

## **Gender in Education and Development**

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### **Abstract**

While the importance of female education has been widely recognised, gender disparity in education persists in a number of developing countries. The evidence from sub-Saharan Africa shows that the disparity is prominent both in access and quality. This paper attempts to discuss the issue of gender and education from the perspectives of "education and feminism" and "gender and development." Moser's framework of gender planning identifies strategic and practical gender needs. Although the original framework does not necessarily recognise schooling as a means for empowerment, this paper attempts to use the framework in clarifying gender needs in education and development at the levels of school and community/family. The concept of gender has made a substantive contribution towards better understanding of education and development. Studies in both gender and education should be academic as well as practical. Therefore they should continue to be in touch with the gender reality and the educational reality in order to further productive research and also to enrich each other.

### **1 Introduction**

The paper discusses the issue of gender in the context of education and development with an emphasis on the evidence in sub-Saharan Africa. Gender is defined as a social phenomenon and a social construct, as distinguished from sex which is biologically determined (Momsen 1991, Mbilinyi 1992 and others). The concept incorporates power, unequal divisions of labour, power and domination (Mbilinyi 1992). Gender has been developed into a substantive issue in social science in this century. Recently gender has been recognised as an important element in the discourse of development and education, reflecting the importance of the issue in the field of education as well as in development in general. The concept of gender has a common root with feminist theories, though the orientation is not identical. The concept of human capital theory underlies discussion of the individual and the social benefit of female education.

The issue of gender in education and development will be discussed from three perspectives. The first is the feminist perspective which was articulated first in industrialised countries in the 1960s. This development was reflected in the international debate in 1975 at the beginning of the UN decade for women 1975-1985. The second is human capital theory, which tries to demonstrate direct and indirect benefits of education in general, and which has provided powerful arguments for the outstanding social benefits of women's education. This argument has been strengthened by evidence associating education with improved health and productivity and creating benefits which go beyond education. The reality of female education in developing countries, however, remains far less than desired. Other aspects of inequality, such as rural-urban disparities, further amplify the gender gap in education. The third is gender framework in development. This framework is currently being utilised in various facets of developmental work. The approach emphasises empowerment as the key concept, a concept born out of criticism levelled against different approaches adopted in the past, such as welfare, equity, anti-poverty

and efficiency. The framework distinguishes strategic gender needs from practical gender needs and it could be utilised as an effective tool in examining female education in the larger context of development.

## **2 Feminist Perspectives on Education**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The contemporary feminist theoretical framework can be classified into three different approaches, namely liberal, socialist and radical. These approaches are closely associated with the perspectives of existing social theories; liberal feminism with functionalism, human capital and modernisation theories; socialist feminism with conflict and Marxist theories; and finally radical feminism with liberation theory.

In terms of their orientation, liberal feminism has economic force, radical feminism has ideological force, and socialist feminism is the interconnection between ideological and economic force (Stromquist 1990a:146).

### **2.2 Liberal Feminism**

Liberal feminism is the oldest and probably the most conventional perspective of the three. It stems from the idea that women must obtain equal opportunities and equal rights in society (Acker 1987, Stromquist 1990a, Phillips 1987, and others). Stereotyping and discrimination have created a situation where women have less chance of education, fewer career opportunities, and other social dimensions in society. It argues for better allocation of resources so that women can obtain a fair share of educational opportunities. Three major points of focus in the discourse of liberal feminism are 1) equal opportunities; 2) socialisation and sexual stereotyping; and 3) sexual discrimination (Acker 1987:423).

This functionalist view enforces the idea that schooling is meritocratic and that success in it depends primarily on the motivation and the intellectual ability of the individual. Therefore this view of feminism does not aspire to change society; rather it aims at improving the situation within the present system, i.e. western industrialised society (Stromquist 1990a). School and education are considered to be positive and good, and improvements are to be made within the existing system. Strategies include attempts to increase access, such as promotion of 'good practice', eg. the Equal Opportunities Commission (Acker 1987) and training to change attitudes of teachers and pupils/students (Weiner 1986). Liberal feminism is based on the assumption that schooling is positive and improves women's welfare. Social evolution is assumed and the state is perceived as a benevolent actor which provides services and goods for the benefit of the people (Stromquist 1990a).

Gordon (1996) argues that the state has perpetuated the educational inequality by legislation and educational policy and practice both during the colonial and independent Zimbabwe. Liberal feminism is criticised for ignoring patriarchy, power and the systematic subordination of women (O'Brien 1983, Weiner 1986, Acker 1987) as well as the effects of race and class (Arnot 1982, Acker 1987). Socialist feminism attempts to address some of these problems.

