Chapter II

Role of Women in Economic Development: An Overview
2.1. Introduction

From the time immemorial, the role of women in economic development is undermined and she has been subjugated with severe exploitation with one form or another. In fact in the early stages of development of agriculture, land was a cause of subjugation and hence right to property was given to women, but once slaves began displacing women in agricultural works it became a means of emancipation of women from land increasing their role in the family. Thus, woman was alienated from the cultivation of land and also the ownership rights of landed property. The subjugation of women to second order was synchronized with the growth of means of production that resulted in social division of labour which consequently influenced or rather dictated the division of labour within the household.

Even the modest form of agriculture created a surplus which was in the possession of man. Slavery gained prominence only after the primitive subsistence production passed over into one of surplus production. A charm developed between family and society, women came to represent the former and man the latter. With the establishment of individual houses, she was deprived of participation in productive work.

As man accrued the rights over property, automatically he got the control over the family, on the women and children. With the institution of monogamy slavery also existed side by side. However, monogamy was only for woman, but not for man. The sole exclusive aim of monogamous marriages were to make the man supreme in the family and to propogate him as the future heir to his wealth and children indisputably his own.

The breaking-up of communal property into private strips of land and absolute rights enjoyed at the household level all contributed mainly to the growth of
feudalism. In feudal mode of production, family system is essentially patriarchal in nature with the head exercising all legislative and executive powers, women and children answerable to him. Women were treated as inanimate objects. During the Rigvedic age, women were given away in the form of gifts as were cattle and horses. Perpetual war and pastoralism brought the patriarchal element to the forefront and relegated women to a lower status.

Adam Smith clearly mentioned in his writings that division of labour was not practiced even in 17th Century. He was the one who developed the concept and preached the benefits of it. According to him, it is only beneficial to the countries enjoying highest degree of industry and employment. The argument that household work and bringing up of children is the natural work of a women stands falsified when Smith says that division of labour gives rise to differences of talent, it being a major cause of the latter than that of natural differences. It is not from nature, but from habit, custom and education that division of labour occurs. With the strengthening of the institution of property, division of labour took acute form. Private property brought forth another important concept of justice.

With the advent of Industrial Revolution in England, the feudal relations hitherto existing started disintegrating and a new set of production relations or capitalist relations began taking form. With the help of many scientific and technological discoveries, entrepreneurs began establishing large factories where goods were turned into commodities. As its name goes drastic changes began occurring in the lives of the labour that were engaged in the process of production. Labour was faced with a sort of alienation that of means of production from labour. When any sort of change occurs, it is the vulnerable sections or the lowest class that is affected most and amongst this class women will be the worst sufferers.
In a capitalist mode of production, labour power is bought and sold like any other commodity. Its value is determined by the working time necessary for its production. But a labourer’s working day consists of necessary labour time needed for his reproduction and also surplus labour time. The surplus which he produces over and above his need is expropriated by the capitalist, which is known as the capitalist exploitation of labour. The factory conditions under which the labour was forced to work were deplorable. Overworking of labourer, employment of women and children in hazardous jobs was common inspite of various factory reports and reports of Mines banning the above.

In some branches of industry, the girls and women worked through out the night together with the males. Females could hardly be distinguished from the males regarding their dress and were smeared with dirt and smoke. Here, women along with men were exploited. It is not division based on sex that is the base for exploitation, but a class oppression, However, women also had an additional burden of looking after household work and bringing up of children. The above events are a proof that women was used inter changeably with men for all types of work. Another notable point here is that as it was of prime importance for the capitalists to continue with production activity round the clock for which additional labour force in the form of women had to be employed.

Modern industry machinery began dispensing muscular power. As a result, it becomes a means of employing labourers of slight muscular strength and those whose bodily development is incomplete to which category women and children fall. Therefore, the most sought after of the capitalist in this period was the labour of the women and children. This resulted in swelling numbers of labour without any distinction of age and sex. Compulsory work for the capitalist not only usurped play
of the children but also the free labour women could offer in support of the family.

The physical deterioration to women and children and women was caused by work in the industries were compelled to sell away their children to the capitalists. The employment of women in the industries for such long hours only increases the child mortality. In the new conditions, she had no time to devote to the household chores and rearing up of children. It also created estranged relations between mother and child. The significant point is that with the advancement of techniques of production, the concept of family life was thrown to the wind, the man, woman and children having nothing else but to work and work for the capitalist,

A considerable decline in women status occurred between seventeen and nineteenth centuries. The factors which caused this were the growth of political and administrative institutions, the development of academics and professions and most important the removal of production from the home to the factory. The removal of production from home to factory has begetted many problems to women, her alienation from the production in the first stage and later on her absorption into the capitalist production raising the degree of exploitation. When a reference is made to the capitalist society where it was a period when capital was being entrenched into the system women were also denied the political rights.

According to J.S. Mill, woman's present inferiority is due to economic factors but by nature man and woman are equals. Division of domestic responsibilities was analogous to the contemporary division of labour. As division of labour in the society has resulted due to economic inequality, therefore domestic division is based on the premise that women are dis-similar from men. However, women were idealized as superior by bringing out a moral and spiritual element in them saying that they would be strong in that realm which synchronizes with Gandhian views.
However, Mill lent active support to the women's movement of his times. He argues that the subjection of women is based on force and coercion, a survival of the "rule of right". The fight for equality which he wielded was only for the benefit of a minority of better off middle and upper class women for whom its achievement would confer upon all the rights enjoyed by men. His solution to the problem of inequality between the sexes was a socialist society where competition would be replaced by principle of cooperation.

