
UNIT: 2 PARADIGM SHIFT: WELFARE TO MAINSTREAMING APPROACHES

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the developing countries, particularly in the past fifteen years, there has been a proliferation of policies, programmes and projects designed to assist low-income women. This concern for low-income women's needs has coincided historically with a recognition of their important role in development. Since the 1950s many different interventions have been formulated. These reflect changes in macro-level economic and social policy approaches to Third World development, as well as in state policy towards women. Thus the shift in policy approaches towards women, from 'welfare', to 'equity' to 'anti-poverty', and to 'efficiency' and 'empowerment' has mirrored general trends in Third World development policies, from modernization policies of accelerated growth, through basic needs strategies associated with redistribution, to the more recent compensatory measures associated with structural adjustment policies.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying Unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the paradigm shift in the process of gender and development;
- Describe various approaches evolved in the process of women's empowerment; and
- Examine the merits and demerits of different approaches.

2.3 THE WELFARE APPROACH

Introduced in the 1950s and 1960s, welfare approach is the earliest policy approach concerned with women in developing countries. Its purpose is to bring women into development as better mothers. Women are seen as passive beneficiaries of development. The reproductive role of women is recognized and policy seeks to meet practical gender needs through that role by top-down handouts of food aid, measures against malnutrition and family planning.

The welfare approach is the oldest and still the most popular social development policy for the developing countries in general, and for women in particular. In fact it was First World welfare programmes, widely initiated in Europe after the end of World War II, specifically targeted at 'vulnerable groups', which were among the first to identify women as the main beneficiaries. As Buvinic (1986) has noted, these were the emergency relief programmes accompanying the economic assistance measures intended to ensure reconstruction. Relief aid was provided directly to low-income women, who, in their gendered roles as wives and mothers, were seen as those primarily concerned with their family's welfare. This relief distribution was undertaken by international private relief agencies, and relied on the unpaid work of middle-class women volunteers for effective and cheap implementation.

The creation of two parallel approaches to development assistance—on the one hand, financial aid for economic growth; on the other hand, relief aid for socially deprived groups—was then replicated in development policy towards Third World countries. This strategy had critical implications for Third World women. It meant that international economic aid prioritized government support for capital-intensive, industrial and agricultural production in the formal sector, for the acceleration of growth focused on increasing the productive capacity of the male labour force. Welfare provision for the family was targeted at women, who, along with the

disabled and the sick, were identified as 'vulnerable' groups, and remained the responsibility of the marginalized ministries of social welfare.

In most countries these ministries and the profession of social planning, frequently seen as their mandate, were from the outset dominated by women, particularly at the lower levels. Consequently, welfare policy was, and still is, frequently identified as 'women's work', serving to reinforce social planning as soft-edged, and of lesser importance than the hard-edged areas of economic and physical planning. Further assistance was then also provided by NGOs, such as the mother's clubs created in many Third World countries, and, to a lesser extent, by bilateral aid agencies with specific mandates for women and children, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The welfare approach is based on three assumptions. First, women are passive recipients of development, rather than participants in the development process. Secondly, that motherhood is the most important role for women in society. Thirdly, that child-rearing is the most effective role for women in all aspects of economic development. While this approach sees itself as 'family-centred' in orientation, it focuses on women entirely in terms of their reproductive role, it assumes men's role to be productive, and it identifies the mother-child dyad as the unit of concern. The main method of implementation is through 'top-down' handouts of free goods and services, and therefore it does not include women or gender-aware local organizations in participatory planning processes. When training is included it is for those skills deemed appropriate for 'non-working' housewives and mothers. In their mothering roles low-income women have been the primary targets for improving family welfare, particularly of children, through an increasing diversity of programmes, reflecting a broadening of the mandate of welfare over the past three decades.

With its origins in relief work, the first, the most important, concern of welfare programmes is family physical survival, through the direct provision of food aid. Generally this is provided in the short term after such natural disasters as earthquakes or famines. However, food aid has increasingly become a longer-term need for refugees seeking protection. Although the majority of refugees in camps are women, left as heads of households to care and often provide for the children and elderly, they usually do not have refugee status in their own right but only as wives within the family.

