

UNIT 17: GENDER AND THE PROCESS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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17.1 INTRODUCTION

Investing in women is central to sustainable development. World-wide experience shows that supporting a stronger role for women contributes to higher economic growth, improves child survival and overall family health, reduces fertility and helps in slowing down the population growth rates. Investing in women with respect to education, health, family planning, access to land, etc. not only directly reduces poverty, but also leads to higher productivity and a more efficient use of resources. Yet, despite these known returns, women face many barriers in contributing to and benefiting from development.

Women represent almost fifty percent of the world population but constitute the most neglected and the poor segments. Women are poorer than men mostly because they are deprived of equal rights and opportunities, lack the access to the financial and economic resources and are denied a respectable social status. In addition to their income-generating activities, women's household duties include caring for the children, the sick and elderly, house maintenance, preparing food, and fetching firewood and water. The need to balance home and market responsibilities is a major constraint on women's earnings, productivity, and human capital accumulation. Because of women's more limited access to education and other opportunities, their productivity relative to their potential and to men's productivity remains low. Women also often lack access to family planning services, which in

combination with low education, results in high maternal mortality rates. Lack of access to credit for female entrepreneurs limits the profitability and growth of their enterprises. Also collateral requirements play an important role, as female rights to property are often more restricted than those enjoyed by men. So, the gender-related issues remain central to the development debate and the poverty reduction strategies.

Improving women's productivity can contribute to economic growth, efficiency, and poverty reduction. In spite of these payoffs, the gender gap remains substantial in many countries. Girls' school enrolment rates lag behind those of boys. Women's life expectancies are often lower than men's due to discrimination in food intake, despite natural advantages at birth. As a result, women are at a disadvantage in the labour market, giving rise to a vicious cycle of low earnings and low investment in schooling.

This Unit gives a historical view of the declining status of women in rural communities, in the household, at the workplace, and in the urban modern sector in the process of development. It also discusses the priority areas like education, health, wage employment, financial services etc. in which action is needed and suggests ways in which active involvement, leadership and commitment of the government can help in reducing gender disparities.

17.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to

- analyze the declining status of women in the process of development;
- describe the gender aspects in economic structure;
- discuss the priority areas where action is needed; and

- explain the ways by which active involvement, leadership and commitment of the government can be translated into tangible progress.

17.3 DECLINING STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

A historical view presented by E. Boserup will make it clear that women were not always in disadvantageous positions. How they reached the position which is inferior to that of men has been a long process. During different stages of economic development their status deteriorated laying the genesis of women's subordination – those stages are discussed in the following sub-sections:

17.3.1 In rural communities: In the initial stages of development two broad groups relating to position of women in farming systems may be identified: The first type is found in regions like Africa where shifting cultivation predominates and the major part of agricultural work is done by women. In such communities, a high incidence of polygamy is found, and bride wealth is paid by the future husband or his family. The women are hard working and have only a limited right of support from their husbands, but they often enjoy considerable freedom of movement and some economic independence through the sale of their own crops. This system changed when under the colonial rule, European administration transferred the land from women to men in South Africa. They denied the right to each wife of a polygamist to have her own plot and introduced the rule of 'one man one plot'. As a result, the wives not only had to cultivate in common the land belonging to their husbands but lost it to male heirs after his death.

African women always protested the deterioration in their position. The transfer of rights from women to men was often felt to be an injustice committed by the Europeans. People wanted to restore to women the rights they had to land in the old society. But all attempts to bring about the change failed to persuade an inflexible bureaucracy which was not responsive to the people.

The second group is found at places like India where plough cultivation predominates and where women do less agricultural work than men. In such communities we may expect to find that only a tiny minority of marriages are polygamous; that a dowry is usually paid by the girls' family; that a wife is entirely dependent upon her husband for economic support; and that the husband has an obligation to support his wife and children, at least as long as the marriage is in force. In the second group, the casual workers, both male and female are hired by the land owners to help them in cultivation. The social gap between cultivators and agricultural labourers is always wide. This is particularly so where female agricultural workers of a low caste or tribal group work for male farmers belonging to communities with non-working women living in seclusion. Here the three statuses of differences – social class, ethnic group and sex culminate in the creation of a wide gulf between employer and the employee. This intricate social and sex pattern is found the world over. In South India many communities have female farming traditions. Hence, female participation rate as casual workers in farming are much higher in central and south India than in north India and Pakistan. The prejudice against women's work in the field in the northern regions seems to be an important cause of the region's poverty.

