

Development Theory and Gendered Approach to Development: A Review in the Third World Perspective

Debnarayan Sarker

Influenced mainly by liberal and socialist feminists, several gendered approaches to development have emerged, in part, as critiques of the major theoretical approaches to development – modernisation theory, underdevelopment and dependency theory, and neo-liberalism – in the Third World countries since the 1950s. A major policy highlight of this has been the predominance of ‘efficiency approach’ of Women in Development (WID), that is, development plans and projects are sought to be made more efficient and effective through women’s economic contribution. Although part of the feminist agenda has been incorporated into development plans and projects, the new directions have wider significance for gender equity and efficiency in development policy and planning in these countries.

Although the term ‘gender’ has been widely used over the past few decades, much of the academic interest in gender relations can be attributed to feminism (Waylen 1996: 6).¹ Feminists of all descriptions have characterised gender relations as relations of inequality and subordination, and feminist academics have been trying to make sure that gendered analysis is incorporated into the study of development. This paper attempts to examine such incorporation in the context of Third World countries. It is organised under seven substantive sections. The opening section provides a brief historical background of the development policies and programmes determined by some international development agencies in The Third World countries. It also discusses how women get associated with these agencies and development programmes, and how the ‘caucus’ known as Women in Development (WID) came into being. Gender issues in modernisation theory, underdevelopment theory, and neo-liberalism are discussed in the next three sections respectively. In the two subsequent sections, follow an examination of gender analysis by a new set of feminist academics and of the implications of the efficiency approach of WID in the Third World Countries.

Some UN Agencies, WID and the Third World

A number of UN agencies and bilateral and multilateral agencies which have emerged after World War II are dictating and determining the development policies and programmes in the Third World countries either directly or indirectly. As a specialised UN agency, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), well known as World Bank, emerged in the aftermath of World War II to advance loans for economic rehabilitation and development of countries which were particularly affected by the War. Although the chief source of the World Bank's fund is capital subscription from member nations and sales of its own bonds to private investors, one-fourth of the initial capital of the Bank was subscribed to by USA. To expand the Bank's lending policies and to invest in private enterprise, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) was created in 1956 and, in 1960, the International Development Association (IDA) was created as an affiliate of the Bank to offer long-term loans. By 1981, IBRD, IFC and IDA, collectively known as the World Bank Group, had advanced 3,383 loans, amounting to a total of approximately \$ 85 billion, with IBRD's share alone amounting to about \$ 60 billion. The World Bank Group progressively increased its lending activities during the 1980s, with concessional terms to the poorest nations. In a single year, during the mid-1980s, the World Bank Group lent more than \$ 12 billion to developing member countries, with \$ 4 billion lent on concessional terms to the poorest nations (Plano and Greenberg 1985). However, though almost all countries of the world are now members of the Bank, which has progressively increased the pace of its lending activities, the ability of the Bank to help developing countries meet their capital needs is limited.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) also emerged as a specialised agency of UN after the Bretton Woods Monetary and Financial Conference of 1944 to promote international monetary cooperation. Its three main objectives were (i) the promotion of exchange stability, (ii) the establishment of a worldwide multilateral payments system, and (iii) the provision of monetary reserves to help the member nations overcome short-run disequilibria in their balance of payments. Although most of the countries of the world are its members, voting power in the IMF is determined by the size of a member's contribution, with USA casting about one-fourth of the total. More important, the industrial nations function as a caucus to reach decisions in the IMF to defend currency values and to promote international liquidity. While the creation of IMF was aimed at preventing a return to the anarchic financial conditions of the 1930s, with its widely fluctuating exchange rates and competitive

devaluation, exchange stability has been greatly weakened in recent years. The main problems facing the Fund have been persistent deficit in the balance of payment of most Third World countries. The situation is critical because many countries, especially the Third World countries, usually borrow money from IMF to make their annual payments to private and public banks and loan agencies on the principal and interest owed on outstanding loans.

As a specialised agency of UN, International Labour Organisation (ILO), established in 1919, is concerned with problems of full employment, labour standards, migration of workers, collective bargaining, social security and workers' health. In recent years, much ILO activity has been directed towards the underdeveloped areas of the developing countries of the world for improving working and living conditions of millions of workers. Hundreds of ILO experts have provided technical assistance to countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Out of all these UN bodies, the World Bank Group in particular has been paying increasing attention to gender issues in its work plan, WID being included among areas of special emphasis in the Third World countries. Within the various UN bodies, WID sought to make 'women' visible as a category in development research and policy. I. Tinker (1990) has identified three categories of social actors – scholars, advocates, and practitioners – in the framing of WID perspective on development. The advent of WID in the international arena represented an infusion of new ideas aimed at influencing prevailing development policy. It needs to be mentioned that the 'welfare' approach was the earliest (pre-WID) approach to be concerned with women in developing countries during the 1950s and 1960s. This approach mainly focused on the reproductive role of women and thus sought to meet the practical gender needs through food aid, supplementary nutrition and family planning. Even today, this approach is the most popular one in the Third World countries, though it is claimed that they have moved from 'welfare' to 'development' to 'empowerment'. Poor women in the Third World had become the main beneficiaries of welfare programmes launched by national and international relief agencies. Such welfare programmes were designed to relieve poor women's needs exclusively in terms of their roles as mothers and housewives (Buvinic 1983: 24).

