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Two Commonwealth Approaches to Gender Equality

This section looks at some general indicators on the situation of women in two Commonwealth countries, India and South Africa, and efforts by governments to advance gender equality in those countries. It also develops a typology of these countries' planning responses to gender.

Engendering Development Planning In Post-Apartheid South Africa¹

The interim constitution of South Africa specifically includes a clause on equality and the promotion of gender equality as a key objective of the South African state. The government is beginning to fulfil this objective through the establishment of a Gender Commission, locating specific gender units/structures in government departments to ensure that all levels of the public sector integrate needs and interests of women in their programmes and projects.² The South African Government and Parliament has made many policy recommendations and taken specific initiatives to address the needs and interests of women, including the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

In the post-Beijing period to date, most national government departments have committed themselves to a range of steps to enhance the status of women in South Africa. Many of the post-Beijing initiatives were led by the Ministry of Social Welfare and the former RDP office. In Gauteng, the GPSC has led the initiative with the sub-commission of the provincial legislature and an intergovernmental forum. These initiatives have raised a critical awareness of gender needs and interests among a few government departments and civil society organisations. However, the key concern is that unless Development Planning Departments recognise the need to integrate gender into planning processes, these initiatives will be lost.

Consequently, efforts must be made to ensure that the needs and interests of women in the struggle for gender equality will respond to the particular context of women highlighted below:

- ◆ At least 35 per cent of households in South Africa are headed by women alone.
- ◆ Woman-headed households are poorer than others, the income being approximately half.
- ◆ Over half of the unemployed in South Africa are women.
- ◆ Women live in extreme poverty in rural areas and are burdened by multiple roles.
- ◆ 13 per cent of rural households have water and most do not have electricity. Women's time is taken up by fetching wood for fuel and water.
- ◆ The illiteracy rates for rural areas where women are in the majority is approximately 50 per cent, and 38 per cent in urban areas.
- ◆ Training and human resource development for women is limited to traditional female occupations.

- ◆ Women's rights and control over reproduction is still an issue, with 300,000 unsafe abortions taking place each year.
- ◆ All forms of violence against women and children are on the increase. In 1993 there were about 966,000 rapes; one woman is raped nearly every minute in South Africa.
- ◆ Women are not recognised, not empowered and not seen as significant in the productive sectors of the economy in South Africa.³

Since 1994 women have been elected into the national Parliament, provincial legislatures and more recently local government structures. Their representation at national level is just over 30 per cent, with more women in Cabinet than ever before, but this representation is not matched by their qualitative participation in decision-making (Taylor, 1996).

The importance of effective co-ordination

In South Africa, the government was not able to utilise donor aid and government allocations set aside for its reconstruction and development programme (RDP). There was a carryover of R7 billion from donor aid into 1995 and it was estimated that there would be a carryover of over R10 billion from the 1996 budget to the 1997/8 budget. The RDP was designed as a comprehensive programme to address poverty, reduce inequalities as a result of apartheid, restructure the economy, reform the civil service and build human resources among others. The RDP process took place as a separate initiative led by democratic forces while the Annual Budgetary and Planning Process took place within the civil service.

The logic of the RDP was neither understood nor immediately accommodated within sectors, and the planning agency (RDP office – subsequently dismantled) did not co-ordinate and synchronise all cycles. There was a time lag in allocating monies to the programmes identified and a build up of unallocated money in government departments. Poverty increased in spread and intensity, women's positions worsened and pressure on the government to deliver led to the disbursement of funds to projects that were poorly conceived and implemented.

In order to advance gender equality in South Africa and integrate gender into government, the report on the status of women in Gauteng emphasises the following national and provincial priorities:

- ◆ The integration of a gendered analysis into all policies, programmes, structures and processes is central to the achievement of gender equality.
- ◆ A gendered analysis of the macroeconomic framework, the budgetary processes and allocations and the need to ensure that these documents are open to public scrutiny, and that competing interests and claims are mediated through a process that is inclusive of all concerned, is critical.
- ◆ That a structure or unit be established, tasked with the responsibility of developing gender plans with clear objectives and priorities to ensure the mainstreaming of gender into all government departments, especially that of development planning by:
 - reviewing existing policies and laws;
 - ensuring that all new policies are formulated within a gender analysis;
 - developing and implementing relevant legislation to advance the status of women;
 - developing a system of indicators and reports by all departments on the gender impact of their policies and budgets;
 - reforming economic planning systems to factor in women's contributions and needs;
 - institutionalising gender education and training strategy for government sectors to develop skills in gender planning, policy development and implementation;

- participating in the government's information systems to ensure the flow of gender information within government and between government and civil society;
- encouraging the active involvement of the public, private and voluntary sectors in partnership with government to attain equality between men and women; and
- promoting the establishment of data collection and analysis which will be gender-disaggregated and accurate.

