

Unit 3

Social, Human and Gender Development

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Learning Objectives

The central objective of this unit is to explain:

- development as a realisation of human potential;
- impact of women on development;
- gender need, gender role and strategy in development; and
- emerging perspective of development on women.

3.1 Introduction

In the earlier units of this course you have learnt several important concepts like change, evolution, progress, growth and development. In this unit we shall be focusing on the social, human and gender aspects of development. In the second half of the first unit of this course we have discussed at length the human aspect of development. In the second unit we have also discussed the various perspectives on change, modernisation, and development. As a continuity to earlier discussion this unit begins with a discussion of the objectives of the development. Here we discuss how the issues of justice, sustainability and inclusiveness, satisfaction of fundamental human needs, participation of the masses in the development processes, etc. have emerged to be integral parts of contemporary development discourse. Women have always been an important constituency of development. However impacts of development on women have not always been positive. Rather, many of the developmental practices have put women in a disadvantageous position in various ways. The impact of ongoing development processes on women, especially, intensification of gender inequality, increasing double burden, reinforcing of gender role stereotypes, feminisation of labour, increase in women's hardship and drudgery, etc. are outlined in this unit. In recent decades various perspectives on women's development have been thought of. In the last section of this unit we discuss some of these perspectives.

3.2 Development as Realisation of Human Potential

Development is seen by some as a desirable state of being and in this sense a developed society often connotes a modern industrial society that enjoys economic well being as it has reached certain levels of wealth and consumption. Others see development as a vision wherein the centre stage is occupied not by levels of production and consumption but by the satisfaction of human needs and potentials. Let us examine some of these visions of development.

a) **Development as an expression of human personality**

Dudley Seers (cf Thomas 2000: 33) while elaborating on the meaning of development, suggests that while there can be value judgments on what is development and what is not, it should be a universally acceptable aim of development to make for conditions that lead to a realisation of the potentials of human personality. Seers outlined several conditions that can make for achievement of this aim:

- The capacity to obtain physical necessities, particularly food;
- A job (not necessarily paid employment) but including studying, working on a family farm or keeping house;
- Equality, which should be considered an objective in its own right;
- Participation in government;
- Belonging to a nation that is truly independent, both economically and politically; and
- Adequate educational levels (especially literacy).

David Korten, a leading proponent of alternative development outlines three basic principles of what he calls authentic development. These are **justice**, **sustainability** and **inclusiveness**. He says development must ensure the following:

Justice: Priority must be given to assuring a decent human existence to all people.

Sustainability: Earth's resources must be used in ways that assure the well being of future generations.

Inclusiveness: Every person must have the opportunity to be a recognised and respected contributor to family, community and society.

(Korten, cf Thomas 2000: 33)

Manfred A. Max-Neef (1991), a Chilean economist and a recognised advocate of human rights and alternative development, disillusioned with the economic growth based developmental experience of Latin American countries, talks of a new praxis based on development focusing on the "satisfaction of fundamental human needs". He calls this **Human Scale Development**. The other salient features of this model of development are:

- Planning with autonomy;
- Growing levels of self reliance;
- Coherent and balanced interdependence of people, nature and technology;
- Balance between the personal and the social;
- Constructive interplay of civil society with the state; and
- Emergence of global processes alongside local activities.

b) **People's development**

The people are held to be the principal actors in human scale development. Respecting the diversity of the people as well as the autonomy of the spaces in which they must act converts the present day object person to a subject person in the human scale development. Development of the variety that we have experienced has largely been a top-down approach where there is little possibility of popular participation and decision making. Human scale development calls for a direct and participatory democracy where the state gives up its traditional paternalistic and welfarist role in favour of a facilitator in enacting and consolidating people's solutions flowing from below. "Empowerment" of people takes development much ahead of simply combating

or ameliorating poverty. In this sense development seeks to restore or enhance basic human capabilities and freedoms and enables people to be the agents of their own development.

c) Participation of the masses

In the process of capitalistic development and leading national economy towards integration into foreign markets, even politically democratic states are apt to effectively exclude the vast masses from political and economic decision making. The state itself evolves into a national oligarchy hedged with authoritarian and bureaucratic structures and mechanisms that inhibit social participation and popular action. The limited access of the majority to social benefits and the limited character of participation of the masses can often not be satisfactorily offset by the unsuccessful and weak redistributive policies of the government. Powerful economic interest groups set the national agenda of development, often unrepresentative of the heterogeneous and diverse nature of our civil society making for a consolidation and concentration of power and resources in the hands of a few. Also, a focus on people and the masses implies that there could be many different roads to development and self reliance. The slogans "human centered development", "the development of people," "integrated development", all call for a more inclusive and sensitive approach to fundamental social, economic and political changes involved in development such that all aspects of life of a people, their collectivity, their own history and consciousness, and their relations with others make for a balanced advancement. The adoption of a basic needs approach with the concept of endogenous development make for a development agenda that is universally applicable while at the same time allowing for country specific particularities to be given due account.

d) Nurturing diversity

The challenge of human scale development is to nurture diversity instead of being threatened by it, to develop processes of political and economic decentralisation, to strengthen democratic, indigenous traditions and institutions and to encourage rather than repress emerging social movements which reflect the people's need for autonomy and space. The fruits of economic development may be distributed more equitably if local spaces are protected, micro-organisations are facilitated and the diverse collective identities that make up the social body are recognised and represented. Greater control of popular masses over environment is a must. In fact this concept of development seeks for the civil society rather than the state to own up and nurture development, so that the role of social actors is enhanced.

e) Development as an open process

Human scale development has a vision of real development not as a stage or a state but as a process, a process that encompasses economic, social and technological changes by which human welfare is improved and embellished with its political, cultural and spiritual dimensions.

