



University of Mumbai

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS

**GENDER, POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT:
Gender Sensitive Budgeting and Other 'Best Practices'.**

**BY
Ritu Dewan**

WORKING PAPER UDE13/1/2004
JANUARY 2004

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOICS
UNIVERSITY OF MUMBAI
Vidyanagari, Mumbai 400 098.

UNIT:
Center of Women's Studies

Documentation Sheet

Title:
GENDER, POVERTY AND DEVELOPMEN:
Gender Sensitive Budgeting and Other 'Best Practices'.

Authors (S):
Ritu Dewan

External Participation:

W.P. No.: UDE13/1/2004
Date of Issue: January 2004

Contents: 18 P, 8R.
No. of Copies: 100

Abstract

The dominance of the mainstream paradigm of growth is being increasingly superseded by the Sustainable Human Development approach. No Concept of development, however, can be complete unless and until it incorporates the gender component at each and every level. The major focus of this paper is on theoretical and conceptual issues, which are defined primarily on the basis of the gendered economic reality of existence and survival. The section after identification of crucial gendered poverty components will deal with a primarily gendered critique of identified 'Best Practices', followed by a somewhat detailed presentation of Gender Sensitive Budgeting initiatives particularly in so-called 'hard' sectors within the context of a Best Practice. In lieu of a conclusion are raised issues of gendered conceptual and practical linkages between theory and experience, perceived within the broader perspective of redefining the origin of poverty as well as reassessing current anti-poverty growth strategies.

Key Words: Anti-Poverty Strategies, Gender, Best Practieces, Gender Sensitive Budgeting.

JEL Code(S): I30, I31, I32, O10, O20, Z00.

GENDER, POVENTY AND DEVELOPMENT:
Gender Sensitive Budgeting and Other ‘Best Practices’.

Ritu Dewan

I. INTRODUCTION

The dominance of the mainstream paradigm of growth is being increasingly superseded by the human development approach. The reasons are many – the collapse of the South East Asian economies, the emerging negative impacts of the neo-liberal model of growth, the opposition of vulnerable sections of people to continued poverty. The most recent and extremely crucial addition to this concept of development is that of sustainability. The Sustainable Human Development approach which focuses on long-felt distribution-related dimensions, necessarily implies the identification and utilization of indicators and statistics.

The concept of Sustainable Human Development – in fact, of any concept of development-cannot be complete unless and until it incorporates the gender component at each and every level. Any analysis and policy that leaves half the population out of its ambit becomes unjust not only to the neglected section but irrelevant to the entire development strategy and even to society. It is in this context that the mainstreaming of gender becomes crucial to economic planning, macroeconomics, poverty alleviation programmes, etc. at all stages. The mere addition of a column relating to ‘women’s issues’ does not, of course, lead to the incorporation of gender into any kind of economic or extra-economic data system, analysis and strategy. It is essential, however, to emphasise at the outset that gender analysis by itself cannot be adequate. Gender, which is an asymmetry, is based on the fact that though men do have economic and social power, this power is diluted by various societal and situational conditions that prevail,

and also by specific forces that operate at a particular phase of historical development of a country.

The major focus of this paper is on theoretical and conceptual issues which are defined primarily on the basis of the gendered economic reality of existence and survival. The section after identification of crucial gendered poverty components will deal with a Primarily gendered critique of identified Best Practices, followed by a somewhat detailed presentation of Gender Sensitive Budgeting initiatives within the context of a Best Practice. In lieu of a conclusion are raised issues of conceptual and practical linkages between theory and experience, perceived within the broader perspective of redefining the origin of poverty as well as reassessing current Anti-poverty Growth Strategies.

II. GENDER PERSPECTIVE OF POVERTY

It must be stated at the outset that poverty issues in different countries need to be perceived in a specific historical setting, given the fact that all Asian nations have undergone colonization. This historical perspective has of necessity to be integrated with the current location of each economy in the prevailing international scenario which is yet dominated by the mainstream paradigm. This paradigm, as noted earlier, is being increasingly debated and sought to be replaced by county-specific alternatives, all focusing in varying degrees on the concept of sustainable human development central to which are the issues of poverty and gender. In this section I will deal with several aspects of poverty as perceived from the gender lens – the only way, I believe to scientifically understand any issue. Any alternative any issue. Any alternative method of understanding poverty and evolving pro-poor strategies of development can only be gender-blind, not merely gender-neutral.

