Chapter 2

Literature Review
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Sociological Theories of Gender: 1960 - Present

Macro-Social Theories of Gender

Feminism's first question, "And what about the women?" has produced significant responses from theorists working out of three major macro-social perspectives that functionalism, analytic conflict theory and neo-Mannheim world systems theory. These theories all use the same analytic process in placing gender in their generalised theoretical account of large scale social phenomena. First, they define those phenomena as a system of interrelated and interacting structures, which are understood as "patterned regularities in people's behaviour" (Chafetz, 1984-23). Functionalists and analytic conflict theories focus on nation-states or, on occasion, especially within analytic conflict theory, on premodern cultural groupings; world-systems theory treats global capitalism as a transnational system within which nation-states are important structures. The variations between these theories centre on the particular structures and systematic processes they see as important. Second, these theories move to situate women within the system described. All three theories arrive at the same conclusion: women's primary location - in the sense that it is a location seen within all cultures as the distinctive "sphere" for women - is the household/family. From that primary location, and always with it as a framing condition, women may have other significant structural sites for activity, most notably in the market economy. The issue then becomes that of understanding the functions of the household/family in the social system and of charting the relationship between
household and economy. Third, each of these groups of gender theorists seeks to explain gender stratification - viewed as the near universal social disadvantage of women - in terms of the triangulated structural alignment of household/family, economy and general social system needs and processes.

**Functionalism**

The major proponent of a functional theory of gender is Miriam Johnson (1988, 1989, 1993). Speaking as a functionalist and a feminist, Johnson first acknowledges the failure of functionalism to adequately explore women's disadvantage in society. She accepts that there is an unintentional sexist bias in Talcott Parsons's theory of the family and that functionalism marginalises issues of social inequality, domination, and oppression - a tendency originating in functionalism's primary concern with social order. Yet Johnson cogently demonstrates that the analytical variety and complexity of Parsonian functionalism should be retained in analyses of gender because of the tremendous analytic range and flexibility such multifaceted theory - reiterating the position of many neo functionalists.

Most significant for a functionalist understanding of gender is Johnson's application of Parson's concept of other institutions, and this model of the functional prerequisites.

**Analytic conflict theory**

The most influential theorist working on the issue of gender from the perspective of analytic conflict theory is Janet Chafetz (1984, 1988, 1990; see also Dunn, Almquist and Chafetz, 1993), who unlike Johnson, works in a network of similarly framed
theoretical work (Rae lesser Blumberg, 1978, 1979, 1984; Randall Collins, 1975; and anthropologist Peggy Sanday, 1974, 1981). Chafetz's approach is cross-cultural and trans-historical and seeks to theorize gender in all its particular societal patternings. More specifically she focuses on gender inequality, or as the labels it, sex stratification. In starting with sex stratification, chaftz is consistent with analytic conflict theory practices: she funds a recurrent form of social conflict and sets out to analyse, from a value-neutral stance; the structural conditions producing the conflict in greater or lesser degrees of intensity.

Chafetz then explores the social structures and conditions which affect the intensity of sex stratification - or the disadvantaging of women - in all societies and culture. These include gender role differentiation, patriarchal ideology, family and work organisation and farming conditions such as fertility patterns, separation of household and worksites, economic surplus, technological sophistication, population density and environmental harshness - all understood as variables.

World Systems Theory

Kathryn B. Ward (1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1988, 1990, 1993) argues that (1) the world system cannot be understood until the labour of the informed economy are properly factored in and (2) that because women compose much of this labour, women must be given special attention in world systems theory and not simply subsumed under the title "worker". The household continues all the work done at home to maintain and reproduce the worker; the informal economy is that organisation of work in which there is no clear separation between labour and capital and no regulation of labour by law or
capitalist organisation. Ward argues that perhaps as much as sixty-six percent of the world's work is done in these two largely ignored, non-capitalist economics and that the proportion of the world's work done in these two economics is expanding precisely as capitalism itself expands globally.

Micro-Social Theories of Gender

Microsociological theorists have focused less on explaining women's social disadvantage than on explicating the phenomenon of gender as it enters into their understanding of society as human beings in interaction; they ask how gender is present in interactions and how interactions produce gender. The two main microsociological theories of gender are symbolic interactionism (Cahill, 1980; Deegan and Hill, 1987; Goffman, 1979) and ethnomethodology (Fenstermaker Berk, 1985; Fenstermaker, West, and Zimmerman, 1991; West and Fenstermaker, 1993; West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Symbolic interactionism's theory of gender begins with a proposition central to any symbolic-interactionist analysis: "Gender identity, like other social identities, emerges out of social interaction and is incorporated into individual's transsituational self [and] must be continually confirmed across varying interactional situations...because the self is subject to constant empirical tests" (Cahill, 1980 : 123).

Ethnomethodology, questions the stability of gender identity and looks at "how gender is done," that is, gender as an accomplishment by actors in various situations.
Both symbolic internationism and ethnomethodology allow for and assume an institutional milieu of normative conceptions about gender.

**Table 1: Overview of varieties of FEMINIST THEORY.**

| Basic varieties of Feminist theory -- answers to the descriptive question, "what about the women?" | Distinctions within theories -- answers to the explanatory question, "why is women's situation as it is?"
<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Difference</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's location in, and experience of, most situations is different from that of men in situation.</td>
<td>Cultural feminism Biology Institutional and socialisation social psychological.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Inequality</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's location in most situations is not only different from but also less privileged than or unequal to that of men.</td>
<td>Liberal Feminism Marxian Marx and Engel's explanations contemporary Marxian explanations.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Oppression</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women are oppressed, not just different from or unequal to, but actively restrained, subordinated, molded, and used and abused by men.</td>
<td>Psychoanalytic feminism Radical feminism Socialist feminism.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Third-wave feminism</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Women's experience of difference, inequality and oppression varies by their social location.</td>
<td>Diversity Critique vectors.</td>
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**General Inequality**

Four themes characterise the theories of gender inequality. **First**, men and women are situated in society not only differently but also unequally. Specifically, women get less of the material
resources, social status, power and opportunities for self-actualisation than do men who share their social location - be it a location based on class, race, occupation, ethnicity, religion, education, nationality or any other socially significant factor. **Second**, this inequality results from the organisation of society, not from any significant biological or personality differences between women and men. **Third**, although individual human beings may vary somewhat from each other in their profile of potentials and traits, no significant pattern of natural variation distinguishes the sexes. Instead, all human beings are characterised by a need for freedom to seek self-actualisation and by a fundamental malleability that leads them to adopt to the constraints or opportunities of the situations in which they find themselves. To say that there is gender inequality, then is to claim that women are situationally less empowered than men to realise the need they share with men for self-actualisation.

**Fourth**, all inequality theories assume that both women and men will respond fairly easily and naturally to more egalitarian social structures and situations. They affirm, in other words, that it is possible to change the situation. In this belief, theorists of gender inequality contrast with the theorists of gender difference, who present a picture of social life in which gender differences are, whatever their cause, more durable, more penetrative of personality, and less easily changed.

**Liberal Feminism**

time, liberal feminism is the most widely diffused approach within
the contemporary women's movement in America it undergirds much
popular writing on careers for women, equal parenting and the need
for gender-free schooling for young children; it guides many of the
policies initiated by the movement and is embodied in the
programatic statement of the most powerful of women's
organisations, the National Organisation for Women (NOW)
(Leidner, 1991; Ryan, 1992; Taylor, 1989; Tinker, 1983). An easy
complementarity between liberal feminism and the mainstream of
American political beliefs helps to make understandable the
popularity of this variant on feminist theory.

Liberal feminism's explanation of gender inequality begins
where theories of gender differences leave off: with an identification
of the sexual division of labour, the existence of separate public and
private spheres of social activity, men's primary location in the
former and women's in the latter, and the systematic socialisation of
children so that they can move into the adult roles and spheres
appropriate to their gender.

**Marxian Feminism**

Marxism presents one of the best known and intellectually
most elaborate theories of social oppression. Beginning with Marx
and Engels and continuing through the whole body of neo-Marxism
literature, this perspective develops the theory of social class
oppression, focusing on the domination of workers in the interests
of the ruling class and on the pervasiveness of class domination,
oppression and conflict in patterning both intranational and
international social relations. Marxian feminism brings together
Marxian class analysis and feminist social protest. Yet this amalgam
produces not an intensified theory of oppression but rather more muted statement of inequality, anatis, of gender inequality (Barrett, 1989; Ferguson, 1987; Kuhu and Wolpe, 1978; Mitchell, 1975; Rowbotham, 1973; Sargent, 1981; Vogal, 1984). While pure Marxian feminism is a relatively dormant theory in contemporary feminism, the tradition is important because of its influence on socialist feminism, which is probably the ascendent theory in academic feminism.

**Marx and Engels**

The foundation of this theory was laid by Marx and Engles. The major arguments of this book are:

1) Woman's subordination results not from her biology, which is presumably immutable, but from social arrangements that have a clear and traceable history, arrangements that presumably may be changed (This claim alone, taken in the context of nineteenth-century beliefs about women, makes the origins a feminist text).

2) The relational basis for women's subordination lies in the family, an institution aptly named from the latin word for servant, because the family as it exists in complex societies is overwhelmingly a system of dominant and subordinate roles. The double standard allows men far greater sexual freedom, within such an institution, particularly when, as in the middle-class family, the woman has no job outside the house and no economic independence, women are in fact the chattles or possessions of their husbands.

3) Society legitimizes this family system by claiming that such a structure is the fundamental institution in all societies. This power was exercised in collective and cooperative communal
living arrangements, commodity use, child rearing, and decision-making and through the free and unencumbered choice of love and sexual partners by both men and women. This type of society, which Marx and Engels describe elsewhere as primitive communism, is associated in The Origins with a free and empowered social status for women.

4) The factors that destroyed this type of social system, producing what Engels calls "the world historic defeat of the female sex" (Engels, 1884/1970 : 87) are economic, specifically the replacement of hunting and gathering by herding, horticulture and farming economics.

**Contemporary Marxian Feminism**

Contemporary Marxian feminists embed gender relations within what they consider to be more fundamental structure of the class system and particularly within the structure of the contemporary capitalist class system (Chinchilla, 1991; Folbre, 1993; Giminez, 1990, 1991; Shelton and Agger, 1993; Wilson, 1993; note in terms of our earlier comment that Marxian feminism is dominant; that three of these citations - Folbre, Shelton and Agger, and Wilson come from the same volume [England, 1993]). Marxian feminists acknowledge that within any class, women are less advantaged than men in their access to material goods, power, status and possibilities for self actualisation.

The embeddedness of gender inequality within the class system is most simply and starkly visible within the dominant class of contemporary capitalism, the bourgeoisie. Bourgeois men own the productive and organisational resources of industrial production commercialised agriculture, and national and international trade.
Women of the bourgeois class are not propertied but are themselves property, the wives and possessions of bourgeois men, men who understand at the deepest level the art of possession.

Gender inequality in the wage-earning classes also is functional for capitalism and therefore is perpetuated by capitalists. Women as wage earners are, because of their lower social status, more poorly paid and because of their sense of wage-sector marginality, difficult to unionise. Thus they serve as an unresisting source of profit for the ruling classes.

Martineau's (1837) feminist approach to social analysis is evident in Society in America in her pervasive interest in and investigation of the conditions of women's lives. She makes the rational facts of marriage in the United States a key index of the moral condition of that society (her conclusions are pessimistic). The enslavement of the Africal American population is her second key index, and she does not miss the significance of the interplay of gender and race. As she had written earlier.

In Martineau's (1932) opinion, a while woman has nobody to rule her but her husband and nobody can hurt her without his leave; but a Slave's wife must obey her master before her husband, and he cannot save her from being flogged.

In her writing and research after the study of U.S. Society, Martineau continued this women-centered sociology with investigations of women's education, family, marriage and the law, violence against women the tyranny of fashion, the inhumanity of the Arab harem, the inhumanity of the British treatment of prostitution, and in study after study, the nature of women's paid work, in terms of tis brutally heavy physical demands and wretchedly low wages.
Her particular focus was on the wage labour of working class women - in factories, in agriculture, in domestic service. In these studies, she brings together the double oppressions of class and gender.

Gilman (1898/1966) argues that in the foundational social institution, the economy, we find a basic stratificational practice which explains most of the ills observable in societies, in individual experience, and in history: that practice is gender inequality. Gilman, who like all the writers of this period lacked the term and concept "gender", uses "sex" to name the stratificational practice she identifies and theorizes. "Sex" in her usage conflates physiological sex traits with socio-cultural gender processes and socio-cultural emotional patternings of sexuality. Thus conceptualised, gender stratification is the primary tension in the economics of all known societies, producing in effect, two sex classes - men as a "master class" and women as a class of subordinated and disempowered social beings. Gillman call this pattern the "sexuo-economic arrangement." In Charlotte Perkins Gilman's (Women and Economics, 1898/1966) best known work, the novel The Yellow Wall Paper, written in 1892 six years before her first sociological book, "women and Economics", Gillman horrifying dramatizes this theme as the female first-person narrator descends into madness because of the inactivity enforced on her by her doctor husband and relatives, that is, by the sexuo-economic arrangements in society. This understanding of human nature is developed in all of Gillman's sociological writings: meaningful work is the essence of human self-realisation; restricting or denying the individual access to meaningful work reduces the individual to a condition of non-humidity.
Gillman presented programatic strategies for ameliorating the situation - another hallmark of critical and feminist social theory. Working systematically through this comprehensive and critical theory of society and gender is the project of Gillman's feminist sociology.

Like many feminist writers today, Gillman experimented with the forms in which her views, of the individual in society might be presented.

Three themes from her sociology are particularly relevant to the concerns of contemporary feminist sociology: the production and reproduction of gender stratification: the impact of gender stratification on social organisation in general and on economic and class relations in particular, and her strategies for social change.

Central to much of Gillman's work is an exploration of the processes that produce gender stratification. Here she uses evolutionary imagery in much the same way as Engels, for example, in The Origins of the family (1884/1970), develops a mythic prehistory for mankind. But stripped of this imagery, Gillman in fact makes a remarkable claim: man's domination of woman springs from his need for sociability with or recognition by an other. This is an argument with much currency in modern feminism. The women of Chicago, like many of the men, defined the purpose of sociology and their role as sociologists as the reform and improvement of society.

Jane Addams (1860-1935) is distinctive among interactionists, although representative of cultural feminists, in focusing on human beings not only as subjectivities but as bodies, and upon subjectivity not only as reason but also as emotion.
Drawing on her Hull House experiences, Addams repeatedly describes the embodied subject: A man who works by night sleeps regularly by day, but a woman finds it impossible to put aside the household duties which crowd upon her, and a conscientious girl finds it hard to sleep with her mother washing and scrubbing within a few feet of her bed. One of the most painful impressions of those first years is that of pale, listless girls, who worked regularly in the factory of the vicinity which was then running full night time. Thus confronted by that old conundrum of the interdependence of matter and spirit, the conviction was forced upon us ... that the power to overcome temptation reaches its limit almost automatically with that of physical resistance.

Addams argues that "parents, as well as daughters, (must) feel the democratic impulse and recognize" the daughter's desire to fulfil the social claim as a legitimate and conscientious action (1902/1907:77-78).

Anna Julia Cooper (Slavery and the French Revolutions 1788-1805) gives serious attention to the cultural themes of masculinity and femininity and to the outcome of those themes for personality and for societal functioning. Order in this may take two forms. It may result from domination and oppression, the situation in much of the contemporary world, or it may result from a dynamic and competitive interdependence between all sectors of a society.

