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Gender Analysis in Development Planning

A Case Book

editors
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Mary B. Anderson
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Introduction

Aruna Rao

ASIA IS CHARACTERIZED BY some of the world's starkest gender inequalities. In South Asia, these are most obvious in relation to the physical quality of life. Although statistics from around the world indicate that women in general live longer than men, the reverse is true for South Asia. In Europe and North America, where access to health facilities is the same for women and men, there are 5 percent more women in the population than men. In South Asia, there are 94 women to 100 men, that is, a deficit of 11 percent in comparison with the West (Sen 1989). Pakistan has the lowest average ratio of females to males in the population (90:100), but the lowest absolute ratio (84:100) is found in the Indian states of Punjab and Haryana, the prosperous Green Revolution states (Sen 1989). In South Asia (except Sri Lanka), female infant mortality rates exceed that of males. Also in South Asia (except Sri Lanka), the female illiteracy rate (66.3 percent) exceeds that of males by 20 percent (ESCAP 1989).

In Southeast and East Asia, which is characterized by some of the world's fastest growing economies, women, on average, enjoy decent living standards. Yet they face, as do their counterparts in South Asia, discrimination in employment, wages, and social status. In Thailand, for example, which is considered a newly industrializing country (NIC), with near-parity rates in male and female labor force participation and an 82.7 percent female literacy rate, 74 percent of women employed in 1980 were found in the agricultural sector. Of those, almost seven out of ten were unpaid family workers (Tonguthai 1987). Even if women are not concentrated in the marginal ranks of the labor force, they still face inequalities. Data on wage differentials for the region as a whole show that women con-

sistently receive lower wages than their male counterparts. In the nonagricultural sector of most Asia-Pacific countries, there is not a large difference in the hours worked by women and men: on average, women work 90 hours to every 100 hours worked by men (ESCAP 1987, 24). In some countries, women work longer hours for lower pay. In Japan, for example, female manufacturing industry workers work slightly longer than their male counterparts, yet they earn only 45 to 55 percent of male wages (ESCAP 1987, 24). Only in some countries, such as the Philippines and the Republic of Korea, do wage differentials decline with increased levels of education (ESCAP 1987, 29).

Also, higher living standards in Southeast and East Asia do not go hand in hand with social equality. According to one recent international survey, social, political, and legal equality between men and women in Southeast and East Asia ranked above the high-growth economies of the Middle East but far below the developing economies of Latin America. Moreover, the difference in male/female levels of equality between South and Southeast Asia was minimal (Population Crisis Committee 1988). In fact, in that survey, Sri Lanka and India ranked far higher on women's social equality than did most Southeast Asian countries, including Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia.

There is now undisputed evidence that the processes of growth and technological change make life better for some—but worse for the many who do not have the political influence to “secure pre-emptory measures or quick amelioration” (Bardhan 1987, 2). Until recently, discussions on poverty and on the employment effects of growth dealt only with aggregate terms and assumed that development processes and policies were gender-neutral in their impact:

The employment effects of technological change, for example, were discussed mostly in terms of total labor input figures, without going on to ask if those displaced and those employed with . . . the new technology would be the same people, of the same gender, of the same class background, even if the net effect on the aggregate turned out to be positive or neutral (Bardhan 1987).

Most development policies and projects have in fact had severe negative impacts on the survival chances of poor women and their families. Moreover, such policies and large-scale projects often fail to meet their goals when women's labor contributions at the household and project levels are overlooked, their need for economic incentives are not understood, and resources relevant to their productive work are misdirected to men (Rao 1986).

But even in the face of such evidence, governments in Asia have not realigned development policies or altered the design of major economic projects in such a way as to support women's productive work and thus

strengthen their contribution to national productivity goals. Major economic sectoral policies and resource allocations (which account for about 40 percent of total annual public expenditures in Asian countries) continue to be gender-blind (ESCAP 1989). As witnessed by the priority accorded to women in national development plans, governments in Asia still view women as an adjunct to the main business of economic development and regard women in development (WID) issues as essentially a welfare concern. No Asian government explicitly has accorded women equality with men in the allocation of public resources or in the targeting of investments, although in this respect, governments in Asia are not unique (United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, INSTRAW n.d.). Women's concerns are treated explicitly only in the family planning, nutrition, and health sections of national development plans.