It is a generally accepted fact that, in the main, inequality within and not between countries, is an important constraint on possibilities for pro-poor growth. This is so even when inequality levels remain the same over a period of time. China and India, with the largest population and the maximum poor, also reported relatively high rates of growth in

the nineties. Low poverty reduction in these two countries can therefore only be explained by increasing or continuing inequality.

The World Bank too has now accepted this inter-relationship. “ Countries with high levels of initial inequality have reduced poverty less for given rates of growth than countries with low initial inequality, and if growth is accompanied by increasing inequality, its impact on poverty will be reduced: (worldbank.org).

Consequently, reduction in both inequality and poverty become prerequisites for increase in growth levels. Inequalities, in their full economic content, include not only the more obvious components relating to income, expenditure and consumption, but also contain within each a strong gender dimension. Added to these are gendered societal diversities of all developmental aspects such as availability of and access to education, nutrition, food security, health, employment, social services, decision-making powers, political participation, democratic rights – the list is endless.

The absence of gender incorporation and analysis in both economic policies and anti-poverty strategies leads to misallocation of resource as well as a virtual denial of the existence of households and ‘vulnerable’ sections. Policies that do not take into account gender discrimination – particularly those relating to access to resources and production outlets – negate women’s multiple role in production, reproduction and maintenance tasks, as also in the distribution and absorption of resource within producing households. This brings into question the very appropriateness of using market analysis in underdeveloped countries where the unit of production is primarily the household rather than the firm, where the non-monetised sector still predominated, and where the motive force of production remains subsistence for the majority of the population both in the urban and rural sectors (see Dewan 1999).

The loci of economics and patriarchal power determine how, when, where and who makes choices. A woman’s choice is determined for her by her economic resource position, by ‘home responsibilities’ assigned to her by society, and by socio-cultural

Sanctions imposed on her. As a consumer, the woman acts as the purchasing agent for the family and buys the raw materials that she uses in household production. As a producer, she is involved mainly in subsistence economic activities, which, even though not recognized as work, underlie the basic survival strategies of specially poor households.

The exclusion of the concept of the family thus has important consequences for pro-poor Growth Strategies as well as for Anti-Poverty Programmes. As many of the commodities produced at home are substituted for purchased goods, what is maximized is a common utility function in which the household is the unit of inquiry. This utility function is generally equated with that of the household head. The assumption here is thus that the head of the household is genderless – *neutrum oeconomicum*.

There can be no debate that gender disparities exist; all demographic data prove this to be true. Life Expectancy Rates are less for girls, as are Live Births, Non-Immunised children, Child and Adult Literacy Rates, Dropout Rates, Nutrition levels. What is extremely worrisome is that sex ratios are declining sharply specially for the 0-5 age-group, implying that the situation will worsen in the long run. While most countries do attempt to collect gendered demographic data, omission of age-specificity reduces the sharpness of analysis of the ‘soft’ social sector.

The fundamental problem, however, arises when data collection and hence analysis is based on the notion of the ‘household’. This is generally true of most ‘hard’ economic information such as consumption, expenditure, per capita income, poverty levels, etc. The presumption here is that there are no inequalities within a single household, that its ‘well-being’ is represented by the head of the household. This assumption is one of the most prevalent conceptual biases in both poverty as well as gender analysis. In most Asian countries the ‘head’ is determined by culture and tradition rather than by the economic definition of ‘main earner’. This is very common, for instance, in India, where the reality is that a large number of particularly rural households are female-headed.

Every Economy is characterized by two interdependent systems – the system of Production of material goods and the system of reproduction of the labour-force, patriarchy being fully integrated with both. The relationship between growth (though I would prefer to use the concept of development.) poverty and gender can only be perceived in all its complexities if gendered is integrated at all levels – in the concepts, methodologies, data disaggregation, programme formulation, implementation evaluation.