In the extensive international effort to combat Third World malnutrition, another emphasis of welfare programmes is nutritional education. This targets children under five years, as well as pregnant and nursing mothers. Since the 1960s, Mother-Child Health Programmes (MCH) have distributed, cooked or rationed food along with giving nutrition education at feeding centres and health clinics. Most recently, especially since the 1970s, welfare policy towards women has been extended to include population control through family planning programmes. Thus development agencies responding to the world's population 'problem' identified women, in their reproductive role, as primarily responsible for limiting the size of families. Early programmes assumed that poverty could be reduced by simply limiting fertility, to be achieved through the widespread dissemination of contraceptive knowledge and technology to women. Only the obvious failure of this approach led population planners to realize that variables relating to women's status, such as education and labour-force participation, could affect fertility differentials and consequently needed to be taken into consideration. By 1984 the World Bank's World Development Report, for instance, identified reducing infant and child mortality, educating parents (especially women) and raising rural incomes, women's employment and legal and social status, as key incentives to fertility decline (World Bank 1984). However, recognition of the links between women's autonomy over their own lives and fertility control is not widespread and women continue to be treated in an instrumental manner in population programmes. The lack of satisfactory birth-control methods, and the introduction of more invasive techniques (such as IUDs and hormonal implants) is making birth control even more 'women-centred'. As DAWN (1985) has argued, this lets men off the hook in terms of their responsibility for birth control, while increasingly placing the burden on women. Their ambivalence towards contraceptive technology will only be removed when the technology is better adapted to the social and health environments in which they are used.

Although welfare programmes for women have widened their scope considerably over the past decades, the underlying assumption is still that motherhood is the most important role for women in Third World development. This means that their major concern has been with meeting practical gender needs relating to women's reproductive role. Intrinsicly, welfare programmes identify 'women' rather than lack of resources, as the problem, and place the solution to family welfare in their hands, without questioning their 'natural' role. Although the top-down handout nature of so many welfare programmes tends to create dependency rather than assisting women

to become more independent, they remain popular precisely because they are politically safe, not questioning or changing the traditionally accepted role of women within the gender division of labour. Such assumptions tend to result in the exclusion of women from development programmes operated by the mainstream development agencies which provide a significant proportion of development funds.

Although by the 1970s dissatisfaction with the welfare approach was widespread, criticism differed as to its limitations. A group of mainly female professionals and researchers were concerned with the increasing evidence that Third World development projects were negatively affecting women; second, development economists and planners were concerned with the failure of modernization theory in the Third World; and third, the United Nations (UN), combined both of these concerns. The voicing of these concerns led to the United Nations 1975 International Women's Year Conference. This formally 'put women on the agenda' and provided legitimacy for the proliferation of a wide diversity of Third World women's organizations, in turn leading to the UN designating 1976–85 as the Women's Decade.

During this decade the critique of the welfare approach resulted in the development of a number of alternative approaches to women: namely, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment. The fact that these approaches share many common origins, were formulated during the same decade and are not entirely mutually exclusive, means that there has been a tendency not only to confuse them, but indeed to categorize them together as the 'women in development' (WID) approach.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

Note: a) Use the space given below to answer the questions.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) List out the three basic assumptions of welfare approach.

2.4 THE EQUITY APPROACH

Equity is the original 'WID' approach, introduced within the 1976–85 UN Women's Decade. Its purpose is to gain equity for women in the development process. Women are seen as active participants in development. It recognizes women's triple role and seeks to meet strategic gender needs through direct state intervention, giving political and economic autonomy to women, and reducing inequality with men.

By the 1970s, studies showed that although women were often the predominant contributors to the basic productivity of their communities, particularly in agriculture, their economic contribution was referred to neither in national statistics nor in the planning and implementation of development projects (Boserup 1970). At the same time new modernization projects, with innovative agricultural methods and sophisticated technologies, were negatively affecting women. These were displacing them from their traditional productive functions, and diminishing the income, status and power they had in traditional relations. Findings indicated that neo-colonialism, as much as colonialism, was contributing to the decline in women's status in developing countries.

Tinker, in her documentation of development projects that had widened the gap between men and women, argued that development planners were 'unable to deal with the fact that women must perform two roles in society whereas men perform only one' (1976:22). She attributed the adverse impact of development on women to three types of planning error: first, errors of omission or failure to acknowledge and utilize women's productive role; second, errors that reinforced values which restrict women to the household engaged in childbearing and childrearing activities; and third, errors of inappropriate application of Western values regarding women's work (1976).

