
UNIT 3 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- discuss how the development process affects women and men in different ways;
- explain gender roles;
- describe the gendered impact of sudden economic change; and
- distinguish between approaches to gender and development.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

“Development cannot be achieved if 50% of the population is excluded from the opportunities it brings” Helen Clarke, UNDP Administrator.

The development process affects women and men in different ways. The after affect of colonialism, and the peripheral position of poor countries of the south and those with economies in transition in today's globalizing world, exacerbate the effects of discrimination on women. Modernization of agriculture has altered the division of labour between the sexes, increasing women's dependent status as well as their workload. Women often lose control of resources such as land and are generally excluded from access to improved agricultural methods. Male mobility is higher than female; both between places and between jobs and more women are left alone to support children. In some countries especially in the Middle East, South Asia and Latin America, women cannot do paid work or travel without their husbands or their father's written permission. Women carry a double or triple burden of work as they cope with house work, childcare and subsistence food production, in addition to an expanding involvement in paid employment. Everywhere women work longer hours than men. The pressure on gender relations of the changing status of women, and of rapid economic restructuring combined with growing impoverishment at the household level is a critical factor in survival.

Gender relations (the socially constructed form of relations between women and men) have been interrogated in terms of the way development policies change the balance of power between women and men. Gender roles (the household tasks and types of work/employment socially assigned to men and women) are not fixed and globally consistent and indeed become more flexible with the changes brought about by economic development. Everywhere gender is crosscut by differences in class, race, ethnicity, religion and age.

As we enter the new Millennium, the focus is on alleviating world poverty. The empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality is one of the eight internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) designed to achieve this. There is a great deal of evidence that societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay a price in more poverty, slower growth and a lower quality of life while gender equality enhances development. For example: literate mothers have better fed children who are more likely to attend school. Yet in no country of the developing world do women enjoy equality with men in terms of political, legal, social and economic rights.

Box 3.1: Millennium Development Goal 3

Goal: To promote gender equality and empowerment of women

Target: To remove gender disparities in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015

3.2 ORIGIN OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

This approach originated in academic criticism started in the mid-1970s in the UK. Based on the concept of gender and gender relations, it analyzed how development reshapes these power relations. Drawing on feminist political activism, gender analysts explicitly saw women as agents of change. The movement also affirmed that giving women greater access to resources would contribute to an equitable and efficient development process.

The end of the 1970s ushered in the concern with gender relations in development. Micro-level studies drew attention to the differences in entitlements, perceived capabilities, and social expectations of men and women, boys and girls. Reflecting the norms, laws, and social values of society, the differences in the status of men and women have profound implications for how they participate in market or non-market work and in community life as a whole. In the 1980s and 1990s, research demonstrated that gender relations mediate the process of development. For example, analyses of stabilization and structural-adjustment policies showed that gender inequalities have an impact on the attainment of macroeconomic objectives.

The concern with gender relations in development has strengthened the affirmation that equality in the status of men and women is fundamental to every society. And this concern has prompted scholars and practitioners to refine the perspective on what development should be and how to bring it about efficiently. It was realized that development requires more than the creation of opportunities for people to earn sustainable livelihoods – it also requires the creation of a conducive environment for men and women to seize those opportunities. Development implies not only more and better schools but also equal access to education for boys and girls. Development requires good governments that give men and women equal voices in decision-making and policy implementation.

Concepts and ideas – such as feminism, gender analysis, diversity, and gender mainstreaming – that have become buzz words in the development circles need to be clarified and demystified. This will foster effective communication among development agents and result in a consistent view of overall development goals and in complementary, rather than contradictory, plans of action.

Gender and society before the development era

It is important to recall the richness of the history of most developing countries before colonialism and the era of development. It is also important to understand the nature of social relations in the earlier periods of that history. Until recently, most of history was androcentric. It focused on the period after the encounter with Western Europe and emphasized male action or agency. In addition, it was often

first written in Western languages by Western male scholars who, with few exceptions, were Eurocentric and intolerant of the people they studied. As a result, our historical records are laced with racism, sexism, and imperialist sentiments.