III.BEST PRACTICES

A large number of what is termed as ‘Best Practices’ have been identified by various institutions and entities in the context of Pro-Poor Growth and Poverty Alleviation Strategies in the Asian context. It needs to be emphasized at the outset that a Best Practice can be considered only in the specific context of the concrete analysis of a particular country, and possibly even a region or section of people. I will not obviously present a long list of these practices. Instead, the intention is to identify a few that have already been termed so by national and international institutions, and which I believe could be successfully adapted in different countries keeping regional specificities in mind.

1. Township Enterprises.

Township Enterprises were initiated in China in the 1970’s with the purpose of expanding rural industrialization, enterprise capacity and human resource development. Ownership alternatives range from the individual to cooperatives to joint ventures. Government assistance is given to those that employ fully local resources, those that function with outside investment, and those that use modern technology. This aid is only partly in the form of capital; training, management skills, study missions, trade fairs and exhibitions constituting the other components. The latest figures available for 1998 show that these enterprises exceed 20 millions in

number, 7000 of them having entered the external export market as their pricing and quality have reached international standards.

Township Enterprises could be particularly significant for Rural Anti-Poverty Programme, as they create co-existence and mutual dependence between the agricultural and town sectors, thus providing employment in the rural sector where productivity too would increase, simultaneously constraining direct migration to metropolises. Growth of rural non-farm activities, with State support, performs an important role in reduction in rural poverty by absorbing the permanent surplus in labour (see unescap.org/rural).

This particular illustration would be extremely useful for countries with a large rural-employed population, but may not be very beneficial for nations where the major source of rural income earned comes from the non-farm agricultural sector. This is precisely why it is essential, as stated at the outset, that each so-called Best Practice can be applicable only after a concrete analysis of the concrete situation prevalent in a specific country.

2. Rural Saemaul Undong

Initiated in the early 1970's in the Republic of Korea, this scheme focuses on country organization and infrastructural development in rural areas. Villages elect their resident men and women to Infrastructure Committees for the Purpose of construction of village roads, small reservoirs, local communications, etc. about half the cost of investment being contributed by the villagers themselves. This is one of the most significant achievements in modern history, 20,000 villages being fully covered within a relatively short period of three decades. The State too saves a large amount of finance, as it invests only half of what it would otherwise have. Further, local supervision by the beneficiaries themselves ensures both timely and high quality construction. This Best Practice, most significantly, empowers women both as

decision-makers as well as those who are impacted most negatively by lack of infrastructure particularly water.

3. Integrated Plant Nutrition Systems

This Best Practice has been implemented in Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and the Philippines for several years. The primary focus is on sustainable production, specifically in areas where the soil has been depleted due to the impact of inorganic inputs. The beneficiaries are poor farmers, and among them mainly women, who are taught the importance of collection of organic farm waste including compost, green and farmyard manure. The trained women utilize their own funds and labour to prepare the basic installation for compost production, the crop cultivated of necessity being high-value vegetables. These beneficiaries are then taught to train other women, the multiplier effect thus impacting several villages across the region. The major benefit is obviously that the State has little expenditure to make, as the initial capacity-building of the women is primarily sufficient to raise their income, increase their mobility as well as to widen their horizons.

4. Pani Panchayat (Participatory Irrigation Management)

The Pani Panchayat was initiated by an NGO in the province of Maharashtra in India about a decade ago by the setting up of elected village committees consisting of both men and women. This Best Practice, based on the concept of collective rights, believes that water is a community asset that must be shared by all, including the landless. Water User's Societies have since emerged by people's actions in several regions all over the country on not only common property resources but also on canals owned and operated by the state governments with the purpose of optimizing distribution. Villagers are provided non-technical expertise in local languages with the voluntary involvement of a large number of highly trained engineers. Tools used include booklets, posters, slides, 3-D models, etc., form being developed and tested through participatory action research processes at the village level.

