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Kaan Taşlı

A Conceptual Framework for Gender and Development Studies: From Welfare to Empowerment

Jänner 2007

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Kaan Taşlı

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES: FROM WELFARE TO EMPOWERMENT

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From Welfare to Empowerment**

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von

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Abstract:

This study analyzes different policy approaches of the 'women and development' discourse, examines their central arguments, and explores their practical implications for women. Here, these policy approaches are evaluated in a chronological order beginning with the welfare approach. After the welfare approach, it goes to analyze the 'women in development' approach (WID). The WID consists of three sub-approaches which are: the equity approach; the anti-poverty approach; and, the efficiency approach. The WID is followed by the gender and development approach (GAD). One important quality of this approach is that it shifts the focus from 'women' to 'gender' in that it looks at women and men in their relative positions within the socio-economic, political, and cultural structures. It urges for a gender-sensitive transformation of these structures through top-down interventions. The main instrument of the GAD is the 'gender-mainstreaming' which demands giving a higher priority to women's concerns in the design and implementation of socio-economic and political interventions. As next, this study analyzes the empowerment approach which also urges a gender-sensitive transformation of the structures in which women's subordination is embedded. However, the empowerment approach argues that this transformation should begin at grass-roots level in a 'bottom-up' manner in that women increase their socio-economic and political powers. Awareness raising, political mobilization, and networking are some of the instruments of this approach. This study considers the empowerment approach to be the most critical and promising, and puts a special emphasis on it. This study searches for convergence points between different approaches, especially between the GAD and the empowerment, and sees certain synergies between top-down and bottom-up strategies when they are deployed simultaneously.

Zusammenfassung:

Diese Studie analysiert verschiedene Ansätze des Diskurses über 'Frauen und Entwicklung', und untersucht deren zentralen Argumente sowie praktischen Konsequenzen. Die Ansätze werden in ihrer chronologischen Entwicklung, beginnend mit dem Welfare-Ansatz, evaluiert. Danach folgt die Analyse des Women-in-Development-Ansatzes (WID). Der WID-Ansatz besteht aus drei Teilansätzen: Equity-Ansatz; Anti-Poverty-Ansatz; und Efficiency-Ansatz. Der WID-Ansatz schließt an den Gender-and-Development-Ansatz (GAD) an. Ein besonderes Merkmal dieses Ansatzes besteht darin, dass er den Schwerpunkt von 'Frau' auf 'Gender' verschiebt. Er betrachtet Frauen und Männer in ihren relativen Positionierungen innerhalb der sozio-ökonomischen, politischen, und kulturellen Gesellschaftsstrukturen. Der GAD-Ansatz verlangt nach einer gender-sensitiven Transformation dieser Strukturen durch sogenannte Top-Down-Interventionen. Das Hauptinstrument dieses Ansatzes, das sogenannte 'gender-mainstreaming', strebt danach, dass die Prioritäten der Frauen ein fixer Bestandteil aller sozio-ökonomischen und politischen Vorhaben werden. Als nächstes wird der Empowerment-Ansatz untersucht. Wie der GAD-Ansatz strebt auch dieser nach einer gender-sensitiven Transformation aller Gesellschaftsstrukturen, in denen die Unterdrückung der Frau eingebettet ist. Aber, im Gegenteil zum GAD-Ansatz vertritt das Empowermentkonzept die Idee, dass diese Transformation bei den Wurzeln der Gesellschaft anfangen soll. Als solches ist Empowerment eine Bottom-Up-Bewegung, in der die Frauen ihre sozio-ökonomische und politische Macht ausbauen, sodass sie die vorhandenen Strukturen nach ihren selbstdefinierten Bedürfnissen ändern können. Awareness-Raising, politische Mobilisierung, und Networking bilden die wichtigsten Instrumente dieses Ansatzes. Diese Studie betrachtet den Empowerment-Ansatz als den kritischsten und vielversprechendsten Ansatz, und verleiht ihm einen besonderen Stellenwert. Diese Studie sucht nach Konvergenzpunkten zwischen verschiedenen Ansätzen, im besonderen aber zwischen GAD und Empowerment, und sieht gewisse Synergien bei einem simultanen Einsatz der Top-Down- und Bottom-Up-Strategien.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This study intends to establish a theoretical and conceptual framework regarding the role and status of women in the development process. As such, it is based on different approaches which have been observed in the 'women and development' discourse from the 1950s onwards. These approaches are: welfare; women in development (WID); gender and development (GAD); and empowerment. The WID consists of three sub-approaches which are: the equity approach; the anti-poverty approach; and, the efficiency approach. In order to give a clear overview, this study analyzes these approaches in their chronological order. On the one hand, it discusses their theoretical underpinnings, and, on the other, it explores their practical implications for women. It critically assesses their key concepts, successes, and limitations. It also looks at similarities and differences between these approaches, and explores points of convergence. The following part (chapter 2) of this study gives a brief overview of some basic terms such as: 'household structures and gender', 'women's multiple roles', and 'women's practical and strategic gender needs'. The distinction between women's different roles within the household and the community on the one hand, and the distinction between women's practical and strategic gender interests on the other are rather useful in terms of evaluating different approaches of the 'women and development' discourse. For instance, Caroline Moser (1989 and 1993) evaluates different approaches on their ability to take women's different roles into account as well as on the extent to which they meet women's practical and strategic gender needs.

Third chapter focuses on the first approach of the 'women and development' discourse, namely, the welfare approach. Although it is the oldest one, the welfarist approach is still the most commonly used approach. All development efforts which take place in form of free delivery of goods and services (food aid, relief aid, family planning programs, etc.) fall into the category of welfare approach. The welfare approach is criticized on the grounds that it sees women solely in their reproductive role and that it does not question the traditional roles assigned to women.

Fourth chapter deals with the WID (Women and Development) approaches. Within the WID, three different approaches can be observed: the equity approach; the anti-

poverty approach; and the efficiency approach. The equity approach is the first and the original WID approach. It is also the most critical among the three WID approaches. The equity approach points out that women and men do not benefit equally from the economic growth. According to the equity approach, economic growth has even negative impacts on women. It therefore advocates the equal distribution of the benefits of economic growth between women and men. More importantly, the equity approach demands not only economic but also political and social equity. However, due to its critical features, the equity approach was soon replaced by the milder anti-poverty approach. This second WID approach is a diluted form of the equity approach. It simply shifts the focus from economic and political equity to poverty reduction for poor women. The anti-poverty was later followed by the efficiency approach. The efficiency approach reflects the concerns of the neo-liberal policies. It considers women as an untapped resource for the economy.

Chapter five focuses on the GAD (gender and development) approach. The GAD is emerged out of the criticisms of the earlier WID approaches. In contrast to these earlier approaches, the GAD uses the concept of 'gender' instead of 'women'. The GAD considers women in the complexity of 'social relations of gender'. As a holistic approach, it urges for fundamental changes in socio-economic and political structures. It sees women as agents of change rather than passive recipients of development efforts. According to the GAD, top-down state intervention can play a major role in women's emancipation. The main instrument of the GAD is the 'gender-mainstreaming'. The instrument of 'gender-mainstreaming' aims at integrating women's concerns in the design, implementation, and evaluation of all socio-economic and political policies. Therefore, the success of the GAD depends in the first place on the willingness of the state that very often fails.

Sixth chapter is about the empowerment approach that occupies a central place in this study. In this study, the empowerment approach is considered to be the most critical and the most promising among all approaches. Like the GAD, the empowerment approach urges for radical changes in the socio-economic and political structures of our societies. However, in contrast to the GAD, it rejects the state intervention. Instead of top-down state policies, it relies on the bottom-up movements of the grass-roots people. According to the empowerment approach, the

state, as a male-dominated institution, is not in a position to defend women's concerns. Therefore, the empowerment approach underlines the necessity of women to increase their socio-economic, political, and cultural power so that they can challenge the existing structures by themselves. The main instruments of the empowerment approach are awareness raising and political mobilization.

Seventh and final chapter contains some concluding remarks. It searches for conjunction points between different approaches, especially between the GAD and the empowerment approaches. Both approaches urge for fundamental changes in the existing structures in which women's subordination is embedded. In this regard, deploying top-down and bottom-up strategies simultaneously, and exerting pressure on the existing structures from both ends may prove to be a more powerful strategy.

The methodology employed in this study is based on an extensive review of the literature on the subject matter. It reviews in particular the original literature which played a key role in emergence and development of different approaches. An important part of this literature stems from the 1980s and 1990s. This study therefore draws partly on 'old literature'. However, this 'old literature' is not out-of-date by any means and is rather valuable in terms of understanding the basic ideas, arguments and concepts of different approaches. Furthermore, the original literature is supplemented with more recent literature which reflects the discussions arising within the women and development discourse upon the emergence of an approach. As regards the construction of this study, each approach is analyzed in a separate chapter. Each of these chapters starts with an introductory analysis of the underlying arguments and concepts as well as the basic terminology of the approach in question. The introductory analysis relies to a large extent on the original literature. The introductory analysis is followed by in-depth analyses of other questions such as: the practical implications of an approach for women; its operationalization by states, development agencies, NGOs and other entities; tools used for this purpose; and so on. In the final part of each chapter, there is a critical assessment of the approach in question and its comparative analyses with other approaches.

2 THE BASIC TERMINOLOGY

This chapter aims at giving a brief overview of some key terms which are going to be mentioned repeatedly throughout this study. In particular, 'women's multiple roles' and 'women's practical and strategic gender needs' are two rather important terms. Following Moser (1989 and 1993), this study evaluates different approaches of the 'women and development' discourse on the extent to which they consider women's multiple roles and meet women's practical and strategic gender needs.

2.1 HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES AND GENDER

Moser argues that there is a tendency to make three generalized assumptions, regardless of the empirical theory. First, that the household consists of a nuclear family of husband, wife and one, two or three children. Second, that the household functions as a socio-economic unit in which women and men have equal control over resources and equal decision-making power. Third, that there is a clear division of labor within the household. The division of labor implies that the husband gets involved in productive work outside the home as 'breadwinner' and the housewife takes overall responsibility regarding the reproductive and domestic work as 'homemaker' inside home (Moser, 1989: 1800 and 1993: 15). These assumptions regarding the household (and the family) oversimplify a complex issue and overlook some important aspects. As a result, they give a rather misleading picture of what a household is.

The first assumption (that the household consists of a nuclear family of husband, wife and children) generalizes the nuclear family as the universal household structure, and excludes other household structures. Moser (1993: 16-17) states that several other household structures exist, although the nuclear family structure may be the dominant type in some contexts. One example of non-nuclear family structure is the extended family. According to Moser (*ibid.*), the extended family does not necessarily disappear with 'modernization' or 'urbanization'. On the contrary, it continues to be a survival strategy for low-income households. Another important type of household structure is the so-called 'female-headed household'. Moser (*ibid.*: 17) distinguishes between the *de jure* female-headed household and the *de facto* female-headed household. In the first case, the male partner is permanently absent due to death,

separation, etc. In the second case, the male partner is temporarily absent due to reasons such as labor migration.

The term 'female-headed households' refers to those households in which women are the "key decision makers and economic managers" (United Nations, 1995: 32). The phenomenon of female-headed households is a major issue in development theory and practice. In some regions of the world one-third of the families are female headed. In the least-developed countries female-headed households account for 23 per cent of total households. The highest rate of female-headed households is in Sub-Saharan Africa with 31 per cent (*ibid.*: 33). The significance of this phenomenon lies in the high correlation between female-headed households and poverty. The implications of female headship on the socio-economic status of the household may differ between countries, and depends on factors such as women's access to income and basic services, social acceptance of female headship, etc. However, it is widely recognized that female-headed households are exposed to a higher risk of poverty. A summary of research findings from 66 studies conducted between 1979 and 1989 by the International Research Center¹ for Women confirms the link between female-headed households and poverty. Forty-four of these studies concluded that women-headed households are poorer than the male-headed ones (United Nations, 1995: 34).

The second assumption (that the household functions as a socio-economic unit in which women and men have equal control over resources and equal decision-making power) is based on the premises of the New Household Economics². According to this model, households are unified units of production and consumption which seek to maximize the welfare of all its members. The household members have equal control over resources, and they participate jointly in the decision-making process on the basis of their free choices and preferences. The problem of conflicting preferences is eliminated through the concept of 'altruism' which suggests that household members are prepared to subordinate their individual tastes and preferences to common goal of maximizing the total family welfare (Moser, 1993: 18-

¹ Seminars I-IV on the Determinants and Consequences of Women-Headed Households, sponsored jointly by The Population Council and The International Center for Research on Women, 27 and 29 February 1989.

² Becker, G. (1986): "A theory of the Allocation of Time", in *Economic Journal*, 75.

27). This assumption ignores the dynamic character of intra-household relations and idealizes the household as a harmonious and conflict-free institution. In reality, however, the intra-household relations are dominated by gender inequalities. In most cases, it is the male partner who controls the resources, and who has the last word in the decision-making process. In addition, the preferences and interests of the male and female partners are often not compatible.

Understanding the household structures as well as the dynamics of the intra-household relations is fundamental to the success of development efforts. As Jaquette (1993: 55-56) draws attention, ignoring gender equity issues within the family entails some costs:

Many of the decisions that are most crucial to development are made at the family level: Who works? How many children? Who is educated? How much savings? Investments? Who moves? Who votes, and how? [...] Using intra-household approach to understanding the family as a crucial institution in development makes it likely that three 'goods' can be served: equity, efficiency, and family stabilization. [...] Understanding household dynamics can help planners design more effective projects that reinforce rather than corrode family relationships.

In response to the third assumption (male 'breadwinner' and female 'homemaker'), Moser (1993: 27-36) draws attention to the fact that women's 'home-maker' role is only one of multiple roles they perform.

2.2 WOMEN'S MULTIPLE ROLES

Moser (*ibid.*) mentions three main roles of women which she refers to as the 'triple role of women'. The concept of the triple role of women includes, beside women's reproductive role, their productive and community managing roles.

2.2.1 Women's Reproductive Role

This includes the childbearing and child-rearing responsibilities as well as domestic tasks. However, the reproductive role extends beyond biological reproduction, and includes also the care and maintenance of the current workforce (husband and working children) as well as the future workforce (infants and school-going children).

2.2.2 Women's Productive Role

This comprises work done (by both women and men) for payment in cash or kind. In the case of women in agricultural production, this includes work as independent farmers, family labor and wage workers.

2.2.3 Women's Community Managing Role

This is an extension of women's reproductive role at the community level, and covers activities which ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption, such as water, health-care and education. It is voluntary and unpaid work which is undertaken primarily by women.

Moser's categorization is useful, first, in that it makes women's work visible and emphasizes the diversity of their domestic, commercial and communal responsibilities. The workload of women is often underestimated due to the tendency of considering only the salaried work to be 'real' work. Second, the concept of the triple role of women demonstrates the banality of the common perception 'male breadwinner' and 'female home-maker'. Lise Østergaard (1992: 5) states that it is a false stereotype to believe that housekeeping and domestic activities are 'natural' extension of women's biological role as child-bearers. This stereotype is used to legitimize the fact that some duties are allocated predominantly, when not exclusively, to women, and others to men. This fact, which is referred to as 'sexual division of labor', is considered to be rigid and universal. However, the division of tasks and duties differs first, from culture to culture, and second, as a result of socio-economic changes. As Moser (1993: 28) argues, "there is no reason why gender should be an organizing principle of the social division of labor, except the physical process of childbearing."

2.3 WOMEN'S PRACTICAL AND STRATEGIC GENDER NEEDS

Moser (1989 and 1993) distinguishes between practical and strategic gender 'needs' in analogy to Monique Molyneux's (1985) distinction between practical and strategic gender 'interests'. Molyneux puts the emphasis on the term 'gender' in order to differentiate her concept of 'gender interests' from the concept of 'women's interests'. She argues that the concept of women's interests imposes a "false homogeneity" which is based on biological similarities. She states that women's oppression is multi-causal in its origin, and takes different forms depending on given structures which

vary considerably across space and time. For this reason, she argues that a theory of interests must begin by recognizing differences among women rather than by assuming their homogeneity (Molyneux 1985: 231-232). Moser nicely sums up this fact:

Because women are positioned within societies through a variety of different means — among them class, ethnicity, and gender — the interests they have as a group are similarly shaped in complex and difficult ways. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to generalize about the interests of women. Instead, we need to specify how the various categories of women might be affected differently, and act differently on account of the particularities of their social positioning and their chosen identities. However, this is not to deny that women may have certain general interests in common. These can be called gender interests to differentiate them from the false homogeneity imposed by the notion of women's interests (Moser, 1985: 232).

Molyneux (1985: 232) defines gender interests as "those that women (or men) may develop by the virtue of their social positioning through gender attributes", and distinguishes between strategic gender interests and practical gender interests.

2.3.1 Strategic Gender Interests

Molyneux (1985: 233) states that strategic gender interests are the ones which are considered to be women's 'real' interests. She argues that demands regarding the strategic interests of women require a certain level of feminist consciousness in order to struggle for them. Molyneux's definition of strategic gender interests is as follows:

Strategic gender interests are derived in the first instance deductively, that is, from the analysis of women's subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangements to those which exist. These ethical and theoretical criteria assist in the formulation of strategic objectives to overcome women's subordination, such as the abolition of the sexual division of labor, the alleviation of the burden of domestic labor and childcare, the attainment of political equality, the establishment of freedom of choice over childbearing, and the adoption of adequate measures against male violence and control over women (Molyneux, 1985: 232-233).³

2.3.2 Practical Gender Interests

As for the practical gender interests, Molyneux gives the following definition:

³ Molyneux (1985: 253) states that the list of strategic gender interests given here is not an exhaustive but simply an exemplary one.

Practical gender interests are given inductively and arise from the concrete conditions of women's positioning within the gender division of labor. In contrast to strategic gender interests, these are formulated by women who are themselves within these positions rather than through external interventions. Practical gender interests are usually a response to an immediate perceived need and they do not generally entail a strategic goal such as women's emancipation or gender equality (Molyneux, 1985: 233).

Molyneux (1985: 233) points out that the distinction between strategic and practical gender interests is important because "practical interests do not in themselves challenge the prevailing forms of gender subordination, even though they arise directly out of them." In other words, policies and programs which are designed to meet practical gender interests do not necessarily improve women's situation with regard to their strategic gender interests.

As already mentioned earlier, in analogy to Molyneux, Moser differentiates between strategic and practical needs. While 'gender interests' are formulated as women's prioritized concerns, the term 'gender needs' refers to the means by which these concerns may be satisfied. According to Moser (1989: 1802), the distinction between 'interests' and 'needs' is essential for policy development and planning as well as for the selection of appropriate tools and techniques for implementation. The following example helps to clarify this distinction:

For example, if the strategic gender interest — namely, the prioritized concern — is for a more equal society, then a strategic gender need — that is, the means by which the concern may be satisfied — can be identified as the abolition of the gender division of labour. On the other hand, if the practical gender interest is for human survival, then the practical gender need could be the provision of water (Moser, 1993: 38).