In the broader context of development theory and the understanding of the basic concepts of WID, gender issues help place the evolution of thoughts and actions within the World Bank. 'Women in development' and 'gender and development' are not interchangeable. The former was applied to actions designed to ensure that women benefited or, at least,

did not suffer from development efforts; on the other hand, the latter takes a broader view of the differences in behaviour expected of men and women, seeking their causes and their consequences for economic and human resource development. Through direct intervention in immediate situations, or through strategic changes in the legal and regulatory framework of the country, gender-related actions can prevent deleterious consequences and maximise the potential contributions specific to men or women. To this end, a shift from WID to gender approach has profound implications for the World Bank. Starting in the early 1970s, pressure from some staff and managers, as also some events outside the Bank, placed what came to be known as 'WID' on the Bank's agenda. In line with early sector papers on education and on population, some projects incorporated activities targeted for girls or women, but these did not represent more than 5 percent of investment lending until fiscal year 1978. A small number of staff and managers of the Bank began discussing informally the new topic of WID. The first working group of the Bank's Staff Association, formed in 1972, focused on the status of women in the Bank. Some members of the working group started a separate informal group to discuss emerging WID issues. Soon, their efforts were reinforced by events outside the Bank.

During the second half of the 1980s, the Bank formally increased its resources and attention devoted to gender-related issues. Basic themes already established (like mainstreaming, efficiency, poverty alleviation, equity-choice of key sectors, and education's link to fertility) by the central WID division and the regions, with explicit and sustained support from senior management and the Board, became integrated into a comprehensive programme of joint action. The relevance of gender issues for development was validated by research work. The focus on WID began to give way to a broader definition of gender issues. As a result, country-level assessment of these issues and investment in projects with gender-related action increased sharply. Recent developments in participatory approaches to development and in the use of social assessments are also relevant for gender issues. Recent innovations include the promotion of participatory approaches to involve women as well as men in project design and implementation, in poverty assessments, and in proposed social assessments. There is increased attention to gender in the financial services, natural resource management, water and sanitation, and urban sectors.

Modernisation Theory and the Feminist Agenda

The first theoretical approach to development, namely, modernisation theory, discussed very little about women. It recognised that, in the transition from ‘tradition’ to ‘modern’ societies, some of the traditional values deemed necessary to modern society (such as affectivity), were maintained by women in the family. It was also believed that modernisation would be emancipatory for women, as industrialisation, technology and modern values would undermine patriarchy of traditional societies and give women increased access to economic resources (Jaquette 1982). In general, modernisation theory emphasised and approved the trend towards western capitalist modernity. It was argued that, if modernisation theory was followed in the Third World, Third World societies would catch up with the West.

Modernisation theory was subject to criticism from many quarters in the late 1960s. Women’s issues of development theory also came to be criticised from different quarters. Since the early 1960s, UN has marked each official ‘decade of development’ with a declaration summarising the lessons learnt from past experience and its priorities for the coming ten years. The declaration that announced the First Development Decade (1961-70) was devoid of any specific reference to women (Kabeer 1996: 1). Between the 1960s and 1970s, the feminist movement gained momentum, and the research done by women scholars pointed out that the so-called modernisation theory of development promoted by the development agencies had not benefited women and, in some cases, had adverse effect on women in the Third World. Women had not been given access to new productive opportunities; technology had not liberated them from domestic drudgery; gender-neutral outcomes had not been led by market forces; and, in spite of the forces of modernisation, prejudice and preconceptions about women persisted in society (*Ibid.*: 19).

About the impact of modernisation on women in the Third World, more generally, there was a growing perception of the failure of development. This perception was combined with the unhappiness of the First World women, and was influenced by the second wave of feminism. These factors culminated in the emergence of the WID movement, which was inspired by liberal feminism (Waylen 1996: 37). Remaining largely with the paradigm of liberal feminism, WID was, in part, a response to the inadequacies of the modernisation approach. It was argued that the process of economic modernisation marginalised women economically and socially, and increased their dependence on men (Boserup 1970).² Development projects largely benefited men, often at the expense of women, displacing women from their traditional productive functions

and diminishing the power, status and income they had previously enjoyed (Moser 1993). Development planners ignored women's productive activities, partly because their national accounting systems ignored much of women's work within the household and subsistence economy, assuming women to be only housewives (Rogers 1980).

