

MODULE 1

UNDERSTANDING GENDER

Overview

Gender is a concept which is widely misunderstood, but which refers to differences between men and women that are not innate or biological but social. Men are expected to behave in certain ways, and women in others. The first topic in the module explores what these gender differences are and how they differ from society to society. It aims to familiarise the participants with the meaning of 'gender', to help them identify gender differences in their own society, and to recognise that these differences are not universal.

The second topic deals with the difference between the terms 'women and energy' and 'gender in energy', and then presents two different reasons why gender may be taken up as a theme in development planning in general and in energy planning in particular. The first relates to project efficiency: many projects have failed in reaching their objectives because they did not consider women's and man's needs and potential separately but lumped them together; disaggregation by gender makes for more accuracy in targeting. The second relates to the fact that women generally have a subordinate position in society; a gender approach can be used to stimulate their emancipation and the attention given to their immediate and strategic needs. These two motivations for using a gender approach imply alternative starting points, and reflect different goals.

The third topic gives an overview of how our understanding of women's problems has changed over time and how development policy has changed to reflect this. One of the most important aspects of this is the change from focusing on women and on special programmes to target women, to the gender approach, which looks at men and women and tried to understand women's problems, and find solutions to these, in the context of the gender relationships that exist. It is shown how this is reflected in the energy sector.

The final topic explains some important terms and concepts which are used in the gender approach to planning.



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Topic 1:

What is gender?

Men and women are different in some ways, and alike in others.

Biologically, we all need to eat and to sleep and to breathe, we are all subject to malaria and 'flu, we all need exercise to keep healthy. But there are differences in body forms; and women bear children while men cannot.

In some ways men and women are similar in social terms. Both are sociable - they both like parties! - and both want to be valued as individuals, for example. There are however a lot of social differences between men and women in most societies. Girls are usually expected to grow up to be good wives and mothers; this sometimes implies that they are expected to be modest, and to be obedient, to be quiet when men are around. Boys in most societies are supposed to grow up to be the chief breadwinners, and the 'head of the family'. They may be expected to be brave, to take the lead, to speak up. Most of these differences are not innate, but are taught, both directly by the parents and by society in general, through what the child observes. Some things are just considered 'right' for women and 'wrong' for men, and vice versa.

However, these differences are not universal, and they vary greatly from society to society, which tells us that they are not determined by nature, but by the social environment in which we are brought up. Our opinions on what is correct and acceptable behaviour are learned at a very early age and if they are challenged, it can give a very uncomfortable feeling. If one is asked to do something which in one's own society is exclusively done by the other gender, one can feel very foolish or alternatively highly offended.

Fifty years ago in Europe men never changed babies' nappies, and would have been horrified if asked to do so. Things have changed a lot however. These days men frequently take over this 'mothering' task, and are often very happy to do so, quite genuinely finding satisfaction in a new, caring relationship with their children.

It is not always easy to say what differences are really biological and what are socially learned ones, and there is always room for discussion on this.



Discussion point

Is it a biological difference or a social one?

- **men are usually heavier than women**
- **women are better at looking after children**
- **girls are shyer**
- **boys can run faster**

All cultures have views on what men and women can and should do and what they are 'naturally' good at and what they are 'intrinsically' bad at. The interesting thing is that many of these vary from culture to culture - so they cannot be biologically inbuilt!

For example, do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

"Men are more logical and rational, women are more emotional"

"Women are unstable at certain times, for example during menstruation"

"Women have more difficulty in working with numbers than men"

"Women are quarrelsome among themselves and don't work well in a group: men get on with each other better"

"Although it is true that women do do some work on the farm, the farmer is really a man"

"A family really consists of a man who is head of the household, a woman, and their children; families with women in charge are not real families"

"Women prefer to have a man to make the decisions for them"

"Children suffer if their mother goes to work outside the home"

"Men are much less sensitive than women: they don't notice how people are feeling"

Too often we make assumptions about gender differences without really thinking about them. In the exercises that follow, it is important that participants share their findings with a view to showing that many norms vary from culture to culture.



Exercise 1.1

Gender likes and dislikes

List two things you like to do, which are considered typical for your gender in your culture:

List two things you hate to do, but which are considered normal for your gender in your culture:

List two things you like to do, which are considered non-traditional or even unsuitable for your gender:

List two things you really wish you could do but which would be frowned upon by society if you did them, because they are 'of the other gender'.

(This exercise is suggested in the CICC handbook (see references))



Exercise 1.2

How cultural norms are formed and passed on

Every culture has gender based norms about what is suitable behaviour and what are suitable activities. In some cultures, divergence from these norms is strongly disapproved of, in others it is tolerated but still considered 'odd'.

1. How are the 'gender-rules' that you have just considered determined in your culture? Where do they come from?
2. Who or what perpetuates them?
3. How strongly is adherence to them valued?
4. How is an 'eccentric' (i.e. someone who goes against the norms) 'punished'?
5. In your opinion, should these norms be changed, and why (or why not)?
6. Would you say that most people agree with you on this? Who agrees, who disagrees?



Exercise 1.3

Strength of cultural norms

Having considered or discussed all these points, make a judgement on a ten point scale on the following issues:

How important are gender-based norms in determining the behaviour of an individual in your culture?

Extremely Important

Not at all important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent do you think it is desirable to change these norms?

Extremely important

Not at all important

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent do you think it possible to change these norms?

Very easy

Impossible

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

To what extent do the norms affect the kind of work you do and the way you do it?

Completely

Not at all

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Topic 2:

The Difference between *Women and Energy* and A Gender Approach in Energy

Everyone knows that when the word 'gender' is used in the context of development planning, it is because there is or has been concern about how *women* are benefiting from development efforts. Is gender then just a new and fashionable term for 'women'?

In this lecture we will explore why the term 'gender' is different from the term 'women', and what the gender idea is really about: there are several different positions on this, as will be explained.

