
UNIT 7 WID-WAD-GAD*

*Adopted from Block 2, Unit 6, MGS-001

Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Objectives
- 7.3 Concepts of Development and Underdevelopment
- 7.4 Boserup's Thesis
 - 7.4.1 Critique of Boserup
- 7.5 Emergence of Women in Development (WID) Approach
 - 7.5.1 Welfare Approach
 - 7.5.2 Equity Approach
- 7.6 Three World Conferences on Women
 - 7.6.1 Anti- Poverty Approach
 - 7.6.2 Efficiency Approach
- 7.7 Women and Development (WAD) Approach
 - 7.7.1 Empowerment Approach
 - 7.7.2 The Indian Context
- 7.8 Critique of WID
- 7.9 Gender and Development (GAD) Approach
- 7.10 Fourth World Conference on Women
- 7.11 Let us sum Up
- 7.12 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercise
- 7.13 References and Suggested Readings

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Ever since the formation of the United Nations Commission on the Status for Women in 1946, it had been proposing a United Nations (U.N.) Women's Conference with little success. Gradually with pressure from the American Women's Movement, the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly declared 1975 as the International Women's Year and 1975-1985 as the International Decade for Women. This declaration led to a growing awareness of women's issues and accepting their demands as legitimate issues for policymaking, both at the national and international level. The major themes of the International Women's Year and Conference were-- Equality, Development and Peace. Equality, however, had been a dominant issue for the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and it came primarily from the feminist movement of the Western industrialized nations. Increasingly considered peace to be a women's issue by the countries of the Eastern bloc. On the other hand, development was a recent issue put forward mainly by the newly independent "Third World" nations as a key to improving women's lives.

During the decade, the important but previously invisible role of women in the social and economic development of the poorer countries was highlighted. The International Decade for Women (1975-85) signified the new visibility of Women in Development (WID) in international forums.

The WID approach was adopted, pointing to the fact that the policymakers do not recognize women's contribution to development. Women are treated as "beneficiaries" of development, not as active agents of development. Before this, however, brought women into "development" policy on very sex-specific terms. Men were seen as the heads of households and productive agents. Women were seen as housewives, mothers and reproducers. Therefore development efforts targeted the male population, while women were relegated to the marginal welfare sector.

In this Unit, we will trace the emergence of a gender-sensitive development debate. But before we examine the details of the term "Women in Development" and the U.N. Women's Conferences, we need to understand the concept of "development", who defines it and how it is defined within the context of international politics.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Highlight the gender blindness of Development and Underdevelopment;
- Discuss the feminist critiques of development; and
- Analyze the different approaches to WID, WAD and GAD approaches.

7.3 CONCEPTS OF DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT

Till the mid-sixties, modernization theories were used to understand post-colonial societies. Modernization theories perceived development as an evolutionary, unilinear process of change that would change traditional society, through various stages to a state of modernity. It involved a total transformation of traditional societies, their institutions, cultures and behaviour. The crux of these theories was that development involved industrial growth which was autonomous and self-sustaining. This form of development, which had occurred in the west, was assumed to be a role model for the rest of the world to follow. There was a kind of economic determinism involved, as development was measured mainly in terms of growth in GNP, and it was believed that the benefits of economic growth would "trickle-down" to households at the bottom of the income hierarchy. On the whole, modernization theories argued that capitalism played a progressive role in developing traditional and underdeveloped societies.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, there was a growing disillusionment with modernization theories. Its inability to explain the failure of capitalist

development in different parts of the world, particularly Latin America, led to the rise of an alternative theory, namely the underdevelopment theory of dependency theory. The theorists Andre Gunder Frank and Immanuel Wallerstein have contributed immensely to the development and popularization of dependency theory.

Frank was one of the first theorists to analyze the causes for the underdeveloped and dependent status of the Third World countries. He argues that this is because of the exploitative chain of metropolis-satellite or core-periphery relations that exist throughout the world system that affect both the economy and polity of the peripheral countries.

Through a historical analysis of Chile and Brazil, Frank tries to show the exploitative relation between the capitalist world and the national metropolises to the regional centres and so on to large landholders or merchants who appropriate surplus from small peasants or tenants, and sometimes even from the latter to landless labourers exploited by them in turn. At each point, the international, national, and local capitalist system generates economic Development for the few and Underdevelopment. The entire system has a monopolistic structure which involves the misuse and squandering of resources throughout the system. However, this capitalist expansion generates the continuous Development of the metropolises and the continuous Underdevelopment of the satellites. The transfer of surplus from the satellite to the metropolis leads to distorted development in the satellite. Finally it is the imperialist metropolis at the end of the metropolis-satellite chain that appropriates all the resources.

