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**Gender Equality,
Poverty Eradication and the
Millennium Development Goals:
Promoting Women's Capabilities
and Participation**

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Gender Equality, Poverty Eradication and the Millennium Development Goals: Promoting Women's Capabilities and Participation

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as a keynote presentation for the
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Introduction

A. The rationale for a gender perspective on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

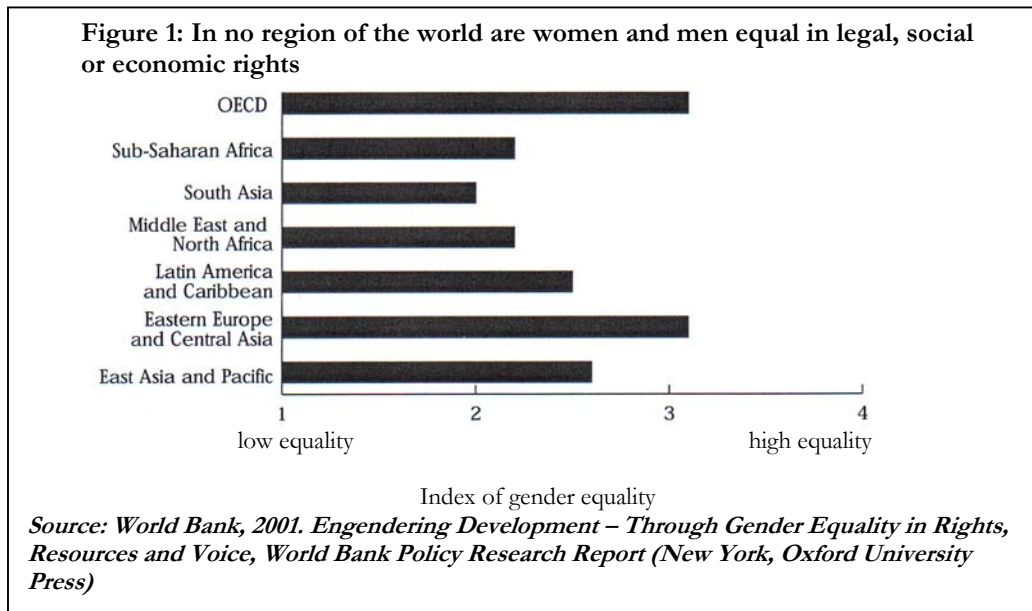
There are three key reasons why gender analysis is relevant to all aspects of economic and the social development and more specifically to the core MDG of halving world poverty by 2015.

The first reason is that, while gender inequality is not the only, or even the most marked form of inequality in a society, it is the most pervasive. It is a feature of social relations in all societies, although it manifests itself variously in different places. Understanding the causes and consequences of gender inequality, therefore, and the power relations that generates and is generated in

*Figures have been supplemented
by World Bank sources*

the process, should be of concern to all societies in the world, rich as well as poor.

The second reason is that the pervasiveness of gender inequality cuts across all other forms of socio-economic differentiation. It is a feature of rich as well as poor groups, racially dominant as well as racially subordinate groups, privileged as well as ‘untouchable’ castes. Figure 1 illustrates this point.



The intersection of gender discrimination with economic deprivation tends to produce intensified forms of disadvantage, more often for women and girls than for men and boys. For this reason, a gender analysis of poverty would examine the problem in terms of the unequal relationships between women and men, girls and boys, but tends to focus on dealing with the greater disadvantage of women and girls.

The third and final reason is that gender relations influence and structure the relations of production and reproduction within every known society. As Gita Sen puts it:

A gender perspective means recognising that women stand at the crossroads between production

and reproduction, between economic activity and the care of human beings, and therefore between economic growth and human development. They are workers in both spheres - those most responsible and therefore with most at stake, those who suffer most when the two spheres meet at cross-purposes, and those most sensitive to the need for better integration between the two (Sen 1995:12).

It is this positioning of women at the intersection of productive and reproductive activities that gives rise to potential synergies and trade-offs which policymakers need to be aware of in their attempts to achieve the MDGs. It also means that the MDGs, each of which relate to a particular form of deprivation or shortfall, cannot be achieved in isolation from the structural inequalities which gave rise to them. If gender inequality is part and parcel of the processes of poverty and discrimination in a society, it must figure just as integrally in the set of measures to eradicate these conditions.

