

participatory?

Lecture
Day 3 Session II
GENDER AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Time – Two hours

Discussion – 10 minutes

Exercises – 80 minutes

Lecture- 30 minutes

Learning Outcomes

Knowledge acquired through this module will allow the participants to:

- Discuss how the process of human development is incomplete without gender equality
- Learn about various forms of gender inequality
- Discuss the status of women in India and various plans and policies designed for achieving gender equality

Discussion Prompt – 10 minutes

Ask the participants to share what they understand of the term 'gender equality'. Also ask them to comment why achieving gender equality is important. Steer the discussion towards listing 'spheres' of equality. For example, participants might associate gender equality with equal access to education. Put all these spheres on a flip chart and refer to it often.

Gender Equality and Human Development

The Human Development paradigm defines development as a process of enlarging people's choices. At the heart of this concept are three essential components.

- **Equality** of opportunity for all
- **Sustainability** of such opportunities from one generation to the next
- **Empowerment** of people so that they participate in - and benefit from - development process.

Human development is defined as the process of enlarging the choices for all people, not just one part of the society. Such a process becomes unjust and discriminatory if most women are excluded from its benefits. Gender equality is therefore a core principle of human development. To quote the eloquent words of Mahbub ul Haq, "Development, if not engendered, is endangered."

Gender Equality has many dimensions:

- Equal access to basic social services, including education and health.
- Equal opportunities for participation in political and economic decision-making.
- Equal reward for equal work.
- Equal protection under the law.
- Elimination of discrimination by gender and violence against women.
- Equal rights of citizens in all areas of life, both public - such as the workplace - and private-such as the home.

Until recently, it was assumed that development was gender-neutral – that both men and women could benefit equally from development, and that the benefits of development interventions spread evenly across society. This has now been shown to be a myth – the historical legacy of gender inequality in all societies across the world implies that there is no "level playing field".

The UNDP 1995 Global Human Development Report attempted to capture gender inequalities through the Gender Related Development Index (GDI), which is essentially the HDI adjusted for gender inequalities, with a GDI of 1 reflecting an absolute equality in the respective attainments of men and women. This Report also introduced the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) – which is a measure of the extent to which men and women are able to actively participate in economic and political decision-making and in the professional/work arena. The GEM reflects

the extent to which men and women can achieve and use their inherent capabilities to take advantage of development opportunities.

Highlights of HDR 1995 Gender and Human Development

- In no society do women enjoy the same opportunities as men.
 - Removing gender inequality has nothing to do with national income
 - Every country has made progress in developing women's capabilities, but women and men still live in an unequal world.
 - While doors to education and Health opportunities have opened rapidly for women, the doors to economic and political opportunities are barely ajar.
 - A major index of neglect is that many of women's economic contributions are grossly undervalued or not valued at all.
 - Another major element of discrimination is the unacceptably low status of women in society, with continuing legal discrimination and violence against women.
 - The revolution towards gender equality must be propelled by a concrete strategy for accelerating progress.
- **Human development if not engendered is endangered.**

From the perspective of human development, gender inequality has adverse impacts at two levels. Longevity and education are important human capabilities and critical constituents of well-being. Reduced achievements for women in these areas is intrinsically problematic.

Gender inequalities can also have instrumental impacts through creating constraints in the achievement of a number of development goals. For example, studies have shown that gender inequality in education and access to resources may hamper the process of reduction of child mortality and lowering of fertility, which in turn impacts the expansion of education for the next generation. Gender inequality also has a negative impact on economic growth. There is now overwhelming evidence that countries that adopt specific measures to protect women's rights and increase their access to resources and schooling have less corruption and achieve faster economic growth than countries that do not.

Dimensions of Gender Inequality

Inequality between women and men can take very many different forms, and incorporates a large range of interlinked problems. Amartya Sen (2001)* provides examples of different kinds of inequalities.

a. Mortality inequality: In some regions in the world, inequality between women and men directly involves matters of life and death, and takes the brutal form of unusually high mortality rates of women and a consequent preponderance of men in the total population, as opposed to the preponderance of women found in societies with little or no gender bias in health care and nutrition. Mortality inequality has been observed extensively in North Africa and in Asia, including China and South Asia.

b. Natality inequality: Given that many male-dominated societies have a preference for boys over girls, gender inequality can manifest itself in the form of the parents' wanting the new born to be a boy rather than a girl. There was a time when this could be no more than a wish (a daydream or a nightmare, depending on one's perspective), but with the availability of modern techniques to determine the gender of the fetus, sex-selective abortion has become common in many countries. It is particularly prevalent in East Asia, in China and South Korea in particular, but also in Singapore and Taiwan, and has emerged as a statistically significant phenomenon in India and South Asia as well.

