



**Report No 55**

## **Gender and Development: Concepts and Definitions**

**Prepared for the Department for International Development (DFID)  
for its gender mainstreaming intranet resource**

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## **1. Introduction**

Selected concepts central to Gender and Development thinking are explained here. These are intended to help you explore some of the key ideas and issues in Gender and Development and their implications for policy and practice. The succinct explanations here are neither comprehensive nor definitive. Readers are advised to consult the recommended readings for more detailed discussions.

## **2. Quick Definitions**

Culture	The distinctive patterns of ideas, beliefs, and norms which characterise the way of life and relations of a society or group within a society
Gender Analysis	The systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress inequities based on gender
Gender Discrimination	The systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender, which denies them rights, opportunities or resources
Gender Division of Labour	The socially determined ideas and practices which define what roles and activities are deemed appropriate for women and men
Gender Equality and Equity	<p>Gender equality denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere</p> <p>Gender equity denotes the equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognising their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources</p>
Gender Mainstreaming	An organisational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability
Gender Needs	Shared and prioritised needs identified by women that arise from their common experiences as a gender
Gender Planning	The technical and political processes and procedures necessary to implement gender-sensitive policy
Gender Relations	Hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to disadvantage women
Gender Training	A facilitated process of developing awareness and capacity on gender issues, to bring about personal or organisational change for gender equality
Gender Violence	Any act or threat by men or male-dominated institutions, that inflicts physical, sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender

Intra-household Resource Distribution	The dynamics of how different resources that are generated within or which come into the household, are accessed and controlled by its members
National Machineries for Women	Agencies with a mandate for the advancement of women established within and by governments for integrating gender concerns in development policy and planning
Patriarchy	Systemic societal structures that institutionalise male physical, social and economic power over women
Sex and Gender	Sex refers to the biological characteristics that categorise someone as either female or male; whereas gender refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male
Social Justice	Fairness and equity as a right for all in the outcomes of development, through processes of social transformation
WID/GAD	<p>The WID (or Women in Development) approach calls for greater attention to women in development policy and practice, and emphasises the need to integrate them into the development process</p> <p>In contrast, the GAD (or Gender and Development) approach focuses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women and emphasises the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations</p>
Women's Empowerment	A 'bottom-up' process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it
Women's Human Rights	The recognition that women's rights are human rights and that women experience injustices solely because of their gender

### **3. Detailed Explanations and Further Reading**

#### **CULTURE**

The distinctive patterns of ideas, beliefs, and norms which characterise the way of life and relations of a society or group within a society

Culturally determined gender ideologies define rights and responsibilities and what is 'appropriate' behaviour for women and men. They also influence access to and control over resources, and participation in decision-making. These gender ideologies often reinforce male power and the idea of women's inferiority. Culture is sometimes interpreted narrowly as 'custom' or 'tradition', and assumed to be natural and unchangeable. Despite these assumptions, culture is fluid and enduring.

*"We talk about poverty across societies, and no-one raises any problems. We talk about gender subordination across societies, and people cry cultural imperialism!"*  
(White, 1993:9)

Dominant cultures reinforce the position of those with economic, political and social power, and therefore tend to reinforce male power. Globalisation also has implications for the diffusion of culture, particularly of western culture.

The defence of 'culture' and 'tradition' is often used by men to justify practices that constrain women's life chances and outcomes. Interventions to challenge power imbalances proposed by local women's organisations or NGOs are often denied legitimacy, or where an international agency is involved, denounced as 'western' interference or 'cultural imperialism'. Many within the international development community also remain resistant to goals of gender equity because they perceive these as interfering with the most intimate domain in society. Some women have themselves defended ideas of 'culture' and 'tradition' in order to hold on to what little power they have, or as a form of resistance. For example, before the revolution in Iran, women took up the veil to show resistance to the processes of westernisation that the country was experiencing.

*See also: FAQ 'What right have we to interfere in other people's cultures?'*

Nevertheless, there are real issues of concern for local women's groups when externally initiated interventions are tainted by colonial attitudes. In the past, women were often seen as 'victims' that needed protection. Male colonisers, however well intentioned, perpetuated this paternalistic idea to justify their colonial domination. More recently, certain western feminists have also colluded in this notion, giving overwhelming priority to such issues as veiling, arranged marriages, and female genital mutilation, at the expense of other perhaps more immediate concerns. Southern feminists challenge this idea of women as 'victims'. They want to set their own agendas - which may imply redistributive action or tackling poverty - and gain support for these from western feminists.