Above all, this conception frees development from any particular specifications and development becomes an open option justifiable only to the extent people need, understand, and able to integrate it. Development must become a process in constant motion for human beings themselves as well as their surroundings which are in permanent motion, a motion that defies static boundaries and frozen directions.

Social and Human Development, therefore necessarily requires a unified approach, integrating the economic and social components in plans, policies and programmes for people's betterment. The challenge is to simultaneously integrate cross sectoral and regional developmental needs as well as to make for a participative development. The issues of environment, pollution, women,

habitat, hunger and employment have come to the fore one by one and continue to require public and institutional attention along with resource allocations. Two major contemporary concerns that require focus in any development initiative are that of human security and sustainability. We need to ensure that development does not mean social dislocation, violence and war and that we meet “the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Each of these problems is interrelated in complex ways and requires a unified approach. The purpose of development should be to develop man and not to end with developing things. Fulfillment of basic needs of mankind should be the true objective of development and achievements that either do not contribute to this goal or even disrupt this basic requirement must not be pursued as a development goal.

Reflection and Action 3.1

What do you mean by development? What, according to you, should be the ideal objectives of development and why?

3.3 Impact of Development on Women

Development is not gender neutral. While one argues for the equality and participation of all human beings, men and women, in the process of development, it is important that we are not indifferent to social implications of biology and the physical constraints it puts for women. Women and development is a theme that raises issues of equality and justice for women’s experience of development as mediated by both their biology and the social construction of it.

a) Intensification of Gender Inequality

Gender inequality tends to lower productivity and efficiency of labour at all levels of the economy, not just the household, and intensifies unequal distribution of resources. Lack of security, opportunity and empowerment also imply the lowering of quality of life for both men and women. Even when women and girls may bear the direct costs of gender inequality it needs to be recognised that the ultimate costs of lack of development and poverty have to be borne by people across the society. Women’s development is therefore simultaneously a gender and a developmental issue, and the developmental planners need to be cognizant of women’s subordination for centuries that has controlled women’s mobility, their labour, sexuality and fertility.

b) Mixed Gain for Women

As far as women are concerned, development has had mixed gains for them while it has widened women’s opportunities and opened up the public sphere to those hitherto confined to the private sphere of family life by tradition and superstitious beliefs, yet evidence from large parts of the world also show that women still face disparity in opportunities and often development for women has meant the widening of the gap between the incomes of men and women and increased strain on their time and energies. Women are unfavourably represented in very large numbers in the unorganised sector where they work under oppressive and exploitative conditions but find themselves restricted due to their biological and social responsibilities as well as the low status they enjoy in society.

c) Intensification of Double Burden

In fact women lose twice as the development planners have been unable to recognise the dual roles of women whereby they bear children and at the same time carry out economic activities and have in their shortsighted definitions of women as mothers ignored and downgraded their economic functions so as to classify them as economically dependents. On the one hand,

the exclusive burden of childcare makes women's access to the market limited, and then the market itself excludes prestigious and well paying jobs from them, doubting their ability to hold such jobs and perform in equal capacity to men. Also, the prevalent definitions of work as work when performed for money and work as work in the modern sector have also contributed to making women's economic contributions invisible. These definitions for instance exclude women who work in the agricultural sector as members of a family living off farm land products, women engaged in exchange labour, household work, childcare and many such activities that are not paid.

d) Reinforcing Gender Role Stereotypes

Stereotypes of sex roles have resulted in a situation where even developmental interventions aimed at modernising farming systems have only exacerbated the problem by targeting only men for inputs such as training, loans and resources such as seeds, land and so on. In case of the green revolution wherein there is high capitalisation involved, better harvesting systems have meant focus on good variety of seeds and fertilizers and such mechanisation that means less of labourers required; thus unemployment. It is women who loose again their traditional economic employment in farms and any alternative employment planned is done only for men.

e) Eroding Women's Role in Traditional Economy

This has widened the gap between men and women, reducing the status of women. Subsistence economies with little specialisation have been more equalitarian and just to women with little differentiation between the status of men and women. Civilisation has created more functional specialisations to the benefit of men and increasingly led to women being reduced to a dependency status as they separated from their erstwhile food production functions. Women, as they lost these functions in civilised societies, increasingly became economic liabilities, and vulnerable to a host of patriarchal controls. Anthropological evidence shows that civilisation's influence on subsistence economies has meant decreased involvement of men in child rearing roles and in other household tasks. Development being largely defined in terms of economic activities has thus focused on men, ignoring women's traditional economic roles.