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2. The geography of gender inequality

There are a number of other considerations that need to be explicitly integrated into gender-aware analyses and approaches to achieving the MDGs.

First, the nature of gender relationships and the inequalities which they embody vary considerably in time and place, leading to a 'geography of gender inequality'. In those regions of the world, for example, where women's mobility in the public domain is severely restricted by social norms, and where households are organized along corporate lines, with the control of family resources, labour and decision-making largely vested in the hands of the senior male, gender discrimination is manifested in extreme forms. This situation often results in excess levels of female

mortality in almost every age group, but particularly among the very young. The situation is exemplified in those regions with the 'missing women' phenomenon, as Amartya Sen has highlighted (Drèze and Sen 1989).

In contrast, the locales where women's ability to move in the public domain is not as severely restricted, gender discrimination is appreciably less threatening. In regions where women have the opportunities to participate in the paid work force, where control over resources and labour takes a less unified and more 'segmented' form, discrimination is evident, but it does not take quite the same life threatening form as discussed earlier.

3. Men, boys and development

...it is imperative to have an understanding and knowledge of women's deprivation relative to men, and girls' deprivation relative to boys.

Gender analysis generally tends to draw attention to the persistence of female disadvantage. However, men and boys are also central to such analysis for a number of reasons.

First, issues of poverty and disadvantage have both an absolute dimension and a relative one. In some cases, concern may be with absolute levels of female deprivation because of the implications for certain kinds of policy. These policies include those in reference to the nutritional status of mothers, which has implications for the birth-weight of babies regardless of the nutritional status of fathers. In other cases, however, it is women's disadvantage relative to men that will be the main focus because of the implications for other kinds of policy concerns, particularly concerns with equality and efficiency. In cases such as these, it is imperative to have an understanding and knowledge of women's deprivation relative to men, and girls' deprivation relative to boys.

Secondly, there are contexts and situations where it is men and boys who may suffer relative disadvantage. Widely cited examples include the excess male mortality in Russia and boys' educational underperformance in the Caribbean. Alternatively, male

disadvantage may take a different form from that of the female. For instance, economic recession may be experienced by men as loss of employment and status as the family breadwinner whereas women may experience the recession as an extension in their hours of work as they strive to compensate for the family's reduced resources. Furthermore, because the problems faced by women and men may be two sides of the same coin of family deprivation, and because families remain bound by relations of co-operation as well as conflict, men and boys have to factor in any equation to address these problems.

A third reason is that models of masculinity and femininity prevalent in a society have been found to differentiate the needs and priorities expressed by women and men as well as their capacity to address these needs and priorities. In many cases, models of masculinity to which men aspire, and which women may support, can constitute a major barrier to the ability of household members to escape from poverty. Unless there is a proper understanding of how men and women perceive social norms, efforts to transform unjust norms are likely to be hampered.

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I. Making the connections

Gender analysis is about the ability to make connections which are not always apparent in the first instance. This is so because of the compartmentalized modes of thinking imposed by disciplinary boundaries and administrative divisions and partly because of the various kinds of biases and preconceptions which cloud the understanding of gender inequality.

One set of connections relates to the linkages between production and reproduction, between economic growth and human development. A second set of connections is between the different levels of analysis: micro, meso and macro (and increasingly, the global). Macro-level forces are the product of, and in turn influence, the actions and interactions of people, women as well as men, located in the different institutional domains of society (Sen 1995).

A third set of connections is between different domains of society. While relationships within households and families are inherently gendered and their inequalities justified through familial ideologies, gender discrimination is not confined to the private domain of the home. It also operates through the institutionalised norms and practices of public institutions of state, markets and society so that private and public inequalities serve to reinforce each other. Despite their purported neutrality, markets cannot dissolve these inequalities because of the unequal terms by which men and women enter the market. This situation is reinforced by women's continued, unpaid and usually unacknowledged,

responsibilities in the home.

Public policy can and should play an important role here in offsetting these disadvantages as well as actively helping to transform the institutional norms and practices which gave rise to them.

