reproductive health needs. More often than not, it is assumed that they do not form part of the target groups because being disabled is associated with being sexless or asexual. Many parents of young girls with disabilities are often advised to remove the uterus of their wards for safety reasons.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

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

b) Compare your answers with the one given at the end of the Unit.

- 1) Which are the categories of women belonging to the categories of difficult circumstances for the purpose of development policies?

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21.6 WOMEN, POVERTY AND SURVIVAL

Women bear a disproportionate burden of the world’s poverty. Statistics indicate that women are more likely than men to be poor and at risk of hunger because of the systematic discrimination they face in education, health care, employment and

control of assets. Poverty implications are widespread for women, leaving many without even basic rights such as access to clean drinking water, sanitation, medical care and decent employment. Being poor can also mean they have little protection from violence and have no role in decision making.

According to some estimates, women represent 70 percent of the world's poor. They are often paid less than men for their work, with the average wage gap in 2008 being close to 17 percent. Women face persistent discrimination when they apply for credit for business or self-employment and are often concentrated in insecure, unsafe and low-wage work. Eight out of ten women workers are considered to be in vulnerable employment in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, with global economic changes taking a huge toll on their livelihoods.

In many developing countries where women work in export-led factories or in countries where migrant women workers are the backbone of service industries, women's jobs take the greatest hit, every time there is a financial upheaval. The International Labour Organization had estimated that the economic downturn led to 22 million more unemployed women in 2009, thereby jeopardizing the gains made in the last few decades in the area of women's empowerment.

In many countries, however, the impact goes far beyond the loss of formal jobs, as the majority of women tend to work in the informal sector, for example as domestic help in cities and do not show up in official unemployment numbers. Economic policies and institutions still mostly fail to take gender disparities into account, from tax and budget systems to trade regimes. And with too few seats at the tables where economic decisions are made, women themselves have limited opportunity to influence policy.

Women and Hunger

Women are the world's primary food producers, yet cultural traditions and social structures often mean women are much more affected by hunger and poverty than men. A mother who is stunted or underweight due to an inadequate diet often gives birth to low birth weight children.

Around 50 per cent of pregnant women in developing countries are iron deficient (source: UNICEF). Lack of iron means 315,000 women die annually from hemorrhage at childbirth. As a result, women and in particular expectant and nursing mothers, often need special or increased intake of food.

According to a study by UNICEF, exceptionally high rates of malnutrition in South Asia are rooted deeply in the soil of inequality between men and women. "...the poor care that is afforded to girls and women by their husbands and by elders is the first major reason for levels of child malnutrition that are markedly higher in South Asia than anywhere else in the world".

This point is made in the article, *The Asian Enigma*, published by UNICEF in the 1996 Progress of Nations, in which the rates of childhood malnutrition in South Asia are compared with those in Africa. We learn that malnutrition is far worse in South Asia, directly due to the fact that women in South Asia have less voice and freedom of movement than in Africa. "Judgment and self-expression and independence largely denied, millions of women in South Asia have neither the knowledge nor the means nor the freedom to act in their own and their children's best interests".

Nutritional deprivation has two major consequences for women: they never reach their full growth potential and anaemia. Both are risk factors in pregnancy, with anaemia ranging from 40-50 percent in urban areas to 50-70 percent in rural areas. This condition complicates childbearing and results in maternal and infant deaths and low birth weight infants.

21.7 OTHER AREAS OF DISCRIMINATION

The persistence of hunger and abject poverty in India and other parts of the world is due in large measure to the subjugation, marginalization and disempowerment of women. Women suffer from hunger and poverty in greater numbers and to a great degree than men. At the same time, it is women who bear the primary responsibility for actions needed to end hunger which include providing: education, nutrition and health facilities/services as well as augmenting the family income.

Looking through the lens of hunger and poverty, there are six major areas of discrimination against women in India.

21.7.1 Malnutrition

India has exceptionally high rates of child malnutrition because tradition in India requires that women eat last and least throughout their lives, even when pregnant and lactating. Malnourished women give birth to malnourished children, perpetuating the cycle.

“...the poor care that is afforded to girls and women by their husbands and by elders is the first major reason for levels of child malnutrition that are markedly higher in South Asia than anywhere else in the world”.