Women experienced a discontinuity in employment mainly due to the responsibility of raising the family and on returning to work, tend to choose voluntarily or forcefully part-time work rather than full-time employment. This may happen due to the low education and lower skills she acquires in an unequal system. As a result, her labour is exploited in a cheap way to add to the profit of the industrialists. Prior to industrialization, there was a recognition for the skills of women labour. For example, in weaving industry, after cotton mills were setup, women were shunned out of the industry under the garb of protective legislation. Flexibility in the mode of work mostly works to the advantage of employers and at the expense of the cheap exploited labour of women.

The production of subsistence food-stuffs provides a clear example of women's contribution to capital accumulation. As the women's income-generating activity is not the sole support for the family, but only a complementary one, whatever meager income they obtain from it is accepted unresistingly. Moreover, peasant families in search of wage labour try to minimize the number of wage earners, women being relegated to the maintenance and reproduction of the male, low cost labour reserve.

The focus on the waged/unwaged division was brought to the fore by the
wages for House work Movement of women. These women were directly influenced by the international character of capital, especially in England where that character was immediately manifested by the import of cheap Third World Labour from ex-colonies. Commodity production is yet another characteristic feature of capitalism. Capital appears as a form of social organization wherein one class imposes work as the fundamental form of social control on another class through the imposition of commodity form.

Selma James extended the analysis of the unwaged house-wife who produces labour power for capital through her children, her husbands and her own labour power, within the Third world peasantry. These house-wives who are within the capital can be termed as unwaged for they are not paid a wage. As a house-wife, she does all the household drudgery and procreates children who are usurped by the international capital for its own accumulation. There was a debate whether the labour of the house-wife directly contributes to profits or has only indirect effects like reduction in wages on capital accumulation. However, the emphasis on domestic labour brings into light certain issues that are given hereunder.

The house-wife sells her labour power in exchange for the means of subsistence which she receives through the mediation of her waged husband. In this way the capital has seized upon every mode of production and transformed them into modes of its own self expansion. Thus, wagelessness is not outside or alongside accumulation, but it is a part of it. The unwaged or the housewives must be accumulated right along with the waged. Prior to the colonial onslaught women were to some extent engaged in agricultural activities though not of the extent as in a pre-capitalist formation. Especially during the war period, women completely replaced men in production, ensured stable living conditions for the people in the rear and took
care of the food supplied for the front. Colonialism has deprived women of their equal working status.

There is a competition between genders due to the existing property relations even in the informal section. The property relations that were shaped during the British has destroyed all the handicrafts and the position of the women deteriorated further. Hence, the position of women was still a deteriorated one. As the peasant was plundered by the Zamindar and his subordinates for payment of taxes and was left with no surplus product, all his family members including his wife and children to work hard. Women belonging to the lower classes were used as slaves in the houses of Zamindars both used for physical work and also for sexual satisfaction.

As merchant capital is associated with increased demand for labour, women were not only involved into the production process, but they were relegated to the function of reproducing the labour force. This results in lessening their control over social resources. Only by examining the form of extraction of surplus labour from peasant households can the familiar strategies of production and reproduction and consequently women’s subordination to the directions of international capital could be understood. Thus, in colonial India, the peasants were the worst exploited consequently the peasant women were still worst sufferers.

The labour is dependent on their master for their existence and the peasant women a double dependence not only that on the capitalist landlord, but also on the male authority. Thus, peasant women are the doubly oppressed section among the vulnerable class. This is because, the poor peasant has no alternative, but to sell his labour by depriving his accession to the means of production.

In the rural economy when the woman’s role is observed, it is realized that she is an equal participant in the productive activity. But in the process of recording
history, they were never given a proper treatment. Her role was mystified and idealized as a mere housewife. The work done by her was classified as only extended housework. This has resulted in universal undervaluing of women's work and ignoring their role in production. Consequently, the development policies could not integrate these invisible producers into the main stream of process of development.

Women producers were made invisible in history that adequate importance was not given as it was given to the male producers. It is interesting to note that regarding implements and appliances used in agriculture and rural manufacture, for example the worker dealing with the plough is mentioned to be a man while implements used by workers for operation in which women's participation was significant were invisible. Some of the crucial jobs such as manuring, transplanting, weeding, winnowing, threshing and rice-beating are the demarcated jobs of women showing their active engagement in agricultural and related pursuits, but having only marginal importance.

It proves that women could also efficiently perform men's role in agriculture. Another important observation made could be the impact of so-called 'civilisation' on women when migration of men to coffee plantations would be taken as a measure towards development, or may be the impact of colonialism. The separation of manufacturing from agriculture not only increased proletarisation, but also rural to urban migration and thereby urbanization.

The developmental policies, especially the rural development strategies have ignored the role of women and have failed to integrate them in the main-stream towards the path of development. The process of development, albeit a capitalist one has strengthened the earlier social structure instead of loosening it more so, in the case of women. Village society is stratified along two axes - by the relations of production
and by the social status hierarchy, by class and by caste cum ethnicity.

In Indian situation, work-pattern stratification is much stringent in the case of women due to status hierarchical and asset-unequal rural society. As work is not merely a medium of earning livelihood, but a symbol of hierarchical position, conveyor of the value system, the participation of peasant women is inversely related with the status of family. It is in such a highly sex stratified and inbuilt hierarchical society that there is no equal work pattern for women.