Hence, while there is the continuous development of the metropolises, simultaneously there is continuous underdevelopment of the satellites. Highlighting the political consequences of dependency, Frank argues that the ruling classes have a vested interest in maintaining the exploitative and monopolistic capitalist structure that runs like a chain from the villages to the imperialist metropolis. For Frank, therefore, the only way to break out of the monopolistic capitalist system is to have a worldwide socialist revolution. Like Frank, for Wallerstein too, unequal exchange between the core and the periphery leads to the Development of the former and Underdevelopment of the latter. *The underdevelopment theories have been entirely blind to gender and the contribution of women to economic development. At this time, Ester Boserup, in her book "Women's Role in Economic Development" (1970), was recognized and widely quoted.*

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 do we mean by Underdevelopment?

.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

7.4 BOSERUP'S THESIS

The publication of Ester Boserup's book in 1970, coincided with the growing wave of feminist consciousness in Europe and USA and youth radicalization all over the world. Boserup argues that a change in the density of population results in the change of techniques in farming, which requires a higher labour input resulting in a change in the division of labour between men and women.

She distinguished between two systems of subsistence agriculture. One is characterized by shifting cultivation, done mainly by female farmers, as in Africa. The other, characterized by plough cultivation, done mainly by male farmers as in South Asia. Boserup criticized the "dubious generalization" according to which males were considered to be the providers of food. With her comparative analysis, she pointed out the differences in women's work, emphasizing the important role women played in African agriculture as compared to the lesser role women played in Asian and Latin American countries.

The reasons for such a difference— in Africa were a low density of population, absence of agrarian technologies and shortage of domestic animals for agrarian task. Land was easily accessible and there was less class differentiation. Thus the men were mainly occupied with clearing the land, while the women cultivated subsistence crops.

In her analysis, Boserup points to the existence of a strong correlation between economic conditions and polygamy. In areas of plough cultivation, where there is a small minority of polygamous marriages, the women are totally dependent on their husbands for economic support, and they are valued only as mothers.

Boserup went on to analyze and point out the adverse effects that European colonialism and the capitalist penetration of subsistence economies often had on women. The European colonial rulers were largely responsible for the neglect of the female farming systems of Africa and the resulting loss of status of the African women. They were unsympathetic to the female farming systems that they found in many of their colonies and believed in the superiority of the male farming system. Hence, when they introduced modern technology, cash crops, and so forth, Boserup argues that they trained only the males to the neglect of the female farmers. This benefited the men, enhancing their prestige and lowering that of women. The discriminatory policies followed in education and training created a technical, cultural and

productivity gap between men and women. Women were increasingly relegated to the subsistence sector of food production using the traditional methods of cultivation. The “land reforms introduced by the European administrators” also resulted in the loss of land rights for the women. From being cultivators themselves, women were increasingly marginalized from agriculture and reduced to being “unpaid helpers in the production of crops belonging to their husbands”. Thus, women lost income and status in comparison to men.

Boserup also analyzed the status of women and the sexual divisions of labour that existed in non-agricultural activities, particularly in the urban areas. She divides towns into predominantly female or male towns. Her thesis challenged the commonly held notion that women’s status and their rights automatically improve with modernization. Despite Boserup’s path-breaking contribution to women's development, her work has also led to a great deal of debate and controversy.

7.4.1 Critique of Boserup

One of the earliest critics of Boserup’s thesis, Suellen Huntington, argued that the division of farming systems into male and female, ignored important aspects of male domination which could not be explained only by developments in agricultural technology. Besides this, Huntington pointed out that women may have had an important role in agricultural production in female farming systems. However, it did not mean that they enjoyed equal status or greater power in relation to men. Claims for women’s equality should be argued for on their own merits and not depend on historical evidence that is refutable.

Lourdes Beneria and Gita Sen argued that Boserup’s thesis was “essentially empirical and descriptive” and that it “lacked a clearly defined theoretical framework”. They criticized her for accepting the capitalist model of development as given. Women’s economic marginalization was due to their incorporation into the worldwide capitalist system, which exploited their labour and not because they were excluded from productive labour. Further, they argued that Boserup concentrates on women’s role outside the household and thus ignores women’s role in reproduction and domestic production. Hence, it is argued that Boserup’s analysis lacks a feminist perspective on women’s subordination (For a detailed critique of Boserup’s thesis, see L. Beneria and G. Sen, 1981). Boserup’s thesis, however, justified the efforts to influence government policy and development based on both justice and efficiency. The debate on Boserup’s thesis can be located in a larger debate which can be largely labeled as the "Decolonization of the Mind" or in other words, the issue of development and the politics of knowledge. For the modernization theorists, decolonization had come to mean westernization and the very idea of decolonization assumed a model similar to the child development model. While Carol Gilligan pointed out the implicit male bias in the model, Nandy pointed out the implicit imperialistic

bias in these models of decolonization. Debates on the western model as environmentally destructive and spiritually lacking were in focus. Tariq Banuri has summarized this in his work “Modernization and its Discontents – A Cultural Perspective on the Theories of Development”.