In order to illustrate the distinction between strategic and practical gender needs, Moser (*ibid.*: 50) gives the following example of skill-training for low-income women in income-generating projects. She states that a common type of skill-training is dress-making which is taught throughout the world by government programs, NGO projects, small self-help groups, etc. The underlying rationale for this type of skill-training is that this is a skill women already know and use, and that women can use also this skill for earning an income. However, dress-making is an area in which women traditionally work. Skill-training in this area does not challenge the gender division of labor, and it can only meet a practical gender need. Skill-training for women in traditionally male dominated sectors would not only create new

employment opportunities for women, but would also challenge the gender division of labor, and therefore meet a strategic gender need.

3 THE WELFARE APPROACH

The welfare approach is the earliest approach concerned with development efforts in the Third World⁴. It is rooted in the social welfare model of the colonial administration and post-war development agencies. The welfare approach addresses women "almost solely in their roles as wives and mothers [...] [with] policies for women restricted to social welfare concerns such as nutritional education and home economics" (Razavi and Miller, 1995: 6-7). For this reason, its policies are restricted to social welfare concerns such as nutritional education and home economics. In the welfare approach, women are passive recipients rather than active participants in the process of development (Moser, 1993: 59-60 and Razavi and Miller, 1995: 6-7).

The welfare approach was most popular between 1950 and 1970. This does not, however, mean that this approach is not in use anymore. Moser (1993: 58) states that the welfare approach is still very popular in development practice. Its main implementation method is the distribution of free goods and services in form of food aid, relief aid, mother-child health programs, family planning programs, etc. Moser (*ibid.*: 61) argues that the welfare approach remains popular since it is "politically safe", in other words, since it does not question or attempt to change the traditional role of women.

In terms of women's multiple role, the welfare approach addresses women solely in their reproductive role as mothers and wives, and ignores women's productive and community managing roles entirely. As regards women's gender needs, the welfare approach meets women's practical gender needs which arise from being wives and mothers. However it does not address their strategic gender needs at all.

⁴ The term "Third World" is used in this study in a very general sense as referring to the least developed and developing countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In this respect, this study does not attach any specific meaning to this term and leaves the discussions regarding its meaning out of consideration.

4 WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (WID)

The term WID has its origins the influential work *Woman's Role in Economic Development* by the Danish economist Esther Boserup (1970). Boserup's work consists of three main parts. The very first part focuses on the sexual division of labor in villages with agrarian economies, and questions how this division of labor has been affected by different factors such as population density, farming techniques, colonial rule, patterns of land-ownership, cultivation of cash-crops, etc. The second part discusses the sexual division of labor in towns with various sectors such as petty trading, industrial occupations, clerical occupations, education sector (teaching), health sector (nursing), etc. In the third part of her work, Boserup (1970: 174) points out that economic development is accompanied by two major movements: first, a gradual movement of the population from village to town, and, second, a gradual movement from agricultural to non-agricultural activities. Examining the implications of these two major movements on the sexual division of labor, Boserup concludes that the process of economic development affects women's position and situation within the sexual division of labor adversely and deteriorates their status.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that it was the first to analyze the Third World women's role in economic development. Eva Rathgeber (1990: 490) describes Boserup's work as remarkable for being the first to use gender as a variable in analysis of data and evidence which had long been available to social scientists and development planners. In the context of the 1970s, Boserup's work can be considered critical since it challenges the earlier welfare approach.

The term WID was initially used by the Washington-based network of female development professionals⁵ who criticized the existing development theories and practices on the basis of the new evidence provided by Boserup as well as their own experiences. They argued that modernization was impacting women in an unfavorable manner, and demanded as a solution the better integration of women into the economic system. This demand coincided with the rise of American liberal feminist movement. As Kate Young writes:

⁵ Women's Committee of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Society for International Development.

Liberal feminists seek to ensure women get greater access to a wide range of occupations and within them to positions of decision-making power. To integrate women into the mainstream of economic, political and social life, laws and institutions must be reformed, and attitudes changed. Women without the right level of qualifications have to be persuaded and aided in getting into higher level of education and training. The approach accentuates the fact that women can do everything men do as well as men (Young, 1993: 129).

The liberal feminist movement put a strong emphasis on "strategies and action programs aimed at minimizing the disadvantages of women in the productive sector" (Rathgeber 1990: 490). Shahrashoub Razavi and Carol Miller (1995: 6) similarly point out that one important theme of the liberal feminists in the United States was equal employment opportunities for women. Therefore, in turning to developing countries, "WID gave primacy to women's productive role and their integration into the economy as means of improving their status" (*ibid.*).

The first major success of the WID movement was the 1973 *Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act*. This amendment required that the assistance granted by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) should "give particular attention to those programs, projects and activities which integrate women into the national economies of foreign countries [...] thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort"⁶. The term WID became popular particularly throughout the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) which started following the First World Conference on Women held in Mexico City in 1975. In this period, the WID approach became institutionalized in the United Nations system as well as in governments, development agencies and NGOs⁷. The popularity of the concept encouraged new discussions and research on the matter which in turn influenced the development practice. The main achievement of the WID approach was that women became visible in development theory and practice.

As regards the criticisms of the WID approach, Rathgeber (1990: 491-492) makes the following points⁸: First, the WID concept was "solidly grounded in traditional modernization theory" which reflected the mainstream thinking on development from

⁶ Section 113 of the Foreign Assistance Act (quoted in Andersen 1992: 167).

⁷ Andersen (1992: 167-172) gives a brief account of the "political recognition" of the WID by governments and international organizations.

⁸ See also Njiro (1999: 47-48).

the 1950s to the 1970s. Modernization theory considered development simply identical with industrialization. Second, the WID concept was "nonconfrontational" and put its main emphasis on the question "how women could be better 'integrated' into ongoing development initiatives", and this without challenging the existing structures in which the sources of women's subordination and oppression are embedded. Finally, the WID concept "focused exclusively on the productive aspects of women's work", and ignored the reproductive aspects of their lives.

Similarly, Young (1993: 130) points out to the following weaknesses in the WID approach: First, the WID approach ignored the 'gender' aspects of the matter, and assumed that "women can become sole agents of their destiny, without any corresponding change in or reaction from men." Second, the WID approach neglected ideological aspects of the matter. Young (*ibid.*) argues that "[t]he unequal balance of responsibilities, work and value was seen perfectly 'natural' if not God given, and therefore unchangeable." Third, the strong and exclusive emphasis on poverty had the effect of masking the structures of gender inequality.

The WID approach underwent a major transformation throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. There is a shift in focus, first from 'equity' to 'anti-poverty', and, then from 'anti-poverty' to 'efficiency'.

4.1 THE EQUITY APPROACH

The equity approach is the original WID approach. It was introduced by the WID movement in the United States, and became popular during the United Nations Decade for Women. It is based on the assumption that economic growth has a negative impact on women. The equity approach therefore advocates equal distribution of the benefits of development between men and women. It supports women's integration into the development process through access to employment and the market-place. One important feature of the equity approach is that its concerns are not restricted to economic inequality. As Mayra Buvinic points out, it also questions the inequalities between women and men in a broader context:

The equity model [...] is concerned with the inequality between women and men, both in private and public spheres of life and across socio-economic groups. It seeks the origin of women's subordination in the context of family as

well as in relationships between women and men in the marketplace (Buvinic, 1986: 659).

In order to reduce the inequalities between women and men, the equity approach demands economic and political autonomy for women through top-down intervention of the state. However, the "recognition of equity as policy principle did not guarantee its implementation in practice" (Moser, 1993: 65). This is mainly due to the fact that the equity approach seemed threatening due to its equity arguments — at least in comparison to the politically safe welfare approach. Buvinic (1986: 660) explains the resistance against the equity approach via its potential to redistribute resources from men to women, and to change the balance of power between men and women.

The equity approach addresses the inequality between women and men, demands economic and political equity for women, and therefore recognizes a strategic gender need. Moreover, this approach considers women not only in their reproductive role, but also in their productive role. However, as already mentioned above, these qualities made the equity approach difficult to implement, and it became diluted in order to make it more acceptable.

4.2 THE ANTI-POVERTY APPROACH

The anti-poverty approach is the second WID approach, and is considered to be a milder form of the earlier equity approach. It became popular in the early 1970s. The anti-poverty approach shifts the emphasis from reducing inequality between women and men to reducing income inequality (Moser, 1993: 67). It focuses mainly on the low-income women with the principal goal of poverty reduction. Buvinic (1983, quoted in Razavi and Miller, 1995: 10) argues that the emphasis on poor women (and by implication on poor men) made the feminist agenda less threatening to male bureaucrats and program implementers.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s it was widely recognized that the accelerated growth strategies based on maximizing GNP had failed to solve the problems of Third World poverty. The response to the failure of the growth strategies was direct poverty reduction measures. As a result, two overlapping anti-poverty strategies emerged. The first strategy was the creation or expansion of employment that could increase the income for poor workers. The second strategy was the so-called 'basic

needs' strategy. According to the basic needs strategy, the main aim of the development efforts was to meet the basic human needs. The concept of basic needs included physical needs such as food, clothing, shelter, etc. as well as social needs such as education, human rights, and 'participation' through employment and political involvement (Razavi and Miller, 1995: 9).

During the 1970s the anti-poverty approach was adopted by international agencies such as the World Bank and ILO as well as by many countries as part of their national programs (Razavi and Miller, *ibid.*). In its implementation, the anti-poverty approach concentrated on programs which were designed to increase women's employment and income-generation (i.e. skill training) as well as their access to productive resources (i.e. credit) (Buvinic, 1986: 659). However, success of these projects was limited. As Buvinic (*ibid.*: 653) argues, a large number of income-generating projects designed during the United Nation's Women Decade had "misbehaved" since their economic objectives were subverted into welfare action during the implementation. Another point of criticism regarding the employment and income-generation projects is that they remained limited to those activities which were traditionally undertaken by women (Buvinic, 1986: 660 and Moser, 1993: 68).

The anti-poverty approach, as already mentioned above, seeks to increase employment and income-generation opportunities for women. In this regard, it recognizes the productive role of women. However, the anti-poverty approach often ignores the reproductive role of women. Productive actions for women need to take into account not only their productive role but also their other roles — reproductive and community managing roles. Productive actions for women need to carefully keep the balance between different roles of women, or else these actions may imply an extra workload, and increase in their 'triple burden'.

New employment opportunities and income-generating projects may increase women's access to additional income, and therefore meet practical gender needs. However, unless economic advancements do not lead to a greater autonomy, they do not meet strategic gender needs (Moser, 1993: 69).

4.3 THE EFFICIENCY APPROACH

The efficiency approach is the third WID approach. This approach became popular during the 1980s, and is still very popular. Its emergence coincided with the rising popularity of neo-classical economic model. In order to better understand the rationales behind the efficiency approach, it is necessary to mention some basic assumptions of neo-classical economics (also referred to as 'neo-liberalism'): The starting-point of the neo-classical economic model is that there is a given amount of resources in the world, and economics is a tool to determine the best allocation of these scarce resources. People behave rationally in this model, using a kind of cost-benefit calculus to maximize their own interests. When people act in their best self-interest, this results in the most efficient use of resources for the economy as a whole ('Invisible Hand'). Supply and demand together determine the allocation of resources, and at the aggregate level, this occurs through markets. Capitalism is argued to be the most efficient economic system. The functioning of free markets guarantees a self-equilibrating economy with a long-run sustainable growth. Therefore, the government should intervene only where there is an imperfect competition (Sparr, 1994b: 13-15).

The efficiency approach which has its roots in the neo-classical economic model regards women as an unused or underutilized asset for development. Thus, the purpose of this approach is to ensure that development is made more 'efficient' and 'effective' through women's economic contribution. The main assumption is that increased economic participation automatically leads to increased equity. Moser (1993: 70) argues that this approach shifted the focus away from 'women' to 'development'. The following quotations selected by her illustrate this shift:

The experience of the past ten years tell us that the key issue underlying the women in development concept is ultimately an economic one (USAID, 1982, quoted in Moser, 1993: 254).

[L]eaving questions of justice and fairness aside, women's disproportionate lack of education with its consequences in low productivity, as well as for the nutrition and health of their families, has adverse effects on the economy at large (World Bank, 1979, quoted in Moser, 1993: 254).

Substantial gains will only be achieved with the contribution of both sexes, for women play a vital role in contributing to the development of their countries. If

women do not share fully in the development process, the broad objectives of development will not be attained (OECD, 1983, quoted in Moser, 1993: 254).

The efficiency approach focuses mainly on economic growth, and considers women simply as an input factor for the economy. Therefore, it does not only shift the emphasis from women to development, but also limits the concept of development solely to economic growth. As such, it fails to understand development as a multidimensional phenomenon, with not only economic, but also social and cultural aspects. The concept of development comprises much more than economic growth:

[d]evelopment means total development, including development in the political, economic, social, cultural and other dimensions of human life, as well as the development of the economic and other material resources and the physical, moral, intellectual and cultural growth of human beings (United Nations, 1986: 7).

The practical implications of the efficiency approach are inter-linked with those of the so-called 'Structural Adjustment Programs' (SAPs) which are also an outcome of the neo-classical economic model. Starting from the early 1980s, the SAPs shaped the economic policy both in the developed and developing countries. However, its consequences for the developing countries were quite different than those for the developed ones. In the case of the developed market economies, the SAPs emerged as a response to increasing international competition in the context of recession and slow growth. The SAPs were aimed at improving the functioning of financial, product and labor markets in order to enhance private sector profitability, and increase competitiveness (United Nations, 1995: 10). In the case of the developing countries, these economies were hit by external shocks such as: reduced demand for primary products as a result of economic slow-down in the developed countries; falling commodity prices and declining terms of trade; high and further rising interest rates; discontinuation of private bank loans; etc. (United Nations, 1995: 14 and Sparr, 1994a: 4). As a result, the developing economies suffered from inflation, stagnating or deteriorating output, trade deficits, government budget deficits, etc. Moreover, these economies were severely indebted, and were not able to repay their foreign loans. As a result, the political-economic strategies known as SAPs were pushed upon developing countries seeking to refinance their loans (Wiegersma 1997: 259). This happened through bilateral and multilateral lending agencies, but in particular through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. As a result of the

SAPs the developing economies were forced to move away from autonomous, nationalistic, and inward-oriented models towards *laissez-faire* capitalism (Sparr, 1994a: 1-2).

As commonly used today, the term 'structural adjustment' [...] refers to the process by which many developing nations are reshaping their economies to be more free market oriented. They are acting upon the premise that less government intervention in the economy is better. More specifically, structural adjustment assumes an economy will be most efficient, healthy and productive in the long run if market forces operate, and products and services are not protected, subsidized, heavily regulated or produced by the government (Sparr 1994a: 1).

The World Bank began structural adjustment lending in 1979 (Sparr, 1994a: 2). By the end of 1989, the bank had concluded 143 structural adjustment loan agreements with 62 countries. The availability of these loans were conditional to the fulfillment of some specific policies which are also referred to as 'conditionality policies' (United Nations, 1995: 14):

- Fiscal policies aimed at reducing budgets and deficits.
- Budget policies directed at tax reform, reducing public spending, cutting social services programs and eliminating subsidies.
- Public enterprise policies directed at restructuring, commercializing and divesting government enterprises.
- Exchange rate policies aimed at correcting exchange rate misalignments.
- Liberalizing and deregulating the factors and goods markets and correcting relative prices to reflect opportunity costs, which in financial markets would entail ending financial repression.
- Agricultural reforms directed at increasing real producer prices for agricultural exporters and reducing the role of government in marketing food crops.
- Liberalizing trade.
- Policies aimed at increasing the role of the private sector and foreign direct investment in economic development.

The immediate outcome of the above mentioned policies was the decline in government spending by restricting money supply and credit, cutting social services such as health and education, reducing investments in infrastructure, removing or

reducing subsidies, especially on food, and reducing real wages and public sector employment. In addition to this, the SAPs encouraged resource allocation to more productive sectors through measures such as: directing funds to the internationally traded sectors through devaluation; price and trade liberalization; incentives for foreign investment in form of wage restraints, and reduction or elimination of labor welfare and protective measures. Privatization of public enterprises as well as the break-down of public and private monopolies were also encouraged. The result was a decline in personal incomes, and an increase in unemployment and poverty. Farmers, small producers, public workers, and informal sector workers were struck particularly hard. Women who constitute a high proportion of the agricultural sector, public sector, and the urban informal sector, were severely affected (United Nations, 1995: 14-16).

On the basis of her analysis of empirical evidence from different developing countries, Pamela Sparr concludes that SAPs had profound and wide-ranging impacts on the lives of women and girls. The following are some negative impacts of the SAPs mentioned by the author:

- More women than men became unemployed as a result of the SAPs (Sparr, 1994b: 21-22). This is mainly due to the reason that women are more likely to become unemployed in times of crisis. And, once they are unemployed, then they are less likely to find an alternative employment (United Nations, 1995: 15).
- Quality of working conditions deteriorated both in public and private enterprises which tried to run more 'efficiently' in line with the SAP philosophy, and therefore, cut back job protection, security and benefits (Sparr, 1994b: 22).
- As formal sector employment opportunities diminished, more women entered the informal sector (*ibid.*: 23).
- The above mentioned factors altogether led to increasing poverty among women (*ibid.*: 23-24).
- In the case of women who were involved in agricultural production, the introduction of export-orientated production often did not benefit women (*ibid.*: 24-25). There was a shift from non-tradable to tradable crops (also referred to as 'cash-crops'). In general, women tend to be employed in the production of non-tradable crops ('women's crop'), and men in the production of tradable crops

('cash crops'). As some women's crops became cash crops due to export oriented production, the status of these crops changed from women's to men's crop (United Nations, 1995). Or, the export-oriented production meant an increase in women's agricultural work for the production of cash crops, and less time for the production of non-tradable subsistence crops for the family (Moser, 1993: 72).

- Women's unpaid work burden escalated due to factors such as cutbacks in social services, higher price level for basic necessities, and increased unemployment. (Sparr, 1994b: 25-26).
- This above mentioned fact had negative impacts also on the lives of girls. For instance, as women's work burden increased, they became more dependent on girls' help, which in return reduced girls' time for school and thus their school enrolment (*ibid.*: 26-27).
- Another impact of the SAPs concerns female-headed households. The number of female-headed households tend to grow as male migration increases due to economic necessities (*ibid.*: 29).
- The worsening socio-economic conditions contributed to malnutrition, diminishing health conditions, increasing violence within the household against women, and stress (*ibid.*: 27-29).

Moser (1993: 71) criticizes the efficiency approach and the SAPs for defining economies only in terms of marketed goods and services, and focusing only on women's productive role. Women's reproductive role which is not a part of the paid economy is not taken into account. As Diana Elson argues, the worsening socio-economic conditions resulted in an increase of women's unpaid work burden:

What is regarded by economists as 'increased efficiency' may instead be a shifting of costs from the paid economy to the unpaid economy. For instance, a reduction in the time patients spend in hospital may seem to be an increase in the efficiency of the hospital [...] the money costs of the hospital per patient fall but the unpaid work of women in the household rises (Elson, 1989, quoted in Sparr 1994b: 17).