c. Basic facility inequality: Even when demographic characteristics do not show much or any anti-female bias, there are other ways in which women can have less than a square deal. There are many countries in Asia and Africa, and also in Latin America, where girls have far less opportunity of schooling than boys do. There are other deficiencies in basic facilities available to women, varying from encouragement to cultivate one's natural talents to fair participation in rewarding social functions of the community.

d. Special opportunity inequality: Even when there is relatively little difference in basic facilities including schooling, the opportunities of higher education may be far fewer for young women than for young men. Indeed, gender bias in higher education and professional training can be observed even in some of the richest countries in the world, in Europe and North America.

e. Professional inequality: In terms of employment as well as promotion in work and occupation, women often face greater handicap than men. A country like Japan may be quite egalitarian in matters of demography or basic facilities, and even, to a great extent, in higher education, and yet progress to elevated levels of employment and occupation seems to be much more problematic for women than for men.

f. Ownership inequality: In many societies the ownership of property can also be very unequal. Even basic assets such as homes and land may be very asymmetrically shared. The absence of claims to property cannot only reduce the voice of women, but also make it harder for

* The Many Faces of Gender Inequality, The Frontline, India, November 9, 2001.

women to enter and flourish in commercial, economic and even some social activities. This type of inequality has existed in most parts of the world, though there are also local variations. For example, even though traditional property rights have favoured men in the bulk of India, in what is now the state of Kerala, there has been, for a long time, matrilineal inheritance was followed until 1974 by the Nair community.

g. Household inequality: Basic inequalities in gender relations within the family or the household, which can take many different forms. Even in cases in which there are no overt signs of anti-female bias like differential survival, son-preference or biases in access to education, family arrangements can be quite unequal in terms of sharing the burden of housework and child care. For example, it is quite common in many societies including India to take it for granted that while men will naturally work outside the home, women could do it if and only if they could combine it with various inescapable and unequally shared household duties. This is sometimes called "division of labour," though women could be forgiven for seeing it as "accumulation of labour." The reach of this inequality includes not only unequal relations within the family, but also derivative inequalities in employment and recognition in the outside world. Also, the established fixity of this type of "division" or "accumulation" of labour can also have far-reaching effects on the knowledge and understanding of different types of work in professional circles.

Gender equality and women's status in India

According to the latest global HDR 2004, Indian ranks 103 among 144 countries with a GDI value of 0.572. GEM is not computed for India because of unavailability of data.

This may seem surprising, because India is among the few developing countries where gender equality and improvement in the status of women are specifically stated to be central goals of development and social policy. This commitment is buttressed by explicit Constitutional mandates that reflect a substantive understanding of the various dimensions of freedom and equality for women. The Constitution also clarifies that affirmative action programmes for women are not incompatible with the principle of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex.

CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES

- Equality before the law. **Article 14**
- No discrimination by the State on the grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of these. **Article 15(1)**
- Special provisions to be made by the State in favour of women and children. **Article 15(3)**
- Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State. **Article 16**

- State policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally, the right to an adequate means of livelihood. **Article 39(a)**
- Equal pay for equal work for both men and women. **Article 39(d)**
- Provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. **Article 42**
- To promote harmony and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. **Article 51(A)(e)**

Despite these enabling factors, gender inequality continues to be one of the defining features of Indian society. Women lag behind men in most of the critical indicators of human development, and poverty in India increasingly wears a female face. Women's subordinate status is reflected in almost every sphere.

- Life expectancy is a basic measure traditionally used as a proxy for capturing the social position of women. Although the life expectancy of women has improved at a faster rate than for men being 61.4 years for women and 60.1 years for men in 1999. This is still below the international norm.
- Sex ratio (number of females per number of males in the population) is also a good indicator of the social position of women. Although the aggregate sex ratio for all ages improved between 1991 and 2001, it was lower in 2001 than the level in 1981, indicating a long-term trend. Census 2001 has also underlined the fact that the decline in sex ratio in the 0-6 age cohort has been continuous and substantial. Amongst the most probable causes for this disturbing trend are sex-selective abortions of female foetuses, combined with systematic neglect of infant girls, leading to lower rates of survival. There are substantial variations in sex ratios across States, but it is significant that these appear to be unrelated to per capita incomes or levels of development.
- Death rates during the first five years of life also show very significant gender differentials. In 1998-99, the child mortality rate for rural boys was 27.9 per thousand, while that for rural girls was one-and-a-half times higher at 41.7¹.
- The average Indian woman bears her first child before she is 22 years old, and has little control over her own fertility and health. Maternal mortality for the country as a whole was estimated at 580 per 100,000 live births in the early 1990s². A significant number of maternal deaths are caused by anaemia. The majority of women in India go through life in a condition of nutritional stress, eating last and least.