### **2.3 Socialist Feminism**

Socialist feminism is closely associated with neo-Marxist theory. The concept poses questions about society and power, issues which liberal feminism does not raise. The state is viewed as an agent

which "acts jointly and closely with economic interests to keep women in a subordinate position" (Stromquist 1990a:146). Unlike liberal feminism, socialist feminism does not consider education as positive. Instead, school is considered to reproduce the current unfair situation. Education is viewed as a regressive organisation rather than progressive, and as fostering a sexist culture. According to socialist feminists, the school curriculum incorporates sexist assumptions, and sexual divisions of labour are built into the context of education. In addition, sexism is seen as "the salient factor in the theory and methods in the specific academic discipline" (Barrett 1980:148).

The theory a parallel arguments a parallel argument of gender imbalance with class struggle. Bowles and Gintis (1976) and others argue that school does not provide a unitary system but aims at reproducing two main social classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In a gender context, schooling serves to perpetuate gender inequalities (Jayaweera 1987, Acker 1987, Stromquist 1990a). Thus the parallel analysis of class struggle with gender provides a theoretical framework.

The strength of a socialist-feminist perspective is that it incorporates other factors of inequality. Race and class are seen to interact with gender in education (Acker 1987, Brah and Deen 1986). In developing countries, however, gender imbalance is often amplified by rural-urban disparities and income differentials (Tilak 1993, Hyde 1993, Abraha et al. 1991). Furthermore, other factors also affect gender imbalance, such as ethnic affiliation and religion.

Some criticism focuses on the research methods of socialist feminism, saying that they do not necessarily address the issue directly. Despite the fact that socialist feminist discourse has a macro-sociological nature, most of the empirical data are derived from school-based observation at the micro-sociological level (Acker 1987). Lack of empirical analysis is also a source of criticism. Much of the socialist feminist work in education emphasises theoretical arguments, historical research or policy analysis, but relatively little research is done using empirical analysis. Furthermore, it is criticised for being more theoretical than implementation oriented (Weiner 1986, Acker 1987).

## **2.4 Radical Feminism**

Radical feminism is concerned with male monopolisation of culture and knowledge and the sexual politics of everyday life in school. Its focus on education is with curriculum, women teachers' and girls' access to power and policy formulation in schools (Acker 1987:429). Radical feminism accepts that education is a tool to release women from subordination, but argues that existing formal schooling cannot be trusted to serve the purpose. Rather, radical feminism supports an alternative nonformal type of education

A radical feminist perspective has similarities with socialist feminism in the way it views the role of the state and schools. The state acts as "a key agent in the perpetuation of women's subordination via its strong defense of the family as the core unit of society" (Stromquist 1990a:145). Such a view stems from the theory of liberation developed in Latin America. In liberation theory, where the aim is the transformation of society, formal education/schooling is not considered to be the key agent, although the transformation itself is an educational process (Shor and Freire 1987). The existing school system is criticised for maintaining a "banking concept of education" where students deposit knowledge given by

teachers (Freire 1972:46).

Radical feminism emphasises patriarchy and power. Its focus on patriarchy and power facilitates an explanation of the oppression of women both within the school and also within the wider context of society in general. At the micro level, it addresses the issue of sexuality and sexual harassment in schools, which is not commonly discussed in other feminist perspectives (Weiner 1986, Acker 1987).

Girls not only receive less teaching time, but their classroom contributions are often met with systematic ridicule and girls are exposed to verbal and non-verbal abuse (Mahoney 1985, Acker 1987). At the macro level, it argues that the higher non-literacy rates for women result from the state's reliance on women for biological reproductive tasks which require only a minimum of skills and knowledge and do not generate demands for schooling (Stromquist 1990a:145).

While liberal feminism aims at improving the existing system of education, both the socialist and radical feminist perspectives aim at much more fundamental transformation. They do not trust the existing formal education system to serve the needs of women because it is monopolised by the state to serve the needs of women.

There has been a recent convergence in feminist thought toward the meshing of ideological and material elements in the explanation of women's subordination, bringing closer than ever the radical and socialist feminist perspectives. These perspectives detect severe limits in the state's ability to improve women's conditions while groups outside the state, particularly women-run organisations, are identified as the most likely source of significant educational change and thus social change, in the interests of women (Stromquist 1990a:137).

Radical feminism is criticised for being the least articulate of the three perspectives. Its research methods are also questioned as a number of studies adopt research methods which are considered 'unconventional'. It is also criticised for its generalisations which give little consideration to issues such as race (Middleton 1985, Connell 1985).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Table 1 summarises the feminist theories on education. The table shows the proximity between socialist and radical feminism especially in their observations on the role of the state and schools. However, all three current feminist perspectives fail to deal with the distinction between rural-urban and low-high income groups, extremes which exist in many of the developing countries.

Many of the feminist arguments are weak in terms of addressing the issues of female subordination in different contexts. Nevertheless, they provide a useful framework for the discussion of gender issues in education. Although gender issues in development are not identical with feminism, feminist theories as well as the debate within and between industrialised and developing countries are both necessary for analysing gender in education in developing countries. As Moser (1993) states, knowledge of feminist theories is essential in gender planning which aspires to achieve gender equality.