This point is made in the article, *The Asian Enigma*, published by UNICEF in the 1996 Progress of Nations, in which the rates of childhood malnutrition in South Asia are compared with those in Africa. “Gender disparities in nutrition are evident from infancy to adulthood. In fact, gender has been the most statistically significant determinant of malnutrition among young children and malnutrition is a frequent direct or underlying cause of death among girls below age 5. Girls are breast-fed less frequently and for shorter durations in infancy; in childhood and adulthood, males are fed first and better. Adult women consume approximately 1,000 fewer calories per day than men according to one estimate from Punjab. Comparison of household dietary intake studies in different parts of the country shows that nutritional equity between males and females is lower in northern than in southern states”.

21.7.2 Poor Health

Females receive less health care than males. Many women die in childbirth of easily prevented complications. Working conditions and environmental pollution further impairs women’s health. A primary way that parents discriminate against their girl children is through neglect during illness. When sick, little girls are not taken to the doctor as frequently as are their brothers. A study in Punjab shows that medical expenditures for boys are 2.3 times higher than for girls.

As adults, women get less health care than men. They tend to be less likely to admit that they are sick and they wait until their sickness has progressed before they seek help or help is sought for them. Studies on attendance at rural primary health centres reveal that more males than females are treated in almost all parts of the country, with differences greater in northern hospitals than southern ones, pointing to regional differences in the value placed on women. Women’s socialization to tolerate suffering and their reluctance to be examined by male personnel are additional constraints in their getting adequate health care.

21.7.3 Lack of Education

Families are far less likely to educate girls than boys and far more likely to pull them out of school, either to help out at home or from fear of violence. Sonal Desai in *Gender Inequalities and Demographic Behaviour* asserts that the reluctance of “parents” to educate daughters has its roots in the situation of women. Parents

have several incentives for not educating their daughters. Foremost is the view that education of girls brings no returns to parents and that their future roles, being mainly reproductive and perhaps including agricultural labour, require no formal education. As more and more boys are engaged in education, there is a growing reliance on the labour of girls. Girls are increasingly replacing their brothers on the farm while carrying on their usual responsibilities in housework. A large proportion of the roughly “40 million ‘non-working’ girls who are not in school are kept at home because of responsibilities in housework”.

21.7.4 Overwork

Women work longer hours and their work is more arduous than men’s, yet their work is unrecognized. Men report that “women, like children, eat and do nothing”. However, if all activities – including maintenance of kitchen gardens and poultry, grinding food grains, collecting water and firewood, etc. – are taken into account, then 88 percent of rural housewives and 66 percent of urban housewives can be considered as economically productive. Women work roughly twice as many hours as men.

Women’s contribution to agriculture – whether it be subsistence farming or commercial agriculture – when measured in terms of the number of tasks performed and time spent, is greater than men. “The extent of women’s contribution is aptly highlighted by a micro study conducted in the Indian Himalayas which found that on a one-hectare farm, a pair of bullocks works 1,064 hours, a man 1,212 hours and a woman 3,485 hours in a year”.

Women’s employment in family farms or businesses is rarely recognized as economically productive, either by men or women. And, any income generated from this work is generally controlled by men. Such work is unlikely to increase women’s participation in allocating family finances. In a 1992 study of family-based textile workers, male children who helped in a home-based handloom mill were given pocket money, but the adult women and girls were not.

21.7.5 Mistreatment

In recent years, there has been an alarming rise in atrocities against women in India, in terms of rapes, assaults and dowry-related murders. Fear of violence suppresses the aspirations of all women. Female infanticide and sex-selective abortions are additional forms of violence that reflect the devaluing of females in Indian society.

Male violence against women is a worldwide phenomenon. Although not every woman has experienced it and many expect not to, fear of violence is an important factor in the lives of most women. It determines what they do, when they do it, where they do it and with whom. Fear of violence is a cause of women’s lack of participation in activities beyond the home, as well as inside it. Within the home, women and girls may be subjected to physical and sexual abuse as punishment or as culturally justified assaults. These acts shape their attitude to life and their expectations of themselves.

In recent years, there has been an alarming rise in atrocities against women in India. Every 26 minutes a woman is molested. Every 34 minutes a rape takes place. Every 42 minutes a sexual harassment incident occurs. Every 43 minutes a woman is kidnapped. And every 93 minutes a woman is burnt to death over dowry. One-quarter of the reported rapes involve girls under the age of 16 but the vast majority are never reported. Although the penalty is severe, convictions are rare.

21.7.6 Powerlessness

While women are guaranteed equality under the constitution, legal protection has

little effect in the face of prevailing patriarchal traditions. Women lack power to decide who they will marry and are often married off as children. Legal loopholes are used to deny women inheritance rights.

