

Chapter 4: Strategies to Address Gender Inequalities

4. 1. Introduction

Historically, every society has experienced gender inequality in one way or another in terms of social, economic, political, and cultural aspects. Women have lower status than their men counterparts and experienced discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream society. However, now days, attention has been given for the inclusion and empowerment of women in the mainstream society and various strategies has been devised for this purpose. Hence, in this chapter, strategies such as gender analysis, gender needs, WID, WAD/GAD, gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, women empowerment and other related issues will be discussed.

4.2. Strategies to Address Gender Inequalities

1. Gender Analysis

Gender analysis is the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress inequities based on gender. It is a valuable descriptive and diagnostic tool for development planners and crucial to gender mainstreaming efforts. The methodology and components of gender analysis are shaped by how gender issues are understood in the institution concerned. There are a number of different approaches to gender analysis, including the Gender Roles or Harvard framework, and Social Relations Analysis.

The Gender Roles framework focuses on describing women's and men's roles and their relative access to and control over resources. The analysis aims to anticipate the impacts of projects on both productive and reproductive roles. It takes the household, rather than the breadth

of institutions, as the unit of analysis and tends to assume that women are a homogeneous category.

In contrast, the Social Relations approach seeks to expose the gendered power relations that perpetuate inequities. This analysis moves beyond the household to include the community, market, and state institutions and so involves collecting data at all these levels. It uncovers differences between women, divided by other aspects of social differentiation such as class, race and ethnicity. The aim is to understand the dynamics of gender relations in different institutional contexts and thereby to identify women's bargaining position and formulate strategies to improve this. It has proved challenging to adopt this approach in operational work.

2. Gender Needs

Gender needs refers to shared and prioritized needs identified by women that arise from their common experiences as a gender. Certain women's interests, of a political or practical nature, related to their experience as a gendered person. Such prioritized concerns have been translated into the concept of gender needs. This identifies the way in which women's gender interests, defined by women themselves, can be satisfied in the planning process. Although needs and interests are conceptually different, in practice, they are closely related in the planning process. Needs, as well as interests, result from a political process of contestation and interpretation and thus should not be externally defined or seen as fixed.

Practical Gender Needs (PGNs) according to Moser (1989) are the immediate needs identified by women to assist their survival in their socially accepted roles, within existing power structures. Policies to meet PGNs tend to focus on ensuring that women and their families have adequate living conditions, such as health care and food provision, access to safe water and sanitation, but also seek to ensure access to income-earning opportunities. PGNs do not directly

challenge gender inequalities, even though these needs may be a direct result of women's subordinate position in society.

Strategic gender needs (SGNs), are those needs identified by women that require strategies for challenging male dominance and privilege. These needs may relate to inequalities in the gender division of labor, in ownership and control of resources, in participation in decision-making, or to experiences of domestic and other sexual violence. These needs are often seen as feminist in nature as they seek to change women's status and position in society in relation to men. As such, they are more likely to be resisted than PGNs.

In reality, it is difficult to distinguish so clearly between strategic and practical needs. Any policy or programme may meet both sets of needs. Through collective organizing around practical gender needs, women may achieve more strategic and transformatory goals. This politicization of practical gender needs is a favored entry point for NGOs and women's organizations.

However, women may not always recognize or priorities their strategic gender needs, particularly if it could threaten their immediate practical needs. At any time, gender interests may not be prioritized over women's other interests which cut across these, such as those of class and race, so assumptions cannot be made of women's solidarity.

3. Gender Planning

The technical and political processes and procedures necessary to implement gender-sensitive policy and practice. The purpose of gender planning is to ensure gender-sensitive policy outcomes through a systematic and inclusive process. If gender policy has transformatory goals, then gender planning as a process will necessarily be a political one, involving consultation with and participation of different stakeholders.