The overriding concern of Marianne Weber's (1870-1954) sociological theory is with the possibility of creating equality of autonomy between men and women, given the very real differences between them produced by culture and structure and given the diversity within each gender category. She develops four themes...
around this central concern: the possibility of a general women's standpoint and the situated differences of standpoint among women; the dual oppressions of women's workplace and household life; the dynamics of gender and power; and her thesis about human nature and the cultural issues of masculinity and feminity. Marianne Weber uses legal research, historical data and statistical data as empirical bases for her theoretical arguments.

She claims that there is a distinctive women's standpoint: "The goal of the women's movement" must only be "those demands which are raised from woman's standpoint as such and for women as such (Hackett, 1976). She defines this standpoint partly by contrasting women's experiences and understandings with men's of marriage, public and household life, the importance of housework, Rower and other relational arrangements, ethics and war. But she also sees that there are differences among women in standpoint because of social class stratification.

The interaction of capitalism and patriarchy creates barriers to the attempts of women, especially nonelite women, to seek greater liberty and autonomy. Weber discusses legal reforms such as spousal rights, job training for women as a route to better employment and more meaningful lives, and most radical of all, various formulas that would provide monetary independence for the housewife, including wages for housework.

Weber's (1995) position is that to improve women's situation, one should begin by reforming the patriarchal household rather than the capitalist workplace. She sees that capitalism may offer some emancipation for women in its acceleration of individualism and its erosion of ancient relational patterns like
patriarchy (Thomas, 1985). A reformed, that is, non patriarchal, household, is one setting in which women can find vocation and self-actualisation. Weber's acute consciousness of women's varied vantage points, however, leads her also to recommended the pursuit of a public career, either paid or voluntary, as another avenue to self-actualisation.

Millicent Garrett Fawcebt (1847 - 1929) is invariably presented as the cautious leader of the constitutional movement for women's suffrage; the predominant image that emerges of her is one of a dedicated and dull woman. Martin Pugh (1980) has said that even her accounts of the constitutional movement are largely bland and unremarkable and there is no doubt that she has suffered in contrast with her more flamboyant contemporary, Emmeline Pankhurst.

To Millicent Fawcett it was her duty to work for women's suffrage and the elevation of the position of women, no matter how unpleasant the task may have been. That she justified her unpopular shared on the basis of the duty has, however, allowed her and her values to be readily misrepresented.

In trying to give some idea of how restricted access was to new, challenging knowledge, Lady Rhondda quotes an incident in relation to Havelock Ellis's book The Psychology of Sex. "It was the first thing of its kind I had found; she says, and, 'Though I was far from accepting it all, it opened up a whole new world of thought to me. I discussed it at some length with my father and he, much interested, went off to buy the set of volumes for himself; but in those days, one could not walk into a shop and buy "The Psychology of Sex"; one had to produce some kind of signed certificate from a
doctor or a lawyer to the effect that one was a suitable person to read it. The reason Lady Rhondda had been able to read it, while her father - to his indignation, could not - was because of the practical provisions made by Ruth Cavendish Bentink who had established a liberty and who was at the time supplying all the young women in the suffrage movement with the books they could not procure in the ordinary way'

Women's economic empowerment is absolutely essential for raising their status in society. Visits to several hundred villages spread throughout the country and large-scale interactions with rural-urban women and questioning them about their needs always elicited the same answer:

"Give us jobs - we can do the rest".

According to Imanuel Wallerstein (societal development on Development of the world system), the capitalist economic foundation of globalisation was laid as early as in 16th century [1990]. Ronald Robertson (Globalisation Social theory and Global culture in 1992) traced the historical temporal path of globalisation to the present complex structure of global system through five phases:

i) the germinal (1400-1750) phase of dissolution of christendom and emergence of nationalism in Europe;

ii) the incipient (1750-1875) phase of nation state and the initial phase of internationalism and universalism in Europe;

iii) the take of (1875-1925) phase of conceptualisation of the world as a single international society, global calender, first world
war, mass international migration and inclusion of non-
Europeans in the international club of nation states;

iv) the struggle for hegemony (1925-1969) phase of cold war, the
emergence of league of Nations and the UN and the emergence
of third world and

v) the uncertainty (1969-1992) phase of space exploration,
reconquition of global environmental problem and global mass
media, via space technology [1992 ].

Maitreyi Chowdhuri (1996) has since done a cogent textual
analysis of WRPE. She stressed the surprising modernity of many
of the concerns of the report as well as the sharp break it had made
from the gender-blindness of liberal theory. At the same time, she
highlighted the many contradictions that were built into the text; these
apparently had arisen from the tensions that were inherent to the
project of the WRPE (women's Role in Planned Economy). The latter,
after all, was trying to make a very aggressive and unfamiliar
individuality a very aggressive and unfamiliar individuality for
women acceptable in a society which was totally unfamiliar with the
idea. Moreover, the exercise was being carried out at the very in
nature when people were engaged in the task of forging a new
national identity out of the struggles emerging from a hated colonial
rule. To protect its hurt and fragile pride, it had probably been
considered necessary to glorify its own past traditions.

Even more surprising is that along with the WRPE report,
the concerns and stances that had been voiced were also completely
forgotten or rejected. The WRPE had achieved a major breakthrough
by shifting, perhaps for the first time in Indian consciousness, the
focus of policy concerns from their longterm preoccupation with
middle class women to poor working women. Given that India was a practising democracy, public policies from the first plan onwards naturally had to be oriented to the masses, including the majority of working masses, including the majority of working women who happened to be poor. However, official policies in independent India showed no interest in women as workers: instead, the first plan resolved to provide women with adequate services necessary to fulfil what was called a "woman's legitimate role in the family" (census of India). Women were back to their iconic roles within the family.

The report of the committee on the status of women in India mentions that the third plan's thrust for women's development was on girls' education [GOI 1974: 307]. But it obviously was not for improving the latter's work prospects. Even more disheartening is the fact that the plan document, in talking about the gap between boy's and girls' educational achievements, had carefully avoided examining its causes; non did it appear to consider that the state may have some responsibility for removing those.

Nirmala Banerjee (1982) have identified official plans took no financial or administrative responsibility for this last sector; there was no plan provision for supplying it with inputs like capital, skill training or assistance for technological upgradation. On the other hand, in setting their sectorwise targets for employment, the plans put the onus of generating bulk of the jobs on this very unorganised sector. For example, for the second plan period, it had been estimated that an additional 80 million new jobs were needed if the backlog of those unemployment at the beginning of the plan plus those newly added to the labour force during the plan's tenure were to be freshly employed. But, the planned sectors were expected to generate no more than 30-32 million jobs. The rest of the jobs were
to come from somewhere else, presumably in the unorganised sector [Banerjee 1988]. There was no acknowledgement on regret expressed that, without any plans for provision of additional resources or skills for this set of activities, the employment in unorganised sector was bound to be much less productive and rewarding than in the planned sectors. This discrimination between two sections of the economy - the traditional and the unorganised - remained built-in in the Indian plant policies. It was perhaps one of the main reasons for the sharp increase over the 1950s and the 1960s in the incidence of poverty, and in the skewness of income distribution that has been widely noted [Shrinivasan et al., 1974; P. K. Bardhan 1984].

J. N. Sinha (1972) find out that in the decades of the 1950s and the 1960s, the overall character of women's employment did not change very much; over 80 per cent of them continued to work in agriculture. Most of the remaining women worked in other unorganised activities [GG (1970)], and the lack of concern on the part of the planners no doubt contributed to the further deterioration in women's economic position. The changes that took place in specific sections of the economy mainly went to re-affirm women's continued subordination. For example, as trade spread over a wider area, women's employment in it went down sharply. In manufacturing industry, their employment increased during the 1950s, but largely in the capacity of unpaid family labour and that too only in few, mainly stagnant industries where women had a tradition of work. As Sinha noted, under the first three plans, women had found few openings it newer, faster growing industries what had come up through planne development [Sinha, 1972].
Importantly, even in the organised sector where there was
a state intervention, there was, if anything, an aggravation in the
differences between male and female workers. The national
commission of labour [Census of India 1969]. Showed that in coal,
mica and manganese mining, women's absolute and relative numbers
had declined (Census of India 1965). In Jute and Cotton textile mills,
the existing imbalance in the division of labour between men and
women had become exacerbated. The unskilled tasks where women
had been working were being rationalised which had led to a
reduction in their relative numbers in those industries [1969 : Census
of India].

In most kinds of plantations, women continued to form 40
percent or more of the total labour but their wage rates, even when
officially fixed, were still significantly below the male wage rates
[Census of India, 1969].

The WRPE had dreamed of women being recognised as
workers in their own rights, earning their own independent incomes;
but the plans as well as actual trends in the economy indicated that
they were being further pressurised into becoming subservient
creatures of the household. As shown before, the plans emphasised
their roles in the household and the community. The trends in the
economy continued to take away their options of making an
independent living.

Regarding the ideas of WRPE vis-a-vis women's economic
independence, the official policy could afford to be even more
cavalier. After all, those ideas had never been a part of the policy
agenda of Nehru and the party under him. After independence, as
the leader of the government, Nehru was quite outspoken in this
matter. In a speech at a girls' college in New Delhi in 1950, Nehru mentioned that women's education was important for making" better homes, better family and better society". He showed his displeasure at the "sloppy" way in which Indians keep their houses and said that "women are chiefly responsible for running the home and should know how to do this in an orderly and aesthetic may" (Gopal 1993). Although he was talking to girl students engaged in higher education in the capital cites of India, there was not a word about the need for them to play any role in the economy or to become efficient and productive workers.

A volume edited by Tara Ali Baig (1957) in late 1950s was patently designed to build up and enlogise the image of the woman as the keeper of the family. The foreword by Nehru is predictably condescending. He talks about our "revolution (!)" being basic because it had affected "the status and the living conditions of our women" [Baig 1957 : VII] but does not mention what those revolutionary changes had been. Ali Baig's own piece is about women the home-maker through ages. The article on education by Muriel Wasi notes with pride that women's enrolment in universities had doubled. She also mentioned the increase in girls' enrolment in secondary education; but does not show any interest in the educational needs of rural girls or of the ordinary woman. The only article in the volume to strike a different note was by Padmini Sengupta on "women in Trades and Professions" where the author notes with some concern the tendency to retrench women from industrial jobs in organised sector.

The most surprising piece in the volume, however, is by Durgabai Deshmukh who was then a member of the Planning Commission. Back in 1921, Durgabai, then a young girl of 12 years,
had organised a meeting of 1,000 Davadasis with Gandhi in a small town of coastal Andhra Pradesh and had raised Rs. 20,000 as donation for the Mahatma [Forbes 1996: 127-28]. After Independence, she had been the chairperson of the Central Social Welfare board. As a planner, however, Durgabai perceived women on supplementary earners and welfare receivers. Her message to women, which concludes, the volume is worth quoting; which the field for women's participation in the work of nation building is vast, much depends on effective exploitation of possibilities. In this context, the spirit that should inspire them should not be one of competition but of co-operation... a willingness to render unselfish service... leaving aside other fields, the field of social welfare and social service is itself so vast most of us can find through participation the joy and satisfaction of having done something worthwhile, if so desire (Baig, 1958).

Women in other words were a different species who could and should women, in other words, were a different species who could and should find self-fulfilment only as selfless workers for the welfare of others. (One of Durgabai's suggestions was then women should save for financing the plan). Poor needy women should be satisfied with some welfare schemes which would give them supplementary income to help the family survive.

The platform on which of different backgrounds had earlier cometogether had been provided by the nationalist movement. The urban educated women of the kind who had participated in the preparation of the WRPE had become aware of the problems of the poor; but they had found little opportunity to built their own communication channels with the latter in the whirlwind of the nationalist movement. Again many of them had worked closely with
the women victims of the great famine and the upheaval following
the participation. But those crisis periods were not conducive to
building a mutual understanding and respect between two groups
regarding the gender based commonalities they shared. So, whether
the NPC watered down the recommendations of WRPE or the party
in power ignored the claims for justice of the ordinary women, it is
clear that the women in the lead lacked the backing of an organised
women's mass movement to challenge the decision-making
ingauthorities. They had to accept the dictates of the latter as final.

This also meant that the feminists could communicate with
or appeal only to the state. Even if they knew, as the WRPE report
indicates, that women's main oppressions were the patriarchal
powers within the household, the society and the economy, they
could not think of throwing the gauntlet at them. Instead, their only
rope seemed to appeal to the state or the political authorities to take
legal or administrative measures to curb the power of patriarchy over
women - be it for routine things like timing of family meals or for
some recognition of their unpaid labour. '

For those of us in the women's movement today, it is a
movement for reflection. Even after 50 years of independence, we are
still following this strategy. We have no illusions about the
patriarchal nature of the Indian state which continues to leave to
household-based authoritaries the control over the lives of their
women. And, despite a number of face saving laws made by the
state practices like dowry-based violence or female foeticide are
carried on with impunity within the household. Despite this, the
Indian women's movement is no more sure that it has the strength to
frontally challenge household-based patriarchy than were those
stalwarts working 60 years ago on WRPE. We still are looking to the state to curb the patriarchal forces and to give women autonomy over their lives.

Periyar had noted: "Just as barhminism condemns a very large portion of the working population to Shudrehood, so it has condemned women to the servitude of marriage." [Anaimuthu 1974]. Neelavathi sees to establish a homology between women condemned to housework and childbearing and yet demed the status of labourers and Shudras condemned to their caste status (and labour) and denied the identity of productive workers.

What is important to note here is that while women like Minakshi reminded their nationalist peers to be attentive to questions of caste difference and consider the problems faced by devadasis and adi dravida women as equally pertinent to the national struggle, as say the boycott of liquor shopes, socialist minded women like Neelavathi sought to remind all women of their common fate as workers in the family. The self-respects acknowledged the fact that caste divided women and prevented them from coming to terms with all those common modes of oppression to which they were subject under patriarchy. Yet they also knew that this divide cannot simply be wished away and that women had to consciously work at coming together, rather than assuming that they could simply because they were sisters together in the nationalist struggle. Women self-respecters resisted caste in other ways as were: by endorsing adi dravida rights - to temple entry, to a separate electorate to learning; by supporting the demand for communal representation - for all non-brahmins in government and education and opposing and criticising the ideology of nationalism, as
exemplified by Gandhi Kunjitham, an intelligent and well read self-respecter met Gandhi, and questioned him closely about his views on varnadharma and caste. She was accompanied on that occasion by her husband, Guruswamy, and other self-respecters, all of whom were keenly interested in unravelling the tangle of piety, politics and pragmatism which lay at the heart of Gandhi's pronouncements and practice during this period (Puratchi, January 14, 1934). Neelavathi met with Gandhi during his visit to the Tamil country in 1934 and interrogated his faith in Varnadharma, his views on the abolition of untouchability and the place he reserved for religion in public life (Puratchi, February 18, 1934).

It must be said here that many adi-dravida women were active in the self-respect movement. The most famous and visible amongst them was Anapoorani, an extremely wellread, articulate and daring woman who spokeout on a variety of matters, including atheism, the repression of caste and the right of women. She married A Rathinasabapathy, an upper caste non-brahmin and a socialist by conviction. Their marriage was considered by'self-respect movement to be a major victory over caste and orthodoxy. Rathinasabapathy was also in the forefront of the struggle against the subordination of women and wrote a fascinating novelle, titled, Yezhai Azhutha Kaneer (The Tears of the poor) (1932), which described a sort of dystopia, where men were punished for their sins towards women in the real world and caste into perdition and eternal suffering.