17.3.2 Cheap labour for export sector: In Asia and in many parts of Africa, a large proportion of the cash crops were produced in plantations established in colonial times making use of cheap labour for the export sector. Recruitment policy for these plantations differed widely from region to region. In some cases only men were employed, in other cases

the whole family. In Sri Lanka, Vietnam and India, women account for over 50% of the labour force in plantations. But, in many parts of Africa, employment in plantations was reserved for men. Women remained back home for doing the family farming for the food crops alone. Thus, the African women contributed little to production of cash crops which was produced mainly for exports. These striking contrasts in the use of female labour in Asia and in Africa depend on what factors make labour costs for the export sector the lowest feasible in the given local circumstances. Thus in Asian as well as in African cases the plantation could avoid paying the male wages sufficient to support a whole family. Both these ways of holding down the labour costs in the export sector are at the expense of the women. The women at the Asian plantation had a double job, as housewife and as full-time labourer. The African women also did double the amount of work at family farms when most of the younger men were away working in plantation or mines.

17.3.3 Low payment to contract workers: Many of the women who take on casual agricultural labour were also prepared to accept other kinds of manual, unskilled employment as the female coolie, that happen to be available in the rural areas where they live. Everywhere we find such female general labourers, who work alone or in a group recruited and supervised by contractors. They often move from district to district in response to the shifting demand for labour for transplanting, harvesting, road work and other construction, and work in mines and transport. Women are preferred to men in these jobs because they are willing to accept lower wages and more often accept unauthorised deductions, false accounts and delayed payments.

17.3.4 Women in household production: In the town in very primitive communities, women usually devote a fairly large part of their time to the production of a variety of goods for household use. At a later stage, some of those goods used in daily life begin to be

exchanged between people within a village or with people in neighbouring villages. If such a centre of home industries appears to have specialized in products which are traditionally produced by women, we may find a very high female participation in them. In many developing countries women form a large part of the home industries' labour force. Since they have no choice they tend to accept very low rates of pay from these industries which can therefore compete successfully with larger industries based upon relatively expensive male labourers. The social restrictions on women's work result in a large supply of women for the few types of work they can do without opposition. As a result, earnings in such activities are small. For example, Indian artisans belong to low castes where it is normal for women to work. Some tribal areas of India such as in Manipur have home industries completely dominated by women.

17.3.5 Women and factory production: But when large industries were being established, women drop-out from industry for various reasons. Most employers prefer male labour because in many developing countries the principle of paying equal wage to men and women doing identical jobs is adopted. If in addition, women get special benefits such as maternity leave, crèches for their children, the right for exemption from night work and underground work in mines, etc. the result might be to make it more profitable to employ men workers. Application of these principles leads to preferential recruitment of male labour in industry and only those jobs for which no men care to apply are given to women.

Demand side alone is not responsible for the low rates of women employment in industry. Often the women themselves tend to prefer work in home industries or in service trades rather than in wage employment in large-scale industry. More flexible working hours are a great advantage for married women with small children. Besides, it is possible to obtain part-time employment in home industries but impossible in larger industries with a more rigorous rhythm of work.

In many developing countries, employment in home industry is preferred because it does not entail contact with men outside the women's own families. These advantages are frequently mentioned not only in Arab countries and in India but also in Latin American and African countries. This type of polarised division of labour creates a wide gap in productivity and income between men and women within the same sector, lowering the position of women in relation to that of men. The gap between the productivity and earnings of men and women is further widened because those few women who are employed in modern industry are mostly doing unskilled jobs.

17.3.6 Women in the urban modern sector: The inferior position of women in the urban

hierarchy is exacerbated by the strong preference for recruiting men to the clerical and administrative jobs. If women are hired at all in the modern sector, it is usually for the unskilled, low-wage jobs. Thus the roles assigned to men and women, even in the modern sector, indicates a widening difference between the productivity and earnings of each. One characteristic feature of labour markets in developing countries is the wide gap between the wages of highly trained and skilled workers and that of unskilled workers. The presence of this gap is to the disadvantage of women in industry since they belong overwhelmingly to the group of unskilled workers.

When a country is moving from a primitive to a more advanced stage of economic evolution, bazaar and service occupations play the peculiar role of an intermediate step between agriculture and the modern occupations. Thus, two successive steps in economic development can be seen; in the first step, subsistence activities for family use are replaced by commercial production for sale and small-scale market trade and services. In the

second step, this type of activity is replaced by employment in modern factories, offices, modern shops and modern service industries.