The development projects where women were included was on sex-specific terms as housewives, mothers and 'at risk producers' (Kabeer 1996: 5). M. Buvinic (1983) characterised development projects as welfare approach to women and development, which identified women as a vulnerable group, needing help, particularly in their reproductive role. These projects concentrated on improving women's domestic skills such as childcare and nutrition (Rogers 1980). Where the projects addressed women's need to generate income, it was through schemes which were in conformity with the dominant conception of women's role such as production of traditional handicrafts catering to insecure market, often for tourists or for export. Women's development projects were often ghettoised, leaving the majority to cater for men (Waylen 1996: 38).

The failure of modernisation to benefit women was attributed to a variety of factors reflecting this different cultural context. In female farming-systems in the Third World, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, women had been deprived of access to training, land rights, education and technology by colonial and post-colonial administrators, whose biased perceptions led them to favour male farmers. While women's own prejudices and preferences inhibited them from seeking employment in the modern sector in the market economies of the Third World, employers demonstrated a preference for men, creating a sex-stereotyped job hierarchy. By the modernisation model, the modern economy being promoted by development planners had brought new resources and opportunities to men, but left women on the margins of development, with the result that the productivity, attitude and outlook of men and women began to diverge – men became familiar with modern equipment and learnt to adapt themselves to modern ways of life, while women continued in the old ways (Boserup 1970). The concept that 'man is the breadwinner and women is the homemaker' is a Victorian (colonial) concept, and does not apply to women in the Third World countries, where women played a crucial productive role in the subsistence economy and contributed to GNP significantly. It was Easter Boserup's study, which has been described as the fundamental text for the 'UN Decade for the Women', which with facts and figures pointed out the economic contribution of women. This led to the 'equity approach' of WID, demanding equality for women in social, economic and political spheres.

Some policy proposals emerged from the WID critics. The solution to equality was observed as widening access to factors such as tools, technology and education. Women had to be integrated into development more effectively, and not allow it to pass them by. Starting from the assumption that economic development strategies had often had a negative effect on women, the equity approach acknowledged women's productive as well as reproductive roles (Buvinic 1983). It argued that women had to be brought into the development process through access to employment and the market place. It placed great emphasis on the wider question of equity and on the need to reduce inequality between men and women. However, the WID group worked to influence United States Agency for International Development (USAID) policy and, as a result of its lobbying, a congressional amendment in 1973 mandated US assistance to 'move women into their national economies'. The WID approach was influential in determining the priorities for the UN Decade for Women (1975-85).

In spite of its essentially liberal feminist and reformist bent, the equity approach aroused hostility among development agencies and the Third World governments (Moser 1993). This is mainly because 'The Decade' rhetoric of equity would have proved difficult to translate into policy, as it required a redistribution of resources throughout the development process. 'Focusing on all women, rather than poor women only, calls for equity at all levels, both among programme beneficiaries and among programme implementers' (Buvinic 1983, cited in Kabeer 1996: 7). Defining women's problems in terms of the family's basic needs rather than unequal access to resources made the WID policy more acceptable within male-dominated agencies. However, the new focus on women was adapted by the official agencies of development by linking it to the emerging concern with 'poverty alleviation and basic needs'. The poverty alleviation and basic needs strategy was important for women, particularly in the Third World countries, for two reasons: first, it retained a reassuring continuity with earlier welfare approaches, in that it focused on women's responsibility for family and child welfare by casting women in the role of managers of low-income households and providers of family basic needs; and second, it also incorporated the WID concern with women's productive roles with the recognition that these responsibilities had an economic component and, therefore, required income-enhancing measures.

Gender Perspective in Underdevelopment Theory

Dependency model, a key element of underdevelopment theory, arose from a growing disillusionment with economic strategies of development, especially as they had been applied in Latin America. Underdevelopment theory was developed, in part, as a direct challenge to modernisation theory. It arose as much as a reaction to classical Marxism as from deeply held objections to modernisation theory.³ Dependency theorists like A.G. Frank (1969), A. Emmanuel (1972) and D. Harrison (1988) argue that development and underdevelopment are two aspects of the same system, namely, the world capitalist system. Indeed, both development and underdevelopment are regarded as part of the world process of accumulation, a process that commenced in the mercantile period, carried through into industrial capitalism and culminated in imperialism. The colonies, the semi-colonies and the neo-colonies existed primarily for the benefit of capitalist metropolis throughout this process and, as a direct result, became underdeveloped. It is only by breaking these links that genuine development can occur. They also concurred with the increasing disillusionment with the belief that the benefits of economic growth under modernisation would trickle down to the poor which provided the spur both to the International Development Organisation (IDO) to shift its emphasis to employment, focusing on the working poor and the potential of the informal sector, and to the agencies such as the World Bank to redirect their efforts towards the eradication of poverty and redistribution with growth (Waylen 1996: 39).