There is a variety of gender planning frameworks based on differing approaches to gender analysis, each with its own planning principles and tools. For example, Caroline Moser (1993) developed a gender planning framework consisting of gender planning tools, gender planning procedures, and the components of gender planning practice. The gender planning tools include gender roles identification; gender needs assessment, and the collection of disaggregated data at the household level. The gender planning procedures involve the diagnosis of the gender problem, formulation of gender objectives, procedures for monitoring and evaluation, gender-based consultation and participation, and identification of an entry strategy. The final aspect, practice, identifies the need to institutionalize gender planning, and to operationalize this through recognized procedures. Building capacity amongst planners is necessary to ensure policy is transformed into practice with the minimum of dilution.

The social relations approach differs in its focus on power in gender relations. This approach uses an institutional framework for the analysis of gender inequalities as a tool for gender-aware planning. It recognizes that the means through which needs are met is as important as the planned ends of any intervention. The planning process is conceived as participatory and constituted by an analysis and evaluation of causes, effects, means and ends. A seven-point 'Gender audit for development interventions' supports this framework.

Whilst gender transformatory policies are increasingly being generated, concerns are focusing on the 'misbehavior' of such policies, i.e. a tendency to slip in implementation from transformatory objectives to outcomes that fail to challenge existing gender relations. It has been recognized that GAD approaches are constrained by resistance and subversion, from within both implementing organizations and targeted communities. Gender planning needs therefore to be part of an on-going process of gender mainstreaming, backed up by sufficient resources,

commitment and authority. Gender planning procedures need to involve the participation of stakeholders and clear lines of accountability.

At the project level, a variety of planning tools are used to operationalize gender policy, including general and sector-specific checklists and guidelines. Logical Framework Analysis is an example of a planning tool which, if used in a gender-sensitive manner, can help to ensure accountability, participation of various stakeholders, and that relevant monitoring and evaluation procedures are implemented.

4. Gender Training

A facilitated process of developing awareness and capacity on gender issues to bring about personal or organizational change for gender equality. Gender training is one of a range of institutional strategies used to integrate gender into the work of development co-operation agencies. Its objectives can include raising general awareness of the relevance of gender to an organization's work and skills transfer in gender analysis, gender-aware planning, programme design and implementation. Gender training typically involves: group discussion and reflection on gender roles and relations; case studies of the impact of development policies and programmes on gender relations; as well as role plays and simulation games which highlight gender dynamics.

The trainer's, as well as the organization's, approach to gender and development influence the training approach, and hence the framework used. These vary in the degree to which they see the need for personal attitudinal and behavioural change, or focus primarily on changing organizational procedures and practices. Personal transformation tends to be a training objective for Southern NGOs/women's organizations rather than development co-operation agencies.

As awareness grows within an organization, so the emphasis of gender training shifts to more tailored courses to meet specific needs and demands, and to more skills-based training. Gender training was initially mainly focused at the project level, but more recently emphasis has shifted to sectoral and macro-economic policy-making. Attention has recently focused on the need to evaluate the impact of gender training. Experience suggests that training is most effective when it is part of a broader strategy of organizational change.

5. Women in Development

The WID (or Women in Development) approach calls for greater attention to women in development policy and practice, and emphasizes the need to integrate them into the development process. The WID perspective evolved in the early 1970s from a 'liberal' feminist framework and was particularly influential in North America. It was a reaction to women being seen as passive beneficiaries of development. It marked an important corrective, highlighting the fact that women need to be integrated into development processes as active agents if efficient and effective development is to be achieved. Women's significant productive contribution was made visible, although their reproductive role was downplayed. Women's subordination was seen in terms of their exclusion from the market sphere, and limited access to and control over resources. Programmes informed by a WID approach addressed women's practical needs by, for example, creating employment and income-generating opportunities, improving access to credit and to education. Women's 'problem' was therefore diagnosed as insufficient participation in a benign development process, through an oversight on behalf of policymakers.

The WID approach aims to integrate women into the existing development process by targeting them, often in women-specific activities. Women are usually passive recipients in WID projects, which often emphasize making women more efficient producers and increasing their

income. Although many WID projects have improved health, income or resources in the short term, because they did not transform unequal relationships, a significant number were not sustainable. A common shortcoming of WID projects is that they do not consider women's multiple roles or those they miscalculate the elasticity of women's time and labour. Another is that such projects tend to be blind to men's roles and responsibilities in women's empowerment.