As far as energy is concerned, in many ministries and other energy related agencies there has been a certain amount of attention given to women, particularly in the area of household energy. Women are the chief cooks and mostly it is they who gather firewood, and there is awareness that this is becoming an increasing problem. As a result, a number of special programmes have been set up for women, mostly to introduce more efficient or less smoky stoves, or to encourage a switch over to solar power for cooking, or biogas. Other programmes have tried to involve women in the growing of trees to increase the level of firewood supply. In many of these, women were the main target. Such programmes have met mixed success. Some have done better than others, but it has not always been entirely clear why some have been unpopular. This type of project or programme can be said to be '*women and energy*' oriented; the concern is entirely with household, and particularly energy for cooking.

One of the things that has become apparent is that, for a variety of reasons, it may be better not to try to deal with women's problems in isolation, but to see them in the context of the society in which they live. What women do and can do depends to a considerable extent on social relations and norms, and to understand this better it is necessary to understand not just how women function but also how men do. It is not enough to just study the women: it is the complementarity of men and women, how roles, work, responsibilities and rewards are shared between them, that is important. Agencies and individuals are therefore increasingly of the opinion that a 'gender approach' is necessary in planned development activities. Just as the term 'socio-economic' implies that we look at differentiations in society, such as those brought about by distribution of wealth or by ethnicity, '*the gender approach*' implies that we look at social differences between men and women. Gender, as has already been discussed, refers to culturally determined differences, and as such, gender differences are by no means the same in every society.

A 'gender approach to energy' does not imply targeting project and programmes to women (although such programmes could also be included). What is meant by a 'gender approach' is that *all* energy programmes and projects, of whatever kind - from local fuelwood programmes up to the construction of hydro-electric power station - should be analyzed for the impact they are likely to have on men and women. The gender approach is a cross-cutting one: it is to be applied across the board to all energy planning activities. Of course the motivation for using it is generally that women have in the past not been considered as a separate group in most sectors of energy planning, but the gender approach stresses that one should be aware of impacts of *all* energy investment on *both* genders.

Discussion point

Is there a term for 'gender' in your own language? How would you explain it in a village meeting?

Two different views on why a gender approach should be taken in planning

There are two possible starting points, or ideological positions, that can be taken as regards the purpose and rationale of gender-sensitive planning: the efficiency point of view, and the equity (or equality)¹ point of view. These will first be discussed in general, after which there will be a small exercise.

The *efficiency* point of view is that gender in development activities is not a political matter but simply an efficiency consideration. Supporters of this line accept that in the past, there has been very little attention to women in development: projects have mostly been directed to heads of households, who are mostly men, in the belief that the benefits would flow to the whole family. Women are rarely invited to meetings, and if they attend, they rarely speak, for whatever reasons. Assumptions have been made about what women want and what women need without actually consulting them. Moreover assumptions have been made about women's willingness to contribute to different projects without looking into whether this is feasible or not. For these reasons, many development projects have simply failed.

This line of reasoning - use of a gender approach for efficiency - accepts that men and

¹ There is a difference between equity and equality. Equity means that a system is in itself fair in its structure (e.g. equal wages for equal work). Equality is what is supposed to result. It will be clear that equity does not necessarily lead to equality: equal wages for men and women in the workplace does not necessarily mean that women are treated as equals with men: they may be passed over in promotion, so that they remain in the lowest levels of employment, or they may not be hired at all. Many feminists these days are arguing strongly for equality, rather than for equity.

women in any given society are different: different in their situations, different in their needs, different in their possibilities. It does not necessarily advocate changing this status quo, but argues that project planners need to understand these differences in order to plan projects that work. The analysis that is required is then a sort of social study which, in addition to looking at the differences between rich people and poor people and their needs, looks also at the differences between men's and women's needs, wants, potentials and constraints. It acknowledges that projects designed to assist women may fail unless men's needs and reservations are also taken into account and dealt with.

One of the most important consequences of adopting this kind of gender approach is that 'the household' is no longer the basic unit of the planning process, since it is acknowledged that within the family, men and women have different views which need to be considered.

Equity with respect to gender is about the empowerment of women. It starts from the assumption that women are not just different from men in their gender roles, but that they are in a weaker position socially and economically. It goes on to declare that this is not a desirable condition: it must be changed. The choice of the word 'gender' rather than 'women' is therefore quite deliberate: it relates to the fact that gender differences are cultural phenomena, that is, acquired characteristics, not biological ones. Thus they are potentially open to change. The equity point of view is that women as a group are systematically underprivileged compared to men: according to UN sources they do more than half the world's work for less than a tenth of the world's income, they have lower participation rates in education and in the formal labour market, and they have inferior legal rights, in practice if not in theory, in many countries. These are indisputable facts, and there is a growing worldwide movement for the emancipation of women and to bring about more equality between the sexes in these regards.

Discussion point

Some people argue that the 'equity' point of view is a Northern fashion which is being imposed on Southern societies. Do you agree with this?

Experience shows that many planned interventions, while aiming at benefits to all, have had skewed benefits in favour of men, because of their stronger bargaining position in society. Mechanisation of ploughing (organised through credit programmes open to men) has led to increased cash returns (controlled by the men in the household). But at the same time it has brought longer working hours for the women, who are responsible

for the non-mechanised tasks such as weeding and harvesting, now on the larger areas cultivated by the machines. Women are not able to obtain credit for machinery to carry out their own tasks both because they do not have collateral (the land is registered in the name of the men) and because the agricultural product (i.e. the profit) is the property of the men. Critics argue that projects resulting in 'unexpected' disadvantages such as increased workload for women are the result of failure to carry out adequate gender analysis during project preparation. They accuse planners of being 'gender blind', in not thinking in gender terms. Planners tend to count an increased product per household a success, and do not scrutinise the internal workings of the family unit as regards who does the work for the extra product and who gets paid.

