CHAPTER 2

Gender and Development

Introduction

This chapter discusses how development practice since the 1970s has been shaped by the notions of women’s representation, their access to resources, and reformation of institutional structures. These notions have resulted in three shifts in development approaches: from WID to WAD and finally to GAD. WID approaches were based on the assumptions that lack of women’s representation in institutions forms the basis of gender inequality in the labor market. The solution therefore lay in the integration of women into the workforce. This was tantamount to arguing that women do not participate in productive work, and so was challenged by WAD scholars. The WAD approaches were based on insights from research on the work done by rural women, which pointed out that while women work, they do not gain real benefits in terms of access to resources. They concluded that the problem of gender inequality in the labor market, rather than being about the participation of women, was due to their lack of access to resources. The development solution came in the form of income generation programs, which since the late 1970s have increased women’s access to resources but have also called into question the terms and conditions of their access to resources. GAD scholars, noting the exploitative nature of these programs, pointed out that both WID and WAD approaches had focused on women, but were exploitative in that the changes that occurred did not address the fundamental structural issues around power. The patriarchal institutional structures in which women were embedded were establishing the content,
extent, and consequences of women’s participation and their access to resources.

However, it is argued that while a plausible diagnosis of the problem of gender inequality in the developing countries was made by the GAD scholars, the transformative potential of the GAD approach and its post-Beijing concept of gender mainstreaming were misappropriated in much of the development practice. It either continued to focus on the provision of financial resources to women so that women themselves could overcome gender inequality, or it adopted the liberal and soft approach of gender sensitivity training for the inherently radical objective of a transformation in unequal gender relations. This chapter points out that, while participation and access to resources are desirable, these could be achieved through reformation in patriarchal institutional rules that determine the extent, content, and effects of women’s participation and access to resources. Unless institutional constraints in the way of gender equality are alleviated in development practice, progress toward the transformation of unequal gender relations will be unattainable.

**WID: The Politics of Integration**

The integration of women in the labor force of the developing nations as a means to change norms of exclusion has been the foundation principle of the WID approach (Tinker 1976; UN 1976; Bandarage 1984; Connelly et al. 2000; Vijayamohanan, Asalatha, and Ponnuswamy 2009). This approach dates back to the early 1970s when “WID” as a term was first used by the Women’s Committee of the Society for International Development, Washington, DC, Chapter to lobby for legal changes for increasing the representation of women, in development institutions (Rathgeber 1990; Moser 1993; Beckman and D’Amico 1994; Chant and McIlwaine 2009). WID demonstrates a unique convergence in the development and feminist views that emphasize the integration of women, albeit for various reasons, for increased productivity and gender equality (Razavi and Miller 1995: 2). Development at the time was based on the notion that “high growth rates are always better than low growth rates and distribution can be taken care of after growth is achieved” (Haq 1973: 30). There was a realization that growth could possibly be increased through hitherto untapped resources, including women (Seers 1964; Lanier 1968; Linke 1968; Elliott 1977; Rathgeber 1990; Kilby and Olivieri 2008). This, however, pointed to a