

**DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND GENDER IN BANGLADESH:  
AN OVERVIEW**

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled, "**Development Strategies and Gender in Bangladesh : An Overview**", submitted by **Bahnni Shikha Das Purkayastha** in part of the requirements for the *Degree of Master of Philosophy* has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge this is an original work.

We recommend that this dissertation should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of the above mentioned degree.

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DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES AND GENDER IN BANGLADESH:

*An Overview*

**MY CHORDI, CHORDA, MA, BABA**

**AND**

**MANAS**

**WHO BELIEVE "WOMEN'S RIGHT IS HUMAN RIGHT"**

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**BAHNNI SHIKHA DAS PURKAYASTHA**

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# CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

More than two decades have gone by since the independence of Bangladesh. During this time we have experienced several development models. But the reality is that Bangladesh with its 100 million population (1985), growth rate of 2.4% per annum and density of 1808 persons per square mile (Khan, 1988) retains its "least development country" status with a per capita income of US\$ 196 (1994), an adult literacy rate of 37 percent, a Human Development Index (HDI) rank of 144 (out of a total of 175 countries) and approximately 65 percent of the population living in absolute poverty '(UNDP, 1997)'.<sup>1</sup>

Why has Bangladesh retained its least developed country status? This is in spite of the fact that it has experienced several development plans since its independence in 1971. Is there any theoretical failing which has been the root cause of the failure of development plans? Or is it the failure of the planners who have been unable to understand the unique situation prevailing in a particular society? Or is it something new which needs rethinking and fresh conceptualization?

These questions reveal one fact that, like many other developing countries, Bangladesh also looked 'at the developed countries as a model for development' without realizing the socio-political and economic context of their success. The low per capita income became the single index of poverty in the Third World countries (Desai: 1986)<sup>2</sup>. Irene Tinker (1976) mentions that, during much of the last century 'development' has been viewed as a panacea for the economic ills of all less developed countries. The belief was that a creation of a modern infrastructure and economy will take off, providing better life for every one<sup>3</sup>.

It was thought that if policy actions were taken to speed up a country's economic growth, increased popular participation in the political process and a more equitable distribution of income would inevitably follow. In other words it was assumed that increase in the rate of growth of such components of economic development as industrialization, agricultural productivity, physical over head capital investment and per capita GNP are closely associated with increase in the extent of political and economic participation (Adelman and Morris: 1973).<sup>4</sup> Decades of experience have shown that economic growth does not by itself lead to improvement in living standards for the majority. Experience in Bangladesh shows that development has failed to address its goal.

As a student of sociology and as interested in gender issues, this attempt is not just to understand the macro economic policies of the state in Bangladesh, but also dwell on its impact

on women in their everyday lives. An emphasis is being made on this because in Bangladesh there has been a tendency in recent years to look at micro level developments vis-a-vis target women beneficiaries in specific development projects alone. What is being argued here is that there is a connection between state policies and women/men's/children lives in villages.

While macro economic studies tend to study macro policies to the exclusion of sociological realities, sociologists have often studied 'field data' without connecting it to state policies. In this study I seek to both look at development in general and gender in particular.

Development paradigms questioned by different researchers over time reveals that, the status of women has not changed though decades of developmental efforts have been launched. In other words, the relation between private and public sphere will show the success or failure of overall planning process. Thus it is necessary to understand the overall planning process as well as its effect on individuals.

It has to be noted that, in Bangladesh the previous model of development was questioned by various sections of society and particularly by the new grass root movements led by the Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) which tried to give a new direction which would provide a new paradigm. In this paradigm women were visualized as playing a vital role. This study seeks to examine whether the new paradigm really alters the lives of poor women.

## **1.2 Objective and Scope**

This study attempts to analyse the relationship between development policies in general and development of women in particular. There are specific historical reasons for this choice of area. Bangladesh has been a centre of Aid agencies and NGO directed development activities almost from its very inception in 1971. Gender and Development have also been a major focus of both action and study. However, a curious decoupling takes place in the manner in which development and gender are looked at in the micro and macro level. A large number of studies usually do indepth micro analysis generating real field data but neglecting to link it with state macro policies and its impact at the field level. It is in this background that I attempt to do two things in this dissertation. One, look at the major debates on gender and development. Two, seek to understand the specific nature of development policies in Bangladesh and its relationship with donor agencies.