There are cases of woodlots planted by women and intended by the promoters as domestic firewood, whose products have been sold by the men as poles or timber. This is not to say that the family as a unit necessarily suffers; the cash may be invested in school fees or a new roof as often as in beer and cigarettes. However gender distinction in roles means that choice regarding the spending of larger cash resources is the prerogative of the male head of the household. This gives them a large measure of power and leverage over women.

Discussion point

Is it generally true that men control the finances in a family?

Is this a factor that needs to be researched for each different setting?

The term '*gender-awareness*' (in preference to 'awareness of women's needs') is used in this context to indicate that it is the *social relationship between the sexes* that needs to be changed, in other words, it is not just women who have to be helped 'up'. 'Gender' is used in this context to imply the existence of an unequal social relationship. There are clear motives and a clear direction for change implied in this. As with any such movement, there are those for it, and also those against it.

Those who are for the gender equity movement usually believe that society should be fair, and that more equality for women is a simple human right. This point of view was strongly put forward by Hilary Clinton at the Beijing women's conference in September 1995. Among its proponents are many women's and other social pressure groups and NGOs in both South and North, and many of the Ministries of Development Cooperation especially those of the western liberal democracies.

Those who are against it usually feel that the differences between men and women are

part of a cultural heritage and social value system that has its own merits should not be interfered with, and very occasionally by those who believe that women are actually inferior in some ways, e.g. intellectually or emotionally. These views are held to varying extent by some organisations and individuals, both in the North and the South.

Can energy projects make any difference to the balance of power between the sexes? Should they aim to 'set the agenda' in this way? Clearly the decision is a political one, and may reflect the ideology of the implementing agency and/or the donor. There are many agencies, and not only radical feminist ones, which are indeed aiming at social change of this kind and who see opportunities for this in rural energy projects as in other kinds of interventions. They may approach the matter rather circumspectly, since the subject is obviously a contentious one which easily opens up conflict and resistance. But the aim to give women more rights and greater freedom is widely shared, if not openly stated.

In practice most people's views on the need for 'gender-sensitivity' probably fall somewhere in between these two alternative starting points. Many people feel that women are to a certain extent exploited, but do not advocate a complete sexual revolution: they are looking, rather, for some reforms to improve the lot of women without turning society upside down totally. Many others believe that if at the project level one looks really carefully at what men's and women's needs and constraints are, changes will be signalled which are of significance not only for the project design itself, but at a social level. As women become more involved, they may become more articulate and experienced; gender sensitive project planning may lead on to a greater level of emancipation for women in a more natural way.

The gender approach in energy planning will most often in fact start from an efficiency viewpoint. Planners will use it in the first place because they recognise that it is a better way to help women to overcome their many immediate energy problems. The equity approach can build on the successes of the efficiency approach where the implementing agency is really aiming at longer term empowerment.

It is important however to distinguish exactly what one is trying to achieve in using the gender approach, and to be able to justify this, for example in project proposals and in project evaluation.



Exercise 2.1

Impacts of commercialisation of forest products on women

The case study from India describes specialised activities using forest products that were traditionally in the domain of women. With government help, these crafts have been improved and made more profitable. However, in the process, more and more of the activities have been taken over by men, and women have been squeezed out.

- i. What are the main forces operating which cause this to happen?
- ii. Are there any solutions that would improve women's relative position in the market?
- iii. The products described are not energy products. However, there is a tendency for biomass fuels such as firewood to become commercialised as shortages occur. Firewood has traditionally been gathered by women. As it becomes commercialised, do you think it will become a male income generating activity, or will it remain in the female domain? Is this a real opportunity for women's earning capacity?



CASE STUDY FOR GENDER IN ENERGY

FOREST BASED SMALL SCALE ENTERPRISES IN INDIA

Source: J.Y. Campbell (ed) Women's Role in Dynamic Forest-Based Small Scale Enterprises: Case Studies on Uppage and Lacquerware in India. FAO, 1991.

Collection of forest products is often very useful for women because it can be undertaken as an extension of household activities. Such products can give increased income to women and can empower them by giving them flexibility and added control over their livelihoods with the household as the economic base. Collection can be fitted in the normal daily routine and can be done for longer or shorter periods according to the individual woman's needs, unlike a wage job, and processing can be done at home in any free moments. It is undoubted that many women have considerable knowledge about the nature and value of minor forest products, where to find them and when to gather them. In many societies it has long been an accepted role for women. The collection and processing of uppage fruits is such a forest based small scale enterprise involving women in India. The demand for uppage has been increasing considerably, which should mean better prices for the gatherers.

However, with the expanded market for uppage rind, more people have entered into what was a traditional occupation of the women from a Brahmin sub-caste in a fairly localised area. Collection and processing of the uppage rind has become seasonally attractive to women (and landless men) of other castes and social groups. Middlemen, including local collection agents and regional contractors have become involved as intermediaries in a complex marketing chain. While new opportunities for women have been created, access to uppage has become more restrictive, and rights to collection are now auctioned and bid for, they are no longer granted free of charge. Many women cannot afford to purchase these new rights, because they are issued only for huge stretches of forest, not small patches. Women are now consigned to working for contractors on a piece rate basis, paid based upon the amount of rind collected and dried. Almost all of them get a very low rate, and although still involved, remain at the bottom of the hierarchy. A large part of the margin which was formerly theirs, now goes to men who intermediate. It is indeed the fact that profits could increasing be made that brought these newcomers into the whole activity, and increasingly commercialised it.

The lacquerware industry is another which has long involved craftswomen, indeed women are the traditional workers in this enterprise. It has boomed recently owing to continued support to quality improvement from national and state institutions, expansion of export markets, and introduction of a new technology: electric lathes.