Although development theorists paid little attention to the complexities of these societies before the era of development, social anthropologists did. However, they also took with them androcentric and ethnocentric biases that clouded their view of these societies and of gender relations in these societies.

In the heyday of Third World nationalism, in the 1960s and 1970s, indigenous historians sought to correct this wrong. Most of these historians were male or trained in the androcentric worldview. So knowledge of women’s experiences in pre-colonial society continued to be hidden. To counteract centuries of what Peter Worsley (1970) called “imperialist history,” nationalist historians often distorted this history to highlight a great and glorious past, stressing the kings and queens, wealth and empire. In so doing, they often ignored the traditional **egalitarianism** of many pre-colonial societies, in which women had greater power and autonomy and life was more in tune with nature and the environment, not based on its destruction.

Today, as feminist activists and other concerned scholars re-evaluate development and modernization, there is a renewed appreciation of the positive features of the ways of life in earlier societies. Also, understanding the need to preserve and protect the egalitarian and environmentally friendly practices that have survived in our societies and have been adapted to serve people’s needs, often outside mainstream political and economic structures.

Gender relations and social change

Since the late 18th century, social scientists have sought to develop a schema to explain the variety and differences in human experience. Today, although critical scholars no longer attribute value to societies in terms of progress or backwardness, they do recognize that pre-colonial societies may have been at different stages of social development. The stages are usually identified as follows: Hunter-gatherer or foraging societies, agricultural or agrarian societies, pastoral or herding societies, Industrial societies etc.

Feminist anthropologists have also argued that the organization of social and **production relations** – such as social **stratification**, the monogamous family, matrilineal/matrilateral descent ownership of property, and forms of work and production – has greatly influenced the differences in gender relations around the world.

In many situations, women have been able to create spaces and possibilities for autonomy within the structures of subordination existing in their societies. However, these strategies were complicated or removed by the imposition of assumptions about a woman’s or man’s place in the new systems of stratification that were based on notions of class and racial or ethnic superiority.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Space is given below for your answers.

- 1) State the relationship between Gender and development.

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3.3 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Out of the total population of 1027 million in India (2001 census), 495.7 million (48.3%) are women. During 1991, female population was 48%. Sex ratio was 933 in 2001 as against 927 in 1991. Female literacy rate was 54.2 percent in 2001 as against 29.8 in 1981. Life expectancy of females was at 65.3 years in 2001 as against 54.7 years in 1981. The work participation rate of women increased from 19.7 percent in 1981 to 25.7 percent in 2001. Similarly, maternal mortality rate (per lakh female population) decreased from 468 in 1981 to 407 in 2001. All these indicate that the gender indices, are gradually improving even though the present levels are still unsatisfactory. The Constitution protects the rights of women to develop the status of women in all spheres and empower them, the Government of India formulated a comprehensive National Policy for Women in 2001. Similarly Five Years Plans especially the 10th Plan stressed on social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice.

National Policy

According to UNDP Report 2001, India ranks 105th in Gender Related Development Index (GDI). India's position is below that of Srilanka but is marginally above that of Pakistan.

The approach on women's development changed from viewing women as beneficiaries of social services to contributors to the social and economic development of nations. The development approach has to address not only women's practical needs (immediate needs) but also their strategic gender interests addressing inequalities in employment, political participation and cultural and legal status).

Box 3.2: National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in 2001

- Creating an environment through positive economic and social policies for full development of women to enable them to realize their full potential.
- The *de-jure* and *de-facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by women on an equal basis with men in all spheres-political, economic, social, cultural and civil.
- Equal access to participation and decision making of women in social, political and economic life of the nation.
- Equal access of women to health care, quality education, career and vocational guidance, employment, equal remuneration, occupational health and safety, social security, public office etc. "Women must not be regarded as mere recipients of public support. They are, first and foremost, economic agents".