Thus my attempt is to try to analyze the pattern of development strategies in Bangladesh specially after independence. But the erstwhile East Pakistan's development policy will also be included for getting an overall picture about development policy. For a great deal of contemporary problems have a historical legacy.



It has to be noted that, foreign aid played a significant role in formulating development policy in both the periods. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the role of donor agencies and the role of the Government of Bangladesh regarding development planning. It is also necessary to look at the strategies adopted by the donor in the various institutional and operational strategies as well as the Five Years Plans by the Government after the independence of Bangladesh.

This study would also try to see how far the strategies adopted by the donors and the government has been successful in ameliorating the position of women, seeking the reasons for their failure to improve the position of women despite all the developmental strategies and constitutional, legal guarantees. The study would, therefore, like to understand the impact of Government plans and donors strategies on the status of women.

### **1.3 Methodology**

This study is not based on field data. Field data is not permitted for conducting M.Phil dissertation in J.N.U. Since the thrust of this study is on macro policy issues and its practice in Bangladesh, I have relied heavily on a systematic analysis of both Bangladesh Government documents and the documents of the donor agencies.

The primary sources used for understanding Government policies of Bangladesh are the Five Year Plans, various documents which have been issued from the Government departments of The Planning Commission, Ministry of Social Welfare and Women's Affairs and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) etc.

The primary sources for donor agencies are from UNDP and the World Bank documents. I have therefore, looked at different appraisals, reports and publications of donor agencies and the Government.

Before going into further details, I attempt in the following section to review some literature on development and Gender. But first a clarification of the concepts 'development' and 'Gender' are in order.

### **1.4 Interrogating the concept of Development**

One of the problems often discussed by the different researchers is that, 'development had an adverse impact on women' (Boserup: 1970, Tinker:1990).<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the question can arise, why development did not achieve its goal and what are reasons responsible for this failure?

The following section is divided into two, (A) Development (B) Gender and development with specific reference to WID issues.

(A) Development:- Development means a process of change, which will improve the social, political and economic well-being of the greater majority of the population in a country. Usually the definition is synonymous with modernization. Modernization specifies particular contents and process of social change in the course of national development. Mechanization or Industrialization are ingredients in the process of economic growth. Modernization also studies the 'non-economics' i.e. social, political and cultural consequences of economic growth and the conditions that are important for Industrialization and Economic Growth to occur.

Thus development remains a complex term which is not easy to define. Boutros Ghali refers to development as:

the decisive factor in shaping our world. It will shape the behaviour of nations. It determines the ecological future of the planet. Yet, today development is in crisis. First, there is a crisis of complexity. We have realized that development has no single definition. No single strategy has been immune from failure. There is no certain path to success.<sup>6</sup>

Now the question could be raised, why development is in-such a state of uncertainty, in a state of flux? Naila Kabeer states that,

this is not an easy concept to define. It is highly ideologically loaded, it means different things to different people. Some see it in terms of a purposive and planned project, others prefer to talk of processes of social transformation. Some define it as the enhancement of individual choice. Others see it as the equalizing of opportunities. Still others as redistributive justice. Some emphasize ends, others means and still others focus on the interrelationship between ends and means.<sup>7</sup>

In its early stage, development was viewed as the growth or the growth rate of GNP or GNP per capita only. But of late, objections have been raised as to the validity of such indicators. Baver and Yemey (1978)<sup>8</sup> argue that income is in no way a surrogate for well-being; if it were so, they point out, an increase in the death rate of the poor would have been regarded as an economic improvement. Objections have been raised in other way also, where GNP is depicted 'as an adequate measure of development and that the benefits of economic growth would trickle-down to households at the bottom of the income hierarchy'. Many of researchers criticise the notion with the experience of the First Decade of Development for the economic growth rates of over 5 percent were documented in many of Third World countries. They pointed out that, it has neither worked at the macro level (region, country) nor at the micro level (household, family). Rather it reinforces chronic unemployment, chronic inflation, unpayable debts, loss of purchasing power, nutritional decline, environmental degradation, denationalization of resources, gender inequality and a set back in the quality of life (Boserup, 1970, Haider 1995, Hossain Hamida and others ed, 1991)<sup>9</sup>