Tariq Banuri points out that to understand the problems of development and progress, one needs to look at the cultural context within which they arose. He argues that modernisation theories are placed in a unique kind of culture, where "the impersonal is superior to the personal". The modernization theories argue that due to this existence of personal relations in traditional societies, development is impeded. The neo-classical economic theory too, Banuri argues, looks upon the individual as separate from the environment.

Banuri suggests that many of the problems in society that seem insoluble are “based in the assumption of a dichotomy and a hierarchy between the impersonal and the personal spheres of culture”. The solution is to supplant the idea of hierarchy with that of a "Tension" or “dialectic” between the two. What is needed is a change in the basic assumption of economic theory that all actions can be reduced to the impersonal sphere and see human actions due to the tension between conflicting obligations and commitments.

The search for an alternative vision thus, begins with the idea of “progress as being the expansion of the awareness of oppression in society”. The existence of a positive relation between impersonality and progress, as claimed by modernization theorists is disqualified. The debate on the meaning of development, it is argued, is highly technocratic and therefore it should be replaced with a “broader social definition”. The oppressed on realization of their oppression, will outline their own priorities and take the required social and political action. The social scientist should take responsibility for the long term consequences of their prescription. The indigenous ways of knowing, based on direct personal relationships, should be strengthened. Decentralization is needed in the polity, economy and society. Finally, however, this alternate vision must differ from place to place according to the cultural characteristics of the place.

However, even in these debates on alternative models, gender is not accorded the status of a structural component. The fact that women had not benefited from the new productive opportunities, new technology and market forces, resulted in doubts over the presumed neutrality of the development agencies. This led to the emergence of the WID critique of development. The WID scholars, however, retained the fundamental premise of the liberal world view. The problem was how to integrate women into development.

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. Whose writings highlighted women’s contribution to economic

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7.5 EMERGENCE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (WID) APPROACH

This section discusses the emergence of Women in Development (WID) approach.

7.5.1 Welfare Approach

Initially, during the First Development Decade 1961-70, there was no mention of women specifically. The **Welfare approach** characterized WID. It was assumed that social and economic development, in general, would bring about the desired changes for women. Women were seen as passive beneficiaries of development with a focus on their reproductive role. However, at this early stage, the emphasis was on equal rights for women rather than economic development.

7.5.2 Equity approach

During the Second Development Decade, 1971-80, the “full integration of women in the total development efforts,” was emphasized. The **Equity approach** aimed at gaining equity for women in the development process. Women were seen as active participants in development. The main goal was to integrate women into the development process more productively. The key route through this could be achieved which was equality of opportunity through education and training. A number of committees within professional associations, new women’s groups and others were formed. They came together on important issues like equal pay for equal work, greater visibility of women within professional organizations, equal rights amendment, and so on. This led to the formation of many women’s pressure groups, especially Women in Development (WID). The advocates of WID pointed out the phenomena that many scholars had observed, particularly in the developing countries, i.e. the adverse impact that development seemed to have on women. The feminization of poverty and the growing number of women-headed households due to the development policies was also highlighted.

With pressure from the American women’s movement, the United Nations declared 1975 as the International Women’s Year and 1975-1985 as the International Women’s Decade. With this, there was a growing awareness of women's issues and accepting their demands as legitimate issues for

policymaking, both at the national and international level. The major themes of the Decade were – Equality, Development and Peace. The U.N. Decade for Women and the international conferences gave impetus to the gender component in development debates.

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. Trace the emergence of the WID approaches.

.....
.....
.....
.....

7.6 THREE WORLD CONFERENCES ON WOMEN

In 1975, the World Conference for the International Women’s Year was held in Mexico City. The Conference highlighted the differences in the needs of women from the

Western industrialized nations and those from the agricultural nations. This frequently led to debates on what embodied “women’s issues”. The equity approach was identified as

“developmental”, but mainly reflected “First world” feminist pre-occupations with equality. The "Second World" delegates were concerned with peace. They argued that capitalism and militarism was responsible for women’s problems. The “Third World” delegates were concerned with development. They argued that development was the key to improving women’s lives. While the women from the underdeveloped nations were concerned mainly with the survival of the family unit, employment opportunities and legal and economic roles of women; those from the developed nations emphasized the symbolic expressions of authority, status, and control over one’s own body, discrimination against women, etc. It also meant the adoption of different strategies for change in the status of women.