Women are subordinate in most marriages. “Wife givers” are socially and ritually inferior to “wife takers”, thus necessitating the provision of a dowry. After marriage, the bride moves in with her husband's family. Such a bride is “a stranger in a strange place”. They are controlled by the older females in the household and their behaviour reflects on the honour of their husbands. Because emotional ties between spouses are considered a potential threat to the solidarity of the patrilineal group, the northern system tends to segregate the sexes and limit communication between spouses – a circumstance that has direct consequences for family planning and similar “modern” behaviours that affect health. A young Indian bride is brought up to believe that her own wishes and interests are subordinate to those of her husband and his family. The primary duty of a newly married young woman and virtually her only means of improving her position in the hierarchy of her husband's household, is to bear sons”.

Women's rights to inheritance are limited and frequently violated. Even the weak laws protecting women have not been adequately enforced. As a result, in practice, women continue to have little access to land and property, a major source of income and long-term economic security. Under the pretext of preventing fragmentation of agricultural holdings, several states have successfully excluded widows and daughters from inheriting agricultural land.

21.7.7 Violence against Women

Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread violations of human rights. It can include physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse and it cuts across boundaries of age, race, culture, wealth and geography. It takes place in the home, on the streets, in schools, workplaces, in farm fields, refugee camps, during conflicts and crises. It has many manifestations – from the most universally prevalent forms of domestic and sexual violence, to harmful practices, abuse during pregnancy, so-called honour killings and other types of femicide.

Globally, up to six out of every ten women experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. A World Health Organization study of 24,000 women in 10 countries found that the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner varied from 15 percent in urban Japan to 71 percent in rural Ethiopia, with most areas being in the 30-60 percent range.

Violence against women and girls has far-reaching consequences, harming families and communities. For women and girls 16-44 years old, violence is a major cause of death and disability. In 1994, a World Bank study on ten selected risk factors facing girls and women in this age group, found rape and domestic violence more dangerous than cancer, motor vehicle accidents, war and malaria. Studies also reveal increasing links between violence against women and HIV and AIDS. A survey among 1,366 South African women showed that women who were beaten by their partners were 48 percent more likely to be infected with HIV than those who were not.

21.7.8 HIV & AIDS

More than 30 million people are today living with HIV. Globally, women now account for half of all infections. Yet women increasingly make up the majority in sub-Saharan Africa, where the epidemic has stretched the furthest. In parts of Africa and the Caribbean, young women aged 15-24 years are up to six times more likely to be HIV-positive than young men of the same age. The proportions of women living with HIV in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe are also growing slowly.

Gender inequality and violations of women's rights make women and girls particularly susceptible, leaving them with less control than men over their bodies and their lives. Women and girls often have less information about HIV and fewer resources to take preventive measures. They face barriers to the negotiation of safer sex, including economic dependency and unequal power relations. Sexual violence, a widespread and brutal violation of women's rights, exacerbates the risk of transmission. And while it is widely assumed that marriage provides protection from AIDS, evidence suggests that in parts of the world it can be a major HIV risk factor, especially for young women and girls. This is greatly so in India.

In many cases, HIV-positive women face stigma and exclusion, aggravated by their lack of rights. Women widowed by AIDS or found to be HIV-positive may face property disputes with in-laws. And regardless of whether they themselves are HIV-positive, women generally assume the burden of home-based care for others who are sick or dying, along with the orphans left behind.

The sixth Millennium Development Goal calls for reversing the spread of HIV and AIDS by 2015. To that end, more resources are needed and strategies and programmes must be targeted to women in particular. At a UN General Assembly Special Session in 2001, more than 180 countries agreed that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental to reducing girls' and women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.

Box 21.2

According to Global Health Council, despite unprecedented global efforts that have led to stabilization of new infections, the HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to affect a growing number of people and the incidence is rising in a number of countries. Over the past 27 years, 25 million have died and 33 million live with HIV, the majority in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2008, new infections increased most rapidly among young women aged 15-24 years. Women comprised 50 percent of adults living with HIV globally; 77 percent of all women with HIV live in sub-Saharan Africa. Gender-based inequity and violence drive the rise of HIV among women and girls. Women often lack control of the decision making process. The feminization of poverty also places women at increased risk.

21.7.9 Women and Old Age

Women live longer than men, on average, but it is no secret that age takes its toll. A new study finds that largely owing to obesity and arthritis, which take root during early and middle age, old age can be miserable for many women – even when comparing men and women of the same age.