#### **Further reading**

Development Assistance Committee (DAC), 1998, 'Gender, Equality and Culture', in DAC Source Book on Concepts and Approaches linked to Gender Equality, OECD, Paris

Mohanty, C. (1991) 'Under Western Eyes. Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse' in Mohanty, C., Russo, A. and L. Torres (eds.), 1991, *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press

Moore, H. 1994, *A Passion for Difference*, Cambridge, Polity

Oxfam, 1995, 'Women and Culture,' *Gender and Development*, Oxfam Journal, Vol.3, No.1, February, Oxfam, Oxford

Nussbaum, M., and Glover, J., 1995, *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*, Clarendon Press, Oxford

## **GENDER ANALYSIS**

*'Gender analysis, once confined to the margins of development theory, has over the last ten years penetrated both the thinking and the operations of international development institutions'*  
(Miller and Razavi, 1998: 4)

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

The Gender Roles framework focuses on describing women's and men's roles and their relative access to and control over resources. The analysis aims to anticipate the impacts of projects on both productive and reproductive roles. It takes the household, rather than the breadth of institutions, as the unit of analysis and tends to assume that women are a homogeneous category.

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

Other gender analysis frameworks include: the Moser/DPU Framework; the Longwe Method/Women's Empowerment Framework; and Levy's Web of Institutionalisation.

Recently, tools have also been developed to apply gender analysis to the analysis of markets, of macro-economic and sectoral policies, and of public expenditure and budgets.

*See also:  
Gender training,  
Gender planning,  
WID/GAD*

### **Further reading**

Elson, D., 1997, 'Integrating gender issues into public expenditure: six tools', mimeo, GENECON Unit, Graduate School of Sciences, University of Manchester

Elson, D., and Evers, B., 1998, 'Sector programme support: A Gender Aware Analysis', mimeo, GENECON, Manchester University

Miller, C., and Razavi, S., 1998, 'Gender analysis: alternative paradigms', Gender in Development Monograph Series, No.6, UNDP, New York

Overholt, C., Cloud, K., Anderson, M., and Austin, J., 1991, 'Gender Analysis Framework' in Overholt *et al*, 1991, Gender Analysis in Development Planning: A Case Book, Kumarian Press, Connecticut



## **GENDER DISCRIMINATION**

*“Not all women are poor, and not all poor people are women, but all women suffer from discrimination”  
(Kabeer, 1996:20)*

*Gender discrimination:*

- *women work 67% of the world’s working hours*
- *2 out of 3 of the world’s illiterate people are women*
- *women’s earnings range from 50-85% of men’s earnings*
- *globally women make up just over 10% of representatives in national government*

*(adapted from Oxfam, 1995:181, and ‘Facts and Figures’ section)*

*See also:*

*Women’s human rights, Social justice, Intra-household resource allocation*

### **Further reading**

The systematic, unfavourable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender, which denies them rights, opportunities or resources

Across the world, women are treated unequally and less value is placed on their lives because of their gender. Women’s differential access to power and control of resources is central to this discrimination in all institutional spheres, i.e. the household, community, market, and state.

Within the household, women and girls can face discrimination in the sharing out of household resources including food, sometimes leading to higher malnutrition and mortality indicators for women. (See *Intra-household Resource Distribution*). At its most extreme, gender discrimination can lead to son preference, expressed in sex selective abortion or female feticide. In the labour market, unequal pay, occupational exclusion or segregation into low skill and low paid work limit women’s earnings in comparison to those of men of similar education levels. Women’s lack of representation and voice in decision making bodies in the community and the state perpetuates discrimination, in terms of access to public services, such as schooling and health care, or discriminatory laws.

The law is assumed to be gender-neutral when in fact it may perpetuate gender discrimination, being a product of a culture with oppressive gender ideologies. Even where constitutional or national legal provisions uphold gender equality principles, religious or other customary laws that privilege men may take precedence in practice. However, the law, when reformed with women’s input, can be a potent tool for challenging discrimination, if combined with other strategies, including capacity-building to overcome barriers to claiming rights.

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979 brought into international focus the rights of women as human rights, including the right to be free from discrimination. Women activists regard this convention as a key tool to support their struggle against discrimination in all spheres, pushing governments towards attaining these internationally recognised minimum standards.

Birdsall, N., and Sabot, R., (eds.), 1991, *Unfair Advantage: Labour Market Discrimination in Developing Countries*, IBRD/World Bank, Washington

Seager, J., 1997, *The State of Women in the World Atlas: Women’s status around the Globe: Work, Health, Education and Personal Freedom*, Penguin, London

## **GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR**

The socially determined ideas and practices which define what roles and activities are deemed appropriate for women and men

Whilst the gender division of labour tends to be seen as natural and immutable, in fact, these ideas and practices are socially constructed. This results in context-specific patterns of who does what by gender and how this is valued. Gender divisions of labour are not necessarily rigidly defined in terms of men's and women's roles, as is sometimes assumed. They are characterised by co-operation in joint activities, as well as by separation. Often, the accepted norm regarding gender divisions varies from the actual practice.

*'Women's labour is not infinitely elastic. It cannot stretch to cover all the deficiencies left by reduced public expenditure. It cannot absorb all the shocks of adjustment.'*  
(Elson, 1995:15)

However, roles typically designated as female are almost invariably less valued than those designated as male. Women are generally expected to fulfil the reproductive role of bearing and raising children, caring for other family members, and household management tasks, as well as home based production. Men tend to be more associated with productive roles, particularly paid work, and market production. In the labour market, although women's overall participation rates are rising, they tend to be confined to a relatively narrow range of occupations or concentrated in lower grades than men, usually earning less.