Karnataka and National Government of India

India: Some indicators on women⁴

- ◆ A third of all households are solely maintained by women.
- ◆ A third of women provide 50 per cent of all earnings in India.
- ◆ 94 per cent of all women work in unorganised sectors such as agriculture.
- ◆ A girl child labours 10 hours a day for 315 days of a year.
- ◆ The sex ratio has steadily been declining over the decade censuses and has come down to 927 females per 1000 males in 1991.
- ◆ Expectation of life at birth has risen from 49.0 years during 1970-75 to 59.7 years for women by 1989-93, exceeding the expectation of life for males at 59.0 years.
- ◆ The total fertility rate has declined to 3.5 in 1993.
- ◆ Literacy levels of females have risen significantly from 29.85 in 1981 to 39.19 in 1991, while the literacy rate for males has advanced to 64.13 from 56.37.
- ◆ Gross enrolment ratios for girls at the three stages of school education have risen rapidly in the last decade from 64.1, 28.6 and 52.1 to 93.3, 55.0 and 79.3 respectively in 1995-96.
- ◆ The percentage of girls in school enrolment has also gone up at all three stages, from 38.6, 32.9 and 29.6 in 1980-81 to 43.2, 39.0 and 35.3 in 1995-96, respectively.
- ◆ Dropout rates for girls have fallen at primary and middle stages from 62.5 and 79.4 in 1980-81 to 37.8 and 56.5 respectively in 1994-95, but are still high at the middle and high school stages.
- ◆ Women's participation in literacy campaigns has been higher than that of men.
- ◆ Work participation rates for women have risen by 2 to 3 percentage points in 1991 as compared to 1981, as seen from census data.
- ◆ The percentage of women in the organised sector rose from 14.38 in 1992 to 15.36 in 1995.

Table 5

A Typology of Development Planning in Practice: Some Features in India and South Africa

Country/ State	Policy Approach	Role of the State	Development Approach	Macro-Economic Framework
India – National	Ranges from welfarist to anti-poverty. Limited role. Only acts when there is extreme pressure. Then promotes an incremental, piecemeal response to address symptoms through sectors.	Based on promoting accelerated economic growth through industrialisation. Limited emphasis on building human resources except in respect of skills for the market.	Modernising the economy through industrialisation and 'trickle down' effect. Emphasis on rapid economic growth through medium/micro enterprise and transnational companies.	Liberalising economy opening. Emphasis on reducing deficits, cutting back on public expenditure, especially on social services. Repayment of debt and servicing. Women seen as dependants.

- ◆ The percentage of women in central government has risen from 3.64 in 1981 to 7.58 in 1991.
- ◆ In the area of social defence, the data reveal an increasing trend of crime against women. The percentage of crime against women out of total crime has risen from 4.3 per cent in 1990 to 5.6 per cent in 1994.

The national government has constituted a State Commission for women which will examine how far the legal, political and economic rights granted to women under the Indian Constitution are actually accessed by women. The Government of the State of Karnataka has also reserved 30 per cent of the posts in all government services for women. The process of 'engendering' government processes is said to have started in this State at the grassroots level with the village, sub-district and district level electing bodies (panchayats) where 30 per cent of the members, several chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons of these bodies are women.

At the national level, the Central Government proposes to reserve 30 per cent of the seats in Parliament and State Legislature for women. Mere engendering is not enough in societies where men have traditionally exercised political, administrative and economic power. So the Department of Women and Child Development has taken up a massive training programme for the empowerment of women in local bodies.⁵

A Typology of Two Governments' Planning Responses to Gender

Most countries have an uneven response to gender which cannot be located within a specific policy approach such as welfare (see Table 1). A typology has been attempted for India and South Africa (see Table 5), which are seeking to address strategic and practical needs of women. The land, agriculture and rural development sectors in these governments tend to push strategic concerns related to land reform, redistribution, credit and loan facilities etc., while welfare departments respond to practical needs. In addition, each country is at a different development stage derived from a specific set of historical/cultural experiences so a typology approach is difficult.

The usefulness of attempting a typology approach in the development planning sector is that it highlights the links between policy, planning and national plans and the disjunction between macro policy and lack of changes in the position of women. It

Institutionalisation of Gender into Planning Framework	Distribution of Funds/Resources	Adequacy of Planning Data	Development Practice Regarding Gender	Women's Political and Economic Participation	Impact on Reducing Gender Inequalities
None except through Dept. of Women and Child Development, monitored by National Women's Commission, Rural Development Ministry. Govt. depts. have few women in planning sector. Staff need gender training.	Decrease in public funds allocated to women's projects and anti-poverty programmes. Credit schemes through national bank for Agricultural and Rural Development.	Adequate central statistical bureau collating sex-disaggregated data for planning. Academics research gender trends and a Gender Development Index and Human Development Index exist for each state.	Limited/no gender analysis in government planning departments. Women seen as vehicles of development with the exception of rural development sector and human resource development.	Impact at higher levels beginning to be felt in government. Caste and gender still a factor in hierarchy of decision-making. Inter and intra household levels remain oppressive. Some practical needs met, but not strategic needs.	Limited participation in central and state level political/economic structures. Increasing role across caste and gender through Panchayati Raj (Local Government) Constitutional amendment resulting in 30% reservation of seats for scheduled classes and women.