Women's Development and Tenth Plan Strategy in India

Social empowerment has been a major focus. The planning effort sought to create an enabling environment through various affirmative developmental policies and programmes for development of women besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realise their full potential.

Economic Empowerment measures sought to ensure provision of training, employment and income-generation activities with both 'forward' and 'backward' linkages with the ultimate objective of making all potential women economically independent and self-reliant.

Gender Justice measures sought to eliminate all forms of gender discrimination and thus, allow women to enjoy not only *de-jure* but also the *de-facto* rights and

fundamental freedoms on par with men in all spheres, viz. political, economic, social, civil, cultural etc.

Indian Constitution and Women

- Article 14: Equal rights and opportunities for men and women in political, economic and social spheres.
- Article 15: Prohibits discrimination against any citizen on the ground of sex, religion, caste etc.
- Article 15(3): Empowers the state to make affirmative discrimination in favour of women.
- Article 16: Provides for equality of opportunities in public appointments of all citizens.
- Article 39: Providing equal right to means of livelihood and equal pay for equal work.
- Article 42: Directs the state to ensure just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- Article 51 (A) (e): Mandates every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.

In 1993 the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution were passed to build a political legitimacy for minority women in local governance. The participation of women in politics is a human right and a development goal. When women participate in politics, there are benefits for women, men, children, communities and nations.

Women and Population

Quick Facts: Indian Census 2001

16.7% of world population in 2.4% of world surface area - India	933 females per 1000 males as against 927 in 1991 census
Only 75 males and 54 females literate out of every 100	29 lives added to the population every minute from 24.79 births and 8.88 deaths per 1000
Uttar Pradesh most populated, estimated more than Pakistan's population.	West Bengal most dense by populated and Arunachal Pradesh the least densely populated.

The United Nations "World Population Prospects" released on 24th February, 2005 in New York, estimates that there will be 1,395m people in India by 2025, and 1,593m in 2050. China will be populated by 1,441m by 2025, and 1,392 in 2050. India was the first country to launch a national programme in 1951, emphasizing family planning to the extent necessary for reducing birth rates but it did not show any change due to decline in death rates simultaneously. Women were the major targets of family planning programmes. The more the number of people, the lesser the rates of employment. The lesser the employment, the more the dependence. The more the dependence, the lower the standard of living. The lower the standard of living, the lesser the levels of well-being and happiness. Hence, by any means, rapid growth of population has to be checked, in India.

Women and Ageing

The special features of the elderly population in India are: (a) a majority (80%) of them are in the rural areas, thus making service delivery a challenge, (b)

feminization of the elderly population (51% of the elderly population would be women by the year 2016), (c) increase in the number of the elderly (persons above 80 years) and (d) a large percentage (30%) of the elderly below the poverty line.

Life expectancy of women is longer than men. The implications of longer life of women are manifold. A larger proportion of older women is likely to become widows. In the case of men, many remarry but widow remarriage does not yet have a full societal acceptance in India. Elderly women are more in number in the aged population in comparison with their male counterparts, but old age social security and benefits are fewer for women. This is mainly due to non-availability of old age income security programmes for the workers in the large informal sector and the coverage gap in the formal sector. That is why there are more poor and needy among the female aged widows than among the male aged. They also suffer from more chronic diseases more intensely and also from disabilities. High female life expectancy indicates that the number of old women will be on the rise.

Women and Literacy

Women constitute almost half of the population in the world. But the hegemonic masculine ideology made them suffer a lot as they were denied equal opportunities in different parts of the world. Women's education in India plays a very important role in the overall development of the country. It not only helps in the development of half of the human resources, but in improving the quality of life at home and outside. Educated women not only tend to promote education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover, educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. According to the Census held in 2001, the percentage of female literacy in the country is 54.16%. The literacy rate in the country has increased from 18.33% in 1951 to 65.38% as per 2001 census.