This Best Practice is perceived as being so successful that several provincial governments have been ‘inspired’ to move out of distribution of irrigation water and instead hand it over to cooperatives of farmers. The problem here is two-fold. One, the withdrawal of the state also implies the dismantling of a regulatory mechanism. Second, and this is much more anti-poor, water cooperatives are increasingly being usurped by rich farmers who operate against the very concept of the Pani Panchayat.

5. People’s Health Campaigns

The People’s Health Campaigns do not strictly fit into the definition of a Best Practice in the context of Anti-Poverty Programmes, yet the results are so successfully that I felt it necessary to at least mention it. An extremely large number of NGO’s have come together, both nationally and internationally, to initiate what they terms as a ‘Grassroots-to-Global Movement’ to carry out a ‘Health for All’ campaign. The People’s Health Assembly, consisting of health and science-related organizations as well as women’s organizations from diverse backgrounds, focus on highlighting health as a vital social and political issue. The background of this campaign in what they call a ‘global wake-up call’ being given to governments around the world, reminding them of their pledge made in 1978 to provide health for all by the year 2000. The main objectives of this Best Practice are basic improvement in public health services, social regulation of the private medical sector, and sensitization to women’s needs.

6. Micro Credit Programmes

Local micro-finance programmes were initially launched by women’s groups and NGO’s as one component of the development strategy to empower women through increased income in both rural and urban areas. I will obviously not go into the details of the micro credit method and the numerous illustrations of the role it performs in

Anti-Poverty Strategies, a vast array of books having been written on them. Rather, I will restrict my argument to the emerging critique of these schemes.

One, the high rate of interest charged by several agencies, often exceeding 25 per cent per annum. Women thus seem to make good business sense, and a source of super profits, particularly because they generally repay on time. Two, impact studies have shown that programme agents often pressurize women ‘beneficiaries’ for repayment on time. Instead, it would be more sensitive and humane to focus on what had been originally planned – evolution of strategies to empower beneficiaries. Further, results of several field surveys show that loan recycling is becoming quite widespread. Every loan to a women does not mean empowerment; studies have shown that in some regions in Bangladesh and approximate two-thirds of loans to women are controlled by men. Additionally, the recognition of the heterogeneity of the poor into upper, middle and ‘core’ poor makes the identification of ‘Best Practice’ design features for poverty alleviation difficult (see Hulme and Mosley, 1996, pp.124-135. Also, Wood and Sharif, 1997).

Importantly, micro finance attempts to develop self-employment in the informal sector, thus reducing the role of the State, and more than that, concealing the dramatic decline in formal sector employment that characterizes all Asian countries. In the ultimate sense, poverty, particularly among women, is caused not merely by low income but also by non-access to resources, engrained inequalities at all levels, and lack of pro-poor macro and sometimes even micro policies.

7. Sensitising and Capacity Building of Officials

Probably among the Best Practices of all, applicable to all countries and at levels, is that of the sensitization and capacity building of officials who design and implement policies and programmes. this gender sensitization applies to both men and women, additional aspects being that of reform-mindedness and technical qualifications. A process of dialogues and negotiation should be initiated not only with women

beneficiaries, but also among officials themselves. Coordination tools that could be utilized include training workshops, and also cooperation at inter-agency levels among governmental institutions. This process needs to be both horizontally and vertically operative, additional linkages being established formally and informally with research institutions as well as with NGO's. The end result would surely lead to greater accountability and transparency. As yet this Best Practice is not being ideally followed in any county, although it seems that Morocco has achieved some level of success.

IV. GENDER SENSITIVE BUDGETING AS A BEST PRACTICE

The first Gender Sensitive Budgeting (GSB) initiative was introduced almost two decades ago in Australia, and has since been launched in several countries around the world. Before going into details explaining the analytical and methodological tools involved in GSB, it is necessary to define what this initiative means.

Budgets contain three macroeconomic policies relating to exchange rate, money and public finance. These policies are informed by macroeconomic statistics consisting of national accounts; government finance; external trade and balance of payments; and money and banking. Social and demographic statistics include population, employment, health, nutrition, and education.