On the basis of evidence such as this, the WID group in the United States challenged the prevailing assumption that modernization was equated with increasing gender equality, asserting that capitalist development models imposed on much of the Third World had exacerbated inequalities between men and women. Recognition of the damaging effects of ignoring women in USAID projects during the First Development Decade (1960–70) made the WID group work to influence USAID policy. Lobbying of Congressional hearings resulted in the 1973 Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act, which mandated that US assistance help 'move

women into their national economies' in order to improve women's status and assist the development process (Tinker 1982; Maguire 1984).

The original WID approach was in fact the equity approach. This approach recognizes that women are active participants in the development process. The approach starts with the basic assumption that economic strategies have frequently had a negative impact on women. It acknowledges that they must be 'brought into' the development process through access to employment and the market place. It therefore accepts women's practical gender need to earn a livelihood. However, the equity approach is also concerned with fundamental issues of equality which transcend the development field. As Buvinic (1986) has in both public and private spheres of life and across socio-economic groups. It identifies the origins of women's subordination not only in the context of the family, but also in relations between men and women in the market place. Hence it places considerable emphasis on economic independence as synonymous with equity.

In focusing particularly on reducing inequality between men and women in the gender division of labour, the equity approach meets an important strategic gender need. Equity programmes are identified as uniting notions of development and equality. The underlying logic is that women have lost ground to men in the development process. Therefore, in a process of redistribution, men have to share in a manner which entails women from all socio-economic classes gaining and men from all socio-economic classes losing (or gaining less), through positive discrimination policies if necessary.

The rational consequence of this is seen to be greater equality with an accompanying increase in economic growth. Although the approach emphasized 'top-down' legislative and other measures as the means to ensure equity, gendered consultative and participatory planning procedures were implicitly assumed. This was particularly the case since the introduction of the equity approach itself had been the consequence of the bottom-up confrontation of existing procedures by feminist women's organizations. In fact, the theme selection for the 1975 International Women's Year (IWY) Conference showed that the equity approach, despite its identification as 'developmental', in many respects was more concerned to reflect First World feminist preoccupations with equality. Third World delegations, while acknowledging women's problems, identified development as their main concern, maintaining that this would increase

women's status. Second World delegates were more concerned with peace, claiming that the capitalist system and its associated militarism were responsible for women's problems—hence the theme of Equality, Development and Peace (Stephenson 1982).

The World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the IWY firmly reflected the equity approach. It called for equality between men and women, required that women should be given their fair share of the benefits of development, and recognized the need for changes in the traditional role of men as well as women (UN 1976a). The Plan set the agenda for future action for the Women's Decade, with the common goal of integrating women into the development process. In reality, the interpretation of the agenda varied. This was reflected in the language used, which ranged from the definitely expressed aim to 'integrate', 'increase', 'improve' or 'upgrade' women's participation in development to the more tentatively worded desire to 'help create a more favorable climate for improving women's options in development' (World Bank 1980:14).

Despite such rhetoric, equity programmes encountered problems from the outset. Methodologically, the lack of a single unified indicator of social status or progress of women and of baseline information about women's economic, social and political status meant that there were no standards against which 'success' could be measured. Politically, the majority of development agencies were hostile to equity programmes precisely because of their intention to meet not only practical gender needs but also strategic gender needs, whose very success depended on an implicit redistribution of power.

From the perspective of the aid agency, equity programmes necessitated unacceptable interference with the country's traditions. At the same time recognition of equity as a policy principle did not guarantee its implementation in practice. In Europe the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee's (OECD/DAC) Guiding Principles to Aid Agencies for Supporting the Role of Women in Development identified 'integration' as critical for a policy on WID issues. However, in a review of European Development Assistance, Andersen and Baud (1987) argued that although policy statements of most donor countries were in general accord with the idea of equality, nevertheless at the level of policy, integration had been mainly interpreted to mean an increasing number of women in existing policies and programmes. Thus, they concluded that 'implicit in such an approach was

the idea that current development models were in principle favourable to women, and that they therefore did not need to take account of women's vision or priorities' (1987:22).