**Women Self-Respects and their claims on reason**

For women who thus, opposed caste, their new sense of self came to hinge on two aspects of consciousness. Reason and mutality Reason was interpreted by women to mean an aspect of a probing,
curious and active intelligence and one which would enable them unravel the meaning of all those rituals, customs and everyday practices which bound them to a life of unknowing and domestic servitude. Reason was to enable them question themselves and reflect on the choices they made, even if these happened to be merely quotidian ones. As Minakshi passionately expostulated in the course of her critique of civil disobedience: sisters, reflect for a moment on the horrors you endure in your day-to-day life. You borrow money—because you wish to observe a custom, practice a ritual, you borrow for a funeral, a pilgrimage ... consequently, poverty, humiliation, debt, police warrant, mortgave, the misery that visits your children, unbearable endness and the rebuke of others. One follows the other why must you do this? To preserve a convention, an orthodox custom? To appear virtuous in the eyes of others? Do you not realise your [minds] are diseased ... stricken with barbarity and afflicted with degenerate rituals .... (Kudi Arasu, March 6, 1932). More generally, women would uphold the claims of reason against the dictates of faith and religious norms and the rules of tradition.

Fighting caste and reasoning against faith, women self respecters viewed themselves as the citizens of the future, as harbingers of the millennium. This millennial urge informed the movement's perceptions of itself to a great degree. Periyar and others often proclaimed themselves as revolutionaries who not only wised to stand caste society on its head, but who were doing so, in the knowledge that no one or no movement, since the time of the Buddha had attempted such a thing. For women, this millennial imagery translated itself as an invitation to citizenhood, to a community of comrades. Even the self-respect marriage row echoed the spirit of comradeship the self respecters wished to consecrate.
Today our conjugal life that is based on love begins. From today I accept you, my dear and beloved comrade as my spouse, so that I may consecrate my love and co-operation for the cause of social progress, in such a manner as would not contradict your desires." (Kudi Arasu 1974: May 11, 1929).

It has been a truism to state that in the early decades of planning in Independent India, as in almost all other countries, women were only looked at as components of social welfare programmes and not of development. We have by now gone through the phase of looking at women from a welfare approach, from an equity approach, from a rights approach. The prevailing discourse in the 1990s is of empowerment but where were as in the first two and a half decades of development India. Were women as women been even as part of welfare? The development plans in fact did not really look a women and their concerns till the committee on the status of women in India (CSW1) report and then the public policy too incorporated their concerns only marginality. Why was this so and how was it that after women's very visible presence and anticipation in the national struggle for freedom and stalwarts still riding on the rational horizon, women as women were so ignored? Was it a consequence of the type of model of planning, the vision and societies of Independent India or the adequate presence of women at the decision making levels and political levels.

In the field of social services the First Five Year Plan made special mention of the increased provision for scheduled tribes, scheduled areas and for scheduled castes and other backward classes, including criminal tribes. However, there seems to have been a singular lack of appreciation of their special needs. In the health plan, for instance in the list of priorities, women are only
mentioned for "(iv) health services for mothers and children". Family limitation or the spacing of the children, it was said, was necessary and desirable in order to secure better health for the mother and better care and upbringing of the children.

In education, the principal requirements of the educational situations were stated to include expansion of facilities for women's education, training of teachers, especially women teachers and teachers for basic schools. There is a special mention of women's education with the following statement:

The First Five Year Plan : (115) emphasised problems concerning women's education receive considerable attention in the plan. It is recommended that while women should have equal opportunities with men in various fields of education, special attention should be given to those in which they have marked aptitudes. For advancing women's education it is important that extensive opportunities should be afforded to them for private study and for taking higher examinations as private candidates. The organisation of short-term courses for women in general education and in crafts is also recommended.

It is under social welfare that 'women welfare' has been specially discussed but it has been left to voluntary organisations.

The main burden of organised activities for the welfare of women is to a large extent borne by voluntary agencies ....... the principal social welfare programmes relate to women and children. It is envisaged that within the limitations of their resources the central and the state governments and the local authorities will strive to undertake more direct responsibility in respect of social welfare than hitherto. Voluntary agencies will have to share the major
burden in this field .... A sum of Rs. 4 crore has been provided in the plan for strengthening, improving and expanding the nature and scope of their welfare activities. It is proposed to set up a social welfare board ..... composed largely of non-officials having actual experience in the field of voluntary welfare work ... to administer this fund ... enjoying a great deal of administrative authority (idib : 124).

In the second Five Year Plan, women do not even figure under social welfare programme but figure only under Central Social Welfare Board Schemes/Services. Welfare of women and children, it is stated, is part of the comprehensive social welfare programme. In health, the specific objective relating to women is not even Maternal and Child Health (MCH) but only "(s) family planing and other supporting programmes for raising the standard of health of the people". The Third Five Year Plan refers to girls' education and MCH. The question of nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives (ANM) and other health workers and women teachers figures in these plans only in the context of their need for institutional expansion. Thus the culture constraints requiring women doctors and auxiliary health personnel led to women's entry and access to health and medical education and training. In the Fourth Five Year Plan the issue of girls' education is taken up and regarding other programmes for women, it is stated that 'CSWB will continue to assist voluntary organisations which implement programmes of women and child welfare as condensed coursed, urban welfare extension projects, etc."

In the social sector, there are sectoral allocations and programmes in which women are either presumed to be beneficiaries or there is a reference to their problems but no attempt to deal with women's issues and concerns. Instead, there is only inclusion of some services and programmes catering to certain identified
problems. Various departments of government should be and are responsible for the planning of programmes for women. However these received special attention only in the social welfare sector, where social welfare services were intended to cater to the special needs of persons and groups who, by reasons of some handicap - social, economic, physical or mental - were unable to avail of or were traditionally denied the amenities and benefits provided by the community women, along with SC (ST and physically and mentally handicapped were considered eligible for welfare and their eligibility determined by the planners' perception of their problems. They perceived women's problems as arising from their being handicapped by social customs and social values. These Five Years Plans, therefore, lay emphasis on providing services for women which would protect them as a weaker section of society and the services constituted mainly health, education and related welfare activities. [Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay : 1994]

Sarah Shaver Hughes and Brady Hughes (Women In World History Vol. 2) finds that one of the most striking changes of the modern world is mass participation by women in politics. In 1500, monarchies were found everywhere. Only women within the palace had much influence and they were more likely to wield power on behalf of their sons or brothers than their genders. Family based power continues to be significant in the late twentieth century, when in south and southeast Asia, as well as in Latin America, women are chosen as national leaders as representatives of their patrician clans.

Most nations achieved independence from direct colonial rule between 1945 and 1975. In most regions, a heritage of dependency on military weapons, trade or markets for export of natural resources lingers. For women of the former colonies, the
heritage is even more complex. Patriarchas customs and laws were enhanced by colonial rulers in many nations of Africa and Asia. Traditional devisions of agricultural resources and labour were disturbed, as were divisions of responsibility within the family. Men often now control contemporary cash crops for export, leaving their wives to grow food for the entire family but expecting the women to pay their share of children's school expenses. Before 1985, these women's roles in the economy, though essential, were invisible to technicians who distributed loans and foreign aid for economic development.

In the 1990s, increasing number of women, consider work as a career and expect their career decisions to be given equal weight within the family with those of men. Women's share for the adult paid labour force has risen sharply throughout the world in the twentieth century. Throughout much of the world, women work more hours for pay (at less pay per hour) each week than men do; even fully employed women spend more hours weekly on housework and child care than men. Although the reading economic sectors employing women today vary considerably by world regions, outside of subsaharan Africa and southern Asia where agriculture remains women's largest employer, women are everywhere more likely to work providing services than in manufacturing or transport industries. Despite the inequities remaining between men and women in 1990, it is the rapid pace of change on every continent since 1950 in women's employment outside the home that is most remarkable. The contrast is even greater when comparison is made to the pre-industrial world.

As industrialisation spread in the nineteenth century across western Europe, then into other countries around the world women
gained new opportunities. Industrial work that was once done in the home by the whole family moved to the factories. The textile and food processing industries were notable for hiring women, especially young, single ones, because they could be paid less than men. The growing urban centers attracted more women who become domestic servants of the increasing middle class. Few women planned careers because most still hoped to work outside their homes only before marriage, though many had to continue to earn (often by poorly paid homework) to supplement their husbands' wages.

Continuing economic development in the twentieth century led to a proliferation of occupations, most reserved for men, but some offering clerical, retail or professional opportunities to women. However, when many women entered a field - as happened at various times and places in teaching, clerical jobs, retail sales and banking - both prestige and pay dropped sharply.

Despite persistent inequities, working for pay revolutionized women's lives. Educating girls became an asset. Young women defined parents to escape arranged marriages and traditional restrictions on their behaviour. Divorce rates escalated as women choose independence in preference to unhappy marriages. Fertility declined sharply as women exercised options other than motherhood. In developed regions of the world by 1995, total births per women were below the population replacement level of 1.9. Only in southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa did women continue to have more than five infants each.

Dr. Anita Arya (Indian Womens Vol. 3) finds that women are primarily associated with the home and man with the outside world. As home-makers women are expected to look after domestic
chores, such as cooking and serving food, processing and storage of food, and cleaning the house woman's contribution to productive activities or to actual earning of the family varies at different socio-economic levels and in different regions.

This traditional concept of women's role is gradually changing as girls have started taking up white collar jobs. In some families, the earnings of the girl are set aside for providing her dowry and marriage expenses, but gradually, the inhibition of the parents to be supported by the earnings of a daughter are also breaking down. There are extreme cases of parents not wanting the daughter to get married, as it would deprive them of her earnings.

The persistence of traditional norms in regard to women's essentially domestic roles and the addition of new work roles in the wider society has created problems of adjustment for them. It has added to their burdens. Everyday domestic chores plus full time employment imply a workload that cannot be managed easily by them. On the domestic front there is little help; they cannot neglect their responsibility in this sphere. The in-laws and even the husband and the children to not extend to them the measure of sympathy and support they need.

New life styles for women are now visible. Today, in the professions, services and in the field of social work, we have a number of successful unmarried women who enjoy high status. Along with married women, who are primarily housewives, there are women who combine housework and job and there are also those who may return to their work or take up a job after their children have grown up. It is generally said that this phase of Indian planning and policy was characterised by a belief in the theory of trickle down of
the benefits of growth. It could not have been unclear to the planners and policy-makers that with the inequalities embedded in the feudal, patriarchal structures, the trickle down would also be intercepted by those who had the power to do so and therefore trickle down, if any, would be unequal and the development/growth would only reinforce the inequalities, with women affected doubly due to their class/caste and gender. But there was no effort to address these continued/reinforced inequalities of gender.

Women’s subordination is not only due to male domination but also due to the basic economic and political structures of society which again are reinforced by the same male domination. The planners and policy-makers were reluctant to question them though these were contrary to the constitutional guarantee of social, economic and political justice in its Preamble and Directive Principle of State policy in Article 38 that the state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political shall inform all the institutions of the national life. They failed to recognise that women's needs, therefore, should have specially been the legitimate concern of policy-making process. The constitutional guarantee required the state’s response to women's social problems whether the state acted directly or mobilised and involved/used other actors and institutions.

Even within the welfare and community development approach, the attention to women's participation got subsumed under the overall rubric of community. Extension agents/workers were placed in community development (CD) block/national extension services (NES), while ten gram swaks (male village level workers) were placed in the block for what were can call "other than
women's programmes", only two gram sevikas (female village level workers) were placed in a block to look after women's programmes including mahila mandals which could be an important instrument in their organisation/mobilisation. It is not difficult to visualise the results of this difference but no one expected to be questioned. Then, in some states even the emoluments of these female workers were pegged lower than that of the gram sevaks. This was further compounded by the decision to reduce financial support to women's programmes at the earliest opportunity on the ground of their low success or problem of resources. In times of competing claims for scarce resources particularly in a developing country, welfare services are the first to face cutbacks without changing or lowering the rhetoric. The welfare policy/approach and this low priority to women's programmes/measures" too had their origin in the basic ideology which treated women as only a weaker section, a housewife and a mother and hence with the lowest claim on public resources.

It appears that the invisibility of women was not only to non-availability of data regarding the extent of their participation and about their needs which should have been addressed. Women were "noticeably absent from the discussions of development theory and practice during the first United Nations Development Decade (1960-70) [Young, Kate 1993 : 18]. Even later in the 1980s, newly established women's countries were anxious to visible women by, for example, improving data collection techniques and national accounting procedures. But their capacity to change the situation, which the mass of data collected revealed, was limited. This study of N. Banerjee and S. Mitter (1998) has examined several instances of women of diverse backgrounds interacting with changing technologies, in the past and currently, in different regions and
industries of country. The analysis has shown that, inspite of these many differences, the reasons why women were comparatively the greater losers were surprisingly similar. Their skills were often very specific to the traditional task and given their makeshift and poor tools of low productivity. Admittedly, employers and male-dominated trade unions had on many occasions used women for adjusting to the shifts in demand for labour arising from technological changes. But it is also true that women's household responsibilities did make them less flexible in their approach to work. In short, the gendered construction of women workers had made them specially vulnerable to technological redundancy.

We have tried to show through our analysis that the dominant position in the Indian women's movement that views technological change itself as being suspect arises from a confusion about how to view women themselves. Through its identification of women with their traditional roles, a major section in the movement has come dangerously near essentialising them in their 'feminine' roles. In that, it has played the hands of the powerful patriarchal forces in our country who want to assign to women the task of preserving the very traditions that have oppressed them.

There is an urgent need to build an active partnership between NGOs working at the grass roots with women and researchers working on women's issues but with the perspective on both the changes that are taking place at the macro level and the possibilities that modern science and technologies have opened for mankind. Unless women release themselves from the day-to-day struggle for survival which they can only do through this emerging potential, they can not hope to find the voice or the opportunity to participate in public decision-making about the nature of future development.
Despite progress, gender disparities persist

The last half of the 20th century saw great improvement in the absolute status of women and in gender equality in many parts of the world - with respect to schooling, health status, labour force participation and wages. Despite the progress, however, significant gender inequalities in rights, resources and voice persist in all developing countries. For example:

* In no region do women and men have equal rights. In a number of countries women still lack independent rights to own land, manage property, conduct business, or even travel without their husbands' consent.

* Women continue to have systematically poorer command over a range of productive resources including land information and financial resources.

* Despite considerable increases in women's education relative to men, women continue to have limited opportunities and earn less than men in the labour market - even when they have the same education and work experience as men.

* Women remain vastly underrepresented in politics and policy making. They hold less than 10 percent of the seats in Parliaments in most regions and less than 8 percent of government ministerial positions.

While women and girls bear the most direct and severe costs of these inequalities, the costs cut more broadly across societies, ultimately harming everyone. Among the poor, these disparities contribute to significant risk and vulnerability in the face of personal or family crises and during shocks.
Gender inequalities tend to be greater among the poor

One of the striking patterns from data across countries is that gender disparities, especially in basic indicators of well-being and development, are greatest on average in poorer countries. And within countries, these disparities tend to be greatest among the poorest households (Fig. 1).

Gender inequalities harm well-being, hinder development

A large body of evidence from a range of countries demonstrates that societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay a significant price in terms of higher poverty and lower quality of life, slower economic growth and development and weaker governance. The costs of gender inequality are particularly large in low-income countries - and within countries the costs are largest for the poor. Let us consider a few examples. Well-being young children are disadvantaged directly by their mothers illiteracy and lack of schooling. Lack of schooling means poor quality of care, which means more illness, more malnutrition, and higher child mortality. Mothers with more education are more likely to adopt appropriate health promoting behaviours, such as having young children immunized, which translated into better health and well-being for their children.