As a mark of this, towards the end of 1970s, an 'anti-poverty' emphasis emerged as the second WID approach. In part, it was a toning down of the equity approach, which had required agencies to interfere in the relations between men and women. An important part of this reorientation was the 'basic needs strategy'. The new focus on women could be accommodated within the development agencies by linking women to poverty alleviation and basic needs (Kabeer 1996: 7). Low-income women could be identified, as a part of this new emphasis, as an important group to be singled out for particular attention. This was mainly because the existing projects had ignored their needs and women generally played the important role in fulfilling the basic needs within the household. This anti-poverty approach stressed income-generating projects for poor women often ignoring their reproductive roles and their interconnection with productive roles, and without the emphasis on increasing women's autonomy which was implied in the equity approach (Waylen 1996).

However, feminist critics, writing from a dependency theory point of view, differed fundamentally with the WID critique of liberal feminists on two important points. First, they argued that the process of modernisation and the spread of capitalism was not an inherently beneficial one; on the contrary, it involved widespread exploitation, and the exploitation of women, within this, took on particular forms. Second, the individual focus of the liberal perspective lacked a consistent theoretical explanation of the bases of women's subordination, depending on irrational prejudice and sex-role stereotypes, reducing the accuracy of their analysis and the effectiveness of their policy prescriptions (Beneria and Sen 1981).

In their analysis, the socialist feminists were influenced by the structural perspectives, including Marxist analysis of capitalism and imperialism. Their analyses tended to place gender emphasis on the wider global processes of accumulation involved in the spread of capitalist social relations along with their impact on gender relation as well as their looking at the impact of particular policies and projects (Young *et al.* 1981). Studies within this framework performed some important tasks. They incorporated a much needed gender perspective to the analysis of dependency, underdevelopment and the new international division of labour. Often utilising ideas developed by socialist feminists for the analysis of gender relations in the First World, these studies also developed a more complex and sophisticated theoretical framework. Rather than simply concentrating on women, their analytical emphasis shifted towards the study of gender relations. A detailed examination of the roots of women's subordination was done through the analysis of the global working of capitalism in combination with patriarchy. Processes linking different parts of the global economy like migration and tourism were examined in gendered terms (Mies 1986). Analyses at different levels were used requiring an examination of the role played by the sexual division of labour and the links between the spheres of production and reproduction in the subordination of women (Edholm *et al.* 1977). In the Third World context, the concepts of reproduction and domestic labour were observed to take on particular meaning: household is often a productive as well as a reproductive unit, and peasant households and poor households in urban areas are often producing for subsistence and the market. Greater emphasis was placed on the household, the role of gender relations within it, and the link between the household as an economic unit and the global economy. This approach has come to be known as 'Gender and Development' (GAD). It has been influential within the development discourse and a number of important studies have been undertaken within this framework (see Deere 1977; Beneria

1982; Mitter 1986; Jockes 1987; Park 1993). While WID concentrates on women's economic activities, GAD tackles the question of inequalities in power and seeks empowerment in all fields.

Studies relating to the impact of the spread of capitalist social relations have been analysed focusing on production and reproduction, and the links between them in both agricultural and industrial spheres from the colonial period onwards. These studies have traced the changes in class and gender relations and the household in agricultural production (Deere 1977; Beneria 1982). The Green Revolution in India is cited as an example of the way in which the introduction of new techniques such as high yielding seeds and fertilizers altered the class position of different peasant households and the amount of productive labour undertaken by different groups of women both as unpaid labour within the household and as paid labour outside of it (Agarwal 1986). The gendered nature of much industrial production in the Third World has also been highlighted in some studies. In the developing countries, women's participation in industrial labour force has risen faster than men's, increasing from 21 percent in 1960 to 26.5 percent in 1980, while the overall share of women in the labour force remained constant at around 32 percent (Jockes 1987: 80). In some developing countries – for example, Hong Kong (now part of China), South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand – women constitute more than 40 percent of the labour force. Women's participation was crucial to the success of manufacturing industry, the 'engine' of South Korea's economic development (Park 1993: 132); these female manufacturing industries accounted for 70 percent of total national export in 1975. Utilising existing gender relations to their advantage, the multi-national corporations (MNCs) employ female labour, capitalising on particular notions of skill with the payment of lower wages to women as well as transforming systems of outworking and household production (Elson and Pearson 1981). However, the employment of female labour by the MNCs is often located in free-trade zones in developing countries and it is most marked in the electronics and textile industries (Mitter 1986). Under the theoretical framework of GAD, the gendered nature of much industrial production in the Third World countries has been highlighted by these studies: women's labour has played a crucial role in the new international division of labour and the global accumulation of capital.