Gender Sensitive Budget analysis identifies implications and impacts for women and girls as compared to men and boys – the fundamental yet relatively new aspect of integration of gender inequality and public finance. The generally accepted purpose is to see whether 'public expenditures are allocated in ways that promote or hinder gender with a view towards reprioritizing public resources towards gender-equitable patterns of revenue collection and resource use' (UNDP/SEPED).

It is therefore first of all necessary to recognize that there is a gender dimension to macroeconomic objectives such as monetary, exchange rate and fiscal policies; to

macroeconomic aggregates such as savings and investment, exports and imports. And, of course, the acceptance of a gender perspective to growth, and productivity, to human development and equity. GSB initiatives question the long-held acceptance of the belief that budgets are gender-neutral in terms of both their conceptualization and their impact.

Methodological Approached of GSB Initiatives

GSB analysis is based mainly on one of the three methodological approaches.

1. *Audit of Distribution of Actual Inputs. Activities and Outputs* – linking of expenditures to actual participation in activities provided by the government, the purpose being to fine-tune programmes and improve benefit to beneficiaries.
2. *Evaluation of Adequacy of Funding for Women's Empowerment and Realisation of Rights* – comparison of actual and required expenditure to achieve specified objectives.
3. *Budget Planning and Appraisal* – individual and intra-household assessment; contribution of unequal and unpaid care work in the context of expenditure cuts and reforms.

Analytical Tools of GSB

Various analytical tools are utilized by GSB analysis.

1. *Gender Aware Sectoral Policy Evaluations* – gendered analysis of impact of policies by using the methods of Desk Reviews, Surveys, and Cost-Benefit Analysis..

2. *Gender-Disaggregated Benefit Incidence Analysis of Public Expenditure* – to examine the extent to which women/men and girls/boys benefit from expenditure on public services. The Method here is to use household surveys in order to calculate unit costs of service, followed by calculation of number of units utilized by various categories of beneficiaries. Cross-checking of official data sources regarding beneficiary lists are also carried out.
3. *Gender-Disaggregated Beneficiary Assessments* – to examine priorities of actual beneficiaries regarding public services and spending through conducting opinion polls, group discussions, etc.
4. *Gender Disaggregated Revenue Incidence Analysis* calculates the relative amount of direct and indirect taxes and user fees.
5. *Gender-Disaggregated Analysis of Impact of Budget on Time Use* makes visible the relationship between national budgets and the care economy. The methods used include household time-use surveys; calculation of time spent on paid and unpaid work, and gross household product, mapping of changes in private and public services and expenditures.
6. *Gender-Aware Budget Statement* can be used by Sectoral ministries to assess implication of the national budget on the Sectoral budget.
7. *Gender-Responsive Medium-Term Macroeconomic Policy Framework* disaggregates existing variables by gender, introduces new variables, and constructs new models incorporating both national and household income accounts reflecting unpaid work.

Selected Gender Sensitive Budgeting Initiatives as Best Practices

1. *Australia*: The first ever GSB analysis was started by the Government of Australia from 1984 to 1996. Even though it focused on the expenditure rather than the revenue side, it inspired other GSB initiatives.
2. *South Africa*: Termed as the Women's Budget Initiative (**WBI**), it was begun in 1995 after the first ever-democratic elections held in the region. It is the best known example, involving components from both inside and outside the government. In 1997, the Department of Finance under the Commonwealth Gender Budget Initiative started a parallel initiative.
3. *Sri Lanka*: Inspired by the Commonwealth Initiative, the Government in 1998 linked up five ministries – Health; Education; Social Services; Agriculture and Land; Industrial Development. The Sri Lankan GSB is one of the better attempts at integrating the gender perspective into national budgetary assessment, analysis, allocation, and planning mechanisms. Measures have already been developed to correct budget neutrality in education, agriculture and industry.
4. *Bangladesh*: Researchers, activists, etc have introduced pro-poor, pro-gender and pro-environment budgeting initiatives. Also, links have been established with grass-roots and participatory approaches. The result is quite positive – regular consultations by the Finance Ministry before budget finalisation.
5. *Nepal*: In 2001 the UNDP began assisting gender assessments of health, education and agriculture sectors, Gender Budget Audit of the Finance Ministry under these headings beginning in 2002. Also, programme effects on women and poor are planned to be done by the ministries of agriculture, labour, education, population and environment. However, bottom-up planning is restricted by the highly centralized budgetary process.