In this regard, the example given by Boserup would be appropriate. She could find four main social groups in which the women represented the different types of farming which are firstly, the veiled non-working women of the Middle East who is similar to the high-caste woman taking no part in outdoor activities, secondly the domestic wife contributing little to farming.

Unique of Latin American women also applicable to the local cultivator caste, thirdly the active family worker characteristic of the South East Asia contributing a large share to the family farm which is the case with the low-caste women and lastly women belonging to the lowest social group who regularly seek paid work for support of their families or in short, the African type of woman falling into the categories of male farming system and female farming system in a single South Indian village. However, the traditional female participation in agriculture is in response to economic need and necessity.

2.2. The Role of Women in Economic Development

Development of women has been receiving attention of the Government right from the very First Plan (1951-56). But, the same has been treated as a subject of 'welfare' and clubbed together with the welfare of the disadvantaged groups like destitute, disabled, age, etc. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), set up in
1953, acts as an Apex Body at 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), the developmental programmes continued with the major objective of raising their economic and social status and bringing them into the mainstream of national development. A significant step in this direction was to 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 a very 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 programmes to complement the general development programmes 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 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 of 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. To ensure that other general developmental sectors do not by-pass women and benefits from these sectors continue to flow to them, a special mechanism of monitoring the 27 Beneficiary Oriented Schemes for women was put into action in 1986, at the instance of the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO). The same continues to be an effective instrument till today.

The National Health Policy 2001 promises to ensure increased access to women to basic health care and commits highest priority to the funding of the identified programmes relating to women’s health. During the Ninth Plan period, several new initiatives were taken as part of the Reproductive and Child Health (RCH) Programme (1997), in order to make it broad-based and client-friendly.

2.3. Role of Women in Agriculture

The NSSO survey results show that there is high female unemployment in the rural sector. Therefore, the Tenth Plan also focused on programmes for increasing the work opportunities and productivity of female farmers. Increasing women’s access to productive land by regularising leasing and share cropping of uncultivated agricultural land by women’s groups, encouraging collective efforts in bringing wastelands under cultivation and providing policy incentives to women in low input subsistence agriculture will have immediate benefits in terms of the household’s food security and
women's empowerment along with additional employment generation.

The agricultural sector is a crucial component of the Indian economy and it accounts for two thirds of the employment. It further provides food, nutrition and employment security. Women are an integral part of agriculture. They contribute substantially from seedling to storage, germ plasma conservation and environment protection round the year. All over India a large number of women are involved in agriculture. Indian women's contribution to agriculture is a significant and crucial way both to agricultural production and the women's household sector.

A large number of adult women in India are in fact farmers working on land. However, agricultural policy is still dominated by the false view that 'farmers are men', women are only housewives'. In fact agriculture employs 85 per cent of all economically active women. It is also related to the fact that although women work to sustain their families most of their work is not measured in wages.

Women's work also became invisible because, women are concentrated outside market related or remunerated work and they are normally engaged in multiple tasks. Yet very rarely do women get the recognition for their perpetual contribution in agriculture in the rural economy. Their work is concerned as secondary by and large by policy makers.

The problem for women is exacerbated by discrimination and they are often paid less than their counterpart of the men. The women carry the double burden of poverty and discrimination. They have less access than men to credit, to production resources such as irrigation, water, fertilizers and improved technologies. The new global structural transformation is posing new challenges to the women in agricultural sector. These women, who are already exploited, now suffer under tremendous disadvantages in the contemporary world due to liberalization, privatization and
globalization.

Over the years there has been a decline in the number of cultivators and more and more women are working as agricultural laborers. According to the Census of India, in 1981 the percentage of women cultivators was 33.09 and in 1991 it was 34.22 per cent but the percentage of laborers was 46.34 in 1981 and it declined to 43.93 per cent. If we look at the distribution of women workers in agriculture, we can see an increase in the percentage of laborers from 31.9 per cent in 1951 to 43.93 per cent in 1991 while the number of cultivators declined from 45.4 per cent in 1951 to 34.22 per cent in 1991. More recently, the increased commercialization of agriculture and monetization of economy have resulted in the transformation of agriculture labor into wage employment. At the national level, the rate of economic participation of women is 20.85 per cent as compared to 53.20 per cent for men. Nearly 79.40 per cent of all economically active women were engaged in agriculture compared to 63.30 per cent of men.

2.4. Economic Empowerment of Women - A Catalytic Force

The erstwhile programme of Indira Mahila Yojana launched in 1995, was recast as Swayamsidha in 2001 to empower women by generating awareness and helping them to achieve economic strength through micro-level income-generation activities and facilitate easy convergence of various services such as literacy, health, non-formal education, rural development, water supply, entrepreneurship, etc. Out of the Ninth Plan outlay of Rs. 165 crore, no expenditure was incurred during the first three years of the Plan as the scheme was being recast. The expenditure during 2000-01 and 2001-02 was Rs.8.95 crore to expand the existing 238 blocks in 1999-2000 to 650 blocks in 2001-02 to form 53400 Women’s Self-Help Groups covering 9.3 lakh women beneficiaries.
Another empowering intervention refers to ‘Swa-Shakti Project’, sanctioned in 1998 for a five-year period till 2003 with assistance from the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Swa-Shakti has been in action in 57 districts of nine states of Bihar, Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh. Its major objective is to create an enabling environment for empowerment of women through setting up of self-reliant women’s Self-Help Groups and developing linkages between Self-Help Groups and lending institutions in order to ensure women’s continued access to credit facilities for income-generation activities. Of the Ninth Plan outlay of Rs. 102.94 crore, the expenditure was Rs.36 crore to set up around 9,735 Self-Help Groups through 118 NGOs (2001).