Scholars like Ester Boserup, Elise Boulding and others, have noted that often, economic development in the underdeveloped countries leads to structural changes that dislocate women from income-generating occupations, or place a more significant load on women who continue with subsistence agriculture, while men move into mechanized agriculture, grow cash crops or migrate to the cities. It was also pointed out that there are a growing number of female headed-households. It was recommended that these women should also be

given priority for employment on par with men with family responsibilities. Stress was also laid on the fact that peace also could be achieved only by realizing that women, who consisted of half the world 's population, were also human beings with equal rights in civil, political, economic and social fields.

7.6.1 Anti- Poverty Approach

The Equity approach, however, was considered threatening and not popular with governments. It was criticized as Western feminism. Hence there was a shift to the **Anti-Poverty approach**. This approach toned down equality because of criticism. It was more concerned with redistribution along with growth and basic needs. Its purpose was to ensure poor women increase their productivity, since women's poverty was seen as a problem of under development, not their subordination. However this approach isolated poor women as a separate category with a tendency to recognize only their productive role. It was more popular among the NGOs and developed at a small scale.

7.6.2 Efficiency Approach

With the UN Mid-decade Conference on Women held at Copenhagen in 1980, the concept of WID had shifted from the equity to **efficiency approach** and was articulated in economic terms. The Conference was dominated by debates on trade, development and politics. There were heated debates over the Palestinian issue, the effects of apartheid on women in South Africa, and women refugees worldwide. Despite the highly publicized arguments, women from different parts of the world endeavoured to understand one another and create a more congruent perspective. At this Conference, it was recognized that women were both participants and victims in political struggles.

In her review of the Copenhagen conference, Irene Tinker asked, "How do you take one tune and encourage variation while eliciting orchestral support?" The response and comments to it by several scholars showed that many people were looking at various women's issues that had not been mentioned, recognized or clarified before the decade began. One of the main functions of the Mexico City and Copenhagen conference was consciousness-raising.

The emergence of the efficiency approach in this period should be seen in a declining world economy and accompanying stabilization and adjustment policies. With serious cuts in welfare spending, the focus on efficient development meant that women became crucial actors in the development scenario. It recognized women's resilience and ability to adjust to crisis. In the formal sector, women are prepared to work for longer hours for less pay. They are usually hired later and fired earlier. Given these disadvantages in the formal sector, women are willing to accept worse conditions than men in the informal sector. All these qualities attracted development planners to

focus their programmes on women.

These approaches recognize that women play a significant economic role both within and outside the families. The efficiency approach focused on credit for women, supplementary income-generating projects, micro-enterprise for women, etc. It focused only on the economic aspects of women in development, and it was designed to suit the interests of more prominent agents of development rather than the women themselves. This approach is still the most popular WID approach for many national governments, state machinery for women and aid agencies, and NGOs. They are keen to maintain the status quo in the name of economic development without questioning the underlying power relations in the communities in which they work.

At the third and final Conference of the international decade for women at Nairobi, the various dimensions of women's needs came up. It was at this Conference that the needs of the "Third World" women gained recognition and were highlighted. The main concerns of women living in subsistence societies were environmental issues, forest and water management methods, sustainable agriculture, etc. These issues were combined with environmental issues on a world scale. The demands of "Third World" countries for techniques to limit the drudgery of everyday work were also put forward. Divisive and political issues such as the debt crises and its effects on countries of the "Third World", the issue of apartheid in South Africa were debated upon. There was growing recognition that one-third of the world's families were women-headed. The women worked to support their families and were also charged with bringing up the children.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

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. List the first three international women's conferences.

.....
.....
.....
.....

7.7 WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT (WAD) APPROACH

The Women and Development (WAD) approach pointed out that women are already integrated into the development process in an exploitative way. This is because planners hold imprecise assumptions about women's specific activities, leading to the neglect of women's real needs and over-exploitation

of their labour.

Proponents of the WAD approach are mainly activists and theorists from the South and few from the North. The latter saw the limitations of WID and argued that women would never get their equal share of development benefits unless patriarchy and global inequality are addressed.