Despite their endorsement of the Plan of Action, similar antipathy was felt by many Third World governments, legitimized by their belief in the irrelevance of Western-exported feminism to Third World women. In fact, one of the outcomes of the 1975 Conference was the labelling of feminism as ethnocentric and divisive to WID. Many Third World activists felt that to take 'feminism to a woman who has no water, no food and no home is to talk nonsense' (Bunch 1980:27), and labelled Third World socialists and feminists as bourgeois imperialist sympathizers. At the same time the fact that there was only one reference to women in the various documents of the 1970 UN New International Economic Order Conference revealed that the importance of women was still identified in terms of their biological role by those formulating policies for the Third World.

In a climate of widespread antagonism to many of its underlying principles from development agencies and Third World governments alike, the equity approach has been effectively dropped by the majority of implementing agencies. However, its official endorsement in 1975 ensured that it continues to provide an important framework for those working within government to improve the status of women through official legislation.

Tinker and Jaquette (1987), in reviewing the 1976–85 Women's Decade conference documents, noted that the goal of legal equality of women had been accepted as a minimum basis of consensus from which to begin the discussion of more controversial issues. This included the rights of divorce, of custody of children, property, credit, voting and other citizen rights.

Significant though the ratification of such legislation is, it is necessary to recognize that it meets potential strategic gender needs, rather than actual needs. Property rights, arranged marriages, dowry and child custody rights provide much cited examples of the highly sensitive strategic gender needs which are often still curtailed by custom, even when amended by law. Even the incorporation of practical gender needs into the mainstream of development plans does not guarantee their implementation in practice. Mazumdar (1979) noted that the incorporation of women's concerns into the framework of India's Six Year Plan indicated India's constitutional commitment to equality of opportunity. Such constitutional inclusions, however, in no way

ensured practical changes. In her opinion these are largely a function of the strength of the political power base of organized women's groups. Ultimately, the equity approach has been constructed to meet strategic gender needs through top-down legislative measures. The bottom-up mobilization of women into political pressure groups to ensure that policy becomes action is the mandate of the empowerment approach, developed by women in developing countries.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

Note: a) Use the space given below to answer the questions.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) Why equity approach failed miserably?

2.5 THE ANTI-POVERTY APPROACH

Anti-Poverty is the second WID approach, the 'toned down' version of equity, introduced from the 1970s onwards. Its purpose is to ensure that poor women increase their productivity. Women's poverty is seen as the problem of underdevelopment, not of subordination. It recognizes the productive role of women, and seeks to meet practical gender needs to earn an income, particularly through small-scale income-generating projects. It is most popular with NGOs.

The anti-poverty approach thus shifts emphasis from reducing inequality between men and women, to reducing income inequality. Women's issues are separated from equity issues and linked instead to the particular concern for the majority of Third World women, as the 'poorest of the poor'.

By the early 1970s it was widely recognized that modernization theory, with its accelerated growth strategies based on maximizing GNP, had failed, either to redistribute income or to solve the problems of Third World poverty and unemployment. Contrary to predictions about the

positive welfare effects of rapid economic growth, financial benefits had not 'trickled down' to the poor. An early initiative was the International Labour Organization's (ILO) World Employment Programme in which employment became a major policy objective in its own right. The 'working poor' were identified as the target group requiring particular attention, and the informal sector with its assumed autonomous capacity to generate employment was seen as the solution. In 1972 the World Bank officially shifted from a preoccupation with economic growth to a broader concern with the eradication of absolute poverty and the promotion of 'redistribution with growth'. Integral to this was the 'basic needs strategy', with its primary purpose to meet 'basic needs' such as food, clothing, shelter and fuel, as well as social needs such as education, human rights and 'participation' in social life through employment and political involvement. Low-income women were identified as one particular 'target group' to be assisted in escaping absolute deprivation: first, because the failure of 'trickle-down' was partially attributed to the fact that women had been ignored in previous development plans; and secondly, because of the traditional importance of women in meeting many of the basic needs of the family.

The anti-poverty policy 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. Underlying this approach is the assumption that the origins of women's poverty and inequality with men are attributable to their lack of access to private ownership of land and capital, and to sexual discrimination in the labour market. Consequently, it aims to increase the employment and income-generating options of low-income women through better access to productive resources. The preoccupation of basic needs strategies with population control also resulted in increasing recognition that education and employment programmes could simultaneously increase women's economic contribution and reduce fertility.

