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Conceptual Background

From Women in Development to Gender and Development

Gender mainstreaming, as a strategy, has developed out of a major shift in the focus of efforts to promote gender equality and equity in recent years. This shift in focus has been away from the women in development (WID) approach, towards the gender and development (GAD) approach.

The WID approach began with an uncritical acceptance of existing social structures and focused on how women could be better integrated into existing development initiatives. Targeting women's productive work to the exclusion of their reproductive work, this approach was characterised by income-generating projects for women which failed to address the systemic causes of gender inequality. It tended to view women as passive recipients of development assistance, rather than as active agents in transforming their own economic, social, political and cultural realities. A key outcome was that women's concerns were viewed in isolation, as separate issues, leading to their marginalisation in the state system and other social structures.

Box 2

From Women in Development to Gender and Development

The Commonwealth Plan of Action summarises the shift of focus from Women in Development (WID) to Gender and Development (GAD) as follows:

“WID policies aim to integrate women into existing structures and address women's specific needs and concerns. The focus is on how women must change to fit into an essentially ‘man-made’ world. GAD, on the other hand, seeks to integrate gender-awareness and competence into mainstream development to account for the different life courses and different impacts of development policies on women and men. It emphasises that development activities may affect women and men differently and calls for appropriate ‘gender planning’ to address them. It also calls attention to ‘outcomes’, and the need to take the necessary steps to ensure that the resulting conditions and outcomes are equitable, rather than being preoccupied with giving only identical treatment. In summary, the GAD approach focuses not only on the differences between men and women but on the inequalities that emanate from these differences: women and their allotted roles have been historically undervalued and continue to be so up to the present time”.

Commonwealth Secretariat, 1995a: 14

Barriers to equality are socially constructed and maintained by a complex array of historical, ideological, cultural, economic and religious influences which are difficult but not impossible to change. Gender roles, relations and inequalities vary across cultures and through different times in human development; thus they are amenable to change.

A GAD framework is more likely to result in:

- ◆ the recognition that women and men have different and special needs;
- ◆ the recognition that women cannot be effectively treated as a homogeneous group because race/ethnicity, class, age, disability and sexual orientation, among other factors, create differences among women and between women and men;
- ◆ the recognition that women tend to be disadvantaged relative to men in terms of their welfare and their access to and control over the means of production, but also that in inequitable class societies, and in the present international economic order, some women are more privileged than men;
- ◆ the recognition of the systemic and structural nature of inequality;
- ◆ the commitment to a process whereby development interventions work towards women's and men's increased empowerment and equality (adapted from Longwe, 1991: 150); and
- ◆ the recognition that gender differences can also result in men being disadvantaged. For example, the recent phenomenon of male under-achievement in Caribbean education systems is beyond the scope of the WID approach, but can be addressed through a gender-aware approach to development. Tracking gender equality in sector-specific data makes it possible to examine the comparative positions of women and men in relation to, for example, health, education, family structures, the labour market and earnings/income. 'Gender equality tracking' is thus a type of gender analysis that is useful in enabling appropriate policy interventions to be made in a timely manner to promote gender equality and equity in either direction.

The gender mainstreaming approach focuses on the fact that women and men have different life courses and that development policies affect them differently. It addresses these differences by mainstreaming gender into development planning at all levels and in all sectors, focusing less on providing equal treatment for men and women (since equal treatment does not necessarily result in equal outcomes), and more on taking whatever steps are necessary to ensure equal outcomes. It recognises that the empowerment of women can only be achieved by taking into account the relationships between women and men.

The GMS and Organisational Development

The GMS is designed to bring about fundamental and long-lasting changes within an organisation, within a government, and within society as a whole. Organisational Development, the science of producing and managing planned change within an organisation, has given rise to a number of models of the change process (Huse and Cummings, 1985). A simple model of planned change, based on the model originated by Kurt Lewin (Huse and Cummings, 1985) envisages the process in four steps:

- 1 **diagnosis:** analysis of the current situation; identification of the desired goal and the problems faced in attaining it;
- 2 **unfreezing:** reducing the forces that maintain the status quo or that perpetuate undesirable behaviours or attitudes within the organisation;
- 3 **moving:** action to shift behaviours and attitudes to the desired state; and
- 4 **refreezing:** stabilising the new situation so that it becomes the norm in the organisation.