f) Feminisation of Household

Changing of customary communal land tenure system to the concept of private property ownership, and introduction of cash crops have been two important developments that eroded women's role in traditional economic systems while favouring men and their rights over land and crops. Also the lure of the modern monetary economy has meant large scale migration of men away from their households, such that women are left to perform additional tasks formerly done by men, reducing significantly women's leisure as well as productivity. Again, improved transportation and markets have had mixed benefits for women and men. While increased access to the markets may have a positive impact on rural earnings, it also impacts people in making several traditional occupations redundant. Local hand-made artifacts can seldom compete with cheaper machine made goods.

g) Differential Access to Education

Since the 1980s a phenomenon called feminisation of labour has been noted as a global development which refers to the process of decentralisation of labour with the intention of reducing wage and non-wage costs of production. Women are preferred as employees for they are available on cheap, flexible, non-permanent terms and can be disposed of whenever it is felt necessary to do so. No doubt more women get an opportunity to work. However that itself is no reason for any optimism for they do such works on increasingly less

favourable terms. Similarly Structural Adjustment Programmes and New Economic Policy are not seen in most feminist quarters as auguring well for women who are expected to be hit the worst by inflation and the winding up of the barest of welfare state measures we have. Increased poverty with a female face, abandonment of women and children as the poor grapple for survival, prostitution and violence are some of the alarming social consequences that are said to be on the flip side of the economic development that is planned through the processes of privatisation, liberalisation and globalisation.

Education is widely regarded as one of the most important developmental initiatives to reduce gender disparity and there are several researches which show positive links between girl's education and economic productivity, maternal and infant mortality, fertility rates and health prospects of future generations. If we look into education and modernisation and its effects on women, though we find that the elite nature of education in most of the erstwhile colonial nations has meant that education has not reached rural populations, particularly women. There is still a wide gap between male and female literacy figures in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Lack of education was itself not a big problem when women engaged in traditional pursuits, however, with development and accompanying changes wherein traditional occupations of women are being superseded, it becomes difficult for poorly educated women to move into the new sectors. In the markets women come to be in a disadvantaged position because of their lack of knowledge and training making for exploitative conditions of work and their inability to compete with more favourably disposed men. Lack of education severely limits ability to take credit, innovate and earn independent income through economic enterprise. In case of migration to cities, rural women often find themselves in less paying jobs as domestic servants, shop assistants and even prostitutes.

Education has all the same opened up a host of occupations for the middle and upper classes and women of these classes have found representation in services like teachers, nurses and doctors. New job opportunities in computers and information technology have bid many a middle class woman to substantially paying jobs. However, it must be remembered that by and large women's economic activities are permitted to them only in situations of family crisis, when women are required to earn an additional income without changing the distribution of work at home. In countries like India educated women often enter prestigious services due to several factors working in their favour of which a supportive family structure that takes pride in their education and employment and the availability of cheap labour for taking care of household jobs, are very important. At the same time women's work outside the confines of the house is not without its problems; divorce, separations and increase in the number of women-headed households may have a link with the increased hostility between men and women, for while women are required to work double shift, men continue to keep off the home sphere. A related issue of concern is the contemporary increase in violence and crime against women which plays its function in maintaining women's subordination by restricting them from free and full participation in development initiatives.

h) Environmental Degradation and Increasing Hardship for Women

Similarly, if we look at development and its impact on the environment, we find that the destruction of the previous balance of nature through unbridled pursuit of man's capitalist interests have affected women more severely than it has men, as they struggle and search for fuel, carry water over long distances and spend unduly long hours processing food. Women's overwhelming involvement in subsistence related activities has meant that environmental degradation translates into special hardships for them for the ready access to natural resources they enjoyed earlier is replaced by working harder to get access to them, often having to pay for what was otherwise communally owned.

i) New Technology and Increase in Women's Drudgery

The dominant discourse on development often draws women as victims of household drudgery. Technology in the form of household appliances and modern science is seen as the panacea for all trouble. However this technology is not really all that "emancipatory" for much of environmental pollution and degradation is linked to this technology. It needs to be noted that women are aware of the links between a balanced and non-degraded nature and human survival as it is women who have taken the leadership and sought solidarity across the world in their struggles against the capitalist plundering of nature and environment be it on the issue of building large dams, the saving of mangrove forests, the building of atomic power plants or mining chalk and other resources.

This is not to say that development is not for women, rather that development interventions, based on certain stereotypes of women have bypassed them, they have negatively affected their productivity, and many times even created obstacles in women's lives when they were actually intended to facilitate them. Development interventions have either prioritised the woman's motherhood role or her economic agency while neglecting the other half of her role, thus creating a situation wherein women in their pursuit of development goals do not find themselves anywhere getting to be equal to men. While they have lost the protections and advantages of a sexually segregated society, they have not been able to get the freedom and status that development promised through reinventing their economic lives.

Reflection and Action 3.2

Make an observation on the economic and social condition of female labourers working either in agriculture or in construction in your neighborhood. Based on your observation write a note on the change in the social and economic status of women labourers in your neighborhood.

3.4 Women as a Constituency in Development Policies

It was only in the 1970s that development policy oriented itself to women as a distinctive category rather than as a residual one. Development planners of the time were faced with the failure of the trickle-down theory, with problems of poverty and unemployment that seemed to have aggravated with economic growth and with the need to focus on basic needs and poverty alleviation in the second decade of development.