Historically, women's productive roles have been ignored or under-valued, particularly in the informal sector and subsistence agriculture. This has led to misconceived development projects; for example the services of extension agents and agricultural inputs being targeted at men. Because women's labour is undervalued, it is often assumed by mainstream development policies to be infinitely elastic. For example, policy makers expect that women can take on roles previously fulfilled by public services, such as care for the sick and elderly, when cutbacks are made.

The formal documentation and recognition of women's roles and the related time burden is crucial for gender-sensitive development interventions. Recently, international organisations have begun to measure all forms of economic activity by gender. International definitions of economic activity have also been broadened to include subsistence farming, food processing and homeworking 'in anticipation of profit'. Time budget surveys are also being implemented in some places to measure women's input into reproductive work.

*See also:*  
*Gender needs,*  
*Gender analysis,*  
*Women's empowerment*

Gender and development policies and programmes can challenge and change women's socially prescribed roles, in pursuit of gender equity. For example, women have been successfully trained and employed as water technicians or builders in communities where these were jobs previously a male

domain. However, programmes aiming to increase women's participation in spheres beyond the household must ensure that they are properly remunerated. They should also be accompanied by consideration of how men, or public provision, can reduce women's responsibilities in the home.

### **Further reading**

Adepoju, A., and Opong, C., (eds.), 1994, Gender, work & population in Sub-Saharan Africa, ILO, James Currey, London

Anker, R., 1997, Gender and Jobs: Sex Segregation of Occupations in the World, ILO, Geneva

Beneria, L, 1992, 'Accounting for women's work: progress of two decades,' World Development, Vol.20, No.11

Boserup, E., 1970, Women's Role in Economic Development, Gower, Aldershot

Stichter, S. and J. Parpart, (eds.), 1990, Women, Employment and the Family in the International Division of Labour, Basingstoke; Macmillan

## **GENDER EQUALITY & EQUITY**

The term 'gender equity' is often used interchangeably with 'gender equality'. Here, a distinction is drawn between these two concepts, reflecting divergent understandings of gender differences and of the appropriate strategies to address these. Gender equality denotes women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere.

This expresses a liberal feminist idea that removing discrimination in opportunities for women allows them to achieve equal status to men. In effect, progress in women's status is measured against a male norm. Equal opportunities policies and legislation tackle the problem through measures to increase women's participation in public life. For example, in Chile, the National Service for Women (SERNAM) developed an Equal Opportunities Plan for Chilean Women 1994-1999. This focused on equitable participation in education, the labour market, health services, and politics. Judicial reform is another key tool in the fight for equality, but lack of implementation and enforcement might limit its impact.

However, this focus on what is sometimes called formal equality, does not necessarily demand or ensure equality of outcomes. It assumes that once the barriers to participation are removed, there is a level playing field. It also does not recognise that women's reality and experience may be different from men's.

Gender equity denotes the equivalence in life outcomes for women and men, recognising their different needs and interests, and requiring a redistribution of power and resources.

The goal of gender equity, sometimes called substantive equality, moves beyond equality of opportunity by requiring transformative change. It recognises that women and men have different needs, preferences, and interests and that equality of outcomes may necessitate different treatment of men and women.

An equity approach implies that all development policies and interventions need to be scrutinised for their impact on gender relations. It necessitates a rethinking of policies and programmes to take account of men's and women's different realities and interests. So, for example, it implies rethinking existing legislation on employment, as well as development programmes, to take account of women's reproductive work and their concentration in unprotected, casual work in informal and home based enterprises.

It is worth examining the content of policies, not just the language, before deciding whether an equity or an equality approach is being followed. Gender equity goals are seen as being more political than gender equality goals, and are hence generally less accepted in mainstream development agencies.

*See also:  
WID/GAD,  
Gender analysis,  
Gender relations*

### **Further Reading**

Development Assistance Committee (DAC), 1998, 'Evolution of the Thinking and Approaches on Equality Issues' in DAC, 1998, DAC Sourcebook on Concepts and Approaches linked to Gender

Equality, OECD, Paris

## **GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

An organisational strategy to bring a gender perspective to all aspects of an institution's policy and activities, through building gender capacity and accountability

Beijing  
Platform for Action:  
*'...governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes'*  
(cited in DAC, 1998:28)

The 1970s strategies of integrating women into development by establishing separate women's units or programmes within state and development institutions had made slow progress by the mid-1980s. (See *National Machineryes for Women*). In light of this, the need was identified for broader institutional change if pervasive male advantage was to be challenged. Adding women-specific activities at the margin was no longer seen as sufficient. Most major development organisations and many governments have now embraced 'gender mainstreaming' as a strategy for moving towards gender equality.