This new technology has pushed many women out of the industry because as in the case of uppage, there is a problem of scale. The hale wood which is the basic material for lacquer products is now controlled on the basis of gathering rights which are sold, as in the case of uppage. It is gathered by larger businesses which can afford these, and it is auctioned only in large quantities, which requires considerable starting capital. Therefore it is bought by secondary traders and retailed to the small enterprises in smaller quantities. These two intermediate steps have of course driven up the price, beyond the reach of many of the women producers. The introduction of power lathes reduces production costs considerably, but to buy the lathes one needs capital, which is not usually available to women; one also needs a supply of electricity. The industry is becoming more of a middle-sized and organised one rather than one of individual craftsmen (craftswomen in this case).

The government also biased the development of the industry by directing its attention largely towards the men involved. Training in power lathe operation is not useful to women if they cannot use a power lathe at home: they are much less mobile than men because of their many reproductive and housekeeping tasks which have to be done along side the craft. Training was offered to women in 'entrepreneurial skills' but this does not help if they cannot easily adapt to the changes in the industry. There is no doubt that the quality of the product has gone up in recent years and the production costs have gone down, with the result that the profits are much greater. In the process, however, women have lost a traditional and income generating role.

Exercise 2.2

A court case

The case study from Himachal Pradesh is an example of an attempt not just to help women meet their needs more easily for fodder and fuel but to empower them in other ways. The long run aim of the sponsoring NGO was clearly to emancipate women.

The groups should divide into three parts: one subgroup will represent the Panchyat (the village council), one the women's organisation, and the third the forest department officials.

You have 20 minutes to prepare yourselves for a court hearing in which the women will plea for full rights over the common land. Each subgroup should prepare its case and be prepared to give evidence in the hearing. After preparing your argument, you should decide which of you will present it and how. None of the groups has a professional lawyer with them. The trainer will play the part of the judge, and the matter will be decided in the light of the quality of the arguments presented on all sides.



CASE STUDY FOR GENDER IN ENERGY

A WOMEN'S ORGANISATION IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: HIMACHAL PRADESH

**Source: Sarin, M: The Potential Role of Rural Women's Organisations in Natural Resource Management. In 'Local Organisations in Community Forestry Extension in Asia'.
FAO/RWEDP, 1992.**

There have been a number of women's groups active in Dharampur Block in Solan District partly due to the efforts of an NGO, SUTRA, which started to work there in 1976. Among other things, the NGO was involved in upgrading the skills of traditional midwives and training women as improved stove builders. By 1985 SUTRA decided that they could not do a great deal more in the way of conventional projects to build up women's organisations, but that they needed to create their own spaces where women could share common hardships and evolve strategies to deal with them. Two inputs were required for women's empowerment: access to information, and opportunities for women to spend time away from home, to reflect on their problems and to build self-confidence. They therefore brought the various local women's groups into contact with each other, and for the first time women began to realise that the problems they faced were not individual, but common to many women. 90% of the population lives in scattered villages of not more than 15 houses and women and girls sustain the agricultural production. They receive no pay for this as it is family labour and in fact it is often not considered work at all. One study showed that women do 75% of agricultural work in the fields, 90% of the livestock-related work (gathering fodder, milking) and 95% of the housekeeping work.

In this area there is very little common or shamilat land for firewood gathering, since the government took over a large part of it in 1971 for distribution to the landless. The remaining part was handed over to the forest department to manage on behalf of the villagers. The FD fenced it and planted it with non-browsable species (thus, those that did not produce fodder), while some private owners acquired land and planted it with fast growing timber species.

In the drought year of 1987, SUTRA tried to motivate women to plant trees, since the women were then walking 20 km to get one headload of fodder. Water was also difficult to obtain. SUTRA introduced the idea of multipurpose trees, and provided seedlings. The members of the women's groups were asked to send lists of plants they required.

At the same time, information was gathered about what women traditionally knew about tree management, which was considerable - women knew hundreds of species by name and by sight, and could list thousands of uses; they knew how much fodder could be cut from different sorts of trees to maintain the maximum output, for example.

However, when the seedlings arrived, few were taken by the women and of those that were taken, few survived. Analysis showed that the women were simply too busy during the rainy season to plant the trees. The areas with the greatest potential for growing trees are the privately owned grazing lands since here the trees will not compete with valuable food or cash crops. But these are far from the home and difficult to protect. In general, there is a shortage of fodder types of trees on these lands, brought about by the men's cutting of any trees with commercial value, for timber. Thus the women were afraid the same fate would befall their newly planted trees. The men after all have the last word on the management of resources on family property. The men were not at all concerned with fodder trees.

SUTRA then realised they had made a classic error in formulating their strategy. Simply because women have the primary responsibility for gathering biomass for fodder and fuel does not mean that they should be considered responsible for replenishing the source. By asking the women to plant trees, SUTRA was increasing their work levels, but not their control over the use of the trees.

This led to a new strategy, to give women more power over the land and decisions on how to use it. At the household level, and with regard to private landholdings, it was not possible for the NGO to intervene in traditional distribution of power between men and women. But they started to work on getting women collective control over common lands, still in the power of the forest department. Up to then, the forest department consulted the village Panchyat (council) about the types of trees to be planted on the shamilat land, but the Panchyat was solidly male, with the result that commercial timber species were always planted. Various women's groups began to oppose this strategy; one group passed a resolution that unless the forest department planted at least 50% fodder species, they would uproot all the trees and replace them with fodder crops. Notification of this was sent to forest officials. In one village the women were able for force the forest department to take down a fence they had erected around some common land; they then worked out a plan for increasing the area's productivity and asked the forest department to implement it for them. They also demanded that in future the forest department should consult the women's organisations as well as the Panchyat, and later this was taken further; the government should give the women's organisations all the power and responsibility for deciding how shamilat land should be developed. In this they were helped by the NGO who provided a lawyer to help them fight for their rights. The issue was not yet resolved at the time the article was written, but the experience demonstrates that once women's organisations join together, they can influence natural resource policies at the state level.