At around the same time the women's movement gave a strong voice to the idea that women's issues have development policy implications. Several studies highlighting women's productive activities, especially women's critical role in food production, women's preponderance among the poor of the world and researches linking women's fertility to their status in society came to the fore and substantiated the need to integrate women in developmental goals. Thus the UN Decade for Women was declared. This brought about a marked change in how development came to be directed at women. Before 1970, policy makers had focused on women in very gender-specific ways. While men were targeted for development as household heads and breadwinners, women were seen primarily as mothers and dependents, hence were beneficiaries of welfare measures rather than development itself. The welfare category has its obvious negative connotations for it is seen in most quarters as a residual category made of dependents who failed to be self reliant, hence must be helped. Since women were type cast in their sex roles without reference to the reality of developing and underdeveloped countries, the kind of initiatives directed for them were programmes on nutritional training, home economics, maternal and children's health care and family planning. This assumption of female domesticity came to be challenged by researches that pointed to

women's productive roles and involvement in basic needs of their families. Development initiatives thereafter translated these insights into income enhancing programmes for women as women came to be conceptualised as managers of low income households. For most purposes during this interim phase development initiatives for women retained their "welfarist" projection and avoided any redistributive outcomes. It was much later, in the 1980s when the world economy was undergoing deterioration that there came about a growing emphasis on women as economic agents in their own right. It came to be realised that women's productive capacities had been under-utilised and as economic restructuring came to be prescribed through processes of liberalisation and privatisation, it came to be hoped that free market enterprise would make for a more efficient usage of human resources, both male and female. During this time, women first came to be given focus as key agents of the development process and were encouraged to take up micro enterprises, small scale business ventures and parallel marketeering.

However this emphasis on women's economic agency has its serious pitfalls. The basic subordination of women and exclusive responsibilities of home and childcare continue and with structural adjustment programmes and the wrapping up of the state welfare measures, these responsibilities only increased, thus making unreasonable demands on women's time and energies. The free market itself is not all that free for women to enter the market with these disadvantages and end up getting more exploited. The efficiency approach of women's development again does not go very far in making change for better conditions in women's lives or for equality to men. The old fable of the fox and the stork that both needed food to be served differently to them to be able to eat is an appropriate analogy to explain differential needs of men and women.

Feminists have sought to influence developmental planners with the idea that for achieving developmental goals of freeing women from their subordination and achieving gender equality, recognition needs to be given to the gender division of labour in production and reproduction. This would lead to better appreciation of the differential needs of men and women. Equity and empowerment cannot be achieved in policy approaches that merely add women to existing developmental plans. Development policies must be based on a social relations framework that accounts for the differences in gender roles and needs. Additionally, development policy cannot justifiably premise itself on a universal category "woman" which does not exist. There are material differences in power, resources and interests of women across the world that effectively stand disguised and denied behind the concept of woman's development, a fact that came to be deeply resented by women's groups in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Development does not operationalise itself in terms of uniform benefits for all men and disadvantages for all women. Women are on structurally disadvantageous terms with men but then Third World men and women are structurally disadvantaged as compared to First World men and women. DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), a network of Third World activists proposed therefore that the strategies for a more equitable development need to be worked out from the vantage point of the most oppressed women who are disenfranchised by class, race and nationality. Only then can the complexities of subordination be fully taken care of in developmental agendas. Over the years, these insights have influenced development policies and achievement of equality, equity and empowerment became legitimate developmental goals of women across the world.

3.5 Identification of Gender Need, Role and Strategy

Two important conceptual rationales forwarded for recognizing women as a distinct constituency in development and gender relations as a necessary framework for planning and implementation of developmental policies need to be discussed in greater detail. These are:

- Gender roles and needs; and
- Control over resources and decision making within the households.

a) Gendered Men and Women and the Household

Women were presumed to be beneficiaries of development as part of families and households targeted for development. It was pointed out by feminist researchers that women and men have different roles in the household and in society making for differential access to resources and power within households. Therefore women's needs for development cannot realistically be merged into those of others in the household. The disaggregation of the household /family on the basis of gender was, therefore, the first principle proposed for planning for development that was responsive to the distinct realities of men and women.

Carolene Moser found that development fell far short of people's, especially, women's needs due to certain widespread stereotypes among development planners about the structure of low income households, division of labour inside them and the power and control of resources within the household. More specifically, she found three faulty assumptions that emanated from a western perspective and that distorted development initiatives as they had no roots in Third World contexts. These are:

- i) that the household consists of a nuclear family of husband, wife and two or three children.
- ii) that the household functions as a socioeconomic unit within which there is equal control over resources and power of decision-making between all adult members in matters influencing the household's livelihood.
- iii) that within the household there is clear division of labour based on gender. The man of the family, as the breadwinner is primarily involved in productive work outside the home, while the woman as the housewife and homemaker takes overall responsibility for the reproductive and domestic work involved in the organisation of the household (Moser 1993: 15-16).

Firstly, the nuclear family with its naturalised division of labour is an idealised concept that distorts reality. It has also been pointed out that the household as a residential unit is distinct from families, the latter being a social unit that is based on ties of marriage and kinship and that though often these correspond, yet an assumption of them being one and the same is bound to lead to misconceptions about the nature of developmental needs of the units targeted. Moreover not only do households show heterogeneity in their structure and composition, it is also a fact that women occupy different positions in these structures. To treat the family, therefore, as a static unit without the socio-economic context and the contemporary pressures that make for constant restructuring of such units is bound to be problematic.