The biggest difference between WID and GAD is that WID projects traditionally were not grounded in a comprehensive gender analysis. The GAD approach is gender-analysis driven. There is definitely a need for women-specific and men-specific interventions at times. These complement gender initiatives. Research shows that the success of both sex specific and gender activities is directly linked with the depth of the gender analysis that informs them.

6. Gender and Development

GAD (or Gender and Development) approach focuses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women and emphasizes the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations. GAD emerged from a frustration with the lack of progress of WID policy, in changing women's lives and in influencing the broader development agenda. GAD challenged the WID focus on women in isolation, seeing women's 'real' problem as the imbalance of power between women and men. There are different interpretations of GAD, some of which focus primarily on the gender division of labor and gender roles focus on gender as a relation of power embedded in institutions. GAD approaches generally aim to meet both women's practical gender needs and more strategic gender needs, by challenging existing divisions of labor or power relations.

The GID or Gender in Development perspective emerged in the late 1980's as an alternative to the prevailing Women in Development or WID approach. Unlike WID, which

focused on women only, and called for their integration into development as producers and workers, GID focuses on the interdependence of men and women in society and on the unequal relations of power between them. The GID approach aims for a development process that transforms gender relations in order to enable women to participate on an equal basis with men in determining their common future. The GID approach emphasises the importance of women's collective organization for self empowerment.

The GAD approach focuses on intervening to address unequal gender relations which prevent inequitable development and which often lock women out of full participation. GAD seeks to have both women and men participate, make decisions and share benefits. This approach often aims at meeting practical needs as well as promoting strategic interests. A successful GAD approach requires sustained long-term commitment.

Note: There are two very similar terms in current usage – Gender in Development (GID): Gender and Development (GAD). There is no substantive difference in the meaning of these two terms, which may be used interchangeably. However, UNDP favours the use of the GID formulation, as it has a slightly more “integrated” connotation. Of course, if gender perspectives were fully mainstreamed into development thinking and action, there would be no need for either designation, as it would be understood that gender inequality is a fact of socioeconomic life, and therefore must be addressed as integral to all development initiatives.

Gender in Development (Condition and Position): Development projects generally aim to improve the condition of people's lives. From a gender and development perspective, a distinction is made between the day-to-day condition of women's lives and their position in society. In addition to the specific conditions which women share with men, differential access

means women's position in relation to men must also be assessed when interventions are planned and implemented.

Condition: This refers to the material state in which women and men live, and relates to their responsibilities and work. Improvements in women's and men's condition can be made by providing for example, safe water, credit, seeds, (i.e. practical gender needs).

Position: Position refers to women's social and economic standing in society relative to men, for example, male/female disparities in wages and employment opportunities, unequal representation in the political process, unequal ownership of land and property, vulnerability to violence (i.e. strategic gender need/interests).

Although WID and GAD perspectives are theoretically distinct, in practice it is less clear, with a program possibly involving elements of both. Whilst many development agencies are now committed to a gender approach, in practice, the primary institutional perspective remains as WID and associated 'antipoverty' and 'efficiency' policies. There is often a slippage between GAD policy rhetoric and a WID reality where 'gender' is mistakenly interpreted as 'women'.

7. Women's Empowerment

In the 1980s, empowerment was regarded as a weapon for the weak, best wielded through grassroots and participatory activities. However, empowerment has many meanings and by the mid 1990s some mainstream development agencies had begun to adopt the term. For the most part these institutions see empowerment as a means for enhancing efficiency and productivity without changing the status quo. The alternative development literature, on the other hand, looks to empowerment as a method of social transformation and achieving gender equality. Jo Rowlands (1997) sees empowerment as a broad development process that enables people to gain self-confidence and self-esteem, so allowing both men and women to actively participate in

development decision-making. The empowerment approach was also linked to the rise of participatory approaches to development and often meant working with women at the community level building organizational skills.

A 'bottom-up' process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it. 'Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace.