The efficiency approach which concentrates only on the economic aspects of women's lives fails to address the strategic gender needs. This approach, as already mentioned above, assumes that any improvement in the economic situation of women would automatically lead to an advancement in other spheres of their lives. Therefore, it does not feel the need to strive for women's strategic gender needs. As

for the practical gender needs, Moser (1993: 72) states that this approach meets the practical gender needs only at the cost of longer working hours and increased unpaid work. In most cases, it harms women's practical gender needs too.

5 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT (GAD)

One of the early definitions of the term 'gender' dates back to 1978 and was put forward by Whitehead⁹:

No study of *women* and development can start from the viewpoint that the problem is women, but rather *men* and *women*, and more specifically the *relations* between them.

The relations between men and women are socially constituted and not derived from biology. Therefore the term gender relations should distinguish such social relations between men and women from those characteristics, which can be derived from biological differences. In this connection *sex* is the province of biology, i.e. fixed and unchangeable qualities, while *gender* is the province of social science, i.e. qualities which are shaped through the history of social relations and interactions (Whitehead, quoted in Østergaard, 1992: 6).

In other words, 'gender' is a social and cultural construct which refers to the "relative position of men and women" (Razavi and Miller 1995: 13) within the family as well as society. Due to its social and cultural characteristics gender differs within and between cultures, and has a dynamic character which makes it subject to change under the influence of a wide-range of socio-economic factors. 'Sex' on the contrary is universal, biologically determined and permanent (CEDPA 1996: 3).

The GAD concept emerged in the 1980s out of the criticisms of the earlier WID concept, and has its roots in socialist feminism:

Socialist feminists have identified the social construction of production and reproduction as the basis of women's oppression and have focused attention on the social relations of gender, questioning the validity of roles that have been ascribed to both women and men in different societies (Rathgeber, 1990: 494).

The GAD concept and the WID concept differ above all in their focuses. In contrast to the WID concept which mainly focuses on 'women', the GAD concept approaches the matter in terms of the 'social relations of gender'. According to Young (1997: 51), relations between women and men are shaped in a variety of settings. Some relations are shaped through a person's position in a network of kinship and affinity

("ascribed relations"), i.e. relations by birth or marriage. And, some are shaped through a person's involvement in socio-economic and political life ("achieved relations"). Both ascribed and achieved relations interact in a complex matrix under the influence of a variety of factors such as class, race, religion, etc.

The GAD concept begins from this 'holistic' perspective and approaches gender relations in the totality of the complex environment of socio-economic and political structures. Whitehead (1979, quoted in Østergaard, 1992: 7) points out that gender relations are "not necessarily nor obviously harmonious and non-conflicting", and they often take the form of "male dominance and female subordination." Gender relations closely correlate with the socio-economic and political distribution of power as well as the distribution of resources, wealth, and work. In contrast to the WID concept, the GAD concept recognizes this fact, and questions the underlying assumptions of current socio-economic and political structures:

A gender-and-development perspective does not lead only to the design of intervention and affirmative action strategies to ensure that women are better integrated into ongoing development efforts. It leads, inevitably, to a fundamental reexamination of social structures and institutions and, ultimately, to the loss of power of entrenched elites, which will effect some women as well as men. [...] It demands a degree of commitment to structural change and power shifts[.] (Rathgeber, 1990: 495).

The GAD concept sees women as agents of change rather than as passive recipients of development efforts. And, unlike the WID concept, it puts a strong emphasis on women's emancipation. The WID concept assumes that any betterment in women's economic situation will automatically lead to advancement in other spheres of their lives. The GAD concept, however, is not that optimistic about this assumption. Women's weakness in socio-economic and political structures as well as their limited bargaining power puts them in a very disadvantageous position. One of the strategies suggested by the GAD approach is the self-organization of women at the local, regional and national levels.

The GAD concept suggests that the state can play an important role with respect to women's emancipation. Young (1997: 53) points out to the role the state can assume

⁹ The IDS conference held in 1978 on the topic: "The Continuing Subordination of Women in the Development Process". See Whitehead, A. (1979:10-13).

in its dual role as major employer and allocator of social capital. This demand, however, seems to be contradictory due to women's poor representation and lack of decision-making power in the state apparatus. This is true, in particular, for developing countries and for higher levels of policy making. Moreover, since the early 1980s the above mentioned roles of the state in developing countries has been fading away as a result of structural adjustment programs (SAPs), privatization, economic crisis, etc.

A very important strategy and instrument of the GAD concept is the so-called 'gender mainstreaming' (also referred to as 'gender awareness'), which aims at increasing gender awareness in all areas and all levels of public life. The following definition of gender mainstreaming was developed by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations:

Mainstreaming as a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for men and women of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in all areas and levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality (Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, 1997, quoted in UN 1999: ix).

The above mentioned definition of gender mainstreaming raises the question of institutionalizing the gender perspective, in other words the question of "gender-sensitive institutional change" (Goetz 1997: 2). The relevant institutions include, above all, the family as the primary institution, and then all respective institutions of the state, the market, and the community. This is however an extremely demanding task which makes the GAD concept difficult to implement.

As mentioned earlier, the GAD concept shifted the discussions in women and development discourse from 'women' to 'gender'. This new gender focus put an emphasis on power relations between women and men, and their relative positions in socio-economic and political structures. The GAD concept urged an institutional change within socio-economic and political structures in order to eliminate the gender inequalities, and to strengthen the position of women. In order to realize this structural change, the GAD concept introduced the instrument of gender

mainstreaming. The GAD concept inspired new debates in women and development discourse, and had important implications both for theory and practice. However, the GAD concept has also drawn criticism. Judy El-Bushra (2000: 56-57) emphasizes three points of 'confusion' regarding the GAD concept:

First, the confusion in discourse: El-Bushra argues that it is not clear what the concept of gender is all about. She argues that different individuals and agencies differ radically in their interpretation and implementation of the concept. Similarly, Arnfred (2001: 75) points to the confusion in the terminology, and argues that "the term 'gender' is used as a neutral term, referring to both women and men." According to Arnfred, despite its good intentions of politicizing women's issues in development, the GAD concept seems to have had the opposite effect:

In the context of development discourse gender has become an issue of checklists, planning and 'political correctness'. Through the terminology of gender women's issues have become depoliticized (Arnfred, 2001: 76).

Arnfred (2001: 79) concludes that the by now established GAD concept moved from the margin to center losing its critical itch.

Second, the confusion resulting from the assumption that gender transformation equals women's economic betterment. According to El-Bushra, many development agencies still adopt women's economic betterment as their main strategy and assume that advancements in women's economic situation would automatically lead to gender equality. Arnfred (2001: 78) too criticizes the GAD concept for becoming a means for economic growth on a neo-liberal economic agenda.

Third, the confusion generated through oversimplification of complex issues and expressing them in slogans. El-Bushra states that slogans which are abstracted from their contexts and used carelessly may be misleading, such as "two-thirds of the world's work is done by women." She warns against reducing complex and sensitive matters of justice and equity to slogans. Baden and Goetz (1998: 23) give further examples of such clichés as: "Women account for two-thirds of all working hours, receive only one-tenth of the world income and own less than one per cent of world

property"¹⁰ (United Nations 1980 quoted in Baden and Goetz 1998: 23) or "Women world-wide produce half of the world's food, constitute 70 per cent of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor and own only one per cent of the world's land."¹¹ The authors argue that such claims seem to be highly effective as "advocacy slogans" but have the potential to backfire and discredit feminist research since they do not have an accurate basis. Similarly, Razavi and Miller (1995: 10) criticize the tendency to make exaggerated and unfounded claims about women's usefulness to development. The authors state that as a result of this tendency the cure for food crisis, child welfare, environmental degradation, and failure of structural adjustment policies are all sought in women, and more recently in gender. Such overstated and slogan-like arguments can hurt women's legitimate struggle, and damage their interests.

An additional point of criticism of the GAD concept concerns gender mainstreaming. One problem with the gender mainstreaming is that it is rather difficult to implement. The goal of integrating women in all spheres and at all levels of the society is not an easy task. Gender mainstreaming implies a major institutional change in all areas and levels of the public sphere. Such an institutional change which is supposed to come from above through 'top-down strategies' requires in the first place political will of the state. However, women's inferior position in the hierarchy of all social structures (including the state), male dominance and resistance, and a generally hostile environment constitute serious obstacles for gender mainstreaming. Arnfred argues that fighting for gender mainstreaming involves the risk of diverting the attention of the feminist struggle from the overall impossibility of the task:

It might be more useful to realize that feminist visions regarding mainstreaming as a tool for changing gender power relations, do not match the reality of governments and development institutions. [...] Feminists have to realise that states are institutions where male privileges are deeply embedded (Arnfred, 2001: 82-83).

Moreover, the gender mainstreaming loses its critical edge and moves from margin to center during its implementation by governments or major development institutions

¹⁰ According to Baden and Goetz (1998: 23), it later came to light that the figure was made up by someone working in the UN because the figure seemed to her good in representing the scale of the gender-based inequality.

¹¹ DAWN (1995): *Securing Our Gains and Moving Forward to the 21st Century: A Position Paper by DAWN for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, September 1995*, University of the West Indies, Barbados: DAWN

such as World Bank (*ibid.*: 79). There is a general risk that the gender mainstreaming is simply understood as integration into the existing agendas (*ibid.*: 81).

6 THE EMPOWERMENT APPROACH

The empowerment approach developed in the mid 1980s is a relatively new approach in women and development discourse. A distinctive quality of the empowerment is that it approaches the matter from the standpoint of the Third World women. In contrast to other policy approaches discussed above, "the origins of the empowerment approach are derived less from the research of the First World women, and more from the emergent feminist writings and grassroots organizational experience of Third World women" (Moser, 1993: 74). In particular, the DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era), a "network of activists, researchers, and policymakers" (DAWN, 1988: 9) from the Third World, had an important contribution to the emergence and development of this approach.

The empowerment approach points to the existing structures in our societies as sources of women's subordination, and puts a strong emphasis on the necessity of challenging them in all areas and at all levels. Throughout its long history, women's gender subordination has become deeply and firmly embedded within the existing structures. The structures of inequity start within the family, and reach all levels of socio-economic, political, and cultural structures of our societies. The empowerment approach views the issue of women's gender subordination within this complex socio-political, economic, and cultural context. It therefore understands that the solutions proposed need to be accordingly sophisticated:

Since the causes of women's inferior status and unequal gender relations are deeply rooted in history, religion, culture, in the psychology of the self, in laws and legal systems, and in political institutions and social attitudes, if the status and material conditions of women's lives is to change at all, the solutions must penetrate just as deeply (Schuler and Kadirgamar-Rajasingham, 1992 quoted in Batliwala, 1994: 130).

Women's gender subordination is deeply rooted not only in the existing structures, but also in the minds of both women and men. The structures of inequity function in a spiral way in that they feed back themselves. They not only produce women's gender subordination, but also strengthen and protect it through socio-cultural norms. The result is the so-called 'false consciousness' which makes both women and men believe that women's inferior position is normal and natural:

Gender-based subordination is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of both men and women and is usually viewed as a natural corollary of the biological differences between them. It is reinforced through religious beliefs, cultural practices, and educational systems (both traditional and modern) that assigns women lesser status and power (DAWN, 1988: 26).

The empowerment approach views the issue of gender subordination not only from the gender perspective. According to the empowerment approach, women's experiences in socio-economic, political, and cultural structures are determined also by other factors such as class, nation, ethnicity, and race:

Over the past twenty years women's movement has debated the links between the eradication of gender subordination and of other forms of social and economic oppression based on nation, class, or ethnicity. We strongly support the position in this debate that feminism cannot be monolithic in its issues, goals, and strategies, since it constitutes the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities, and ethnic backgrounds (DAWN, 1988: 18).

In this respect, the empowerment approach combines the feminist struggle with the struggle against other forms of oppression. In other words, the struggle against gender subordination must go hand in hand with those against national, racial, and class oppression (DAWN, 1988: 80). DAWN (1988: 19) refers to this as "Third World perspective" of feminism which strives for the "deepest and broadest development of society and human beings free of *all* systems of domination." As Bhasin (1995, quoted in Townsend *et al.*, 1999: 19) writes, "the goal of women's empowerment is not just to change hierarchical gender relations but to change all hierarchical relations in society, class, caste, race, ethnic, North-South relations."

In conclusion, from a feminist perspective, the empowerment approach "involves the radical alternation of the processes and structures which reproduce women's subordinate position as a gender" (Young, 1993: 158). As DAWN (1988: 20) puts it, "equality for women is impossible within the existing economic, political and cultural processes that reserve resources, power and control for small groups of people." According to DAWN, increasing women's 'power' is a necessary condition for challenging the structures of oppression. Anne Touwen (1997: 10) writes that "[t]he lack of power causes dependency, marginalisation, and poverty." The author sees the empowerment approach as a strategy which aims at helping women to gain the power they need for breaking the relations of dependency.

6.1 DEFINING POWER

The empowerment approach defines its root-concept 'power' less in terms of domination over others, and more in terms of capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength (Moser, 1993: 74). In order to clarify this distinction, it is necessary to mention different meanings of the term 'power'. Jo Rowlands (1995: 101 and 1997: 11) states that most frameworks for understanding power appear to be neutral, and make no comment about how power is distributed within a society. The author criticizes that "there is no consideration of power dynamics of gender, or of race, class, or any other force of oppression." In her gender analysis of power, Rowlands distinguishes between "power over", "power to", "power with", and "power from within."

6.1.1 Power-Over

If the term 'power' is defined as power-over, then it refers to a relationship of domination and subordination:

If power is defined as 'power over', a gender analysis shows that power is wielded predominantly by men over other men, and by men over women. Extending this analysis to other forms of social differentiation, power is exercised by dominant social, political, economic, or cultural groups over those who are marginalised (Rowlands 1995: 101-102).

Such power is described as "finite supply" (Rowlands 1997: 11) or as "zero-sum" (Oxaal and Baden 1997), meaning that one group's or person's increase in power leads to another's loss of power. In terms of 'power-over', women's empowerment implies less power for men, and any change in power relations is therefore seen as necessarily involving conflict (*ibid.*). This explains why women's empowerment is sometimes seen as a threat for men. Men's fear of losing their patriarchal control constitutes an obstacle to women's empowerment (Rowlands 1997: 11).

The most practical implication of power-over for women is the patriarchal system under which men make the rules by which women have to live (Townsend *et al.* 1997: 27). Patriarchy takes many forms, and pervades not only the legal system, social and economic custom, but also the ideology which sets rules and ideals (*ibid.*).

6.1.2 Power-To

The term power does not necessarily involve domination, and can take different forms which in turn attribute different meanings to the concept of empowerment. In contrast to power-over, power-to is a "generative and productive power [...] which creates new possibilities and actions without domination" (Rowlands 1997: 13). "This power relates to having decision-making authority, power to solve problems and can be creative and enabling (Oxaal and Baden 1997). Power-to "refers to people's capacity to define their own life-choices and to pursue their own goals [...]" Kabeer (2001: 21). Williams *et al.* define power-to as follows:

We can conceive of power as power-to, power which is creative and enabling, the essence of the individual aspect of empowerment. Most people describe situations where they felt powerful as those in which they solved a problem, understood how something works or learned a skill" (Williams, Seed and Mwau, 1994: 233).

One important aspect of 'power to' is that it is free from conflict of interests. It is not a 'zero-sum', and therefore an increase in one person's or group's power does not diminish that of another (Rowlands, 1997: 12). Power-to is the power that the empowerment approach refers to, and this power is achieved by increasing one's ability to resist and challenge power-over (Rowlands, 1997: 12). Zoë Oxaal and Sally Baden (1997: 3) define implications of power-to in practice as capacity-building, supporting individual decision-making and leadership.

6.1.3 Power-With

This type of power refers to the power which is exercised commonly with others, for instance in a social group. As Oxaal and Baden (1997) put it, "this power involves people organizing with a common purpose or common understanding to achieve collective goals." The term power-with is closely linked with 'collective empowerment' which is going to be discussed later on (see chapter 6.3):

Collectively, people feel empowered through being organized and united by a common purpose or common understanding. Power-with involves a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together (Williams, Seed and Mwau 1994: 233).

The practical implications of the term power-with are social mobilization as well as building alliances and coalitions (Oxaal and Baden 1997: 3).

6.1.4 Power-From-Within

Power-from-within, also referred to as power-within, refers to the mental and spiritual strength which stems from the inner deepness of an individual. This type of power relates in particular to self-acceptance and self-respect (Williams *et al.* 1994: 233). Williams *et al.* define power-from-within as follows:

... the spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self acceptance and self-respect which extend, in turn, to respect for and acceptance of others as equals (Williams, Seed and Mwau 1994: 233).

A very important quality of power-from-within is that "such power cannot be given; it has to be self-generated" (Kabeer 1994a: 229). The practical implications of power-from-within include increased self-esteem, awareness or consciousness raising, and confidence building (Oxaal and Baden, 1997: 3).

6.2 DEFINING EMPOWERMENT

The distinction between power-over and other types of power implies that we need to strategically change our understanding of power, and resist power-over in a creative manner. This strategy involves exploring the concepts of power-to, power-with, and power-from-within as well as understanding how they relate to each other. In development work, this means building problem-solving and resolution skills, strengthening organizations, and increasing individual and collective skills, and building solidarity (Williams *et al.* 1994: 234).

The term 'power' is a multi-dimensional concept with different and sometimes contradictory meanings. Depending on context and interpretation, 'power' receives a different definition which in turn determines that of 'empowerment'. When defined in terms of power-over, the term empowerment means simply "bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it" (Rowlands 1995: 102 and 1997: 13). Empowerment as such implies participation and decision-making in political and economic structures. Rowlands (1998: 12) criticizes empowerment in terms of power-over, and argues that this view of empowerment is closely linked to the particular view of 'development-as-Westernization' which predominated the women and development discourse since the 1970s:

The view is that women should somehow be 'brought into development' and become 'empowered' to participate within the economic and political structures of the society. They should be given the chance to occupy positions of 'power', in terms of political and economic decision-making. This view of empowerment is consistent with the dictionary definition of the term, which focuses on delegation, i.e. on power as something which can be bestowed by one person upon another. The difficulty with this view of 'empowerment' is that if it can be bestowed, it can just as easily be withdrawn: in other words, it does not involve a structural change in power relations. [...] Women's 'empowerment' is, in this sense, an instrumentalist approach to achieving the economic growth of the developmentalist discourse ... (Rowlands 1998: 12-13).

However, the notion of empowerment which is defined in terms of power-to, power-with, and power-from-within implies more than women's integration into the existing socio-economic and political structures through increased decision-making authority. Empowerment includes the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions. It involves the full range of human abilities and potential (Rowlands, 1995: 102). Empowerment implies "undoing negative social constructions, so that the people affected come to see themselves as having the capacity and the right to act and have influence" (*ibid.*: 102-103).