Seers (1972) suggests that development means creating the conditions for the realization of human personality. Its evaluation must, therefore, take into account three linked economic criteria. that is, whether there has been a reduction in (i) poverty (ii) unemployment and (iii) inequality. He notes that GNP can grow without any improvement in these criteria (Seers, 1972). Similarly Sweezy (1972) has argued that if we want indicators of real development, we should look at such matters as infant mortality, disease rates, nutritional level, tendencies to equality or inequality, poverty, participation by people in shaping their destinies and literacy. Development thus, viewed as a user friendly term, has potential meaning to potential users. The range of definition is broad and diverse so that some times it means diametrically opposite. Jan Knippers Black in 'Development in Theory and Practice: Bridging the Gap (1991)' has summarized the free size fitting feature of development:

development is a standard borne by those who would promote the interests of the affluent and the powerful as well as by those who would serve the un-affluent and the unpowerful, by those who would expand the reach of the most industrialized states and those who would shield the least modernized from nefarious influences; by those who would stress the virtues of entrepreneurship and individualism and those who would nurture community and collective concern; by those who would pursue strategies of top down initiative and decision making and those who advocate a bottom-up, or grass roots approach; and finally by those who would exploit and maim Mother Nature for the benefit of either business or labour in today's world as well as by those who concern themselves with a bountiful and liveable environment for future generations.

Yet, the single common ground for advocates of development is that, it has a positive connotation. It is denoting a movement in the right direction, the path to a state of well-being, a progress from a condition of poverty to one of comparative affluence. (Haider, 1995, P:4).<sup>10</sup>

But the ICPD (International Conference on Population and Development) in Cairo in 1994, in looking at the interrelationships between population, sustained economic growth and sustainable development found that, 'despite decades of development efforts, both the gap between rich and poor nations, and true inequalities within nations have widened. Serious economic, social, gender and other inequalities persist and hamper efforts to improve the quality of life for hundreds of millions of people. The number of people living in poverty stands at approximately 1 billion and continues to mount (ICPD, 1994).

These facts imply one thing that, it is necessary to reformulate development goals or objectives which was to bring sustained improvement in the well-being of the individual and bestow benefits on all. If undue privileges, extremes of wealth and social justice persist then development fails in its essential purposes (Kabeer, 1994, P-3).<sup>11</sup>

This ideology was influenced by various criticisms which indicate that there are some lackings in development policy which does not meet the links between economic and social objective. The publications of Boserup 1970, Chenery et. al. 1974, World Bank 1975, and ILO 1976, epitomized this ideology and bring the disadvantageous group . (i.e. women) in development paradigm as a specific concern area. There were two areas where women's role in development received particular attention (Pietila and Vickers, 1990)<sup>12</sup> The first one is food and second one is population. The FAO and World Food Conference 1974, recognized officially the women's contribution in agriculture along with their role in family, food provision and nutrition. The second one is population. In the fifties and sixties the macro economic models was concerned with economic growth, which stated that population is yet another obstacle for economic growth, because 'potential economic surpluses were used up in consumption and welfare expenditures instead of productive capital formation'. So, women gets emphasis as a 'crucial variable influencing fertility decisions, quite apart from the intrinsic human rights aspect (Jackson, 1977, P.10).<sup>13</sup> Such research on food and population helped to establish the conceptual link between women's issues and economic development policy implications (Buvinic, 1983, P.23).<sup>14</sup> According to UN report, women constitute half of the world's population, form nearly two thirds of its work force, receive one tenth of the world's income and own less than one percent of its property. This suggests that they carry out a substantial, and, in most cases, essential part of income activities. Yet their work is consistently undervalued (UN Report, 1995)<sup>15</sup>. So the economists, since the mid seventies, have acknowledged the critical role of women in the development process. The two protest movements of the sixties and seventies - in the south against the injustices of the international economic order and in the civil-rights and black-power movements combined with Third World Liberation struggles to heighten awareness of continuing forms of neo-colonialism across the global landscape, helped to rethink about women. The women's movement itself emerged with the "women's question" which spread the idea that there is male privilege existing in the academy of politics and in relations of everyday life. This questioning mood helped to reexamine the development policy in academic realm as well as in the United Nations. Thus the United Nations has set up several bodies - Division for Women in UN Development Programme, along with the UN Development Fund for Women, the Legal Committee for The Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement for women, an autonomous body within the UN, as well as, Women in Development (WID) units within the various bodies of the UN. The