It is one of the important programmes for the women which is launched in 1972-73, the programme of Hostels for Working Women (HWW) aims to promote greater mobility for women in the employment market by providing safe and cheap accommodation to working women belonging to the lower income strata living away from home. Of the Ninth Plan outlay of Rs.51.25 crore, Rs.34.57 crore was spent for setting up 102 new hostels benefiting around 8,000 women.

Since inception of the scheme, 881 hostels were sanctioned with a capacity to accommodate 62,308 women till date and their 8,226 dependent children in the attached 316 day-care centres. The programme of Short Stay Homes (SSH) for Women and Girls was launched in 1969 to protect and rehabilitate those women and girls who are in social and moral danger due to breakup of families, mental strain/stress, social ostracism, exploitation etc. Of the Ninth Plan outlay of Rs.55.64 crore, the expenditure was Rs.25.53 crore. At present, there exist 271 SSHS, benefiting more than 6,700 women.
The Ninth Plan attached great importance to efforts that trigger changes in societal attitudes towards women and the girl child. An integrated media campaign - covering electronic, print and film media - which projects a positive image of both women and the girl child is the most important component of the Government's communication strategy. To sensitise the enforcement machinery, a countrywide gender sensitization programme was launched in 1991 in collaboration with United Nations Development Fund for Women, New Delhi. Special campaigns to combat atrocities against women were also launched throughout the country in collaboration with the State Home Departments and NGOs.

A set of 10 legal literacy manuals written in a simple and illustrated format was also published in 1992 with the aim of educating women about the laws concerning their basic rights. These manuals cover laws relating to working women, child labour, contract labour, adoption and maintenance, Hindu, Muslim and Christian Marriage Laws including right to property, dowry, rape, kidnapping and related police procedures.

The Awareness Generation Project for Rural Poor Women (AGPRP) aims to identify the needs of these women and generate awareness amongst them about their rights and handling of social issues. Since 1986-87, the scheme has placed special emphasis on encouraging the participation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions and learning about their role in national integration and communal harmony. Of the Ninth Plan outlay of Rs. 15.63 crore, expenditure incurred amounts to Rs. 10.92 crore. The programme for Information and Mass Education creates public awareness through the multi-media strategy on issues relating to women. Of the Ninth Plan outlay of Rs.9.75 crore, expenditure was Rs.8.70 crore.

These include Rashtriya Manila Kosh (RMK), set up in 1993, as a national-
level mechanism to meet the credit needs of poor and asset less women in the informal sector. RMK has taken a number of promotional measures to popularise the concept of micro-financing, thrift credit, formation and stabilisation of Self-help groups and also enterprise development for poor women. Since its inception, RMK has so far, sanctioned credit worth Rs.109.73 crore benefiting 4.2 lakh women through 992 NGOs and disbursed Rs.82.38 crore up to February, 2002.

The National Commission for Women (NCW), set up in 1992, has a mandate to safeguard the rights and interests of women. Its major objectives are to investigate, examine and review all matters relating to the safeguards provided for women under the Constitution, review of both women-specific and women-related legislations and suggest amendments wherever needed and to function as an agency to keep surveillance and facilitate redressal of grievances of women.

Of the total 41 legislations having a direct bearing on women, the Commission reviewed and suggested remedial legislative measures in respect of 32 Acts and forwarded the same to the government for further action. The Commission has accorded the highest priority to securing speedy justice to women.

The year 2001 was celebrated as Women’s Empowerment Year’. During the year, various activities and programmes were taken up on different themes pertaining to women’s social, political and economic empowerment. The Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances - 'Swadhar' has been designed with a flexible and innovate approach to cater to the requirements of various categories of women in distress, in diverse situations under different conditions.

The Scheme aims to provide basic needs of shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalised women living in difficult circumstances who are without any social and economic support. It also attempts to provide emotional support and counseling to
such women and ensure their social and economic rehabilitation through education, awareness, skill upgradation and personality development through behavioural training etc.

The genesis of WCP, though officially launched in the Ninth Plan, can be traced back to as early as in the Seventh Plan (1985-90) when PMO, in collaboration with the Planning Commission, identified 27 Beneficiary Oriented Schemes for women. Monitoring the progress of the implementation of these Schemes was entrusted to the Department of Women and Child Development to assess the quantum of funds/benefits flowing to women. These efforts were further strengthened when the Eighth Plan made a commitment stating that the benefits of development from different sectors do not by-pass women and the flow of benefits to women in education, health and employment will be monitored.

Later in the Ninth Plan, the concept of WCP was brought into action as one of the important strategies by directing both the Centre and the State Governments to ensure that not less than 30 per cent of funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women-related sectors. Also, the flow of funds/benefits were monitored through an effective mechanism of inter-sectoral review to ensure that adequate funds/benefits flow to women from all the related sectors so as to prove that the strategy of empowering women is a multi-sectoral approach towards holistic development and advancement of women.

