

Building a Gender Perspective in DPEP  
Digumarty Bhaskara Rao

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# Building a Gender Perspective in DPEP

As DPEP is being implemented in educationally backward districts which have a female literacy rate below the national average, a twin track approach is being followed. While all planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes have an inbuilt gender focus, the district-specific interventions for girls. To build a gender focus in the task of annual planning and budgeting, the first national workshop on gender strategies was held in New Delhi in June, 1995. Based on the recommendations of this workshop and the expressed need to reiterate strategies to build a gender perspective in DPEP, the second national workshop was organised in New Delhi in December, 1995.

A perspective building exercise was seen as necessary to knit the demands of educational planning with the perceived needs of girl children for schooling. At the same time the programme would help participants understand that gender needs and gender interests have broader implications for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

As this workshop was a good opportunity at the national level to share experiences and build a common agenda, participants from all 12 DPEP States and the U.P. Basic Education Programme were invited. Each State was represented by the DPEP State Project Director, State level Gender Coordinator and a district level functionary, responsible for evolving girl child education strategies.

Planning with a gender perspective requires a fresh conceptual understanding and new skills to address gender-related concerns. Efforts have been made by different sectors and at various levels for planning with a gender perspective. These have rarely been institutionalised.

## The Workshop Design

The workshop design evolved from the cumulative experience of the Gender Planning Training Project (GPTP) which was launched in 1993. The GPTP aimed to raise awareness of how gender plays a key role

in the way women and men participate in social and economic activities and promote gender equality within social change.

Adapted to DPEP requirements, the workshop was designed to cater to the needs of planners, researchers, implementors and trainers. The workshop sessions broadly covered three areas:

- Perspectives on Gender Issues in Development
- The Gender Relations Framework (GRF)
- Analysis of diverse situations using the GRF

Discussion on the social construction of gender roles helped participants realise the over-arching importance of socialisation on the lives of girls and boys - particularly that processes are so interlinked that it determines their motivation, expectations, perceptions and attitudes. Participants were having to go through a process of unlearning and almost simultaneously learning 'new' methods of analysis. They began to accept that learning about gender is not just learning about women and their concerns but also involves learning about men.

The understanding that gender is a social construct initiated the discussion on the institutions within which gender relations need to be examined. The GRF looks at the household, the community, the market and the State as institutions in which gender bias is rooted. The strategies for change in the educational system and the wider community will need to address all of these institutions individually and also as a collective. Institutions (The household, community, market and the State) are the formal and informal rules which shape social relations and limit choices. The GRF begins from the understanding that the problem is not women but the skewed gender relations and the inequitable development process. Aiming to transform social relations, the approach views integration as a necessary but not sufficient condition for transformation of gender relations and of broader social structures.

The acceptance of institutions as formal and informal rules which influence organisational structures, employee profiles, resource allocations and in-house practices is the basis of institutional analysis through the GRF. Their impact in different institutional setting is analysed (*Seep. 253*).

Relating this institutional analysis to DPEP, four critical areas were examined by the State teams:

- Text Books
- Teacher Training
- Community Support

institutions Aspects		<i>Houshold</i>	<i>Community</i>	<i>Market</i>	State
<i>RULES</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Breadwinners</i>	<i>Must support</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Need qualifcations for jobs</i></li> <li>• <i>Clear hours of work</i></li> </ul>	<b>Head</b> of household/own assets
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Caretakers</i>	<i>To Care for the home</i>		<i>Extension of men with no independent identity</i>
<i>PRACTICES</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Must earn</i>	<i>Pressure to work/earn well</i>	<i>Gethired</i>	<i>Access to credit against collateral</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Must do housework</i>	<i>If wants to work, must also handle home</i>	<i>Work part-time/get retrenched</i>	<i>Not eligible</i>
<i>PEOPLE</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Do 'outside' jobs</i>	<i>Must be independent</i>	<i>Higherposinbns</i>	<i>Own/possess assets</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Do 'inside' jobs</i>	<i>Shoudl be dependent/ potected</i>	<i>In 'soft' positions</i>	<i>Do not own assets</i>
<i>RESOURCES</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Access to education/ technology/ information</i>	<i>Accesstotechnical qualifications</i>	<i>Qualified therefore decision makers</i>	<i>Get into business</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Illiterate/ home science</i>	<i>'Soft' professions e.g., teaching/n ursing</i>	<i>Follow instructions</i>	<i>Home-based industry</i>
<i>POWER</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Decision makers members</i>	<i>Leaders/committee</i>	<i>Bosses</i>	<i>Work gets accounted</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Restricted mobility/ listeners &amp; followers</i>	<i>Followers/ supporters</i>	<i>Subordinates</i>	<i>Work supplement and not recognised</i>

- Educational Administration

Examining on-going AWP preparations using the gender relations framework began in the afternoon of Day II. The process begins from an understanding of the inherent biases in the institutional framework and how these are reproduced. Identifying how these biases are reflected and integrated in programming strategies and interventions assists in the plan review.

Participants identified the need for gender-aware planning in DPEP as crucial particularly as the programme gathers momentum. The planning process, it was discussed, had to address both the practical gender needs of women and girls, in the context of DPEP and their strategic gender interests.

Gender-aware planning processes necessitate taking a cross-sectional approach. As participants found during group work, every problem, strategy and intervention has a gender dimension, which often gives the issues a higher degree of complexity. From the discussion it is possible to evolve a check-list of factors to be considered at every stage of a gender-aware planning process:

- Articulate the assumptions and stereotypes of women and men involved in the programme.
- Specify the practical gender needs to be addressed and the strategic interests sought to be addressed.
- Ensure there is an understanding of the need for and the importance of gender in planning. This is likely to require a shift in orientation and perspective.

#### Four Key Elements

A gender-aware planning process will thus have four key elements:

**Accountability:** Linking the success of the planning process to achievement of greater gender equity ensures that plans are made in consultation with a generally excluded group. Their participation in the process of making the plan and in implementation raises their stake in its successful completion. The ownership of the plan and the sense of responsibility it brings along begins the slow process of empowerment and transformation of gender relations.

*Through a process of gender-aware planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, the attempt is to facilitate empowerment of women to challenge the status quo in gender relations and the development process.*

**Transparency:** This allows policy advocates and activists to monitor

the process by which policies are translated into action plans, plans implemented and evaluated. This ensures that the commitment to advance gender equity is integrated in the plan and a series of specific strategies and interventions outlined and implemented to facilitate women's empowerment.

**Flexibility:** Gender-aware planning is a new field and there is a dearth of successful experiments, worldwide. A flexible approach allows for field learning to be incorporated and at the same time facilitates accountability.

**Consultation:** Building-in consultative procedures which regularly feed into the plan implementation process, assist in the reformulation and refining of the plan process based on field-level experiences and the feedback received from beneficiaries and implementors.

### **Follow-up**

- There were suggestions that similar albeit more practical exercises be conducted at the State level or preferably in districts where a larger number of practitioners could benefit.
- Some participants also suggested that if the workshop could be conducted in the regional languages the message would be better received.
- The need to develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to check on the impact of different interventions on girls and women's participation in education was underlined.

Many of these suggestions will be concretized during the planned workshop on defining the role of a gender coordinator at State and district levels.