declaration of the International Decade for women with the official themes of Equality, Peace, and Development signified the visibility of women in Development in international forums.

But even after these initiatives, there was considerable concern for the lack of understanding of women's reality, which is attributed to the lack of proper understanding of gender relations and the gender blindness in the development process itself.

### **(B) Gender and development : with specific reference of WID issues**

Gender refers to the socially constructed and Institutionalised forms of identity which are attached to biological sex differences, 'Gender' rather than 'Sex' is concerned with social roles rather than their biological characteristics. Gender relations are the socially determined relations that differentiate male and female situations, they describe the social meaning of male and female and thus what is considered appropriate behaviour or activity for men and women (Elson, 1995).<sup>16</sup> It varies considerably between different societies and different historical periods. Thus people are born with the biologically female or male sex characteristics, but have to acquire a gender identity. Gender relations refer to the gender dimensions of the social relations structuring the lives of individual men and women, such as the gender division of labour and the gender division of access to and control over resources. An emphasis on gender highlights the fact that work is gendered, that some tasks are seen as 'women's work' while other tasks are men's work. An emphasis on gender relations encourages a questioning of the supposed equality in the household and facilitates the posing of questions about the relative power of men and women.

It is assumed that, most of the development policies and programmes, are gender blind or biased against women. The emerging literature in this regard recognizes that the community, the state, and the household as structures separately and interactively are perpetuating gender inequality. The literature on women and development has generally limited itself to examining gender impacts of development strategies or specific policies and programmes, but lends itself to questions about officials who dominate decision making, the gender ideologies on which they based their decisions and links between economic interests and the exercise of state power. This is because the state and other bureaucratic institutions were assumed to operate on gender-neutral terms where neither the sex of bureaucrats nor of policy recipients were supposed to make a difference to the ways in which interests of men and women are institutionalised in public administration. However, analysis of gender policy in development have pointed to a gender specific patterns in the way public service institutions address people's needs in development. So much so that the state is now seen as a structure of patriarchy, reinforcing the ideology of male dominance and female subordination. The state

influences how women are viewed in society as autonomous individuals or as dependents of men and thus determine gender relations, through mechanisms such as legislations: how public institutions are run and staffed social policies. It is significant to make the distinction between the state and government clear in this context. The state is a broader concept, which not only includes what we popularly understand as government, but also the legislature that votes on public rules, the political system that regulates elections, the role that is given to the opposition parties and the basic political rights that are upheld by the Judiciary.

Among developing nations, Bangladesh has accumulated a unique record of NGOs' involvement, which is attributed to the failure of government to adequately handle the development needs of the country (ESCAP, 1998, P.24).<sup>17</sup> Though the country's constitution guarantees women equal rights (Article 28 (1); 28 (2); 28 (3)); Bangladesh Government has employed quotas to ensure women's participation in politics, introduced legal reforms to protect women from violence and undertaken special measures to increase girls' enrollment in schools.