Central to the concept of women's empowerment is an understanding of power itself. Women's empowerment does not imply women taking over control previously held by men, but rather the need to transform the nature of power relations. Power may be understood as 'power within,' or self confidence, 'power with', or the capacity to organize with others towards a common purpose and the 'power to' effect change and take decisions, rather than 'power over' others.

Empowerment is sometimes described as being about the ability to make choices, but it must also involve being able to shape what choices are on offer. What is seen as empowering in one context may not be in another. Empowerment is essentially a bottom-up process rather than something that can be formulated as a top-down strategy. This means that development agencies cannot claim to 'empower women', nor can empowerment be defined in terms of specific activities or end results. This is because it involves a process whereby women, individually and collectively, freely analyze, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above. Planners working towards an empowerment approach must therefore develop ways of enabling women themselves to critically assess their own situation and

shape a transformation in society. The ultimate goal of women's empowerment is for women themselves to be the active agents of change in transforming gender relations.

Whilst empowerment cannot be 'done to' women, appropriate external support can be important to foster and support the process of empowerment. A facilitative rather than directive role is needed, such as funding women's organizations that work locally to address the causes of gender subordination and promoting dialogue between such organizations and those in positions of power.

Recently, interest has grown among development professionals in approaches to measuring women's empowerment, particularly in relation to microcredit programmes. A number of 'indicators of empowerment' have been developed in different contexts. Again, caution must be exercised in assuming that empowerment can be externally defined and objectively assessed, or that such indicators can be easily transferred.

8. Gender and the Environment (GED)

This approach was at first based on ecofeminist views, especially those of Vandana Shiva (1989), which made an essentialist link between women and the environment and encouraged environmental programmes to focus on women's roles. Others take a materialist or feminist political ecology approach.

9. Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is an organizational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability. The 1970s strategies of integrating women into development by establishing separate women's units or programmes within state and development institutions had made slow progress by the mid-1980s. In light of this, the need was identified for broader institutional

change if pervasive male advantage was to be challenged. Adding women- specific activities at the margin was no longer seen as sufficient. Most major development organizations and many governments have now embraced 'gender mainstreaming' as a strategy for moving towards gender equality.

With a mainstreaming strategy, gender concerns are seen as important to all aspects of development; for all sectors and areas of activity, and a fundamental part of the planning process. Responsibility for the implementation of gender policy is diffused across the organizational structure, rather than concentrated in a small central unit.

Such a process of mainstreaming has been seen to take one of two forms. The agenda-setting approach to mainstreaming seeks to transform the development agenda itself whilst prioritizing gender concerns. The more politically acceptable integrationist approach brings women's and gender concerns into all of the existing policies and programmes, focusing on adapting institutional procedures to achieve this. In both cases, political as well as technical skills are essential to a mainstreaming strategy.

Any approach to mainstreaming requires sufficient resources, as well as high-level commitment and authority. A combined strategy can be particularly powerful. This involves the synergy of a catalytic central gender unit with a cross-sectoral policy oversight and monitoring role, combined with a web of gender specialists across the institution. The building of alliances both within the institution and with outside constituencies, such as women's organizations, is crucial for success. Mainstreaming tools include gender training, introducing incentive structures which reward efforts on gender, and the development of gender-specific operational tools such as checklists and guidelines.

10. Gender Budgeting

Gender budgeting is the application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process; this entails a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. Gender budgeting is part of the gender mainstreaming strategy. Gender budgeting focuses on a gender-based analysis and an equality-oriented evaluation of the distribution of resources. These resources are mainly money, time as well as paid and/or unpaid work. Gender budgeting seeks to achieve a gender-equal distribution of resources. The distribution of resources in a society is a decisive factor for the participation of individuals in social decision-making processes, and for their esteem within the social fabric. The public budget clearly reflects the value-related decisions and priorities of a government.

Gender budgeting as part of gender mainstreaming in the case of financially effective decisions of the public sector. In the current discourse, gender budgeting is often understood as a procedure for the systematic analysis and development of public budgetary policies which aims at focusing on gender equality. In doing so, all budget-related political decisions, measures, programmes and laws as well as budgets are reviewed with regard to their consequences for different women and men.