Neo-Liberalism and the Efficiency Approach of WID

The third theoretical framework of development, namely, neo-liberalism, and the policy prescriptions accompanying it, while not strictly a corpus

of development theory, has eclipsed both modernisation and under-development theories and dominated development thinking since the early 1980s. Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek, who emphasise the unfettered working of the free market to promote economic growth, provided the theoretical basis for many of its ideas. While appearing to be gender neutral, neo-liberalism carries with it the implicit assumption of certain gender relations and particular roles for women. Despite talking of 'gender-free individual' as the basic unit of analysis, the assumption is that women are subsumed within the household, providing important reproductive services, leaving men to be the individuals and heads of households who enter the free market and the public sphere. The major policy prescription following from this kind of analysis is the implementation of free-market policies and structural adjustment, and these have been widely promoted by the international institutions such as World Bank and IMF. Structural adjustment programmes (SAP) have definite implications for different groups of women in the Third World countries, as, among others, privatisation of state enterprises and the reduction in the size of state bureaucracies often make a reduction in employment opportunities for many middle-class professional women, who often form a large portion of teachers, social workers and nurses; the introduction of measures such as the removal of food subsidies has made, particularly, women in poor households to adopt survival strategies which need greater income generation for large section of poor women (Afshar and Dennis 1992).

The widespread implementation of SAP by the Third World governments at the instance of international institutions has coincided with the predominance of the third variant of WID, the 'efficiency approach'. The efficiency argument has been clearly spelt out by B. Rogers (1980), who had stressed the advance impact of women's exclusion on development. In view of growing economic crisis in the Third World, she suggested that continued neglect of women's productivity was a costly mistake that planners could no longer afford to make. Gender-specific occupational segregation, with concentration of men in higher-level jobs and women in lower ones, is regarded as a stable and rigid phenomenon that exists in traditional as well as modern societies. Various studies underline the persistence of gender-segregated labour markets globally as being independent of level of industrial development or occupational diversification (Terrell 1992; Anker 1998). Even within the same occupation, women are paid lower wages relative to men and male-female earnings are not well explained by gender differences in human capital endowments (Coppin 1995; Hotchkiss and Moore 1996; Olsen and Coppin 2001). Anker (1998) argues that human capital approach is becoming weak as

more empirical evidence is taken into account. Many working women have a continuous working career in developing countries, as in industrialised countries, and yet the working experience has not improved women's occupational performance. Lower returns to education lead to inequalities in wages and job mobility.

'The issue was not so much that women needed development, but that development needed women' (Kabeer 1996: 25). This kind of argument was most persuasive among the development agencies, for it appeared to feed directly into their concern with the efficient allocation of resources. It has helped to impart the efficiency approach its current prominence in WID policy at national and international levels.

However, the new policy equation has been constructed on an equality-impooverished view of women's lives; it has defined women's economic agency as equivalent to that of men, ignoring their greater embeddedness in familial and domestic responsibilities. Here welfare is seen as complementary, rather than in opposition to efficiency. It suggests that the opposition posited in WID advocacy between welfare and efficiency needs to be rethought. Although WID advocacy shifted the grounds for investing development resources in women from welfare to efficiency, or from need to merit, Boserup (1970) spoke directly to a market conception of merit claims (Kabeer 1996: 25). However, market-led efficiency, with the WID emphasis on women as economic agents, served to underscore the 'gender grip' for women within the market solution. If the market is to be the primary mechanism for allocating resources, then, women, who generally have less purchasing power, will be unable to buy the support services they need to reduce their domestic labour overheads; if they are unable to buy these labour-replacing services, they will also be unable to carry on the range of activities that would help them to increase their purchasing power. In its broader meaning, development can carry both negative and positive connotations – enriching a few, impoverishing the many.

If the satisfaction of human need, rather than the exercise of market rationality, is taken as the criterion of production, a more holistic view of development becomes necessary. Development should not be measured by the volume of marketed goods or services alone, but by the extent to which human well-being is assured. However, instead of the WID advocacy of market-led welfare and efficiency in the new policy equation (women + productivity = efficiency), market would take their place as simply one of a variety of institutional mechanisms through which human needs can be met, rather than as a sole arbiter of 'value'. Such an approach would promote both class and gender equity: women particularly poor women, would take their place as key actors in the

development process for their contribution to human survival and well-being among those who have been most disenfranchised by growth-dominated development strategies (*Ibid.*: 82-85).

The critique of development theory by feminist academics suggested that development plans and projects would not succeed unless women's potential and actual productive roles were recognised. However, part of the feminist agenda was incorporated into development thinking. Primarily, this agenda was executed in an instrumental manner – the improvement of women's life was seen as a mechanism to achieve other development goals, such as population control, rather than as a valuable end in itself. Subsequently, the feminist agenda has emerged as an independent action plan of IDO, World Bank, and the developed and the developing countries.