One of the principal criticisms of employment programmes for women is that since they have the potential to modify the gender division of labour within the household, they may also imply changes in the balance of power between men and women within the family. In anti-poverty programmes this redistribution of power is said to be reduced, because the focus is specifically on low-income women, and because of the tendency to encourage projects in sex-specific occupations in which women are concentrated, or to target only women who head households. The fear, however, that programmes for low-income women may reduce the already insufficient

amount of aid allocated to low-income groups in general means that Third World governments have remained reluctant to allocate resources from national budgets to women. Frequently, the preference is to allocate resources at the family or household level, despite the fact that they generally remain in the hands of the male head of household.

While income-generating projects for low-income women have proliferated since the 1970s, they have tended to remain small in scale, to be developed by NGOs (most frequently all-women in composition), and to be assisted by grants, rather than loans, from international and bilateral agencies.

Most frequently they aim to increase productivity in activities traditionally undertaken by women, rather than to introduce women to new areas of work, with a preference for supporting rural-based production projects as opposed to those in the service and distribution sectors, which are far more widespread in the urban areas of many developing countries.

Considerable variation has been experienced in the capacity of such projects to assist low-income women to generate income. Buvinic (1986) has highlighted the problems experienced by anti-poverty projects in the implementation process, due to the preference to shift towards welfare orientated projects. However, such projects also experience considerable constraints in the formulation stage. In theory, 'basic needs' assumed a participatory approach, yet in practice anti-poverty projects for women rarely included participatory planning procedures; mechanisms to ensure that women and gender-aware organizations be included remained undeveloped.

In the design of projects, fundamental conditions to ensure viability are often ignored, including access to easily available raw materials, guaranteed markets and small-scale production capacity. Despite widespread recognition of the limitations of the informal sector to generate employment and growth in an independent or evolutionary manner, income generating projects for women continue to be designed as though smallscale enterprises have the capacity for autonomous growth.

In addition, the particular constraints that women experience in their gendered roles are also frequently ignored. These may include problems of perception in separating reproductive from productive work, as well as those associated with 'balancing' productive work alongside domestic and childcare responsibilities. In many contexts there are cultural constraints that restrict women's ability to move freely outside the domestic arena and therefore to compete

equally with men running similar enterprises. Where men control household financial resources, women are unable to save unless special safe facilities are provided. Equally, where women cannot obtain equal access to credit, such as through lack of collateral, they are often unable to expand their enterprises unless nontraditional forms of credit are available to them (Bruce 1980; IWTC 1985).

Finally, the tendency to distinguish between micro-enterprise projects for men, and income-generating projects for women, is indicative of the prevailing attitude, even among many NGOs, that women's productive work is of less importance than men's, and is undertaken as a secondary earner or 'for pocket money'.

Anti-poverty income-generating projects may provide employment for women, and thereby meet practical gender needs, by augmenting their income, but unless employment leads to greater autonomy it does not meet strategic gender needs. This is the essential difference between the equity and anti-poverty approaches.

In addition, the predominant focus on the productive role of women in the anti-poverty approach means that their reproductive role is often ignored. Income-generating projects which assume that women have 'free time' often only succeed by extending their working day and increasing their triple burden. Unless an income-generating project also alleviates the burden of women's domestic labour and child care—for instance, through the provision of adequate socialized child caring—it may fail even to meet practical gender need to earn an income.

2.6 THE EFFICIENCY APPROACH

Efficiency is the third, and predominant WID approach, particularly since the 1980s debt crisis. Its purpose is to ensure that development is more efficient and effective through women's economic contribution. Women's participation is equated with equity for women. It seeks to meet practical gender needs while relying on all of women's three roles and an elastic concept of women's time. Women are seen primarily in terms of their capacity to compensate for declining social services by extending their working day. Although the shift from equity to anti-poverty has been well documented, the identification of WID as efficiency has passed almost unnoticed. The emphasis has shifted away from women and towards development, on the assumption that increased economic participation for Third World women is automatically linked with increased

equity. This has allowed organizations such as USAID, the World Bank and OECD to propose that an increase in women's economic participation in development links efficiency and equity together. Amongst others, Maguire (1984) has argued that the shift from equity to efficiency reflected a specific economic recognition of the fact that 50 percent of the human resources available for development were being wasted or under-utilized. Although the so-called development industry realized that women were essential to the success of the total development effort, it did not necessarily follow that development improved conditions for women. The assumption that economic participation increases women's status and is associated with equity has been widely criticized. Problems such as lack of education and under-productive technologies have also been identified as the predominant constraints affecting women's participation.