For instance, although it is normally assumed that the head of the household is a man, the situation is quite different in actuality with women-headed households showing an increase with desertion, death, male migration, situations of war, insecurity and disaster. Female dependency is constructed on a false assumption that men are the breadwinners and financial supporters of dependent women. While this may be a feature of industrial societies in some cases, it is a restricted phenomenon and does not represent the low income households and their realities where women are very often the primary or the sole earners. In the Caribbean, large parts of Latin America, Central America and parts of Africa, female-headed households form a sizable proportion of the economically vulnerable, often falling below the poverty line. Where the mother is the only adult income earner and there are several dependent children, poverty manifests itself in children dropping out of education, working

and in making for an inter-generational transfer of poverty. Women balance multiple roles in the household and the assumption of their economic dependence on men can seriously impact policy against their interests. There have been many instances when false assumptions of women's role in the family resulted in their labour and participation in agriculture being discounted and they being excluded from developmental initiatives involving ownership of land, credit-extension and other services.

Similarly faulty assumptions about the household as a natural socio-economic unit presupposes first that a family provides equal control over familial resources to all its members and that adult household members share between them the power of household decision making. The importance of intra-household dynamics in inequitable distribution of resources and in unequal exchanges of labour and its fruits is ignored and questions of power and control left unaddressed. Arguments about the economic rationality of household behaviour contradict the complex array of relationships and interactions within the household and treat the household as an individual decision maker. However the treatment of household as the most relevant unit of utility maximisation removes the possibility of exploring and treating conditions of unequal exchanges and exploitation between family members. Empirical evidence exists that there are conflicts of interests between men and women as well as interdependence and that gender inequalities are often rationalised through bias in perception of individual contributions and interests of men and women. There are economic as well as cultural and ideological reasons that underlie such asymmetries in intra-household resource allocation.

However it is commonly supposed that altruism governs family relations and individual family members subordinate individualism in pursuit of the common goal of the welfare of the family. Marriages specially are assumed to be cushioned with love and sacrifice from conflicts that dog other social institutions. However, the belief that marriages and families mean a partnership between men and women that is shared on the basis of common objectives and where there is reciprocity in rights and obligations that make for a joint control and management of resources such that each has access to pooled resources according to his/her need, belies reality. First the household may not necessarily be a collectivity of reciprocal interests. Even though sharing may be the dominant principle of household distribution, it does not mean that everyone has an equal access to resources. Gender is an important element in defining people's access to resources especially scarce ones. For example women routinely get less to eat in poor households, and are socialised to bear hardships so that their men can get better care and resources. Maternal altruism is held to be a womanly virtue and in most homes it is the woman's obligation to routinely sacrifice food, leisure, health and entertainment so that men can have a bigger share of these. Likewise women often do not have direct access to household assets and property and have any control over these solely by virtue of being wives or mothers of male relatives. In contrast men have direct access to property and cultural sanctions for independent decision making.

Household distribution of labour and responsibilities also plays an important role in circumscribing equal opportunities of men and women in the market and this limitation on women's ability to expand income generating activities pushes them back into a dependency status, vulnerable to violence and intra-household inequality.

It has also been pointed out that management and distribution of resources within the household takes place differently with men and women at the helm of affairs and this is linked to gender based responsibilities of the two sexes. Studies across the world show that women's income is largely used to pay for day to day food, clothing and domestic goods and thus this household provisioning implies that a greater share of women's income covers subsistence

and nutrition needs of the family as compared to that of men. It needs to be underlined that the assumption of the male head as a benevolent caretaker cannot be stretched too far and that the head cannot by himself represent household needs, therefore his welfare too cannot be taken to be a representative of the welfare of all household members. While it is true that in most cases cultural rules, ideology and practices make the intra household distribution appear natural and legitimate, yet inequalities continue to exist because men and women share the bias in perception of their actual contribution to the household. Direct money earning by men is often perceived as a bigger contribution to the household entitling men to greater household resources than women whose time and energy spent on ensuring overall wellbeing of the family as well as in non-market activities that indirectly go to support the men's enterprises in the market are discounted. Correct assessment of individual interests and well being for planning development interventions therefore need to be based on a gendered understanding of the dynamics of intra household inequalities.

b) Gender Roles and the Impact on Women's Development

Women though often perceived as dependents or as homemakers, are engaged in three basic responsibilities that they shoulder and these have been referred to in developmental literature as their triple role. Firstly, women are engaged in reproductive work that involves both child bearing and rearing. Secondly, most low income households in the Third World have their women engaged in what is called productive work, or work that earns wages. In rural areas this could be agricultural work in urban areas women work in large numbers in the informal sector, in and around their homes. Thirdly as part of their reproductive responsibilities women also take up community managing work that facilitates collective consumption needs of the neighbourhood or the community. Despite these three roles women's work is generally made invisible for either their work is regarded as a natural extension of their biological role of giving birth to children or nurturing them or their work is considered secondary. Men in contrast are largely seen as productive workers even when they may be unemployed or earning erratically. As far as reproductive role is concerned men do not have a clearly defined reproductive role in most societies and when involved in the community, men do not largely engage in consumption related voluntary work, rather they take up the community leadership roles that get them either some payment or social prestige.