In Bangladesh both officials and non-officials have followed closely the 'donors'\* vocabulary. The successive Five Year Plan documents have articulated the official perspective of Government WID objectives and thus have changed over the years following the trends established by the donors. For example, the First Five Year Plan (1973-78) did not specifically focus on women's roles in economic development, but singled them out only under the social welfare sector programme. The Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) talked about women's development, but treated it as a special and separate issue, which was continued in the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90). The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95) for the first time used terms such as 'mainstream' and 'gender' and adopted 'bringing women in the mainstream of development planning as an 'important strategy' (The Fourth Five Year Plan, 1990-95, Government of Bangladesh). It established nine specific objectives for its WID policy, which included such concerns as increasing women's participation in public decision making; raising productivity and income improving nutrition and health, reducing population growth, infant and maternal mortality and the male female literacy gap; but it did not talk about gender equality which it pledged in the socialization of family. Bangladesh limited its objective to equality in the public domain and did not embrace the term empowerment (Jahan: 1995, P-27).<sup>18</sup>

This work tries to reexamine the state's policy towards development of women and look at the integration of and share of women in various development programmes. It examines the impact of these programmes and policies on 'gender specific' needs. In other

words, do government policies and institutions affect women's access to social and political power? Does it aim at achieving a men-women parity in society? Are the development strategies in Bangladesh aimed at destroying patriarchal bases of power and involving women in decision making process at all levels of social, economic and political activity as well as in planning and implementing development programmes? Further, what has been the effort to make political apparatus sensitive to the needs and interests of women, who have no authority over the control of resources and participation in decision making?

## **1.5 Chapterization**

This work attempts to understand the relationship between development policies in general and development in women in particular. With these broad objectives, the next chapter (chapter2) will give an idea about 'women' and their status in the development paradigm. This section will sketch out the theoretical debates around women issues. It has been argued by various researches that, development effect men and women differently. Men are viewed as productive agents while women are treated as dependent. The feminists have pointed out that, the existing development planning is biased and relegates 'women' to marginal status. Therefore to improve the society as a whole implies that one has to improve the status of women. Because, the status of women in a given society indicates the status of society itself. Thus women should be viewed as crucial indicators in the development paradigm and ought to play a vital role in changing the society as a whole. Therefore the chapter on 'women' in the development paradigm will given an idea about the gender debate and how to bring the change in the development paradigm.

A discussion on development strategy in erstwhile East Pakistan and Independent Bangladesh is one of the important aspects of this study. Chapter 3 will give an idea about the direction of development and the relation of the individual to the planning system. This study will try to depict the picture of overall socio-political economic situation, where the individuals are interrelated within the system. It will also try to give an idea about a new thinking, which is not only questioning the previous model but also gives a direction to a new one.

A discussion on 'donor' is another important aspect of this dissertation. Donor has come to occupy a significant position in the socio-economic political structure of a developing country like Bangladesh. Chapter 4 of this study will try to show that how through the medium of financial aid donor influences planning and resources allocation in Bangladesh. We will also study the impact of donors strategies on women's position and role in a patriarchal society whether it has resulted in any change or not. Therefore the chapter on 'Development strategy: The role of Donors agencies and the Government of Bangladesh' broadly seeks to

understand the tools used by donors as well as the Government of Bangladesh in developing development strategy and their results on womenfolk.

This chapter is therefore an attempt to trace the basis of the inequality of gender relations and the ideological roots of women subordination which perpetuate gender inequality. The donors as well as the Government of Bangladesh have played an important role in formulating policies, programmes which initiate the debate on whether these policies and programmes reinforce women's subordination/ marginalization or help to improve their position in the society.

Chapter 3 seeks to draw out the major issues raised by this study. It also attempts to put forward the salient findings of the study.



## Notes

\* Note Donor means the organization which gives financial aid

(1)UNDP, Human Development Report, 1997.

(2)Desai, N, 'From Articulation to Accommodation, Womens Movement in India', in Leela Dube and others, ed. Visibility and Power, New Delhi, 1986.

3)Tinker, Irene and Bramsen, Michelle B, eds. Women and World Development, ODC, Washington DC, 1976.

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(6)Ghali, Butros, At a speech delivered to the Economic and Social Council Sustainable Session Meeting in NewYork in 1994, the UN Secretary General referred in his report on 'Agenda for Development'.

(7)Kabeer, Naila, Reverse Reality, Kali for Women, 1994.