Further, the commonly pursued path of economic development primarily follows the profit motive, with development taking place in a socioeconomic context characterized by hierarchies and inequality. This approach has hurt the poor badly, and as Raj Krishna pointed out, “a development policy that hurts the poor will inevitably hurt poor women even more” (Krishna 1983, 10). Particularly in South Asia, “as development forces bring more and more of national resources like land, forests or water into the pale of the markets, [women's] extended domestic work for adding to the real incomes of families becomes increasingly more arduous” (Banerjee 1989, 5). Many poor households are de facto female-headed and supported primarily by women's meager earnings. But poor women find it increasingly difficult to make up the gap between poverty and survival.

Governments, particularly in South Asia (except Sri Lanka), simply have not allocated sufficient public resources to reduce women's extended domestic burden by provisioning poor families with basic minimum needs: guaranteed employment at least at a poverty-line income, health services, water and sanitation facilities, appropriate technologies to reduce the drudgery of women's home production activities, nurseries and day-care centers, and compulsory primary education. In South Asia, on average, education accounts for 6.7 percent of public expenditure (Southeast Asia spends twice that), and health accounts for approximately 3 percent throughout Asia (ESCAP 1989). In contrast, economic services (transportation and communications infrastructure and power) account for 35.5 percent of public expenditure in South Asia (ESCAP 1989). Moreover, research conducted at the end of the 1970s showed that the *minimum needs strategy* was not unaffordably expensive (ESCAP 1979). Basic needs at a minimum level could have been provided to all low-income communities in Asian countries had governments raised their social service outlay to at least 20 percent of total public expenditure and raised the proportion to at least 33 percent as income grew over the next decade (ESCAP 1979).

The evidence from around the world indicates that the provision of minimum needs does not need to wait for sustained high levels of economic growth. In fact, economic growth (though necessary in the long run) does not appear to be a sufficient condition for improvement in living standards. As an illustration, between 1960 and 1980, the countries that achieved the greatest reduction in their mortality rate for children under age five included low-growth countries such as Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, and Cuba, but did not include a number of high-growth countries such as Brazil (Sen 1989). Clearly, improvements in living standards require a rapid expansion in public resources allocated to social sectors: education, health, nutrition, and water and sanitation. In some countries, this wide distribution of resources has come before increased economic growth and in others after it (Sen 1989). The lesson seems to be that the fruits of development must be consciously distributed for specific purposes to specific populations—they do not simply trickle down.

Fairer distribution of the gains from development is central to the concept of integrating gender issues in development planning (Krishna 1983). Such a distribution, though motivated by equity considerations, nonetheless has long-term productivity consequences. The relationship between access to basic social services and female labor force participation is a case in point. Across the Asia region, it has been documented that the "female [labor force] participation rate is inversely related to household income per capita, especially in the lower ranges of income" (Krishna 1983, 4). In other words, poor women are under greater pressure to work for wages, however low, than are women from middle-income households, who also have better access to labor-saving household technologies. Poor women's work is essential to the survival of their families, but it often comes at the expense of their daughters' education and future income-earning opportunities. Extensive coverage of minimum needs might not only improve girls' educational prospects, but also might allow poor women to move out of the secondary or unorganized labor market (with its low wages, irregular and insecure jobs, and few worker benefits) and into the organized sector for a longer-term commitment.