**Table 1: Feminist Perspectives on Education and Development**

Feminist Theory	Liberal Feminism	Socialist Feminism	Radical Feminism
Related Social Theories	functionalist theory human capital theory modernisation theory	neo Marxist theory conflict theory	liberation theory
Key Concepts	-equal opportunities -socialisation and sex stereotyping -sex discrimination	-reproduction of gender and social division	-patriarchy -male monopolisation of knowledge and culture -sexual politics in schools
Forces	economic force	interconnection between ideological and economic forces	Ideological force
State viewed as:	benevolent actor	acts jointly and closely with economic interests to keep women in a subordinate position	a key agent in the perpetuation of women's subordination
School viewed as:	agent for social mobilisation	agent for reproduction and perpetuation of existing social classes	place where injustice and oppression of a certain category of people is done, such as sexual harassment.
Orientation	implementation oriented	theoretically oriented	Descriptive and reality oriented
Possible Intervention a) orientation	-existing school based -numerically (quantitatively) orientated	-existing school based -content of education oriented	-alternative forms of education -single sex schools
Possible Intervention b) methods	-better allocation of resources -increased access for women	-revision of curricula -consciousness raising	-awareness -conscientisation -prioritising female interests

### 3 Beneficial Effects of Female Education in Development

#### 3.1 Recognition of the Beneficial Effects of Female Education in Development

Recent years have witnessed the recognition of female education as an important element in the discourse on education and development. Strong associations between female education and economic development have been noted as well as desirable effects on social welfare aspects, e.g. the high correlation between the enrolment rate of girls in primary schools and GNP per capita, as well as life expectancy, infant mortality rate and total fertility rates. These have legitimised not only educationalists' but also development economists' focus on female education. Numerous publications from donor agencies have extensively documented these beneficial effects of female education (Floro and Wolf 1990, King and Hill 1993, King 1990, Herz et al. 1991, Subbarao and Raney 1992, Hartnett and Heneveld 1993, Ogubo and Heneveld 1995). These studies employ evidence from econometric studies such as Hartnett and Heneveld (1993) to summarise the effects of schooling: each additional year of schooling is estimated

to produce a 10 to 20 % increase in income for both males and females; disaggregated data show that female education has far greater social returns than male education as additional schooling creates substantial social benefits; educated women bring social benefits by having healthier, fewer and more educated children; and each additional year of schooling is estimated to decrease the mortality of the under five age group by 5 to 10 % and the fertility rate by 10 %. In addition, at the national level, female education seems to be related to development. Benabot (1989) shows from the analysis of cross-national data from 96 countries that long-term economic development in developing countries was more strongly associated with the increase in enrolment among primary school girls than boys .

### **3.2 Human Capital Theory**

#### **a) Human Capital Theory Applied to Female Education**

The current recognition of the beneficial effect of female education is a relatively recent shift in the human capital concept. In fact, early human capital analysis did not include women as a separate category of analysis. In the 1960s, Becker claimed that the gain to women from additional schooling could be determined by family earnings rather than by personal earnings as very few women participated in the labour force, especially after marriage (Becker 1975:178-179). The empirical analysis of the effects of education excluded wives "since their labour force behaviour is strongly influenced by their husbands' income and the number and age distribution of their children" (Chiswick 1970:172). In the analysis, the students and the elderly were also excluded. T.W. Schultz, a major figure in the economics of education at that time, cited women's education as one of the main omissions in the work of human capital theorists.

If one were to judge from the work that is being done, the conclusion would be that human capital is the unique property of the male population. . . despite all the schooling of females and other expenditures on them, they appear to be of no account in the accounting of human capital (Schultz 1970:302, cited in Woodhall 1973:9).

This provocative statement might have been made with the intention of inviting attempts to remedy this deficiency by analysing the investment aspects of women's education in order to judge whether the concept of 'investment in women' is as valid as that of 'investment in man', as in the comparative study done by Woodhall (1973). In her analysis of seven countries, of which three were developing countries, private rates of return to education among women were lower than those of men. She argues, however, that the "indirect or spillover benefits and non-economic benefits" should not be ignored (Woodhall 1973:10).

#### **b) Returns to Female Education**

Psacharopoulos (1993) claims that the aggregate of social and private rate of returns shows that the rate for females is marginally higher than that for males. It should be noted that the pattern is not consistent. As Table 2 illustrates, the rate of return to education among females is higher than among males in secondary level, while primary education continues to demonstrate much higher returns to males than females. In fact, it is questionable whether one could aggregate the rates of returns to different levels of education. However, the conclusion derived from this somewhat questionable data has been

cited over and over and legitimised the creation of numerous educational projects targetted towards girls and women.