In denial of the use of 'power over' and based on the concept of 'power to', Jill M. Bystydzienski gives the following definition for the process of empowerment:

Empowerment is [...] a process by which oppressed persons gain some control over their lives by taking part with others in development of activities and structures that allow people increased involvement in matters which affect them directly. In its course people become enabled to govern themselves effectively. This process involves the use of power, but not 'power over' others or power as dominance as is traditionally the case; rather, power is seen as 'power to' or power as competence which is generated and shared by the disenfranchised as they begin to shape the content and structure of their daily existence and so participate in a movement for social change (Bystydzienski 1992: 3 quoted in Yuval-Davis 1994: 179-180)

Srilatha Batliwala (1994: 129) defines the term 'power' as "control over material assets, intellectual resources, and ideology." According to Batliwala's definition, material assets can be of physical, human or financial nature, and include items such as land, water, labor, money, etc. Intellectual resources include knowledge, information, and ideas. As regards the ideology, this might be of social, religious or political, and "signifies the ability to generate, propagate, sustain, and institutionalize specific sets of beliefs, values, attitudes and behavior — virtually determining how

people perceive and function within given socio-economic and political environments." Based on this three-dimensional concept of 'power', Batliwala (*ibid.*: 130) defines empowerment broadly as "the process of challenging existing power relations, and of gaining greater control over the sources of power." According to Batliwala, empowerment is manifested as a redistribution of power between nations, classes, castes, races, and gender. Women's empowerment implies the redistribution of power between genders, and involves the following elements:

[...] to challenge patriarchal ideology (male domination and women's subordination); to transform the structures and institutions that reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and social inequality (the family, caste, class, religion, education processes and institutions, the media, health practices and systems, laws and civil codes, political processes, development models, and government institutions); and to enable poor women to gain access to, and control of, both material and informational resources (Batliwala 1994: 130).

Naila Kabeer (2001: 18) uses the term 'disempowered' to explain the concept of empowerment. The author defines the term 'power' as "the ability to make choices", and argues in this regard that to be disempowered implies to be denied choice:

My understanding of the notion of empowerment is that it is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refers to the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability. In other words, empowerment entails a process of change. People who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be *very powerful*, but they are not *empowered* in the sense in which I am using the word, because they were never disempowered in the first place (Kabeer 2001: 18-19).

According to Kabeer, some choices have greater significance than others in people's life, such as choice of livelihood, where to live, whether to marry, who to marry, whether to have children, how many children to have, freedom of movement, etc. The author refers to such critical choices as 'strategic life choices', and defines empowerment in this regard as follows:

Empowerment [...] refers to the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them (Kabeer, 2001: 19).

Similarly, Janet G. Townsend *et al.* (1999: 19) base their definition of empowerment on the notion of being 'powerless', and define empowerment as "the gaining of power by the vulnerable." According to this definition what the 'powerless' need is the power to solve their own problems.

Moser underlines the ability to make choices as well as control over material and non-material resources. The author defines empowerment as:

the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength. This is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change, through the ability to gain control over material and non-material resources (Moser, 1989: 1815).

In light of the above mentioned definitions, one can argue that the meaning of empowerment is open to further discussion. Rowlands (1997: 7) writes that the meaning of empowerment is not very precise, neither in the development nor in the gender context. She argues that it is necessary to give empowerment a concrete meaning:

The failure to define and explore the practical details of how empowerment can be achieved considerably weakens the value of the concept as a tool for analysis or as part of a strategy for change (Rowlands 1997: 8).

Also Kabeer (2001: 18) states that "not everybody accepts that empowerment can be clearly defined." However, in contrast to Rowlands, Kabeer argues that the value of the concept for many feminists lies precisely in this 'fuzziness':

I like the term empowerment because no one has defined it clearly yet; so it gives us a breathing space to work it out in action terms before we have to pin ourselves down to what it means (An NGO activist, quoted in Kabeer, 2001: 18).

6.3 PROCESSES OF EMPOWERMENT

Rowlands distinguishes between three empowerment processes: 'personal empowerment', 'collective empowerment' and 'empowerment in close relationships'. According to Rowlands (1998: 22) this distinction is "a necessary and helpful one in thinking further about processes of empowerment and how to approach conceptualization which might serve a practical purpose in organizational and planning terms."

6.3.1 Personal Empowerment

The process of empowerment for the individual woman is a personal and unique experience (Rowlands 1998: 22). This dimension of empowerment involves

particularly "developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression"¹² (Rowlands 1995: 103). The personal empowerment involves furthermore a sense of agency through which a woman can interact with her surroundings and cause things to happen (Rowlands 1997: 111).

Rowlands (1997 and 1998) gives also a catalogue of 'core elements' for each of the empowerment processes which she also refers to as 'core values'. These elements make up the essence of an empowerment process, and serve to determine whether empowerment processes are taking place or not. Although they do not in themselves demonstrate the empowerment processes, the core elements are products of the empowerment processes, and their increase is an evidence that the empowerment has been taking place (Rowlands, 1998: 22). The core elements for personal empowerment are: self-confidence; self-esteem; sense of agency (being an individual who can interact with her surroundings and cause things to happen); 'self' in a wider context (being able to move out of the gender-assigned roles given by culture); and dignity¹³ (Rowlands, 1997: 111-112 and Rowlands, 1998: 23).

6.3.2 Collective Empowerment

This second dimension of empowerment refers to women's collective experiences made during their empowerment. Here, "individuals work together in order to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone" (Rowlands 1995: 103). In this sense, collective empowerment refers in particular to that empowerment which is achieved as a result of the collective action of a group. The core elements for collective empowerment include: sense of collective agency; self organization and management; group identity; and group dignity (Rowlands, 1997: 115-116 and Rowlands, 1997: 23).

¹² Rowlands (1997:11) explains the term 'internalized oppression' as follows: "People who are systematically denied power and influence in society internalize the message they receive about what they are supposed to be like, and may come to believe the messages to be true. ... Thus, for example, a women who is subjected to violent abuse when she expresses her opinions may start to withhold them, and eventually come to believe that she has no opinions of her own".

¹³ Rowlands (1998: 24) writes that the word 'dignity' was repeatedly mentioned by women whom she interviewed during her field-work in Honduras. Rowlands states that the word, as it was used by the Honduran Women in its Spanish original, means not only 'dignity' as English uses it, but also self-respect, self-worth, honor as well as the expectation (and the right) of receiving respect from others.

6.3.3 Empowerment in Close Relationships

The third dimension of empowerment refers to women's experiences with their immediate family members, in particular with their husbands and children, and also with their parents, parents-in-law, etc. It is about "developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of the relationship and decisions made within it" (Rowlands, 1995: 103). According to Rowlands (1998: 23), empowerment in close relationships is the hardest to be achieved since the individual woman is here "up against it on her own." For this reason, empowerment in close relationships demands a certain degree of personal empowerment, and "could be seen as an area of change arising from personal empowerment processes" (Rowlands, 1998: 24). The core elements for empowerment in close relationships include: ability to negotiate; ability to communicate; ability to get support; self-organization and management; ability to defend self/rights; sense of 'self' in the relationship; and dignity (Rowlands, 1997: 119 and Rowlands, 1998: 24).

The above mentioned distinction between different empowerment processes emphasizes the dynamic and multi-dimensional character of the empowerment approach, and constitutes a fertile ground for further discussion. However, this distinction does not imply that the three empowerment processes can take place independently from each other. As Rowlands (1997: 127) points out "the three dimensions of empowerment [...] are closely linked [and] positive changes in one dimension can encourage changes in either the same dimension or in another." Particularly, the connection between individual and collective empowerment is a much discussed one. Rowlands (1997: 115) regards personal empowerment as a precondition for collective empowerment since "without empowerment at a personal level it is very hard for the individual to be active collectively." This is true also the other way around. Namely, women need to empower themselves collectively in order to defend the achievements of their individual empowerment:

[W]hile individual women may play an important role in challenging [the structures of] constraints, structural inequalities cannot be addressed by individuals alone. Individual women can, and do, act against the norm, but they may have to pay a high price for exercising such autonomy and their impact on the situation of women in general remains limited. [...] individual empowerment is a fragile gain if it cannot be mobilised in the interests of collective empowerment (Kabeer 2001: 47-48).

The same point is also underlined by Batliwala (1994: 132) in that she stresses the significance of collective empowerment in supporting and protecting women's individual empowerment, and for initiating more profound changes in the society:

[R]adical changes are not sustainable if limited to a few individual women, because traditional power structures will seek to isolate and ostracize them. Society is forced to change only when large numbers of women are mobilized to press for change. The empowerment process must organize women into collectives, breaking out from individual isolation and creating a united forum through which women can challenge their subordination. With support of collective and the activist agent, women can re-examine their lives critically, recognize the structures and sources of power and subordination, discover their strengths, and initiate action.

Also Young (1993: 158) points to the connection between individual and collective empowerment, and emphasizes that the process of empowerment includes both individual change and collective action. She criticizes the empowerment understanding of the mainstream development discourse which focuses on the individual dimension of the empowerment approach and ignores its collective aspects:

[This] is closely allied to the current emphasis on the individualistic values; people 'empowering themselves' by pulling themselves up by their bootstraps; in other words self-reliance in its most narrow interpretation. With the emphasis on individualism, co-operation becomes submerged, and there is no mention of the need to alter existing social structures (Young 1993: 159).

As Young (1993: 159) warns, the individual empowerment cannot simply be equated to "individual advancement." Women's individual empowerment should not incorrectly be conceptualized as the self-empowerment of an individual woman in isolation from others. On the contrary, the process of empowerment implies Individual empowerment at a collective level. In this sense, individual empowerment and collective empowerment — and also empowerment in close relationships — are integral and complementary to each other, and the process of empowerment is sustainable only as a whole.

6.4 EMPOWERMENT AS A POLITICAL MOVEMENT

Women's collective empowerment deserves further consideration due to its strong political connotations. The empowerment approach strives for social transformation

and structural change. It strongly emphasizes the need for broad and deep changes in socio-economic, political, and cultural structures of the society, and this at all levels from the household to the state. This is a rather ambitious goal which demands awareness and support of the masses. In other words, such a goal can only be achieved collectively.

The collective dimension of the empowerment approach has therefore a strong political character which puts it into the heart of the matter. As Batliwala (1994: 134) states, for the empowerment approach to be able to challenge and transform the existing power structures, it must become a political force in form of an organized mass movement. Similarly, Kabeer (1994a: 253) argues that women's subordination is collectively constructed and collectively reinforced, and is therefore only collectively changeable. Pointing to the fact that women are disenfranchised from most resources of institutional power, she argues that women's collective strength is the most important transformatory resource at their disposal.

Women's political empowerment can take place within and outside the formal politics. As regards women's political empowerment within the formal politics, the main problem concerns their limited access to institutional power in terms of key positions in the state bureaucracy, representation in legislative bodies (at local, national, and international levels), participation in political parties, etc. Women's limited access to institutional power becomes clearly visible in their poor representation in legislative bodies, particularly in less developed and developing countries. As Young (1993: 160) states, women in LDCs have only 7 per cent of the seats in the national legislature. Oxaal and Baden (1997: 12-13) give a list of instruments which can be used for increasing women's participation in formal politics. These include: reform of political parties; quotas and other forms of affirmative action; training to develop women's political skills; working with women's sections of political parties; and development of women's political organizations.

However, the measures which aim at increasing the number of women in formal politics are not sufficient. Women's political empowerment within the formal politics must be supported by their political empowerment outside the formal politics:

Women in politics may be elites, in positions due to their personal connections with male politicians and be unable or unwilling to represent grassroots women's interests. [...] it is important to 'feminise' the power spaces, so that there are increasing number of women in the spaces where decisions are taken nationally and internationally, but that it is also necessary to simultaneously strengthen women's movement as a political lobbying force that can establish dialogue with those very power structures (Herrera quoted in Oxaal and Baden 1997: 13).

In this regard, women's political empowerment outside the formal politics implies "collective public action" which aims at "gaining a voice, having mobility and establishing a public presence" (Johnson 1992 quoted in Rowlands 1997: 18) within the civil society. The collective public action enables women to exert pressure on formal politics in favor of their practical and strategic gender needs. The collective public action gains a particular importance where women have limited or no access to formal politics.

Here, in the context of collective public action, women's organizations have an important role to play. In order to have a common voice to express their particular (strategic and practical) needs, women need to get organized at grass-roots level. And, as DAWN (1988: 87-88) suggests, building coalitions and alliances between different women's organizations can help to build a broad-based movement at national level. DAWN (*ibid.*) argues moreover that these coalitions and alliances need to be extended to include other political and socially conscious organizations across gender and class. Women's organizations may lack necessary skills, experience, finances, etc. Here, those NGOs and development agencies which choose to adopt the empowerment approach can provide a valuable support. They can help women's organizations in building necessary capacities through different mechanisms such as training, consulting, financial support, etc.

Before concluding, it is necessary to mention one additional point which deals with the political diversity. Although the empowerment approach accepts that women share a common experience of oppression and subordination, it also emphasizes that there must be a "diversity of feminisms" (DAWN 1988: 18). The idea of diversity suggests that feminism can be defined differently by different women in accordance with their particular needs, concerns, and experiences. The empowerment approach understands feminism as a 'political movement', and suggests that feminism, like all

political movements, can be diverse in its issues, goals, and methods (DAWN 1988: 79). According to DAWN (1988: 19) such a diversity gives feminism a dynamic, flexible and sensitive character making it more powerful to challenge the status quo. Similarly, Chandra Mohanty (1997: 83) states that women constitute different socio-economic and political groups depending on the particular local context in which they are situated. The author points out to the problem of regarding women as a homogeneous group with a historical and universal unity which is based on the generalized notion of their subordination. According to Mohanty such a generalized mode of thought ignores other dimensions of the matter such as social, class and ethnic identities.

6.5 EMPOWERMENT AS A 'BOTTOM-UP' APPROACH

Within the context of the empowerment approach, an alternative development can start only from below. Behind this conviction lies the skepticism about political will of the establishment and its institutions, in particular of the state, to induce a structural change through top-down intervention:

What is lacking is not resources, but political will. But in a world and countries riven with differences of economic interest and political power, we cannot expect political will for systemic change to emerge voluntarily among those in power (DAWN 1988: 81).

According to Carolyn Hannan (2000: 244 quoted in Anfred, 2001: 84), the problem in promoting gender equality has never been the lack of necessary frameworks and tools, but the lack of political will. The author argues that relevant frameworks and instruments have been developed in abundance. However, when it comes to their implication, these frameworks and tools are not used according to their intentions; their important political implications are neglected; and, the promotion of gender equity is reduced to a technical issue. As a result, the eloquently formulated policies and strategies become empty slogans during their top-down implementation. Writing about gender planning, Moser (1993: 191) argues that the state lacks not only the political will but also the ability to confront the fundamental issues of women's subordination. The author regards powerful social and political movements generated by women themselves as an alternative to the top-down state intervention:

Change instigated through 'top-down' interventions of the state as the dominant 'structure' of power, control and domination is distinct from change achieved through 'bottom-up' mobilization of 'agency' in civil society (Moser 1993: 190).

As a bottom-up approach, the empowerment attaches special attention to women's grass-roots organizations. Before getting into the discussion on women's grass-roots organizations, it would be appropriate to make a brief classification of women's organizations in general. Women's organizations differ considerably in their size and nature. The DAWN (1988: 89-93) distinguishes between the following types of women's organizations: traditional service oriented women's organizations; political parties; worker-based organizations such as trade unions; handicraft and credit cooperatives; grass-roots organizations; and, research organizations. In addition to these six types of organizations, the DAWN (*ibid.*) points to women's movements as a further category:

[A] large number of women's movements [...] have sprung up during the decade. Their overall strength derives from their flexibility and unity of purpose, while their weakness may stem from the lack of clear organizational structures [...]. Such movements have come together around basic needs such as fuel and water, and in response to urban crisis such as loss of services or inflation. They also focus on such issues as peace, opposition to violence against women, sex tourism and sexual exploitation, militarism and political repression, racism, and fundamental religious forces opposed to women's rights. Many of these movements are large, mass-based, non-violent in their methods, and extremely courageous in the actions undertaken (DAWN 1988: 93).

Mary Johnson Osirim (2001: 4), on the other hand, makes a rather broad distinction between national women's organizations and grass-roots organizations. For the sake of simplicity, this study will use this distinction in its further analysis of women's organizations. Whilst national women's organizations are usually large and formal organizations which are established and run at national level; women's grass-roots organizations are in contrast relatively small and informal organizations formed by the grass-roots women at local level. National women's organizations are criticized for various reasons. Osirim (*ibid.*) argues that these organizations "generally reflect the concerns of elite women, even when they state that they are designed to meet the needs of the mass [...]." DAWN (2000: 151 quoted in Anfred 2001: 80) points to the following shortcomings of national women's organizations: they are hierarchical in

their structures; they are dominated by elite women; they pursue genteel politics in order to avoid conflicts with the state; they are absorbed by the state; and as a result, they are ineffective as vehicles for women's struggle.

Coming back to women's grass-roots organizations, this type of organizations are central to the bottom-up strategies of the empowerment approach. Because without grass-roots women getting organized and mobilized at local level, the empowerment cannot claim to be a 'bottom-up' approach. The empowerment approach rejects top-down policies, and supports the idea that the change must come from below. Grass-roots women organized around their immediate socio-economic, political, or cultural needs are the agents of a transformation that starts at local level. This transformation is supposed to expand gradually in two directions: first, horizontally through the networking between women's grass-roots organizations; and, second, upwards as a political pressure mechanism which challenges the hierarchical social structures from below.

In this regard, women's grass-roots organizations and the earlier mentioned "women's broad-based movements" (DAWN 1988: 93) are closely linked to each other. While women's movements need women's grass-roots organizations as a solid ground which they can build upon, women's grass-roots organizations need to become a part of women's movements for a more meaningful empowerment. As long as they exist as tiny and isolated entities, the significance of women's grass-roots organizations remain limited to the local context. They may bring about some improvements in the lives of their individual members, especially in terms of meeting their practical gender needs; but, they fail to support the transformatory goals¹⁴ of the empowerment. However, in that they become a part of women's movements, women's grass-roots organizations would enjoy a higher degree of stability and security. Co-operation and networking would allow them to benefit from exchange of information, know-how, and experience. In an environment of solidarity, they would not only better protect their achievements, but also be able to achieve more significant changes in their members' lives. As a result, women's grass-roots

¹⁴ The term 'transformatory goals' refers to the goal of transforming existing socio-economic, political, and cultural structures in favor of gender equity. Yuval-Davis (1994: 180) argues that "empowerment [...] can be transformative when it is linked to permanent shift of social power." Here, the accent is on meeting women's strategic gender needs.

organizations would contribute to transformatory goals of the empowerment in a more substantial manner. In the end, melting in the same pot, women's grass-roots organizations and women's movements would become inseparable entities.