But development planning as an instrument of distributive justice cannot stop at the doorstep of the household—it must step in. Various theories on the economic behavior of the household have assumed incorrectly that household allocational decisions proceed on the basis of a unitary utility function and maximize the rational allocation of resources toward the achievement of commonly held goals. In fact, it is becoming increasingly evident that "just as men and women differ in their participation in labor markets, in their wage rates, and in their prospects when marriages dissolve through death or separation, men and women also frequently differ with respect to allocational priorities" (Bruce and Dwyer 1988, 2). Gender inequalities in access to and control over resources in the world of income

relations would suggest that a common ground plan is unlikely to serve men's and women's distinct self-interests within the family (Bruce and Dwyer 1988). In contrast to the earlier view of households as homogenous units, Sen characterizes households as bargaining units of "cooperative conflict." According to Sen's view, individuals within households primarily contend to gain their own ends, but their utilities (which in a poverty context relate primarily to survival needs rather than utilities such as "satisfaction" and so on) may overlap in many areas (Sen 1985).

What are the differences in the way men and women spend their income, and how do these affect family survival? A growing body of research indicates that women spend all or a greater portion of their income than do men on subsistence and nutrition. While gender-differentiated allocational priorities and responsibilities are most evident in Africa, such differences are not uncommon in Asia. For example, Kumar's study in Kerala, India, showed that a child's nutritional level increased proportionally with increases in the mother's income, food inputs from subsistence farming, and the quality of available family-based child care (Kumar 1977). Children's nutritional levels, however, did not increase in direct proportion to increases in parental income. Thus, what do gender-based allocational differences mean for development policy? The answer is simply that "individuals rather than households should be the recipients of economic outlays, whether transfers or wage earning opportunities, with women being more appropriate recipients when certain ends are desired" (Bruce and Dwyer 1988, 18).

The instruments available for transforming the political economy that conditions the status of women in society are many. Most important is the organized political power of women themselves. Women's organizations, particularly in South Asia, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the Working Women's Forum (WWF), have been effective not only in improving the material conditions of women. They also provide a sheltered space where women can explore different self-perceptions and foster a much-needed extrafamilial association through which women can interact with other women from their broader community. The starting point for women's advancement may lie within the household, but the key to changing household dynamics that discriminate against women (what Jain calls the "tyranny of the household") is the strength women gain (to confront oppressive conditions) from association and support from groups outside the family (Jain 1985). Although typically these women's groups are small, they represent women's voices and provide laboratories for experimentation and the engineering of social change. In the long run, this kind of group action can counteract the political weakness of individual women and raise their influence vis-à-vis other groups in the political arena as well (Corner 1986, 22).

Still, it is often the case that experiments that work well on a small scale

do not lend themselves to large-scale operation because of "diseconomies of scale"—organizational, political, and economic (Tendler 1987). The fact remains that governments exert a powerful impact (both positive and negative) on poverty either directly through income distribution or indirectly through policies, for example, regarding agricultural development, credit subsidization, and tariff protection (Tendler 1987). This has impelled the concern to integrate gender into development planning. Indeed, public policy can also influence the role of markets and market imperfections in determining the allocation and reward for labor (a third instrument for transforming the conditions that determine the status of women in society).

Although the issue of integrating gender into development planning is essentially political in nature, at least some of the persistent gender-blindness in policy and programming can be traced to uncertainty over how the concept translates into appropriate and workable analytical tools. Thus, what are the ways of convincing development planners to take women into account? This key question has elicited a number of responses. One response has been to make visible women's "invisibility" in national income accounts by redefining "productive work" to include household production, to recount women's labor force participation, and to make monetary estimates of women's total contribution to national income. Another approach has focused on evaluating the gender-differentiated impact of mainstream economic development programs and sectoral policies.

In the early years of this decade, there were few studies of this kind. From 1984 to 1989, I coordinated a program for the Population Council in Asia on Women's Roles and Gender Differences in Development. The program covered five countries: India, Bangladesh, Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It aimed to strengthen planners' and practitioners' ability to generate and use information about women's social and economic roles in the design, implementation, and evaluation of large-scale projects and sectoral plans. Two major strategies were adopted in pursuance of this goal:

1. The production of case studies that (a) document the impact of gender-differentiated access to and control of valued resources (including labor and income) on the objectives of programs and on the lives and welfare of women and their families; and (b) suggest alternative planning and evaluation frameworks and management strategies that are sensitive to the gender factor in development.
2. Collaboration with (a) development training institutes in integrating materials on women's roles into programs geared toward development planners and practitioners within key sectors; and (b) planners and project personnel in working toward policy and program changes more beneficial to low-income women as well as men.