The shift towards efficiency coincided with a marked deterioration in the world economy, occurring from the mid-1970s onwards, particularly in Latin America and Africa, where the problems of recession were compounded by falling export prices, protectionism and the mounting burden of debt. To alleviate the situation, economic stabilization and adjustment policies designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have been implemented by an increasing number of national governments. These policies, through both demand management and supply expansion, lead to the reallocation of resources to enable the restoration of a balance of payments equilibrium, an increase in exports and a rejuvenation in growth rates.

With increased efficiency and productivity as two of the main objectives of Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), it is no coincidence that efficiency is the policy approach towards women which is currently gaining popularity amongst international aid agencies and national governments alike. Again top-down in approach, without gendered participatory planning procedures, in reality SAPs often simply mean a shifting of costs from the paid to the unpaid economy, particularly through the use of women's unpaid time. While the emphasis is on women's increased economic participation, this has implications for women not only as reproducers, but also increasingly as community managers. In the housing sector, for instance, one such example is provided by 'site and service' and upgrading projects with self-help components which now regularly include women in the implementation phase. This is a consequence of the need for greater efficiency: not only are women as mothers more reliable

than men in repaying building loans, but also as workers they are equally capable of self-building alongside men, while as community managers they have shown far greater commitment than men in ensuring that services are maintained.

Disinvestments in human resources, made in the name of greater efficiency in IMF and World Bank ‘conditionality’ policies, have resulted in declines in income levels, severe cuts in government social expenditure programmes, particularly health and education, and reductions in food subsidies. These cuts in many of the practical gender needs of women are seen to be cushioned by the elasticity of women’s labour in increasing self-production of food, and changes in purchasing habits and consumption patterns.

The efficiency approach relies heavily on the elasticity of women’s labour in both their reproductive and community managing roles. It only meets practical gender needs at the cost of longer working hours and increased unpaid work. In most cases this approach fails to reach any strategic gender needs. Because of the reductions in resource allocations, it also results in a serious reduction in the practical gender needs met.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

Note: a) Use the space given below to answer the questions.

b) Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1) What is the thrust of efficiency approach?

2.7 THE EMPOWERMENT APPROACH

Empowerment is the most recent approach, articulated by Third World women.

Its purpose is to empower women through greater self-reliance. Women’s subordination is seen not only as the problem of men but also of colonial and neo-colonial oppression. It recognizes

women's triple role, and seeks to meet strategic gender needs indirectly through bottom-up mobilization around practical gender needs. It is potentially challenging, although it avoids the criticism of being Western-inspired feminism. It is unpopular except with Third World women's NGOs and their supporters.

In many respects empowerment developed out of dissatisfaction with the original WID as equity approach, because of its perceived co-option into the anti-poverty and efficiency approaches. However, the empowerment approach differs from the equity approach. This relates not only in its origins, but also in the causes, dynamics and structures of women's oppression which it identifies, and in terms of the strategies it proposes to change the position of Third World women.

The origins of the empowerment approach are derived less from the research of First World women, and more from the emergent feminist writings and grassroots organizational experience of Third World women; it accedes that feminism is not simply a recent Western urban middle-class import. The empowerment approach acknowledges inequalities between men and women, and the origins of women's subordination in the family. It also emphasizes the fact 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.

The empowerment approach questions some of the fundamental assumptions concerning the interrelationship between power and development that underlie previous approaches. It acknowledges the importance for women to increase their power. However, it seeks to identify power less in terms of domination over others (with its implicit assumption that a gain for women implies a loss for men), and more in terms of the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength.

This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material resources. It places far less emphasis than the equity approach on increasing women's 'status' relative to men. It thus seeks to empower women through the redistribution of power within, as well as between, societies.

The best-known articulation of the empowerment approach has been made by the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN). This is a loose formation of individual women and women's groups set up prior to the 1985 World Conference of Women in Nairobi. Their purpose has been not only to analyze the conditions of the world's women, but also to formulate a vision of an alternative future society.