A 2005 study found that women suffer more pain than men, in part because of perceptions of pain related to differing hormone levels. Among 5,888 people over 65, women suffered up to 2.5 times more disabilities than men of the same age. Higher rates of obesity and arthritis among these women explained up to 48 percent of the gender gap in disability – above all other common chronic health conditions, researchers have said.

Old age is also a time when a women's place in society can become more respected. Experienced older women, grandmothers or friends, who can often extend their support to grown up children or extended family, can form a valuable part of the social order. They are well equipped for a valuable role as care-givers or mentors. However, it is not very often that this role of a woman is acknowledged or appreciated. On the contrary, aged women are seen as a burden on their families.

Vulnerable, elderly people (in this case both men and women) are subjected to neglect, abuse, discrimination and ill-treatment by the very people who should be looking after them. Lack of dignity, especially for personal care needs, inappropriate medication designed more to subdue them than treat them and over-hasty discharge from hospitals, in case of illness are also some of the issues that women who are aged, have to suffer from. In this context, it becomes imperative that all government policies and plans concerning old age have to take into consideration gender-related issues and concerns before being drawn up. Similarly, before allotting money to any programme, care should be taken to see that the programme is gender-sensitive and the gender component has been duly addressed.

It is important to see that the planning process keeps in mind the Human Rights of the Aged, which includes:

- The human right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, shelter and clothing.
- The human right to adequate social security, assistance and protection.
- The human right to freedom from discrimination based on age or any other status, in all aspects of life including employment and access to housing, health care and social services.
- The human right to the highest possible standard of health.
- The human right to be treated with dignity.
- The human right to protection from neglect and all types of physical or mental abuse.
- The human right to full and active participation in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life of society.
- The human right to full and effective participation in decision-making concerning their well-being.

21.8 GENDER-RESPONSIVE PLANNING AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETS

Some of the ways to implement gender-responsive planning include:

- Addressing issues facing the planning and development of communities, cities, regions, states and the nation related to the changing roles of women and men as a means of promoting social equity;
- Creating a national network of planners, decision makers and persons actively involved in organizations which are concerned about women's empowerment.
- Promoting professional growth of women in planning and advocating for equitable treatment and advancement of female planners at all stages of their careers;
- Recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of women in planning;
- Advancing technical knowledge and improving techniques of dealing with the issues of women and planning; and
- Promoting the analysis and examination of the issues of women and planning at every level of government and in colleges and universities.

Gender-Responsive Budgets

Women belonging to Special
Categories

It is in this context that gender-responsive budgets come into play. A budget is the most comprehensive statement of a government's social and economic plans and priorities. In tracking where the money comes from and where it goes, budgets determine how public funds are raised, how they are used and who benefits from them. Therefore, implementing commitments towards gender equality requires intentional measures to incorporate a gender perspective in planning and budgeting frameworks and concrete investment in addressing gender gaps.

Gender-responsive budgeting is not about creating separate budgets for women or solely increasing spending on women's programmes. Rather gender-responsive budgeting seeks to ensure that the collection and allocation of public resources is carried out in ways that are effective and contribute to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. It should be based on in-depth analysis that identifies effective interventions for implementing policies and laws that advance women's rights. It provides tools to assess the different needs and contributions of men and women and boys and girls within the existing revenues, expenditures and allocations and calls for adjusting budget policies to benefit all groups.

Gender-responsive budget analysis, along with legislation and other practical policy measures can address gender bias and discrimination. It is a step not only towards accountability for women's rights, but also towards greater public transparency and can shift economic policies leading to gains across societies.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

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

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of the Unit.

1) How are women affected by HIV/AIDS?

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21.9 SUMMING UP

In this Unit, we have studied the status of women across regions of the world. As we discussed in this Unit, we have examined the status of women with disabilities, women in poverty, women facing varied types of discrimination and we have analyzed the need for gender planning belonging to different categories. Gender-responsive planning is examined, especially in relation to gender-responsive budgeting.

21.10 GLOSSARY

HIV/AIDS : **Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)** is a lentivirus (a member of the retrovirus family) that *causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS)*, a condition in humans in which progressive failure of the immune system allows life-threatening opportunistic infections and cancers to thrive. Infection with HIV occurs by the transfer of blood, semen, vaginal fluid,

Femicide

pre-ejaculate or breast milk. Within these bodily fluids, HIV is present as both free virus particles and the virus within infected immune cells. The four major routes of transmission are unsafe sex, contaminated needles, breast milk and transmission from an infected mother to her baby at birth (perinatal transmission). Screening of blood products for HIV has largely eliminated transmission through blood transfusions or infected blood products in the developed world.