With economic development comes a proportional increase in the total labour force employed in the modern sector, while the employment in agriculture and in some of the market and service occupations declines. This structural shift in the economy may have the effect of reducing women's share in the total labour force, because they may fail to find employment in the modern sector sufficiently rapidly to compensate for the relative or absolute decline of those sectors which employ a high proportion of women. When economic development induces a large number of men to change from agriculture, bazaar and service employment to modern sector employment, the accompanying movement of families from rural to urban areas may cut their wives off from employment in agriculture or bazaar or service occupations without giving them enough opportunity for employment in the still small modern sector, mostly staffed by men. In such cases, the overall percentage of economically active women will decline as a result of the structural change in the economy.

17.3.7 Vicious cycle of low qualification and low employment of women in modern

sector: Low rates of work participation for women tend to depress urban family incomes in many developing families. Some economists from developing countries have pointed to the need for higher urban work participation rates for women, from the point of view of both economic and social development. But the opposite view is far more widespread: it is argued that the advantage some families gain from more employment of women would be offset by a corresponding loss for other families whose bread winner would lose his job if more women were given employment. Once this premise is accepted that in the first instance only men can contribute to economic

development, it seems illogical not to give them priority for higher education during that period.

In most of the developing countries, including India, women's way to employment in the modern sector is barred by their lack of proper qualifications. Apart from the major exception of commercial schools for girls in Latin America, very few opportunities for training girls exist in developing countries. It reflects that in most of the developing countries qualification gap between male and female labour is becoming wider.

As a result of the deteriorating status of women in the process of economic development over the past few decades, gender issues have increasingly gained prominence on the development agenda. More attention is being given to the plight of poor and disadvantaged women in developing countries, and to the unfinished gender agenda in more developed countries. Recognizing the importance of ensuring equal opportunities for females and males on grounds of both fairness and efficiency and as an instrument for achieving poverty reduction and economic growth, the international development community has included gender equality among the Millennium Development Goals.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

- Note:** i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.
ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this Unit.

1. What are the different stages of economic development through which the status of women deteriorated?

17.4 GENDER ASPECTS IN ECONOMIC STRUCTURE:

Keeping the above historical view in mind, there are four ways to capture gender aspects in an economic structure:

17.4.1 Making visible the unpaid care economy

In this framework the economy can be subdivided into a 'commodity economy' where output is sold in markets and a 'care economy' where output is not sold in markets, but remains in families or communities. The commodity economy is included in the System of National Accounts, whereas the care economy is not. As most of the work of women takes place in the care economy, this makes a large part of female work invisible. This does not mean that output from the care economy cannot be measured either in time or in money, only that it will take large efforts to do so.

17.4.2 Gender in economic decision making

The main characteristic of economic development is the progress towards an increasingly intricate pattern of labour specialization. On various decision-making levels, gender imbalances can be distinguished in communities even at the earliest stage of development. At the most primitive stage of family self-sufficiency, there is some division of labour within the family. In a household shared by male and female partners, men bring the food and women prepare it. This is the basic common picture all over the world. At the macro-level, economic policy-making is usually a male domain. At the meso level, men may monopolize leadership roles, leaving

support activities to women. At the micro-level, there may be conflicts between men and women within households. This must be taken care off.

17.4.3 Gender-based distortions

Discrimination of women may take various forms. In labour markets lower wages are paid to women as a result of underestimating women's productivity. In credit markets higher interest rates are charged as a result of overestimating the risks (underestimating the returns) of lending to women. As much of women's work is unpaid, its price (or opportunity cost) appears to be zero. Hence, there is discrimination due to lack of markets, both those for output in the care economy and the commodity economy. Gender-based price distortions lead to false economics. Economic policy-makers aiming to improve overall economic efficiency should be aware that the real costs of women's work (paid and unpaid) are often not visible.

17.4.4 Gender based institutional biases

Institutional biases occur when institutions-such as schools, hospitals, government offices malfunction by operating in ways which maximize the benefits of certain interest groups, often groups which control these institutions. For instance, male-biased norms in allocation of jobs may maximize the gains to male employees, but do not maximize the contribution of the organization to society as a whole, because they result in a waste of women's skills. In general, male-biased norms in the allocation of public expenditure result in reproducing rather than diminishing gender inequality. Patterns of public expenditure like these do not have to be deliberately planned to be male-biased, but they typically result from male-biased norms about priorities and procedures. In many markets the norms about how to do business, about with whom it is appropriate to negotiate, to exchange

information, and to conclude contracts, result in the exclusion or marginalization of women.