**Table 2: Returns to Education by Gender**

Educational level	Men	Women
Primary	20.1	12.8
Secondary	13.9	18.4
Higher	13.4	12.7
Overall	11.1	12.4

Psacharopoulos (1993:15)

The importance of female education is more often discussed for its non-market returns where the improvement of family welfare is expected. The education of women and girls has been recognised as a vital input for the social development not only of women themselves but also of their family members, especially their children. The benefit is more evident in low income countries or disadvantaged areas. In sub-Saharan Africa where various social services lag behind, female education attracts attention as a viable medium for social development.

Female education can be one of the most powerful forces of development in low-income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where social welfare and economic improvement are constrained by dramatic population growth and a fragile human resources base (DAE 1993:1).

This view stems from empirical evidence illustrating an association between the gender differential in school enrolment in Sub-Saharan Africa and the pronounced low social development in the area. Although the view is widely accepted, it needs to be challenged continuously for its top-down approach as well as for its view of women solely as tools for development (Moser 1989, 1993, Buvini\_ 1986, Kabeer 1992). Adolescent girls are encouraged to attend school in order to receive health education and other information to improve the family welfare which are initiated by the schools, rather than girls themselves being encouraged to initiate such learning.

Female education has been recognised as having a strong association with the decline in fertility rate. There has been ample discussion on the relation between female education and fertility decline. Together with other factors, such as increased employment, rising legal and social status of women and increased income in rural areas, female education is one of the key concepts for fertility decline (Moser 1993 and others). Schooling delays marriage, increases participation in the labour market, which in turn creates incentives for fertility control (Schultz 1989).

Investment in the next generation is also a beneficial effect of mother's education. Numerous studies observe that a mothers' education increases children's schooling (Tietjen 1991, Schultz 1989). Schultz (1993) observes that a mother's education influences allocation of private household resources more positively towards the benefit of children's nutrition and schooling. When women's economic capacity is enhanced by education, they have more influence in household decision-making.

### 3.3 The Reality of Female Education

#### a) The Reality of Female Education World-wide

While the importance of female education is widely recognised, the educational reality of women in developing countries is far from satisfactory. The educational situation is seen as the main obstacle preventing the full involvement of women in the development process. Table 3 shows the gender breakdown of the literacy rates by regions. Although the gender gap in literacy continues to narrow, the gap still remains. Moreover, the gender gap in developing countries remains wider than that in industrialised countries. The gap in least developing countries remains the largest.

**Table 3: Estimated Adult Literacy Rates (percentage)\* by Gender; 1980-2000**

	1980		1995		2000	
	male	Female	male	Female	male	female
<b>World Total</b>	77.2	61.9	83.6	71.2	85.2	73.6
<b>Developing countries</b>	68.9	46.8	78.9	61.7	81.2	65.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	51.8	29.2	66.6	47.3	70.9	50.3
Arab States	55.0	26.2	68.4	44.2	72.2	50.1
Latin America	82.1	77.5	87.7	85.5	89.0	87.4
Eastern Asia/Oceania	80.4	58.0	90.6	76.3	92.8	80.6
Southern Asia	52.8	24.5	62.9	36.6	66.0	40.7
Least developed countries	48.3	24.9	59.5	38.1	62.9	42.4
<b>Developed countries</b>	98.0	95.4	98.9	98.4	99.1	98.8

\*Percentage of literate adults in the population aged 15 years and over. The population data utilised are those of the United Nations Population division database (1994 revision).

(from UNESCO 1995 *World Education Report*, p.105)

The result of the disaggregation by gender and regions indicates associations between low literacy rates and women, as well as low literacy rates and developing countries, especially the least developed countries. Within the developing countries, Southern Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab States have relatively low literacy. Moreover, where lower literacy rates are observed, the gender gap is more evident. The phenomenon is observed by Stromquist as "the manifestation of gender and poverty upon women's literacy" (1990b:100). Poverty, together with traditional beliefs and customs, can perpetuate child labour and early marriage which prevent schooling of girls. Stromquist (1992, 1990b) examines the gender disparity in literacy and explains it in terms of the sexual division of labour and men's control over women's sexuality. Both are related to states' implicit and explicit policies to ensure that women remain in their traditional social roles. Ballara (1992) suspects that statistical representations may even underestimate female non-literacy as it is easier to conceal the non-literacy of women than that of men.

The enrolment ratios in different levels of education (see Table 4) show a similar trend to that of literacy. While there is less of a gender gap in industrialised countries, the gap in developing countries is wider. It is also a characteristic of developing countries that the gender gap widens the higher the

educational level. Although gender ratios have improved in the last ten years, the gap remains.