Raising household income improves child survival rates and nutritional status. But who controls this additional income also matters. In the hands of women within the household, it has a larger positive impact. This is the conclusion of studies from a number of countries, including Bangladesh, Brazil and côte d'Ivoire and under scores the fact that the balance of power between women and men
within the home is important why? Because women are more likely than men to spend the additional household income for schooling, health expenditures and food.

Gender inequality can harm adults in drastic ways. One case in point. A recent cross-country study indicates that countries with the largest gender gaps in schooling and urban employment have experienced the fastest growth of HIV infection rates - a relationship that holds even after controlling for many other factors that explain HIV prevalence. Unchecked, the AIDS epidemic will spread rapidly over the next decades - until up to one in four women and one in five men become infected, already the case in several countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

**Productivity and economic growth**

Gender inequalities also reduce output and productivity in farms and enterprises. These losses result from inefficiencies that arise from systematically excluding women or men from access to productive resources, public services and employment.

One study estimates that if the countries in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East and North Africa had started with the gender gap in schooling that East Asia had in 1960 and had closed that gender gap at the rate achieved by East Asia from 1960 to 1992, their income per capita could have grown 0.5-0.9 percentage points faster per year - substantial increases over actual growth rates. Even for middle and upper income countries with higher initial education levels, an increase of one percentage point in the share of women with secondary education is associated with an increase in per capita income of 0.3 percentage points.
Governance

Finally, evidence suggests that gender inequality weakens a country's quality of governance - and thus the effectiveness of its development policies.

Several recent studies find that in countries where women have more equal rights or greater participation in public life, corruption is lower. The findings hold even when comparing countries with the same income, civil liberties, education and legal institutions.

A study of 350 firms in the republic of Georgia concludes that women in business are less likely to pay bribes to government officials. Firms owned or managed by men are 10 percent more likely to make unofficial payments to government officials than those owned or managed by women. As with the other studies, this result holds regardless of the characteristics of the firm and characteristics of the owner or manager. While these findings are still only suggestive, they argue for a large presence of women in the labour force and in politics - since they can be an effective force for the rule of law and good government.

Public Policy matters to Gender Equality

Because gender inequalities exact high human costs and high costs to development - and because the factors that cause gender inequalities to persist are difficult for individuals alone to change - there is a strong case for public action to promote gender equality. In this context,
Engendering Development outlines a three part strategy to promote gender equality.

- **Reform institutions** to provide equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men.

- **Foster economic development** to strengthen incentives for more equal resources and participation.

- **Take active measures** to redress persistent disparities in command of resources and political voice.

**Rights, resources, participation**

Under development as well as gender inequality is the story of power and powerlessness: who was it, who wields it, how and for what purpose. The goal of our work is to equalise power between women and men in the home, at work, under the law, in public office, in public policy and in every other area of life that matters. But precisely because of its potential to equalise power relationships and to transform structures, there will be tremendous resistance.

The contribution of women in the redefinition of power is probably going to be their most transformative contribution. It has something to do with bringing about a just and harmonious social order, exercising democratic leadership, promoting a participatory process and protecting the rights of the minority. As Mary Robinson, has said it so eloquently, "As women lead, they are changing leadership; as they organise, they are changing organisation. Women have fresh and imaginative skills of dialogue and are setting a more open, flexible and compassionate style of leadership." There is evidence in many countries that women's
political leadership and participation have led not only to change in style but most especially to priorities with the accompanying changes in budget allocations. And as has already been pointed out in the Bank's report, there is a decrease in the level of corruption as the number of women in public office increases.

Women have shied away from power because it has always meant control, domination and manipulation. Power needs to be redefined in order for women to claim it. Power, according to Irene M. Santigo, is the potency to act for what is good. When power is based on women's vision and values, it is transformative. Politics and governance will change when women engage in public discourse and play a significant part in decision making. As we continue to search for development that is humanly meaningful and ultimately sustainable, the political space opened by women from the grassroots to the highest reaches of the UN is the one space where women must belong. The two important arenas in which women and the poor are trying to engage in local budgeting and auditing are decentralised government and the implementation of centrally found safety-net programs such as food-subsidy systems and employment, generation schemes. Auditing government spending at the local level enables citizens to witness and comment upon the direct links between revenue generation and expenditure, and between planning and the actual implementation of public policies. Local level auditing contributes to more gender and poverty sensitive planning and policy implementation in that it makes it easier to pin-point both poorly targeted spending and outright corruption.
Monitoring gender sensitive budgets

Following the passage of the 73rd amendments to India's constitution in 1993, state governments have not only created multi-tiered systems of elected local government, but some have gone even further, vesting village assemblies with powers to both plan and audit local spending. Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and lately Rajasthan have gone furthest in legislating for people's audits of local planning and spending, and have also exacted measures to ensure women's participation in these processes. All three states have 'right-to-information' provisions through which villagers can, in theory, have access to documents detailing official expenditures. All three states not only have provisions ensuring that one third of elected representatives on village councils are women, but also that a minimum proportion of village assembly participants must be women for the required public meeting to constitute a quorum. For instance, Kerala has earmarked 10% of local planning funds for women's development and women only sub-committees within the village assembly decide on how this should be spent. This last provision gives women a direct interest in seeing that spending plans are implemented properly.

It is too early to judge the effectiveness of any of these novel measures. Early evidence however suggests that women's engagement in local accountability systems cannot simply be legislated into existence. In Kerala women's groups have been rebuffed by local politicians and government officials when they tried to follow up on now the earmarked funds for women's development have been spent. Local power relations obstruct effective use of such provisions, even in Kerala, where the poor and women enjoy comparatively high degrees of literacy and social
welfare. When poor people challenge local decision-making and spending, patterns, the interests of local elites and officials one profoundly threatened.

It has hidden growth reserves in its people, especially its women, who now provide more than half the region's labour but lack equal access to education and factors of production. We concluded that gender equality can be a potent force for accelerated poverty reduction in Africa.

There is increased recognition of the relevance of gender for development work in Africa. In this region, we addressed the linkages between gender, growth and poverty in the 1998 Poverty Status Report prepared for the strategic Partnership with Africa (SPA). This helped to frame the gender debate in terms of economic growth and productivity, i.e., in terms of development effectiveness, and not just in terms of social equity - although equity considerations are important, too.

Burkina Faso in a study states that Shifting existing resources between men's and women's plots within the same household could increase output by 10-20 percent.

Kenya: Giving women, farmers the same level of agricultural inputs and education as men could increase yields obtained by women by more than 20 percent.

Tanzania: Reducing time burdens of women could increase household cash incomes for small holder coffee and banana growers by 10 percent, labour productivity by 15 percent and capital productivity by 44 percent.
If women enjoyed the same overall degree of capital investment in agricultural outputs, including land, as their male counterparts, output could increase by up to 15 percent.

Gender inequality in education and employment is estimated to have reduced SSA's per capita growth during 1960-92 by 0.8 percentage points per year.

The gender impact of transition differs by country and regions. In general, there is evidence that in most countries women take over a disproportionately high share of costs of systematic changes while their access to opportunities remains low. However, the lack of opportunities has also devastating effects on many men, especially those with narrow technical skills. In many declining regions, including one company toxins and rural areas, jobs are difficult to find even for young men, leading to anti-social behaviours such as drinking, drug use, crime and domestic violence.

In transition economics - women have limited impact on establishing new laws, institutions and policies as they remain vastly underrepresented in new decision-making structures, especially at national level. The share of women in parliaments varies with few exceptions, between 1.5 percent to 15 percent of all seats. Women's losses in the labour market have been very high in number of countries and the erosion of the welfare system of the past has required that women play a much bigger role in performing caring functions. Although the full extent of female poverty is difficult to evaluate due to the lack of data, deep cuts in women's
employment and income, lower wages, dependency on shrinking family benefits and increasing costs of living and raising a family strongly suggest that poverty among women is widespread. The reversal of these negative trends in gender equality is crucial in terms of respecting human rights of individuals. Engendering transition policies in also necessary to fully use human potential which is a key factor in economic growth. Gender equality is thus a priority for improving economic efficiency and development prospects. Four major policy directions have been debated by ECE member states and NGOs and subsequently adopted as part of the agreed conclusions of the meeting dealing with women in economy. These are:

- Eliminating discrimination against women in the labour market through further developing and applying legislation, eliminating gender based vertical and horizontal segregation and establishing a sound system of monitoring and evaluation;

- Increasing employment opportunities for women through developing the employabilites of women and fostering women's access to enterpreneurship;

- Promoting gender equality in social protection (unemployment, health and pension benefits) through a new approach responding to the rise in a typical jobs and changing need for dependent care;

- Empowering women through access to and control over resources and mainstreaming the gender perspective in macro-economic and social policies.
Grouping of women has increased their awareness and eliminated exploitation by the middleman in the case of active groups. In many trades like wearing processing food items ..... giving women access to finance through revolving funds and cheap credit has resulted in women directly procuring raw materials and producing and marketing goods without having to depend on the middleman for raw materials to process on measly daily wages, that too at disadvantageously lower levels for women. Incomes have also increased in the process. Studies by the Self Employment Women's Association (SEWA), Ahmedabad on the DWCRA groups helped by them in respect crafts women and gum collectors clearly show that these groups have strengthened women's economic position, increased their bargaining powers, self-sufficiency and thereby social status. Women are held in esteem now and men have become more cooperative on the domestic front and even help women in fuel and fodder collection. Women in turn feel more confident and have a sense of belonging. These self help groups are a new source of social security with the crumbling of the joint family system. Other field level experiences and studies have clearly shown that despite all its limitations, the group strategy has empowered women to approach functionaries and banks to their advantage.

The idea of empowerment has taken a hold over the minds of increasing number of persons in the last few years. It is now widely employed in the press, on television, and in political, academic and even legal circles. There is talk about the empowerment of the poor, of backward communities, of women and of various other disadvantaged sections of society. Empowerment is seen by many politicians, publicists, social activists and a growing section of the intelligentsia generally as the only effective answer to
oppression, exploitation, injustice and the other maladies with which our society is beset.

This idea of empowerment contains exciting possibilities. It seems somehow to fit our present Indian reality particularly well. But in its current, widespread use, the idea is new and as with most attractive ideas that are new, it means different things to different persons, and in some cases even to the same person. It bears the risk of being put to too many uses by too many persons to serve the requirement of systematic social analysis (Beteille, 1999).

Empowerment is about social transformation, it is about radical social transformation; and it is about the people - ordinary, common people, rather than politicians, experts and other socially or culturally advantaged persons. Above all, it is about power, although the concept of power contained in it is generally left unspecified. Empowerment is both a means to an end and an end in itself. The term adapts itself differently situations, and its equification is both variable and fluid.

The idea of empowerment may be invoked in virtually any context: in speaking about human rights, about basic needs, about economic security, about capacity building, about skill formation or about the condition of a dignified social existence. It is well known that our constitution has created many rights for all members of society, irrespective of their social or economic standing. It is equally well known that for millions of Indians those rights exist only on paper. Creating rights is one thing, and giving security to them is quite another. Our legislators have been prodigal in creating rights but have not paid much need to the enforceability of those rights. Empowerment is seen as a way of addressing the problem of rights that remain unenforced.
Since 1989, the Women's Crisis Centre (WCC), a non-profit non-government organisation in the Philippines, has been providing holistic services to women survivors of gender based violence. It started as a response to the needs of women survivors of military rape and sexualised torture during the Philippines' martial law years. A group of former women political detainees banded together as an informal support group and were soon joined by other women political activists and survivors of gender-based violence. These like-minded women then took the risk of establishing the WCC to address the need for a safe and supportive environment. Its values, principles and mission are based on the belief that women have a right to choice and given the needed support, can take control of their lives. It also introduced feminist counselling, which involved the application of feminist principles and processes in counselling practice, in the Philippines.

Generally, there is a lack of understanding on the plight of abused and exploited women. A feminist action research conducted by WCC in 1998, The study on the Impact of violence Against Women on Women's Health, revealed that the perceived consequences of sexual assault on women's mental health far outweigh the direct and immediate physical effects of the assault. Depression, anxiety, fear, loss of self-esteem, anger, hostility and distrust rank high as the common effects that have disrupted survivors' everyday lives.

In recent years in India, there has been an increased need for gender based data to plan and implement gender sensitive development programmes. At present, conventional data sources do not have the comprehensive framework to generate gender based data. In addition, whatever data is available is difficult to access. The Government of Gujarat is committed to integrating gender
development concepts in programmes and projects in order to create needs-based programmes for gender equality. In this respect, the need for easy access to gender-related data with a "one widow approach" was expressed. In view of this critical need, the Commissionerate of Women and Child Development (CWCD), Gujarat initiated the process of compiling available data to provide easy user-friendly data access. In this endeavour, the Centre for Health Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA) developed strategies, activities, as well as the concept and contributed relevant case studies with the objective of providing qualitative data on gender and development issues. In continuation, a state level meeting was held on 7 December to get feedback from NGOs and government departments on the concept of a gender data bank. On 31 December, the gender data bank was formally launched along with its website.

A training programme on the convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW Convention) was held from 19 to 22 December, 2001 in Mumbai. Adopted by the UN General Assembly on 19 December 1979, the convention became an international treaty on 3 December 1981 after the twentieth country had ratified it. The convention reaffirmed the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which set a list of inalienable human rights and stressed the eradication of all forms of discrimination against women. The training programme was jointly organised by Mahila Sarvangeen Urkarsh Mandal (MASUM) of India and the International Women's Rights Action Watch (IWRAW) - Asia Pacific. Women's groups from three western states - Goa, Rajasthan and Maharashtra - participated. It was an opportunity to share the rights framework with like-minded
organisations and to work out strategies for the application of the CEDAW convention in India. The objectives of the training were -

1. **To provide a theoretical understanding of the CEDAW convention;**

2. **To assess the Indian government's compliance in terms of issues for women in India; obstacles for state compliance of the treaty; women's involvement in the implementation and monitoring of the treaty and India's experience of reporting under the CEDAW convention; and**

3. **To formulate strategies on taking the actual implementation of the treaty forward and incorporating it in their own work.** The resource person, Shanthi Dairiam, the Executive Director of IWRAW - Asia-Pacific, packed the four days' sessions with information on women's struggles for equality in different countries, snippets on the workings of the United Nations and concrete guidance on strategy and intervention. Madhu Mehra from Partners for Law in Development, Delhi, meanwhile, joined on the last day to lead the session on the implementation of CEDAW in India. As a result of the training, the participants became equipped with the language of rights and with a new methodology with which to articulate and clarify the ways in which women face discrimination. They emerged with strategies to identify discrimination in all forms (direct and indirect discrimination) at all levels (the family, community, market and state) and to link these discriminations to the violations of particular rights and principles embodied in the CEDAW convention keeping in view the specific issues that women in India faced due to their caste, class, region, sexuality,
religion, age, mental health status and physical ability, the participants strategised on how to bring about gender justice in different areas. The CEDAW convention was one of the instruments used for reverage but the strategies also included broad-based reforms, a perspective that the training had strengthened. Towards the end of the training, the participants discussed how their work on the CEDAW convention could be linked to the work being done on other conventions.