The above-mentioned distortions and biases result in a relative overutilization of women's time. Women's working days are much longer than men's. In all the developing countries and in most of the industrialized countries, often men apply modern scientific methods in cultivation of cash crops while women continue to cultivate food crops by traditional methods. Even in the course of agricultural development, men's labour productivity tends to increase while women's remains more or less static. As a result, relative status of women within agriculture declines which forces them either to abandon agriculture or to retire to domestic life. The reason is that usually it is with men who learn to operate the new types of equipment while women continue to work with the old hand tools. Thus, men monopolize the use of new equipment and modern methods. By their discriminatory policies in education and training the Europeans created a productivity gap between male and female farmers. Such a development has the unavoidable effect of enhancing the prestige of men and of lowering the status of women. It is the men who do the modern things and women represent the old drudgery. Thus, the change from traditional to modern methods of production in any sector tends to enhance men's prestige at the expense of women's by widening the gap in their levels of knowledge and training.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

Note: i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.

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

1. What are the different ways to capture gender aspects in an economic structure?

THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY	THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

17.5 PRIORITY AREAS

According to a World Bank (1994) study, comparison of country-specific evidence suggests that there are five priority areas where action is needed: education, health care, wage labour, agriculture, and financial services. While many other policy options are available, these five have been chosen because they provide the foundation on which other policies can build. Public policies in these fields should work in order to compensate for market failures. Investing proportionately more in women than in men, in the above mentioned areas, should be an important part of development strategy, as well as an act of social justice. It directly reduces poverty through substantial economic and social pay offs; it leads to higher productivity and more efficient use of resources. It contributes to environmentally sustainable development. It produces significant social gains – lower fertility, better household nutrition, and reduced infant, child and maternal mortality. The inter-generational gains of mother's education are particularly striking. Gender inequalities in access to education and health services and in access to productive assets, markets and employment affect power relations between women and men, starting with their relative ability to influence decisions within their households. These inequalities imply unequal capacity to take advantage of economic and other opportunities and to participate fully in public policy debates and formulation. In particular, access to these facilities increase women's ability or power to make choices about their lives and to exercise those choices. They also address the need for leveling the field of

opportunities for men and women as defined by the rights given to them in a country's legal and regulatory framework, and removing the basic barriers to participation of women in the domains defined by the household, markets and civil society.

In spite of the payoffs, the gender gap in most of the above mentioned key areas is substantial in many countries. This inequality is not only an issue of gender inequity that demands rectification, but also an issue of efficiency in terms of lowering the development opportunities of the countries involved. Some effective strategies to reduce these gaps and barriers are given in the following discussion.

17.5.1 Education:

While there has been considerable progress in reducing the gender gap in schooling enrollments and achievements across the developing world, significant gender gaps remain in particular regions and at particular levels of education. Specifically, in parts of South Asia (most notably Northern India and Pakistan) and many poorer countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (especially in West Africa), there remain large gender gaps in attainment of education. In India literacy percentage for female is much lower than that of men (table-17.1).

Table-17.1: Literacy rate in India

Year	Female	Male	Total
1981	29.5	56.5	43.7
1991	39.3	64.1	52.2
2001	52.1	75.8	65.4

Source: Census of India, 2001

In a larger group of countries across the developing world, there are sizeable gender gaps in educational attainment. The main reasons behind this can be the expenditure required for educating the children even when the government pays for much of it. In case of girls parents not only bear the direct costs for school fees, books and clothing but they also bear the opportunity cost because girls are not available for looking after their younger siblings, for household chores and for wage earning as child labour when they go to school. A poor family cannot afford to forego such help.

Private returns for investment in education and health are more or less the same for men and women. Social returns, however, are much higher for women than for men.

This is because of the strong correlation between women's education, health, nutritional status, and fertility levels on the one hand and productivity of future generations on the other hand. Table 17.2 reveals that fertility has a strong correlation with the educational level of the mothers in India.