Women from the developed nations were slowly realizing that the concerns of “Third World” women were also legitimate. They began to identify with them and their earlier condescending attitude towards “Third World” women diminished. Efforts were made to link issues of the family with that of politics at the local, national and international levels. The Third World feminist movement increasingly incorporated struggles against sexual inequality

with political struggles. The gathering at Nairobi provided women of the “Third World” as well as the “First World” the chance to combine forces to fight against injustice.

The WAD approach provides a more critical view of women’s position than WID. It is assumed that women’s position will improve once international structures become more equitable. However, how these could change is not clearly explained. According to this perspective, women were not a neglected resource but overburdened and undervalued. Their substantial contribution to development needs to be recognized, along with a redistribution of its benefits, burdens between men and women. The WAD approach also demanded “affirmative action” by the State as “Laissez Faire” in the market worsened already existing inequalities.

7.7.1 Empowerment Approach

In this period, the **Empowerment approach** was adopted. Unlike the previous approaches, the empowerment approach is a direct result of “Third World” women’s social and grassroots movements and their realities and experiences of mainstream “development”. Its roots were in Latin American social movements where educationists such as Paulo Freire and Evan Ilich used conscientization to mobilize oppressed sections.

The approach emerged out of a critique of all other approaches, which were based on the expert analysis of how and what “Third World” women need to develop themselves and their communities. This approach gained momentum in the 1980s and continues to be popular among social activists, feminist researchers, NGOs and Aid agencies who are genuinely interested in the transformative potential of development initiatives.

The empowerment approach questions the notion that “women” can be addressed as a universal category. Further, for the first time, women's subordination was seen as a men's problem.

The empowerment approach broadened the scope of development theory by addressing issues hitherto not considered relevant. These included oppressive

gender relations, ecological destruction, and the ethics of multinational control over the developing countries. Thus the empowerment approach became most threatening to government and international agencies. The Self-Employed Women's Organization (SEWA) started in Ahmedabad, India, the Grameen Bank (Bangladesh), are examples of the success of empowerment through organization.

At the Nairobi conference, 1985 some Third World Women formed a group DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) which interpreted development issues from the woman's perspective. They pointed out that the concept of development followed in the post-colonial world has been guided by a western patriarchal and capitalist idea of economic development, which believed that change is linear. They rejected the aggressiveness of the dominant system and advocated the values of nurturance and openness, discarded hierarchy and recognized the diverse but equally genuine meanings of feminism of every area.

The U.N. decade for women brought to light the fact that women still perform two-thirds of the world's work, but earn one tenth of its income and own only one hundredth of its property. There was recognition of the fact that the "feminization of poverty was on the increase". Women's participation in the goals and strategies for change and their empowerment, both within and outside the home, were stressed if change was to occur.

The conferences of the International Decade for Women brought about greater interaction and mobilization of women from various countries. They provided the motive to investigate the common concerns of women worldwide. Conventional indicators of development-modernization, urbanization, per capita income, growth of the economy, mechanization, white-green-blue revolution were questioned. During the conferences, the various meanings of the term "women in development" predominated. Besides economic development, it also signified "legal equality, education, health, employment and empowerment".

Equal rights for women and men before the law were stressed in the early years. During the International Women's Decade, a number of conventions were passed, important among them is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Later on, legal rights were not given great importance. Though most countries had granted women's equality, they were not enforced.

It was argued that women's status could be improved by educating them. However, the earlier literacy programme had failed because classes were held at the time when the women were busy with economic activities. No formal education systems were advocated, and emphasis was laid on reducing gender biases within the education system.

Emphasis was laid on employing women, especially in the development agencies as an effective method of ensuring that development programme reach and involve women. Consciousness-raising and empowerment of

women was emphasized.

Economic Development remained the main focus of "women in development". The attempt was to remove the gender bias in development planning that overlooked women's role in economic activities.

7.7.2 The Indian Context

The U.N. decade for women generated a lot of data on the status of women the world over. In India, a political emergency was declared in 1975. Yet in this period, the UN-sponsored International Women's Decade provided the space for women's organizations to meet and discuss issues, organize seminars, etc.

During this period, an important and significant report on the "Status of women in India" was published entitled "Towards Equality" Report (in 1974 it was tabled in the parliament). The Government of India appointed the Committee on the Status of Women in 1971 to look into the changes – legal, constitutional, administrative, political, social and economic, -- that had occurred in the status of women since Independence. The Committee submitted its report in December 1974. Its investigations revealed the dismal reality of declining sex ratios, decreasing participation of women in employment and political activities. Illiteracy and lack of vocational training prevented women from being absorbed into the modern economy. Development itself was very uneven between different regions, communities and sections of society.