Gendered Analysis by a New Set of Feminist Academics

The 1980s saw the emergence of a new set of feminist critiques of much of the existing literature and policies and projects. While they are often overlapping and intersecting, three different lines of critique can be identified. The *first* derives from the work of Third World feminists, activists, researchers and policymakers. There is now a growing feeling that there is a need to develop a Third World focus to understand the gender problem, focusing among others on gender subordination, value of women's work, empowerment, feminist ideology, and identity of women. Although considerable dependence is noticeable on western ideas, models and methodologies, there is now a discernible women's perspective on development in the Third World countries. Before the NGO'85 Conference at Nairobi in July 1985, twenty-two activists, researchers and policy makers prepared a document enunciating a Third World women's perspective on development, described as 'Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era' (DAWN) (see Sen and Grown 1987). DAWN suggested that the problems of development were not unique to the Third World; even within the First World, there had always been those who had been marginalised in the process of market-led growth and whose dissonant voices had not been heard in the mainstream western feminist movement. The priorities for poor women from racially and nationally disadvantaged groups were frequently food, housing, jobs, services and the struggle against racism rather than equality with men. DAWN was of the view that equality with men, who themselves suffered unemployment, poor work conditions, low wages and racism within the existing socioeconomic structures, did not seem an adequate or worthy goal (Kabeer 1996: 32).

The notion of global sisterhood was also challenged by the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD), a network of African researchers. AAWORD (1982) rejected the analysis and strategies of western women who insisted on prioritising problems of equality between the sexes as the fundamental issue facing all women, and argued that the interests of men and women were opposed and mutually exclusive. Asian Women Research and Action Network (AWRAN) initiated a debate on the relevance of feminism in Asia and the special features of Asian feminism. The DAWN report (1991, cited in Sharma 2000: 165) suggests going beyond the discussion of empowerment as good for women to the discussion of empowerment as critical for building accountability into the functioning of the public realm – both the state and the institutions of civil society.

The second line of critique has been labelled the ‘postmodern feminist critique’ of women and development theory and practice. This critique rejects universal constructs of truth, objectivity and neutrality. It replaces the unitary notions of ‘women’ and ‘feminine’ gender identity with plural and complexly constructed conceptions of social identity, treating gender as one of the relevant strands among others, attending also to class race, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation (Fraser and Nicholson 1988: 390-91). While some women share common interests and face some common enemies, such commonalities are by no means universal. They are interlaced with differences, even with conflict. This new feminism is more sensitive to local and diverse voices of feminism, and it rejects any universalistic feminist perspective. Whereas earlier feminism was concerned with understanding and recording commonly experienced oppression of women, the postmodernist feminist practice emphasises diversity of women’s interrelationships. However, postmodern feminism draws much of its inspiration from the work of DAWN (Parpart 1993; Waylen 1996). The *third* line of critique consists of mainly the First World feminist academics that worked to improve development analysis and policy of the Third World countries.

Of these three new lines of feminist critiques, the most important is that of DAWN, which has laid out the gender analysis in a wider process of development and social change in the Third World societies (Sen and Grown 1987). All three critiques have criticised much of the WID and early GAD literature on several grounds (Waylen 1996 : 43): first, they homogenise women, treating them as a single unitary category ignoring difference; second, the Third World women are seen as passive objects of policy, not agents of change in their own right; and third, as a corollary of the second, many of the policy prescriptions and projects are seen as primarily top-down ones, imposed from above.

Moreover, in the purely capitalist model of development and its doctrine of free-market economy and liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation, women have become victims of development and non-planners/policy makers in the development process. Hence, most of these approaches have failed to achieve their objective of meeting the strategic gender needs. This is reflected in the increasing incidents of violence against women, dowry deaths, rape, sexual abuse, prostitution in the name of tourism promotion, and the declining sex ratio. The governmental policy of privatising health and education sectors may have very adverse effects on meeting even the basic needs of women. Accordingly, DAWN emphasises that development plans and projects would be more efficient and effective through women's economic contribution, but there must be a 'bottom-up' development approach through active participation and leadership of women.

Implications of the Efficiency Approach of WID

That women's economic contribution brings about higher economic growth and productivity has been acknowledged in the progress reports of various countries. Improving women's education increases their efficiency as producers; it also increases women farmers' access to agricultural extension, credit services and other productive inputs (Quisumbing 1994; Saito *et al.* 1994). The analysis of household panel data for Burkina Faso suggests that farm output could be increased by 6-20 percent through a more equitable allocation of productive resources between men and women farmers (Udry 1996). A more equitable distribution of opportunities and resources between men and women leads more directly to higher economic growth and productivity (World Bank 2000: 199).