Exercise 2.3

Equity or efficiency?

It has been suggested that there are two points of view regarding why a gender-sensitive approach is necessary in planning and implementing development projects.

On the one hand we have the equity point of view that women have been systematically underprivileged in the past and that they want and need to be emancipated. Let us call this 'argument A'.

On the other we have the efficiency point of view that projects will simply not be effective unless they are constructed on a proper understanding of both men's and women's needs and constraints. We will call this 'argument B'.

Which point of view do you sympathise with more, and why?

Write 'A' or 'B' as appropriate on a piece of card and attach it to your clothing.

Walk around the room and join up with others of the same opinion. Share your reasons with them.

Select one or two from your group to present your views in a debate.



Topic 3:

Changing views on development, gender and energy

When the fuelwood crisis was first recognised in the 1970's, women were regarded as the *cause of the problem* by some planners: women were portrayed as wilfully cutting down forests for their own needs. By the beginning of the 1980's however this view had changed: women were seen instead as *victims* of environmental degradation and deforestation, caused by a variety of factors including overpopulation and clearance for agriculture. Not only did they bear the brunt of the fuelwood shortage, but they were also seen as having to cope with other effects of environmental degradation such as declining soil fertility and migration due to drought etc. Most recently the view has changed again: some planners see women as the *saviours* of the environment; they believe that women are more caring of the environment than men, and that women have a deep knowledge of the environment owing to their traditional dependence on it, particularly on natural ecosystems such as forests.

Discussion point

What is the common view among your colleagues as regards women and the environment: do they see them as:

- the cause of the deforestation
- victims of deforestation
- potentially the saviours of the forest

As these views about women have changed, so have policies for development. There have been a series of policies known as *women in development (WID)*. Most early attempts to assist women were *welfare* oriented: they aimed to help women in their practical needs, particularly with regard to household duties, and they were charitable in nature. This approach has been criticised because it tended to treat women as passive recipients and in some case undermined their own survival strategies. In the energy sector, a number of NGOs distributed free stoves to women under such programmes. Women were not consulted about the types of stoves and were not trained to make them or to repair them: there were no spin off positive effects other than each stove itself.

In the mid-1970's there was a movement in development for *equity* between men and women, driven mainly by political movements in the USA. Although this certainly affected UN policies (two UN women's organisations - UNIFEM and INSTRAW - were set up, and there were a number of international conferences on women), there was little change in practice in the field. The equity movement of the 1970's does not seem to have been reflected in the energy sector at all.

The *basic needs* approach, which suggested that if people - both men and women - are given their basic requirements, they will develop themselves, started at the end of the 1970's. In energy this is reflected in an upsurge of programmes to encourage people to plant trees for firewood; many small scale new and renewable energy technologies were encouraged in this period also. As firewood was identified as a particular basic need of women, there were many attempts to start women's woodlots or agroforestry schemes. Most of the new and renewable energy technologies were first promoted as contributions to basic needs.

Later the notion emerged that it was perhaps better not to start special programmes for women but to ensure that women were included in *mainstream* projects, for a variety of reasons (these will be discussed in the following topic).

The most recent *WID* policy is *empowerment* or *autonomy* for women. This is a return to the ideals of the equity movement of the 1970's, with the idea of helping women meet their strategic needs and not just their practical ones. This time there is considerable support from women's groups in the South for such programmes.

Alongside these changes in attitude towards women by donors, the environmental movement has grown. A group emerged which supported programmes under the banner *women, environment and development (WED)*. This is the origin of the idea of women as saviours of the environment; women are seen as natural custodians of nature. This has prompted some projects for supporting women in forest management activities, particularly of common property forests, which should help to ensure firewood supplies while at the same time protecting the natural resource. Some writers of a school entitled *ecofeminism* even suggest that women are closer spiritually to the natural environment. Vandana Shiva for example writes about how market economics is an essentially male invention, and that if women were in charge, environmental values would assume a much stronger position. There is however no general agreement on the validity of this. Writers in this tradition generally criticise the *WID* approaches to development on the grounds that they are paternalistic. *Gender, environment and development (GED)* stresses the fact that it is not sufficient to look at women's needs alone, but that these must be seen in the context of social control of resources, both private land and common forest.



Discussion point

Let us imagine a project which offers solar cookers to women with a credit programme to assist in purchasing them. Would you say that this is:

- a welfare approach?
- an equity approach?
- a basic needs approach
- a mainstreaming approach
- an empowerment approach

Let us now imagine a programme which sets out to train women to assemble solar cookers and sell these in the district. What category would this fall under?

In your opinion, which category do most rural energy projects for women fall under?



Topic 4:

Important concepts and terminology relating to gender

There are a number of key concepts in gender. Here, three will be considered:

- the triple role
- practical versus strategic gender needs
- mainstreaming

The Triple Role

The first thing to be clear about is that gender roles are socially determined rather than biologically. As noted earlier, they are different in different cultures. Moreover they are not static but changeable; however, they tend to resist change. The differences in gender roles are justified by a variety of arguments as we have seen, but as we all recognise, the basis of these arguments is often not very strong. It reflects tradition, the way things have always been, rather than necessity, and like all traditions, it persists.

The types of roles which men and women play in society are often classified as follows:

- reproductive
this means child bearing and rearing, and all the things undertaken to reproduce the labour force eg feeding the family, caring for the sick, teaching good behaviour etc
- productive
work done for payment in cash, or in kind: the production of wealth via subsistence or market production.
- community tasks
tasks done not for individual family gain but for the well-being of the community or society: charitable work, self-help communal construction of village facilities, sitting on village committees, involvement in religious activities, visiting friends who need help etc. (of course these categories are not entirely water tight: there are fuzzy lines between them. For example, if someone runs in an election for a political position - is that community work or productive ?)