¹ Data from the Registrar-General of India, Sample Registration Surveys.

² P. N. Bhat, Mari K. Navaneetham and S. Irudaya Rajan "Maternal mortality in India: Estimates from a regression model", in Studies in Family Planning, 1995.

- Gender disparities in nutrition remain significant and have probably even widened over time. Estimates by the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau³ indicate that the proportion of men defined as "Chronically Energy Deficient" in terms of Body Mass Index declined to nearly half (from 55.6 per cent in 1975-79 to 28.6 per cent) in 1995-96, while the decline among women was significantly less (from 51.8 per cent to 36.2 per cent) over the same period. While the All-India average intake of calories is substantially below the recommended dietary allowance for both men and women, the largest deficits are in the case of pregnant and lactating mothers.
- Gender disparity in nutrition is marked among children. Numerous micro studies have indicated that deep-rooted gender bias can be expressed even by mothers, through differential patterns of breast-feeding and food distribution, reflected in differential rates of malnutrition for girls and boys.
- India is still home to the largest illiterate female population in the world. Only 50 per cent of Indian women are literate, compared to 65.5 per cent men. There is substantial evidence to show that even when girls are formally enrolled in schools, they often do not attend regularly for a variety of reasons, including their involvement in unpaid work in the home. Similarly, dropout rates tend to be much higher for girls than for boys.
- Most women workers in India are engaged in agriculture, where livelihoods have become insecure and wages are low, with a significant gender wage gap. Women's work is "invisible" and unrecognized socially and in public policy. The definition of economic activity used by both the Census and the National Sample Survey is quite restrictive. Even though Census 2001 recorded women's involvement in some household enterprises such as farm activities, small-scale artisan production or transacted service provision, it still does not include the full spectrum of economic activities defined in the UN System of National Accounts. The National System of Accounts therefore excludes a significant amount of unpaid or non-marketed labour within the household, including the processing of primary produce for own consumption, basic domestic handicraft production, services such as cleaning, childcare and care of the sick and elderly. This contributes to an underestimation of economic activity within the household and work participation rates, especially of women.
- Women are under-represented in governance and decision-making positions. At present, less than 8% of Parliamentary seats, less than 6% Cabinet positions, less than 4% of seats in High Courts and the Supreme Court, are occupied by women. Less than 3% of administrators and managers are women.
- Women are legally discriminated against in land and property rights. Most women do not own any property in their own names, and do not get a share of parental property. While women are guaranteed equality under the Constitution, legal protection has little

³ Quoted in Chandrasekhar, CP and Jayati Ghosh, "Women in India: A Status Report". Hindu Business Line, 3 September 2002.

effect in the face of prevailing patriarchal traditions. Women lack power to decide whom they will marry, and are often married off as children. They are also unable to exercise their reproductive rights. Legal loopholes are used to deny women their right to inherit family property.

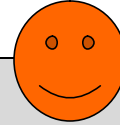
- Women face violence inside and outside the family throughout their lives. Police records show that a woman is molested in the country every 26 minutes. A rape occurs every 34 minutes. Every 42 minutes, an incident of sexual harassment takes place. Every 43 minutes, a woman is kidnapped. Every 93 minutes, a woman is killed⁴.

Inter State Gender disparities

The First National Human Development Report of India prepared by the Planning Commission presented the Gender Disparity Index for two time points –1981 and 1991. In the 80s, GDI was highest for Kerala, followed by Manipur, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The situation changed in the 90s, with Himachal Pradesh at one end of the spectrum with a GDI value of 0.858, and Bihar at the other end with a GDI value of 0.469.

⁴ Menon-Sen, K and A.K.Shiva Kumar. 2000. “Women in India: How Free? How Equal?” UN System in India.

Group Exercise No.1 – Time: 50 minutes




Analysing the causes and consequences of gender inequality

Organise participants in State wise groups and provide them with copies of the State-wise figures and tables from the National Human Development Report, 2002.

Step One. Ask the group to identify the main manifestations of gender inequality in their own State, based on the data and on their own experience of the situation at the local level, and classify them on the basis of Sen's framework. Assign 20 minutes for this task.