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

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

See also:  
*National Machineryes for Women,*  
*Gender planning*

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

### **Further reading**

BRIDGE, 1997, 'Institutionalising gender', Development and gender in brief, Issue 6, BRIDGE, IDS, Brighton

DFID (Social Development Division), 1998, 'Putting gender mainstreaming into practice', mimeo, paper presented to the DFID Management Board, 8 May

Goetz, A., (ed), 1997, Getting Institutions Right for Women in Development, Zed Books, London

Moser, C., Tornqvist, A., and van Bronkhorst, B., 1998, Mainstreaming Gender and Development in the World Bank: Progress and Recommendations, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Washington, D.C.

Razavi, S., and Miller, C., 1995, 'Gender mainstreaming: a study of efforts by the UNDP, the World Bank and the ILO to institutionalize gender issues', Occasional Papers, No.4, UNRISD, Geneva

Schalkwyk, J., Thomas, H., and Woroniuk, B., 1996, Mainstreaming: a Strategy for Achieving Equality between Women and Men', SIDA, Stockholm

## **GENDER NEEDS**

Shared and prioritised needs identified by women that arise from their common experiences as a gender

Certain women's interests, of a political or practical nature, related to their experience as a gendered person. Such prioritised concerns have been translated into the concept of gender needs (Moser, 1989). This identifies the way in which women's gender interests, defined by women themselves, can be satisfied in the planning process. Although needs and interests are conceptually different (Molyneux, 1998), in practice, they are closely related in the planning process. Needs, as well as interests, result from a political process of contestation and interpretation and thus should not be externally defined or seen as fixed.

Practical Gender Needs (PGNs) according to Moser (1989) are the immediate needs identified by women to assist their survival in their socially accepted roles, within existing power structures. Policies to meet PGNs tend to focus on ensuring that women and their families have adequate living conditions, such as health care and food provision, access to safe water and sanitation, but also seek to ensure access to income-earning opportunities. PGNs do not directly challenge gender inequalities, even though these needs may be a direct result of women's subordinate position in society.

*See also:*  
*Gender analysis*  
*Gender planning*  
*Women's empowerment*

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

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

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

### **Further reading**

Molyneux, M., 1985, 'Mobilisation without emancipation? Women's interests, the state and revolution in Nicaragua', *Feminist Studies*, Vol.11, No.2



Molyneux, M., 1998, 'Analysing women's movements', in Jackson, C., and Pearson, R., 1998, *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy*, Routledge, London

Moser, C., 1989, 'Gender planning in the third world: meeting practical and strategic needs', *World Development*, Vol.17, No.11, pp1799-1825

## **GENDER PLANNING**

*'Project planning and implementation from a gender-based perspective can have only one ultimate goal...contribute to changing the balance of the sexual division of power and resources so as to make it more equitable'*  
(Macdonald, 1994:45)

The technical and political processes and procedures necessary to implement gender-sensitive policy and practice

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

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

The social relations approach differs in its focus on power in gender relations (See *Gender Analysis*). This approach uses an institutional framework for the analysis of gender inequalities as a tool for gender-aware planning. It recognises that the means through which needs are met is as important as the planned ends of any intervention. The planning process is conceived as participatory and constituted by an analysis and evaluation of causes, effects, means and ends. A seven-point 'Gender audit for development interventions' supports this framework. (Kabeer and Subrahmanian, 1996).

Whilst gender transformatory policies are increasingly being generated, concerns are focusing on the 'misbehaviour' of such policies, i.e. a tendency to slip in implementation from transformatory objectives to outcomes that fail to challenge existing gender relations. It has been recognised that GAD approaches are constrained by resistance and subversion, from within both implementing organisations and targeted communities. Gender planning needs therefore to be part of an on-going process of gender mainstreaming, backed up by sufficient resources, commitment and authority. Gender planning procedures need to involve the participation of stakeholders and clear lines of accountability.

See also:  
*Gender mainstreaming,  
Gender training,  
Gender analysis,  
WID/GAD*

At the project level, a variety of planning tools are used to operationalise gender policy, including general and sector-specific checklists and guidelines. Logical Framework Analysis is an

example of a planning tool which, if used in a gender-sensitive manner, can help to ensure accountability, participation of various stakeholders, and that relevant monitoring and evaluation procedures are implemented.

**Further reading**

Kabeer, N., and Subrahmanian, R., 1996, 'Institutions, relations and outcomes: framework and tools for gender-aware planning', IDS Discussion Paper, No.357, IDS, Brighton

Macdonald, M., (ed.), 1994, *Gender Planning in Development Agencies: Meeting the Challenge*, Oxfam, Oxford

Moser, C., 1993, *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice and Training*, Routledge, London

## **GENDER RELATIONS**

*'If gender is about relations between men and women, then the male side of the equation must also be figured in. If women's gender identities are to be changed, then men's must change also.'*  
(White in Macdonald, 1993:20)

Hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to disadvantage women

These gender hierarchies are often accepted as 'natural' but are socially determined relations, culturally based, and are subject to change over time. They can be seen in a range of gendered practices, such as the division of labour and resources, and gendered ideologies, such as ideas of acceptable behaviour for women and men.