Discussion point

In your society, do men or women take the greatest role in:

- reproductive tasks
- productive tasks
- community tasks

One of the difficulties in answering this question is that things vary so much even within one country, according to social group, and particularly according to class. Educated and wealthy families often have very different habits from traditional families. Exercise 4.1 should be carried out for a specific, named community within your country.

In most societies, women contribute significantly in all three of these areas. Although they may not go out to earn a cash income in many places they often contribute importantly to household food production. In Africa it is estimated that 70% of all agricultural work is done by females, in terms of total numbers of hours worked. Tasks are often specifically gender divided: men clear the land and usually plough it (women sometimes also participate, although if tractors are used it is universally a man's task); women plant the seeds, weed and harvest, and carry the crops back to the store. Men usually spray herbicides and pesticides. Boys and men herd animals, especially if this takes place at some distance from the home: but if fodder has to be gathered to stall feed animals, this is often a woman's task. Both women and men work on vegetable gardens to supplement the family's diet.

Because women are involved in tasks in all the three main areas, they are often said to carry a 'triple role'. This can mean (though does not always mean) that they are expected to do a full day's work raising crops or working outside the home, plus housework and child raising, plus community obligations.

Generally, the contribution of men is greatest in the productive tasks, and they are much less involved in reproductive and community tasks, although this does vary by community.

On average, there is no doubt that women work longer hours than men, if all the tasks are added together. This general finding seems to be true in most societies, although of course there are variations according to local conditions and family circumstances.





Source: Illustration by Terry Hirst, in Rocheleau, D., F. Weber and A. Field-Juma *Agroforestry in Dryland Africa*. Nairobi, ICRAF.

Practical versus Strategic Gender Needs

The needs that men and women have are determined by the roles they are expected to play in society and the relations that exist between the genders. These needs are often divided into *practical* and *strategic*. They are always context specific, i.e. they depend on local circumstances and are influenced also by things like age and civil status.

Practical needs arise immediately from the gender division of labour: in rural areas for example, where women's tasks almost always involve fetching water, cooking, and portering, there follow immediate needs such as improved water provision, easier access to fuel, better (e.g. less smoky) cooking stoves, better grain grinding facilities, bicycles or other equipment to make carrying heavy sacks easier etc. All these things make women's work less arduous, given that these are the tasks she expects to do. Men's practical needs might include improved equipment for heavy tasks like ploughing.

Strategic needs refer to those things necessary to change the balance of power between men and women in society; they rest on the idea that women are in almost every case subordinate to men in society, and involve strategies to change this. For example, in many societies certain groups of women (widows, divorcees, abandoned wives) suffer economic deprivation as a result of their civil status; their property is removed from them by male relatives. A strategic need to protect such women is therefore law, and enforcement of law, which establishes their rights to land and other property. Other strategic needs for women may include laws on inheritance (so that daughters have equal rights with sons, for example), and on violence against women. In most countries there are such laws but they are not enforced. Education is another strategic need. Education levels are lower for females than for males the world over, as parents see the boy-child as the future breadwinner, and thus perpetuate the girl-child's inability to take a stronger economic position in society, and also the idea that women are and should be dependent on men. Thus strategic needs are those which aspire to women's emancipation, equality and empowerment.

It is important to recognise that different groups of women may have very different practical and strategic needs in a given society. In communities where there is a strong class or caste division, the needs of the poor women will be quite different from those of the rich. One cannot assume that all women have the same problems, as exercise 4.2 will show. One should not assume either that just because women are women, they will have sympathy for each other's problems and be ready to work together for their common good. This is a fallacy in many settings. It relates to the problem of identifying target groups, which is examined more carefully in Module 2.

Neither practical nor strategic needs are absolute: they are context specific, and they are to some extent a matter of opinion, although many women's organisations are arguing that some of these needs are in fact universal human rights. Whether this is so or not is



of course being debated in all kinds of forums, from the international institutions down to the village. However, the terms *practical needs* and *strategic needs* are in any case very useful when it comes to discussing what a development intervention should be aiming at, and whether it is succeeding.

Mainstreaming

There is another debate still going on about whether programmes aiming at helping women should be *mainstreamed* or whether separate, special programmes should be set up for women ('women-only' projects). Mainstreaming means that all projects for development should try to encourage the participation of women as well as men; they should be designed in a gender-sensitive way so that the benefits come to women as well as to men.

The idea of 'women only' projects follows from the growing understanding that many interventions have done harm to women while benefitting men. An example is mechanisation projects in which tractors and other equipment have increased the field area which a farmer can cultivate in a given period of time. Since weeding and harvesting are not mechanised, but are primarily women's tasks, it follows that they have to do more manual work than before. Another example is land registration, in which plots of land which have been cultivated for generations by a family are made 'official' (the family receives papers of ownership, giving them more security). In practice it is not the family, but the (male) head of household that receives such land titles. Women, who do much of the farm work, therefore have no legal hold over the land and for example are not able to use the land titles as collateral should they want to raise credit at a bank. Supporters of 'women only' projects believe that only in such projects is there any certainty that the benefits will actually flow to women. They also argue that women will learn skills such as management and decision making if they are made responsible for these (in most projects, the majority of the managers are men).

Mainstreaming of women in projects means that these projects have been designed to help women as well as men to participate and benefit from a project; sometimes this means that special provisions have to be made so that women can overcome the obstacles that have prevented them participating in the past. Supporters of mainstreaming argue that women are entitled to participate in all activities, and that positive discrimination in their favour should be made in all projects to help them into management and decision making positions.

If one is concerned to improve the condition of women, there are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. Mainstreaming often does not work, because women may not be in a position to participate (too heavy a workload already, no experience in making financial decisions, entrenched gender taboos against e.g. speaking up in front of men etc). On the other hand, women-alone projects may be even more strongly opposed by the men in a society, who not infrequently feel



emancipation of women as threatening and express this in terms of the need to maintain social or religious norms. There are cases in which men in a village have sabotaged women's small industry projects or woodlots because they see them as 'immodest' and leading to 'trouble between men and women at home'.