In reality, organisations are more complex than this model suggests, and change occurs gradually over time, often through a cyclical (or iterative) process in which incremental improvements are made with each repetition of the cycle. Therefore, the last step of the cycle, rather than being a final 're-freezing' is more likely to be a new round of diagnosis, unfreezing and moving to a more desirable state.

Levers of change

In order to accomplish the change process, a number of *levers of change* are needed. These can be classified in three main areas: the communication lever, the awareness lever, and the incentive/boundary lever.

The communication lever

The GMS depends upon the timely flow of accurate information about gender differentials both within the organisation and in the broader society it serves. Information systems should be both diagnostic and interactive (Simons, 1995). In other words, they should be able to provide the raw information necessary to undertake analyses of the current situation, in order to determine appropriate goals and interventions to achieve them, and they should continue to provide information that can inform ongoing strategic decisions at all levels, based on the changing gender needs within the organisation and in the broader society. Gender analysis and the Management Information System, which serve as the 'communication levers' of the GMS, emphasise the use of gender-sensitive indicators to provide both these kinds of information.

The awareness lever

The awareness lever is necessary to change the institutionalised practices that maintain the status quo of gender inequalities. This entails transforming the belief systems commonly held in society and in organisations, regarding gender roles, what women and men are capable of, what is appropriate for them, and so on. As well as gender analysis and the interactive flow of gender information provided by the Management Information System, the GMS emphasises the importance of ongoing gender training as an essential 'awareness lever' to bring about the required change in consciousness.

The incentive/boundary lever

Many governments in the Commonwealth and elsewhere are engaged in extensive processes of public service reform. Generally the trend of this reform is towards a performance-based public service, with a performance appraisal system to gauge the success of staff members in achieving the goals of their governments and ministries. Incentives motivate staff by offering rewards for positive achievements; boundary instruments define limits beyond which behaviour is unacceptable and institute sanctions if those limits are crossed.

The boundary and incentive lever of the GMS consists of the Performance Appraisal System, which is not a stand-alone system, but rather a modified version of whatever system is currently in place for appraising the performance of employees in the public service. There may be one system managed by the central personnel office, or each ministry may have its own system. In either case, gender mainstreaming involves making the system gender-sensitive. It should include specific items applied specifically to the achievement of the goals of the Gender Action Plan. This ensures accountability is the basis of decisions on what incentives or sanctions can be applied in each case.

Through the appropriate use of these three types of lever, a cyclical process of planned change can be created. Gender mainstreaming cannot be achieved in a single movement; neither can the gender equality and equity it seeks to create. Both processes are cyclical, with each repetition of the cycle bringing the organisation closer to the desired goal.

Some Useful Concepts in Gender Analysis

Practical and strategic gender needs

Because men and women have different roles and responsibilities, they also have different needs – gender needs. These can be further divided into practical and strategic gender needs.

Practical gender needs emanate from the actual conditions women experience due to the roles ascribed to them by society. Often, these needs are related to women's roles as mothers, homemakers and providers of basic needs. Projects can meet the practical gender needs of both men and women without necessarily changing their relative position in society.

Examples of actions that address practical gender needs:

- ◆ reducing women's workload, e.g., the convenient location of stand-pipes and hand-pumps, providing grinding mills, developing fuel-efficient stoves;
- ◆ improving health, e.g., primary health centres, clean water supply, child spacing/family planning advice;
- ◆ improving services, e.g., primary schools, housing infrastructure, transport facilities; and
- ◆ increasing income, e.g., skills training, credit initiatives, access to markets.