While the impact of various developmental policies, plans and programmes implemented over the last few decades have brought forth a perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of women, problems like illiteracy, ignorance, discrimination and violence continue to persist even today. There has been a slight increase in the total female population of the country, from 407.1 million (48.1 per
cent of total population) in 1991 to 495.7 million (48.3 per cent) in 2001.

While the percentage increase is very marginal, increase in terms of absolute numbers was 88.6 million as against 77.1 million between 1981 and 1991. The growth rate of female population for the 1991-2001 decade was 21.79 per cent, which was 0.86 percentage points higher than that of males and 0.45 percentage points more than that of the total population. Yet, the demographic imbalances between women and men continue to exist till date.

The sex ratio, which represents the survival scene of women, registered a very marginal improvement, from 927 in 1991 to 933 in 2001 (Table 2.1). While the sex ratio in respect of all ages has increased, it has declined in the most crucial 0-6 age-group, from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001. Also, the same declining trend was reflected in most states, including the more economically advanced ones like Punjab and Haryana. This clearly points to the fact that economic growth may not necessarily bring about an improvement in the status of women. This, in turn, can be attributed to the discrimination that the girl child faces and the consequential problems of poor health and nutritional status. Added to these are the problems of female foeticide and female infanticide, the incidence of which is on an increase.

Table 2.1: Population by Sex and Decennial Growth Rate (1981–2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Females Population</th>
<th>DGR*</th>
<th>Males Population</th>
<th>DGR*</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>DGR*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>330.0</td>
<td>24.93</td>
<td>353.4</td>
<td>24.41</td>
<td>683.4</td>
<td>24.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>407.1</td>
<td>23.37</td>
<td>439.2</td>
<td>24.30</td>
<td>846.3</td>
<td>23.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>495.7</td>
<td>21.79</td>
<td>531.3</td>
<td>20.93</td>
<td>1027.0</td>
<td>21.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Decennial Growth Rate
i) The population figures exclude the area under the occupation of Pakistan and China, ii) the 1981 Census was not held in Assam. The figures for 1981 include the interpolated population of Assam; iii) The 1991 Census was not held in Jammu & Kashmir. The figures for 1991 include the population of Jammu & Kashmir as projected by the Standing Committee of Experts on Population Projections (October, 1989).

The Tenth Plan will also take cognizance of the gender asymmetry in the population pyramid with 'males out-numbering females' as a whole and 'females outnumbering males' at the upper end of the age structure and calls for urgent interventions to protect the girl child, besides providing social security for the aged women.

2.5. Economic Empowerment of Women

Ensure provision of training, employment and income generation activities with both 'forward' and backward' linkages with the ultimate objective of making all women economically independent and self-reliant through:

- Organising women into Self-Help Groups under various poverty alleviation programmes, viz. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana (SJSRY), Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK), Support for Training and Employment Programme (STEP), Training-cum-Production Centres for Women (NORAD) etc. and offering them a range of economic options along with necessary support measures to enhance their capabilities and earning capacities with an ultimate objective of making them economically independent and self-reliant.

- Ensuring that women in the Informal Sector who account for more than 90 per cent are given special attention with regard to improving their working conditions as the same continued to be very precarious without even minimum or equal wages, leave aside other legislative safeguards.

- Making concerted efforts to ensure that the benefits of training and extension in agriculture and its allied activities of horticulture, small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries, etc., reach women in proportion to their numbers and also
issue of Joint Pattas for husband and wife under the Social Forestry and Joint Forest Management programmes.

- Ensuring that the employers fulfill their legal obligations towards their women workers in extending child care facilities, maternity benefits, special leave, protection from occupational hazards, allowing formation of women workers' associations/unions, legal protection/aid etc.

- Re-training/upgrading the skills of women displaced from traditional sectors due to advancement of technology so that can take up jobs in the new and expanding areas of employment and formulating appropriate policies and programmes to promote alternative opportunities for wage/self-employment in traditional sectors like Khadi and Village Industries, Handicrafts, Handlooms, Sericulture, Small Scale and Cottage industries.

- Initiating affirmative action to ensure at least 30 per cent of reservation for women in services in the Public Sector as their representation in 1999 was only 14.5 per cent, along with required provisions for upward mobility.

- Increasing access to credit for women either through the establishment of new micro-credit mechanisms or micro-financial institutions catering to women or strengthening existing arrangements in these areas along with an expansion of the limited coverage of RMK.

2.6. Employment and Income-Generation of Rural Women

Further, as the ultimate objective of empowering women is to make them economically independent and self-reliant, special efforts will be made to generate gainful employment through promotion/expansion of both wage and self-employment opportunities. In this context, the ongoing training-cum-employment-cum-income-
generation programmes viz. SGSY, SJSRY, PMRY, STEP, NORAD etc., will be further expanded to create more and more of employment-cum-income-generation opportunities and to cover as many women as possible living below the poverty line.

In these efforts, priority will be given to female-headed households and women living in extreme/object poverty. The programme of Swayamsidha will be further expanded to 2,000 additional blocks during the Tenth Plan. The micro-credit programme of RMK will be closely tied up with Self-Help Groups formed under Swayamsidha for financing various employment-cum-income-generation activities. Thus, Swayamsidha is going to emerge as a nation-wide integrated programme to provide a strong base for empowering women, both socially and economically, during the Tenth Plan and beyond.