**Table 4: Percentage of Female Enrolment by Level of Education 1960 - 2025**

	first level				second level				third level			
	1960	1980	2000	2025	1960	1980	2000	2025	1960	1980	2000	2025
<b>World Total</b>	43	45	47	47	41	43	45	46	34	43	44	44
<b>Developing Countries</b>	39	44	46	47	29	39	44	46	26	35	40	41
Sub-Saharan Africa	34	43	45	44	25	34	40	40	11	21	28	27
Arab States	34	41	45	46	26	37	45	46	17	31	40	42
Latin America	48	49	49	49	47	50	51	50	30	43	47	47
Eastern Asia	39	45	48	50	30	40	47	51	24	24	32	32
Southern Asia	36	42	45	46	25	36	41	44	26	33	39	41
Least developed Countries	32	40	44	44	18	31	39	39	16	26	31	31
<b>Developed countries</b>	49	49	49	49	49	50	49	49	36	48	49	49

(from UNESCO 1993, *Trends and Projections of Enrolment by Level of Education by Age and by Sex 1960-2025*, p.15)

Herz et al. (1991) claim that demand-side factors have been important in primary and secondary enrolment, while in tertiary education Subbarao et al. (1994) claim that supply-side constraints have been critical in improving gender parity. This difference could be explained by the fact that in primary and secondary education, economic or cultural constraints on families and societies prevent schooling, while in higher education limited places and a limited choice of courses available prevent female students from continuing their education. Subbarao et al. (1994) have observed the complex mechanism of restrictions which is influenced by various social factors and labour market constraints. They consider that restrictions are more complex in higher education where low secondary enrolment rate, high direct costs and cultural restrictions interact with one another. Their analysis concludes that educational statistics on enrolment, drop-outs and completion rates by gender at all levels of education are necessary for the effective implementation of gender related programmes.

#### b) Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa has lower female participation in education than other regions although there is a substantial variation among countries. Some countries such as Botswana and Lesotho have higher female participation in education (Hartnett and Heneveld 1993). Since the 1960s, a remarkable growth in enrolment has been observed. Nevertheless, the significant gender gap in the enrolment ratio persists. Table 5 shows the aggregate female participation in education in the region.

**Table 5: Female Participation in Education in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Indicator	Female Ratio	Gender Ratio
Primary Admission Rate	76%	0.88
Gross Primary Enrolment Ratio	63%	0.77
Persistence to Grade 4	83%	0.99
Primary Completion Rate	36%	0.81

Continuation Rate from Primary to Secondary	41%	0.92
Gross Secondary Enrolment Ratio	11%	0.50
Secondary Completion Rate	18%	0.64
Female Teachers as % of Total:		
Primary	34%	
Secondary	22%	
Mean Years of Schooling	0.8	0.40
Adult Literary Rate	30%	0.57
Labour Force Participation Rate	32%	0.63

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(from Hartnett and Heneveld 1993)

The analysis by Hartnett and Heneveld (1993) shows disadvantaged participation throughout primary and secondary education. A close examination of the data reveals that the admission rate in primary school differs but, once enrolled, girls complete grade 4, the level of schooling presumed to have established literacy, at a comparable rate with boys (0.99). However, the primary school completion rate shows a greater difference (0.81). The continuation rate from primary to secondary has a relatively small difference (0.92) but the completion rate is much lower among female students than male students (0.64). The gender gap accelerates up the grades and at tertiary level, and the gross enrolment demonstrates the largest gap (0.22). These results are reflected in mean years of schooling, adult literacy rates and labour force participation in the formal sector.

Numerous studies show that girls are disadvantaged in terms of school retention. High rates of examination failure, repetition and drop-out are reported to be more evident among girls (Mbilinyi and Mbughuni 1991, Hyde 1993). This leads to the chance of participation in the labour market. In the Ivory Coast, the low level of labour participation among women used to be attributed to child-rearing and other family obligations. However, the recent survey data show that it is more closely related to low levels of education. Wages and choice of work are both limited for the less educated (Appleton et al. 1990), implying women are disadvantaged and less educated women are more disadvantaged. Even when women receive education, the benefit is not equal. Female students do not benefit from schooling as much as their male counterparts in terms of employment. In Zimbabwe, among secondary school graduates with the same number of passes in their examination results, a consistently higher percentage of male students were engaged in wage employment than female students (Bennell and Ncube 1994).

Enrolment statistics from Ghana show a strong gender imbalance. The retention of one cohort through the nine year basic education shows gradual widening of the the gender gap. Girls' enrolment is constantly lower than boys' and the drop-out rate among girls is higher than the rate among boys (Ghana NCWAD 1994).

Table 6 shows the completion rates in JSS for the cohorts of 1987/88 to 1990/91. Although the completion rates improve over the years, a gender gap still remains. A smaller number of girls than boys enter JSS1, and the completion rates among female students is lower.

**Table 6: Completion Rates in JSS for the Cohorts of 1987/88 to 1990/91 by Gender**

		intake in JSS I	the number who sat BECE	completion rate
Cohort of 1987/88	Male	105,138	75,963	72.25%
	Female	75,717	51,590	68.14%
Cohort of 1988/89	Male	112,239	88,799	79.12%
	Female	80,840	58,262	72.07%
Cohort of 1989/90	Male	115,488	100,143	86.71%
	Female	85,053	64,810	76.20%
Cohort of 1990/91	Male	127,132	108,980	85.72%
	Female	91,323	72,778	79.69%

(calculated from: enrolment statistics from Ministry of Education and WAEC: West African Examinations Council)

Table 7 shows the national examination results according to gender. It also shows a gender gap in educational performance. Although improving every year, the number of female students with high marks is lower than that of male students. This shows that female students are disadvantaged not only in access but also in achievement. The lower achievement among girls is likely to result in reduced access to higher education and hence less chance for joining the labour force in the formal sector.