Analyses which focus on gender relations differ in emphasis from those which take 'gender roles' as a starting point. They give more prominence to the connectedness of men's and women's lives, and to the imbalances of power embedded in male-female relations. They also emphasise the interaction of gender relations with other hierarchical social relations such as class, caste, ethnicity and race. But whether gender relations act to alleviate, or to exacerbate other social inequalities, depends on the context.

Gender relations constitute and are constituted by a range of institutions, such as the family, legal systems or the market. They are a resource which is drawn on daily to reinforce or redefine the rules, norms and practices which govern social institutions. Since historically women have been excluded from many institutional spheres, or their participation circumscribed, they often have less bargaining power to affect change who institutions operate.

So, for example, where they are perceived to transgress their accepted roles, women can be physically or sexually abused by male partners with relative impunity. In many cultures, beatings or rape in marriage are considered acceptable in the existing legal framework. Even where, following lobbying of women's groups, rape or violence within marriage is outlawed, women may be reluctant to seek redress because the male dominated judicial system is unsympathetic, or because they fear ostracism. Where women retaliate, they become criminalised themselves. However, change is possible: in a few recent cases, following sustained campaigns, women have been acquitted of 'crimes' against violent partners and new laws have been passed to respond to such attenuating circumstances.

*See also:*  
*Gender equity,*  
*Gender analysis,*  
*Sex and gender,*  
*WID/GAD*

Hierarchical gender relations constrain development efforts. For example, rigidities in the gender division of labour limit the effective mobilisation of women's labour to support export production. Poverty reduction efforts are hampered where men use their authority to usurp control over resources targeted at women. Development strategies need to be informed by an analysis of gender relations and to support women's own attempts to change the rules and practices which reinforce these gender hierarchies.

## **Further reading**

Pearson, R., Whitehead, A., and Young, K., 1984, 'Introduction: the continuing subordination of women in the development process,' in Young, K., Wolkovitz, C., and McCullagh, R., 1984, *Of Marriage and the Market*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London

Razavi, S., and Miller, C., 1995, 'From WID to GAD: Conceptual Shifts in the Women and Development Discourse', Occasional Paper, UNRISD, Geneva

Pearson, R., and C., Jackson, 1998, 'Introduction: interrogating development. Feminism, gender and policy', in Jackson, C., and Pearson, R., (eds.), 1998, *Feminist Visions of Development: Gender Analysis and Policy*, Routledge, London

## **GENDER TRAINING**

A facilitated process of developing awareness and capacity on gender issues to bring about personal or organisational change for gender equality

*'Gender training...is a tool, a strategy, a space for reflection, a site of debate and possibly for struggle. Training is a transformative process'*  
(Macdonald, 1994:31)

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

The trainer's, as well as the organisation's, approach to gender and development influence the training approach, and hence the framework used (*See Gender Analysis*). These vary in the degree to which they see the need for personal attitudinal and behavioural change, or focus primarily on changing organisational procedures and practices. Personal transformation tends to be a training objective for Southern NGOs/women's organisations rather than development co-operation agencies. and the 'further reading' below.

*See also:*  
*Gender analysis,*  
*Gender mainstreaming,*  
*Gender planning*

As awareness grows within an organisation, so the emphasis of gender training shifts to more tailored courses to meet specific needs and demands, and to more skills-based training. Gender training was initially mainly focused at the project level, but more recently emphasis has shifted to sectoral and macro-economic policy-making.

Attention has recently focused on the need to evaluate the impact of gender training. Experience suggests that training is most effective when it is part of a broader strategy of organisational change.

### **Further reading**

Kabeer, N., 1994, 'Triple Roles, Gender Roles, Social Relations: The political subtext of gender training frameworks', in *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*, Verso, London

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## **GENDER VIOLENCE**

*“Women should wear purdah [head-to-toe covering] to ensure that innocent men ... are not unconsciously forced into becoming rapists’  
Parliamentarian of the ruling Barisan National in Malaysia  
(cited in Heise et al 1994:iii)*

*Percentage of women surveyed reporting physical assaults by intimate partner:  
Japan: 59%  
Zambia: 40%  
Colombia: 20%  
Tanzania: 60%  
(UN, 1995:160)*

*See also:  
Gender discrimination,  
Social justice,  
Women’s human rights*

Any act or threat by men or male-dominated institutions, that inflicts physical, sexual, or psychological harm on a woman or girl because of their gender

Gender violence occurs in both the ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres. It happens in virtually all societies, across all social classes, with women particularly at risk from men they know. Official figures are scarce, and under reporting is rife, especially when the violence involves another family member. Violence against women, and particularly systematic rape, has frequently been used as a weapon of war against particular ethnic groups or entire populations.

There is, however, no single definition of gender violence accepted internationally and there is much debate over the breadth of inclusion. Commonly, the acts or threats of such included in the definition are rape, sexual harassment, wife-battering, sexual abuse of girls, dowry-related violence, and non-spousal violence within the home. Other definitions extend to marital rape, acts such as female genital mutilation, female infanticide, and sex-selective abortion. In addition, certain definitions include ‘sexual exploitation’ such as enforced prostitution, trafficking of women and girls, and pornography.

