



THEORITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

N. Padmaja

UGC Post Doctoral fellow, Department of Anthropology, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh 517502, India.

ABSTRACT

The concept of development and women has envisioned only in the second half of the 19th century, prior to this various forms of feminists movement has thrived. The development programmes are largely criticized for ignoring gender roles and the impact it has on women. This paper discusses about the evolution of gender planning in development process, chiefly focusing on socio-economic planning, thus taking into consideration women and men. The paper is discusses both on major approaches, to the study Women Empowerment and Perspectives of Women within development. This paper explains how these perspectives have become the most significant feminist development theoretical frameworks, they are women in development (WID) and gender and development (GAD).

KEYWORDS : Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), Gender and Development (GAD), Feminist Perspectives, and Empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Feminist's organizations have worked for social-welfare causes, reform, and empowerment in the global South. The concept of approaches to women development is introduced during 1950s and 1960s. The association of women organizations and development concerns has given rise to a specific planning field. During zenith of development in 1950s the state or government played a vital role in introducing development policies and strategies to improve standards of living and conditions of life.

Development in the Third World has historically provided little benefit to women, generally leaving them in a more vulnerable social and economic position. Gender planning holds the key to the implementation of successful development programs in Third World communities by recognizing different social relationships between women and men occur from society to society and are conclusive in development planning (Darcy L. Boellstorff, 1995). This study shall emphasis, development approaches and paradigms to women in development in Third World Countries.

2. APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The researchers and development agencies reveal a variety of approaches to development. The major approaches they have attempted to address welfare, equity anti poverty and empowerment. Caroline Moser (1989) has identified five paradigms towards women's development in Third World countries.

2.1. The Welfare Approach

The first paradigm related to welfare approach is based on the traditional view of marking the women's role in development or the basis of customary gender division of labour. Moser (1989, 1993) describes the welfare approach as being based on three assumptions:

- Women are Passive recipients of development, rather than participants in the development process.
- Motherhood is the most important role for women in society.]
- Child rearing is the most effective role for women in all aspects of economic development.

During the 1970s, criticisms of the welfare approach encouraged several alternatives approaches to women; namely equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment. The term "women in development" was initiated in the early 1970s by the Women's Committee of the Washington DC Chapter of the Society for International Development.

2.2. The Equity Approach:

The second paradigm came into existence during 1975-85, when

the decade was declared as the 'Decade of Women'. This approach was aimed at gaining equity and procuring her as active participant in development process. It further aimed at giving equal opportunities to women even by creating positive discrimination or reservation.

Women productive and reproductive roles, is unacknowledged for the contribution to economic growth of the country. The approach starts with the basic assumption that economic strategies frequently have had a negative impact on women, and acknowledges that they must be "brought into" the development process through access to employment and the market place (Moser, 1993). This change in emphasis from family to the economic arena has been a step in the right direction: but economic independence has been erroneously, interpreted as synonymous with equity. Like many of the WID approaches, this approach focuses on women in isolation, both from their daily lives and the relationships through which inequalities are perpetuated (Kabeer, 1994).

2.3. The Anti-poverty Approach

The third paradigm was concerned with anti-poverty, directed at poor women to ensure and increase their productivity. This approach to women focuses mainly on their productive role on the basis that poverty alleviation and the promotion of balanced economic growth requires the increased productivity of women in low-income households. According to C.L. Claridge et al, (1999) underlying the anti-poverty approach is the assumption that the origins of women's poverty and equality with men are attributable to women's lack of access to private ownership of land and capital and to sexual discrimination in labour market. Therefore, it aims to increase the employment and income generating options of low income women through better access to productive resource.

2.4. The Efficiency Approach

The fourth paradigm is related with efficiency which depends on the policies of economic stabilization and adjustments rely on women's economic contribution to development and their economic participation is seen as a mechanism to achieve equity.

The efficiency approach is now predominant approach for those working within a WID framework (Moser, 1993) and evidences a shift away from women and toward development, on the assumption that increased economic participation for the Third world is automatically linked with increased equity. The efficiency approach relies on the ability of women to increase their labour both in reproductive and community management. However, in most cases this approach fails to reach any strategic gender needs and seriously reduces the number of practical gender needs that are met (Moser, 1993), because of reduction in resource allocation.

2.5. The Empowerment Approach

The fifth paradigm is empowerment model; "The origins of empowerment approach are derived from the emergent feminist writings and grassroots organization experiences of many Third World women" (Moser 1989:1815). Although empowerment approach acknowledges inequalities between men and women, and origins of women's subordination in the family, it also emphasises that women experience oppression differently according to their race, class, colonial history and current position in the international economic order. It therefore maintains that women have to challenge oppressive structures and situations simultaneously at different levels (Moser, 1993).