(8)Cited in Nazrul Islam, 'Sociology of Development : In need of a Fresh Paradigm'? in Sociology and Development , (Bangladesh Perspective), Bangladesh, Sociological Association, Dhaka, 1990.

(9)Boserup, Ester,Women's Role in Economic Development, St.Martin's Press, New York, 1970.

Haider, Ranna,Gender and Development, The American University in Cairo Press, 1995.

Hossain, Hamida and others, eds. No Better Option? UPL, Dhaka, 1991.

(10)Haider, Ranna, Gender and Development, The American University in Cairo Press, 1995.

(11)Kabeer, Naila,Reverse Reality, Kali for Women, 1994.

(12)Pietila and others, United Nations and the Advancement of Women, The Role of the Nordic Countries in the Advancement of Women within the United Nations System, The Nordic UN Project Report, no.16, 1990.

(13)Jackson, 1977, cited in Naila, Kabeer, Reverse Reality, Kali for Women, 1994.

(14)Buvinic, Mayra, et al.Women and Poverty in the Third World, Johns Hopkins University Press Baltimore, 1983.

(15)Elson, Diana, 'Male Bias in the Development Process: An Overview ' and 'Overcoming Male Bias' in the Diana Elson (ed.) Male Bias in Development Process, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1995.

(16)ESCAP, Governments and NGOs in Asia and the Pacific: The Interaction Process for Social Justice, Geneva. 1988.

(17)Jahan,Raunaq, The Elusive Agenda, University Press, Dhaka, 1995.

## CHAPTER 2 : "WOMEN" IN DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS

### II. 1 Introduction

While the focus of my study is on development policies in Bangladesh with special reference to women, the discussion of this issue would not be possible without locating it in the wider context of international debates within the discourse of women's development.

As has been stated in Chapter I, many of the newly independent nations after independence felt development was the answer to all their problems. Experience over the years however exposed the gender blind nature of the policies. Rethinking began both within international development organizations and within the nation. This chapter attempts to review how the concerns of women were reflected in the theories of development and different development programmes.

It was nearly two decades ago that the global community affirmed gender equality as a central development concern and a decade ago that it adopted forward looking strategies (FLS) to accelerate women's advancement. In the last twenty years, in response to demands of the women's movement and the United Nations' mandates, national governments and international development agencies have adopted special policies and measures to promote women's advancements. 'Women in Development' (WID) emerged "as a visible field of policy and action in most of the international development agencies and in many countries, especially those which were dependent on foreign assistance". (Jahan, 1994 P-1).<sup>1</sup>

WID explored the fact that men entered the policy process as household head and productive agents, while women were viewed primarily in their capacity as housewives, mothers, and dependents (Jaquitte and Standt, 1988).<sup>2</sup> In other words, the intervention of development agencies further narrowed to address the primary domestic role assigned to them by pre-WID development planners, viz. in programmes delivering nutritional training, home economics, maternal and child health care and family planning.

Since the 1970s WID emerged with the goal of economic growth, equality before law and greater access to education. These issues identified the failures of the first decade of development which was devoid of any specific reference to women (Kabeer: 1994, P-1).<sup>3</sup> The UN Commission on the status of women and the U.S. Women's movement took a significant role to increase women's status in employment sector. "At that time most government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) consulted, assumed that economic and social development would bring about any desired changes for women" (Bruce, cited in Tinker: 1990).<sup>4</sup> But UN Commission preferred to emphasize the human element i.e. women's equal

rights in development and called for greater investment in women as human resources (Tinker:1983).<sup>5</sup> Boserop (1970)<sup>6</sup> and many others of WID advocates pointed out that 'development seemed to be having an adverse impact on women'. They argued that, mainstream 'development' efforts were targeted mainly at the male population while women were relegated to the more marginal 'welfare' sector (Buvinic, 1983) .<sup>7</sup> Their focus was primarily on poor women who were 'neglected by' development programmes despite the estimates that, they comprised one-third of all household worldwide (Tinker 1976 b, Buvinic, Youssef with Von Elm 1978. Youssef and Hetler 1983). Particularly, Boserup's theory legitimized efforts to influence development policy with a combined argument for justice and efficiency. She explained that, women's dependence as a consequence of the changing relations of economic production, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, women had been deprived of access to training, land rights, education and technology by colonial and post colonial administrations, whose biased perceptions led them to favour male farmers. She further pointed out that, the tendency of planners to see women as 'secondary' earners and to train them to be more efficient housewives rather than seeking to improve their professional ability to compete equally with men in the market place. (Boserup: 1970).