Historically, a variety of factors have been found to be responsible for poor female literate rate such as:

- Gender based inequality;
- Social discrimination and economic exploitation;
- Occupation of girl child in domestic chores;
- Low enrolment of girls in schools; and
- Low retention rate and high drop-out rate

The main strategies adopted by the Government for increasing female literacy in the country include:

- 1) National Literacy Mission for imparting functional literacy
- 2) Universalization of Elementary Education
- 3) Non-Formal Education

At the national level 45.8% of the female population is illiterate as against 12.4% in Kerala. Rajasthan has the highest percentage of illiterate women with 67.2%. The male-female literacy gap has reduced from 24.84% in 1991 to 21.59% in 2001. Mizoram has the smallest gap (3.97%) followed by Kerala (6.52%) and Meghalaya (5.82%). The 2001 Indian Census provisional results demonstrate the continued discrepancy between male and female literacy rates. For example, in Uttar Pradesh 70.23% of men are said to be literate in contrast to only 42.98% of women.

Indian women have high mortality rates, particularly during childhood and in their reproductive years. The health of Indian women is intrinsically linked to their status in society. The women of India are victims of prejudice from birth itself. They are not breastfed for long. For want of a son the women wants to get pregnant as soon as possible which decreases the caring period for the girl child whereas the male members get adequate care and nutrition. There is a strong son preference in India, as sons are expected to care for parents as they age. This son preference, along with high dowry costs for daughters, sometimes results in the mistreatment of daughters. Only a very limited number of Indian women have the opportunity to choose whether or when to have a child. Women, particularly women in rural areas, do not have access to safe and self-controlled methods of contraception. The public health system emphasizes permanent methods like sterilization, or long-term methods like IUDs that do not need follow-up and are thus felt to be more 'fool-proof' than other spacing methods. In fact, sterilization accounts for more than 75% of total contraception, with female sterilization accounting for almost 95% of all sterilizations (Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in India, 2001).

In changing society, women have to play multiple roles from child bearing and rearing, income earning to active partnership in development and governance. In India, mortality rate among females is greater than males at all stages especially in the age group 15-35 years. Generally in India, women are the one who eat last and least in the whole family. So they eat whatever is left after men folk are satiated. As a result most of the times their food intake does not contain the nutritive value required in maintaining a healthy body. This nutritional deficiency has two major consequences for women. First they become anaemic and second they never achieve their full growth, which leads to an unending cycle of poor growth as malnourished women cannot give birth to a healthy baby. Malnutrition results in poor health of women. Women are not given the right to free movement. This means that they cannot go anywhere on their own and they have to take the permission of male members of the family or have to take them along. This results in a decrease in women's visits to the doctor and she could not pay attention to her health as a result.

Women and Violence

Violence against women and the girl child, both at home and at the work place, has been showing an alarming trend in the country. Data from State Crime Bureau shows that the total number of crimes committed against women has increased from 1.13 lakhs in 1997 to 1.44 lakhs in 2001 at the national level. Amongst the states Uttar Pradesh reports the highest with 14.1 percent of total crimes, followed by Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh with 11.5% and 10.1% respectively. There is increasing evidence to show that all women, regardless of age, class, caste, and community are vulnerable to domestic violence - marriage, a joint family, education, economic security and social status do not provide any real protection. According to Visaria (2000), younger, lower caste, and less educated women in India are at greater risk of experiencing domestic violence.

Every five Minutes, a violent crime against a woman is reported. In certain societies, violence, such as wife beating, is perceived as "normal" or as a husband's right. However, violence against women is detrimental to economic development because it deprives women of the ability to participate fully in the economy by depleting both their emotional and physical strength. Violence against women also can have negative consequences for the children of the victims. The data that are available show that much of the violence to which women are subjected occurs in the home and/or is carried out by relatives. For instance, the majority of reported rapes are

committed by family members. Many of the victims are young women; 30 percent of all reported rapes happened to girls who were age 16 or younger. In the past few years, there has been an increase in the reported incidence of torture - cruelty by the husband and the husband's relatives.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Space is given below for your answers.