Globally and for the Asia and Pacific region, the social change of societies modernising, family ties becoming less supportive, migration becoming more common, work becoming more demanding, global culture becoming more influential and more relative poverty, are leading to negative consequences for people's mental well being. Unfortunately the model of globalisation and development is not increasing society's experience of satisfaction and happiness. For the future the WHO warns that one in four people will be affected by a mental disorder at some stage in their life. On top of these general social determinants, women experience almost double the incidence of depression and greater anxiety than men. Theories on depression point very strongly to the overwhelming significance of severe life events and difficulties especially those involving loss, humiliation, entrapment and a sense of lack of control and inferiority. Women's social status, greater poverty and subordinate gender roles thus place them at gender risk of such sadness, loss of confidence and self-esteem and less energy.

The levels of violence against women in a society are key indicators of the extent to which gender equality exists in the society and family. Levinson, who researched 179 societies, found a direct relationship with less violence in societies in which there was more
equal value of men and women. Feminist theory is a generalised, wide-ranging system of ideas about social life and human experience developed from a woman-centered perspective. Feminist theory is women centered - or women centered - in three ways.

First, its major "object" for investigation, the starting point of all its investigation, is the situation (or the situations) and experiences of women in society.

Second, it treats women as the central "subjects" in the investigative process; that is, it seeks to see the world from the distinctive vantage points of women in the social world.

Third, feminist theory is critical and activist on behalf of women, seeking to produce a better world for women - and thus, it argues, for human kind.

Feminist theory differs from most sociological theories in a number of ways. First, it is work of an interdisciplinary community, which includes not only sociologists but also scholars from other disciplines, such as anthropology, biology, economics, law, history, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology and theology; people best recognized as creative writers; people who see themselves primarily as political activists; spokes persons for women of color; and writers from various European or Third world intellectual communities.

Second, feminist sociologists, like other feminist academics, work with a double agenda: to broaden and deepen their discipline of origin - sociology, in this case - by reworking disciplinary knowledge to take account of being discoveries being made by feminist scholars; and to develop a critical understanding.
of society in order to change the world in directions deemed more just and humane. A double agenda of this type is the hallmark of any critical theory. In the 1990s, feminist sociological theory may well be the most dynamic of the schools of critical theory having an impact on sociology. This is so not only because of the dynamism of its expanding general theory, but also because of the use of feminist sociological theory to repattern such sociological subfields as family, work, organizations, law, criminology, violence and theories of the global order. Third, despite these developments, many - perhaps a majority of - sociologists are still hesitant to incorporate feminist theory into their work, in part because that theory seems so radical, in part because of suspicious about the scientific credentials of a scholarly undertaking so closely linked to political activism, and in part because so many its creators are women. Fourth, feminist theory is not anchored in any one of the three paradigms that have long patterned sociology's orientation to its subject matter - the social-facts paradigm, the social-definition paradigm the social behaviour paradigm. This departure from the usual paradigms occurs because feminist theory has gone a long way toward effectively integrating and thus transcending, the micro-social vs. macro-social debate, which is one of the major causes of this paradigmatic division. This transcendence of the macro-versus-micro issue may make it difficult for sociologists based in one of the discipline's long-standing theories to work out their relation to feminist theory.

The impetus for contemporary feminist theory began in a deceptively simple question: "And what about the women?" In other words, where are the women in any situation being investigated? If they are not present, why? If they are present, what
The consequences of trying to answer feminism's basic question - "And what about the women?" - have been revolutionary. Dramatically, the contemporary scholarly community discovered that what it had assumed to be the universe of experience was really a particularistic account of male actors and male experience.

Twenty-five years of posing this question have produced some generalisable conclusions. Women are present in most social situations.

Feminism's second basic question is: "Why then is all this as it is?" As the first question calls for a description of the social world, this second question requires an explanation of that world. Description and explanation of the social world are two faces of any sociological theory. Feminism's attempts to answer these questions have therefore produced a theory of universal importance for sociology.

Over the twenty-five year period the circle of menists exploring these questions has become steadily larger and more inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds, both in the United States and internationally. This has led to what is now called "third-wave feminism", a movement characterised by its focus on the implications of monolithic sameness that comes from speaking about "woman" or "the women" and from an intense interest in the issue of differences among women. This interest has given rise to a third basic question guiding feminist theoretical work today: "And what about the differences among women?" We call this third question
feminism's qualifying question, because it leads to a general conclusion that the invisibility, inequality and role differences in relation to men which generally characterise women's lives are in their particularities profoundly affected by a woman's social location - that is, by her class, race, age affectional, preference, marital status, religion, ethnicity and global location.

Anjali Bahuguna's paper highlights the different issues of science and technology for the rural women from First to Eight Five Year Plan has been discussed. Emphasis concludes that test of technology should be its social utility, emphasizing local needs, local creativity, local expertise, local associations and mechanisms.

In conclusion Bahuguna states that there is need to empower women to enhance their quality of participation. This can be achieved through training besides of course the literacy educational programmes. Mahila Mandal could be activated for this purpose where women could learn skills and acquire confidence. To have a meaningful exercise in this direction special attention needs to be paid to the grassroot women workers who have hitherto been side tracked by the bureaucracy. Links have to be strengthened between the village and the bureaucracy at lower level.

It would be worthwhile experimenting with an all women panchayat considering the fact that our cultural system does not allow women to be vocal in the presence of menfolk. Either the strength of women should be sufficient or alternately a parallel all women panchayat for specific purpose should be encouraged.

Special programmes on role of women in Panchatati Raj System, on rights of women and procedures should be prepared and highlighted through the mass media so as to make women aware and
improve the quality of their participation in socio-political system.

At the time of formulation of elight plant a streak of optimism for Indian women is visible. With the formation of statutory national commission on women there is likelihood of acceleration in the social movements for a just social order if the country's planning process explicitly commits itself to uphold the dignity of women.

The commitment to political empowerment must be supplemented by a new conceptualisation of women's role in the political economy of India. At this juncture the country's planners must strive to end the paradox of participation in a setting of powerlessness.

Dr. N. S. Bisht in his paper states that status of women participation in economic activities in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Indian economy have been discussed. On the basis of empirical evidences. Some observations and recommendations for science and technology application are arrived. Analysis is based on population census of 1991.

Comparative status of women population in Uttarakhand hills, Uttar Pradesh and Indian economy is hardly different from one another.

Considering the marginal workers in these three economics, a different picture is emerged between them. In Uttarakhand male workers are ahead of females by the ratio 1 : 0.93 whereas in Uttar Pradesh and India reverse is the picture depicted by male and female ratio at 1: 12.5 and 1 : 9.1 respectively. These relationships indicate very high proportions of female marginal workers in Uttar Pradesh and India while in Uttarakhand they are almost equal. Participation
rates of women main workers have been enumerated to find out the structural and behavioural patterns taken place during the study period in the economies. Analysis is carried out in four stages: Firstly, participation of women in agricultural sector; Secondly, industrial sector; Thirdly, service sector and Fourthly, economy as a whole.

Comparative analytic study of these three economics highlighted some points to support the idea of introducing an appropriate technology for the development of women resources. It is well known fact that few women are having high positions in the country. They are born either with silverspoons or in well educated and advanced families of high economic status. Baring countable numbers on finger tips, rest are belonging either to middle class or lower and down trodden classes. Majority of them are from rural background and leading a life of misery and distress. Economic status is poor, as a result they are prey of social prejudices blind faith and conservatism. Girls are denied education due to these social vices. Although under the constitutional provisions and educational policy free education is advocated upto the standard of tenth calss (high school), yet we could not bring all the girl population in the stream of education and literacy. How many girls are going school? No due bothers about the objectivity. Till now, there exists no provision/directive to compel each and every family in urban and rural areas to send their give child to school. Keeping this fact in view, there is a need of making some constitutional amendment to enforce upon every family, so that, all the female children may get education up to a level of at least twelfth standard.
Inspite of the social reforms and enactment, female child marriages are prevalent below the age of 18 years, while it is her, educational age as well as physical and mental growth. Social and legal efforts from the Government side seem to be inadequate.

A large number of women workers are marginally employed. United Nations report has highlighted the crimes inflicted on women. A new system of credibility must be introduced to estimate and add in the family income generation contributed by female partners of the family. It will determine their economic status and she will not be treated non-earning member. Crux of the recommendations is to introduce a new technique of production with the provision of appropriate technology to increase their productivity and to make them productive members of the society in rural India.

Dr. Uma Narula (1991) states that constraints for development of Indian women - rural, urban slum and urban women are manifold. Particularly, the rural women and more so in hilly regions lack technological access to facilities in household, health and nutrition, education, training and employment etc. There are certain constraints why the available technology may not be diffused among the rural, hilly region women. The major constraints are socio-economic and Geographic non-accessibility to technology; social structural barriers of caste, class and gender differentials for development of technological skills, communication barriers and low exposure to communication channels.

The process of Science and Technology promotion among rural women prerequisites a Technology Model, Social Technology Model, Diffusion Model, participation of target groups, technology
promoters (government and NGO's) and an environment receptive to technologies.

Flavia Agnes (1998) reports that rape, dowry-related violence and other forms of domestic violence against women are different manifestations of the same malaise. To the extent that judicial decisions and their implementation on the ground continue to be coloured by patriarchal values, the effect of legal reform will necessarily be unsatisfactory. The campaign for legal reform by the women's movement has so far attached primarily superficial symptoms. The trust in the campaign has to be reoriented at this point of time if better results are to follow.

Jeemol Uni (1999) writes the plea for women's rights to property can be instified on the grounds of welfare, efficiency, equality and empowerment. The welfare argument is that it would reduce the risk of poverty and destitution for women and their households: it has been found that women generally use their earnings for the well-being of their families. The efficicacy argument is more complicated. Giving a woman little to property would improve her access to credit technology and information which inturn would help enhance her productivity and therefore her income-earning capacity.

In the area of Indian agrarian studies, a significnat body of literature has emerged in recent years. Women form a separate analytic and empirical category in addition to, but distinct from, the more commonly used categories such as class, race and casts (Agarwal, B. 1983). Although invaluable in contributing to an understanding of the change and contiunity in the rural stratification and dynamics of agrarian social reality, these studies, because they
fail to look at the women's position in class formation and social transformation in agriculture, project a biased and incomplete picture.

Studies on women, whether in general or on women in agriculture in particular, are of fairly recent origin in India. The impetus for these studies was given by the submission of the Report of the committee on the status of women in India in 1974. Among studies relating to women in agriculture, Pranab Bardhan (1978) highlights features of rural women's labour market as follows:

a) they are an irregular supplier of labour;  
b) their entry and withdrawal are frequent; and  
c) their employment participation is sometimes different from that of men. Vina Mazumdar, Kumud Sharma and Sarthi Acharya (1979) point out the general situation of poverty, illiteracy and ill health of the poorer rural working women. They also found in rural society gender discrimination is the general rule. G. Kelkar and S. Anandalakshmy (1980) highlight women's productive role, which has been viewed as being "secondary to their reproductive roles." G. Parthasarathy and G. D. Rao (1980) conclude that the rural women's labour participation reflects the poor economic and low social status of their household and their low work participation reflects higher "Economic invisibility" of work. K. M. Manahar (1982) indicates that: these jobs are manned by women drawn from lower caste and lower class ... Ignorance, traditional bounds, illiteracy, lack of skill, discrimination in the wage structure ... ill treatment, immigration and disintegration of families, alienation etc. are
some of the characteristics of employment in this sector.

Kalpana Bardhan (1985) highlights the structural elements of society responsible for economic exploitation and socially condoned, culturally rationalised discrimination and exclusion even within their class. Agarwal (1985) points to the gender specific problem of unemployment, poverty and destitution.

Recognising that women are frequently an oppressed group within each unit of socio-economic stratification, such studies have gone on to hypothesise as well as investigate into some causes of these growing gender imbalances in the form of women's invisibility in work participation, their subjugation and disadvantaged position in society.

The rural development strategy, which supposedly aims at reducing poverty, inequality and unemployment and at improving the quality and conditions of life, has in reality augmented regional disparities, class inequalities and gender differentiation. Though this strategy incorporates a range of technological, educational, administrative and organisational changes, in recent years, technological innovations have been given the pride of place in order to promote rapid agricultural modernisation and increase productivity. This in turn has marginalised women's position in rural society, sharpening gender inequality.

The present study proposes to examine the broad social processes generated out of the penetration of new technology of cultivation and thereby locates the changing roles and statuses of women within these social processes. Specifically, it propose to examine the impact of new technology of cultivation.
The study also examines how the gender gaps, which operate within the given social norms, values and customs, are being strengthened in the process of agricultural modernisation and economic development in rural India.

In a transitional society, women's position in both in the family and in society at large is radically changed by the processes of technological modernisation, economic development and social change. According to Boserup, the changes in women's position should be viewed; not a isolated factors, but rather as part of general changes that come about as human societies slowly develop from subsistence economics to high technology societies. Economic development is a gradual change from family production to specialised production of goods and services. This specialisation of production makes it possible to use better technologies, scientific methods, and an increasingly elaborate economic and social infrastructure (1990).

Third world societies are experiencing a rapid transformation in their technological base of production. But the pertinence of new technology itself has been questioned by the social scientists in recent years. Many of them contest its aptness as regards the gender gap, its impact on women's social and economic position in society, especially in the third world women's access to, control over and management of it. Among the several questions social scientists have raised are:

- Have new technologies been gender neutral and woman friendly?
- What have been the effects of the introduction of western technology on the sexual division of labour and on the social and economic lives of women of the third world?
What is the form and extent of women's access to and control over this new technology?

Some important theoretical framework has been evolved in recent years on the subject. Amartya Sen (1983) sees sexual division of work and reward as a 'cooperative conflict' - an extension of pure bargaining theory. He also takes a broader view of technology which is not longer 'merely commodity production' but needs also to take account of the social arrangements that permit productive processes to be carried out.' The purpose of Mr. Shahra Razavi's (United Nations 14th Nov., 2001) paper is to provide a an overall assessment of how globalisation, which is taken here to mean greater openness of economics to international trade and capital mobility, in diverse regional contexts since the early 1980s has impacted on the growth of new economics and their capacity to create employment. More specifically, the paper attempts to trace how these policies have impacted on women's access to employment and their enjoyment of social rights while there has been significnat criticism of the way in which neo-liberal stabilisation and structural adjustment policies have impacted on poor-women in much of the developing world, the debate on the impacts of trade liberalisation on female emplyment has been for more sanguine. In fact, one argumane that is frequently made in favour of globalisation, and trade liberalisation in particular, is that it has brought about higher rates of employment in developing countries as the focus of manufacturing has shifted from the North to the South, and that within developing countries women have emerged unequivocally as the winners.

Women are certainly more likely to be working outside te home than even before. Between the 1950s and the end of the 1990s, the proportion of women aged 20-59 who were in the labour force
increased from around one-third to one half. The current participation rates by region from 14 percent in North Africa to 76 percent in East and Central Europe (see figure 1). In many cases, women's participation has increased at the expense of men's. It half the developing countries for which data were available, over the period 1975-95 the female participation rate rose while the male rate fell. The global labour force has become more female - rising from 36 percent in 1960 to 40 percent by 1997.