Feminists have identified this gender based division of labor as both the reason and expression of women's subordination. They have contested the dualistic division of work as productive and reproductive, which essentially implies that the productive elements of reproductive work are completely erased. It has been pointed out that women's reproductive work both "produces" labour force and maintains it, thereby making for the fundamental productive activity that is essential for all subsequent productive enterprises. Capitalistic development is itself held responsible for this historical and artificial division between men and women's roles that later got enforced by ideology. Several feminists have traced this "domestication of women" to the industrial revolution which created the modern cash economy that cut women off from their traditional subsistence activities and resulted in women's loss of autonomy as farmers, crafts workers or traders. The housewife role that came onto women as their primary responsibility however is neither valued nor paid and the use value of reproductive work is not given the recognition it deserves. Even as far as the realm of productive work goes, the ideology of housewifisation masks asymmetry in men and women's work and their exchange value. Not only do women get work at the lower end of the economy which are low skilled and low paid and not wanted by men, they are also vulnerable to exploitation and harassment and an overload of labour due to their multiple roles. Yet the unpaid work of women at homes and in the community and their

low paid work in what is recognised as the productive sphere have not created major conflicts in the rank and file of women because they themselves accept and conform to the gender ascribed roles and find little choice.

c) Practical and Strategic Gender Needs

Since in discussing development, the concept of human needs and their satisfaction has emerged as an important criterion for assessing whether or not interventions lead to development, it is important to look at the twin concepts of practical and strategic gender needs when discussing gender development. Women and men have different roles in societies and therefore distinct prioritised concerns. Maxine Moleneux had conceptualised this distinction which was later elaborated by Caroline Moser while advocating to the developmental planners to be more gender sensitive. According to Moleneux and Moser, there are **women's interests** and **gender interests**. The two are not the same. Women's interests refer to interests which women across the world share by virtue of being the biological sex female. Since in real life situations, women live in a society where their position is defined not merely by their sex but by other important factors like their class and ethnicity as well as gender, it would be wrong to present women's interests and needs as a homogenous category for women. Rather, while planning, development planners must take cognizance of the fact that woman's interests and needs vary according to their social positioning which itself is defined by the specific socio- economic context and also by factors such as class, ethnicity and religion. This makes for the importance of referring to the general interests that women share amongst themselves as gender interests and the terminology changes to needs in reference to planning for addressing them.

Planning for development and change itself focuses on multiple levels of goals as policy interventions can accomplish limited goals. So that there is less confusion in what is aimed and what is achieved; the distinction between strategic and practical needs is very useful.

Moser defines thus

Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society. Strategic gender needs vary according to particular contexts. They relate to gender divisions of labour, power and control and may include such issues as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages and women's control over their bodies. Meeting strategic gender needs helps women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position.... Practical gender needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical gender needs do not challenge the gender divisions of labour or women's subordinate position in society, although rising out of them. Practical gender needs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often are concerned with inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care, and employment (Moser 1993: 40).

It is evident that addressing strategic gender needs makes for a transformation in social relations such that women come to enjoy greater equality and power and that such a transformation is dependent on a consciousness of a different order and a commitment to struggle against the prevalent order. Practical gender needs, since they are addressed to make for better adaptation to women's concrete conditions in the domestic arena or in income generating activities or even in community based resources, do not result in such transformation though they generally provide relief to women in their gendered roles and responsibilities. The greater majority of developmental interventions, aim at attending to women's practical gender needs and do not contribute directly to challenging either the sexual division of labour, or social political

and economic organisation of society that subordinates women. However it would not be right to term strategic needs based development interventions to be feminist and the interventions directed at improving women's access to their practical needs as "less" feminist, for the two are linked and in effect often inseparable.

Reflection and Action 3.3

How do gender roles affect women's participation in the development process? Answer this question with suitable illustrations.

3.6 Perspectives on Women and Development

There are several important perspectives on women's development. Let us examine a few of them here.

a) Structural Perspective

Structural perspectives on development are critical of the Women in Development (WID) approach of developmental policies for they start with the basic assumption of conflict in society that makes for competition for resources and power and that manifests itself in struggles of classes and groups, such that domination and oppression have a structural base. Change itself in existing systems is seen not in terms of accommodation and reforms but in radical and revolutionary transformations that result in a more fair redistribution of resources and power. Marxism forms an important wellspring for the critical conflict view. Marxism holds, like the WID approach, that development as economic modernisation or capitalist development has led to the marginalisation of women in the Third World. However, it goes further than the women in development approach in seeing sexual inequality at a deeper, structural and dialectical level and linking it to the uneven and unequal worldwide development of capitalism and to inequalities embedded in social classes. However there is criticism that Marxism fails to deliver what it promises for while it explains the capitalist development as a system of hierarchical structures of production that leads to the emergence of a small but powerful minority with resources and a much larger dispossessed majority that stands alienated from the means of production, it could by itself not explain women's subordination further to the subordination of men that is created by the capitalist mass production. Feminists have critiqued it also for reducing women's oppression to the abstract concept of a particular mode of production, thereby not paying any attention to the fact that men, and not just the abstract concept of capital, benefit from women's oppression. The agency and consciousness of human beings as social actors stands completely denied in this conceptualisation for the individual is defined purely in relation to class interests. Women's opposition to male domination and control is itself dismissed as false consciousness and the result of the divisive strategies of the ruling minority.