- 1) List the provisions for women in the Indian constitution.

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- 2) State the factors responsible for poor female literate rate in India.

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- 3) What are the inter-linkages between gender and health issues in India?

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3.4 GENDER, POVERTY AND BUDGETING

Six out of ten of the world's poorest people are women who must, as the primary family caretakers and producers of food, shoulder the burden of tilling land, grinding grain, carrying water and cooking. This is no easy burden. In Kenya, women can burn up to 85 percent of their daily calorie intake just fetching water.

Yet some 75 percent of the world's women cannot get bank loans because they have unpaid or insecure jobs and are not entitled to property ownership. This is one reason why women comprise more than 50 percent of the world's population but own only one percent of the world's wealth.

Equality between men and women is more than a matter of social justice - it's a fundamental human right. But gender equality also makes good economic sense. When women have equal access to education, and go on to participate fully in business and economic decision-making, they are a key driving force against poverty. Women with equal rights are better educated, healthier, and have greater access to land, jobs and financial resources. Their increased earning power, in turn, raises household incomes. By enhancing women's control over decision-making in the household, gender equality also translates into better prospects and greater well-being of children, reducing poverty of future generations.

Gender equality and women's empowerment is central to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet, while there are some positive trends in gender

equality, there are still many areas of concern. Girls account for the majority of children not attending school; almost two-thirds of women in the developing world work in the informal sector or as unpaid workers in the home. Despite greater parliamentary participation, women are still out numbered four-to-one in legislatures around the world.

Gender equality is a condition for inclusive, democratic, violence-free and sustainable development.

Gender Budgeting

Gender budgeting is an application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It means a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. Gender budgeting should be a priority, since budgets are important as policy and planning instruments for governments.

Australia was the first country to develop a gender-sensitive budget, with the Federal government publishing in 1984 the first comprehensive audit of a government budget for its impact on women and girls. The gender budgeting initiative in India started in July 2000 when a Workshop on 'Engendering National Budgets in the South Asia Region' was held in New Delhi in collaboration with the UNIFEM, in which Government representatives, UN agencies, media, NGOs, research institutions, civil society and members of the Planning Commission in the South Asia region participated. In India, gender perspectives on public expenditure had been gaining ground since the publication of the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India in 1974. The Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97) highlighted for the first time the need to ensure a definite flow of funds from the general developmental sectors to women. The Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002), while reaffirming the earlier commitment adopted the Women's Component Plan as one of the major strategies and directed both the Central and the State Governments to ensure "not less than 30 per cent of the funds/benefits are earmarked in all the women's related sectors". It also directed that a special vigil be kept on the flow of the earmarked funds/benefits through an effective mechanism to ensure that the proposed strategy brings forth a holistic approach towards empowering women.

India has accepted the need for gender sensitivity in plans and has highlighted this aspect in the Tenth Five Year Plan 2002-07. Women's participation rate has increased every year in the Gram Sabhas. The quality of women's component plan has improved over the last few years. Decentralization has provided wider opportunities for the women to discover their potential, and provided scope for interaction. The transformative process has to go further. However, the spectacular change in welfare, efficiency, mobility and self-confidence of the women at grassroot level cannot be overlooked.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Space is given below for your answers.

1) How are gender and poverty related?

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2) What are the objectives of gender budgeting?

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3.5 LET US SUM UP

Gender equality and women’s empowerment are human rights that lie at the heart of development and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

There are two ways in which gender equality concerns can be mainstreamed. *Integration* aims to ensure that women’s concerns are integrated in the analysis of obstacles to development, and that these concerns inform the formulation of policy, programmes, and projects. Specific targets are set for outcomes, and the monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes must capture the progress made in the achievement of gender equality. In contrast, the *transformation* approach aims to move beyond integrating women’s concerns relating to the demands of their daily lives, to focus on improving women’s position (status), and thereby transforming the agenda.