**Table 7: Basic Education Certificate Examination Results by Gender**

Grade Range	1990		1991		1992		1993	
	male	female	male	Female	male	female	male	female
6-11	8,216 (10.82%)	2,857 (5.54%)	8,132 (9.16%)	3,301 (5.67%)	9,969 (9.95%)	4,079 (6.29%)	10,693 (9.81%)	5,128 (8.70%)
12-17	12,290 (16.18%)	5,666 (10.98%)	12,592 (14.18%)	5,920 (10.16%)	14,868 (14.85%)	6,833 (10.54%)	14,815 (13.59%)	7,851 (12.47%)
18-23	15,984 (21.04%)	9,245 (17.92%)	17,822 (20.07%)	9,811 (16.94%)	20,042 (20.01%)	11,302 (17.44%)	20,767 (19.06%)	11,916 (17.98%)
24-35	27,846 (36.65%)	22,361 (43.34%)	34,889 (39.39%)	24,997 (42.90%)	39,392 (39.34%)	28,079 (43.33%)	45,454 (41.71%)	32,617 (42.95%)
over 36	11,627 (15.31%)	11,461 (22.22%)	15,364 (17.30%)	14,233 (24.43%)	15,872 (15.85%)	14,517 (22.40%)	17,251 (15.83%)	15,266 (17.89%)
Total	75,963 (100.0%)	51,590 (100.0%)	88,799 (100.0%)	58,262 (100.0%)	100,143 (100.0%)	64,810 (100.0%)	108,980 (100.0%)	72,778 (100.0%)

(calculated from WAEC data)

### 3.4 International Intervention in Female Education

Recognition of the beneficial effects of female education and the existence of these gender gaps in low income countries has led to the intervention of development agencies. Publications from the World Bank in the 1980s show the theoretical orientations and numerous projects where female education features either as a direct objective or as an incorporated element. Bilateral donor agencies also adopted a similar view. For example, a DFID (then ODA) document on Women in Development specifies four main objectives, namely legal rights, access to planning public services, social status and access to education.

Access to education is vital for development, the document argues:

Limited access to basic education and in particular to literacy not only lowers women's status but also hinders their effectiveness in achieving improvements in health, agriculture, family planning and nutrition for their own families and for the community. The ability to understand information is fundamental to development (ODA 1992:3).

The USAID programme responses recognised three strategies to be adopted: 1) innovative measures to increase access, 2) culturally appropriate schools, and 3) measures to facilitate girls' learning (Tietjen 1991).

At first, a 'gender-neutral' approach was taken in order to increase women's access to education. However, these gender-neutral approaches were questioned in terms of the recognition that access to education among women lags behind that of males even when overall access is increased. The gap continues to exist even when the overall access is increased. This situation has led to gender specific and gender related projects and programmes.

After actively discriminating policies have set inequalities in motion, sex-neutral policies are sufficient to maintain established patterns. Thus the educational gap continues, as does the clustering of women in low-paid service occupations (Kelly and Elliot 1982:336).

The argument here is that, once the disparities exist, only specific women-focused projects are able to improve the situation. This idea promoted a large number of 'women's projects' to help the disadvantaged women in developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s. "But little substantive change occurred," Blumberg (1989:170) observes, "despite the fact that all the major development 'donor agencies' soon adopted policies proclaiming their commitment to what soon became known (least controversially) as 'Women in Development'". These projects typically concentrated on increasing women's income by additional economic activities. The criticisms are that these activities placed an added burden on already overworked rural women.

Women in the Third World were already integrated into development; they were integrated too much. WID projects added more work onto their shoulders, without alleviating their other responsibilities in production (Mbilinyi 1992:48).

Buvini\_ (1986:653) critically analyses the failure of women-specific projects by asserting that "project misbehaviour and the prevalence of welfare intervention" were evident in many of these projects. These projects typically adopted welfare-related activities, and activities which are conventionally viewed as women's, such as soap making. These marginal activities were not as effective as promoting the participation of women in mainstream economic activities.

Currently, functional adult literacy learning materials are typically formed in such a way that women can acquire knowledge on Maternal Child Health (MCH) and family hygiene. Although these approaches undoubtedly benefit women and their families, they could help perpetuate a traditional gender division of labour and thereby delay the emancipation of women. More recent functional adult literacy activities

do account for the gender issue, such as ActionAid's REFLECT (Archer and Cottingham 1996) and some literacy training programmes (Aksornkool 1997).