Not satisfied by these explanations some feminists reworked with the basic Marxist argument to explain female subordination as a part of new constraints that came about as a result of inequities generated by capital intensive development on a global scale. One stream of feminists hitched their arguments to the dependency theories, furthering the argument that the capitalist mode of production has polarising tendencies and creates a relationship of dependency between the peripheral nations of the Third World with the metropolitan centres of the First World such that women's development is adversely affected in the Third World peripheral countries even while women in the First World may come to enjoy opportunities hitherto inaccessible. These theorists draw on Rosa Luxemburg's thesis that precapitalist forms of production provide an essential subsidy to capital accumulation. Saffiotti (cf Kabeer 1995: 47) suggested that the family was an example of such a precapitalist form of production that

aided capital accumulation by drawing on the labour of women, their time and energies without adequate payment, because the family is organised in such a way that voluntaristic sentiments rather than contractual labour marks production relations. Capital accumulation could take place in the metropolitan centres at the cost of women in the Third World countries that had to grapple with increasing poverty and marginalisation, even while their unpaid labour or their “reserve” labour was called upon to benefit the capitalist system. A pervasive patriarchal sex role ideology was held to be the direct cause of women’s subordination for it rationalised women’s confinement to home on the basis of her biology and social role. Dependency feminists thus worked out connections between different forms of inequalities at the international, national and household levels. Yet, like the Marxist approach they held the view that men and women held common class interests and did not see the rationale for the material exploitation of women in their households by men. Sexual aggression and subordination by men was attributed to the frustration and helplessness of men involved in exploitative capitalist production, thus ignoring the relationship of men and women itself in terms of a set of production relations wherein production of people itself was undervalued in comparison to production of things with exchange value.

Maria Mies, a German feminist while drawing again on Luxemburg’s thesis, has disagreed with the prioritising of class as the primary contradiction and sees the first contradiction to be that of gender. The basic biological difference between men and women, according to Mies meant that women experienced their relationship with nature and their environment differently; they experienced their whole bodies as productive and in tune with nature unlike men who could produce with their hands and the tools that became an extension of these hands. According to Mies men’s relationship with nature was predatory from the beginning and in his lust for power, man established a similar relationship with women who seemed to be like nature.

She sees capitalism as a more recent manifestation of a male patriarchal order that came into force far back in the history of mankind when men realised that the destructive tools that they could make could be used to domesticate women and animals and thus make for appropriation of economic surplus. Since women came to be seen as providing the essential physical precondition for male production, men made women as their first colony. All subsequent development is likewise marked by the same predatory mode of production. Colonisation and “housewifisation” are two ways that women and the weak are reduced to, being nature and thence their control and exploitation becomes justified. Mies’ account deviates from traditional Marxist accounts in that it establishes the relationship between men and women as a relationship of power and instead of blaming capitalism for women’s oppression, blames patriarchy. She traces different forms of violence on women as a manifestation of patriarchy irrespective of its forms in different production systems and exploitation and oppression as the common denominator for both First World and Third World women. Men everywhere are held to be violent for they uphold the global patriarchal hierarchy, but since the white men currently control the technology of destruction, Mies holds them more culpable than men elsewhere.

Reflection and Action 3.4

What do you mean by housewifisation? In your opinion how can this process be broken?

b) Gender Relations Framework

Both the structural explanations outlined above make global generalisations about the effects on women of capitalism and its interplay with patriarchy. These have been critiqued by a group of women who promoted the gender

analytical approach to development for being too monolithic to be of much use in practice. At the same time the WID promotion of the category "woman" was also found wanting for the exclusive focus on women creates woman and man as isolable categories.

Those who promote the gender analytical approach adopt social relations of gender as their chief analytical category and extend the Marxist concept of social relations beyond the production of objects and commodities to areas of gender relations such as procreation, care of children, old and sick and to what all comes under the daily reproduction of labour. Instead of seeing power rooted in men and denied to women in all circumstances, this approach sees power in general inherent in gender relations. While it explains women's subordination in gender relations in the household it does not limit itself to the household and analyses how asymmetrical gender relations springing from the household interact, relate and define relations in the broader economic arena. Gender relations, thus are not merely male-female relations, they refer to the "full ensemble of social relationships", through which men become men and women become women. More than the sex, it is the socially differentiated arrangements and patterns of gender behaviour and relations that define the differential experience of the world by men and women. The gender relations framework thus frees woman and man from any biologicistic determinism, while at the same time not negating the fact of different sex bodies leading to different rules and practices coming into operation so as to define gender relations and make for gender inequality.

The framework goes further to emphasise that other social relations such as class, race, ethnicity, religion, etc. mediate to define and translate gender inequality, so that neither class, nor sex, nor any other attribute has prominence over other as a determining principle of individual identity, social position or power. By rethinking of men and women without a universal structure of patriarchy, the gender relations approach makes it possible for constructing gender subordination in different societies, communities, institutions and arenas of action in a historically specific manner thus making for a more realistic and pragmatic attempt at changing how men and women work, live and relate.