Despite the progress that has been made, six out of ten of the world’s poorest people are still women and girls. Less than 16 percent of the world’s parliamentarians are women, two thirds of all children shut outside the school gates are girls and, both in times of armed conflict and behind closed doors at home, women are still systematically subjected to violence.

Fifty years after the adoption of the Constitution, people are curious about the extent to which the Constitutional commitment to equality and freedom for women has been implemented. India has been one of the foremost leaders in ratifying the UN Conventions and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action. In the last few years, as an outcome of affirmative policies and programmes, women’s position in Indian society has advanced. However, insidious gender-based gaps persist within Indian culture. The status of women falls short of standards put forth by the Indian government and its Constitution. India’s diversity is evident especially when examining the variation in health statistics across the country. For instance, the average life expectancy for women in Kerala is reported to be 75 years of age as compared to 57 in Madhya Pradesh. Life expectancy is determined by multiple factors - some of which include: level of income, access to education (literacy) and health care, urban vs. rural environment, nutritional status, prevalence of disease, issues of human rights, relational dynamics, workplace issues, gender-based violence, and decision-making abilities. Mother’s education, according to the NFHS, is highly correlated with the level of malnutrition among children. Children of illiterate mothers are twice as likely to be undernourished or stunted as children whose mothers have completed at least high school. The differentials are even larger when severely undernourished children are considered. Children of illiterate mothers are three times as likely to be severely undernourished as children of mothers with at least a high school education.

As UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has stated, “Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance.”

This recognition is currently missing in India. Transforming the prevailing social discrimination against women must become the top priority, and must happen concurrently with increased direct action to rapidly improve the social and economic status of women. In this way, a synergy of progress can be achieved. As women receive greater education and training, they will earn more money.

As women earn more money - as has been repeatedly shown - they spend it in the further education and health of their children, as opposed to men, who often spend it on drink, tobacco or other women. As women rise in economic status, they will gain greater social standing in the household and the village, and will have greater voice. As women gain influence and consciousness, they will make stronger claims to their entitlements - gaining further training, better access to credit and higher incomes - and command attention of police and courts when attacked. As women's economic power grows, it will be easier to overcome the tradition of "son preference" and thus put an end to the evil of dowry. As son preference declines and acceptance of violence declines, families will be more likely to educate their daughters, and age of marriage will rise. For every year beyond 4th grade that girls go to school, family size shrinks 20%, child deaths drop 10% and wages rise 20%. As women are better nourished and marry later, they will be healthier, more productive, and will give birth to healthier babies. Only through action to remedy discrimination against women can the vision of India's independence - an India where all people have the chance to live healthy and productive lives - be realized.

"Empowering women is vital for achieving development goals overall, and for boosting economic growth and sustainable development," said UNDP Administrator Helen Clark.

3.6 KEY WORDS

- Gender** : "Gender" refer to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.
- Development** : Progression from a simpler or lower to a more advanced stage, gradual advancement or growth through a series of progressive changes.
- Egalitarianism** : Egalitarianism (derived from the French word *égal*, meaning "equal") has two distinct definitions in modern English. It is defined either as a political doctrine that holds that all people should be treated as equals and have the same political, economic, social, and civil rights or as a social philosophy advocating the removal of economic inequalities among people.
- Millennium Development Goals** : The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that all 192 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. They include reducing extreme poverty, reducing child and maternal mortality rates, promoting gender equality

and women's empowerment, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development

Gender mainstreaming : It is the (re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making.

Integration : This approach aims to ensure that women's concerns are integrated in the analysis of obstacles to development, and that these concerns inform the formulation of policy, programmes and projects. For example, an agricultural development project might focus on ensuring that women involved in farming have equal access to technology and information

Transformation : This approach aims to move beyond integrating women's concerns relating to the demands of their daily lives, to focus on improving women's position (status), and thereby transforming the agenda. For example, if the key issue facing women in agriculture is lack of independent land rights, this approach would move far beyond ensuring that women have equal access to technology and information, to advocating for changes in inheritance practices and land ownership.

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