The current international initiatives for cooperation and communication strongly influence development activities. The International Women's Decade "provided the 'political space' for formal 'top-down' coalitions at the supra-national level" (Moser 1993:209). Similarly, discussions on education and development are currently initiated/dominated by so-called international communities consisting of UN agencies and donors with the World Bank as their opinion leader. Their view is inevitably utilitarian and efficiency-oriented.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

By now the beneficial effect of female education has been widely recognised. While the issue has a certain association with feminist perspectives, an economic orientation with a human capital concept is dominant in the literature. The gender disaggregation of the data available claims to show higher rates of return to female education than that to male education. The empirical evidence based on the human capital concept justifies and validates the role of female education. However, it should be noted that, over the years, contradictory evidence has been presented and rates of return to education of women have not always been higher than that of men.

International initiatives have been facilitated which focused their activities on female education. The current international forms of cooperation and communication strongly influence development activities. Firstly, general gender-neutral approaches were adopted and then they became more women-specific. Although the orientation of the implementation changed, the underlying idea remained the same. Women were viewed as an efficient tool for development through increasing family welfare. This view is criticised by the more feminist-oriented development scholars. They demand social transformation rather than improvement within the existing social structure. Their views will be focused on in the next section.

## **4 The Issue of Gender in Development**

### **4.1 Women in Development (WID)**

The concept of WID has a relatively short history, with rapid changes. In the 1960s women were largely viewed from the perspective of family welfare and were virtually invisible in development planning. The 1970s witnessed the rapid expansion of WID: women became the main focus of analysis once their economic contribution had been recognised, and the basic needs approach was developed. The 1980s further consolidated this approach. Efficiency became a key word and activities aimed at utilising women more effectively, by improving their productive capacity within the framework of the market system (Young 1993).

### **4.2 Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD), and Gender and Development (GAD)**

The term WID was first used by the Women's Committee of the Washington, D.C., Chapter of the Society for International Development, as a strategy for utilising evidence presented by Boserup's *Women's Role in Economic Development* published in 1970 (Rathgeber 1990, Moser 1993). Boserup (1986) made a systematic analysis of the division of labour in agriculture and work in towns. She showed not only

desegregation of the data but for the first time used gender as a variable in the analysis. Although her work has been criticised for its "oversimplification of the nature of women's work and roles" (Rathgeber 1990) it was the start of recognition of women in the process of development. Women's role and contribution has not been fully recognised nor incorporated into development planning and a new approach for economic growth and social justice was advocated (Overholt et al. 1984).

The concept of WID was articulated at first by American liberal feminists and the term became "common currency both inside and outside academic settings" in the 1970s to mean the "integration of women into global processes of economic, political, and social growth and change" (Rathgeber 1990:489). The movement was facilitated by international concern with equity issues at the time (Blumberg 1989). WAD was derived from the socialist feminist approach and had a more critical view of women's position than WID. GAD emerged in the 1980s as an alternative to WID. GAD's approach focuses on the totality of social organisation, economic and political life and recognises women as agents of change with an emphasis on empowerment and female solidarity (Rathgeber 1990:492-4). Although GAD's approach is considered more advanced and favourable, it is rarely found in current projects (Rathgeber 1990, Moser 1993). WID has been accepted and used both in the research and implementation of projects while WAD is seldom used. WID has been used in general terms often encompassing ideas expressed as WAD or GAD. In the following section, the term WID will be used to encompass the wider meaning.

### **4.3 Gender Planning**

The orientation in policy approach has shifted in the course of the last four decades. Moser (1989, 1993) analyzed five aspects of orientation adding 'efficiency' and 'empowerment'. These shifts mirrored general shifts in development policies, "from modernisation policies of accelerated growth, through basic needs strategies associated with redistribution, to the more recent compensatory measures associated with structural adjustment policies" (Moser 1989:1807). The empowerment approach seeks for alternative development where education of women must lead to empowerment.

Molyneux (1985) points out that gender issues are not necessarily women's issues. Gender planning cannot be free from acute class conflict, differences in race, ethnic groups and nationality. She articulated "the false homogeneity imposed by the notion of women's interests" (Molyneux 1985:232) and differentiated between women's interests and more specific gender interests. Gender interests are further divided into strategic gender interests and practical gender interests. The former addresses women's emancipation or gender equality while the latter responds to an immediate perceived need. Her analysis contributed to the stratification of women's interests.

Molyneux's framework was further developed by Moser into gender planning, which identifies different needs of women derived from different roles men and women play in societies in developing countries" (Moser 1989). This view provided both the conceptual framework and practical tools for assimilating gender into planning. The recognition of the fact that women and men have different roles in society as well as the identification of the triple role of women, i.e. reproductive, productive and community management work, should have important implication for policy makers. Reproductive and community managing work has not been valued, and only productive work was considered to be important. Structural adjustment policies' narrow definition of economics was criticised from this perspective. It includes only marketed goods and services but excludes women's reproductive work, such as bearing and raising the next generation (Moser 1989, Elson 1991).