Discussion point

Which, in your view or your experience, is more effective in getting women involved in development activities: a mainstreaming approach or a women-only approach?

Give some examples.

Exercise 4.1

Identifying triple roles

Choose a society with which you are familiar (e.g. typical village in southern Malawi, or upper middle class society in Bandung). Say what proportion of the tasks are carried out by men and women:

	Men	Women	Total
Reproductive			100%
Productive			100%
Community			100%

Type of society: _____



Exercise 4.2

Identifying practical and strategic needs in Ashapur

The case of Ashapur demonstrates how energy problems (and other daily problems) vary according to social class as well as physical conditions.

Identify as far as you can the *practical* and the *strategic* needs of the following groups (you will have to use your imagination).

- i) Men of the high caste/landowning class
- ii) Women of the high caste/landowning class
- iii) Men of the labouring class
- iv) Women of the labouring class

What energy projects could you design which would help each of these groups deal with their practical needs?

To what extent would or could these assist in meeting strategic needs also?



CASE STUDY FOR GENDER IN ENERGY

ASHAPUR, A VILLAGE IN NORTH INDIA

Source: W. vd Velden: Silent Voices: Gender, Power and Household Management in Rural Varanasi, India. PhD Thesis, Free University of Amsterdam, 1991. Additional material on energy consumption has been added from other sources.

Ashapur is a village in the hinterland of Varanasi, twenty minutes walk from a metalled road. It is a typical village consisting of half a dozen social groups of different status (castes). It has a population of 1,100 with 25% belonging to the Scheduled Castes (the 'lowest' social group). This group lives in its own separate hamlet, the other castes in multicaste hamlets. Most people, regardless of caste, are in one way or another engaged in agriculture. Most of the actual cultivators are from middle or lower castes, but the upper castes mainly own land and give it out under share cropping arrangements to lower caste farmers, or have the work done by agricultural labourers, who are mainly Scheduled Caste. Older women from these landholding families often supervise the labourers, particularly when the men are employed elsewhere. Among the middle castes there are many small or marginal farmers with their own small plots of land. Many people of Scheduled Castes also find employment outside the village or in other occupations.

Differences in gender as regards work varies to some extent between the castes. In Table 1 a general picture is given. 'Work around the house' tends to be women's work, but many people consider agriculture to be 'work around the house' too, since many of the tasks done there are directly related to agriculture.

There are a variety of crops produced: wheat and rice hybrids grown under irrigation, millet and maize, chickpeas, potatoes and peas are rainfed. Seed is bought by the men but prepared (eg by soaking) by the women. Preparation of soil is usually done by men, but could be done by women if the plot is small and operated by hoe. The period of clearance and planting is the busiest in the year.

The Fuel Regime

Energy is used in Ashapur for a variety of enduses: cooking including making tea, lighting, house heating in the winter when night time temperatures can drop to 3° C, ironing, heating bathing water, preparing food for the calves, irrigation, milling, and transport etc.

Wood energy is available in very limited supplies, since the village, which lies in the Gangetic plains, has very little wooded area within walking distance. There are trees however on many field boundaries, both native species and eucalyptus which were planted as a result of a social forestry programme some years ago. Both dung and crops residues are used for household purposes, particularly rice straw which is available in considerable quantity, and has no commercial value.

Two high caste families have biogas plants which they feed both with dung from their stalled cows and with *Gliricidia* leaves from trees in their compound area. They use this for cooking, in addition to wood from occasional trees cut for the purpose. Other well-off families use large quantities of dung, which is collected by labourers and dried on the compound walls. Wood can also be purchased in the village, coming from forests far away. The poorest families use small twigs from shrubs growing on wasteland if they have no rice straw or other crop wastes (chick pea provides a good fuel: the branches are quite thick and woody), they also gather dung from there and sun dry it. Most families have a traditional two-hole chula built out of mud by the housewife (richer families often have two such units). Charcoal is available in the market but is too expensive for the poorer families (its primary use is for ironing). Richer families have electricity in their homes, preferring strip light over regular bulbs because although they are more expensive to purchase they are much more efficient. Rich families usually have at least a fridge and TV. Kerosine is commonly used for lighting in poorer household; both hurricane lanterns and simple wick holders are used.

Irrigation is done both by electric pumps and by diesel, the latter mostly being used by smaller farmers who hire the pumps for a short period. Transport of crops is done either by headloading or with bullock carts, depending on income.

Table 1

Work activities of men, women and children.

Activity	men	women	children
<u>In and Around the House:</u>			
Processing grains, etc.		m	
Storing grains/pulses		m	
Cleaning grains etc. for use		m	
Grinding *		m	
Husking rice		m	
Providing for fuel *		m	
Fetching water *	l	m	l
Cooking *		m	
Cleaning the house *		m	l (f)
Cleaning utensils *		m	l (f)
Looking after kids *	l	m	l
Washing clothes	l (own)	m	
Putting jute to soak	m		
Stripping jute fibre	o	m	
Making rope	l	l (e)	
Stringing cots	m		
Repair of tools	l		
Repairs to the house (L.C.)	l	l	
Sewing etc.		l	
Fishing	l		
Shopping - local	m	l	l
- city	m	l (e)	
<u>Looking After Cattle *</u>			
Milking	l	m	
Cutting grass/fodder (U.C.)	m		
id. (L.C.)	l	m	l (f)
Chopping fodder	l	m (esp. L.C.)	
Herding cattle (esp. L.C.)	l	o	m
<u>Looking After the Land</u>			
Preparing the soil	m	l	
Ploughing	m		
Sowing	l	m (esp. L.C.)	
Irrigating	m	l (in day)	l
Making bunds	l		
Transplanting		m (L.C.)	
Weeding		m	
Guarding the land	l	l (e)	l
Harvesting (own)	m	m (L.C.)	l
Threshing: rice	o	m (L.C.)	
wheat	m	m (L.C.)	
Winnowing	l	m	
Supervising labourers (U.C.)	l	l	
Vegetable fields	l	l	
Gleaning (L.C.)		l	
Agricultural labour (L.C.)	l	m	

Note: m indicates major, l lesser and o occasional activity.