A progress report on the World Bank's initiative for WID, which started during the 1980s, focuses on increasing women's productivity and income, because this is considered the best way to help women help themselves and contribute to economic performance, poverty reduction, slower population growth and environmental sustainability (World Bank 1990: 61). Progress in the Bank's lending has been most apparent in sectors (education, population, health and nutrition, and agriculture) that affect women's productivity the most. About two-fifths of the Bank's operations in the fiscal year 1989 included WID recommendations, as did almost all population, health and nutrition - PHN - projects (*Ibid.*: 61). About 40 percent of the Bank's operations approved in the fiscal year 1991 included specific recommendations for action to integrate women into the development process (World Bank 1991: 55). A review

of some projects approved in the 1980s highlighted the need for more effective planning of WID action during project preparation and more effective supervision once project implementation had begun.

A primary component of then World Bank's WID initiative had been the preparation of country-specific WID assessments and action plans. These assessments outlined specific programmes of action to assist women that could be implemented with the assistance of the Bank. About four-fifths of these action plans recommended raising the productivity and incomes of women farmers by improving access to extension and other agricultural support activities (*Ibid.*: 62). A new operation policy directive issued in April 1994 states that it is the Bank's intention to reduce gender disparities and enhance women's participation in economic development by integrating gender issues into country-specific strategies (World Bank 1994: 37).

Direct efforts to ensure women's access to productive resources include the land-tilling programmes to grant land rights to women. Statutory law in several Latin American countries required that the beneficiaries of earlier land-reform programmes be head of households. It was difficult for women to benefit from such programmes since custom dictated that men were the heads of the household. However, during the 1980s and 1990s, reform measures changed, and the more progressive agrarian codes of the 1990s gave special attention to this problem. For example, the Columbian agrarian law gave priority to the redistribution of land to households headed by women and to women who lacked protection or had been displaced by war (Deere and Leon 1999). There have been success stories from several other Latin American countries: a study based on gender-disaggregated data for six countries (Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Mexico, and Peru) reveals that women account for the large share of beneficiaries under the current land-tilling programmes than under the past agrarian reforms (World Bank 2000: 121).

A study on the effect of networking schemes, such as group-based micro-credit, suggests that these schemes have enormous potentials for reducing poverty and facilitating the empowerment of women. The interest reached a new peak with a micro-credit summit at Washington DC, in February 1997, which was considered the first step in a decade-long campaign seeking to ensure delivery of micro-credit for self-employment along with other financial and business services by 2005 to 100 million of the world's poorest families, especially the women of those families. In many developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, a significant movement has been gathering momentum over the recent years, influenced mainly by the WID policy framework. To this

end, the global movements of micro-credit programmers by different government and non-government agencies have focused mostly on women through the economic route with the 'bottom up' approach of women's active involvement in the programme. Some of these micro-credit programmes – such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee and Grameen Bank in Bangladesh – target women more than men, and the credit has greater productive potential for poor households in Bangladesh when women are the programme participants (Pitt and Shahidur 1998). In southern Africa, for the networking schemes of credit and saving facilities, women own an impressive share of small, informal sector business: 67 percent in Zimbabwe, 23 percent in Lesotho, and 84 percent in Swaziland, though training in entrepreneurial skills for women, who are typically cut-off from the normal paths for acquiring such skills, is critical. Group-based micro-credit schemes have helped women acquire non-land assets and have also had positive effect on girls' schooling (World Bank 2000). Furthermore, the effect of micro-credit programmes on women's empowerment has largely been positive (see Rahman 1986; Amin and Pebley 1994; Pitt and Khandker 1995).

The relationship between gender and environment is complex because of the underlying historical inequalities in gender and caste/class relations, which determine women's multifarious roles as producers, conservers, consumers and distributors of natural resources. Women are seen as being closer to nature because of their natural procreative function (Ortner 1972: 71); women are more dependent on nature by virtue of sexual division of labour. It is said that women are primarily responsible for gathering fuel, fodder and wild foods and growing subsistence crops for survival, whereas men are seen as mainly responsible for growing cash crops (M. Leach and C. Green, cited in Locke 1999: 236-37); women are seen as being the most appropriate participants in environmental conservation, as they are the main victims of environmental degradation, and degradation of natural resources destroys the material basis on which women's indigenous knowledge of resources and processes is found and kept alive (Fernandes and Menon 1987; Shiva 1988; Chen 1991; Kelkar and Nathan 1991).

Integrating WID initiative in the environmental area, Women, Environment and Development (WED) put forward two arguments: first, improving the status of women will assist the solution of environmental problem; and second, within environmental projects, women's sole participation will lead to an improvement in project efficiency (Sarker and Das 2002: 4407). The Rio Declaration (The UN Conference on Environment and Development at Rio 1992) at the Earth Summit also acknowledges that women have a vital role to play in environment

management and development from which they have been historically excluded (Sharma 2000). Women's active participation and women's leadership have been stressed in the area of Natural Resource Management (NRM) Programmes in developing countries like India for protecting environmental degradation, sustainable development and efficient management of natural resources.