6. *India*: Several provincial governments in India, along with NGO's, have begun to promote participatory local development planning and budgeting, as well as expanding transparency regarding local development expenditure. Some attempts supported by the UN have been made in the last few years particularly in terms of institutional and individual projects being conducted on time series and sector-specific analysis of union and state budgets as well as gendered analysis of policies in health, education and employment.

Critique of Gender Sensitive Budgeting Analysis

Gender Sensitive Budgeting initiatives are an extremely significant addition to our perception and methodology about the extent, nature and intensity of poverty and anti-poverty strategies in all their complexities. There are, however, certain points at issue which need to be debated and resolved if GSB analysis is to become truly relevant to the economic and societal reality of women. I will mention these aspects in short, certain connections already having been established in the analysis presented so far. These debatable points do not in any way imply that the methodology of GSB initiatives itself should be rejected; rather, the purpose is to sharpen GSB tools and approaches, and to primarily locate them in a concrete situation, situated, of necessity, in the broader perspective of anti-poverty policies and strategies.

Generally GSB analysis focuses more on 'soft' sectors rather than 'hard' sectors, thus again marginalizing and isolating women and their issues. Little work is being done on trade; balance of payments; exchange rates, money and banking; direct and indirect taxes; savings and investment.

The existing definition and usage of GSB is sometimes problematic as it accepts as 'given' the prevailing macroeconomic policies, and as it functions within these 'sacred' parameters. Few studies go beyond these boundaries to question and debate them. The generally accepted definition of GSB itself therefore needs to be examined and possibly widened.

The accepted definition of the purpose of GSB – whether “*public expenditures are allocated in ways that promote or hinder gender equality with a view towards re-prioritising public resources towards gender-equitable patterns of revenue collection and resource use*” – does not deal with basic macro issues including fundamentals such as debt/GDP ratios; disinvestments; etc. Also, there is little debate on expanding the national cake: in fact, the debate is sometimes reduced to ‘take from men and give more to women’.

V. IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

Poverty and the struggle against its persistence has to be understood within the context of the prevailing dominant development paradigm, not ‘merely’ the current scenario but, keeping in mind the shared historical colonial-developmental experience of the region, also the persistence of semi-feudalism. Hence, the co-existence of market as well as non-market sectors have to be linked to the broader aspect of poverty, our main concern. Even in urban areas formal and informal markets in the same economic sector have identical systematic integration of formal production and informal labour structures.

Few, if any, anti-poverty strategies in Asia take into account the fact that one of the major structural constraints in reducing poverty and inequalities is that relating to land and the distribution of resources. And among these possibly the most difficult to demolish are gender inequalities.

Numerous field surveys have concluded that women and girls are the ‘poorest among the poor’, receiving less nutrition, protein levels, medical assistance, education at all levels, income, employment – thus negating all aspects that define Sustainable Human Development. Inter-regional and rural-urban differentials complicate the issue further. Numerous NGOs who have been working and organizing on these issues for over two decades now in most Asian countries report identical results. Most of the attempts to theoretically examine gender issues as well as to resolve them through action have concentrated on the relatively ‘soft’ disparities, that is, focusing on social sectors such as

education and health rather than ‘hard’ macroeconomic aspects. Even relatively newer interventions like GSB initiatives have tracked public expenditure rather than revenue. A major problem that is repeatedly emphasized is the lack of information relating to gender inequalities, this data-gap seen to be an important constraint in the successful implementation of anti-poverty programmes. The following two examples illustrate how women managed to overcome these several ‘problems’ policy planners often find ‘unsurmountable’.