...one of the major shortcomings in the current formulation of the very first MDG, that of halving world poverty, is that it does not make any explicit mention of the gender dimensions of poverty.

A. Gender equality and income poverty

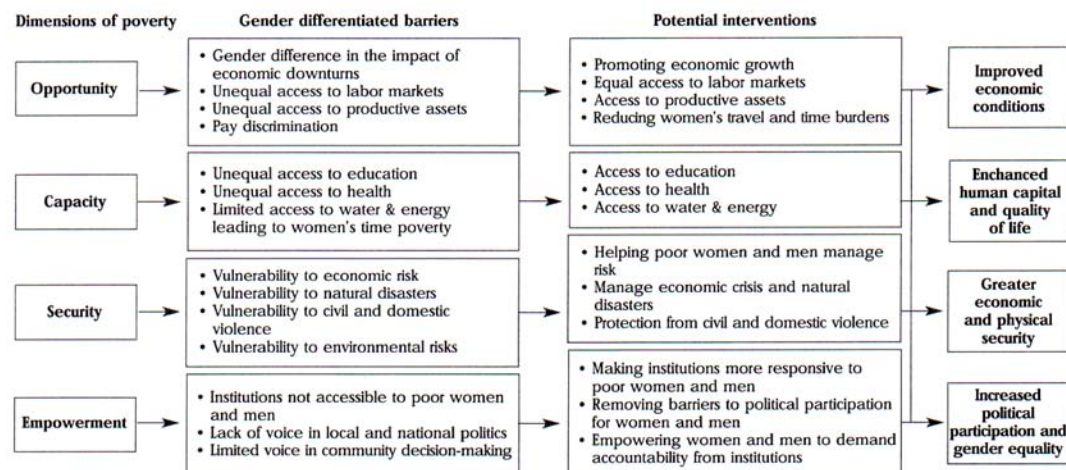
The MDGs represent an extremely important set of commitments to reduce extreme income poverty as well as some major aspects of human poverty. Unfortunately, one of the major shortcomings in the current formulation of the very first MDG, that of halving world poverty, is that it does not make any explicit mention of the gender dimensions of poverty.

Women's participation in paid work is a strong correlate of poverty in both urban and rural areas in many parts of the world. This is most evident in those places where powerful social norms restrict women's ability to take employment in the public sphere. In countries such as Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, female labour force participation is highest in the poorest households and tends to decline as households become better off. It is not that women stop working, but that their work takes a different form and happens in a different place from the public sphere – home-based and often unpaid.

Elsewhere, domestic responsibilities may constrain women's ability to access labour market opportunities, but not prevent them from taking up paid employment in the public domain. The relationship between women's employment and household poverty is likely to be somewhat different in these contexts. In Chile, it was found that women were unemployed only

in the very poorest households while in Jamaica, the poorest households were those whose female head had been unemployed for a prolonged period of time. In rural Vietnam, household poverty was associated with women's inability to diversify out of rice farming in the northern part of the country while in the south it was associated with their participation in agricultural wage labour.

Figure 2: Gender equality and connections to poverty



Source: Gender and Development Group, World Bank, *Gender Equality & the Millennium Development Goals* (World Bank, 2003). (<http://www.undp.org/gender/docs/mdgs-genderlens.pdf>)

More generally - in both rich and poor countries - household poverty determines, and is determined by the nature of women's participation in the labour market. All poor households rely on the economic contributions of their able-bodied members. However, the households are made poorer when some of their members are systematically confined to the lower echelons of the informal economy in casualized wage work, in undercapitalised own-account work, in home-based piece work or in unpaid family labour. The relationship between household poverty and women's paid activity has, if anything, become more visible over the past decades, partly in response to economic crisis and the 'push' into the labour market and partly in response to new opportunities generated in the course of globalisation. Women are now active in

wage labour on a historically unprecedented scale but at a time when labour markets have become increasingly deregulated and labour increasingly reduced to the status of a commodity.