**Figure 1—Women's labour force participation, 1980s and 1990s**

![Bar chart showing women's labour force participation rates across different regions](image)

Note: Uses the latest census available in 1999.
Source: (UNRISD 2000. p.133)

But it is also important to underlie an important counter-trend taking place in the 'transition' economics of East and Central Europe, where women's formal employment has fallen since the onset of economic reforms. The female labour force participation rate was lower in 1997 than in 1985 in all transition countries, and the drop in female employment was an drastic as 40% in Hungary (UNIFEM 2000), although this may hide the increasing informalisation of female labour not only in Hungary (Sza laind) but also elsewhere in the region.
This paper began by looking at some of the broad facts of 'globalisation' - which is taken here to mean greater openness of economics of international trade and capital mobility while questioning some of the claims of global enthusiasts, it argued that there has nevertheless been a clearly discernible shift toward global economic liberalisation which has involved liberalisation of the international trade in goods and services on the one hand, and the flows of international capital, on the other. The impacts of these major policy shifts on regional growth rates seem far from encouraging - not to mention the social disruptions caused by financial liberalisation. The extent to which external liberalisation has weakened the national state and led to 'social dumping', we argued, are complex questions given the diversity both in state capacity as well as in institutional and political factors that mediate the forces of globalisation. While there has been increasing convergence in macro economic policies towards neo-liberal deflationary policies, the same cannot be said about industrial and social policies that continue to be shaped by national institutional characteristics and histories, as well as political alliances and dynamics which are increasingly interwined with clashes of interests and ideas among influencial supranational actors. The resistance to neo-liberal models of social policy seems to be most marked among the institutionalised welfare states of Europe, while the trends in East Asia also appear to be encouraging. Hence while the room for mancuver has clearly narrowed, there are still policy choices to be made and contestation and struggle at the national and global levels can have an impact on the liberalising juggernant.

Looking more specifically at the impact of trade liberalisation (one important component of 'globalisation') on
employment patterns, a number of findings emerged from our review of the literature. First, while labour market conditions especially in the manufacturing sector in the North have clearly deteriorated since the mid 1970s, it would be very difficult to attribute these negative trends to be rising, but still rather marginal, North/South trade in manufactures. Moreover, even if there were some adverse labour market outcomes in the 1980s and 1990s of trade with the south, these could have been overridden by faster economic growth. Second, as far as the South's much-cited employment gains from trade liberalisation in manufactures are concerned, the picture looked far less optimistic on closer scrutiny. For a start, the gains in manufacturing employment appear to be confined to a small group of developing countries (the so-called 'Group of 13'). Moreover, even within this group there are clear indications that employment expansion through export-oriented industries has coincided with the destruction of jobs in other sectors of manufacturing due to competition from imports, so that the net employment expansion has been far less impressive in most cases than is often assumed (although we suggested that this is an area that requires far more rigorous data and analysis). The same holds true as far as women are concerned while some groups of women (young, rural migrants) are over-represented in the export-oriented industries, other groups of women (in state owned enterprises and in import-competing industries) have suffered job destruction consequent upon trade liberalisation - an issue that has tended to be neglected. Finally, for the handful of countries that have succeeded in expanding their manufactured exports and employment in recent years (e.g., Malaysia, Indonesia and Chile), there are worrying signs of deteriorating terms of trade and of so-called 'immiserizing growth',
i.e., of productivity gains that are less than proportionately reflected in rising real incomes or living standards. This, we argued, raises questions about both global policy coordination (the limits of labour-intensive growth which has been predicted upon women's 'cheap' and 'docile' labour).

The third important area of concern that has been probe in this paper is that interface between female employment and social policy provisions. Given the fact that poor women in many developing countries enjoyed few social rights even prior to the neoliberal era, some critics argue that it is almost meaningless to criticise 'globalisation' for creating jobs for women that have few social rights attached to them. Models of important substitution industrialisation (ISI) essentially created jobs for a male 'labour aristocracy' and their associated systems of social protection were biased in favour of men who were assumed to be 'breadwinners' while women were considered to be their dependents'. There has thus been no regression or reversal of rights as far as women are concerned.

The author also argues that it is crucial to recognise the shortcomings of keynesian thinking and the ISI strategies that fell short of their objectives in several important respects, especially as far as women are concerned, a constructive approach would have been to extend their achievements and to change their less successful interventions so as to make them perform better rather than to reverse their gains. A gender sensitive approach to social policy and to macro-economic policy more broadly must start from the promise that women have a different relation to employment than men; approaches that premise social rights and entitlements on labour market contributions will remain gender biased given that for the
majority of women their labour market contribution has to be inter
woven with their care obligations (they thus work part time, and
withdraw from the labour market during some periods of their lives
when they are intensively involved in care activities). Thus, social
entitlements based on citizenship or residence can reach women far
more effectively. These are the likes along which the keynesian
development model should have been re-structured and reformed.

Instead what we are witnessing today with the new
direction of public policy is that poor women in many developing
countries are being deprived of even the prospect of the progressive
realisation of a non-discriminatory system of decent jobs and public
service and broad-based social security systems' (Elson 2001).
Employment objectives, the creation of decent jobs and broad-based,
redistributive social security systems are no longer even the
objectives of public policy in most countries what we are witnessing
instead in many contents is the drastic reduction of state-based
entitlements and their replacement by a market based, individualised
system of social services which inevitably only responds to the needs
of a few privileged men and women who can afford them, while the
great many who cannot are left with elusive safety nets, overwork
and increasing vulnerability.

Economic reforms or globalisation in more generalised
terms, is dominating the world socio-economic scenario for the last
two decades. The process is having significant impacts on India as
well. Effectiveness of public sector economic development
programme is increasingly being questioned now. Higher
accountability and participatory approach are becoming more
acceptable means. Saswati Basu's and Dr. Parikshit Basu's paper
"Income Generation Program and Empowerment of Women - A case study in India" attempts to assess the roles of the public sector and voluntary organisations in the process of conducting economic development programs for women in India. More specifically, it analyses whether implementation of economic development programs automatically improve the level of empowerment of women. To pursue this objective the authors take the help of a socio-economic case-study based on the interview of some 70 women beneficiaries of economic development program from a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and a governmental organisation (GO) in the districts of South 24 Parganas in West Bengal, India. These women are micro-entrepreneurs and engaged in self-employment business of more than three years. The economic development program of the NGO and the GO in the case-study area provided them credit to run their business. The case-study finds that income generation activity of the NGO increases economic empowerment and overall empowerment of women more than government organisation. It highlights the fact that the NGOs' development programs have contributed more than the GOs' programs to improve the economic and social status of women beneficiaries. The NGOs have certain positive qualities that make them more successful in reaching the poorer sections of society. The major positive point lies in the NGO development strategy or approach. This approach includes participation, partnership and member accountability.

The objective of this paper is to analyse whether economic development program, specially targeted at women, automatically increase their level of empowerment. To pursue this objective the author takes the help of a socio-economic case study based on the
interview of some 70 women beneficiaries of economic development program from a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and a governmental organisation (GO) in the districts of South 24 Parganas in West Bengal, India. These women are micro entrepreneurs and engaged in self-employment business for more than three years. The economic developmetn program of the NGO and the GO in the case study area provided them credit to run their business. The case-study finds that income generation activity of the NGO increases economic empowerment and overall empowerment of women more than government organisation. So it follows from the case-study result that an income generation program only might not be helpful to enhance the level of overall empowerment level of women. Women should be organised under a group or accountable body to achieve the goal of increasing the overall empowerment level of women.

Some studies (Kandiyoti 1988; Buvinic, 1987) suggest that economic development program could automatically increase the economic status of women and thereby their overall status in community and family. They tend to focus on economic development program with the expectation of achieving the goals of empowering women with productive capacities and skills for the future. This implies that according to these studies the economic development program could automatically increase the overall status of women and make them empowered in all senses.

There is obviously some debate surrounding the specific impact of economic development program on the level of empowerment of women. For multitude of underlying social, cultural and institutional versions there are often varying degrees of choices for women and varying degrees of ability or empowerment
to exercise those choices. Sometimes women could not exercise their choices because of social restriction practiced by their families though they have choices open to them. Women may not go outside their home though they are trained and skilled with a particular business skill because of social restrictions one evaluation study contends that one should not assume that generation of income or economic empowerment will automatically increase women's independence, bargaining power and overall status in the family or in the community. The same study also reports that bargaining power of women coming from poor households does not change just because the women may now be earning a higher income (McCormack et al., 1986).

Some researchers (Carr et al., 1996 and Viswanath, 1995) found that the best way of achieving women's empowerment is to organise them under a common group or forum with income generation program support. These studies show that different NGOs in different countries of South Asia have achieved this goal by following multiple development strategies. NGOs generally take participatory and community development approach, which differs from traditional approaches usually taken up by government institutions. Viswanath (1995) also found overall empowerment of women in southern state of India when they have been organised under NGOs' economic development program.

Far from the hustle-bustle of Cairo, a seminar on 'Female Empowerment and Demographic Processes'. Moving Beyond Cairo took place in the quiet city of Land. Sponsored by the IUSSP committee on Gender and Population and co-organised by Harriet Presser, Gita Sen and Brigida Garlia, in collaboration with PROP,
Programme on Population and Development, Lund University, the seminar was comprises of a multidisciplinary group representing the population research community, human rights activists and the public policy perspective. The main theme of the seminar was the female empowerment is an important concept for demography that can enrich both analysis and policy. The major topics covered were conceptualising and measuring female empowerment, intersections between female empowerment and demographic processes, case studies from developing countries, sources of change to empower women and public policy implications.

Paula England (conceptualising Women's Empowerment) and Gita Sen and Srilata Batliwala (Empowering women for Reproductive Rights) in this session, presented empowerment in different congrate of power. England focused on access to resources (i.e., economic resources, favourable laws and institutional rules, favourable social norms) as the key to power. Sen and Batliwala both exphasized the extrinsic control over resources of women's right.

Another demension, mediating between the context of power and outcome, is individual behaviour, specifically the making of decisions. However, some argued that it is not behaviour but rather social, political and institutional processes which mediate between context and outcome.

Empowerment was also discussed as rational concept. In particular, the discussion focused on the relation between the empowerment of women and its impact on men. Questions were asked whether women's empowerment would also require a transformation of men and whether it is a zero-sum game leading to disempowering of men. Placed in the context of power, however,
women's empowerment also needs to be analysed relative to the influence of the family, community, market and the state.

It was also emphasized that empowerment is context specific; what is empowerment for women in one context is not necessarily empowering in another. For example, life cycle differences should be taken into account in defining and measuring empowerment. In certain cultures the same behaviour, e.g., using contraceptives, may have different implications for women at different stages of their lives. The measurement of empowerment is, therefore, not universal and would change depending on the situation and context.

Female empowerment can have some negative aspects. England mentioned that women's increasing access to earnings may actually be correlated with the rise of the 'feminisation' of poverty or, the greater tendency of women to be single mothers in many cultures may make it socially easier for men to abandon their wives or partners. Moreover, female empowerment may have negative impacts on others such as children. Or, the process of empowerment may do more harm than good, since power relations operate, for women, at least at four different levels - change at one level does not guarantee change at others and may even lead to backlash or backsliding at other levels.

The multi-dimensional aspects of empowerment raised concerns about the measurement of empowerment and, in particular, the use of proxies, for or as means, to female empowerment such as education and female labour force participation. It was argued that simply looking at school enrolment is not sufficient; the content of education, which often reinforces gender ideologies, must be
incorporated. Similarly, women's participation in the labour force does not automatically translate into women having control over their income; it is important to know who actually has access to and control over that income. It is not automatically translate into women having control over their income; it is important to know who actually has access to and control over that income.

The intersection of female empowerment and demographic process

Sonia Correa (Reproductive Rights and Demographic Processes from an Empowerment Perspective) presented the notion of empowerment from a feminist perspective, derived in turn from Foucaultian post-structuralism. According to this view, power is not contained in 'big black boxes' such as the state, the church or the husband but rather it is spread unevenly across the social tissue. In other words, neither men always monopolize power nor women are always disempowered. This approach has generated new ideas with possibilities for improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). These are: male and female identities are social constructions which can be deconstructed and reconstructed; the notion of sexuality is not a naturally driven force; and a better articulation of the differences between the objective and subjective dimensions of domination is possible.

Ivonne Szasz and Juan Figueroa (Sexuality, Gender Relations, and Female Empowerment) emphasized the demographic importance of sexual norms, identities and practices in the context of Mexico. By focusing on sexuality or the social construction of femininity and masculinity, inequalities and power relations implicit in gender systems, it is possible to get deeper insights into classic demographic variables such as exposure to intercourse, conception...
and pregnancy. Moreover, there are implications of sexual norms, identities and practices for health or ill health, especially for the spread of STDs.

Ruth Dixon-Mueller and Adrienne Germain (Reproductive Health and the Demographic Imagination) situated the issue of SRHR in the context of several important dimensions of female empowerment. They argued, first, that the locus of decision-making power or influence vis-à-vis the individual or behaviour in question is important. Second, the opportunities for distribution of resources that facilitate or inhibit certain life options influence SRHR. Third, the nature or content of ideologies and norms may have serious implications for sex, gender, rights, obligations of individuals and families. Further, the authors argued that the ICPD plan of action directs us to reorganize, improve and link existing family planning (FP) and health services within the context of women's health and rights. In this context, the following research issues were emphasized: unwanted and unsafe sex and sexual relationships; problematic contraceptive use or non-use; unwanted or untimed pregnancies; unsafe abortion; infections of the reproductive tract; and unsafe pregnancy and childbirth. The authors describe how these issues broaden and deepen the scope of demographic research, as well as provide new ways to approach traditional questions.

Anrudh Jain's paper (Family Planning Programmes and Demographic Outcomes) focused on knowledge, proxied by education, and information, gained through FP programmes, as measures of empowerment and how these variables affect fertility. He gave attention to macro level effects, to the broad relationship of the timing of the fertility transition and its linkage with levels of schooling, and hypothesized that information distribution through
FP programmes can empower clients to regulate their fertility.

Barbara Bergmann (Gender Discrimination in the Workplace) discussed the possible linkages of market discrimination and marital fertility. She suggested that women's labour market success, which is in part determined by the extent of discrimination against women, may influence the number of births to a married couple, by affecting the desires of the male and female partners for preferred number of children and by affecting the status of women within the family. Bergmann also suggested that women's labour market position influences the education a woman gets (and vice versa), which may again affect her status, the number of children she wants as well as her earning and her use of contraceptives.

John Hobcraft (The Consequences of Female Empowerment for Child Well Being) reviewed the links between female empowerment and child well-being. Among the most important gains for children from female empowerment, he argued, are those for the girl child; better survival of the mothers and the consequences for orphanhood; and improved infant and child health. In general, the often presumed negative consequences of female employment for child development do not hold. However, there do seem to be some negative consequences for children from partnership breakdown and from extra partnership childbearing. In the context of this paper, the group discussion raised doubts whether divorce is necessarily a sign of empowerment.

Anastasia Gage (Female Empowerment and Adolescent Demographic Behaviour) indicated the importance of studying the association between female empowerment and adolescent demographic behaviour. She argued that a critical step in conducting
demographic studies of female adolescent empowerment is an understanding of how power operates in adolescent relationships. In order to do so, however, demographic approaches must be broadened. They need to go beyond issues such as access to material resources and include the psychological aspects of empowerment and the process by which women are socialized into traditional gender roles. Moreover, it is important to consider women's sphere of influence in negotiating reproductive outcomes and the costs and benefits to women of making choices that are consistent with empowering behaviour. With the rising proportion of teenagers who are engaged in premarital sexual relations, there is a need to develop an empowerment framework that is specific to this group. Very importantly, in the context of the rise in HIV infections and STDs, it is important to view empowerment not only as an individual phenomenon but also as a collective process to provide adolescent girls with the social support necessary for the adoption of safe and responsible sexual behaviour.

Noriko Tsuya (Low Fertility, Marriage Perceptions, and Gender Relations in Japan) talked about Japan's below-replacement TFR by providing an intergenerational perspective of why young Japanese women and men delay or avoid marriage. She suggested that intergenerational coresidence provides the unmarried with securities that marriage would otherwise offer. Also, intergenerational coresidence allows unmarried women to witness the traditional gender relations and gender segregation of marital roles, thus providing a disincentive to get married. The paper implicitly suggested that marriage may lead to a relative loss of power for women in Japan.