It is now recognised in international law that violence against women is a human rights issue with major health and economic implications. The rape of women in wartime has been recognised and explicitly prohibited since 1949 in article 47 of the Fourth Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Civilian Persons in Times of War. The United Nations (UN) recently appointed a Special Rapporteur on violence against women. However, legislation alone is insufficient to address this problem.

The prevention and elimination of violence against women is hampered by pervasive attitudes that devalue women’s lives and by institutional resistance, including from the judicial system and the police, to recognising the extent of the problem. There is hostility to interfering with ‘private’ domestic disputes. Even where countries have issued appropriate legislation, its implementation and enforcement may well be weak. Additional support activities are required. Legislative reform, training of the police and lawyers, provision of shelters, and the building of capacity for women to combat violence and pursue their rights, are all necessary.

Development policy must understand both the obstacles gender violence places in the way of effective development, and the debilitating impact it has on women’s lives. Policy concerns should not only focus on programmes specifically targeted at violence against women, but on violence as an aspect of other programmes, such as microenterprise schemes. Development interventions themselves could make women more vulnerable to violence if men feel threatened by attempts to enhance women’s status.



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## **INTRA- HOUSEHOLD RESOURCE DISTRIBUTION**

*'The consensus appears to be shifting to the view that intrahousehold relations are indeed characterised by power' (Kabeer, 1998:103)*

*See also:  
Gender relations,  
Gender discrimination,  
Women's human rights*

The dynamics of how different resources that are generated within, or which come into the household are controlled and accessed by its different members

Gender analysis has revealed some evidence of bias against female members of households in the allocation of resources such as income, food, nutrition, health care and education. These patterns are not universal, however, and are also mediated by other factors such as age, and birth order. For example, there is little evidence of nutritional bias against girl children in Sub-Saharan Africa, whereas in South Asia this pattern has been widely noted. It has also been shown that resources controlled by women, for example in female-headed households, are distributed differently to resources controlled by men. There is some evidence that women spend a higher percentage of their generally smaller incomes on family consumption and children's welfare.

Conventional macro-economics treats the activities performed within the household as non-economic and hence irrelevant. Conventional micro-economists typically sees the household as a consumption unit and treat it as a 'black-box', assuming gender-neutrality. It was the New Household Economics (pioneered by Gary Becker in the 1960s) that challenged the conventional microeconomic approach and highlighted the importance of production within the household. In this model, all resources are pooled and distributed in an altruistic manner by a benevolent male household head to maximise the welfare of household members. However, gender analysts, particularly feminist anthropologists and economists, have demonstrated that this characterisation of the household is naïve and ignores gender power imbalances and conflict within the household.

Feminist models highlighted the fact that resources are not always pooled and stressed the role of bargaining processes within the household in determining access to resources. Gender relations within the household are then seen as characterised by both conflict and co-operation, whereby women tend to have less bargaining power in the struggle over household resources (for example, Sen). The division of labour and dynamics within the household are seen also to influence opportunities and outcomes for women outside the home, in employment for example. Certain theorists suggest that women's bargaining position within the household is enhanced when they work outside the home. Other mechanisms for enhancing women's bargaining power in the home include strengthened property rights, and membership of collective organisations.

The household has often been used as the basic unit of analysis in, for example, poverty measures. But because of inequalities in intrahousehold distribution, household income-based measures of poverty do not correlate neatly with gender-differentiated assessments of well-being. Consequently, poverty reduction strategies that target male household heads, erroneously assume

that benefits will 'trickle-down' to the rest of the household. Where women are targeted with income-generating opportunities, it cannot either be assumed that women will retain control of those resources they bring into the household. This suggests the need for improved data collection and analysis procedures that collect more data at individual level, incorporate consideration of intrahousehold dynamics and recognise the heterogeneity of household arrangements.

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## **NATIONAL MACHINERIES FOR WOMEN**

Agencies with a mandate for the advancement of women established within and by governments for integrating gender concerns in development policy and planning

National Machineries for Women (NMWs) - whether offices, desks, or ministries – were central to the integration strategies of the 1970s (see *WID/GAD*). They expanded in numbers in the 1980s and 1990s, now being a feature of most governments. NMWs have made many positive achievements, most importantly legitimising the place of gender issues in development planning (Goetz, 1998).

*‘Linking NGOs and women’s organisations with policy-makers in government is a key role for NMWs in the context of mainstreaming’  
(Oxaal, 1997:2)*

However, NMWs have often proven weak, under-resourced, vulnerable to changing political fortunes, and often ghettoised within social and welfare departments. The fact that many national machineries were established during periods of fiscal restraint and government restructuring has made claims on resources difficult to advance.