The goals of both poverty eradication and gender equality demand, not that women be privileged over men in access to employment, but that both be able to access decent forms of work and on the same terms. Policy makers need to consider both the quantity of employment available to the poor, and to poor women in particular, as well as the quality. They need to consider measures (some of which are suggested in figure 2) for improving the returns to women's work and for helping them to secure better terms and conditions. And they need to ensure that both women and men have access to safety nets and forms of social protection that will tide them over in times of crisis. The experience from countries that have not sacrificed equity to growth demonstrates that such forms of protection work best when they are built on principles of cross-class solidarity, supported by all and supporting all.

B. Gender equality and human development

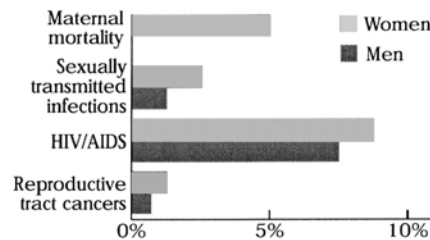
There are equity arguments for integrating gender analysis into human development efforts. Gender inequalities in hunger, health, mortality rates, education and skills are pervasive in many parts of the world and they reflect some of the factors discussed above, viz. institutionalised norms and practices and the particular options that women and girls face relative to men and boys. This is reflected in the operation of discrimination in the context of poverty. Data on household responses to crisis, illustrates the facts:

- Increases in women's work to compensate for male unemployment tends to add to already long hours of work, leading to fatigue and 'burn-out';
- Girl children are often withdrawn in larger numbers than boys

from school, undermining their chances of moving out of poverty in the future;

- The reduction of already meagre levels of consumption in ways that impinge on women's and girls' well-being to a greater extent than men's and boys';
- Higher levels of excess female mortality in times of famine or drought; and
- Seasonal fluctuations in women's bodyweight, but not in men's).

Figure 3: Global burden of disease in adults, by gender and cause, 1999



Source: *World Health Report, 2000*, as cited from *Gender and Development Group, World Bank, Gender Equality & the Millennium Development Goals (World Bank, 2003)*.

<http://www.undp.org/gender/docs/mdgs-genderlens.pdf>

Note: Measured in terms of per cent of total life lost due to premature mortality

Figure 3 is indicative of the gender inequality in health outcomes that must be addressed because they violate principles of justice and equality.

There are, however, instrumental arguments for integrating gender analysis into the achievement of MDGs. There is a necessary link between the inequalities in some of the human development outcomes, identified by the Millennium Summit, to gender inequalities in the kinds of agency permitted to women and girls in different parts of the world. This linkage is, in turn, related to the successes and failures of different governments in addressing the inequalities. There is evidence to support these arguments. Enhancing women's agency through improving their access to critical resources, such as income, is an important route through

which improvements in human development can be achieved among poor households. This may entail improvements in overall levels of well being among household members as well as by closing gender gaps in well being.

There are strategies here that need to be made central to the achievement of the MDGs.

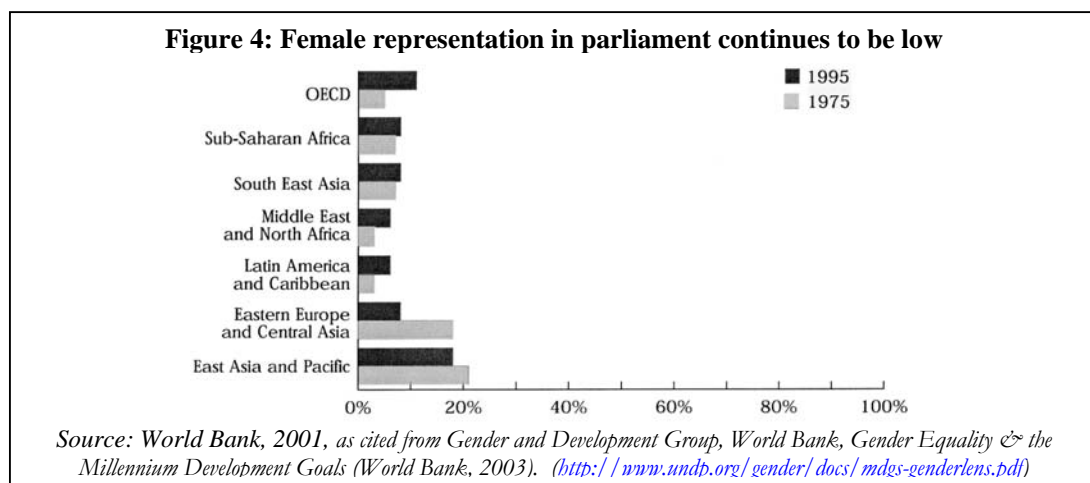
There is a necessary link between the inequalities in some of the human development outcomes, identified by the Millennium Summit, to gender inequalities in the kinds of agency permitted to women and girls...