Case studies: developing countries
Sajeda Amin and Cynthia Lloyd (The Gender Dynamics of Recent Rapid Transitions) analysed trends in fertility and contraceptive use in Egypt and Bangladesh from 1975 to 1995. In terms of the gender dimension, their indicators focused on status and autonomy of women. Amin and Lloyd concluded that a low level of female autonomy is not a barrier to changes in fertility levels and in contraceptive use. However, there are differing trends within the two countries. In Bangladesh, there is lower fertility relative to Egypt despite lower levels of income and urbanization, and higher levels of mortality and lower levels of mobility for women and little change in female labour force participation or education. This result is attributed to the differences in the philosophy of service provision in FP and also in other sectors of the economy. They hypothesized that in Bangladesh service provision systems, especially in FP, may have been more cognizant of the realities of women's lives and may have been, therefore, more empowering for women.

Abdullahel Hadi, Samir Nath and AMR Chowdhury (Women's Empowerment and Contraception) focused on the impact of female empowerment on contraceptive use in Bangladesh among married women. Three dimensions of empowerment were included: buying capacity, participation in household decision-making, and gender equity within the household. The impact of access to credit on female empowerment and contraceptive use is analyzed. The authors concluded, first, that the empowerment indices are positively linked to contraceptive use. Second, a duration of at least five years of credit programme involvement indicates a positive credit-contraceptive link. Third, the role of credit programmes are far greater in regions where contraceptive use is in the take-off or
transitional stage.

Sunita Kishor (Empowerment of Women in Egypt and Links to the Survival and Health of their Infants) suggested that women's empowerment is an important explanatory variable in child survival and health in Egypt net of all regional, biodemographic and socioeconomic influences. The study indicated that different dimensions of empowerment are important for different outcomes. An important contribution of the paper is in the different ways empowerment is defined and measured: as an end product (using indicators that measure directly women's control over their lives and environment) and as a process (using measures that document the existence or lack of an appropriate setting for women's empowerment and of women's access to different sources of empowerment). Using DHS data, 32 indicators of empowerment were identified from which 10 factors were extracted using factor analysis. The resulting composite indicators were used as explanatory variables for survival and health of children.

Shireen Jejeebhoy's study (Operationalizing Women's Empowerment) explored various dimensions of female autonomy at the household level, their link to traditional proxies of female autonomy, and the extent to which these are influenced by regional and community differentials. The study, based on data from two culturally distinct rural sites in India, one in Uttar Pradesh and the other in Tamil Nadu, measured rural women's status across regions and across Hindu and Muslim communities. The findings suggested that several distinct dimensions of autonomy can be operationalized and measured including women's decision making authority, mobility, power relations with husband, and access to, and control
over, economic resources. These are closely related in all settings, irrespective of regional and religious divides. She also confirmed that the extent to which women enjoy autonomy is shaped by social institutions of gender within each community, defined here by region. There is a clear regional divide, net of individual and household level characteristics, in almost every index of autonomy, with Tamilian women experiencing far greater autonomy than their North Indian counterparts. This analysis found little support for the argument that Muslim women in India are at a disadvantage in terms of women's autonomy compared to Hindu women.

Stan Becker (Incorporating Women's Empowerment in Studies of Reproductive Health) examined the relationship between women's role in household decision making and the extent of prenatal care and contraceptive use in Zimbabwe. Of the two variables the stronger associations were found with prenatal care. Possible explanations could be that women accept their husbands' decision to use or not to use contraceptives. Also Zimbabwe has relatively high contraceptive prevalence as a result of government's high priority to FP and outreach through community based distribution of contraceptives.

Mary Kritz, Paulina Makinwa and Douglas Gurak (Wife's Empowerment and Recent Fertility in Nigeria) focused on the linkages between gender dynamics at both macro and micro levels and reproductive outcomes. The outcome variables were: demand for no more children, current use of modern contraception and pro-contraception. The analysis was confined to nonpregnant married women aged 15-40 in five Nigerian ethnic groups. While the study showed several linkages between socio-economic variables of
women and reproductive outcomes, what was unique about the study is the analysis of female empowerment in the context of the residence of the women surveyed. The analysis confirmed that **zone empowerment** accounts for a significant share of the differences in demand for children and pro-contraception between the ethnic groups.

Cheryl Doss (Women's Influence on Decision-Making Within Households) presented a framework in which she utilizes models of intrahousehold decision-making behaviour to look at demographic outcomes in Ghana. She included measures of bargaining power, proxied by the percentage of assets owned by women, as a determinant of household decisions about child health and education. Although the analysis did not distinguish between measures of empowerment from measures of women's bargaining power, Doss pointed out that conceptually they are related but distinct. The study concluded that women's bargaining power does affect the outcomes of household decisions. Children who live in households where women own a large share of the assets are more likely to have been vaccinated. The effects on children's education are more ambiguous possibly because of women's conflicting desires for increasing their children's education and for taking full advantage of the labour that the children can provide.

**Sources of change to empower women**

Brigida Garcia (Economic Restructuring, Women's Survival and Transformation in Mexico) looked at transformations of the labour market, survival strategies and urban collective struggles as sources of change to empower women. This case supported the argument that recent economic reforms have adversely affected the
labour force as a whole, and female workers in particular. There has been a rise in female labour force participation mostly in marginalized, informal and non-salaried jobs and some in professional and technical jobs. The question raised is whether the seeds for transforming gender relations lie in the crisis itself. Evidence goes in favour of empowerment of middle class women with greater educational attainment. However, the case of poor working women with low educational attainment is more complex, with evidence showing that their empowerment can proceed at an unequal pace depending on which aspects are taken into account. The evidence on urban collective struggles show that although they can be helpful for the poor women's empowerment, this process is slow, ambivalent and sometimes contradictory.

Drawing on his experience in South East Asia, Graeme Hugo (Migration and Female Empowerment) talked about migration both as a cause and consequence of female empowerment. Migration may enhance female empowerment by breaking down the isolation and seclusion that women face in traditional societies, by weakening patriarchal authority or through the formation of new groups like unions and sisterhood. However, migration may also serve to entrench the status quo. For example, in China patrilocal marriage maintains the subordination of women and binds male groups together. Migration can also be disempowering. The growing practice of trafficking in women migrants is one such example. The impact of migration is not restricted to the migrant only. It is important to assess the status of women who are left behind by male family members. In concluding, Hugo argued that migration policies and programmes have the scope to prevent disempowerment of women migrants.
Wanda Novicka (The Position of Women and Demographic Processes in the Countries in Transition) focused on the transition of centrally planned economies to democratic and market regimes and its impact on women. The report drew on evidence from Poland and Russia. The impact of the political and economic changes on women have in general been adverse, particularly in areas such as education, political participation, the economy and health, including reproductive health. The author pointed out that under communism, men and women were never equal in spite of the claims of gender equality by the communist regime. After the collapse of communism, the unequal gender relations clearly manifested and widened. However, although the scenario is generally negative for women, the economic and political transition nevertheless offers a window of opportunity for women to become more organized and improve their position in society.

Barbara Klugman (Mobilizing and Networking) used two case studies from South Africa to show the role of mobilizing and networking in influencing policies towards women’s empowerment and gender equity. She, however, pointed out that mobilizing and networking are strategies that happen in a context as part of a policy process. The context and nature of the process will determine whether or not mobilization and networking can be successful in achieving the intended goals. Therefore Klugman emphasized that mobilization and networking are strategies rather than principles.

Katarina Lindahl (The Growth of Women’s Empowerment in Sweden) discussed the dramatic changes that women’s empowerment has gone through over the last 100-150 years in Sweden. A holistic perspective was used in describing changes
favouring women that occurred in the economic, political and SRHR arenas. Individuals also played a critical role in this process. All of these factors together contributed to the shift in women's position from being close to powerless to being relatively more empowered.

Moving beyond Cairo: public policy

Women's empowerment has emerged as a central theme in international development and policy agenda. Carmen Barroso and Jodi Jacobson (The Policy Agenda for Women's Empowerment in the Next Decade) provided an historical perspective of how women's issues have evolved from being ignored in the policy realm, to being confined narrowly to FP policies to its current focus on empowerment. Barroso/Jacobson and Rebecca Cook (Making Goverments Accountabel for Female Empowerment), see the future policy focus as one of deepening the empowerment agenda and scope of public intervention beyond just health and rights and within the overall context of the family, community and the state. Cook, for example, talked of moving beyound Cairo by setting up of explicit standards by which governments can be held accountable on women's rights issues.

K. C. Roy in his "Impediments to women's Empowerment in Rural India: Access to Employment, Land and Other Resources", finds that in Indiam slightly over seventy per cent of total population live in rural areas. Slightly less than fifty percent of total population are females. This would mean that nearly 700 million out of 1 billion people live in rural areas. Generally, people in the rural areas are poorer than those in the urban areas because of the absence of non-agricultural employment opportunities. Amongst males and females, females are poorer than males because the technological
change in agriculture displaces females from many of their traditional jobs, and now agricultural employment opportunities are more limited for females than for males. Also due to gender restriction, illiteracy and ignorance, rural women are unable to go outside the surroundings of their homes in search of employment. Making women economically independent is crucial to achieving women's empowerment, which is central for achieving sustainable development. Improvement in the socio-economic status of women can reduce population growth which can reduce pressure on the environment, which in turn can lead to sustainable development.

Increases in women's income and earning opportunities improve the family's living standard, enhance the family's social status, raise the age of marriage, reduce the pressure on women's health and time and on them to have more children. Property rights, availability of credits, inputs, and marketing facilities make poor women more independent economically and facilitate the process of sustainable growth and development of the country.

Hartman and Boyce, 1983 (A Quiet Violence: view from a Bangladesh village, London: ed) finds that poor women in rural societies appear in one way or another to be prisoners of social taboos which make them lose their self-confidence, control over their even income and even control over their own lives.

Accordingly to Kandiyoti, 1985. (Women in Rural Production systems, Paris: UNESCO), despite considerable class, cultural and regional differences, rural households in all countries in the sub-continent, tend to exemplify 'classic patriarchy' which
implies the shelter of women in a highly hierarchical domestic realm. It also implies control by men of some of the joint patrimony in land animals or commercial capital. Thus, the imposition of gender discrimination on women embodied in the 'classic patriarchy' prevents them from becoming economically independent and tends to keep them under perpetual poverty. Apart from experiencing discrimination outside their homes, women also experience intra-family discrimination. The degree of antifemale bias in poor families tends to be inversely related to the female's effective contribution to the total family income and to the amount of dowry that her family members would be required to pay at the time of her marriage. The female's contribution can be considered effective if her work is socially visible and socially recognised as valuable.

Agarwal's (1989) study indicates the pressure of

i) gender-based inequalities in the distribution of resources for fulfilling the basic needs,

ii) differences in household spending patterns with women's earnings much more than men's going to the family's basic needs in poor households and

iii) of a strong link in poor households between the nutritional status of children and the mother's earnings. It was also found that within the family, adult females, dolescent girls and small female children receive less vitamins and minerals through food allocation in both North and South India and also receive less protein and calories in part of North India than their male counterparts (Harris, 1986).

Owing illness men receive medical treatment more
promptly than women and more females than males receive no treatment at all (Dandekar, 1975).

Gender Empowerment has been recognised as key to the improvement of the women in developing countries. One of the main means for gender empowerment is education to women so that they utilise their qualification to gain employment, which in turn will lead to Economic Independence.

[Women - New technology and development changing Nature of Gender Relations in Rural India (1995)], Debal K. Singha Roy states, new technology has affected the organisation of production, patterns of ownership, control, use of land and cropping patterns. These in turn, have affected the existing structure of inequalities and production relations between various groups in the agrarian hierarchy. Women play an important role in agrarian economics - in production, processing, storage and marketing. They perform, in addition, the reproductive roles, socialisation of children and household chores. Any change in the organisation of production affects these multiple roles and consequently women's status in the family and society, though diversely across different sections. We examine the impact of these changes on women's status through some indicators such as:

a) their role and position in the organisation of production;
b) access to and control over productive resources;
c) the sex ratio;
d) literacy;
e) access to medical care;
f) marital status and marriage practices;
organisation of production
b) the impact of their work participation on their household responsibilities,
c) women's participation in household decision making in the changed circumstances; and
d) women's access to household property.

Organisation of Production

In a transitional economy like India, women contribute substantially to agricultural production, marketing and storage. Their household and reproductive activities also provide the basis for the productive activities of the family. Apart from this, "they spend almost 10-12 hours per day doing the household chores including, fetching of water and getting fuel and fodder.

The notion of women's work participation has been subjected to controversy in India in the past two decades on account of the changing definition of terms like 'worker' and 'work' in various censuses. The 1971 census used the 'labour time disposition' criterion over the reference period (one year for agricultural activities) and defined workers as only those who spent the major part of their time in economic activities, thus excluding all irregular, marginal and part-time workers. Most women come under the latter category ad because of a definition of worker that has a pronounced gender bias, their economic contribution is unrepresented or at least under represented in the census figures. In the inherited structure of rural
society and the agricultural processes themselves, women's work contribution is not recognised. Most rural women are categorised primarily as housewives, performing domestic work, which is regarded as unproductive. Though they work on their own farms and/or help in a part of the production process which leads to the final output, the work remains largely invisible and goes unrecorded.

Women's economic position in society and the nature and extent of their work participation are conditioned by various socio-economic variables of society.

In a developing economy like India, rural women are involved in a host of activities, not all of which are considered to be 'work' in economic terms. Three broad types of activities in which women are involved are:

a) wage work and self-employment outside the household;

b) self-employment in cultivation and industries related to the household sector; and,

c) domestic work within the household.

Domestic work has been excluded from economic activity in all censuses.

In agriculture, women's work participation outside the household is conditioned primarily by the localised norms and values. All over India, only women from the lower castes and tribal groups do wage work and self employed outside the household. Generally, extra-mural work is a taboo for the higher caste women, except in extraordinary circumstances.
New technology has brought significant changes in the organisation of production, which would be expected to affect the nature and extent of women's work participation.

i) What have been the nature and direction of these changes?

ii) Have there been changes in the localised norms and values on women's work participation along with the changes in agricultural technology?

iii) What have been the nature of gender differentials by caste and class in the nature and extent of women's work participation?

A) Patterns of women's work participation.

B) Self-Employed cultivators.

C) Agricultural labourers.

D) Women cultivators cum wage labour.


F) Agrarian structure and caste hierarchy.

G) Patterns of women's work.

H) Women and Household Responsibilities.


J) Women's Participation in Household Decision making.

To what extent is the increasing burden of work and responsibility reflected in women's decision-making status?
K) Women's Access to property. To what extent are women's uneven roles in decisions relating to family property reflected in their ownership, control and use of household assets.

Development and change General Indicators of women's status -

Over the years, certain general indicators of women's status have been evolved. These include

a) Sexratio in the population
   i) Immigration and settlement of Male Migrant Labourers.
   ii) Higher female Infant Mortality.
   iii) Frequent Divorce amongst the backward castes.

b) Literacy and education
   i) Levels of education.
   ii) Investment in education.

c) Access to Health care
   i) The availability of services within a responsible distance;
   ii) The economic condition of the family;
   iii) The beliefs and practices among people.

d) Marriage Practices
   i) Age at marriage
   ii) Child marriage
   iii) Choice of Marriage partner
   iv) Dowry
   v) Matrimonial home -

e) Political Participation
Sangeetha Purushothaman, in her case study 'The Empowerment of women in India - Grassroots Women's Network and the state' demonstrates the need for decentralised, informal organisational forms, such as networks and women's collectives, in mobilising resources for poor women and for facilitating their participation in developmental processes. These forms of organisation have not been validated as successful by especially resource mobilisation theory. Contemporary social movement theory emphasizes the ability of centralised, hierarchical organisational forms to fulfil the needs of organisations but usually do not concern themselves with the autonomy of individual organisations. This study, however, has shown how networkers of organisations, whose work is relevant to the needs of both organisations and women's collectivities protect the autonomy of organisations and are therefore shown to be sustainable in the long run.