Some lessons have been learned. National machineries set up during democratic transitions (e.g. Philippines, Chile, South Africa, Uganda) have been more influential and effective, at least in part because of a political commitment to greater social equality and justice. Positive experiences also highlight the importance of broad and open processes of consultation, for example in the development of national gender policies.

NMWs have therefore had varying degrees of success, and face many challenges in their ability to fulfil a catalytic role and build capacity in other ministries as well as their own. There are many constraints remaining on their effectiveness. These include: lack of strong and clear mandates; underfunding and overreliance on donor funding; lack of qualified and technically skilled staff; bureaucratic resistance; inappropriate location; lack of political autonomy; and often lack of political support from national political leadership.

The 1990s have seen a shift towards new strategies for NMWs of institutionalising or ‘mainstreaming’ gender through advocacy and policy oversight work across all sectors, ministries and departments. Strategies include: lobbying for gender in national development plans; setting up of focal points in other ministries; gender training at all levels; guidelines and checklists to assist planning and evaluation; and building strategic alliances with NGOs and other women’s organisations.

*See also:  
Gender mainstreaming,  
Gender planning*

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## **PATRIARCHY**

Systemic societal structures that institutionalise male physical, social and economic power over women.

Some feminists use the concept of patriarchy to explain the systematic subordination of women by both overarching and localised structures. These structures work to the benefit of men by constraining women's life choices and chances.

*'In attacking both patriarchy and capitalism we will have to find ways to change both society-wide institutions and our most deeply ingrained habits. It will be a long, hard struggle'*  
(Hartmann 1976:169)

There are many differing interpretations of patriarchy. However, the roots of patriarchy are often located in women's reproductive role and sexual violence, interwoven with processes of capitalist exploitation. The main 'sites' of patriarchal oppression have been identified as housework, paid work, the state, culture, sexuality, and violence. Behaviours that discriminate against women because of their gender are seen as patriarchal 'practices'; for example occupational segregation, exclusion, and unequal pay.

The concept of patriarchy has been drawn into gender and development theorising; in order to challenge not only unequal gender relations but also unequal capitalist relations, sometimes seen as underpinning patriarchy (Mies, 1986; DAWN, 1995). Feminists who explain gender inequality in terms of patriarchy often reject male-biased societal structures and practices and propose greater female autonomy or even separatism as a strategy. In some views, women are seen as having room for manoeuvre within a constraining patriarchal system by negotiating a 'patriarchal bargain' with men. This entails a trade-off between women's autonomy, and men's responsibility for their wives and children.

An overarching theory of male power may help to conceptualise the extent of gender inequality but fails to deal with its complexity. It tends to assume that gender oppression is uniform across time and space. More recent thinking has therefore rejected such a universal concept, identifying the need for detailed historical and cultural analysis to understand gender-based oppression. Neither are women a homogeneous group constrained in identical ways. Gender inequalities are crosscut by other social inequalities such as class, caste, ethnicity and race, which could be prioritised over gender concerns in certain contexts. A rigid and universal concept of patriarchy denies women space for resistance and strategies for change. A more nuanced analysis is needed that takes into account difference and complexity, and the agency of women.

See also:  
WID/GAD,  
Gender discrimination,  
Gender violence,  
Culture

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## **SEX & GENDER**

'Sex' refers to the biological characteristics that categorise someone as either female or male; whereas 'gender' refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male

Whilst often used interchangeably, 'sex' and 'gender' are in fact distinct terms.

'Sex': a person's sex is biologically determined as female or male according to certain identifiable physical features which are fixed. Women's marginalisation has often been seen as 'natural' and a fact of their biology. However these biological differences cannot explain why women have less access to power and lower status than men. To understand and challenge the cultural value placed on someone's biological sex, and unequal power hierarchies, we need the relational concept of 'gender'.

*See also:*  
*Gender analysis,*  
*Gender relations,*  
*WID/GAD*

'Gender': how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or man. 'Gender' and the hierarchical power relations between women and men based on this are socially constructed, and not derived directly from biology. Gender identities and associated expectations of roles and responsibilities are therefore changeable between and within cultures. Gendered power relations permeate social institutions so that gender is never absent.

The value of the distinction between the terms 'sex' and 'gender' has been challenged more recently as 'sex' has also been seen to be socially constructed (Baden and Goetz, 1998).

Use of the term gender, rather than sex, signals an awareness of the cultural and geographic specificity of gender identities, roles and relations. It also recognises gender inequality as the outcome of social processes, which can be challenged, rather than as a biological given. For this reason, its use can generate considerable opposition, particularly from conservative religious and cultural groups but also in mainstream development institutions.

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## **SOCIAL JUSTICE**

Fairness and equity as a right for *all* in the outcomes of development, through processes of social transformation

The idea of 'social justice' as the outcome of struggles against social inequalities implies change towards a more 'fair' society. This requires strategies to redress past injustices, violation of rights or persistent economic and social inequalities. Social movements such as the women's, worker's, and human rights movements, have fought against perceived social injustices from a variety of entry points. Such movements have also challenged the ideologies and prejudices that legitimate social inequalities, in order to mobilise people for change.