II. Connecting capabilities and participation

A. Gender equality and women's empowerment

There are a variety of ways in which women can be empowered. These include having access to the economic, social and political resources identified by the MDGs. These resources represent the capabilities that women can bring to bear in defending their rights and dignity as human beings. Additionally, women's ability to participate in the various processes of decision-making, private as well as public, which impinge on their lives and wellbeing, are critical forms of agency. These are goals that need to be explicitly integrated into the MDGs.

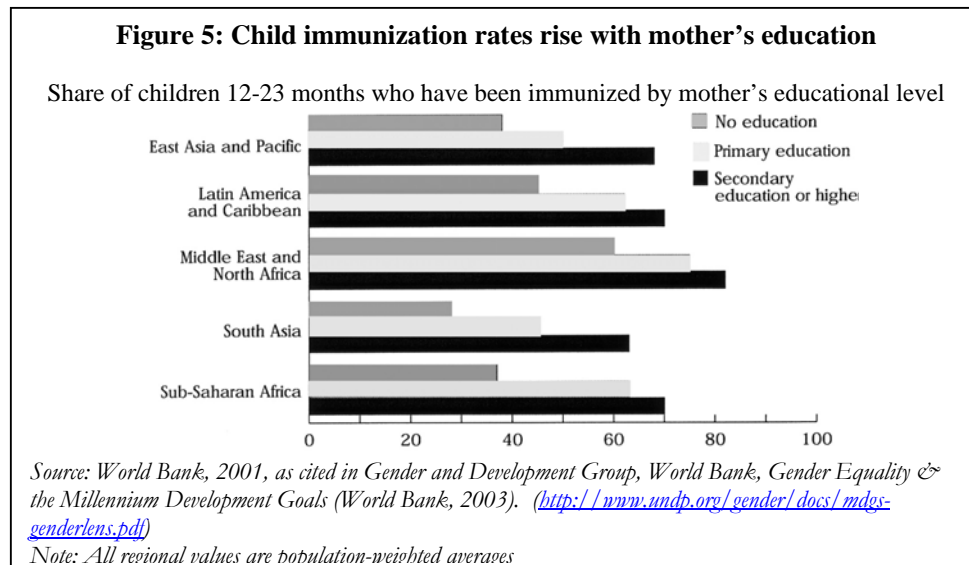
The MDGs prioritise women's access to certain kinds of resources as indicative of their empowerment. These include, among others, the social (closing the gender gap in education), economic (increase in women's access to waged employment in the non agricultural sector) and political (increase in the number of seats held by women in parliament).



There are lessons to be learnt from studies which demonstrate that access to particular resources have helped women to empower themselves. At the same time, there are also lessons to learn from studies that suggest the reverse. Unpacking these different outcomes to look at underlying causes draws attention to the social relationships through which they were brought about.

B. Education

Education is not simply about jobs. Education is also about access to new knowledge, information and ideas as well as the capacity to use these effectively. These are enhancements of the capabilities that individuals bring to their goals in many areas of life, aside from the labour market. They explain some aspects of the correlation between women’s education and various human development outcomes referred to earlier.



Education affects health as much as the other way around. Findings from various studies show that a mother’s education

directly relates to whether or not she will attend antenatal clinics, that births will be attended by trained medical personnel, that complete immunization of children will take place (figure 5) and that sick children will receive timely and effective medical care. This is particularly evident in poorer areas where proper health services are not available. In such contexts, education puts women at an advantage in processing and utilising new information and accessing available services when there is none or a lack of such services in closer locales. Education also increases women's capacity to deal with the outside world, including the world of health service providers.