Table 17.2: Educational Level and Total Fertility Rate

Sr. No.	Educational Level	Total number of children born per woman (Age group 15-49 years) (2001)
1	Illiterate	4.2
2	Literate below middle	3.7
3	Middle but below matriculation	3.3
4	Matriculate but below graduate	2.7
5	Graduate and above	2.1

All educational levels	3.8
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Source: Census of India-2001; Fertility Tables

The table 17.2 indicates that as the educational levels of women increase, their fertility rate decreases. Still, in many countries, girls' school enrollment rates lag much behind those of boys. Dropout rates are higher for girls than for boys. Parents in developing countries are less interested in sending their daughters to schools than their sons because returns from daughter's education are uncertain and remote. According to the World Bank (1994) Study, strategies for expanding girls' enrollment include reserving places for girls, establishing single-sex schools and classrooms, recruiting more female teachers and designing school facilities to conform to the cultural standards of the community. In Kerala, which has the highest literacy percentage and enrollment rates in India, more than 60% of teachers are women compared with less than 20% in the states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, which have the lowest female enrollment rates. The push to achieve universal primary education with gender-informed education policies has yielded higher girls' enrollments at all levels of schooling, and several countries have achieved gender parity in primary enrollments. This progress is quite remarkable and shows the responsiveness of households to policy interventions such as more community schools, lifting of user fees, stipends, conditional cash transfers, and vouchers targeted at girls. More schooling for girls today will confer long-term benefits in terms of their health and employment, as well as to their children's well-being in the future. At the same time, perhaps for this and other reasons, there is a positive association between female education and measures of aggregate economic growth.

17.5.2 Health

Girls are often less cared for and more undernourished than boys, as reflected in low ratio of females to males in the population. A disturbing revelation of the Indian Census statistics is decline in ratio of females per thousand males as shown in Table 17.3. Preference for sons has been widespread in India which is probably the most important cause of existing sex composition. "Many studies have shown that

Table 17.3: Number of Females per Thousand Males (Sex ratio)

Year	Females Per Thousand Males
1901	972
1911	964
1921	955
1931	950
1941	945
1951	946
1961	941
1971	930
1981	934
1991	927
2001	933

Source: Census of India, 2001

behavioural factors, including care seeking practices operate against young female children.” Besides, there is strong evidence of sex-selective abortions in some parts of the country.

In many countries of South Asia and Africa, discrimination in food intake and health care means that women’s natural health advantage at birth is quickly eroded resulting in lower life expectancies for women than men. But as a result of greater care of women due to change in our attitude towards them along with their natural advantage at birth of better survival has resulted in higher life expectancy of the female population in developing countries (Table 17. 4).

Table 17.4: Life Expectancy at Birth (in years) 2005-06

Countries	Female	Male
India	66.9	63.9
China	74.2	70.6
Bangladesh	64.3	63.3
Pakistan	64.3	64.0
Sri Lanka	77.5	72.2

Source: State of world Population-2006

Besides, a significant decline in infant mortality has also contributed to increased life expectancy. For improving these conditions, integrated services, which combine nutrition, family planning, maternal and child health services, and primary health care, tend to be most effective in reaching women.

17.5.3 Wage labour:

Low investment in women's education and health, places women at a considerable disadvantage relative to men in the formal labour market. This is reflected in low work participation rate of women in India as given in Table 17.5. The table reveals gender bias in employment. As per the World Bank (1994) study, the principal strategies for increasing women's participation in the formal labour force include removing legal and regulatory barriers, raising women's productivity, easing the constraints on their time and improving the efficiency of the labour market providing information on job opportunities. Legal reforms, education and training, improved access to information and affordable childcare is the key for enhancing women's participation in formal labour markets.

Table 17.5: Workforce Participation Rate in India

Year	Female	Male	Total
1981	19.7	52.6	36.7
1991	22.7	51.6	37.7
2001	25.7	51.9	39.2

Source: Census of India 2001

17.5.4 Agricultural and natural resource management:

As most of the poor rural women work in agriculture, the main strategy to help should be to allow them rights to the land they cultivate and open the doors to the extension services and government assistance. Environmental degradation increases women's burden. The direct and indirect costs of environmental damage for women need

to be assessed and included in natural resource management projects and policies. Promoting women's ownership and control of land, trees and other forest resources, and developing appropriate technologies to reduce time women spend in collecting water and fuel can contribute to environmental sustainability.