The Population Council program generated a total of eight studies on such issues as nonfarm rural employment, small-scale industries, and irrigation. Five of the studies have been published, and all have been widely distributed in Asia and elsewhere. Also, these materials have been discussed by the planners and program personnel directly involved in the program studied. In some cases, the authorities involved adopted the program design changes or policy recommendations highlighted in a study, which resulted in a more gender-equitable distribution of resources, promoted women's participation, and enhanced their labor productivity.

Finally, these studies, in their original format, have been used in short- and long-term training exercises and in academic courses around the world. For the purposes of teaching, five of the Asia studies have been reformatted into four case studies and are included in this publication. Teaching notes for all the cases have also been prepared and are available on request from Kumarian Press. The remaining two cases published here are drawn from studies I conducted in Asia between 1985 and 1988.

This case book is meant primarily for national development planners and practitioners as well as for staff of international development agencies. Those who are looking for a set of conceptual perspectives and analytical techniques to deal explicitly and effectively with gender issues in a range of development projects can use these cases as a pedagogical tool. Those who are new to gender issues will find that the cases present factual descriptions of actual projects that encourage application of the Gender Analysis Framework designed by Overholt et al. (1985), reproduced in the next section of this book, and allow for thinking purposefully about issues that are highly relevant to their professional work. The analytical framework is, in essence, a means of making visible what women do and why. It is a process of building a gender-differentiated data base on activities, access to resources, and control over resources, and on factors influencing these three issues, in a way that facilitates translation into project or policy terms.

Because the cases in this volume have been reformatted for teaching by the case method approach, they contain no analysis. Rather, "they provide the raw material from which the participants can engage in their own analysis and draw their own conclusions" (Overholt et al. 1985, xiii). The cases do not discuss theories or hypotheses. As in the real world, they do not have a "right answer," but offer many reasonable alternatives and defensible recommendations (Overholt et al. 1985, xiii). Because the case method approach to training is grounded in the philosophy that participants must take an active part in and share the responsibility for the learning process, problem-solving skills are developed in the process of systematically deriving a logical and sensible set of conclusions (Overholt et al. 1985). Using these cases in particular, development personnel can increase their knowl-

edge and skills to address issues related to the role of women in development at the project and policy levels. This should enhance opportunities for women's contribution to development and facilitate their access to the benefits of development. If this in turn helps poor women lead the life they want to lead, then development planning can do no better.

Gender Analysis Framework

*Catherine A. Overholt, Kathleen Cloud,
Mary B. Anderson, and James E. Austin*

(Formerly "Women in Development: A Framework for Project Analysis," chapter in Overholt et al., *Gender Roles in Development Projects: Cases for Planners* [Kumarian Press, 1985].)

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING HAS FAILED to recognize fully or systematically women's contribution to the development process or, in turn, the effect of this process on them. This failure has limited development efforts and effects. Economic growth, project efficiency, and social justice call for a new approach to development that systematically includes women.

In her seminal work of 1970, Ester Boserup plainly articulated the state of neglect: "In the vast and ever-growing literature on economic development, reflections on the particular problems of women are few and far between."¹ Over the last decade, the issues regarding the integral involvement of women in national development processes have slowly crept onto the agendas of national and international development agencies. By 1980, many countries and international agencies had explicitly incorporated women's issues into their development plans and had set up special bureaus, offices, or even ministries as the organizational focal point of these new concerns. Furthermore, the barren literature fields observed by Boserup had begun to produce intellectual harvests. By 1981, articles and books in the women in development area were appearing at a rapid rate.

Although there has been much activity, development planning efforts still fail to recognize fully women's actual and potential contribution to the development process or the effect of the development process on them.