Education increases the likelihood that women will look after their own, as well as the family's, well-being. A study from rural Zimbabwe had examined the factors that affect the likelihood of women taking up contraception and antenatal care, both these measures having positive implications for the reduction of maternal mortality. The study found that education and paid work positively affected women's use of contraception and antenatal care. Women with low levels of education were less likely to seek prenatal care within the first trimester of their pregnancy and to continue to visit antenatal facilities throughout their pregnancy.

Education may have an impact on power relations within the home. In Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe, educated women were found to have more leverage in bargaining within their families and husbands and a greater say in spending household income than uneducated women. In rural Bangladesh, educated women in rural areas were likely to participate in a wider range of decision-making than uneducated women.

Educated women also appear less likely to suffer from domestic violence. A study from Calcutta in West Bengal notes that educated women were better able to deal with violent husbands. Access to secondary stages of education may have an important contributory role in enhancing women's capacity to exercise control in their lives' through a combination of literacy and numeracy skills,

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and enhanced self-esteem. A similar finding was documented in rural Bangladesh. Research suggests that women put a great deal of emphasis on education for their daughters. This is to ensure that the daughters will be able to stand up to their husbands and have the resources to fall back on should they ever need to become independent.

Societies which are characterised by extreme forms of gender inequality not only restrict women's access to education but curtail the effects of education they do receive

The value given to education and how it is utilised will be mediated within the wider context in which it is provided. These are other less positive findings from some studies. Societies which are characterised by extreme forms of gender inequality not only restrict women's access to education but curtail the effects of education they do receive. Where women's role in society is defined purely in reproductive terms, education is perceived as the means to equip girls to be better wives and mothers or increase their chances of getting a suitable husband. Although these are legitimate aspirations given the realities of the society, they do little to equip girls and women to question the world around them and the subordinate status assigned to them. Indeed, findings from rural India, which report suggest that a mother's education may also result in unequal reduction in the mortality risk of boys and girls, further widening the differentials.

The power relations embodied in the delivery of education must also be considered.

The power relations embodied in the delivery of education must also be considered. This is particularly the case in the formal educational system and represents a second set of qualifications concerning education as a route to women's empowerment. The content of education often serves to mirror and legitimize wider social inequalities. Formal educational content often denigrates physical labour, largely the preserve of the poor; and domestic activities, largely the preserve of women. Gender stereotyping in the curriculum, particularly in text books, serve to reinforce traditional gender roles within society and to act as a barrier to the kind of futures that girls are able to imagine for themselves. Indeed, the design of education has often reinforced the biases of many parents that the purpose of schooling is to prepare girls for their

domestic roles. This leaves them with few options in terms of earning a living, except in poorly paid, casualized forms of work on the margins of the labour market, and curtails the potential of education to improve their life chances.

The 'hidden curriculum' of school practice reinforces messages about girls' inferior status on a daily basis and provides them with a negative learning experience...

Social inequalities are also reproduced through interactions within the schooling system. There is evidence of widespread gender bias among teachers; for example boys receive more attention than girls from the teacher. Interviews with teachers confirm the resilient influence of gender stereotypes, including a dim view of the abilities and potential of female children. The absence, or minority presence, of female teachers is likely to be a problem in many contexts. Reinforcing the male dominance of public services, it can act as a barrier to girls' access to, and completion of schooling. The 'hidden curriculum' of school practice reinforces messages about girls' inferior status on a daily basis and provides them with a negative learning experience, thus creating a culture of low self-esteem and low aspirations. The abusive behaviour meted out to girls within the educational system in a number of countries has also been documented. While in some cases, sexual relationships between boys and girls were consensual, more often they were found to be abusive, entered into by girls under coercion from older male students as well as male teachers.

These aforementioned limitations do not negate the earlier more positive findings. They do serve, however, to caution against assuming that effects will be uniform across all contexts. Various aspects of educational provision do militate against its empowerment potential as well as against its ability to attract and retain women and girls, particularly those from poor backgrounds. Moreover, important and critical learnings have yet to find their way into the design of educational curriculum, either within the formal schooling system or in later vocational training. These include the facts that many women the world over play a critical role in earning household livelihoods, and increasing numbers of women head their own households.

The meaning of education and its potential to improve the capabilities of subordinate groups must be strongly considered.

...the strongest effects of paid work are in the area of destabilising power relations, both within and outside the family.