There are varying conceptions of 'justice'. Common to them all is a formal idea of justice - the idea that inequalities of distribution must be justified by an impartial and rational assessment of 'relevant' differences between the people involved. One key theory of justice, based on Rawls' ideas, translates this into the idea of 'justice as fairness' with its equity overtones and need for redistributive strategies. Other thinking, derived from welfare economics, focuses on more 'efficiency' ideas of maximising overall utility or welfare, such that no-one can be made better off without someone else being worse off. In development thinking a 'capability' perspective of justice is common, based on the work of Amartya Sen, i.e. the idea that people should have the capabilities to survive and function and the freedom to pursue well-being. This requires both aggregative and redistributive considerations.

Mainstream poverty debates have tended to focus on meeting the basic needs of poor people and maximising their opportunities, rather than seeing poverty as an issue of social inequality or injustice. More radical perspectives, often adopted by NGOs, do see poverty as an issue of injustice and focus on organising and building capacity for the assertion of rights by the marginalised. The idea of poverty as an issue of rights is growing in influence in the development discourse, however, as for example in the DFID White Paper.

Strategies towards social justice have often overlooked the specific gender injustice or discrimination, as well as wider social injustices, faced by women. The women's movement has been working to ensure that efforts to address injustice, through human rights measures, or economic and social policies, are informed by an understanding of gender inequalities.

*See also:*  
*Gender discrimination,*  
*Women's human rights*

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## WID/GAD

The WID (or Women in Development) approach calls for greater attention to women in development policy and practice, and emphasises the need to integrate them into the development process

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

*'Gender relations do not operate in a social vacuum but are products of the ways in which institutions are organized and reconstituted'*  
(Kabeer, 1996:17)

In contrast, the GAD (or Gender and Development) approach to development policy and practice focuses on the socially constructed basis of differences between men and women and emphasises the need to challenge existing gender roles and relations

GAD emerged from a frustration with the lack of progress of WID policy, in changing women's lives and in influencing the broader development agenda. GAD challenged the WID focus on women in isolation, seeing women's 'real' problem as the imbalance of power between women and men. There are different interpretations of GAD, some of which focus primarily on the gender division of labour and gender roles focus on gender as a relation of power embedded in institutions (see *Gender Analysis*). GAD approaches generally aim to meet both women's practical gender needs and more strategic gender needs (see *Gender Needs*), by challenging existing divisions of labour or power relations (see *Gender Division of Labour; Gender Relations*).

*See also:*  
*Gender analysis,*  
*Gender planning,*  
*Sex and gender*

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

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## **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

Beijing Declaration:

*'Women's empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all sphere of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace (paragraph 13).'*

*(cited in DAC, 1998: 10)*

*See also:*

*Gender analysis,  
Gender needs,  
Gender training,  
WID/GAD*

*See also: FAQ*

*'How can we measure empowerment?'*

A 'bottom-up' process of transforming gender power relations, through individuals or groups developing awareness of women's subordination and building their capacity to challenge it. The term 'empowerment' is now widely used in development agency policy and programme documents, in general, but also specifically in relation to women. However, the concept is highly political, and its meaning contested. Thus, there are dangers in the uncritical overuse of the term in agency rhetoric, particularly where it becomes associated with specific activities, or used in simplistic ways.

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

Empowerment is sometimes described as being about the ability to make choices, but it must also involve being able to shape what choices are on offer. What is seen as empowering in one context may not be in another.

Empowerment is essentially a bottom-up process rather than something that can be formulated as a top-down strategy. This means that development agencies cannot claim to 'empower women', nor can empowerment be defined in terms of specific activities or end results. This is because it involves a process whereby women, individually and collectively, freely analyse, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-defined, or imposed from above. Planners working towards an empowerment approach must therefore develop ways of enabling women themselves to critically assess their own situation and shape a transformation in society. The ultimate goal of women's empowerment is for women themselves to be the active agents of change in transforming gender relations.

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

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

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## **WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS**

*Percentage of countries that have ratified the Women's Convention (CEDAW) worldwide:*

- 60 percent without reservations
- 29 percent with reservations
- 11 percent not ratified

*(IWTC, 1998:126)*

*'Despite these meticulously worded international treaties, discrimination against women persists on every level in every corner of the world'*

*(IWTC, 1998:20)*

*See also:*

*Culture,  
Gender discrimination,  
Gender violence,  
Social justice,*

*See also: FAQ*

*'As gender is a human rights issue, isn't legislation the answer?' and*

*'What right have we to interfere with other people's cultures?'*

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

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) established in 1979 marked an important step towards explicit prohibition of discrimination against women. During preparations for the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna (1993), women's groups mobilised around the slogan of "Women's rights are human rights!" which signifies the indivisibility of women's rights from universal human rights. Participants in the UN Beijing Women's Conference (1995) continued with this call, attempting to broaden the conception of rights to include social, economic, and cultural rights, as well as reproductive and sexual rights put on the agenda at the 1994 Cairo population conference.

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

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

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

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