2.7. Adoption of Gender Budgeting

While taking note of the efforts initiated during the Ninth Plan towards ensuring a gender-just/gender-sensitive budget, the Tenth Plan continued the process of dissecting the Government budget to establish its gender-differential impact and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments. As the process of Gender Budgeting has its own limitations in terms of being a post-facto effort to dissect/analyse and thus offset any undesirable gender-specific consequences of the previous budget, this cannot be an effective measure to ensure adequate flow of funds and benefits for women.

More than the quantum or percentage of outlays, what is more important for empowering women is ensuring that the funds from various developmental sectors are effectively converged, properly utilised and monitored. This can be done through a systematic process of identifying the existing gaps in services and facilities being provided and ensure reaching adequate resources to fill those gaps as these very gaps
are standing as major obstacles in the process of empowering women.

In this context, the Tenth Plan also takes note of the over-riding priority given to the programmes of child development and the resultant intra-budgetary imbalances that exist today within the budget of the nodal Department of Women and Child Development and suggests to rectify the same through a much more balanced distribution of resources between 'Empowerment of Women' and 'Development of Children' - the two major responsibilities entrusted to it.

2.8. Research, Evaluation and Monitoring for Women Development

Diagnostic/Action research on important problems relating to women and children and which take place even during the week. The estimate of the employed based on current daily status gives average daily picture of employment. Therefore, the Special Group regarded the CDS measurement as the most appropriate measure to have an estimate of the gap i.e., jobs to be created on gainful basis, in order to bring out recommendations as to how they can be filled up by changes in policies.

The NSSO Report also provides estimates of the likely underemployment that is hidden in the number of the employed category, calculated by the UPSS approach when they are compared with CDS. The activity pattern of the usual employment during the days within the reference week is indicated by the distribution of their activity by current daily status. It is observed that the proportion of person days of the usually employed, utilised for work, is lower for females as compared to the males. This proportion was estimated at about 68 percent and 79 per cent for females in the rural and urban India respectively, as against 90 per cent and 94 per cent for males in rural and urban India respectively. If the work is not available, large portion of the females withdraw from the labour force rather than report themselves as unemployed.
2.9. Achievements for the Empowerment of Women During the Ninth Plan
(1997-2002)

- Adoption of Women’s Component Plan (WCP) to ensure that benefits from other developmental sectors do not by-pass women and not less than 30 per cent of funds/benefits flow to them from all the women-related sectors. Review of the progress of WCP during the Ninth Plan reveals that funds flowing from one of the women-related Departments (viz. Family Welfare) was as high as 70 per cent of its Gross Budgetary Support of the Ninth Plan; (1997).

- Launching of “Swa-Shakti” to create an enabling environment for empowerment of women through setting up of self-reliant Self-Help Groups (SELF-HELP GROUPSs) and developing linkages with lending institutions to ensure women’s access to credit facilities for income-generation activities; (1998).

- “Stree Shakti Puraskar” instituted for the first time in the history of women’s development to honour 5 distinguished women annually for their outstanding contribution to the upliftment and empowerment of women; (1999)

- Setting up of a Task Force on Women under the Chairpersonship of Shri K.G.Pant, Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission to review the existing women-specific and women-related legislations and suggest enactment of new legislations or amendments, wherever necessary. The Task Force also suggested a thematic programme for celebrating the year ‘2001 as Women’s Empowerment Year’, besides reviewing 22 existing legislations; (2000).

- Introduction of Gender Budgeting to attain more effective targeting of public
expenditure and to offset any undesirable gender-specific consequences of previous budgetary measure; (2000-01).

- Adoption of a National Policy for Empowerment of Women to eliminate all types of discrimination against women and to ensure gender justice, besides social and economic empowerment of women; (2001).

- Celebration of the Year 2001 as Women’s Empowerment Year' to create awareness generation, remove negative thinking, besides building up confidence in women through the processes of conscientization so that they can take their rightful place in the mainstream of the nation’s social political and economic life; (2001).

- Recasting of Indira Mahila Yojana as “Swayamsidha”, - an integrated programme for empowerment of women through a major strategy of converging the services available in all the women-related programmes besides organizing women into SELF-HELP GROUPSs for undertaking various entrepreneurial ventures; (2001).

- Launching of ‘Swadhar’ to extend rehabilitation services for Women in Difficult Circumstances’; (2001).

Thus, the government welfare programmes and development planning in India by and large was assumed that the general progress made by the population as a whole, would ultimately be shared by all sections and that whatever benefits accrued to the men (or to the family as a reckoning unit) would also percolate to the women and result in better status and gender equality. This, however, turned out to be a faulty assumption, as periodic assessments at the end of each plan period.
2.10. Projections of Employment Opportunities

The employment generating capacity of output growth has been seen to be reduced in recent years. The baseline scenario of growth of GDP is 6.5 per cent, as indicated in the Tenth Plan Approach Paper. The employment perspective using these estimates show that on the 'business as usual basis' (i.e., with the present employment elasticity) the percentage of unemployed will grow up to 11.0 at the end of the Tenth Plan, giving a total unemployed labour force of 45.56 million person years. This picture is not acceptable on any socio-economic or political ground. Therefore, a much higher growth rate (8 per cent) is needed for the future along with positive policies and programmes for changing the sectoral pattern and technology in favour of labour intensive production, if unemployment is to be tackled.