17.5.5 Financial services:

Innovative programmes have demonstrated that financial services, mainly credit and savings, can be provided to poor women at competitive costs. This improves women's ability to earn income as needed or desired and thus reduce their financial vulnerability. Group lending has broken down the barriers of high transaction costs, high perceived risks of default and lack of collateral. A significant number of women are employed in the informal sector, but most lack access to formal credit markets. Formal sector commercial banks focus on lending to larger business, while microfinance institutions (MFIs) cater to the informal sector and to women in particular. Group-based lending allows members to choose a group of peers with whom to join the programme, so that each borrower is responsible not only for her own loan, but also for the loans of the other group members. If any one group member defaults, all members become ineligible for further loans. Thus, collateral is replaced by group pressure in ensuring repayment. Microfinance is increasingly viewed as an important tool for alleviating poverty.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

- Note:** i. Use the space given below to answer the questions.
ii. Compare your answer with the one given at the end of this unit.

1. What are the key areas where action is needed to reduce the gender gaps?

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17.6 SUMMING UP

Public policy can significantly enhance women's participation in economic development. In some instances, the contribution may consist largely of training and supporting the activities of non-governmental agencies, communities and parents. In others, it may take the form of changing the legal and institutional frameworks. The tangible progress depends on the active involvement, leadership and commitment of governments in following ways:

1. By strengthening the database for gender analysis:

In all the countries, public agencies are responsible for collecting and publishing the data used to monitor progress towards economic and social objectives. In the absence of such information the ability of the government to identify areas of concern and to design appropriate remedial measures and to monitor progress becomes weak. Therefore, it is essential for the government to ensure that socio-economic data are recorded separately for men and women. Similarly, information on the outcome of development programmes should be gender-specific so that the effectiveness of intervention can be assessed.

2. By developing gender-sensitive policies and programmes:

The governments should identify gender issues through public expenditure reviews to poverty assessments, analytical reports on gender issues and sector reports like education, health and agriculture etc. The objective of all this should be

to develop a clear understanding of the current status of women's access to services and productive assets, the current policies affecting access.

3. By modifying the legal and regulatory framework:

Governments have the capacity to remove barriers to women's control over productive assets and resources by modifying legal and regulatory frameworks.

Allowing women to own land can improve their access to inputs and credit that raise their productivity. Removing legal barriers can open segments of formal labour markets once closed to women. In many countries, the constitutional provisions for the equality of the sexes already exist. However, the translation of these provisions into reality through changes in legislation and regulations is yet to be made.

4. By ensuring effective programme delivery:

Well-designed policies and programmes are not enough -- they need to be effectively implemented. Governments need to pursue complementary strategies to make sure that the programmes reach the women. Involving women directly in project design can make programme delivery more effective. Working with NGOs can improve programme effectiveness because NGOs can adapt more readily to change in local needs and requirements.

5. By mobilizing resources:

The resource implication of a programme for enhancing women's contribution to economic development in a given country depends on the past investments in human resource development. The countries where these investments have been limited, access and quality of services will be low for men and women. In most such cases programmes and policy changes do not involve additional cost. Resource

implication may actually be greater in countries where investments in human resource development have been substantial but where gender disparities are also large. These countries will face difficult decisions on whether to reallocate resources from one group to another or find additional resources to expand services to the under-served group.

17.6 GLOSSARY

Polygamy: Polygamy is a form of marriage in which a person has more than one spouse at the same time.

Plantation: Plantation is a large farm or estate in a tropical or sub-tropical country where plants are grown for distant markets rather than local consumption.

LEB (Life Expectancy at Birth): LEB indicates the number of years a new-born infant lives if prevailing patterns of mortality at the time of its birth were to stay the same throughout its life. (Source: United Nations Population Division, 2009).

Enrollment Rate: Enrollment rates are expressed as Net Enrollment Rates, which are calculated by dividing a number of students by a particular age group enrolled in all levels of education by the number of people in the population in that age group (Source: OECD)

17.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1:

1. Different stages of declining status of women in the process of economic development are: in rural communities, in export sector, as contract workers, in household production, in factory production, in the urban modern sector and in modern sector.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

1. Different ways to capture gender aspects in economic structure are: making visible the unpaid care economy, promoting women in economic decision making, removing gender-based distortions at work place and reducing gender-based institutional biases.

Check Your Progress Exercise 3:

1. Five priority areas where action is needed to improve the status of women are: education, health, wage labour, agricultural and natural resource management and financial services.

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17.9 QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRACTICE

1. Discuss the declining status of women in the process of economic development.
2. Give a historical review of the status of women in the process of economic development.
3. Explain various ways to capture gender aspects in economic structure.
4. What are the priority areas where action is needed to enhance women's participation in the process of development?
5. Give your suggestions about what policies should be adopted by the government to bring tangible improvement in status of women.