Table 5 *continued*

A Typology of Development Planning in Practice: Some Features in India and South Africa

Country/ State	Policy Approach	Role of the State	Development Approach	Macro-Economic Framework
State Karnataka	Promotes the thinking that helping poor women will increase their productivity and promote economic growth. Poverty is seen as the problem due to under-development – not unequal power relations. Also retains welfare approach.	Mix between social market and economic market emphasis. Intervenes to a limited extent. Role seen only as co-ordination through nation-wide anti-poverty campaigns.	As above but does pursue efforts to promote small business and rural economy. Handicraft co-operatives struggle to survive.	As above.
South Africa				
National	Anti-poverty in planning, but policy rhetoric is of empowerment and economic development.	Emphasis on economic market. Reduced state intervention. Attempt to build social accord with business, labour and civil society. Limited gains for workers.	Economic growth model. Neglect of rural economy. Modernising economy and promoting small-scale businesses and income generating products. Emphasis on employing women in certain sectors such as the service industry/crafts.	Liberalisation. Emphasis on reducing deficits, cutting back on public expenditure, especially on social services. Repayment of debt and servicing. Women seen as dependants.
Province				
Gauteng	Anti-poverty efficiency but policy rhetoric is of development and empowerment.	Ambivalent partnership approach but practice is freeing up the markets.	As above.	As above but emerging tensions between labour, business, government and political movements.

further highlights that development planning agencies have remained outside of the gender concerns and are in the main unaware of the need to mainstream gender into planning. Most countries' responses vary between a welfare and an anti-poverty approach in practice, although the rhetoric is of equity and transformation.

Institutionalisation of Gender into Planning Framework	Distribution of Funds/Resources	Adequacy of Planning Data	Development Practice Regarding Gender	Women's Political and Economic Participation	Impact on Reducing Gender Inequalities
As above. The existence of strong pressure groups has not led to any significant institutionalisation.	As above.	Adequate – as above.	Poor – as above.	As above except greater emphasis on human resource development and training of women.	As above but stronger and larger presence of women at top levels. Effects of greater numbers of women in local governments still has to be felt.
Through women's desks in National Departments/Gender Commission. Gender not integrated into planning because planning processes are in process of being restructured.	Limited public sector funds. Funding through loans and grants available for anti-poverty programmes. Donor and private-sector support provided for small income-generating projects. Lag in distribution of funds.	Inadequate conventional socio-economic indices available. No proper census done. Apartheid legacy. Gender audit and data collection beginning.	Positive in respect of broader equity (class, race, ethnicity, disability) but practice is non-existent in terms of gender except through such sectors as water, forestry and land, where the response is welfarist.	Limited policy level changes have resulted in more women in government and national parliament, but intra household, community and social inequalities remain. Representation of women has not resulted in gendered participation. Gender awareness increasing.	Greater participation of women in national Parliament (+25%) and in senior levels of government and business sector but at lower levels and rural areas increasing powerlessness.
In progress, but there is the option of gender units in departments. Intergovernmental forum and provincial service commission active. Planning department nationally.	As above, through aid and grants from national government. Lag in distribution of funds.	Inadequate data for planning. Gender data being collated but not yet used in planning systems.	As above. Except for emphasis to correct imbalance through efforts of Gauteng Provincial Service Commission and women's interest groupings.	Minimal. Women are more visible, but inequalities remain. Gender awareness increases but structural inequalities remain. Apartheid legacy stronger factor.	Elites benefit in economic and political spheres – greater numbers of women in professional sectors (+50% white). Increasing gaps between top and lower levels – women alienated in informal/squatter settlements.

Notes

- 1 Sources: The Gauteng Development Planning Paper, "Post-Apartheid Development Planning", 1996, Gauteng. "Development Planning in Gauteng", 1996. Information was obtained from: Members of the Gauteng Provincial Service Commission, Ms Luci Abrahams, Mr Allan Taylor, Mr Kenny Mosime, Ms Aspasia Karras; the Minister of Planning and Local Government, Mr S Shiceka, and Policy Director Mr Rolf Dauskardt; the Economic Advisor, Mr Moss Ngoasheng, to the Deputy President Mr Thabo Mbeki; NGOs involved in development. Members of National Parliamentary Portfolio Committees; "Gender in Gauteng", a report on the status of women in Gauteng prepared for the Gender Subcommittee of the Public Participation Committee, Gauteng Legislature by Albertyn C; Goldblatt, B; Gulati, A; Tlhase, I; and Everatt, D, 1996.
- 2 "Gender in Gauteng".
- 3 South African Women on the Road to Development, Equity and Peace; Beijing Conference on Women: Plan of Action for South Africa by Umanyano Media Service for Department of Welfare and Population Development, 1995.
- 4 Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India (1997); Women in India - A Statistical Profile, 1997, New Delhi.
- 5 Dr Malati Das, Secretary to Government, Department of Women and Child Development, State of Karnataka, Government of India.