



UNIT 2



UGC's GUIDELINES-VII TO XI PLANS

- In order to promote Women's Studies, the University Grants Commission has been playing a significant role through the creation of Centres for Women's Studies by implementation of a scheme on Development of Women Studies in Indian Universities and Colleges.
- These Centres in the University system have been functioning for about two decades, since 1986 and have succeeded in playing an interventionist role by initiating a gender perspective in many domains; in knowledge generation and in policy designs and practice etc.
- The Women's Studies Centres were designed to act as catalysts for promoting and strengthening Women's studies through teaching, research, curriculum, field and extension work, training and continuing education. The Centres have carried out their work not only in the above areas, but also in areas of gender equity, economic and self reliance, girls'education, population education, women's rights and law. They have been instrumental in incorporation of women's studies in various courses of teaching as well as facilitated research in socially relevant areas.
- The Centres for Women's Studies have contributed to the visibility of women's issues, tried to combine erudite knowledge with socially relevant theories, and have succeeded in opening a dialogue in multi-disciplinary collaborations. Over the last two decades in India, Women's Studies has raised important questions about the invisibility, distortion and marginalization of gender as a category of analysis in mainstream disciplines

- The Women's Studies Centres play a vital role in academic upliftment including creating regular, short term and basic foundation courses to incorporate new gender perspective in all faculties. It has to develop, update and restructure curricula.
- These Centres create a conducive environment by creating infrastructure and women's basic educational and common facilities including the benefits of involving and capitalizing faculties from other departments to adopt multidisciplinary approach in an integrated manner.
- The Centres aim at greater participation of women teachers in the faculty of the Centres and also to cover various sub disciplines concerned in the emerging areas of global and national interests, but also create adequate women's hostel facilities and hostel accommodation to cater to the requirement of female students especially in colleges. The University will take initiatives in monitoring admission and related women's issues in this regard.
- Important issues in the media which require active and immediate intervention, issues affecting the social upliftment, issues promoting social degradation of the status of women, need to be contested by these centres. The Centres work to ensure convergence with all other agencies engaged in these ventures in tune with the guidelines framed under the scheme.

Development of Women: Genesis, Growth and Diversification:

Development of women as a group has been receiving the attention of the Government right from the very first five-year plan (1951-56). But it has been treated as a subject of welfare and clubbed together with disadvantaged groups like the destitute, disabled, aged etc. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), set up in 1953, acts as an apex body at the national level to promote voluntary action at various levels especially at the grassroots to take up welfare-related activities for women and children.

- The Second to Fifth Plans (1956-79) continued to reflect the very same welfare approach, besides giving priority to women's education and launching measures to improve maternal and child health services, supplementary feeding for children and expectant and nursing mothers.
- The shift in the approach from welfare to development of women could take place only in the Sixth Plan (1980-85). Accordingly, the Sixth Plan adopted a multi-disciplinary approach with a special thrust on the three core sectors of health, education and employment.
- In the Seventh Plan (1985-90), developmental programs continued with the major objective of raising women's economic and social status and bringing them into the mainstream of national development. A significant step in this direction was to identify/promote the Beneficiary-Oriented Schemes (BOS) in various developmental sectors, which extended direct benefits to women. The thrust on generation of both skilled and unskilled employment through proper education and vocational training continued.
- The Eighth Plan (1992-97) with human development as its major focus played an important role in the development of women. It promised to ensure that benefits of development from different sectors do not by-pass women, implement special programs to complement the general development programs and to monitor the flow of benefits to women from other development sectors and enable women to function as equal partners and participants in the development process.
- The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) made two significant changes in the conceptual strategy of planning for women. Firstly, empowerment of women became one of the nine primary objectives of the Ninth Plan. To this effect, the approach of the plan was to create an enabling environment where women could freely exercise their rights both within and outside home as equal partners along with men. Secondly, the plan attempted convergence of existing services available in both women specific and women-related sectors. To this effect, it directed both the Centre and the States to adopt a special strategy Women's Component Plan (WCP) through which not less than 30 per cent of funds/benefits flow to women from all the general development sectors

Approach in the X plan

The Centres for Women's Studies (CWS), having played quite significant roles and functions in facilitating the national goals of removal of poverty and discrimination were required to have a properly designed strategic plan for action and implementation of a well designed program so as to consolidate strengthen and sustain the Centres according to their areas of strength, potential, thrust or priorities and fulfilling the national goals in women's empowerment.