Step Two. Ask the group to identify the major causes behind each of the manifestations of gender inequality identified by them, and to trace the interlinkages between them. Assign 30 minutes for the task. Ask groups to present their findings in a diagrammatic form on flip-charts.

 **Trainers Tip:** With small group exercises, you can give everyone a chance to participate. This leads to confidence in using the new learning. These exercises also provide participants an opportunity to work on problems rather than talk about theory.

The Report concludes that in general, women were better off in Southern India than in the Indo-Gangetic plain, comprising mainly the States of Bihar and UP. States that have done well on improving their female literacy levels were also the ones that have substantially improved gender equality.

The table given below provides data for some human development indicators. The differences in the quality of life enjoyed by women in different States is striking.

Indicator	Best State	Worst State
Life expectancy at birth (1992-96)	Kerala 75.8 yrs	Orissa 56.6 yrs
Infant mortality Rate (2001)	Kerala 16 per thousand live births	Orissa 98 per thousand live births
Maternal Mortality Rate	Gujarat 28 per 100,000 live births	UP 707 per 100,000 live births
Sex Ratio (0-6)	Sikkim 986 per 1000 males	Punjab 793 per 1000 males
Women with any anaemia	Kerala 22.7 %	Assam 69.0 %
Total Fertility Rate	Goa 1.5 %	Rajasthan 4.2 %

Literacy Rate	Kerala 87.86 %	Bihar 33.57 %
Rural females Workforce Participation Rate	AP 478 per 1000 workers	Assam 151 per 1000 workers

Source: Planning Commission, National Human Development Report, 2001

National Plans and Policies

Awareness of the above situation, and a determination to address it through focused policy measures, are features of each of the National Five-Year Plans.

The current Tenth Plan document identifies malnutrition, poor health, lack of education, overwork, violence and systemic powerlessness as markers of the life-long discrimination faced by women in India. The Tenth Plan represents a distinct advance from earlier plans, in terms of articulating a strong and time-bound platform for action on gender equality. Key strategies are

- **Creating an enabling environment through positive economic and social policies**, for the development of women and the realisation of their full potential;
- **Enabling the *de jure* and *de facto* enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms** by women on par with men in the spheres of political, economic, social, cultural and civil rights;
- **Ensuring equal access** of women to public services, public office and decision-making in the social, political and economic spheres;
- **Strengthening legal systems** aimed at the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women;
- **Changing societal attitudes** and community practices through the active participation and involvement of both men and women;
- **Mainstreaming a gender perspective** into the development process;
- **Eliminating discrimination and all forms of violence** against women and the girl child;
- **Building and strengthening partnerships with civil society**, particularly women's organisations, corporate and private sector agencies.

India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993. The Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development & Peace for the 21st century, titled

"Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action" have been unreservedly endorsed by India for appropriate follow up.

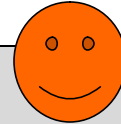
The National Policy for the Empowerment of Women adopts a sector-specific three-fold strategy of social empowerment, economic empowerment and gender justice for the empowerment of women.

a. Social Empowerment - creating an enabling environment through various affirmative developmental policies and programmes for development of women besides providing them easy and equal access to all the basic minimum services so as to enable them to realize their full potential.

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

c. Gender Justice – elimination of all forms of gender discrimination to ensure both de jure and de facto rights and fundamental freedoms for women on par with men in all spheres.

Group Exercise No.2 – Time: 30 minutes



Divide participants into four small groups to discuss the question: “How can levels of gender equality/inequality be assessed at the local level?” Ask each group to come up with a list of at least ten critical indicators.

After groups present their lists, consolidate the exercise and close the session by presenting the list of key sex-disaggregated indicators of women’s status for which data is available at the district level, developed by Indian researchers. These are:

- Sex Ratio
- Sex Ratio in the Age Group of 0-6 years
- Age Specific Mortality Rate in 15-34 years of Age Group
- Under Five Mortality Rate
- Work Participation Rates
- Percentage of Non Farm Workers among Workers
- Percentage of Agricultural Labourers among Marginal/Subsidiary Workers
- Agricultural Wage Rate per day (Rural/Urban/Combined)
- Literacy Rate for the Age Group in 6-14 Years
- Percentage of Population Completed Middle Level
- School Attendance Rate for Age Group in 6 –14 Years
- Percentage of Persons Voting, Contesting And Elected in Central And State General Elections
- Percentage of Employment In Central/State Government. Local Bodies
- No. of Unnatural Deaths per Lakh Population
- Percentage of Sterilisation
- Percentage of Non Death Crime against Women
- Percentage of women with land and assets registered in their own names
- Percentage Students Appearing for the 10th Board Examinations