Women's organizations have some requisites. Young (1993: 164) draws attention to three points. First, as a democratic process, the empowerment approach demands democratic structures within the organizations. The author states that women's organizations "must look very stringently at their own mechanisms of participation, democratic decision-making and accountability" (*ibid.*). Referring to the same point, the DAWN (1988: 89) points to the importance of open and democratic processes in organizations for empowering their members. According to DAWN (*ibid.*), "the long-term viability of the organizations, and the growing autonomy and control by poor women over their lives, are linked through the organization's own internal processes of shared responsibility and decision making." Second, women's organizations need resources. On the one hand, these might be concrete resources such as finance and technology. On the other, these might also be more abstract resources such as know-how, and skill training in fields such as management, leadership formation, conflict resolution, etc. (Young, 1993: 164 and DAWN, 1988: 89). Third, women's organizations should play a prominent part in wider social movements. According to Young (*ibid.*), this is a necessary condition for preventing gender issues from becoming marginalized. This very last point is closely related to the above discussion about the necessity of women's grass-roots organizations becoming a part of social and political movements, as well as to an earlier discussion (see chapter 6.4) about the political dimensions of the process of empowerment.

In providing grass-roots women and their organizations with the resources they need, the external bodies such as NGOs and development agencies, national or international, can play a major role¹⁵. However, those external bodies which choose to work within the framework of the empowerment approach need to reconsider the

¹⁵ In the empowerment literature, the discussions focus particularly on the role of NGOs in bottom-up development. They are seen as "catalysts to bring together those most deeply affected by change, help them understand [and] articulate their situation, and assist them in building organizational capacities" (Razavi and Miller 1995: 19). However, in our discussion, we will not make a distinction between NGOs and other development actors. We will instead distinguish between 'women's grass-roots organizations' and 'external bodies', and focus on the relationship between these two. Here, 'external bodies' refers to all NGOs and development agencies, national and international, which are here to provide women's grass-roots organizations with external support.

way they approach grass-roots women and their organizations. Because, the empowerment has its own concept of co-operation which is based on the notion of 'participation'. Oxaal and Baden (1997: 8) state that notion of participation implies more than consultations over decisions already made elsewhere. The authors define the term 'participation' as women's active involvement at all stages of projects, including the evaluation. Taking the discussion one step further, Batliwala argues that the term 'participation' does not fully reflect the desired role of women. The author therefore suggests to use the term 'ownership', and argues that the term 'participation' should be understood as a means which should end in women's 'ownership':

For genuine empowerment to occur, women should not become passive recipients or beneficiaries, but, over time, the 'owners' of the program, so that they can eventually run it without the support of any outside agency" (Batliwala, 1993: 36 quoted in Rowlands, 1997: 25).

Within this context, the role of the external bodies becomes one of 'helper' and 'facilitator' (Rowlands, 1997: 16). Rowlands (*ibid.*) sees anything more directive than this as interfering, and argues that the external bodies cannot expect to control the outcomes of authentic empowerment. In order to describe the role of external bodies, some use the term 'change agents'. Others prefer to use the French term '*animateur*'. As Friedman (1992: 144) describes it, the basic task of *animateurs* is to 'animate' in that they "blow the breath of life into the soul of the community [...]." The author points out that the *animateurs* are meant to spark endogenous change from within, but not to carry out the program, because this is the responsibility of the community involved in that program. Kabeer (1994b: 97) points out that there are risks and costs involved in processes of change. She therefore argues that such changes must be believed in, initiated, and directed by those people whose interests are meant to be served. In this regard, she refers to external bodies as 'enablers' who "provide women with enabling resources which allow them to take greater control over their own lives, to determine what kinds of gender-relations they would want to live within, and to devise the strategies and alliances to help them get there" (*ibid.*).

In conclusion, the genuine empowerment arises out of internal dynamics of a group. It cannot be brought in from outside. It is "a process whereby women can freely analyse, develop and voice their needs and interests, without them being pre-

defined, or imposed from above [...]" (Oxaal and Baden 1997: 4). Acting as 'enablers', the external bodies can help women to overcome the barriers and constraints on the way to their empowerment. However, they cannot tell them which way they should go. As Kabeer (1994: 97) writes, "empowerment cannot be given, it must be self-generated."

6.6 EMPOWERMENT AS A 'PROCESS'

The empowerment is a long-term, dynamic, and open-ended 'process'. It is a process which involves deep and broad changes in socio-economic, political, and cultural structures. As Oxfam (1995 quoted in Oxaal and Baden, 1997: 22) points out, such a process of change cannot have clear beginnings, middle, and end. It also cannot be defined in terms of specific activities or end results (Oxaal and Baden, 1997: 4). As a social movement, it cannot be engineered (Razavi and Miller, 1995: 29). It also cannot be easily planned and implemented.

As a process, the empowerment is not always compatible with the concept of 'planning'. The concept of planning is a problematic one, and draws often criticism. For instance, Saskia Wierenga (1994: 141) argues that the past practices of the development planning on women and other marginalized groups raise some doubts about the rationales behind it. According to the author, the concept of planning embodies the belief that social change can be engineered, directed, and produced at will:

With its belief in the possibility of economic engineering of complex socio-political structures, planning obscures conflicting interests (between members of different sexes, classes, ethnic groups), divergent world-views and divided loyalties. It evades the question of whether 'modernity' is desirable or should be excepted in the form in which the Northern-centric development industry defines it. It neglects the issue of local, subjugated knowledges" (Wierenga, 1994: 841).

Wierenga (*ibid.*: 842) suggests therefore that the transformation should be seen as a process rather than a fixed goal in the future.

As Kabeer (2001: 80) states, the process of empowerment is a complex phenomenon with multiple dimensions which can occur through a multiplicity of routes. Each empowerment process is a unique one influenced by different factors

and players at different levels. Discussing about women's political empowerment (see chapter 6.4), we have already mentioned that women's common experience of gender subordination does not mean they constitute a homogenous group. A number of other factors such as class, race, nationality, ethnicity, caste, age, and sexual preference influence their individual and collective experiences. The interaction between all these factors takes place within the complex texture of socio-economic, political, cultural, and traditional structures. Within these structures, women are, of course, not alone. We observe different players at different levels. For instance, at micro level, we can mention family, household, community, women's grass-roots organizations, etc. At macro level, there are institutional players such as international and national development agencies, state, finance institutions, and market players. Rowlands summarizes the complex nature of the empowerment process as follows:

[E]mpowerment process will take a form which arises out of a particular cultural, ethnic, historical, economic, geographic, political, and social location; out of an individual's place in the life cycle, specific life experience, and out of the interaction of all the above with gender relations prevailing in society. (Rowlands 1997: 129-130).

Understanding empowerment as a such process implies careful analysis of the complex matrix of socio-economic, political, and cultural relations in which women are involved, and this both at macro and micro as well as collective and individual levels. In other words, since each women's or group's process of empowerment is a unique one, it is necessary to be able to read and understand the realities of their immediate and general environment. This is a necessary condition in order to be able to support women's empowerment process in a more meaningful manner.

One framework which aims at conducting this analysis in a systematic manner is the so-called 'social relations analysis'. As Kabeer (1994b: 84) defines it, the concept of social relations "draws attention to the way in which gender is constructed as a relationship of inequity by the rules and practices of different institutions, both separately and through their interactions." Following Kabeer (*ibid.*: 84-90), different steps of the social relations analysis can be summarized as follows. In the first place, the key institutions need to be identified. The author, for instance, identifies four key institutions which are: families/households; market; state; and community. She describes the household as a place of altruism and cooperation. The community

delivers local services and cares for the 'moral economy'¹⁶. While the state is responsible for the national welfare; the market follows the ultimate goal of profit maximization. In the next step, the social relations analysis examines the functioning of these institutions. On the surface, all institutions operate with some official ideologies. However, since the official ideologies can be misleading, it is necessary to move beyond them. This happens in that we 'deconstruct' the institutions into their components, and see the actual social relations and processes by which they are constituted. The author sees the institutions constituted of rules, practices, people, resources, and power. The term 'rules' refers to official ideologies and regulations as well as unofficial values and norms. The term 'practices' defines how 'the things get done', and refers to activities, tasks, and procedures. 'People' are not only those who are positioned within the institutions, but also those who are affected by the actions of these institutions. Resources may be of material or intangible nature. Power implies control over resources, and determines the distribution of benefits, rights, and obligations. In the final step, the social relations analysis seeks to determine how the axis of gender is positioned within the matrix of social relations. It looks for answers to questions such as: what the gender implications of interactions and interdependencies between the institutions are; how the changes in rules, people, resources, practices, and power affect women; what aspects of these relations need to be challenged; and, how the design of policies and programs for intervention should look like.

The social relations analysis should not be regarded as a strict methodology. It is rather an open concept which can be utilized in a flexible manner. What it does, as Kabeer (*ibid.*: 91) puts it, in the first place, is to highlight the fact that gender relations need to be considered in their relevant institutional context. Razavi and Miller (1995: 26) state that the social relations analysis attempts to demonstrate the conflictual and collaborative aspects of gender relations which involve men and women in a constant process of negotiation and re-negotiation.

Another 'exploratory framework for women's empowerment' is delivered by Sheena Asthana (1996). Her framework for the analysis of empowerment shows some

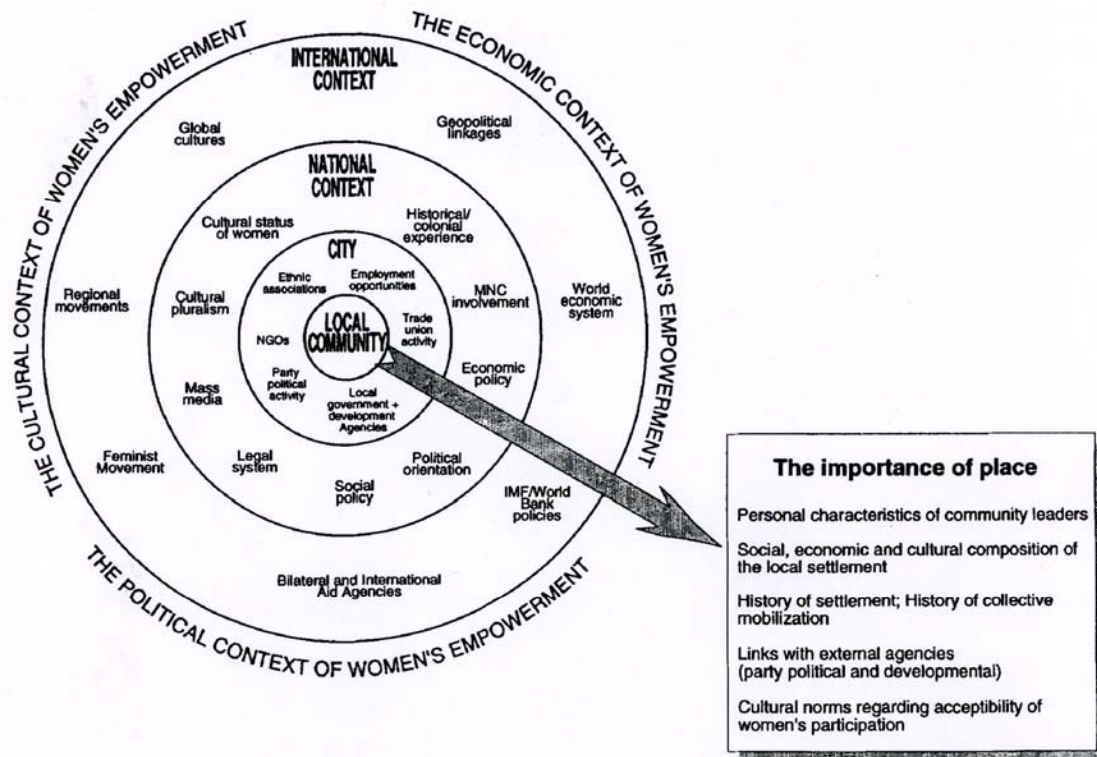
¹⁶ The term moral economy, as Friedman (1992: 67) defines it, refers to non-market relations such as socialization and other life-supporting activities within the immediate neighborhood.

similarities to the framework of social relations. Like the social relations framework, also Asthana's framework sees women involved in a complex matrix of social relations, and acknowledges that these relations are influenced by various factors. Both frameworks understand that these factors need to be analyzed in a careful manner. However, while the social relations framework conducts its analysis with a focus on 'institutional context', Asthana's framework focuses on the 'context of locality' in its analysis. Asthana (*ibid.*: 3) distinguishes between the general processes (economic, political, cultural, etc.) at international and national levels on the one hand, and the local conditions on the other; and, argues that they both play an important role in the production of social relations. However, since the general processes at international and national levels remain unchanged over the regions, it is the distinctive characteristics of the local conditions which make a difference. The author (*ibid.*) argues that factors that constrain or enable empowerment are place specific, and sees gender roles, relations, and experiences as regionally differentiated. However, this does not imply that the general processes should be left out of consideration. The author (*ibid.*) suggests that the framework for the analysis of empowerment need to take into account both general processes and local conditions:

[...] whilst grassroots mobilization is, by definition, a very 'local' phenomenon, general cultural, political and economic conditions also shape participants' consciousness of the nature of their needs and of the opportunities available to them to redress those needs. If the potential of the empowerment approach is to be assessed, therefore, it is necessary to adopt a perspective which can accommodate both local-level processes and the contextual features [...] (*ibid.*).

The following figure by Asthana (*ibid.*: 4) is an example of such a framework. The figure is a useful one in terms of illustrating the variety of factors that exert influence on the process of empowerment at different levels. Furthermore, as the author states, it draws attention to the constraints and opportunities for individual and collective action within the structures. However, the author also warns that such an all-encompassing framework can suffer a number of draw-backs, particularly when it comes to practically identifying the whole hierarchy of factors.

Figure 1: Importance of Locality for Empowerment



Asthana, Sheena (1996): "Women's Health and Women's Empowerment: A Local Perspective", in *Health & Place* 2 (1): 1-13.

The point made at the beginning of this chapter emphasizes the fact that the empowerment is a complex process which takes place within the puzzling matrix of social relations on which a large number of factors exert influence. This chapter argues that understanding empowerment as such a process implies the careful analysis of this process and its specific context. Before concluding this chapter, it is necessary to mention that gender analysis has two important prerequisites: consultations with women and profound gender expertise.

Young (1994: 147) points to the importance of "listening to women," and states that consultation of local people about projects and programs is a precondition for successful outcomes. However, as Young (*ibid.*: 147-148) states, consultation is not unproblematic. The author points to some difficulties which need to be dealt with in a careful manner. As the author states, one difficulty concerns the fact that those who are wealthier, more articulate, and educated are more likely to get involved in consultations. According to Young, in many developing countries, these will be men

who may give their views as those of women's. Another difficulty arises when women are reserved in expressing their needs because they do not want to offend powerful people or attract negative male reaction. Moreover, many women are not in the position to articulate their needs because, as Young puts it, they are socialized in such a way that they lack any sense of having rights or needs. At this point, 'awareness raising' (see chapter 6.7) may play a crucial role in helping women to critically assess their situation.

Finally, gender and development studies are interdisciplinary studies acquiring knowledge from various fields. As Wierenga (1994: 844-845) writes, "gender expertise should be taken for what it is, a specialization requiring a great deal of study." Pointing to the wide and complex literature, the author argues that gender training is not a one week course in which some tricks are learnt" (*ibid.*: 845). Therefore, both conduction of gender analysis and evaluation of its findings should be conducted by professionals with profound gender expertise. In the end, simplistic approaches to highly sophisticated matters need to be avoided.

6.7 EMPOWERMENT AND AWARENESS RAISING

The main instruments of the empowerment approach include: organization and networking; political mobilization; and, awareness raising. The issues of organization and networking (see chapter 6.5) as well as the issue of political mobilization (see chapter 6.4) are already covered. Therefore, this chapter will focus mainly on 'awareness raising' which is also closely connected to other instruments of the empowerment approach. 'Awareness raising' is also referred to as 'conscious raising', and aims at developing a critical consciousness by women (and men) so that they "move from a position of unquestioning acceptance of the social order to a critical perspective on it" (Kabeer 2001: 25).

It was pointed out earlier that gender subordination is deeply rooted in the consciousness of both women and men, and is reinforced through social norms, culture, educational system, religion, etc. (DAWN 1987: 26). At this point, one can ask the hypothetical question to what extent women are aware of the gender subordination they are subject to. On individual basis, many women have of course a certain degree of awareness of their gender subordination. However, they usually

cannot attempt to question it because this would bring them into conflict with the social norms. As Kabeer (2001: 46) states, "women are likely to be given greater respect within their communities for conforming to its norms, and to be penalized if they do not [...]." Moreover, women usually lack the material and non-material resources to challenge the gender subordination. In general, however, women's awareness of gender subordination and its implications is quite limited. This is mainly due to the reason that they have been living in the structures of gender subordination since their childhood where they have continuously learned they belong to a lower category. In the end, they start to 'internalize' their social status as persons of lesser value (Kabeer 2001: 24), and consider it as 'natural' or 'God-given' (Young 1993: 143). As Sarah Mosedale points out, oppressed people's perception of their situation is inevitably shaped by the ideology which supports the oppression they face. Kabeer (1994: 227) writes that "[p]ower relations may appear so secure and well-established that both subordinate and dominant groups are unaware of their oppressive implications or incapable of imagining alternative ways [...]."

As a result, the problem of gender subordination becomes even more critical as it is 'internalized' by women¹⁷. As a result of the internalized subordination, women do not only undermine the well-being of themselves and other female family members, but also discriminate against other females in their societies (Kabeer 2001: 24). Batliwala (1994: 131) states that a complex web of religious sanctions, social and cultural taboos, and superstitions lead women to participate in their own oppression. Women's acceptance of their secondary claims on household resources; their acceptance to violence at the hands of their husbands; their willingness to bear children to the detriment of their own health; adherence to social norms and practices associated with son-preferences; discriminating against daughters in matters of food allocation, basic health care, and education; promotion of the practice of female circumcision; oppressive exercise of authority by mother-in-laws over daughter-in-laws; hierarchies among women in the family; behavioral training; seclusion; veiling; curtailment of physical mobility; and control of sexuality (including concepts like 'good' and 'bad' women) are some problems mentioned by Kabeer (*ibid.*) and Batliwala (*ibid.*) in connection with women's internalization of their lesser status. Sen (1990: 126 quoted in Kandiyoti, 1998: 139) argues that acute inequalities survive

precisely by making allies of the deprived. According to the author, the underdog becomes an implicit accomplice in that she/he accepts the legitimacy of the unequal order. The author therefore warns that "it can be a serious error to take absence of protest and questioning of inequality as evidence of the absence of that inequality [...]" (*ibid.*).