The estimates of employment and unemployment of the Tenth Plan’s base year (2001-02) are given. The estimates of unemployed for the year 2001-02 have been given around 34.85 million person years (defined on CDS basis) when the unemployment rate went up around 9.21 per cent. It also provides the estimates of addition to labour force over the Tenth Plan period as 35.29 million people.

Table 2.2: Distribution particulars of Person-days of usually Employed (per 1000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Daily Status</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tenth Five Year Plan
Table 2.3: Distribution particulars of Person-days of usually Employed
(Per 1000)

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<td>1000</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tenth Five Year Plan

2.11. Rural Development Schemes for Women Development

Rural women’s development received priority for the first time during the Sixth Plan period. The emphasis however, continued to be on the economic front, through programmes such as the IRDP, Development of Women and Children of Rural Areas (DWCRA) and the Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM). An enumeration of the different schemes alone runs to two pages, with 41 items listed under employment generation alone, including the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), the Shram Shakti Employment Guarantee Scheme and the Integrated Area Development Programme (IADP). The IRDP covers 20 million families, using a package of subsidies and institutional credit, of which 30 per cent was to go to SC/STs and ‘at least 30 per cent to women’.

Similarly, tailoring training was made available and sewing machines were donated, but here again, it was discovered at the end of the training that there was either no market for a trained women’s sewing skills in the area (because the village was too poor to generate business), or she had to pawn or sell her sewing machine in
certain cases because she needed the money to cope with expenses caused by unforeseen illnesses in the family. The basic vulnerability of women, which was the cause of poverty, was not being tackled or even addressed. Training, therefore, often turned out to be a non-viable economic activity.

Under the NREP and RLEGP projects for creating community, assets, there was a mandate to give preference to SC/STs, but in subsequent assessments by the planners themselves, it was again conceded that none of these projects had delivered the expected results, in the form of overall betterment of women status in these communities.

When UNICEF phased out its involvement in the project as planned, the state government’s funding became a bottleneck because of a ‘resources crunch’ and the scheme came to be seen as threatened, although it had mobilized savings to the tune of Rs.80.2 million. This created anxiety and dependence, where self-assurance and empowerment was the avowed goal. Thus, in spite of networking among the women and peer pressure to ensure loan repayments without default, there was no autonomy.

Several other programmes also showed evidence of lack of commitment to gender equality policies - as for instance, default over two years, in the payment of allowances that were due to rural midwives. Anganwadi workers are ‘multi-dimensional workers’ responsible for motivation, health work, teaching and acting as mother’s helpers. Their salaries had fallen below the official statutory minimum wage.

2.12. Conclusions

From the time immemorial, the role of women in economic development is undermined and she has been subjugated with severe exploitation with one form or another. In fact in the early stages of development of agriculture, land was a cause of
subjugation and hence right to property was given to women, but once slaves began displacing women in agricultural works it became a means of emancipation of women from land increasing their role in the family. Thus, woman was alienated from the cultivation of land and also the ownership rights of landed property. The sole exclusive aim of monogamous marriages were to make the man supreme in the family and to propagate him as the future heir to his wealth and children indisputably his own.

The breaking-up of communal property into private strips of land and absolute rights enjoyed at the household level all contributed mainly to the growth of feudalism. During the Rigvedic age, women were given away in the form of gifts as were cattle and horses. Perpetual war and pastoralism brought the patriarchal element to the forefront and relegated women to a lower status.

In a capitalist mode of production, labour power is bought and sold like any other commodity. Overworking of labourer, employment of women and children in hazardous jobs was common inspite of various factory reports and reports of Mines banning the above.

In some branches of industry, the girls and women worked through out the night together with the males. Females could hardly be distinguished from the males regarding their dress and were smeared with dirt and smoke. However, women also had an additional burden of looking after household work and bringing up of children. The above events are a proof that women was used inter changeably with men for all types of work.

The employment of women in the industries for such long hours only increases the child mortality in the new conditions she had no time to devote to the household chores and rearing up of children. A considerable decline in women status
occurred between seventeen and nineteenth centuries. The factors which caused this were the growth of political and administrative institutions, the development of academics and professions and most important the removal of production from the home to the factory.

According to J.S. Mill woman's present inferiority is due to economic factors but by nature man and woman are equals. Division of domestic responsibilities was analogous to the contemporary division of labour. As division of labour in the society has resulted due to economic inequality, therefore domestic division is based on the premise that women are dis-similar from men.

Women experienced a discontinuity in employment mainly due to the responsibility of raising the family and on returning to work, tend to choose voluntarily or forcefully part-time work rather than full-time employment. This may happen due to the low education and lower skills she acquires in an unequal system.

The house-wife sells her labour power in exchange for the means of subsistence which she receives through the mediation of her waged husband. In this way the capital has seized upon every mode of production and transformed them into modes of its own self expansion. Thus, wagelessness is not outside or alongside accumulation, but it is a part of it. There is a competition between genders due to the existing property relations even in the informal section.

The labour is dependent on their master for their existence and the peasant women a double dependence not only that on the capitalist landlord, but also on the male authority. Thus, peasant women are the doubly oppressed section among the vulnerable class.

In the rural economy when the woman’s role is observed, it is realized that she is an equal participant in the productive activity. It is interesting to note that regarding
implements and appliances used in agriculture and rural manufacture, for example the worker dealing with the plough is mentioned to be a man while implements used by workers for operation in which women's participation was significant were invisible. Some of the crucial jobs such as manuring, transplanting, weeding, winnowing, threshing and rice-beating are the demarcated jobs of women showing their active engagement in agricultural and related pursuits, but having only marginal importance.