C. Paid work

There is persuasive evidence to suggest that access to paid work can enhance women's agency in critical ways. At the same time, studies of the effects of women's access to paid work also provide a contradictory set of conclusions.

Paid work carried out within the home can serve to shift the balance of power within the family. This is borne out in studies of Bangladeshi homeworkers in the United Kingdom, of women engaged in industrial homework in Mexico City and of women recipients of microcredit services in a variety of contexts. The findings all testify to the importance of women's ability to contribute to their households' survival and security to their own sense of self-worth and the ability to have a say in household decision-making.

By and large, however, the strongest effects of paid work are in the area of destabilising power relations, both within and outside the family. This is suggested by the literature relating to women's access to wage employment. Some of this evidence comes from the agricultural sector in a number of countries. There appears to be a perceptible shift in women's agency as result of entry into waged labour opportunities generated by the expansion of non-traditional agricultural exports. However, changes in women's life chances as a result of entry into waged work appear more marked when the focus is on the non-agricultural sector. This is partly because such employment is generally associated with migration by women out of rural areas and away from the patriarchal controls of kinship and community. The conclusion of a

study on Chinese women working in export factories echoes that of a number of other such studies from around the world:

...we cannot dismiss as meaningless the voices of the many young women who affirm a sense of achievement and pride in the lives they make for themselves as factory workers. And hardship may be a price worth paying if the cash they earn allows them to change something they disliked in their past or that they wish to avoid in their future (based on Lee 1998:80-84; Zhang 1987:19 cited in Davin 2001).

The division of labour in domestic chores and child care is rarely renegotiated across the genders.

Many studies also point to the highly exploitative conditions of work in industries, which promote flexible labour practices in order to compete internationally. Extremely long hours of work during busy seasons are often combined with lay-offs in the slack season. Many women who leave rural areas to take up jobs in the towns in order to make new friends and build a life for themselves do not have time to take up such opportunities. The division of labour in domestic chores and childcare is rarely renegotiated across the genders. Despite their increased labour input into paid work, women (particularly married women) either continue to bear the main burden of domestic work, or share it with other female members of the household, often their daughters. By and large, gender inequalities in work burdens appear to be intensified.

Finally, the attention to export oriented manufacturing and agriculture should not detract attention from an important fact of life. The vast majority of working women do not work in these sectors but are to be found in the informal economy concentrated in the most casualised forms of waged labour and low-value own-account enterprises. It is difficult to see how earnings generated by prostitution, domestic service or daily labour on construction sites - which is where the poorest women are likely to be found - will change women's subordinate status at home or at work.

Organizational capacity is a critical precondition for any struggle for rights at work. Indeed, the right to organize is recognised as a core social principle by the international community. There has been a great deal of controversy about

whether labour standards, including the right to organize, can be improved through trade sanctions. Whatever the outcome of this debate, however, the reality remains. Globally enforced labour standards will do little to change the lives and livelihoods of the vast majority of working women in the world who work in the informal economy where such standards are impossible, or impossibly expensive, to enforce. A more inclusive approach would be to institute a universal social floor based on supporting all and supported by all.

Most poorer countries in the world have demonstrated a commitment to universal provision of basic services, such as health and education. Many have also sought to institute other measures to provide some degree of security to the vulnerable: low cost insurance, microfinance, public distribution systems and so on. The idea of a social floor does not rule out the possibility of fighting for improved labour standards in the trade sector; it makes it more likely. Without some form of safety net to fall back on, the right to organize and to engage in collective bargaining will remain formal rather than real. And unless this safety net is built on principles of universalism, it is unlikely that it will fulfil its role of providing safety. Services intended only for the poor will always remain poor services.

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III. Voice, representation and women's empowerment

...if the highest decision-making body in a country does not represent different interests among its citizenry, it cannot qualify to be a particularly representative body.

The concern with the number of seats held by women in national parliaments moves the focus of empowerment into the arena of politics and into the struggle for voice and representation. Clearly, if the highest decision-making body in a country does not represent different interests among its citizenry, it cannot qualify to be a particularly representative body. However, the greater participation of women in national political processes should be matched by, and indeed built on, greater participation in local political processes where poorer women are more likely to be able to exercise some voice.