The most notable contribution of Moser's work is to differentiate the needs of women into strategic gender needs and practical gender needs. Strategic gender needs stem from the gender inequality existing in society, and the concept is akin to the radical feminism perspective. It is described as women's "real interests" and essential for emancipation and empowerment (Molyneux 1985, Moser 1993).

Strategic gender needs are the needs women identify because of their subordinate position to men in their society. Strategic gender needs vary according to particular contexts. . . Meeting strategic gender needs help women to achieve greater equality. It also changes existing roles and therefore challenges women's subordinate position aspiring for emancipation and empowerment (Moser 1993:39).

Practical gender needs, on the other hand, are more functional. They are practical in nature. They do not challenge the subordinate position of women in society, and do not lead to emancipation or gender equality like strategic gender needs, but deal with more immediate needs in everyday life, such as water provision, health care and employment.

Practical gender needs are the needs women identify in their socially accepted roles in society. Practical gender needs do not challenge the gender divisions of labour or women's subordinate position in society, although rising out of them. Practical gender needs are a response to an immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context (Moser 1993:40).

Moser states that the differentiation of gender needs is a useful tool for planners. Gender planning is political and technical in nature. This dual nature is represented in strategic gender needs and practical gender needs.

Gender planning strategies value women's organisations, stressing women's solidarity. Schooling and formal education are seldom referred to as a means for empowerment. Instead, conventional education is often viewed as a false focus for changing women's relation to technology. The underlying notion here is that the educational systems tend to reflect the existing cultural bias and values of the societies which support male dominance in technology (Conway and Bourque 1995, Bourque and Warren 1990). However, a framework of gender needs can be utilised to clarify needs perceived in education. Table 8 shows the concept of gender needs applied in education and development.

**Table 8: Gender Needs in Education and Development**

	strategic gender needs	practical gender needs
School	-women's status at school -curriculum -choice of courses available	-access to education -distance from home to school -timetable -reasonable user fees -quality of education -female teachers
Community/ Family	-women's status in the community -women's status in the family	-economic capacity -household chores reduced for girls

Strategic and practical gender needs can be described as prerequisites for each other, and the

emancipation of females in education can be achieved through the process of addressing particular needs at appropriate times in order to achieve further objectives. For instance, improvement in economy in a certain area might make the people more willing to send their daughters to school, which may lead to change the education policy in the direction of making a wider choice of courses for female students available.

## 5 Conclusion

Incorporation of the gender concept in development is a relatively new phenomenon. The idea of 'women' as a distinctive rather than residual category made its appearance in development thinking in the 1970s. In the 1960s and 1970s a climate of liberal ideas emerged and this made the world more receptive to ideas like those of Boserup. Recognition of the role of women in economic development was a notable accomplishment in the discourse of development, since the argument could be described as bridging feminist perspectives and development, even though the feminist perspective used is that of liberal feminism, and more conservative than others.

Feminist perspectives, corresponding to a number of major social theories, are useful tools for critically examining gender inequalities in education. While liberal feminism perceives both the school and the State as positive agents, socialist and radical feminism do not, and aim for a more fundamental transformation of society. Naturally, it was liberal feminism, the most conservative perspective, that was taken as a basis for the WID approach initiated by development agencies.

The current feminist perspectives fail to deal with the rural-urban as well as low-high income group disparities, phenomena which are very significant in many developing countries. The UN decade for women was a crossroads where the gender concerns articulated in the north and the south met and communicated. Mexico City 1975, Nairobi 1985, and Beijing 1995 were not only memorable occasions but also places where the gender perspectives exchanged views. At that time, the discrepancies between the north and the south became apparent, and efforts were made to incorporate ideas and perspectives from both sides. This had the effect of raising international awareness on the issue, but also of providing political space for a top-down approach from the north to the south.

The WID approach has been translated into a series of development objectives, namely welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency, and empowerment. Gender planning emerged from the critical review of these objectives. The former four had top-down characteristics whereby women were perceived as mere tools rather than active agents to achieve the outcome of emancipation for themselves. Therefore, gender planning adopts an empowerment approach.

Gender planning differentiates gender needs from women's needs, and gender needs are further divided into strategic gender needs and practical gender needs. While the latter deal with more immediate issues perceived by women themselves, the former aim at the more fundamental issue of the emancipation of women. Such a framework is useful in clarifying gender needs in education and development, for these two kinds of needs are essential for achieving gender equality in education.

The contribution of gender to the field of education and development should not be ignored. First of all it is helpful in analysing the nature of inequalities, and secondly it has changed women's perceived role from that of recipients of welfare to active agents for transformation, and finally it has clarified the issue of north-south relations in academic thinking. Studies in both gender and education should be academic as well as practical, and therefore they should continue to be in touch with the gender reality and the educational reality in order to further productive research. The two fields are likely to enrich each other as long as forthright dialogue continues.

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