As Young (1993: 143) argues, "it cannot be assumed that [women] have perfect knowledge or understanding of the economic, political and social context of their lives." In order to challenge gender subordination, as Batliwala (1994: 131) suggests, "women must first recognize the ideology that legitimizes male domination and understand how it perpetuates their oppression." From this perspective, the process of empowerment entails a 'cognitive' component which involves "understanding the self and the need to make choices that may go against cultural or social expectations" (Stromquist, 1995: 14 quoted in Mosedale, 2005: 248). The empowerment approach asserts that empowerment is something which needs to come from within. Women do empower themselves, and empowerment is not something that can be given by others. However, the condition of internalized gender subordination and absence of critical consciousness about gender issues can make external intervention necessary. Pointing to the fact that the condition of subordination does not automatically lead to demands for change, Batliwala (*ibid.*: 131-132) suggests that "empowerment must be externally induced, by forces working with an altered consciousness and an awareness that the existing social order is *unjust* and *unnatural*." At this point, external bodies such as NGOs working with women's groups can play a crucial role. The first thing they can do is to help women get organized into groups, where they can freely express themselves, tell about their experiences, exchange ideas, and start questioning the social conditions under which they live. As Rowlands (1997: 24) points out, dialogue, discussion, and analysis are essential for developing critical consciousness. One important point is that these groups serve as free spaces of socialization where women can freely discuss without ideas being imposed upon them. The 'change agents' (external or internal) attending women's discussions should be "trained to catalyze women's thinking without determining the direction in which a particular group may go" (Batliwala, 1994: 136). Besides providing a safe haven where women can come together, women's groups

¹⁷ Women's internalization of the gender subordination is also referred to as 'false consciousness'.

can of course fulfill some other functions. They can, for instance, provide skills training, technical training, literacy courses, and initiate or participate in projects on different matters such as health and nutrition.

According to Batliwala (*ibid.*: 132), the process of awareness raising should run with the following objectives: altering women's self-image and their beliefs about their rights and capabilities; challenging the sense of inferiority; creating awareness of how gender discrimination acts on them; recognizing the true value of their labor and contributions to the family, society, and economy. In this regard, as Wieringa (1994: 834) argues, feminism is "a process of producing meaning, of subverting representations of gender, of womanhood, of identity and collective self." However, as the author points out, this process of changing women's personal and collective identity is not an easy one:

[T]he identity of a woman is the product of her own interpretation and reconstruction of her history, as mediated through the discursive context to which she has access. To empower women to critically and creatively reshape their worlds, women's own concept of themselves has to be de-coded, and re-inscribed. This is a difficult and often painful process (Wieringa, 1994: 834).

The awareness raising strategy aims at changing women's consciousness and self-image, and at helping them discover their strengths. But it does not end there. The ultimate goal of the awareness raising strategy is that their changed consciousness encourages women for action to change their lives individually and collectively. As Batliawala (1994: 132) writes, "through empowerment, women gain access to new worlds of knowledge and can begin to make new, informed changes both in their personal and their public lives." The author sees the process of empowerment as a spiral of changing consciousness and action:

The process of empowerment is thus a spiral, changing consciousness, identifying areas to target for change, planning strategies, acting for change, and analyzing action and outcomes, which leads in turn to higher levels of consciousness and more finely honed and better executed strategies (Batliwala, 1994: 132).

Finally, the empowerment approach aims at effecting changes in the whole society, and not only amongst the female population. As Rowlands (1997: 131) points out, "empowerment of women is a *gender* issue and not simply a women's issue [...]."

This means that "gender transformation should affect men too" (Wierenga, 1994: 845). According to Rowlands (*ibid.*: 132), there is a need to work with men on gender issues in order to open up the possibilities of change in gender relations. The author gives the example from India where men are being trained to be gender trainers in order to overcome the difficulties women face in training men on gender issues. Therefore, it is clearly necessary to apply the concept of awareness raising as working with both women and men. In the end, women's empowerment becomes more stable and meaningful when it is based on a new consciousness of both genders.

As Batliwala (1994: 131) states, women's empowerment implies important gains for both women and men. The author draws attention especially to the psychological gains of becoming equal partners. According to Batliwala, women's empowerment free men from their roles of oppressor and exploiter which limits the potential for self-expression and personal development in men as much as in women. She argues furthermore that men discover an emotional satisfaction in sharing responsibility and decision-making. After all, gender-discrimination is a burden on the whole society which prevents it from achieving higher levels of existence:

Women's empowerment should lead to the liberation of men from false value systems and ideologies of oppression. It should lead to a situation where each one can become a whole being, regardless of gender, and use their fullest potential to construct a more humane society for all (Akhtar 1992 quoted in Batliwala 1994: 131).

6.8 MEASURING EMPOWERMENT

The process of empowerment is not only difficult to define and conceptualize, it is also difficult to measure. As Kabeer (1999: 2) puts it, "not everyone accepts that empowerment can be clearly *defined*, let alone measured." One problem with measuring empowerment is to find appropriate indicators. This problem becomes even more critical given the fact that we need different indicators for measuring different levels and dimensions of empowerment. For instance, empowerment at local and national levels cannot be measured with the same indicators. Similarly, we need different indicators for measuring individual and collective empowerment. Oxaal and Baden (1997: 17) divide indicators of empowerment into two categories: those

which measure empowerment at a broad societal level, and those which measure the empowerment effects of specific projects and programs.

6.8.1 Measuring Empowerment at a Broad Societal Level

The Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are the examples of indices which fall into this first category. However, before moving on to the discussion about the GDI and GEM indices, it is necessary to give some brief information on the Human Development Index (HDI) of the UNDP.

The Human Development Index: The HDI is an index which aims at measuring the 'human development' achievements in a country. It has been constructed since 1990, and its results and related comments are published annually in UNDP's Human Development Report. In contrast to indices based solely on economic indicators, the HDI attempts to combine both economic and social indicators. From this point of view, the HDI constitutes a critical response to the "excessive preoccupation with GNP growth and national income accounts" (UNDP 1990: 9).

The UNDP (*ibid.*: 10) describes the human development as a "process of enlarging people's choices," and considers three choices as particularly essential ones: a long and healthy life; access to knowledge; and, access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. According to UNDP (*ibid.*: 10), "if these essential choices are not available, many other opportunities remain inaccessible." In order to capture improvements in these three dimensions, the UNDP (*ibid.*: 12) identifies the following three respective indicators: life expectancy at birth; literacy figures¹⁸; and real GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity¹⁹. Measured at national level, the HDI calculates an overall average of these three dimensions for each country, and ranks the countries accordingly. In the HDI, countries' performances are expressed as a value between 0 and 1, 1 being the maximum achievable value. The following table (UNDP 2004) shows the HDI values of some selected countries for the year 2004:

¹⁸ This includes adult literacy rate, and the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio (UNDP 2004: 259),

¹⁹ The GNP per capita based on 'purchasing power parity' reflects not only income, but also what that income can purchase (UNDP 1994: 92). UNDP (*ibid.*) gives the following example to define 'purchasing power parity': "Housing and food are cheaper in Bangladesh than in Switzerland, so a dollar is worth more in Bangladesh than in Switzerland. Purchasing power parity adjusts for this."

Table 1: HDI Values of Some Selected Countries in 2004

HDI rank	Countries	Life expectancy at birth (years) 2002	Adult literacy rate (% ages between 15 and above) 2002	Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (%) 2001/02	GDP per capita (PPP US\$) 2002	Life expectancy index	education index	GDP index	Human development index 2002	GDP per capita (PPP US\$) rank minus HDI rank
1	Norway	78.9	99.0	98	36,600	0.90	0.99	0.99	0.956	1
2	Sweden	80.0	99.0	114	26,050	0.92	0.99	0.93	0.946	19
3	Australia	79.1	99.0	113	28,260	0.90	0.99	0.94	0.946	9
4	Canada	79.3	99.0	95	29,480	0.90	0.98	0.95	0.943	5
5	Netherlands	78.3	99.0	99	29,100	0.89	0.99	0.95	0.942	6
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14	Austria	78.5	99.0	91	29,220	0.89	0.96	0.95	0.934	-4
15	Luxembourg	78.3	99.0	75	61,190	0.89	0.91	1.00	0.933	-14
37	Poland	73.8	99.7	90	10,560	0.81	0.96	0.78	0.850	13
77	Saudi Arabia	72.1	77.9	57	12,650	0.79	0.71	0.81	0.768	-33
88	Turkey	70.4	86.5	68	6,390	0.76	0.80	0.69	0.751	-12
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173	Burundi	40.8	50.4	33	630	0.26	0.45	0.31	0.339	0
175	Mali	48.5	19.0	26	930	0.39	0.21	0.37	0.326	-11
175	Burkina Faso	45.8	12.8	22	1,100	0.35	0.16	0.40	0.302	-20
176	Niger	46.0	17.1	19	800	0.35	0.18	0.35	0.292	-8
177	Sierra Leone	34.3	36.0	45	520	0.16	0.39	0.28	0.273	-1

United Nations Development Programme (1994): *Human Development Report 1994*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 139-142.

The UNDP (1990: 10) states that "there is no direct link between income growth and human progress." Therefore, the HDI ranks countries quite differently than GDP per capita ranks them. The reason is, as the UNDP (*ibid.*: 14) underlines, that GDP per capita captures only one dimension of peoples' lives, while the HDI index captures other dimensions as well. The last column of the above table compares countries' HDI rankings with their GDP rankings. Countries with positive values are considered to be more successful in directing their economic resources towards human progress. For instance, moving from the 50th place in GDP ranking to the 37th in the HDI (+13), Poland is one of the countries which do better on their human development ranking. Saudi Arabia's achievements in human development, on the other hand, are rather modest in relation to its economic resources. Therefore, Saudi Arabia moves 33 places downward in the HDI ranking (-33).

The UNDP is aware of two important short-comings of its HDI. First, the indicators used are not sufficient to give a comprehensive picture of the human development. Some highly valued dimensions of peoples' lives such as economic, social, and political freedoms, or protection against violence and discrimination are not captured in the HDI (*ibid.*: 16). However, pointing to the lack of relevant comparable statistical data, and the methodological problems due to inclusion of too many variables, the UNDP underlines the necessity of focusing on a limited number of indicators, at least

for the time being (*ibid.*: 11). Secondly, all three indicators of the HDI suffer from the common failing that they ignore wide disparities in the overall population, such as gender, class, and regional disparities, as well as disparities in income distribution (*ibid.*: 12).

The UNDP (1994: 90) therefore understands that the HDI would remain subject to improvements, corrections, and refinements. Potential improvements in the HDI concern the statistical methodology collection and evaluation data on the one hand, and addressing the above mentioned disparities on the other. However, it is not the intention of this study to get into an in-depth discussion whether and to what extent such improvements have been made. This study instead focuses on one specific improvement. That is the introduction of two new indices in 1995, namely the GDI and the GEM, as an attempt to address the gender disparities in a more comprehensive manner. The results of both indices are published together with those of the HDI annually in the Human Development Report.

The Gender Development Index: The GDI is the gender-disaggregated form of the HDI. It uses the same indicators as the HDI, but takes into consideration of gender inequalities. The GDI is constructed through adjustments for the gender disparities in three basic dimensions of the HDI — life expectancy, educational attainment, and income. The methodology used here penalizes countries for gender disparities in their basic achievements. The HDI of those countries with gender disparities are adjusted downwards. The greater the gender disparity, the lower a country's GDI compared with its HDI (UNDP 1995: 72-73). Since gender inequality exists in every country, the GDI is always lower than the HDI (*ibid.*: 75). For this reason, we observe considerable differences between the GDI ranking and HDI ranking of countries. The table below shows the GDI (UNDP 2004) values of some selected countries for the year 2004:

Table 2: GDI Values of Some Selected Countries in 2004

GDI rank	Countries	Life expectancy at birth (years) 2002		Adult literacy rate (% ages between 15 and above) 2002		Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools (%) 2001/02		Estimated earned income (PPP US\$) 2002		GDI value	HDI rank minus GDI rank ²⁰
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male		
1	Norway	81.8	75.9	99.0	99.0	102	94	31,356	42,340	0.955	0
2	Sweden	82.5	77.5	99.0	99.0	124	104	23,781	28,700	0.946	0
3	Australia	82.0	76.4	99.0	99.0	114	111	23,643	33,259	0.945	0
4	Canada	81.9	76.6	99.0	99.0	96	93	22,964	36,299	0.941	0
5	Netherlands	81.0	75.6	99.0	99.0	99	100	20,358	38,266	0.938	0
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12	Japan	85.0	77.8	99.0	99.0	83	85	16,977	37,208	0.932	-3
13	Denmark	79.0	74.1	99.0	99.0	99	92	26,074	36,161	0.931	4
14	Ireland	79.5	74.3	99.0	99.0	94	87	21,056	52,008	0.929	-4
17	Austria	81.4	75.3	99.0	99.0	92	91	15,410	43,169	0.924	-3
70	Turkey	73.1	67.9	78.5	94.4	62	74	4,757	7,873	0.746	2
72	Saudi Arabia	73.6	71.0	69.5	84.1	57	58	3,825	18,616	0.739	-9
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140	Burundi	41.3	40.2	43.6	57.7	29	38	561	794	0.337	1
141	Guinea-Bissau	46.8	43.7	24.7	55.2	29	45	465	959	0.329	-1
142	Mali	49.0	47.9	11.9	26.7	21	31	635	1,044	0.309	0
143	Burkina Faso	46.3	45.1	8.1	18.5	18	26	855	1,215	0.291	0
144	Niger	46.3	45.7	9.3	25.1	16	23	575	1,005	0.278	0

United Nations Development Programme (1994): *Human Development Report 1994*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 217-220.

A comparison between a country's HDI and GDI ranks gives some indication of how equitably that country's basic human capabilities are distributed between women and men (UNDP 1994: 78). Looking at the top five, we do not see any differences between the HDI and the GDI rankings. However, moving a few rows downwards in the GDI, we observe some shifting. For instance, two industrialized countries, namely Japan (-3) and Ireland (-4) have lower GDI rankings due to gender discrepancies in their basic achievements. Denmark, on the other hand, is ranked four places higher in the GDI. However, going back to the point made earlier, all countries have some gender inequalities in their basic achievements. Therefore, a country's higher ranking in the GDI should not be interpreted as absence of gender disparity. A country's higher ranking in the GDI indicates only that this particular country has, in its basic achievements, a lower gender disparity than others at similar human development levels.

The Gender Empowerment Measure: The GEM attempts to measure women's overall empowerment in a given country. It focuses mainly on women's participation in three basic areas: women's access to economic resources based on earned

²⁰ The HDI is constructed for 177 countries, and the GDI for 144 countries. The HDI values used in this column are therefore recalculated for the 144 countries with a GDI value (UNDP 2004: 220).

income; women's access to professional opportunities and participation in economic decision-making; and, women's access to political opportunities and participation in political decision-making. For measuring changes in these areas, the GEM uses the following respective variables: per capita income based on purchasing power parity²¹; women's share of jobs classified as professional and technical as well as administrative and managerial; women's share of parliamentary seats (*ibid.*: 82). Also here, country performances are evaluated for each dimension, and, thereafter, the results are combined in a single index. The average performance of countries are again expressed as a value changing between 0 and 1. The following table (UNDP 2004) shows the GEM ranking of some selected countries for the year 2004.

Table 3: GEM Values of Some Selected Countries in 2004

GEM rank	Countries	Gender empowerment measure (GEM)	Seats in parliament held by women (% of total)	Female legislators, senior officials and managers (% of total)	Female professionals and technical workers (PPP US\$)	Ratio of estimated female to male earned income
1	Norway	0.908	36.4	28	49	0.74
2	Sweden	0.854	45.3	31	50	0.83
3	Denmark	0.847	38.0	22	51	0.72
4	Finland	0.820	37.5	28	52	0.70
5	Netherlands	0.817	35.1	26	48	0.53
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8	Australia	0.806	26.5	35	55	0.71
10	Canada	0.787	23.6	34	54	0.63
13	Austria	0.770	30.6	29	48	0.36
17	Bahamas	0.699	26.8	31	58	0.65
19	Costa Rica	0.664	35.1	53	28	0.39
38	Japan	0.531	9.9	10	46	0.46
43	Greece	0.523	8.7	26	48	0.43
---	---	---	---	---	---	---
73	Turkey	0.290	4.4	7	31	0.60
74	Sri Lanka	0.276	4.4	4	49	0.57
75	Egypt	0.266	3.6	9	30	0.38
76	Bangladesh	0.218	2.0	8	25	0.56
77	Saudi Arabia	0.207	0.0	1	31	0.21
78	Yemen	0.213	0.3	4	15	0.30

United Nations Development Programme (1994): *Human Development Report 1994*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 221-224.

The GEM values are not necessarily comparable with those of the GDI because of the differences in their variables and construction. However, substantial differences in the values of the two indices are indicative of important problems (UNDP 1995: 85-86). Looking at the GEM and the GDI, we observe that some countries' GEM values are far lower than their GDI values. Such differences show that women's access to

²¹ In the GEM, income variable is treated differently than in the HDI and the GDI. In the HDI and GDI, it is assumed that achieving a respectable level of human living does not require unlimited income. Therefore, the real GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity is here subject to a logarithmic adjustment (UNDP 2004: 259). In the GEM, however, income is evaluated as a source of economic power that provides the income-earner a broader range of options. Therefore, in the GEM, the real GDP per capita based on purchasing power parity is not subject to any logarithmic adjustment (UNDP 1995: 82).

basic resources (health, education, income) does not automatically mean empowerment for women by itself (Oxaal and Baden 1997: 18). Two countries which are ranked within the top five in the GDI, namely Australia and Canada, move in the GEM to the eighth and tenth places respectively. Denmark and Finland move upwards to join the top five in the GEM. Japan and Greece are two industrialized countries with rather poor GEM performance. They hold only 38th and 43rd places respectively. On the other hand, some developing countries are ranked far better in the GEM. Bahamas and Costa Rica, for example, are two such countries which occupy much higher ranks in the GEM. Bahamas moves from the rank 46 in the GDI to the rank 17 in the GEM. Similarly, Costa Rica moves from the rank 44 in the GDI to rank 19 in the GEM. Saudi Arabia ranks as the second last in the GEM.

Both the GDI and the GEM have been criticized for a number of reasons concerning conceptualization and construction, selection of indicators, issue of validity, reliability of data sets, reliability of statistical calculations, etc. (see, for example, Bardhan and Klasen 1999; Dijkstra 2002; Charmes and Wierenga 2003). As Geske Dijkstra (2002: 302) points out, despite all criticisms, both indices have remained almost unchanged since their introduction in 1995, the only exception being the adaptation made in the income indicator of the GDI in response to the criticism raised by Bardhan and Klasen (1999). However, the criticisms of the GDI and the GEM intend to draw attention to short-comings which limit their usefulness. In other words, these criticisms should not be understood as questioning the essentiality of these indices. The advantages of having global indices such as the GDI and the GEM are self-evident. As Kabeer (1999: 6) points out, global methods of measurement are useful for monitoring achievements across nations and across time, as well as for drawing attention to problematic disparities in these achievements. According to the UNDP (1995: 77-78), the GDI and GEM draw attention to three important points. First, no society treats its women as well as it treats its men. Second, gender equality does not depend on the income level of a society. Third, despite some achievements of the last two decades, countries still have a long way to go in terms of achieving gender equity. In addition, the international comparison of countries' performances in gender issues deliver valuable material for a discussion at a global level. Such a comparison puts pressure on governments for recognizing and dealing with the gender disparities in their countries.