There is evidence that governments can do a great deal to promote such participation. In India, where there is now 33 per cent reservation of seats for women in local government, a number of states have added further inducements to local communities to encourage women's participation. Madhya Pradesh and Kerala require that one third of participants in the regular open village meetings be female before they are considered to form a quorum. Kerala earmarks 10 per cent of development funds received by local councils from the state to be used for 'women's development' and managed by representative all-female groups of the village assembly. The evidence suggests that as women become more accustomed to participation in local government, the benefits of their presence are becoming clearer. They have represented a different set of priorities from men, they have allocated funds differently from men and their leadership of village councils has led to more active participation by other women, a greater willingness to ask questions and to address requests or complaints.

IV. Agency and collective action: building capabilities and participation from the grassroots

...the likelihood is that the political pressure necessary to ensure these actions from above will have to come 'from below', from various forms of agency exercised by, and on behalf of, marginalised groups seeking to claim their rights in various arenas.

There is evidence of change in those areas that are considered by the international development community to be indicators of progress towards women's empowerment. In each case, however, there are qualifications about the extent to which progress with the indicators is sufficient to achieve the goals. These qualifications relate to the social relationships embodied in these changes, the extent to which they promote new forms of agency for women and their strategic potential.

There is clearly room for further public policy to help realise more fully the transformatory potential embodied in these changes. At the same time, it is also clear that there will be powerful forces, some within the policy domain itself, which will militate against this happening. But not all forms of public action need to be undertaken by the state or the donor community. Indeed, the likelihood is that the political pressure necessary to ensure these actions from above will have to come 'from below', from various forms of agency exercised by, and on behalf of, marginalised groups seeking to claim their rights in various arenas.

Agency is central to social transformation and the kinds of change signalled by the MDGs do contribute to the enhancement of women's agency. However, agency has to be exercised on a collective basis if such changes are to translate into structural transformation. It is necessary, therefore to look towards new

forms of association which can bring women into the public domain to collectively challenge patriarchal power across a wide range of institutional spheres.

There is, of course, nothing inherent to associations which make them vehicles for the promotion of gender equality goals, whether they are women's organizations or not. Many may be specifically set up to protect an elitist status quo or to promote a welfarist agenda for women. Equally, however, others can help to expand the space available for democratic activity. These groups may not necessarily operate in the political sphere, but they become 'democratically relevant' when they seek to contest relations of dominance within their own sphere of operation.

...it is not simply the formally constituted political organizations which are relevant to the practice of citizenship.

All forms of struggle against the arbitrary exercise of power by those who are placed in a position of authority (managers, landlords, party bosses) contribute to the struggle to expand democratic space. Having a say in the way one is ruled is part of the process by which recognized procedures for participation and accountability are established. Where these are not established by those in authority, they have to be obtained through struggles 'from below'. Struggles to improve the public provision of social services, to render them more responsive to the needs of the poor, may also be counted as a part of the process of building and strengthening citizenship identity. Thus, it is not simply the formally constituted political organizations which are relevant to the practice of citizenship. All forms of organizations and interest-groups that succeed in building the conditions which would enable citizens to act as citizens, are relevant and necessary.

Examples of collective action and social mobilization that have succeeded in giving voice to women as well as men, from poorer sections of the population, can be found in many contexts and take many forms. These include:

- Self-help groups and microcredit groups formed around microfinancial services of various kinds;
- labour organisations that have sprung up to address the

interests of women working in different sectors, including the informal economy;

- social movements around issues such as fair access to land, water and other vital resources;
- initiatives to promote greater awareness about HIV/AIDS, which becomes a campaign for sex workers' rights.

Such organizations, like all forms of human agency, have a dynamic of their own: local struggles go national or even international. What starts out as welfare becomes transformed into a demand for recognition as citizens. Resistance to an infrastructure project starts an international debate about environmental sustainability. It is the building of these kinds of connections around some felt need or perceived injustice that women's capabilities as individuals can be transformed into collective capabilities in the struggle for gender justice.

“There is no time to lose if we are to reach the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015. Only by investing in the world's women can we expect to get there.”

*- Kofi Annan
United Nations Secretary General*

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