The overall goal of gender budgeting is to achieve a gender-equality-oriented resource distribution on all areas of resource allocation. With regard to financially effective political decisions, this implies gender-equitable budgetary policies that encompass public revenue and expenditure as well as regulations and measures pertaining to economic policy. The gender perspective should be integrated into every phase of budgetary decisions and into the drawing up

of budgets. This implies a change of priorities that focuses on the implementation of gender equality of women and men.

Gender budgeting approaches

There are no standardized tools for the implementation of gender budgeting. This is mainly due to the extremely different national and local conditions governing budgetary and resource-related decisions. Therefore, translation of the given experiences into other contexts is limited. The different base lines and questions of gender budgeting initiatives require a customized adaptation and harmonization of tools to the relevant needs.

In the context of various gender budgeting initiatives, a whole range of approaches have been developed that Bud lender, among others, compiled in a set of seven tools. These tools are not to be directly integrated into the work of an administrative authority; however, they do offer important guidance

1. Gender-equality-oriented evaluation of political / economic strategies (by gender equality players)
2. Gender-sensitive check and analysis of individual financial priorities

Both approaches ensure the inclusion of the gender perspective in budget-relevant processes at the level of players.

3. Gender-oriented breakdown of the use of public funds (expenses)
4. Gender-oriented breakdown of public revenues
5. Gender-oriented breakdown of the impact of public funds on time management
6. Gender-equality focus in medium-term financial planning

These four approaches (3 – 6) enable a comprehensive analysis of the implications of budgetary processes on social gender relations. These four approaches help to make gender specific consequences of allegedly neutral budgetary activities visible.

7. Gender-equality-oriented explanation of budgets

The gender-equality-oriented explanation of budgets includes accountancy and is therefore already a form of controlling. Tools and steps for action that are based on these gender budgeting approaches have to be tailored to national and regional conditions and to the individual fields of action, subjects and specialized departments in administrative authorities.

11. Women's Human Rights

It is based on the recognition that women's rights are human rights and that women experience injustices solely because of their gender. The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) laid out the idea of the universality of rights, but failed to take into account women's needs and interests as women. Its focus was on formal political and civil rights, hence conceiving rights to be relevant to the 'public' rather than the 'private' sphere. As such, violations of women's bodily integrity, which occurred in the private sphere, were not part of the human rights discourse.

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) established in 1979 marked an important step towards explicit prohibition of discrimination against women. During preparations for the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993), women's groups mobilized around the slogan of "Women's rights are human rights!" which signifies the indivisibility of women's rights from universal human rights.

Participants in the UN Beijing Women's Conference (1995) continued with this call, attempting to broaden the conception of rights to include social, economic, and cultural rights, as well as reproductive and sexual rights put on the agenda at the 1994 Cairo population conference.

Gender-based violence has been a high profile issue in advocacy efforts on women's human rights. Groups have campaigned for the recognition as human rights of, for example, the right of women to freedom from rape, from sexual assault as refugees and displaced women, from abuse in custody, and particularly domestic violence. The 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights was a watershed as it marked the first international recognition of violence against women as a human rights violation. There is now a UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women with the specific remit to gather facts and report to the UN.

Whilst there has been progress in the recognition of women's human rights in international human rights instruments this has not been matched by progress in the implementation and enforcement of these rights by state bodies. Many countries have failed to ratify CEDAW, and some that have ratified it have failed to uphold it. Even when international and national laws recognize women's human rights, they may be undermined by patriarchal customary laws or social practices. Furthermore, human rights advocates, including those promoting women's rights, face challenges from those who regard human rights discourse as a western, imperialist imposition on other cultures.

Mobilization of women to claim their rights is essential in order to press for reforms, and for the implementation and enforcement of human rights and national legal instruments. This requires strategies of capacity-building in terms of literacy, legal knowledge, and political participation. Gender-awareness training for the judiciary and the police, in addition to strengthening women's participation in these fields, is also crucial.