6.8.2 Measuring Empowerment at Project and Program Level

At the beginning of this chapter (chapter 6.8), following Oxaal and Baden (1997), two categories of indicators have been distinguished: those which measure empowerment at a broad societal level, and those which measure empowerment at program and project level. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) developed a catalogue of empowerment indicators for measuring the results of its interventions at program and project level. The CIDA (1997: 3) states that its guide does not intend to set up a universal catalogue of indicators that can be used in all instances, but rather to make suggestions about indicator use. The CIDA distinguishes between legal, political, economic, and social empowerment, and provides the following indicators for measuring women's empowerment at local level:

Table 4: Indicators of Empowerment

Indicators of Political Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enforcement of legislation related to the protection of human rights• Number of cases related to women's rights heard in local courts, and their results• Number of cases related to the legal rights of divorced and widowed women heard in local courts, and the results• The effect of women's enforcement of legislation in terms of treatment of offenders against women• Increase or decrease in violence against women in comparison to men• Percentage of women judges, prosecutors, and lawyers at local level; percentage of women in local police force.
Indicators of Legal Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Percentage of seats by women in local government, local councils, and other decision-making bodies• Percentage of women in the local civil services• Percentage of women registered as voters• Percentage of women who actually vote• Percentage of women member of unions• Percentage of women in senior and junior decision-making positions within unions• Percentage of women who participate in public protests and political campaigning.
Indicators of Social Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Numbers of women in local organizations such as women's associations, consciousness raising groups, income-generating groups, etc.• Numbers of women in position power in these organizations• Extent of training or networking among local women, as compared to men• Control of women over fertility decisions, number of children, number of abortions, etc.• Mobility of women.

CIDA (1997): *Guide to Gender Sensitive Indicators*, Canadian International Development Agency, pp. 30-32.

The above classification of the CIDA is an interesting one in terms of highlighting the need for different indicators for different dimensions and levels of empowerment. However, as the CIDA also acknowledges, most of the above mentioned indicators are quantitative ones. The CIDA (*ibid.*: 32-33) understands that qualitative indicators

are fundamental for measuring empowerment. However, arguing that qualitative indicators for empowerment are hard to agree upon, the CIDA does not involve in an in-depth discussion about the matter²². This is understandable, given the fact that qualitative indicators need to be identified for each program or project specifically. This is mainly due to the reason that the process of empowerment is unique for each person or group (Rowlands 1997: 140). In addition, behaviors and attitudes which are relevant in one society might have no relevance in another (Hashemi, Schuler, and Riley 1996: 637).

In measuring empowerment, the qualitative indicators are essential for two reasons. First, since empowerment is a bottom-up process that starts at local level, it is important to measure it at local level. As the CIDA (1997: 9) underlines, "qualitative indicators are particularly useful in understanding local people's views and priorities related to development and development projects." Second, the empowerment entails a process of social change which is difficult to capture with quantitative indicators (Kabeer 2001: 28). Measuring empowerment implies capturing changes in women's awareness, self-confidence and self-perception, relations with the male members of their families, etc. Changes in such dimensions cannot be captured with quantitative indicators (Wallenlind 1997: 3).

Identifying and selecting qualitative indicators for measurement of empowerment is a demanding task. Repeating the same point made above, this is mainly because qualitative indicators need to be identified specifically for each case of measurement. Therefore, it is not the intention of this chapter to create a catalogue of qualitative indicators. Instead, it looks at some selected studies which reflect experiences from the practice. With the exception of Rowlands' study, all studies are concerned with measuring the empowerment effect of micro-credit programs. This chapter focuses only on the qualitative indicators used by these studies, and leave their general findings out of consideration.

²² The CIDA (1997: 33) mentions only some examples of qualitative indicators, such as: women's awareness of local politics and their legal rights; women's self-respect; women's perception of their economic autonomy; changes regarding the decision-making practices within the household; areas in which women can decide independently; etc.

Rowlands (1997): Going back to Rowlands' model (see chapter 6.3), the author distinguishes between three processes of empowerment: personal, collective, and empowerment within close relationships. Rowlands gives for each process of empowerment a set of 'core values' which she regards as products of empowerment. The author suggests that the increase in the core values is an evidence of empowerment processes taking place. Reminding the points made in chapter 6.3, the core values for personal empowerment include: self-confidence; self-esteem; sense-of agency; dignity; etc. The core values for collective empowerment are: group identity; sense of collective agency; group dignity; and self organization and management. Finally, the core values for empowerment within close relationships include: ability to negotiate; ability to communicate; ability to get support; ability to defend one's self and one's rights; sense of 'self' in relationship; and dignity.

One problem with the core values is that these are too abstract to be used as indicators of empowerment. For this reason, Rowlands deconstructs the core values into their more tangible components, and uses these as indicators of empowerment. These components mostly consist of women's critical abilities and capabilities which they need for conducting their lives in a more conscious, independent, and creative way. Looking at changes in these abilities and capabilities, Rowlands attempts to determine whether and to what extent the empowerment processes are taking place. The following indicators result from Rowlands' work in Honduras where she assessed empowerment effects of two local programs²³:

²³ Health Promotion Programme in Urraco which trained women health promoters to work in communities; and Women's Educational Programme in Santa Bárbara which provided popular education for local women.

Table 5: Indicators of Empowerment

Indicators of Personal Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to formulate and express ideas and opinions• Ability to participate in and influence new spaces• Ability to learn, analyze, and act• Sense that things are possible• Ability organize own time• Ability to obtain and control resources• Ability to interact outside the home
Indicators of Collective Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to negotiate with other organizations including official bodies• Ability to organize around own needs• Recognition by outsiders, and ability to generate external support• Ability to respond collectively to events outside group• Access to resources• Ability to join and start new networks of organizations
Indicators of Empowerment within Close Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Control over income• Control over childbearing• Control over mobility• Control over time use• Ability to attend meetings• Self-respect and respect from others• Capacity to make own choices

Rowlands, Jo (1997): *Questioning Empowerment: Working with Women in Honduras*, Oxford: Oxfam, pp.110-128.

In contrast to CIDA's indicators, the above indicators are mostly qualitative ones, and qualitative indicators require qualitative instruments such as in-depth interview, group discussion, and observation. In particular, in-depth interviews and group discussions can create an environment where women overcome their reticence and express themselves in a more comfortable manner. They can facilitate intensive discussions between researcher and women as well as among women themselves. They can also encourage women to raise new questions or draw attention to new points which have not been thought about before. The qualitative instruments therefore allow researchers to have a better insight into their perceptions and feelings of women.

During her work with women in Honduras, Rowlands (*ibid.*) also analyzed the local factors which inhibit or encourage the processes of empowerment. The following are some of the negative factors which inhibit the processes of empowerment: health problems; poverty; dependency; male control over income, land, and other resources; lack of control over fertility; constant child-bearing; child-care obligations; alcohol consumption by partners; male violence; negative cultural expectations on women; internalized oppression; etc. And, the following are some of the positive

factors which encourage the processes of empowerment: activity outside the home; travelling; wider friendships; sharing problems with other women; participation in groups; organizing small income-generating activities; leadership from committed and competent local women; building links and networks with other women's groups; discussion of sexuality; development of literacy skills; identification of own needs; analysis of own context; perception of inequality as 'wrong'; and knowledge of women's rights; etc. Rowlands' analysis of inhibiting and encouraging factors is rather useful in terms of understanding the local forces which shape the processes of empowerment (see also chapter 6.5).

Hashemi, Schuler, and Riley (1996): In their article, Hashemi *et. al.* present the findings from their study of two programs which provide micro-enterprise credit for poor women in Bangladesh²⁴. The research was undertaken in six villages²⁵ during 1991 and 1994 in order to "document processes of change both in women's roles and status and in norms related to reproduction" (*ibid.*: 636). In each village, a team consisting of a woman and a man resided for a period of about two years, and made occasional visits during the next year. The teams made observations and interviews with 120 households, half of whom were participants of a credit program. In order to supplement the information stemming from observations and interviews, a structured form was developed. The so-called 'household survival matrix' was conducted on monthly basis for a period of one year for collecting information about matters such as: economic activities of household members; children's schooling; women's participation in credit programs; major investments; households' responses to economic stress events such as weddings etc. Furthermore, economic analyses of women's micro-enterprises as well as analyses of their control over economic resources were part of the study (*ibid.*: 636-637).

The study by Hashemi *et. al.* sets a good example in terms of combining qualitative and quantitative methods, long-term commitment, and careful analysis of different aspects of women's lives at local level. The authors state that "developing valid and reliable measures of women's empowerment was one of the most difficult tasks" of

²⁴ Grameen Bank; and Bangladeshi Advancement Committee (BRAC).

²⁵ Two Grameen Bank villages; two BRAC villages; and two villages with no credit programs.

their study (*ibid.*: 637). For assessing women's empowerment, the authors developed eight indicators of empowerment:

Table 6: Indicators of Empowerment

Indicators of Empowerment	Definition
Mobility	Women's freedom of movement in terms of her access to public places such as the market, a medical facility, the movies, outside the village, etc.
Economic security	Women's ownership of her house, homestead land, productive assets, cash savings, etc.
Ability to make small purchases	Purchasing small items used daily in food preparation for the family such as kerosine oil, cooking oil, spices, etc.; purchasing small items for oneself such as hair oil, soap, etc.; purchasing small items for the children such as ice cream or sweets.
Ability to make large purchases	Purchasing pots and pans, clothing for children, clothing for oneself, etc.
Involvement in major decisions	Making decisions individually or jointly with husband within the past few years about house repair or renovation, taking in animals for raising for profit, leasing land, buying land, buying a boat or a bicycle rickshaw.
Relative freedom from domination by the family	Women's control over their money, land, jeweler, livestock, etc. Women's freedom of visiting their natal home. Women's freedom of working outside the home.
Political and legal awareness	Knowing the name of a local government official, a Member of Parliament, the Prime Minister, etc. Knowing the significance of registering a marriage. Knowing the law governing inheritance.
Participation in public protest and political campaigning	Campaigning for a political candidate. Joining protests against: a man beating his wife, a man divorcing or abandoning his wife, unfair wages, unfair prices, misappropriation of relief goods, 'high-handedness' of police or government officials, etc.

Hashemi, S. M., Schuler, S. R., and Riley, A. P. (1996): "Rural Credit Programs and Women's Empowerment in Bangladesh, in *World Development* 24 (4), pp. 638-639.

The authors developed a point system for using the above indicators. In interviews, the research teams asked women different questions in each of eight categories. For instance, in order to measure women's mobility, the women were presented with a list containing the above mentioned places (the market, the movies, etc), and asked if they had ever gone there. They were given one point for each place they had ever visited, and an additional point if they had ever been there alone. Similarly, as in measuring 'involvement in major decisions', one point was given for taking in a goat to raise for profit, three points for deciding to lease land, four points for deciding to

buy land, and so on. Women who reached a certain number of points in one specific category were considered as 'empowered' in that specific category. A woman was classified as overall empowered if she had reached a minimum score on five or more of the categories (*ibid.*).

Pitt, Khandker, and Cartwright (2003): The study by the authors Mark M. Pitt, Shahidur R. Khandker, and Jennifer Cartwright evaluate the empowerment potential of different micro-credit programs in rural Bangladesh²⁶. The authors used the data coming from a large household survey conducted in 1988/1999 by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) in cooperation with the World Bank. During the survey, 2074 households with married couples were interviewed. Roughly half of households were participating in at least one credit program. The rest of the households belonged to the control group of the study. While in some households only the wives or husbands borrowed, in others, both partners were borrowers. (*ibid.*: 6-8). The following are the indicators of empowerment identified by the authors (*ibid.*: 8-12):

²⁶ The households were borrowing mainly from the following credit programs: the Grameen Bank; Bangladeshi Advancement Committee (BRAC); and Bangladesh Rural Development Board (BRDB); and the Rural Poor Programme of the government (RD-12).

Table 7: Indicators of Empowerment

Indicators of Empowerment	Definition
Economic decision making	Decision making authority within the household on issues such as: house repair and construction; livestock sale and purchase; borrowing money; transactions involving household equipment.
Purchasing capacity	Women's decision making authority regarding the common household purchases such as: food; toiletries; candies for children; cooking utensils; furniture; children's clothing; and own clothing.
Control over loans	Women's control over their loans and their management power of the activities for which the loans are used.
Control over income and savings	Women's access to an independent income and savings that they could use at their own discretion without consulting their husbands.
Mobility	Women's freedom of mobility in terms of when, where, and with whom they travel. Their access to places such as market, bank, health clinic, etc.
Political awareness and activism	Women's knowledge of local politics; knowing the name of their member of parliament; percentage of women voted in the last election; percentage of women voted for a candidate of their own choice without being influenced or compelled by their husbands; percentage of women who have ever publicly protested against wife-beating.
Networking and friendships	Women's close friends and relatives outside the household with whom they can share their feelings.
Family Planning	Responsibility of birth control within the household; percentage of women and men using a birth control method; women's and men's attitudes towards birth control; etc.
Attitudes	Women's and their husbands' opinions and attitudes on gender in society.
Spousal abuse	Verbal and physical abuse against women within the household.

Pitt, Mark M., Khandker, Shahidur R., and Cartwright, Jennifer (2003): *Does Micro-Credit Empower Women? Evidence from Bangladesh*, Policy Research Paper 2998 (Rural Development, Development Research Group), Washington: The World Bank, pp. 8-12.

In order to operationalize the above indicators, Pitt *et. al.* generated a catalogue of structured questions which were to be responded with predefined answers such 'yes', 'no', 'wife alone', 'husband alone', 'husband and wife together', etc. The following are some of the questions which were asked women in connection with the indicator 'political awareness and activism': "did you vote in the last election?" (yes=1; no=0); "did you vote in the last election without your husband telling you who to vote for?" (yes=1; no=0); "did you ever protest against any incidents of wife-beating?" (yes=1; no=0) (*ibid.*: 37). One important quality of the study by Pitt *et. al.* is that the interviews

were conducted not only with women but also with their husbands. Going back to the point made earlier, empowerment is a 'gender issue' which has implications not only for women but also for men (see chapter 6.7). Therefore, it is important to have insights on men's perception of gender relations. Furthermore, it is necessary to see whether and to what extent women's empowerment bring about changes in men's attitudes.

Pitt *et. al.* analyzed the data coming from interviews with statistical methods. The authors performed regression analysis not only on above listed indicators, but also on each questions of the interview (*ibid.*: 19). The authors analyzed the effect of credit use for each indicator separately. The authors found that the credit use effected positive changes in all indicators of empowerment (see *ibid.*: 22-30). In general, the authors state that "[t]he results are consistent with the view that women's participation in micro-credit programs helps to increase women's empowerment" (*ibid.*: 29).

Ackerly (1995): Brooke Ackerly's study measures empowerment potential of three credit organizations in Bangladesh²⁷. During her research in Bangladesh, the author evaluated 826 loans of 613 female borrowers. The author measures women's empowerment on one single indicator: 'knowledge of accounting'. In the context of Ackerly's study, the term 'knowledge of accounting' is not restricted to bookkeeping. It refers to women's general ability of "doing the calculations necessary to determine the most profitable quantities for production, the best time to buy and sell, and whether or not the enterprise is profitable" (*ibid.*: 61). During the interviews, the borrowers were asked about the input costs, product yield, and profitability of the loan. Kabeer (1999: 31) criticizes Ackerly's indicator for failing to constitute an evidence of empowerment. She (*ibid.*) argues that knowledge of accounting "would have been more persuasive as an indicator if some attention had been paid to what such knowledge had allowed women to achieve in strategic decisions about their lives [...]." As Kabeer (*ibid.*) points out, women's knowledge about her enterprise may be indicative of their enterprise involvement. This is an important issue which is closely related to women's economic empowerment. However, women's

²⁷ The Grameen Bank, Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), and the Bangladesh field office of Save the Children.

empowerment is a much wider issue which cannot be measured on the basis of one simple indicator.

Goetz and Sen Gupta (1996): The authors Anne Marie Goetz and Rina Sen Gupta conducted qualitative studies of 275 loans across four credit organizations in Bangladesh²⁸. The authors took women's 'managerial control' over the loan-funded activities as the indicator of empowerment. As the authors state, their indicator and the indicator used by Ackerly's (1995) are roughly equivalent (*ibid.*: 49). In their interviews, the Goetz and Sen Gupta asked women questions about different aspects of their productive activities such as: type of the loan-funded activity; procurement of productive assets and other inputs; cost of inputs; use of inputs; marketing of outputs; prices of outputs; problems in the productive process; keeping and controlling accounts; general management; etc. On the basis of these questions, the authors developed an index which distinguished between five levels of women's control over loan use as: full; significant; partial; very limited; or no involvement. Goetz and Sen Gupta found out that only about one third of the women had full or significant control over their loans (*ibid.*: 49). As the authors acknowledge, the main problem with using 'managerial control' as the indicator of empowerment is that it provides a relatively incomplete perspective of women's empowerment (*ibid.*: 48). However, they also state that their indicator is designed to produce insights on one specific aspect of women's empowerment: the issues surrounding women's control over loan use. The study by Goetz and Sen Gupta successfully demonstrate that 'access to credit' and 'control over credit' are two different issues. On the basis of their findings, the authors deliver a rather detailed discussion about credit and empowerment.

This chapter will be concluded with some general suggestions. First, there are no certain methods or universally valid indicators for measuring empowerment. There is also no need for them. Because, repeating the same point, each person's or group's empowerment is an unique process. Therefore, methods and indicators for measuring empowerment have to be accordingly unique. This implies a careful analysis of the context of empowerment as discussed in the chapter 6.5. Second,

empowerment is a continuous process. Changes resulting from empowerment are difficult to capture with a single measurement. In the case of a project or program, for instance, it would be rather useful to conduct at least two measurements: one before the project starts and one after the project is finalized. A comparison of the results would show changes in people's lives in a more illustrative manner. Third, the process of empowerment is not easily captured with quantitative methods. However, this does not mean that quantitative methods are useless. They can be accommodated for supporting the qualitative methods. Fourth, empowerment is a phenomenon with a multitude of dimensions such as: socio-economic, political, cultural, personal, collective, cognitive, and so on. Therefore, different indicators need to be identified for different dimensions. Attempts to measure 'overall empowerment' on the basis of one single broad indicator (or a limited number of indicators) need to be avoided. Fifth and finally, empowerment is a gender issue. Some attention need to be paid to changes in men's attitudes about gender issues. Positive changes in men's attitudes regarding women's role and status can be taken as an indicator of women's empowerment.