The low status of women in society was indicated by a number of factors such as – the age of marriage of girls was below 15 years in more than 1/3 of the districts of India. The life expectation for females was 45 years as compared to 47 years for males in 1961-71. The gap in male and female life expectation was in fact increasing. The female mortality rate was much higher than that of males, especially in 15-44 years. Though there has been an increase in the female population, the number of females per thousand males has been declining. In 1901, it was 972 females per thousand males, but by 1971, it had declined to 930 females per thousand males, and in 1991 it had declined further to 929 women per thousand males. One of the reasons for the low sex ratio, it is observed, is the high maternal mortality. In 1964, it was 252 per 1,00,000 live births in the whole country, and in 1968, it went up to 573 for 1,00,000 live births in rural areas. Maternal mortality has been mainly due to frequent pregnancies, abortions, malnutrition, etc.. Another reason is rampant female feticide and infanticide.

The literacy rate among women was much lower than for males – 18.4% and 39.5% respectively. The number of women in the labour force came down from 34.4% in 1911 to 17.35% in 1971. 94% of the women workers are found in the unorganized sector and the rest 6% in the organized sector. It was also noted that a majority of women did not make use of the rights and opportunities guaranteed by the Constitution. There has been an increasing

incidence of dowry in the urban and rural areas and communities that did not follow this practice earlier.

This report demystified the popular belief that the Constitution had guaranteed equality between the sexes. The mid-sixties witnessed an economic crisis, stagnation, inflation and increasing lawlessness. There was general discontentment and displeasure in society, especially among the youth and working class. There were strong protests by students all over the world, trade unions and anti-price rise movements, and anti-war and colonial liberation movements.

In India, too, there were student protests, anti-price rise *morchas*, tribal revolts, and the Naxalbari movement in the seventies. Women participated in large numbers in these movements. A number of radical activists started autonomous groups involved with education, popular science (KSSP – Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad), health, environmental protection, civil liberties, women’s issues, tribal issues. Involvement with the anti-price rise protests, student and tribal movements made the women realize the importance of taking up issues related to the oppression of women, violence in the family, dowry, alcoholism, sexual

discrimination against women. It was in the decade of the 1970s that the “Third World” began to emerge as a challenge and a force to reckon with. This heralded the critiques of “development” and “under-development” in the “Third World” countries from both feminist and others.

Check Your Progress Exercise 5

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. Is the Empowerment approach drawn from WAD?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7.8 CRITIQUE OF WID

The main critique of Women in Development came “from three sources: - Marxist feminists, women from the developing countries and scholars who sympathized with the female sphere approach”. In their effort to influence the development experts, the advocate practitioners and scholars of the WID approach did not “raise basic theoretical issues” but instead, sought to adjust the contemporary “development practices to include and benefit Women”.

As the field developed, the pragmatic approach of the WID practitioners and advocates and the detail of women's lives coming from WID scholars began to influence the theorists. The theorists then raised questions about the global power structures, values etc. which were more relevant.

The Marxist feminists have questioned the constitution of women as a "category". They argue that biological sex has been misunderstood as gender relations through social, cultural, political and economic forces. However, women's interests vary by class. But one common factor among women of all classes and in all societies is their subordinate position in society. The main cause of this is class and patriarchy. While Marxists and other feminists would try to change this situation and fight for equality, the feminists who argue for a female sphere would emphasize the difference. Over the years, other factors of subordination of women have come up like race in the USA, colonialism, Underdevelopment and dependency in the "Third World" and the intricacies of caste, religion and ethnicity in India.

Development programmes that are supposed to help women with their practical and material problems and to address the causes of their subordination often end up perpetuating it. What is required, therefore, is feminism that provides a political basis for bringing women of all classes together despite their differences.

Throughout the Decade, the effort was to associate value and status to women's work. But often, the emphasis has been on economic activities. Though women have worked for long hours, be it in subsistence societies or the new industries of developing societies, their work has not been valued, and they have not got high status. The effort now is to decrease the woman's work and simultaneously empower her. This would need an examination of the controls on woman's labour. Hence an examination of the household and the issue of patriarchy.

The female sphere theorists argue that the demand for equality of work for a just and egalitarian society may be disadvantageous for women. In a society where women enjoyed autonomy in the private sphere, they are withdrawn from the visible public labour force and are made economically dependent on the family. However, many women have chosen to retain their economic Independence.

Yet another perspective is put forward by scholars like Elise Boulding, who argue that women have developed the quality of nurturing, survival and peace. These feminine values will save the earth and not the male values of ruling and conquering. The need is for environment-friendly technology and efforts towards peace.