Ascription of gender roles is often done discreetly, it may be implicit rules and practices that promote one gender rather than the others and there are strong biologicistic ideologies supporting them. Many gender discriminatory practices like the sexual division of labour, construction of an elaborate and sacrificial motherhood or violent and aggressive manhood stand to be questioned more logically once it is realised that they are neither instinctual, nor dictated by biology, rather it is an elaborate social system of gender relations that defines them and that privileges one gender over the other in terms of resources and power.

Lastly, development planners must realise that gender is never absent, though family is a critical site for the beginning of its operations, it operates as a pervasive allocation principle determining the participation of men and women in all social institutions. It links production with reproduction, the domestic domain with the public domain and the micro-economic units with the larger economy.

A gender relations approach has the advantage of being an inductive mode of analysis and can thus explain empirically found contradictions of subordination and power and the multiplicity of outcomes of developmental interventions, sometimes "emancipatory", sometimes making for more oppressive and subordinating conditions for women across the world.

c) Empowering Women for Development

Very closely connected with the issue of women's development is the question of women's empowerment. But what does empowerment mean and how can development bring it about? The term is contentious, yet it is important not to see it equivalent to greater participation of women in economic activities for economic activities do not always improve women's conditions and often add extra work burden on her. The term empowerment has within it the highly contentious concept of power which is understood differently by different people. In an article, *"What is Empowerment"*, Jo Rowlands (1997) makes a distinction between "power over" and "power to", the first implying that some people have power or control over others, hence an instrument of domination and the second as a generative power, a power to stimulate, to lead without a conflict of interests, a power that does not seek to dominate or subordinate, rather a power that can resist and challenge the coercive intentions of "power over".

Empowerment generally is defined as bringing women from outside the decision making process into it such that they have access to political structures and decision-making, to markets and income and more generally to a state where they are able to maximise opportunities without constraints of the family, community or the state. A feminist definition of empowerment however is broader for it demands a consciousness of one's own interests and how they relate to the interests of others so that decision-making is based on knowledge of self and others and an assessment of ability to exert influence. Empowerment in the feminist sense would imply a realisation of the "power over" as well as the "power to" resist, negotiate and change. The ability to act and exert influence thus requires the empowered to understand internalized oppression as well as the dynamics of oppression such that power is not given or received, rather it comes from within. Empowerment is thus a process; and development itself should not be confused as empowerment. In some of the policies of the State, as it has been pointed out, the goal of development should be women's empowerment. This implies that women gain in self confidence and take charge of creating for themselves the conditions that will facilitate the maximisation of their human abilities and potentialities.

Reflection and Action 3.5

You must be reading several stories on women's empowerment in newspaper, journals and magazines. Select any two of stories from them and analyse the processes involved in women's empowerment in Indian society.

3.7 Conclusion

Gender issues and Gender analysis are today regarded as significant and of priority in development policy and planning. Since the 1970s a number of things have been accomplished as far as integrating gender in development is concerned. There has been a lot of thinking on cultural stereotypes and changing them, anti discriminatory legislation in all walks of life has been passed and state and national machineries for looking into women's affairs have been successfully set up.

However there is serious rethinking by feminists on their goals and strategies for mainstreaming gender in the developmental process. First, feminist theory ever since it has taken the post-modern turn has itself found it increasingly difficult to have gender as a universal reference point for analysis as well as action. The deconstruction of gender and women while on the one hand, an acknowledgement of multiple and distinct social identities of women and their often contradictory political interests yet on the other, is vastly confusing. For if there are no shared gender interests of women across countries and the world, then it makes little sense of privileging gender in development planning

and interventions. Also, while a lot of feminist passion went in bringing the issue of gender on the centre stage in the developmental discourse, feminists have realised that developmental agencies, nations and their machineries have co-opted the feminist vocabulary without either incorporating the ideology or translating it into sufficient and necessary action to change the realities of women. Women have been offered tokenistic and marginalised positions with little or no access to power. The state even when it appears to be democratic, progressive and proactive, seemingly offering space to women for renegotiating rights and privileges, in actuality implements policies and programmes that have strong shades of capitalist and patriarchal control and women's concerns are at best incorporated in a superficial and fragmented manner. Policy documents which incorporate state's vision of equality and justice to women are prepared every now and then. However, these largely remain as pieces of paper and only contribute to increasing the volume of state rhetoric on women.

In this unit we have covered a vast area related to gender issues in development. As human being is at the center stage of all development the gender issue can no more be neglected if we are to make development sustainable. Here we discussed the impact of development on women, women as a constituency of development and various perspectives on women's development.

3.8 Further Reading

Kabeer, Naila 1995. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. Kali for Women: New Delhi

Krishnaraj, Maithreyi 1993. "New Economic Policy and Development of Women: Issues and Implications". In IAWS (eds.) *The New Economic Policy and Women: A Collection of Background Papers to Sixth National Conference*. IAWS: Mumbai

Schrijvers, Joke 1993. *The Violence of Development: A Choice for Intellectuals*. Kali for Women: New Delhi