In Africa, community participation has helped restore forest resources in Gambia, and led to broader participation in rural development in Zimbabwe (World Bank 2000 : 92). The progress report of Joint Forest Management (JFM) in India reveals some success stories relating to the involvement and active participation of women in the programme. Chipko movement in India, which hailed from women's activism, was independent of global environmental consciousness. Environmental campaigns in India have been successful in negotiating some changes in government policies. In the last two decades, conflicts over alternative uses of local resources have given rise to a variety of community initiatives. The National Forest Policy in India asserted that one of the basic objectives was 'creating a massive people's involvement with the involvement of women' (Ministry of Environment and Forest 1988 cited in Sarker and Das 2002: 4408). Making a sharp departure from the past, JFM is a direct outcome of 1988 National Forest Policy, which acknowledges the dependence of the rural poor on forest resources for survival. Despite the ideological diversity of community initiatives and proliferation of non-governmental organisations working in the area of environmental action, poor peasant women are motivated for group action as they regard these organisations as the only protection against their vulnerabilities as individuals at home, at work and in society. Understanding that women are being deprived of their equal constitutional right to benefit accruing from the forest, the West Bengal government's Forest Department has recently made efforts to establish a new management system of female Forest Protection Committee (Sarker and Das 2002).

In another action project in Bankura district of West Bengal, women have been mobilised around wasteland development. Once the district had thick mixed forests, but the Santhal tribals lost their forestland to traders, contractors and cultivators. They started migrating for work to Burdwan and Hooghly districts. The migration was harsh and women clamoured for work in their villages. The project has evolved from women's group activity in reclaiming wasteland and converting it into *tassar* plantation (Sharma 2000: 159-60).

The WID approach has also broadened women's legal rights in many countries by increasing their political representation in local and national

assemblies. Efforts are under way in at least thirty-two countries to increase women's political representation by reserving seats for them in local and national assemblies (World Bank 2000 : 119-20). In Panchayati Raj institutions in India, by law one-third of the seats are reserved for women. This has given rise to a new class of women (some 600,000 strong) with political influence. Similar reservation is under consideration for higher political bodies (*Ibid.*: 120).

Conclusion

Feminist academics have been trying to make sure that gendered analysis is incorporated into all areas and in all development plans and projects. However, new directions have emerged in both policy and analysis of development plans and projects, particularly in the Third World countries, with the predominance of the WID's efficiency approach through active involvement of women in development plans and projects. New areas and forms of analysis are being explored. The 'bottom-up' development schemes have entailed a vibrant civil society created through grassroots collective organisations. Acknowledging differences among women, these organisations have also necessitated greater consideration of the construction of identities and interests and have highlighted the need for alliances between different groups of women. Governments of the Third World countries have taken up legislative and reformative measures for smooth and successful functioning of gender-sensitive planning in various fields. A number of non-governmental organisations have become the torchbearers of this movement, even in remote areas in the Third World countries. Although parts of the feminists' agenda have been incorporated into development plans and projects of the Third World countries, the new directions have wider implications for gender equity and efficiency in all future development policy and planning in these countries.

Notes

1. Much of the work on gender in the Third World countries has been influenced by socialist and liberal feminism, the two major analytical camps dominant in the 1970s. Unlike Marxist feminists, socialist feminists go beyond the simple socialist solution, maintaining that the abolition of private property will not automatically result in women's liberation (Pandey 1987: 117). Socialist feminists believe that societies are fundamentally structured around patriarchy and profound inequalities in gender relations (Waylen 1996: 6-7). Besides the economic class structure, they attack all forms of male oppression. Liberal feminism is the most diverse strand. Liberal feminists are less concerned with finding structural explanation for women's subordination than socialist feminists. Instead, they find the socialisation of men and women

into different roles reinforced by discrimination, prejudice and irrationality as responsible for women's unequal position in society. The solutions to inequality are changes which will give women a better deal in the existing system, such as, legal changes and the promotion of equal opportunities allowing women access to things on the same terms as men. Liberal feminism has been criticised for its overly individualistic approach and its lack of a coherent analysis of women's oppression.

2. Based on a comparative analysis of women's economic role in the developing world, Boserup (1970) has observed that new technology in farming actually lowered women's status by reducing their access to productive work. As cash crop production and wage jobs were only made available to men, women were increasingly relegated to the subsistence economy during and after the colonial period.
3. For classical Marxists, the Third World countries will remain 'underdeveloped' until they are developed by capitalism. For the underdevelopment theorists, it is precisely because such societies have been incorporated into the world capitalist system that their development has been blocked, even reversed, and they have become underdeveloped.

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