6.9 A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE EMPOWERMENT APPROACH

In the women and development discourse, one general problem concerns the fact that policy approaches lose their critical elements during their implementation. For instance, the 'Equity Approach', the original and the most critical of all WID approaches, was soon replaced by the milder 'Anti-Poverty Approach'. Subsequently, the 'Anti-Poverty approach' was replaced by the 'Efficiency Approach' which reflected the concerns of the neo-liberal agenda (see chapter 4). Similarly, the GAD lost most of its critical features as it became popular (see chapter 5). The empowerment approach has emerged out of the criticisms of the earlier approaches. However, it is not immune against the same old obstacles faced by the earlier approaches. Its increasing popularity seems to become a serious obstacle. Kabeer (1994: 129) writes that "the sharpness of the perspectives that gave rise to [empowerment] has been diluted" as it has become a buzzword in development jargon:

²⁸ Rural Poor Programme (RDP) of Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC); the Rural Poor Programme of the government (RD-12); *Thangemara Mahila Sebuji Sengstha* (TMSS); and *Shaptagram Nari Swanivar Parishad* (SNPS). The last two organizations are NGOs.

Empowerment has become something of a catchword among feminist writers in recent years, and different authors and practitioners have used it without bothering to attend to its different and shaded meanings (Friedman 1992: 115).

The language of empowerment has been co-opted by scholars, governments and international development agencies who have little interest in empowering women beyond whether or not it is capable of 'delivering goods'. Instead of an open-ended process of social transformation, we find a notion of empowerment as a form of electric shock therapy to be applied at intervals to ensure the right responses [...] (Kabeer 2001: 50).

There is a danger of the term empowerment becoming a buzzword within certain circles in development policy and practice and of its being used to add glamour (rather than value) to interventions which actually seek to achieve a variety of economic and social outcomes, which, though they may be extremely desirable in themselves, do not necessarily challenge existing patterns of power (Sarah Mosedale 2005: 248).

In light of the above statements, one can conclude that the term 'empowerment' is being used as a new label for existing development practices. Oxaal and Baden (1997: 22) warn that "development organisations run the danger of merely renaming old top-down approaches as part of an empowerment policy, without altering the content and character of their programmes [...]." Also Mosedale (*ibid.*: 244) argues that "traditional development goals, such as better health or increased income, are cited as evidence of empowerment." Similarly, Razavi and Miller do not see significant differences between the past and present practices:

[G]iven the difficulties in carrying out consciousness-raising and organizational capacity building [...], some advocates have come to appreciate the practical issues around which women can be brought together. Most of these practical initiatives are essentially projects with welfare (health, nutrition, sanitation) or production (micro-enterprise) objectives. How are these initiatives going to be different from the much-despised women's income generating projects that littered many developing countries during the Women's Decade? (Razavi and Miller 1995: 29).

In the practice, the term empowerment seems to be mentioned mostly in connection with credit delivery for women's income-generating activities. Supporting poor women's income-generating activities through credit provision is, of course, an important strategy in poverty alleviation. However, whether or not credit provision falls into the category of empowerment approach depends on the context in which this activity is being carried out. Naked provision of credit cannot challenge existing

structures of gender subordination. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as an empowerment strategy. As Hashemi *et. al.* (1996: 635) state, "minimalist programs [...] that provide credit with minimal training or other supplementary support services do not empower their female participants and may even worsen their situations." Similarly, Linda Mayoux (2002: 7 quoted in Mosedale 2005: 248) writes that "female targeting without adequate support networks [...] will merely shift the burden of the household debt and household subsistence onto women." Therefore, the minimalist credit programs fall rather into the category of the efficiency rather than the empowerment approach²⁹. The empowerment is a holistic approach, and it implies much more than credit delivery. However, the credit provision can become one of the instruments of the empowerment approach, provided that it is utilized in compliance with the goals of empowerment. For credit to have an empowering effect, it must be offered as a part of a complete package. This package should include skills and technical training as well as training in marketing, finance and bookkeeping on the one hand; and non-formal education and awareness raising in social and political matters, on the other.

The extreme focus on credit delivery has a strong negative effect on the ways of measuring empowerment. As Hashemi *et. al.* (1996: 635) point out, the rapid expansion of credit programs resulted in a growing emphasis on high repayment rates, and financial efficiency and sustainability. Goetz and Sen Gupta (1996: 47) state that credit program evaluations focus mostly on quantifiable results, and restrict themselves simply to analyzing the financial costs to the programs and monetary benefits to the borrowers. Therefore, women's high demand for loans, and their regular repayment rates are taken as proxy indicators of empowerment (*ibid.*). As a result, high numbers of women reached by credit programs, women's high repayment rates, cost efficiency of credit programs, etc. are celebrated as success stories of empowerment. Unfortunately, as Goetz and Sen Gupta (*ibid.*: 62) put it, "the concern

²⁹ As discussed in the chapter 4.3, the efficiency approach is a product of the neo-liberal trends within the development mainstream. As Young (1993: 159) points out, the mainstream of the development theory and practice sees entrepreneurial capitalism and market forces as saviors of backward economies. From the viewpoint of the mainstream development, the term empowerment means "entrepreneurial self-reliance" in a rather individualistic sense (*ibid.*). The minimalist credit programs with an extreme focus on women's entrepreneurial self-reliance therefore fall into the category of efficiency approach, even if they are planned, carried out, and assessed under the label of empowerment.

is with increasing numbers, and less with the quality and meaning of women's participation."

There is a clear sign that the empowerment approach is interpreted falsely within the mainstream development. However, given the fact that there has never been much place for alternative voices within the development discourse, this development is not surprising at all. In addition, the empowerment approach is not an easy tool. For most development organizations, the empowerment is a rather demanding approach. It requires long term engagement, high commitment, alternative ways of doing business, flexible organizational structures, a new consciousness by the members of organizations, and so on. All these necessities make the empowerment approach for many development organizations 'too difficult' to adopt:

Development planners are searching for easy schedules, quantifiable targets and simplicity, while addressing enormously complex situations. The empowerment approach is often seen as too difficult. Planners want to fix, with projects of a few years' duration, problems which have grown over ages. They are often impatient with feminist theory building, which they consider too complicated and not directly relevant to their daily work (Wierenga 1994: 835).

Wierenga (*ibid.*: 845) suggest that working with small feminist NGOs might bring the best results. Similarly, Friedman (1992: 139) sees micro-projects as more appropriate for alternative development initiatives. The author states that the micro-projects are more sensitive to the local needs and more experimental in their methods (*ibid.*). Friedman (*ibid.*: 140) lists the advantages of micro-projects as follows: financial assistance goes directly to the poor; they are relatively inexpensive; they are people-intensive; face-to-face interaction is an essential component of the micro-projects; they use more appropriate technology, often as extension of existing practices; they have flexible management, and changes are possible in the course of implementation; they are fine-tuned to the local conditions; they are oriented toward mutual learning between external agents and local actors (transactive planning); control for negative side effects is relatively easy and quick; they have a short start-up time. Micro-projects at local level carried out by small feminist NGOs or women's grass-roots organizations seem to be more promising in terms of achieving empowerment goals. However, also here, there are at least two major problems which remain unsolved. First, as Wierenga (1994: 845) points out, the scope of

micro-projects is rather limited. As Friedman (1992: 141) puts it, their impacts and significance are local and at micro-level. In order to reach all needy people they need to be replicated thousands of times. A replication at that scale without fading away the charisma and dedication as well as the innovation associated with micro-projects is nearly impossible (*ibid.*). Second, small NGOs and women's organizations need funding for their micro-projects. However, as Oxaal and Baden (1997: 8) state, accepting funding from a donor means becoming accountable to it. Pointing to the growing proportion of donor funding made available, Razavi and Miller (1995: 32-33) argue that it is difficult to imagine small NGOs and women's grass-roots organizations not becoming influenced by the objectives of the donors. Rowlands (1997: 137) points out that donors have their own accountability processes, reporting cycles, criteria for success and failure, etc. Therefore, they might not be prepared to wait many years for the unpredicted results of an open-ended process, and ask for quick, visible, and quantifiable results. (*ibid.*). After all, also the micro-projects initiated by small NGOs or women's grass-roots organizations cannot easily escape the problems faced by larger development projects.

The above mentioned criticisms do not question the theoretical conceptions of the empowerment approach. Rather, they draw attention to the general difficulties faced during its practical implementation. In other words, they draw attention to the gap between the theory and the practice of empowerment. They show that many activities conducted under the label of 'empowerment' do not fall into the category of empowerment. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, other approaches such as the equity and the GAD were also affected by similar difficulties and problems. Therefore, the above mentioned criticisms are rather general ones which concerns not only the empowerment approach but the whole women and development discourse. In the following part, we will point to more specific criticisms which directly question the theoretical assumptions of the empowerment approach.

Some assumptions of the empowerment approach are criticized for the reason that they are too simplistic. For instance, Nira Yuval-Davis (1994) criticizes the assumption of non-problematic transition from personal to collective empowerment. Yuval-Davis (*ibid.*: 180) points out that the notion of empowerment is closely linked to the notion of 'the community'. With its strong political connotations, the empowerment

approach suggests turning acts of individual resistance into mass political mobilizations that challenge the basic power relations in our societies (*ibid.*: 194). It situates individuals inside a community which is egalitarian and homogenous. And, the members of the community collectively fight against their oppression for becoming controllers of their own destiny (*ibid.*: 180). In doing that, the empowerment approach seems to ignore the fact that there are religious, ethnic, political, and other conflicts also among the poor and the oppressed:

[S]uch constructions [of the empowerment approach] assume a specific 'identity politics' which homogenizes and naturalizes social categories and groupings, denying shifting boundaries and internal power differences and conflicts of interest. Also in such an approach cultures and traditions are transformed from heterogeneous, sometimes conflicting reservoirs of resources into unified, a-historical and unchanging essence (Yuval-Davis 1992: 194).

The empowerment approach acknowledges the fact that people are discriminated not only on the grounds of gender but also on the grounds of class, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual preference, and so on. Furthermore, it sees strong connections between gender and other forms of discrimination. Therefore, it emphasizes the importance of running the struggle against gender discrimination along the struggles against other forms of discrimination. However, the fact that most women are subject to gender discrimination does not automatically imply that they do not have conflicts of interests among themselves. It is quite plausible to assume that some women discriminate against other women on the grounds of their ethnicity, religion, political convictions, etc. From this point of view, the question of how to bring women with different backgrounds together in a broad-based political movement requires further consideration.

Yuval-Davis (*ibid.*: 181) criticizes also the assumption that people can increase their power without having any negative consequences on the lives of other people. This assumption is based on the distinction between 'negative' ('power over') and 'positive' power ('power to', 'power from within', and 'power with'). Since positive power is no zero-sum, powerless people can increase their positive power without diminishing the power of others. Furthermore, the positive power does not imply establishing domination over others. Such a construction of power rules out any possibility of conflict not only between the oppressed and their oppressors but also among the

oppressed themselves. As Yuval-Davis (*ibid.*: 182) puts it, the automatic assumption here is that no conflicts of interests can arise during the process of empowerment. However, the notion of power has inescapably a conflictual nature. First of all, as Young points out (1993: 158), "empowerment is not just about women acquiring something, but about those holding power relinquishing it." Since those in positions of power will not relinquish their power voluntarily, the empowerment approach needs to be prepared for conflicts of interests. In addition, going back to the point made above, one should be prepared for conflicts that might occur among the women themselves in the course of their empowerment process. Finally, Yuval-Davis (*ibid.*: 194) draws attention to the "old truism that 'power corrupts'." The author argues that "this can also apply to the power of the previously disempowered people, and to power which is only relative and confined to specific contingencies" (*ibid.*). Yuval-Davis (*ibid.*) argues that the empowerment approach seeks to escape some dilemmas through its construction of power, and warns against the simplistic notions of empowerment:

I am far from believing, and especially far from hoping, that solidarity among different people, as individuals and as groupings, in struggles against racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination and disadvantage, are impossible. [...] However, I do not believe that such struggles can be taken forward successfully by simplistic notions of empowerment of the oppressed (Yuval-Davis 1994: 182).

Another assumption of the empowerment approach which attracts some criticism is the assumption that the state, as a male-dominated institution, is not in a position to promote gender equity. The empowerment approach criticizes the top-down strategies of the state on the justifiable grounds that they try to integrate women into the existing structures without touching the basic nature of these structures. Therefore, the empowerment approach focuses on bottom-up strategies which can be carried out without reliance on the state. For this reason, the empowerment approach tends to ignore the state almost totally. In the whole concept of empowerment, we do not find much discussion regarding what the role of the state might be in women's empowerment. However, it is necessary to encourage direct discussions regarding the role of the state in women's empowerment process. Because, despite all criticisms, the state has still a fundamental importance for the process of empowerment:

Although an alternative development must begin locally, it cannot end there. Like it or not, the state continues to be a major player. It may need to be made more accountable to poor people and more responsive to their claims. But without the state's collaboration, the lot of the poor cannot be significantly improved. Local empowering action requires a strong state (Friedman 1992: 7).

Goetz and Sen Gupta (1996: 59) point out that some problems of women such as the inadequate legal foundation for economic rights, especially as concerns rights of ownership and inheritance, negative religious environment such as in the case of opposition from Islamic groups etc., are behind the scope of any single organization to solve. The authors argue that such problems require state-level responses. Furthermore, large social investments such as the ones in the fields of health and education require also state involvement. In order to achieve the goals of empowerment, women do need the state on their side.

Razavi and Miller (1995: 30) point out that civil society organizations such as women's grass roots organizations and women's NGOs are seen as playing a central role in the process of bottom-up development. The authors agree that women's organizations play an important role in creating space for women to politicize their demands (*ibid.*: 33). However, they argue that unrealistic expectations are being placed on the capacity of these organizations (*ibid.*: 30). According to the authors, civil society organizations cannot substitute for the powers of the state (*ibid.*: 32). Pointing to the state's role as the regulator of macro-level forces, the authors suggest that it is necessary to put pressure on the state to regulate these macro-level forces in a more gender-equitable manner (*ibid.*: 33).

In light of the above discussions, Razavi and Miller (*ibid.*: 33) criticize the enthusiasm for the civil society organizations, and warn against the efforts to limit the role of the state. At this point, it is necessary to point out that the neo-liberal policies which are harshly criticized by the empowerment approach do also support the idea of a shrinking state. The neo-liberal ideology suggests that the state should delegate some of its powers and functions to civil society organizations (in particular to NGOs) and the private sector. In that it declares the state intervention as undesirable, the empowerment approach runs the danger that it serves the interests of the neo-liberal agenda. The real challenge lies not in keeping the state out of the game, but rather in

making it more responsive to women's demands. Strengthening the civil society does not necessarily imply the withdrawal of the state. A strong civil society and a strong state can exist together. Besides their socio-economic, political, and cultural functions, the civil society organizations can also fulfill the function of a control and pressure mechanism which keeps the powers of the society in balance:

[A]n alternative development involves a process of social and political empowerment whose long-term objective is to rebalance the structure of power in the society by making state action more accountable, strengthening the powers of civil society in the management of its own affairs, and making corporate business more socially responsible (Friedman 1992: 31).

However, the civil society organizations can function only in an environment of democracy. Within the context of the empowerment approach, this implies that the women's grassroots organizations and women's NGOs need a democratic space for their activities. Batliwala (1994: 137) states that "[a]n empowerment process [...] is impossible without democratic space for dissent, struggle, and change." Because, as the author argues, theocratic, military, or other kinds of authoritarian states will not allow radical women's empowerment movements to survive (*ibid.*). Writing about the South Asia, the author reports that many women's movements tend to avoid political activities. They rather provide women with different services, and encourage a certain level of gender awareness, but they avoid seriously challenging the dominant ideologies and the existing power structures. This is another dilemma which the empowerment approach needs to deal with.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The women and development discourse has been witnessing different approaches: the welfare approach; the WID approaches (the equity, the anti-poverty, and the efficiency); the GAD approach; and, finally, the empowerment approach. This study regards the empowerment approach as the most challenging, the most radical, and the most promising among all approaches. However, this does not mean that the other approaches need to be abandoned in favor of the empowerment approach.

For instance, the earliest approach, namely the welfare, is most probably still the most commonly used approach. All development activities which concentrate on free delivery of goods and services fall into the category of the welfare approach. The welfare approach addresses women's practical gender needs only, and it does not attempt to challenge the existing structures of subordination. However, it fulfills an important function in terms of meeting women's practical gender needs. As Batliwala (1994: 134) points out, poor women suffer from acute poverty and overwhelming work burden. Most activists, as the author states, face the following dilemma:

Should they respond to women's immediate problems by setting up services that will meet their practical needs and alleviate their condition? Or should they take the longer route of raising consciousness about the underlying structural factors that cause the problems [...]? (Batliwala 1994: 134).

Choosing to address women's strategic gender needs should not imply that their practical gender needs are not important. It is possible to address women's short term urgent practical gender needs, but at the same time, work for their long term strategic gender needs. This is not contradictory in any terms. The welfare approach can be adopted as complementary to the empowerment approach. As Kabeer (1994b: 84) points out, it is argued that "the problem with the old welfare approach lay not in the kinds of needs it sought to address, but in the assumptions and welfarist relationships which it embodied." A pure welfare approach without such assumptions could prove to be rather useful in meeting some immediate needs of poor women. It is however important to draw clear lines between different approaches. One should avoid offering welfarist provisions under the label of empowerment.

Similarly, also the links between the GAD and the empowerment approaches need further consideration (Oxaal and Baden 1997: 23). There are some possible points of convergence between top-down and bottom-up strategies which need to be explored (Razavi and Miller 1995: 33). The DAWN, an organization which contributed substantially to the development of the empowerment approach, warns that disengagement from gender-mainstreaming is not an alternative: "Despite the formidable obstacles faced by women, to abandon the project of institutionalizing gender is *not* an option" (DAWN 2000: 16 quoted in Anfred 2001: 83). As Arnfred (*ibid.*) suggests, "the challenge for feminists is to find ways in which to make gender mainstreaming meaningful women's points of views." It has already been discussed above that the state has an important role to play in women's empowerment, and suggested that it is necessary to make the state more sensible to women's concerns. As Razavi and Miller (1995: 32) suggest "efforts at mainstreaming gender into state policies should [...] remain high on the agenda of those striving for a more gender-egalitarian order." Instead of abandoning the top-down strategies and focusing solely on the bottom-up ones, top-down and bottom-up strategies can be combined in a meaningful manner. This would intensify the pressure on the structures of gender subordination. Pressure coming from both ends, from the top and the bottom, would accelerate the process of change. Also here, we need to draw clear lines between both approaches. The GAD and the empowerment are two different concepts, and one should carefully avoid mixing up the notions and tools of one approach with those of the other.

In light of the above examples, this study suggests that there are good possibilities of adopting the welfare, the equity (the first of the WID approaches), the GAD approaches as complementary (not as alternatives) to the empowerment approach. Different organizations working with different approaches can support each other's efforts. The women and development discourse has developed rather valuable concepts and tools. When they are used with flexibility and creativity, but also with commitment, determination, and willingness, they promise a lot for achieving a more gender equitable society.

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