

State Policy and the Twelfth Plan through a Gender Lens

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The advisory group of the Review of Women's Studies (RWS) is grateful to the editorial team at the EPW for having been requested to assist the journal in bringing out this review issue twice a year. Over the years, the RWS has evolved into one of the most significant spaces for showcasing new scholarship in the field of women's studies, thanks to the extraordinary efforts and leadership of Maithreyi Krishnaraj. We would like to take this opportunity, therefore, to record our appreciation and admiration for her pioneering role in encouraging new and established scholars to publish their work in the EPW, and so deepen existing research and thinking on gender related issues. We hope to carry Maithreyi Krishnaraj's efforts forward, for which we look to her support, together with the assistance of the EPW and the wider community of scholars.

This issue of the RWS focuses on questions of policy in the context of the upcoming Twelfth Plan. The relationship of the women's movement in India to the State and more specifically to aspects of development planning and policy is as old as the movement itself, and has had a multilayered history. Making demands on the state and its machinery in order to overcome processes that marginalise women has taken many forms, and there have been significant changes in orientation over the last decades. One might point to the truly remarkable report *Women's Role in a Planned Economy* produced in 1941 for the future nation state which "disappeared" with independence; the subsequent adoption of a social welfare approach to women in the First Five-Year Plan; and the findings and critiques of the *Towards Equality Report* by the Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1975, followed by the first serious efforts at policy review with the lifting of the Emergency after 1977. It is not possible to go into the details of the different pressures that sections of the women's movement have placed on the state planning process in the intervening decades and the kinds of outcomes that ensued, such as the special chapter on women and development in the Sixth Plan (1980-85), and the later use of terms such as "women's empowerment".

As the first article in this collection ("Gendering the Twelfth Plan: A Feminist Perspective") demonstrates clearly, the situation on the eve of the Twelfth Plan (2012-17) could not be more challenging. The current context is one where there has been some acknowledgement of the need to move away from an isolated focus on women to a more integrated approach. Given the unprecedentedly high growth rates that the Indian

economy witnessed during the Eleventh Plan and the Plan's explicit claim to "inclusive growth", the question addressed in the article is where a gender perspective is to be found, and what needs to be done further to provide one. The express task is to engender planning across all sectors, agriculture and manufacturing, rural and urban development, transport and infrastructure, health and education, among others. The article argues not only that inclusion must be explicitly embedded within the growth process, but the many advantages of doing so.

The second article "Gender Responsive Budgeting in India: What Has Gone Wrong?" explores the very instrument that the Indian state has now adopted in order to achieve integration or "gender mainstreaming", namely, gender responsive budgeting. Since 2005, in some contrast to an earlier "Women's Component Plan" approach, gender budgeting has been institutionalised in India following the example of a growing number of countries. Meant to be a tool that tracks how much of the state's budget addresses gender disparities and how programmes and schemes can promote gender equality, the article exposes the problems that currently beset the adoption of this approach by the government and what must be done to change it.

The third article ("Ladlis and Lakshmis: Financial Incentive Schemes for the Girl Child") examines a set of schemes that have been recently promoted by several states in the country in an effort to combat the declining child sex ratio. With various names such as Dhanlaxmi, Ladli, Beti Hai Anmol, and so on, a number of Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) schemes have been deployed with the goal of reducing the burden of an unwanted girl by providing cash payments to poor families with a daughter. The article describes the nature of the schemes, and points out problems with the many conditionalities that accompany it, including population control norms that demand of most families that they have just one or at the most two girls (no boys) followed by sterilisation. The study raises some fundamental questions about the very purpose that is sought to be achieved and the methods of doing so.

A very different intervention is the subject of the next article on the Dilaasa Model, which deals with domestic

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violence. Using a case study approach, the article (“Addressing Domestic Violence within Healthcare Settings: The Dilaasa Model”) looks at how and whether women who have suffered from domestic violence can be helped in a public health context. Crisis centres established in two public hospitals in Mumbai and the experience of women survivors of domestic violence who came there for help are drawn upon to make a case that there is a need to upscale such a model into a policy.

The final paper in this issue of the rws (“Beyond Feminine Public Altruism: Women Leaders in Kerala’s Urban Bodies”) moves into the realm of a less well known and certainly less well studied dimension of development planning, namely, urban local governance. In the context of Kerala and its policies of decentralisation within which women’s participation has been foregrounded, the article discusses the ambiguous location of urban local politics between the realms of state politics and local (rural) decentralisation, and how this affects the trajectories of women representatives who strive for a political future. In particular, the constraints of urban governance are being increasingly redefined by neo-liberal development policies of urban management, which in turn shape the kinds of women who are being elected and the power that they wield.

Opening Up Dimensions of Public Policy

In different yet related ways, each of the articles opens up dimensions of public policy in the contemporary moment, one which has been transformed by the neo-liberal turn that the Indian state has chosen to take. But this is also a moment in which the state has made several claims about being more gender aware – such as those to engender the entire planning process; to institutionalise gender sensitive budgeting across all the ministries; to better target girls born into poor families; to respond to domestic violence in a public health setting; and to expand the presence of women via reservations within local bodies. The question therefore is what a critical gender lens can make visible, from the most macroeconomic of spaces to the most micro-level experiences of everyday life.

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India Time Series

A few months ago EPWRF introduced an online database service christened as ‘India Time Series’, www.epwrfits.in. The project envisaged dissemination of data in fifteen modules displaying time series on a wide range of macroeconomic and financial sector variables in a manner convenient for research and analytical work. This is targeted to benefit particularly students, research scholars, professionals and the academic community, both in India and abroad.

This online service is a part of the project funded by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and executed by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai and the *Economic and Political Weekly* (EPW).

Time series data sets have been structured under various modules.

Modules released so far	Following modules will be added soon
1) Financial Markets	1) National Accounts Statistics
2) Banking Statistics (Basic Statistical Returns)	2) Annual Survey of Industries
3) Domestic Product of States of India (SDP)	3) Finances of Government of India
4) Agricultural Statistics	4) Finances of State Governments
5) Price Indices	5) Industrial Production
6) Power Sector	6) External Trade
	7) Insurance
	8) Education
	9) Health

Key Online Database Features

- Disseminating data in time-series format.
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- Instantly compare, plot and analyse different data in relation to each other.
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