

Women's Economic Empowerment Framework  
Indian Feminists' Statement for CSW 61

**WE as India feminists RECOGNIZE THAT:**

- India has one of the largest number of people living in poverty and 70% of the poor are women.
- Women are food insecure, lack basic health care, access to education and enabling technologies, employment opportunities and have little or no social security.
- The devastating impacts on women's lives and livelihoods are different and severe as a result of:
  - the changing global economic, financial situation
  - transition to a network economy characterised by platform monopolies and digital intelligence
  - conflicts and disasters, both man-made and natural
  - long standing patriarchal norms, values and practices
  - climatic unpredictability and other environmental destruction
- Dispossession of and change of use in resources have negative impacts on women's livelihoods.
- Women, due to prescribed stereotypical gender roles, bear an unfair and unequal burden in providing food, water, fuel and care for themselves and their families. Lack of infrastructure and poor energy, and technology options add to this burden.
- All women work whether paid or unpaid. Women do a lot of unpaid work within the household and in family farms and enterprises. Despite its obvious economic and social worth, much of the work that women do remains invisible, unaccounted, undervalued, and under-appreciated.
- Women's reproductive work remains under-valued by the state. Women are liable to lose their jobs and livelihood owing to marital status, pregnancy and maternity. During pregnancy and after childbirth, women are forced to cut down on their rest, nutrition and breastfeeding since they do not receive maternity allowances or paid leave if they work in the informal or unorganized sector.
- Women from social and economically marginalized groups continue to face multiple discrimination on grounds of caste, race, class, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, ethnicity, language, literacy, disability, and age.

Since national, regional and international economic growth policies and development agendas have not taken due note of the above listed concerns, **WE BELIEVE THAT:**

- There is need for a paradigm shift that recognises all **women as workers, farmers, producers as economic agents.**
- Women, as workers and producers, need to be guaranteed individual unmediated access, control,

ownership and management of **productive resources** including

- a. natural resources such as land, water, forests
- b. financial resources such as credit, sustainable livelihoods including decent job,
- c. social resources such as skills, energy, technology
- d. other resources such knowledge, housing, commons, markets and reproductive control and rights

- Recognize that women traditionally and historically have **skills and knowledge** for livelihoods that ensure food security for all.

- Recognize, Reduce and Redistribute women's **unpaid work** in the care economy and the productive economy

**Recognize** women as a worker and unpaid work as work

- Redefine the whole concept of work to include all activities – economic, social, human and environment development
- Recognise **care** as a public good and basic right
- Ensure nine months of wage-adjusted leave for pregnant women so that they can breastfeed their baby for six months without loss of income

**Redistribution** of unpaid care work should be in three ways:

- *Redistribution from women to men*
- *Redistribution from households to the state not amounting to privatisation*
- *Redistribution of time and resources, particularly in favour of poor households*

**Reduction:**

- To reduce women's time burden, and drudgery provide accessible basic services such as water, sanitation (toilets), education, appropriate technology, health, fodder, energy, fuel and housing.

- Provide women-sensitive infrastructure for the care economy (child care/crèche, and adult care).

- Conduct time use survey periodically to review paid and unpaid work done by women.

- Recognize women as **individual rights holders** and not just as members of a family, household, or group. The rights should be unmediated rights of women as **independent citizens**. Their marital status should not have an impact on their entitlements.

- Ensure informed, meaningful and engaged participation of women in **decision-making processes** at all levels that impact their lives.

- All women work and are therefore entitled to **universal social security**.

- We underscore that women, feminists, women's organisations and women movements play key roles in development at all levels and stress that the full realisation of human rights and women's rights are essential to any development.
- We believe in redistributive justice and the eradication of all forms of inequalities, not just gender inequalities, but race, caste, ethnicity, rural-urban divides, abilities, age, sexual orientation, occupation etc. Development and economic policies should ensure '*no woman and girl is left behind*'.
- We challenge the mainstream economic development models, based on extractivism and the exploitation of resources, including women's bodies, labour and natural resources such as land, to shift the dominant development discourse towards an inclusive, sustainable, and just paradigm.

**Endorsed by:**

*Individuals:*

1. Dr Pam Rajput
2. Priti Darooka
3. Dr. Mohini Giri
4. Meera Khanna
5. Kalyani Raj
6. Shewli Kumar
7. Asha Chandra
8. Jyotsna
9. Jashodhara Dasgupta
10. Anita Gurumuthy
11. Jeevika Shiv
12. Sejal Dand
13. Sarojini
14. Sheba George
15. R. Meera

*Organizations:*

1. PWESCR
2. Guild Services
3. All India Women's Education Fund Association (AIWEFA)
4. NAWO
5. MDS
6. WOMEN 2030
7. IT for Change
8. Sahyog

9. ANANDI
10. MAKAAAM
11. SAMA
12. AIWC
13. SAHR WARU
14. WOMEN'S INITIATIVES (WINS)