Using time as a basic parameter for change, DAWN distinguishes between long-term and short-term strategies. Long-term strategies are needed to break down the structures of inequality between genders, classes and nations. Fundamental requisites for this process include national liberation from colonial and neo-colonial domination, shifts from export-led strategies in agriculture and greater control over the activities of multinationals. Short term strategies are identified as necessary to provide ways of responding to current crises. Measures to assist women include food production through the promotion of a diversified agricultural base, as well as in formal and informal sector employment.

Although short-term strategies correspond to practical gender needs, long term strategies contain a far wider agenda than do strategic gender needs, with national liberation identified as a fundamental requisite for addressing them. The new era envisaged by DAWN also requires the transformation of the structures of subordination that have been so inimical to women. Changes in law, civil codes, systems of property rights, control over women's bodies, labour codes and the social and legal institutions that underwrite male control and privilege are essential if women are to attain justice in society. These strategic gender needs are similar to those identified by the equity approach. It is in the means of achieving such needs that the empowerment approach differs most fundamentally from previous approaches. Recognition of the limitations of top-down government legislation actually, rather than potentially, to meet strategic gender needs has led adherents of the empowerment approach to acknowledge that their strategies will not be implemented without the sustained and systematic efforts of women's organizations and like-minded groups. Hence it explicitly includes gendered consultative and participatory planning procedures. Important entry points for leverage identified by such organizations are therefore not only legal changes but also political mobilization, consciousness raising and popular education. All of these are mechanisms to ensure that women and gender aware organizations are included in the planning process.

In its emphasis on women's organizations, the empowerment approach might appear similar to the welfare approach, which also stressed the importance of women's organizations. This has led some policy-makers to conflate the two approaches. However, the welfare approach recognizes only the reproductive role of women and utilizes women's organizations as a topdown means of delivering services. In contrast, the empowerment approach recognizes the triple role of women and seeks through bottom-up women's organizations to raise women's consciousness to challenge their subordination. In fact, Third World women's organizations form a continuum. This ranges from direct political action, through exchanging research and information, to the traditional service-orientated organizations with their class biases and limited scope for participatory action. While acknowledging the valuable function of different types of organizations, the empowerment approach seeks to assist the more traditional organizations to move towards a greater awareness of feminist issues. Thus Sen (1990) acknowledges that the perceptions of the individual interests of women tend to be merged with the notion of family well-being. The 'political agency' of women may be sharpened by their greater involvement with the outside world.

Another important distinction between the empowerment and equity approaches is the manner in which the former seeks to reach strategic gender needs indirectly through practical gender needs. The very limited success of the equity approach to confront directly the nature of women's subordination through legislative changes has led the empowerment approach to avoid direct confrontation. It utilizes practical gender needs as the basis on which to build a secure support base, and a means through which strategic needs may be reached. The following examples of Third World women's organizations are much quoted 'classics' of their kind, which have provided important examples for other groups of the ways in which practical gender needs can be utilized as a means of reaching strategic gender needs.

In the Philippines, GABRIELA (an alliance of local and national women's organizations) ran a project which combined women's traditional task of sewing tapestry with a non-traditional activity, the discussion of women's legal rights and the constitution. A nation-wide educational 'tapestry-making drive' enabled the discussion of rights in communities, factories and schools, with the end product a 'Tapestry of Women's Rights' seen to be a liberating instrument (Gomez 1986).

A feminist group in Bombay, India, the 'Forum against Oppression of Women' first started campaigning in 1979 on such issues as rape and bride burning. However, with 55 percent of the low-income population living in squatter settlements, the Forum soon realized that housing was a much greater priority for local women, and, consequently, soon shifted its focus to this issue. In a context where women by tradition had no access to housing in their own right, homelessness, through breakdown of marriage or domestic violence, was an acute problem, and the provision of women's hostels a critical practical gender need. Moreover, mobilization around homelessness also raised consciousness of the patriarchal bias in inheritance legislation as well as in the interpretation of housing rights. In seeking to broaden the problem from a 'women's concern' and to raise men's awareness, the Forum has become part of a nation-wide alliance of NGOs, lobbying national government for a National Housing Charter. Through this alliance the Forum has ensured that women's strategic gender needs relating to housing rights have been placed on the mainstream political agenda, and have not remained simply the concern of women.