The anti-arrack (liquor) agitation in Andhra Pradesh in India began in the late 1980’s, women forcibly closing down liquor shops in villages. The agitation issues involved were both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ – the wastage of income on drinking by men, and rise in domestic violence. The Progressive Organisation of Women (POW) recorded the list of impacts – reduction in income had led to decline in consumption levels of mainly girls, as also education, health, expenditure, etc. Several families had slipped under the poverty line; used their meager savings; some had sold their assets; become enmeshed in indebtedness; children, specially girls, had joined the ranks of child labourers; women had been forced into taking up jobs “we did not like”; violence against both women and children had risen; psychological problems had emerged; etc. The movement spread from a few villages to several provinces and became such a success that the state government was forced to ban sale of liquor. However, even though several years later the government withdrew the ban on the plea that it could not raise enough revenue without sales tax from liquor, this movement has become part of a strong anti-poverty strategy and is often resorted to even today by women in several Indian provinces.

Another extremely crucial issue that could be one of the most effective components of a gender-based anti-poverty strategy is that of land and housing rights. When women have no legal right whatsoever in ownership of whatever little property is owned, it becomes easy for them to be deprived of the right of residence and occupancy. The high proportion of female-headed households in India is mainly due to the fact that the majority are deserted and shelter-less. An issue therefore that has been taken up by several women’s organisation as part of their anti-poverty empowerment strategy is that of property

rights. Housing rights and women's groups in urban areas often demand and succeed in registering slum homes either solely in the name of the woman, or at least in terms of joint ownership. This policy is quite difficult to implement in rural areas where the power and patriarchal structures are much more strongly entrenched.

A major issue that has been raised earlier and that re-emerges consequent to these two. Best Practices is that unemployment alone does not either define nor result in poverty. This aspect assumes significance in the specific context of regions where unemployment rates are high, and are, in fact, expected to increase even further. Anti-poverty strategies, therefore, require additional components to be incorporated instead of merely anti-employment measures. Consequently, there is possibly good reason to re-evaluate on-going anti-poverty programmes, but from a different perspective than what is generally perceived as being the economic reality.

These two examples prove that even though enough gender-disaggregated data may not be immediately available at the macro level and while efforts are simultaneously being made to develop this base, Gender-Sensitive Poverty Reduction Policies can still be formulated, debated, and also implemented at least partially.

The implication of these theoretical and practical linkages are, ultimately, their incorporation into economic analysis and anti-poverty policies, as well their translation into Pro-Poor Development Strategies. The relationship between poverty and gender is complex but not complicated. The problem lies partly in not fully integrating field experiences. More importantly, fundamental economic concepts and methodology need to be re-evaluated, and current anti-poverty strategies possibly re-assessed. The desperation of the exploitation and oppression women face can no longer wait for policy maker to find the 'perfect' time and the 'ideal' strategy.

Select Bibliography

1. Cagatay, Nilufer, Mumtaz Kekklik, Radhika Lal, and James Lang, (2000), *Budgets as if People Mattered: Democratizing Macroeconomics Policies*, UND/SEPED Conference Paper Series #4, May.
2. Dewan, Ritu, (1999), Gender Implication of the 'New' Economic Policy: A Conceptual Overview, Women's Studies International Forum, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp 425-429.
3. Dewan, Ritu, (2002), *Structural Dimensions of Gender Sensitive Budgeting Initiatives: A Reality Check on Concepts*, UNDP Workshop on Poverty Reduction, Kathmandu, Nepal, October 2-4.
4. Hewitt, Guy, (2002), *Gender-Responsive Budgets: A Commonwealth Perspective*, UNDP Workshop on Poverty Reduction, Kathmandu, Nepal, October 2-4.
5. Hulme, David and Paul Mosley, (1996), *Finance Against Poverty, Volume 2*, Routledge, London.
6. Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in Asia and the Pacific, Poverty Reduction Section, unescap.org/rural
7. Wood, Geoffrey and Iffath Sharif (eds.) (1997), *Who Needs Credit: Poverty and Finance in Bangladesh*, Zed Books, London.
8. worldbank/wbp/data/trends/inequal