The DAWN report points out the connection between global economic policies and women at the local, national and international levels. The economic crises, ecological degradation, increasing militarism and so on are all linked to the global policies. Scholars have pointed out how the debt

crises, structural adjustment policies, and macro-level development policies have had differential effects on male and female work and perpetuate gender bias in market policies. Rae Blumberg argues that the African food crisis resulted from macro-level development policies that overlooked the importance of women's contribution to economic development.

Kathryn Ward, in her work "Women in the Global Economy", argues that women's economic status has stagnated due to underdevelopment processes. Increasingly, women are pushed into subsistence agriculture or the service or informal sectors. Until the coming of transnational corporations, women did not get industrial employment. However, even this employment is not permanent, and they are once again displaced into the service sectors.

Ward argues that women's status has been structured both directly and indirectly by the global capitalist system. She highlights three processes of trade dependency, dependent development, and debt dependency as being particularly important in shaping women's status. As a result of this global capitalist system, the peripheral regions within this system experience socio-economic dependence on the core nations and underdevelopment.

The major problems with the WID approach are as follows.

- WID considers women as a homogeneous group. It ignores the fact that women are not a single uniform category. Women are differentiated by racial, economic and other factors which are not considered important.
- WID projects the myth that women's development can be achieved by addressing economic issues alone. Yet, in a context where women are not allowed to own property and do not have control over resources, it is questionable how income-generating projects can lead to women's development.
- It does not question the kind of development that is being imposed on the developing countries. WID does not have any scope for change and transformation. It does not challenge existing power relations in society. Hence it has remained popular.

However, since the early 1980s, WID came under severe attack, mainly from "Third World" women's movements, who are questioning the relevance of such development programmes in the context of continuing poverty and oppression. This has led to a rethinking of the WID approach and resulted in the emergence of the **Gender and Development approach** or GAD.

7.9 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD) APPROACH

GAD, which shares elements with the empowerment approach, gained popularity in the 1980s and attempts to address the loopholes of WID. It is rooted in post-development theory and post-structuralist critiques in

GAD does not consider women as a uniform group. It maintains that women’s situation should be seen in the context of the socio-economic, racial and other factors that shape a particular society. It points to the importance of understanding the relationship between women and men and how society influences their respective roles. Development to be meaningful will have to take all these factors into consideration.

This approach rejects the dichotomy between the public and the private. It focuses attention on the oppression of women in the family, within the private sphere of the household. It emphasizes the state’s role in providing social services to promote women’s emancipation. Women are seen as agents of change rather than passive recipients of development.

The focus is on strengthening women’s legal rights. It also talks in terms of upsetting the existing power relations in society. Gender is an issue that cuts across all economic, social and political processes. The GAD approach attempts to identify both the practical gender needs of women and the strategic gender needs that are closely related.

The problem with GAD is that it is accessible in the name of gender to disguise and even sidetrack real issues that affect women. Gender can rise above the personal, which means the personal can remain behind the scene, despite all the efforts that go into the analysis of “social construction of gender”.

However, GAD is often seen as just a new label for the same older women’s programmes that do not address power relations in society or women’s oppression. Though

It is popular among funding agencies and NGOs and can be different, and it has become institutionalized like WID.

Check Your Progress Exercise 6

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 is GAD?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

2. How is GAD different from other approaches?

7.10 FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

At the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in December 1995, the mood was sombre, reflecting the turmoil of the past decade, the global economic crises, the collapse of most communist regimes, unmitigated ethnic conflict and growing conservatism. This is reflected in the disproportionate burden borne by women. Statistics showed that women today constitute 70% of the world's 1.3 billion poor, 2/3rd of the illiterates and (with their children) 80% of the 25 million refugees mostly victims of armed conflict.

The single most critical issue at the Conference was women's economic crises: Southern women reeling under structural adjustment; East European women faced with rising unemployment and collapse of state-provided welfare services; and Western women faced with sharp cuts in public expenditure on health, education and welfare.

The critical outcome in Beijing was the new recognition by both NGOs and governments that macro-economic policy is also an issue of critical importance for women and, therefore, a feminist concern. Furthermore, it was important not just to be reactive after policies have done their damage but to be creative in framing alternatives. The "Beijing Platform for Action" recognizes the link between the economic and the political. Eradication of poverty cannot be accomplished through anti-poverty programmes alone. Still, it will require democratic participation and changes in economic structures to ensure access for all women to resources, opportunities and public services.