Strategic gender needs are what is required to overcome the subordinate position of women to men in society and relate to women's empowerment. Such needs vary according to the economic, political, social and cultural context. Most governments now acknowledge the need to create opportunities which enable women to address their strategic needs. Examples of actions that address strategic gender needs:

- ◆ improving education opportunities, e.g., adult literacy classes, female teachers provided as role models, gender-aware textbooks;
- ◆ improving access to productive assets, e.g., legal status on land ownership, rights to common property, bank accounts;
- ◆ enabling women to take part in decision-making, e.g., participation in elections; representation at the local, provincial and national levels; establishing and supporting women's groups; and
- ◆ promoting equal opportunities for employment, e.g., equal pay for comparative jobs (even if there is a gender division of labour), increasing women's access to jobs traditionally done by men.

It is sometimes said that 'women in development' projects address practical gender needs, while 'gender and development' projects address strategic gender interests. However, the reality is more complex, since both types of gender needs may be addressed from either the WID or GAD approach. Nevertheless, the distinction between practical and strategic gender needs serves as a useful means of evaluating the extent to which a particular policy or intervention may further the goals of the GMS.

Women's triple roles

Analysis of the gender division of labour has revealed that women typically take on three types of roles in terms of the paid and unpaid labour they undertake (Razavi and Miller, 1997: 14). These three roles can be described as follows:

- ◆ **the productive role:** this refers to market production and home/subsistence production undertaken by women which generates an income (whether financial or 'in kind');
- ◆ **the reproductive role:** this refers to the child-bearing and child rearing

responsibilities borne by women – which are essential to the reproduction of the workforce; and

- ◆ **the community management role:** this refers to activities undertaken by women to ensure the provision of resources at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role (Razavi and Miller, 1997: 14).

An understanding of these three roles can inform gender-aware planning that takes into account the differential impact of programmes and projects on women and men because of women's triple role. Table 1 shows how such an understanding illuminates the analysis of policy interventions designed to impact upon practical gender needs and strategic gender interests.

Table 1 Women's Triple Role and Meeting Practical/Strategic Gender Needs

| Type of Intervention | Women's Role Recognised | | | Gender Needs Met | |
|---|-------------------------|------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | Reproductive | Productive | Community Management | Practical | Strategic |
| 1 Employment Policy | | | | | |
| (i) Skill training | ◆ | | | | |
| <i>Cooking</i> | ◆ | | | ◆ | |
| <i>Dressmaking</i> | | ◆ | | ◆ | |
| <i>Masonry/carpentry</i> | | ◆ | | ◆ | ◆ ^a |
| (ii) Access to credit | | | | | |
| <i>Allocated to household</i> | | ◆ | | ◆ | |
| <i>Allocated to women</i> | | ◆ | | ◆ | ◆ ^b |
| 2 Human Settlement Policy | | | | | |
| (i) Zoning legislation | | | | | |
| <i>Separates residence and work</i> | ◆ | | | | |
| <i>Does not separate residence and work</i> | ◆ | | | ◆ | |
| (iii) House ownership | | | | | |
| <i>In man's name</i> | ◆ | | | ◆ | |
| <i>In woman's name</i> | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | ◆ ^c |
| 3 Basic Services | | | | | |
| (i) Location of nursery | | | | | |
| <i>Located in community</i> | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | |
| <i>Mother's workplace</i> | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | |
| <i>Father's workplace</i> | ◆ | ◆ | | ◆ | ◆ ^d |
| (ii) Transport services | | | | | |
| <i>Only peak-hour bus service</i> | | ◆ | | ◆ | |
| <i>Adequate off-peak service</i> | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | |
| (iii) Timing of rural extension meetings | | | | | |
| <i>In the morning</i> | | ◆ | | ◆ | |
| <i>In the afternoon/evening</i> | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | ◆ | |