It proves that women could also efficiently perform men's role in agriculture. The separation of manufacturing from agriculture not only increased proletarisation, but also rural to urban migration and thereby urbanization. The developmental policies, especially the rural development strategies have ignored the role of women and have failed to integrate them in the main-stream towards the path of development which will be discussed in the second chapter.

Development of women has been receiving attention of the Government right from the very First Plan (1951-56). But, the same has been treated as a subject of 'welfare' and clubbed together with the welfare of the disadvantaged groups like destitute, disabled, age, etc. The Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), set up in 1953, acts as an Apex Body at 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 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), the developmental programmes continued with the major objective of raising their economic and social status and bringing them into the mainstream of national development.

The Eighth Plan (1992-97), with human development as its major focus, played a very important role in the development of women. 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.

The agricultural sector is a crucial component of the Indian economy and it accounts for two thirds of the employment. It further provides food, nutrition and employment security. Women are an integral part of agriculture. They contribute substantially from seedling to storage, germ plasma conservation and environment protection round the year. All over India a large number of women are involved in agriculture. Indian women's contribution to agriculture is a significant and crucial way both to agricultural production and the women's household sector.

The problem for women is exacerbated by discrimination and they are often paid less than their counterpart the men. It is women who carry the double burden of poverty and discrimination. The erstwhile programme of Indira Mahila Yojana launched in 1995, was recast as Swayamsidha in 2001 to empower women by generating awareness and helping them to achieve economic strength through micro-level income-generation activities and facilitate easy convergence of various services such as literacy, health, non-formal education, rural development, water supply, entrepreneurship, etc.

Another empowering intervention refers to 'Swa-Shakti Project', sanctioned in
1998 for a five-year period till 2003 with assistance from the International Fund for Agricultural Development. It is one of the important programmes for the women which is launched in 1972-73, the programme of Hostels for Working Women (HWW) aims to promote greater mobility for women in the employment market by providing safe and cheap accommodation to working women belonging to the lower income strata living away from home.

The Awareness Generation Project for Rural Poor Women (AGPRP) aims to identify the needs of these women and generate awareness amongst them about their rights and handling of social issues. The year 2001 was celebrated as Women’s Empowerment Year. During the year, various activities and programmes were taken up on different themes pertaining to women’s social, political and economic empowerment. The Scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances - 'Swadhar' has been designed with a flexible and innovate approach to cater to the requirements of various categories of women in distress, in diverse situations under different conditions.

While the impact of various developmental policies, plans and programmes implemented over the last few decades have brought forth a perceptible improvement in the socio-economic status of women, problems like illiteracy, ignorance, discrimination and violence continue to persist even today. The sex ratio, which represents the survival scene of women, registered a very marginal improvement, from 927 in 1991 to 933 in 2001.

The Tenth Plan will also take cognizance of the gender asymmetry in the population pyramid with ‘males out-numbering females’ as a whole and ‘females out-numbering males’ at the upper end of the age structure and calls for urgent interventions to protect the girl child, besides providing social security for the aged
women. Further, as the ultimate objective of empowering women is to make them economically independent and self-reliant, special efforts will be made to generate gainful employment through promotion/expansion of both wage and self-employment opportunities.

While taking note of the efforts initiated during the Ninth Plan towards ensuring a gender-just/gender-sensitive budget, the Tenth Plan will continue the process of dissecting the Government budget to establish its gender-differential impact and to translate gender commitments into budgetary commitments. The increasing aspiration amongst the masses for education led by the National Literacy Mission will be tapped in the Tenth Plan by increasing the involvement of the community through PRIs in the implementation of UEE.

Similarly, the on-going scheme for the Adolescent Girls, viz. Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY), launched in 1991-92 aims at the empowerment and self-development of adolescent girls in preparation to their future productive and reproductive roles as confident individuals not only in family-building but also in nation-building.

Rural women's development received priority for the first time during the Sixth Plan period. The emphasis however, continued to be on the economic front, through programmes such as the IRDP, Development of Women and Children of Rural Areas (DWCRA) and the Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM). An enumeration of the different schemes alone runs to two pages, with 41 items listed under employment generation alone, including the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), the Shram Shakti Employment Guarantee Scheme and the Integrated Area Development Programme (IADP).
In the second half of the Sixth Plan, DWCRA was introduced for specially targeting rural women. Beginning with 50 districts, this revolving grant scheme had by the end of the Eighth Plan, covered 291 districts. With the central and state governments and UNICEF, each contributing one-third of the seed money, the women beneficiaries were encouraged to form thrift groups, which were expected to work better than the previous experiments of granting aid to individual women, which had 'failed'.

Several other programmes also showed evidence of lack of commitment to gender equality policies - as for instance, default over two years, in the payment of allowances that were due to rural midwives. Anganwadi workers are 'multi-dimensional workers' responsible for motivation, health work, teaching and acting as mother’s helpers.

An Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) programme for providing nutritional supplements and health services to pregnant and lactating women and to children below the age of six, hit the headlines, recently, for alleged misuse of funds.

The government 'grants-in-aid scheme' for mahila mandals to encourage women to be self-reliant and to run training-cum-production centres for needy women for instance, calls for the maintenance of 13 different registers. Under the circumstances, even the modest resources allocated and set apart for women's development do not get utilised optimally, by and for those who need it most.
2.13. References