Check Your Progress Exercise 7

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. Where was the Fourth World Conference on Women held?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. What are the key issues discussed at the Conference?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7.11 LET US SUM UP

In conclusion, the significant issues that emerge are: In the '60s and '70s, women voiced their dissent and protested through mass movements as well as autonomous feminist groups.

The “Western” model of development as the role-model was not only questioned, but women activists in the Third World refused the label of “always and already victims” that the Western feminists had accorded them. This translated into viewing women, not as passive recipients of development but as active agents in the process.

The issues of gender, nationality and ethnicity within the context of the global political economy came into focus; rightly questioning thereby the “woman” as the subject of feminist debates.

The increasing marginalization of women in the economy, their increasing landlessness and lack of access to resources had resulted in feminization of poverty. A significant relationship between the feminization of poverty and female-headed households was brought into focus.

7.12 UNIT END QUESTIONS

1. Elaborate Boserup’s contribution to visibility of women and development.
2. Describe the emergence of the WID approach.
3. Trace the WID approach through the first three world conferences.
4. Elaborate the GAD approach

7.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Lack of economic growth is considered as under development. This is measured in terms of GDP.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2

1. Esther Boserup

Check Your Progress Exercise 3

1. The pressure from the Third World women group led to the emergence of the WID approach. In this approach, the status of women on par with men was discussed in terms of equality. This was emerged in the year 1975.

Check Your Progress Exercise 4

1. Mexico – 1975
2. Nairobi – 1980
3. Copenhagen – 1985

Check Your Progress Exercise 5

1. Yes, in WAD period, the **Empowerment approach** was adopted. Unlike the previous approaches, the empowerment approach is a direct result of “Third World” women’s social and grassroots movements and their realities and experiences of mainstream “development”. Its roots were in Latin American social movements where educationists such as Paulo Freire and Evan Ilich used conseintization to mobilise oppressed sections.

Check Your Progress Exercise 6

1. GAD means Gender and Development.
2. GAD doesn’t consider women as a uniform group.

Check Your Progress Exercise 7

1. Beijing - 1995
2. Representation of women in social, political and economic institutions.

7.14 REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED READINGS

Banuri, T., “Modernization and its discontents: A critical perspective on theories of Development”, In F.A. Marglin and S.A. Marglin, ed., *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Benicia, L. and G. Sen, "Accumulation, Reproduction, and Women" s Role in Economic Development: Boserup Revisited”, *SIGNS*, Winter, vol. 7(2), pp. 279-298, 1981.

- Blumberg, R.L., "Towards a Feminist Theory of Development", In R.A. Wallace, eds., *Feminism and Sociological Theory*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage publications, 1989.
- Boserup, E., *Women's Role in Economic Development*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1970.
- Gaidzanwa, R., J.F. O" Barr, I. Tinker et al., "Reflections on forum" 85 in Nairobi, Kenya: Voices from the International Women's Studies Community", *SIGNS*. Spring. 11(3), pp. 584- 606, 1986.
- Gilligan, C., *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Huntington, S., "Issues in Women's Role in Economic Development: Critique and Alternatives", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 37(4), pp. 1001-12, 1975.
- Kabir, N., *Reversed Realities- Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1996.
- Larrain, J., *Theories of Development: Capitalism, Colonialism and Dependency*, London: Polity Press, 1989.
- Marglin, F.A. and S.A. Marglin, ed., *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.
- Mohanty, C.T., "Through Western Eyes", *Boundary*, No. XVII (Reprinted by Vikas Adhyayan Kendra), 1992.
- Moser, C.O.N., *Gender Planning and Development- Theory, Practice and Training*, New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Nandy, A., *Science, Hegemony and Violence: A Requiem for Modernity*, Oxford: University Press, 1989.
- Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, Towards Equality*, 1974, Delhi: Government of India, 1975.
- Sen, G. and C. Grown., *Development Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives*. 2nd edition. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987. (Written for the project Development Alternatives for Women in a New Era: DAWN. First edition without the author's names published by DAWN 1985).
- SIGNS, 1975 Report of the World Conference of the U.N. Decade for Women – Equality, Development and Peace*. Copenhagen. 1980. U.N. Publication, A/CONF. 94/35.
- Report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year*. Mexico City. 1975. New York: U.N. Publication, E/CONF. 66/34.
- Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the U.N. Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace*. Nairobi, Kenya. 1985. U.N. Publication, A/CONF. 116/28.
- Tinker, I. , *Persistent Inequalities- Women and World Development*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Ward, K., "Women in the Global Economy", In Gutek, Strombek and Larwood, ed., *Women and Work: An Annual Review*, London: Sage Publications, 1988.