In the context of having laid down National Policy, approach to the X Plan for empowering women stood on a strong Platform for Action with definite goals, targets and a time-frame. Further, as the process of empowering women initiated during the Ninth Plan was expected to continue through the X Plan, there could be no better approach than translating the National Policy for Empowerment of Women (2001) into action through:

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for the development of women to enable them to realize their full potential;
- Allowing the de-jure and de-facto enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women at par with men in all spheres - political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- Providing equal access to participation and decision- making for women in social, political and economic life of the nation;
- Ensuring equal access to women to health care, quality education at all levels, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security and public. office etc.
- Strengthening legal systems aimed at the 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 into the development process.
- Eliminating discrimination and all forms of violence against women and the girl child.
- Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society, particularly women's organizations, corporate and private sector agencies.
- Thus the strategy was a well-defined action plan of activities and programs in all such self-identified areas to fulfill the objectives and national goals accordingly applicable to a centre.

Approach in the XI Plan

- The guidelines for the XI Plan have taken a broader view of women's studies by supporting University Women Studies Centres and facilitating them to become teaching and research departments in the University system. Further, the thrust is to develop field action projects for action, research, evaluation and enhancement of knowledge and partnership across boundaries of caste/class/religion, community and occupations. To meet these ends, the new focus emphasizes mentoring, partnership and clustering as well as orientation and training workshops.
- The thrust is to involve many more people and many organisations in the network as well as to ensure that the focus and the quality of this newly emerging discipline are maintained Hence, the need for a Chair for Women's Studies at the UGE level.

- In the XI Plan, it is proposed that a broader view is taken of this constituency of Women's Studies Centres and women's studies scholars who have been playing a significant role facilitating the national goals of establishing a secular, inclusive and just society in the new millennium. It is proposed that support must be given to strengthen and sustain the University Women's Study Centres by establishing them as statutory Departments in the university system, as also to facilitate the own capacity to network with other constituents, such that they are mutually reinforcing as well as synergizing one another. The current configuration of the Centres is such that there are differences amongst them in their age, skills, location within the University in terms of the University's own priorities as well as in leadership.
- While the primary role of the Centres located in the University system can be defined as knowledge assimilation and knowledge transmission through teaching, research, field action and documentation, Centres may emerge as specialized/ advanced Centres for teaching or research in identified areas Strengthening the capability of Centres/Departments to perform the abovementioned roles has to take place in many directions including:
 - i) Teaching and Training
 - ii) Research
 - iii) Field Action
 - iv) Dissemination (library, documentation and publication)v) Advocacy

GENDER STUDIES: BEIJING CONFERENCE AND CEDAW

BEIJING CONFERENCE:

The Beijing Declaration was made during the Fourth World Conference on Women convened by the United Nations during 4 -1 5 September 1995 in Beijing, China.

It was at this conference that the world agreed on a comprehensive plan to achieve legal equality on a global scale. The plan was known as the Beijing Platform for Action.

The Beijing Platform for Action covers 12 critical areas of concern.

They are as follows:

- Poverty
- Education and Training
- Health Violence
- Armed Conflict
- Economy
- Power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanisms
- Human rights
- Media
- Environment
- Girl Child

What was the impact of the Beijing Declaration?

- The Beijing declaration led to renewed activism of women's movement on a global scale with an increase in political will and worldwide visibility. Above all, it provided greater clarity on how to achieve equality and empowerment. Since the conference, civil society, governments and the general public have carried out the Platform Action's objectives, bringing about major changes in individual countries. These have ushered in enormous improvements in women's lives. More women and girls than at any previous point in time serve in political offices, are protected by laws against gender-based violence, and live under constitutions guaranteeing gender equality. Regular five-year reviews of progress on fulfilling Beijing commitments have sustained momentum.
- But despite such positive changes, there are still miles to go regarding advancements in the field of gender equality. This became evident when on the 25th anniversary of the Beijing declaration a new report was published to ascertain the progress made.