The empowerment approach recognises the triple role of women. It aims to raise women's consciousness and encourage women to challenge their subordination, by using 'bottom-up' processes through women's organisations (C.L. Claridge et al, 1999). Many (Steady, 1993; Shiva, 1989) have considered that sustainable development will not be possible without the central and beneficial participation of women to incorporate their needs, concerns, aspirations and perspectives in all sectors, and at all levels of society and the political process.

3. MAJOR PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN WITHIN DEVELOPMENT

The terms used to describe different perspectives of women and development are WID (Women in Development), WAD (Women and Development), and GAD (Gender and Development)

3.1. Women in Development (WID)

In practice, WID is still predominant institutional perspective (Young, 1993) despite an evolutionary progression towards the GAD perspective. The term "WID" was initially used by the women's committee of the Washington, D.C.

Mitchell (1994) saw WID as helping women to gain control over their lives. WID would change unjust practices which work to oppress women in a structural sense. However, the approach still works through a "women isolation" perspective which does not adequately address the problem (Kabeer, 1994). Because of many WID project are either add-ons or work in isolation. However, Young (1993) finds at the project level, women's components are usually poorly financed and either limited to welfare decision-making (re-emphasising women's reproductive roles), or focus on forms of income earning which are marginal, unstable, and poorly rewarded.

3.2. Woman and Development (WAD)

The women and development (WAD) approach originated back in 1975 in Mexico city, as it sort to discuss women's issues from a neo-Marxist and dependency theory perspective. Its focus was to "explain the relationship between women and the process of capitalist development in terms of material conditions that contribute to their exploitation". Rathgeber (1990 cited in Young 1993). It seems to concentrate more on inequalities between Industrial Market Economies and LDCs within development process, and the nature of development itself, as prime overarching determinants of women's poverty, marginalisation and inequality (Young, 1993). WAD is often misinterpreted as WID; however, WAD focuses specifically on the relation between patriarchy and capitalism. The WAD perspective states that women have always participated and contributed towards economic development, regardless of the public or private spheres.

3.3. Gender and Development (GAD)

The gender and development approach has emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to the earlier WID focus. In the 1980s, the approach of Gender and Development (GAD) had emerged as it focuses explicitly on improving women's status. The approach focuses on gender roles while criticizing the gender with regard to structure (Rathgeber, 1990). The GAD approach starts from a holistic perspective, looking at "the totality of social organization, economic and political life in order to understand the shaping of particular

aspects of society" (Young 1987:2).

The GAD approach does not look welfare, antipoverty and equity as three individual approaches, it looks all three approaches are necessary for gender equity.

The GAD approach sees women as, agents of change rather than as passive recipients of development and it stresses the need for women to organize themselves for more effective political voice. It recognizes the importance of both class solidarities and class distinctions but it argues that the ideology of patriarchy operates within and across classes to oppress women.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The Women in Development perspective was the first approach to incorporate women in the development agenda it led to later perspectives such as the Women and Development (WAD), and finally, the Gender and Development approach. The criticism is that the GAD perspective is theoretically distinct from WID, but in practice, a program seems to have the element of the two. Many development agencies either government or non-government organizations are now committed to a gender approach, in practice. But the main institutional perspective remains focused on a WID approach. According to Development agencies, the advanced gender transformation is nothing but economic empowerment of the women. Gender inequality is highly linked with the power struggle that hinders the acknowledgment of women as significant actors and negotiators of the development processes.

REFERENCES

1. Darcy L. Boellstorff 1995 Women in Development: The need for a Grassroots Gender Planning Approach. Nebraska Anthropologist. Paper 82.
2. Caroline O.N. Moser. 1989. Gender planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs. World Development, Vol. 17, No. 11, pp 1799-1825.
3. Claridge C.L., B.R. Frank and J.J. Mott 1999 The Environment, Development and Women: What is the Connection? Journal of Rural Development, Vol. 18 (1), pp. 1-27, NIRD, Hyderabad
4. Caroline O.N. Moser. 1993. Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training, Routledge, London.
5. Mitchell, C. 1961. 'Wage Labour and African Population Movements in Central Africa,' in Essays on African Population. Edited by K.M. Barbour and R.M. Prothero. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
6. Rathgeber, E.M. 1990. WID, WAD AND GAD: Trends in Research and Practice. Paper presented in International Development Research Center, Ottawa, 19 November.
7. Rowlands J 1997. Questioning Empowerment: Working with Women in Honduras. New Jersey, Oxfam Publications.
8. Steady, F.C. 1993. Women and Children: Managers, protectors and Victims of their Environment, in Women and Children First: Environment, Poverty and Sustainable Development, Edited by Steady, F.C. Schenkman Books Inc. Vermont.
9. Shiva, V. 1989. Development, Ecology and Women, in Healing the Wounds : The Promise of Ecofeminism. Edited by Plant, J. Green Print, London.
10. Young, Kate. 1987. "Gender and Development." Notes for a Training Course on Gender and Development, sponsored by the Aga Khan Foundation, Toronto.
11. Young, K. 1993. Planning Development with Women: Making a World Difference. St. Martins Press, New York.