- : Femicide was redefined as a feminist term by Diana Russell in 1976 to refer to misogynist murders. Just as murders targeting African Americans differentiate between those that are racist and those that are not, so are murders targeting women differentiated into those that are femicides and those that are not. When the gender of the victim is immaterial to the perpetrator, the murder qualifies as a non-femicidal crime. After making minor changes in her definition over the years, Russell redefined femicide as “the killing of females by males because they are female”. Misogynist murders are the most obvious examples of femicide. These include mutilation murder, rape murder, woman battery that escalates into wife killing, the immolation of widows in India and “honour crimes” in Latin and Middle Eastern countries, where women who are believed to have shamed their families by associating with an unrelated male or even by being raped by a brother, are often murdered by their male relatives. Feminists in Latin America have been among the first to adopt the term femicide to refer to the massive number of these misogynist crimes in Juarez, Mexico. Many of these young femicide victims were also raped, tortured and mutilated. Use of the term femicide and the creation of anti-femicide feminist organizations, spread from Mexico to many other Latin American countries. Russell’s concept of femicide extends beyond misogynistic killings to apply to all forms of sexist killing. Misogynistic murders are limited to those motivated by the hatred of females whereas sexist murders include killings by males motivated by contempt for females, a sense of entitlement and/or superiority over females, pleasure or sadistic desires toward them and/or an assumption of ownership of women. In addition, Russell’s definition of femicide includes covert forms of the killing of females, such as when females are permitted to die because of misogynistic attitudes and/or social institutions. For example, when male children

are valued more highly than females, many girls starve as a result of this sexist attitude. Hence, these deaths qualify as femicides.

UN General Assembly : The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policy making and representative organ of the United Nations. It comprises all 193 members of the United Nations. It provides a unique forum for multilateral discussion of the full spectrum of international issues covered by the charter. The assembly meets in regular session intensively from September to December each year and thereafter as required.

World Health Organization : WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations System. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends. In the 21st century, health is a shared responsibility, involving equitable access to essential care and collective defence against transnational threats.

21.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- 1) Women in extreme poverty/deprivation; destitute women; women affected by terrorist/militant violence; women affected by natural calamities; women affected by riots; women in conflict situations; women in inaccessible & underdeveloped regions; women with disability/special ability; widowed women; divorced/separated women; women heading households; single women in difficult circumstances; women displaced from employment; migrant women; deserted women; women who are victims of domestic violence; commercial sex workers; and women sold or trafficked or used for immoral purposes.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

- 1) More than 30 million people are today living with HIV. Globally, women now account for half of all infections. Yet women increasingly make up the majority in sub-Saharan Africa, where the epidemic has stretched the furthest. In parts of Africa and the Caribbean, young women aged 15-24 years are up to six times more likely to be HIV-positive than young men of the same age. The proportions of women living with HIV in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe are also growing slowly. Gender inequality and violations of women's rights make women and girls particularly susceptible, leaving them with less control than men over their bodies and their lives. Women and girls often have less information about HIV and fewer resources to take preventive measures. They face barriers to the negotiation of safer sex, including economic dependency and unequal power relations. Sexual violence, a widespread and brutal violation of women's rights, exacerbates the risk of transmission. And while it is widely assumed that marriage provides protection from AIDS, evidence suggests that in parts of the world it can be a major HIV risk factor,

especially for young women and girls. This is greatly so in India. In many cases, HIV-positive women face stigma and exclusion, aggravated by their lack of rights. Women widowed by AIDS or found to be HIV-positive may face property disputes with in-laws. And regardless of whether they themselves are HIV-positive, women generally assume the burden of home-based care for others who are sick or dying, along with the orphans left behind. The sixth Millennium Development Goal calls for reversing the spread of HIV and AIDS by 2015. To that end, more resources are needed and strategies and programmes must be targeted to women in particular. At a UN General Assembly Special Session in 2001, more than 180 countries agreed that gender equality and women's empowerment are fundamental to reducing girls' and women's vulnerability to HIV and AIDS.

21.12 REFERENCES

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www.globalhealth.org

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21.13 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

- 1) Discuss women's status and position in different regions in the world.
- 2) Which are the areas in which women face discrimination and violence? Explain with suitable examples.