Source: Moser, 1993: 49

(a) Changing the gender division of labour

(b) Control over financial services

(c) Overcoming discrimination against women owning land, by law or tradition

(d) Alleviating the burden of domestic labour

Table 2 Five Policy Approaches to Gender and Development

| | Historical Origins | Aims | Comments |
|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Welfare | 1950s–70s but still widely used. Linked to the residual model of social welfare introduced by colonial administrations where it was of a targeted and relief-oriented nature. | This approach focuses only on women's practical gender needs. The kind of projects for women deriving from this approach include maternal and child health schemes, nutrition, hygiene, education and food distribution programmes. | By targeting women as wives and mothers, other household members are helped, especially children. However, there is no attempt made to tackle gender stereotypes within this approach. These programmes have therefore been criticised for maintaining the status quo. |
| Equity | Attempts were made to adopt this approach during the UN Decade for Women, 1975–85. | This approach focuses only on women's strategic gender needs and advocates changing the unequal economic, legal, social and ideological realities of the female situation. Equity projects include consciousness-raising initiatives as well as practical action in areas such as legal rights and access to credit. | Sees underdevelopment, rather than gender subordination, as the main reason for inequality between low-income men and women. Projects therefore aim to improve the material conditions of women's lives – helping them to 'catch up' with men, e.g., income-generation and skills training, access to marketing outlets, credit, etc. |
| Anti-Poverty | A 'toned-down' version of the equity approach, the anti-poverty approach emerged from the 1970s onwards. | This approach achieved little support from governments and development agencies as it was seen as too politically sensitive. Its relevance has also been questioned, e.g., Moser observes that many third world activists felt that to talk feminism to women who have no water, food or home is to talk nonsense. | This approach addresses some of women's practical gender needs but overlooks their strategic gender needs, e.g., women's need to share the workload at home if they are to take advantage of increased earning capacity. Exclusive focus on women therefore means this approach has limited impact. |
| Efficiency | Post-1980, this approach is widely linked with the neo-liberal market-oriented policy framework which accompanied the debt crises and structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s. | This approach is interested in harnessing women's labour to make development more efficient, and assumes that women's increased economic participation will lead to increased equity. Women may be targeted as beneficiaries and participants which fulfil some practical gender needs. | Criticisms are that if women maintain their roles as primary care-givers in the home, inequalities may be intensified as women merely extend their working day. Interventions can therefore be seen as getting women working for development rather than vice versa. |
| Empowerment | From 1975 onward but accelerating during the 1980s, this approach built upon experience gained in the equity approach and has most in common with it. | This approach focuses on strategic gender needs but defines them by mobilising around practical gender needs identified by women at the grassroots. It is more concerned with changing practices and enabling people to define their own agendas than with changing laws, rules or frameworks. | Empowerment policies orient their efforts to providing resources and developing strategies which enable women to gain more control over their lives and allow them to determine gender relations which are more acceptable to them. |

Source: Adapted from Moser (1993)

Policy approaches to gender equality

Over the years, a number of policy approaches have been adopted in efforts to address gender inequalities. Table 2 provides a summary of each of these approaches. The GMS draws upon a number of aspects of the equity, anti-poverty and empowerment approaches, while taking them a stage further by advocating a system-wide gender mainstreaming strategy which engages the entire state machinery in partnership with non-state stakeholders.

Gender-sensitive policies

Government policies may fall into one of three possible types: gender-neutral, gender-specific or gender-aware/redistributive/transformational. These can be distinguished as follows (adapted from Kabeer, 1994):

- ◆ **Gender-neutral policies** are those that are seen as having no significant gender dimension. However, government policies seldom if ever have the same effect on women as they do on men, even if at first sight they may appear to exist in a context where gender is irrelevant. Thus policies which may appear to be 'gender-neutral' are often in fact 'gender-blind', and are biased in favour of males because they presuppose that those involved in and affected by the policy are males, with male needs and interests. *Example:* a policy to extend credit to small enterprises which does not address constraints women face in obtaining such credit.
- ◆ **Gender-specific policies** take into account gender differentials, and target women or men specifically, but leave the current distribution of resources and responsibilities intact. *Example:* a micro-credit scheme that targets women.
- ◆ **Gender-aware/redistributive/transformational policies** seek to transform existing gender relations by changing the distribution of resources and responsibilities to make it more equitable. These policies are the most politically challenging, because they involve altering the existing balance of power between men and women, but they also go the furthest towards addressing not only practical gender needs but strategic gender interests as well (adapted from Kabeer, 1994).