Beijing Declaration +25

- Following 25 years of since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration, a United Nations report was published in early 2020 which stated that progress towards gender equality is slowly faltering and hard-won rights of women are gradually being reversed.
- As per the report, Women currently hold just one-quarter of the seats at the tables of power across the board while men are still 75 per cent of parliamentarians, hold 73 per cent of managerial positions, are 70 per cent of climate negotiators and almost all of the peacemakers.

- Thus, it can be safely said that the gender gap is still prevailing at a nominal level after 25 years. The problem is compounded by the Wuhan Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Research shows that pre-existing inequalities are exacerbating and even threatening to reverse the gains made by collective effort. The data from this research shows that the pandemic will push 47 million more girls and women below the poverty line, with an increase in violence against women during the lockdown phase, loss of livelihood at a faster phase because they are exposed to hard-hit economic sectors.

CEDAW:

CEDAW was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1979. It became effective in 1981 after the condition of 20 ratifications were fulfilled.

- It is considered by many as an international ‘bill of rights’ for women.
- It is one of the core international human rights treaties of the UN treaty system, which requires Member States to undertake legal obligations to respect, protect and fulfill human rights.
- It has been acceded to or ratified by 189 members.
 - i. India signed CEDAW in 1980 and ratified it in 1993, with certain reservations.
 - ii. The US has signed the treaty but not ratified it.
- CEDAW is a treaty that is exclusively dedicated to gender equality.
- It also defines the meaning and nature of sex-based discrimination and gender equality.
- By becoming a party to the Convention, a country is legally obliged to take all appropriate measures to eradicate discrimination against women and promote gender equality.

- i. The obligation of the member pertains to both public as well as private life.
- ii. This is important because one of the biggest hurdles to achieving equality has been the perception that the State should not interfere with the private life of an individual.
- iii. CEDAW makes the States' obligations to ensure that women are not discriminated against in the private realms of marriage and family life.
- iv. CEDAW acknowledges that unequal power relations within the private sphere contribute greatly to gender inequality in all aspects of women's lives, and it directs States to take measures to correct this power imbalance.
 - The treaty is monitored by a 23-member expert committee called the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.
 - i. The members are elected by state parties with the tenure of membership lasting four years
 - CEDAW requires that member states not only have an absence of discriminatory legal framework, but that their laws and policies should not be discriminatory in effect.
 - It underscores the difference between formal equality and substantive equality between men and women.
 - The CEDAW Convention provides strong standards on equality and non-discrimination for all women.
 - It also provides critical normative standards that are intrinsically linked to the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development such as those related to food, health, education, housing, legal capacity, non-discrimination, political participation and equal family relations. SDG 5 talks about gender equality in the world by the year 2030.

EXCLUSIVENESS AND INCLUSIVENESS

Social Exclusion:

- Social exclusion (SE) is a process by which certain groups are systematically disadvantaged because they are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, HIV status, migrant status or where they live.
- Social exclusion can also be defined as a process in which one section of society looks down upon the other, and alienates and excludes the latter from all opportunities of development on an arbitrary basis. The dominant section uses not only religion, tradition and culture but also political and bureaucratic powers and if nothing works also indulges in violence to perpetuate its dominant position. The condition of Dalits in India who constitute over 16 percent of India's population is a classic case of social exclusion.

Exclusive Inclusive Policies in India:

Inclusive policies ought to be an integral part of national policies of every country that proclaims to be valuing diversity in the true sense. Articles 15, 16, 17, 38, 39, 46, 332, and 333 of Indian Constitution recognize the importance of valuing diversity and social justice. India is one of the few countries that have elaborate policy measures and also machineries/ Institutional arrangements to enforce inclusive policies.

Outcome of Inclusive Policies since 1950:

- Due to reservation policy, some dalits have become IAS officers (bureaucrats). But even these few Dalit IAS officers, District Collectors and VCs feel excluded and discriminated against among their colleagues in covert forms. Yet a sizeable percentage of posts reserved for them continue to remain vacant despite implementation of inclusive policies for nearly 60 year The private sector industries and educational institutions are opposed to such inclusive policies, and are unwilling to adopt it for their institutions/industries.
- Most of the teaching and non teaching positions, reserved for dalits, have not been filled both in natural and social science educational institutions/universities. This only reflects that even education has not helped much to address social exclusion issue through inclusive policies. This reflects the seriousness of the problem of social exclusion which is rooted in caste prejudice.