The evolution of a complex flexible organisational form, such as the Swayam Shiksham Prayog (SSP), a network of organisations and women's collectives, was intrinsically linked to the social and economic position of poor women. The invisibility of poor women and their communities demanded a dynamic process, which combined policy change and implementation and easy feedback between the resource institution and poor women, in order for the poorest to obtain resources. The implications of such on organisational structure for relations of power and autonomy of poor women vis-a-vis men and local elites have been analysed.

Theories (Marvell and Oliver 1988) who emphasize a critical movement, do not questions whether size for the success of a this size should be attained through a single, centralised organisation or a loose, informal, network of small organisations. A centralized organisation
would not have been as succesful in lobbying resources and changing policy as a decentralised network, which the SSP represents network, which the SSP represents.

A few hypothetical conclusion, however, can be reached in this regard, for different levels of this network. **At the first level** women's collectives, by their very existence provide an alternative voice to decision making processes within the villages in which they operate. In the absence of such an organisational entity at the village level, the visibility of poor women and their ability to discuss issue, reach decisions and formally voice these concerns is lower. **At the second level**, by forming federations of collectives, women gain power through their organisations by influencing the distribution of resources in programmes such as DWCRA, JRY, TRYSEM and others. **At the third level**, through network of women's organisations a greater number of women are able to avail resources as a result of policy changes at the state level than if their collectives had applied individually for programmes.

Other preliminary conclusions point to the correlation between increased access to resource and the increase of women's intra-familial and intra-communal decision making. Hence, one can assume this will continue to be the case, provide the economic project proves successful in offering women with sustainable incomes. Women can gain more autonomy in their households and their communities in various ways. A steady income and greater freedom in decision making together allow them the freedom and provide them the time to attend meetings and organise. The creation of savings club has been found to decrease and often eliminate women's debts to money lenders, local shop-keepers, and landlords, which directly increased their autonomy. Often, joint economic production helped eliminate parasitic middlemen, since women were able to bargain collectively for their inputs and market prices.
The women and development literature has adequately demonstrated the worsening situation of women in the third world, and the burdens of development that women bear disproportionately.

New social movement theory which has emerged in West Europe in connection with movements which are described to be around post materialist values - such as the women's movement, the environmental movement or the peace movement cannot be directly applied to this movement. However the elements of social movement theory do apply in case of India too. In this case, the collection and mobilisation of poor women from a variety of organisations was clearly in the quest for resources and to change their economic conditions, through the use of institutional and non-institutional means normally unavailable to them. The effort to gain resources mainly for poor women and not for the men in those communities was simultaneously an effort to change gender relations between men and women in the village, as well as social relations between poor women and other social groups. Strategies were constantly being evolved to lesson the work burden women faced to improve their bargaining power in their homes and communities and to decrease their dependency on money lenders, landlords as well as families.

Social movement theory that emerged through the analysis of movement that accured in the 1960s in the West emphasized social crises as stimuli to movements, therefore also emphasizing certain historical moments or what is termed "eros". In this case study one could identify the growth of a long term, deepening economic crisis, where women and poor communities have to increasingly fight for their survival. However wheatever there is a particular moment at which this crisis should erupt into a movement is questionable. In this case these appears to have been a slow awakening of the consciousness among poor women
to change the forms that development was taking in their communities. Hence, this movement represents a long-term struggle being waged by poor women to change the economic conditions of their communities and in this context a multiplicity of issues needed to be addressed. But, in order to develop women's capacities to address these issues they, as both individuals and organisations, had to be first strengthened economically. Resource mobilization theory does not fully explore the strength and advantages of a complex organisational form, which involves both formal and informal structures, large and small units, and decentralised decision making structures. The polarity in the literature between these different organisational characteristics has been shown to be unnecessary. In fact, a network of organisations with large mass base and geographical scope was shown to be importance for policy charge to be made. Simultaneously the collective as a decision making entity at the village level which was both small and informal, was been as equally important.

We are now able to expand the model of the status of women and demographic behaviour giving fertility as the component of demographic behaviour, as shown in the following figure.
A model of the status of women and its influence on fertility

Explanation

Note that the model in its refers reform to the intermediate variables which affect volitional fertility control and not to those proximate determinate which influence 'natural' fertility. We include in the above model the effects of the position of women an these other potential proximate determinants of natural fertility tending to causes one another out. We include in the above model the effects of the position of women on these other potential proximate determinants of fertility, such as the age of marriage and birth spacing behaviour, but
as yet these seem to be only indirectly connected to final fertility levels through their influence on party-specific birth-control, rather than having a direct effect on differences in non-parity specific fertility. Even the greatest amount of contraceptive use between births by the South Indian women seems to be doing little other than compensating for the longer breast-feeding durations among the North Indians, with closed birth interval being very similar in the two graphs.

Besides the direct effect of the postulated components of women's position; there is the possible indirect effect of each component via its interaction with one or more of the other components. For example, while we cannot see why autonomy in decision making should lead to a smaller structural demand for children, one can imagine a pathway of influence that goes something like this:

autonomy $\Rightarrow$ economic interaction with the
Outside world $\Rightarrow$ need for children as security

Indeed, the bulk of the effect of female autonomy on the determinants of voluntary fertility control probably occur through its effect on the two other components of women's position. In this sense it is much more powerful than simple model suggests. At the same time, it should be stressed that while female autonomy often leads to greater exposure and/or interaction it is not a necessary condition for them; they can exist even in the absence of women's controls over their lives. For instance, other household members can have important altruistic or vested interest in sending girls to school or women to work, both factors contribute to their exposure to and interaction with the world outside the home. For the sake of simplicity, such indirect effects have not been spelt out in the formal model.
A model of the status of women and regional differences in child mortality

1) Access to resources, especially knowledge

2) Use of resources

Proximate determinants relevant to regional child mortality differential

Exposure to outside world

Interaction with outside world

Autonomy in decision making

A model of the factors influencing the status of women in North and South India
There is a relationship between educational differences and the status of women

1. Both education and employment appear to be powerful tools for changing women's position in a direction conducive to lower fertility and mortality rates. This is an encouraging finding because it suggests policy interventions that would be more welcome than an assault on factors such as marriage practices.

2. However, educational and occupational differentials in demographically relevant indicators of the status of women are distinctly lower for Tamil Nadu than for Uttar Pradesh. In fact, not only are they lower, they are often in an unexpected direction as well. For example, educated Tamil Nadu may take less not more of a responsibility for household food expenditure than the uneducated women.

3) More interestingly, within each educational category the Tamil Women continue to have higher levels of exposure, interaction and autonomy in decision making than the women from Uttar Pradesh. In fact it is among the uneducated women that regional differences in these indicators of the status of women are the greatest, suggesting strongly that it is not education which accounts for the bulk by regional differentials. Indeed, cultural background seems to be functioning in the same way as educational or a gainful occupation to influence the position of women and through this their fertility and child mortality levels. Our model of the relationship between the status of women and the sex differentials in child mortality (as a proxy for sex differentials in physical well-being in general would therefore be illustrated.
A model of the status of women and regional sex differences in physical welfare

In the area of Indian agrarian studies a significant body of literature has emerged in recent years. Women form a separate analytical and empirical category in addition to, but distinct from, the more commonly used categories such as class, race and caste (Agarwal, B. 1983:4). Although invaluable in contributing to an understanding of the change and continuity in the rural stratification and the dynamics of agrarian social reality, these studies, because they fail to look at the women's position in class formation and social transformation in agriculture, project a biased and incomplete picture.

Studies on women, whether in general or on women in agriculture in particular, are of fairly recent origin in India. The impetus for these studies was given by the submission of the Report of committee
on the Status of Women in India in 1974. Among studies relating to women in agriculture, Pranab Bardhan (1978) highlights features of rural women's labour market as follows: (a) they are an irregular supplier of labour; (b) their entry and withdrawal are frequent; and (c) their employment participation is sometimes different from that of men. Vina Mazumdar, Kumud Sharma and Sarthi Acharya (1979) point out of the general situation of poverty, illiteracy and ill health of the poorer rural working women. They also found that in rural society gender discrimination is the general rule. G. Kelkar and S. Anandalakshmy (1980) highlight women's productive role, which has been viewed as being "secondary to their reproductive roles". G. Parthasarathy and G. D. Rao (1980) conclude that the rural women's labour participation reflects the poor economic and low social status of their household and their low work participation reflects higher "economic invisibility" of work K. M. Manohar (1982) indicates that:

These jobs manned by women drawn from lower caste and lower class.. Ignorance, traditional bounds, illiteracy, lack of skill, discrimination in the wage structure.. ill treatment, immigration and disintegration of families, alienation etc. are some of the characteristics of employment in this sector.

Kalpana Bardhan (1985) highlights the structural elements of society responsible for economic exploitation and socially condoned, culturally rationalised discrimination and exclusion even within their class. Agarwal (1985) points to the gender-specific problem of unemployment, poverty and destitution.

Recognising that women are frequently an oppressed group within each unit of socio-economic stratification, such studies have gone on to hypothesise as well as investigate into some causes of these
growing gender imbalances in the form of women's invisibility in work participation, their subjugation and disadvantaged position in society.

The rural development strategy, which supposedly aims at reducing poverty, inequality and unemployment and at improving the quality and conditions of life has in reality augmented regional disparities, class inequalities and gender differentiation. Though this strategy incorporates a range of technological, educational, administrative and organisational changes, in recent years, technological innovations have been given the pride of place in order to promote rapid agricultural modernisation and increase productivity. This in turn has marginalised women's position in rural society, sharpening gender inequality.

The present study proposes to examine the broad social processes generated out of the penetration of new technology of cultivation and thereby locates the changing roles and statuses of women within these social processes. Specifically, it proposes to examine the impact of new technology of cultivation.

The study also examines how the gender gaps, which operate within the given societal norms, values and customs, are being strengthened in the process of agricultural modernisation and economic development in rural India.

In a transitional society, women's position both in the family and in society at large is radically changed by the processes of technological modernisation, economic development and social change. According to Boserup the changes in women's position should be viewed: not as isolated factors, but rather as part of general changes that come about as human societies slowly develop from subsistence economics to high technology societies. Economic development is a
gradual change from family production to specialised production of goods and services. This specialisation of production makes it possible to use better technologies, scientific methods and an increasingly elaborate and social infrastructure (1990).

Third World societies are experiencing a rapid transformation in their technological base of production. But the pertinence of new technology itself has been questioned by the social scientists in recent years. Many of them contest its aptness as regards the gender gap, its impact on women's social and economic position in society, especially in the Third World. Women's access to, control over and management of it. Among the several questions social scientists have raised are:

◆ Have new technologies been gender neutral and women friendly?
◆ What have been the effects of the introduction of Western technology on the sexual division of labour, and on the social and economic lives of women of the Third World?
◆ What is the form and extend of women's access to and control over this new technology?

Some important theoretical framework has been evolved in recent years on the subject.

Amartya Sen (1985) sees sexual division of work and reward as a 'cooperative conflict' - an extension of pure bargaining theory. He also takes a broader view of technology which is no longer merely commodity production but needs also to take account of the 'social arrangements that permit productive processes to be carried out'. Sen postulates that the conflict between the sexes cannot be resolved within the framework of pure bargaining theory (as capitalists and workers do), for in spite of conflicting interests, man and women share the same
concerns and experiences. Hence they have to cooperate (or collude) with each other, as also bargain to gain positions of advantage in relation to one another.

According to Srinivas, this mobility was legitimised through the sanskritisation process and gradually the quantum of sanskritisation increased in rural India. The alteration in the lifestyle and its legitimisation by resorting to sanskritisation have radical effects on women's lives. To Srinivas, "It immures them and chances the character of the husband-wife relationship ... Sanskritisation leads to heightened sensitivity to ideas of purity and pollution and to the performance of elaborate ritual, life-style, calendrical and other. Further, among the high caste Hindus women may be said to be the custodians of the purity of the house and its members and of ritual". Srinivas located a basic contradiction in the conceptualisation of the conjugal bond of sanskritic Hinduism; in which the wife is considered to be the moral and religious half of the husband while at the same time she has been made the inferior. 'The husband was not only the wife's master but her deity. He might be a wife beater, drunkard, gambler and a womaniser but her duty was to serve and obey him'. She had to be a virgin before marriage and chaste subsequently and was not allowed divorce or to remarry if she was a widow. To Srinivas, the conjugal relations appear to be more egalitarian among the less sanskritised low castes than among the sansskritised high castes, in the process of sanskritisation rural women have been subjected to remain in 'status trap'. Hence an essential precondition of women's breaking out of the status trap is migration to urban areas, and the bigger and more cosmopolitan the urban areas the easier the transition.

Among the notable recent studies on the impact of agricultural modernisation in general and new technology and irrigation...
in particular on women's status in India is the one by Agarwal (1985). She points out that: "...Technology, however does not operate independent of the societal values and ideology that legitimise the women's subordinate position in society. Agarwal writes:

The fact that it is women who often tend to lose more or gain less from a scheme than the men of their class again relates less to the technical characteristics of the scheme than to the ideology that legitimises and reinforces women's subordinate position, economically and socially, both in the household and in the larger society. This subordination manifests itself in inequalities in women's access to productive resources, especially land, in the roles they assume in the private and public spheres, and in the sharing of the burden of work and the product/income from such work between male and female household members.

Kaur and Sharma (1989) studied the impact of the Green Revolution on the status of rural women in the most advanced and least advanced villages of Haryana.

In Indian society, gender plays a crucial role in allocating role and status to an individual. In general, gender determines the ways in which men and women participate in the work, economic, social and political relationships in society. Yet gender construction takes place within societal norms, values, customs and traditions; it is through these that gender role and status stereotyping are inculcated through the processes of socialisation in the family and other related institutional arrangements of society.

Because of their inherent inequality, rural women suffer as a social category. They have lower access to education and training facilities and marginal access to productive resources; their work is
not recognised; their work participation is invisible; they are preoccupied with reproductive activities; they have low access to medical and health care facilities; and they suffer from social subjugation, taboos and seclusion.

In Third World societies in general, and in particular, development initiatives are commenced, operated and implemented through the existing institutional structures. These institutions have patriarchal gender biases, since there has been nil or meagre representation of women in their decision-making. Usually the decision-makers have taken a very genetic view on technological transformation, economic development and social change and have failed to give due consideration to their possible adverse impact on women's social status. The result has been that the processes of technological transformation and economic development have only strengthened the pre-existing institutional arrangements, keeping the women as an economically deprived, socially subjugated and politically powerless group.

The development strategies so far tries out have envisaged gradual and institutionalised social change. They recognise and re-emphasise the existing structural arrangements of society and envisage that the elevation of the social status of its members takes place within these institutionalised arrangements. Any positional mobility is also legitimised by the socially recognised norms and values. India is a stratified society based on caste and social class. These societal arrangements do not ensure equal opportunity to its members. Women in every group of this socio-economic hierarchy suffer from various rural, economic and political disadvantages.