- * indicates that an activity is a daily chore.

- U.C.(upper caste) and L.C.(lower caste) are used where significant differences exist between castes.

- f is female; e is elder.

Table 2

Work activities of men, women and children.

<u>Income Earning</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Children</u>
Factory labour (outside)	m	o	
Weaving - carpet	m	o	m (m)
- sari	m	o	
'Ashram'	m	l	
Matches (home)		m	m (esp.f)
Brick factory/construction	m	o	
Teaching	m	l	
Wholesale trade	l		
Small trade	l	l	
Middleman	l		
'Service'	l		
- Traditional occupation:			
Sonar	l		
Lohar	l		l (m)
Kumhar	l	l	
Musician/dancer	l		

Note: m indicates major, l lesser and o occasional activity.

(m) indicates male, (f) female.

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Exercise 4.3

Recommendations for social forestry, Azad Jammu and Kashmir

The case study describes a social forestry programme that went badly wrong at first. A commentator provides some recommendations for improvements.

He clearly believes that participation is essential to project success and states that it is very important to involve women. However, the story shows that most small farmers were reluctant to join in with communal activities.

Make a list of the factors which you think may make it difficult for poor women to be involved in a project involving communal planting of trees for firewood.

In this kind of situation, would you recommend a 'women-only' project or a 'mainstreamed' one? List your reasons and be prepared to defend them!



CASE STUDY FOR GENDER IN ENERGY

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY IN AZAD JAMMU AND KASHMIR (PAKISTAN)

Sources: Cernea, M.M. Alternative Units of Social Organisation Sustaining Afforestation Strategies: in M.M. Cernea (ed.) Putting People First, IBRD/World Bank, 1985, and A.Q. Chaudhry, Regional Community Forestry Training Center, Faculty of Forestry, Kasetsart University, Bangkok

The Azad Kashmir Hill Farming Technical Development project was cofinanced by the World Bank between 1978 and 1983, as a pilot exercise to test how several new approaches would work. The forestry component included fuelwood plantations, testing of new tree species under local conditions, and establishment of nurseries for supplying the seedlings. It was started because of the prospect of rapid deforestation, an impending fuelwood crisis and environmental deterioration. Pressure on the forests was high as population had increased and under customary rules, people are allowed to remove dead branches and non-commercial species from reserved forests without payment. However this traditional right is widely abused (trees are debranched, so that only 10-20% of the crowns remain). In the Chir pine areas, long thin slices of the bole of the trees are removed for lighting purposes. Also much of the area is used as rangeland by semi-nomadic peoples.

The Forest Department needed the cooperation of the people to combat all this. The scale of afforestation envisaged to produce the firewood necessary to supply local population was estimated at 330,000 to 400,000 fully planted and well managed acres (150,000-180,000 ha.). It was hoped that social support (private contributions) would be forthcoming to join with government financing.

Shamilat land ('land generally left uncultivated, owned jointly by a number of families') was identified as suited for the afforestation: there was an estimated 325,000 acres available, equivalent to about half the area which is under cultivation. The programme started with 3,000 acres of plantation and it was proposed that community consent would be necessary to use the land, which was to be planted with community participation for the benefit of small farmers. These farmers would also be responsible for guarding the young trees.

In the first year fuelwood trees were planted on 500 acres of which 100 were community land. The owners and users of this land had agreed, although no contract was signed. In the second year 750 acres of community land was identified by local people, far more than had been expected by the project. A social survey was then made to find out why this was proceeding so successfully. From this it appeared that shamilat land was not in fact communal land as had been thought. Although it is so in principle, in practice it is largely privatised and individualised. Almost all that land that had been thought to be reforested 'communally' turned out to be privately owned. The owners were generally large landowners; almost the entire 100 acres planted the first year belonged to one family, who were largely involved in trading but also owned land. It appeared that small farmers on the other hand were very reluctant to involve themselves in tree planting communally, since they feared the government would subsequently take the land over itself.

Many lessons were learned from this experience. The following year only 25 acres of genuinely shamilat was identified, more planting was done instead on government land, and farm forestry was introduced for small farmers. It was found that there were few strong social organisations within the farming community so the approach was individualised.

Various proposals have been made by different interested parties about how a social forestry projects could operate more effectively under this type of circumstances. A.Q Chaudry recommends the following:

For the implementation of a community forestry programme, involvement of people and NGOs is recommended at every stage, to balance the technical inputs of the Forest Department. Coordination between the three partners - people, FD and NGOs - can work effectively if there is close understanding and coordination between the chief executives of the FD and the NGOs and other government departments engaged in rural development. The organisational structure of such a project must be kept simple so that people can understand how it functions. Two or at most three tiers should be contemplated.

1. The most important criterion for success in CF is involvement of local population at all levels.
2. As it is difficult for the poor to invest in activities with a long return, some sort of incentives such as the provision of multipurpose trees at nominal cost, subsidies, grants etc. are necessary.
3. Financial agencies dealing the agricultural credit may give credit for farmers who plant trees on their land.
4. Forest associations or cooperatives to plant, harvest, process and market forest produce should be considered
5. Establish demonstration centres to show people the usefulness of tree crops.
6. As village councils are rather weak, voluntary organisations such as youth groups, religious groups, schools, student organisations etc should take the lead to form forestry committees.

7. Education on environmental problems should be made part of regular school programme.
8. There is a need to redefine village rights within state-owned lands, to reclassify lands where necessary and redefine village boundaries.
9. The involvement of women is crucial to the success of the CF programme. Men are not interested in issues of fuelwood and fodder.



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