Conflicts often occur when empowered women's organizations succeed in challenging their subordination. One widely cited example is the Self-Employed Women's Organization (SEWA) started in Ahmedabad, India, in 1972 by a group of self-employed women labourers. It initially struggled for higher wages and for the defence of members against police harassment and exploitation by middlemen. At first, with the assistance of the male-dominated Textile Labour Association (TLA), SEWA established a bank, as well as providing support for low-income women such as skill training programmes, social security systems, production and marketing co-operatives (Sebsted 1982). It has been said that the TLA expelled SEWA from its organization, not only because the TLA leaders felt increasingly threatened by the women's advance towards self independence, but also because their methods of struggle, in opposition to TLA policy of compromise and collaboration, provided a dangerous model for male workers (Karl 1983). SEWA has survived considerable setbacks in its development largely due to its widespread membership support. The fact that it has developed into a movement has made it increasingly difficult to eliminate. In addition, at various times the grant support SEWA has received from international agencies has assisted in giving the organization a level of independence within the local political context.

2.8 GENDER MAINSTREAMING APPROACH

The term 'gender mainstreaming' came into widespread use with the adoption of the Platform for Action at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The 189 governments represented in Beijing unanimously affirmed that the advancement of women and the achievement of equality with men are matters of fundamental human rights and therefore a prerequisite for social justice. Gender mainstreaming attempts to combine the strengths of the efficiency and empowerment approaches within the context of mainstream development. Mainstreaming gender equality tries to ensure that women's as well as men's concerns and experiences are integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all projects so that gender inequality is not perpetuated.

2.9 SUMMING UP

Gender mainstreaming approach has evolved over a period of time shifting from welfare approach to empowerment approach. Attaining gender equity and equality in socio-economic-political-cultural spheres is an arduous task and it requires persistent effort from the state, society and market. Failures of different approaches have indeed contributed to the emergence of gender mainstreaming approach and this was explained in detail in this Unit. All these approaches manifest themselves in the form of policies, programmes and schemes. Now, it is the turn of gender mainstreaming approach to strive towards gender equality and equity.

2.10 GLOSSARY

The World Plan of Action: The World Plan of Action is addressed, among others, to: individuals, families, groups and communities, educators, teaching institutions and their boards, students, young people, the media, employers and unions, popular movements, political parties, parliamentarians, public officials, national and international non-governmental organizations, all multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, the United Nations Organization, in particular its Centre for Human Rights, specialized institutions of the United Nations system, in particular UNESCO, and States. The Plan of action calls for a global mobilization of energies and resources, from the family to the United Nations, to educate individuals and groups about human rights so that conduct leading to a denial of rights will be changed, all rights will be respected and civil society will be transformed into a peaceful and participatory model. Learning is not an

end in itself but rather the means of eliminating violations of human rights and building a culture of peace based on democracy, development, tolerance and mutual respect.

GNP: GNP is the total value of all final goods and services produced within a nation in a particular year, plus income earned by its citizens (including income of those located abroad), minus income of non-residents located in that country. Basically, GNP measures the value of goods and services that the country's citizens produced regardless of their location. GNP is one measure of the economic condition of a country, under the assumption that a higher GNP leads to a higher quality of living, all other things being equal.

2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

1. The welfare approach is based on three assumptions. First, women are passive recipients of development, rather than participants in the development process. Secondly, that motherhood is the most important role for women in society. Thirdly, that child-rearing is the most effective role for women in all aspects of economic development.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

1. The major drawback of equity approach is the lack of a single unified indicator of social status or progress of women and of baseline information about women's economic, social and political status meant that there were no standards against which 'success' could be measured. Politically, the majority of development agencies were hostile to equity programmes precisely because of their intention to meet not only practical gender needs but also strategic gender needs, whose very success depended on an implicit redistribution of power.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

1. The main thrust of efficiency approach is to ensure that development is more efficient and effective through women's economic contribution. Women's participation is equated with equity for women. It seeks to meet practical gender needs while relying on all of women's three roles and an elastic concept of women's time.

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2.13 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Distinguish between welfare approach and empowerment approach.
2. What are the features of anti-poverty approach?
3. How gender mainstreaming approach is different from equity approach?