As a result, women were given 'particular attention to those programmes, projects and activities which tend to integrate women into national economies of foreign countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development efforts' (Parcy Amendment, 1974).<sup>9</sup>

The overarching concept of 'full integration of women in the total development effort' was declared in the second decade of development. The three united Nations Conferences (the Mexico Conference in July 1975, Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi Conference in 1985) legitimized women's concern to the national government to address women's productive and reproductive roles which was earlier devaluated by the authority. Attention was drawn to women's continued inequality and the general growing poverty in most countries of the world, and the particular poverty of women. But the question remains the same for the practitioners, as to how to integrate women into the national economies. A report of National Federation of Indian Women reveals the fact that:

- (1) Women earn 1/10 of the world's income, own less than 1/10 of the world's property and hold 1 percent of chief executive positions worldwide. (UN Report: 1995).<sup>10</sup>
- (2) While progress has been made in terms of women's access to education, women still comprise two thirds of people who cannot read or write, women still represent 60 percent of more than 1 billion adults who have no access to basic education. Girls constitute the majority of the 130 million children with no access

to primary school worldwide; girls currently attend school 55 percent as much as boys do. (Human Development Report 1997) <sup>11</sup>

- (3) Although economic progress has benefited many, one fifth of the world's people today live in absolute poverty. Poverty has a female face. Women are 70 percent of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor. Women within poor countries and communities are more impoverished than men. In African countries, for example, women account for more than 60 percent of the agricultural labour force, contribute up to 80 percent of the total food production and receive less than 10 percent of the credit to small farmers and 1 percent of the total credit to agriculture. (Human Development Report, 1997)<sup>12</sup>
- (4) On many ecologically fragile zones, especially those in war-torn areas and in communities undergoing economic and social disintegration, women and children comprise 75 percent of affected and displaced people.
- (5) Only 10 percent of the parliamentary seats and less than 4 percent of cabinet positions are occupied by women. (UNDP Report: 1994).<sup>13</sup>

These existing equalities expose a fact that, development is not able to change women's situation, rather it reinforces 'at its worst' (B.M.P. Report 1999, Hyderabad, India).<sup>14</sup>

Why are women seen as vulnerable by the development process? Researchers suggest that development agencies followed two approaches for women in their policy programme. First one is welfare and second is efficiency. But each approach emphasized only one part of a women's life; as a mother or as a worker. It is argued by different researchers (Moser, 1989, Buvinic, 1983) that welfare approach relegates women into marginal status and maintains the status quo of the society. 'It enforced their conformity to the 'expressive' role within the family, one which dictated passively, obedience and dependence while endowing men with the ambition, achievement and financial rewards associated with the 'instrumental' role (Kabeer, 1994, P-23-24).<sup>15</sup> Thus it does not help to change their status, it rather increases their dependency (Tinker: 1990). In other words the programmes were tended to retain stereotypes about women's domestic roles in the society. Buvinic (1986)<sup>16</sup> identified three major problems with welfare approach:

- (1) Setting up of women only in programme oriented welfare sector by intermediary organisations.
- (2) Assumptions are made by these organisations about group membership and cooperation but excluded poor women, the beneficiaries of these programmes.
- (3) The organisations themselves were outsider of mainstream development programming.

So the welfare approach was a transitional phase which led to efficiency approach, where economic growth is the main concern for women. The argument made by the practitioners was that, if women were an integral part of both design and implementation, the

development project would attain their goals. They pointed out that, in sectors (such as, agriculture or energy oriented) or rural development programs, women's 'work' remain unrecognized (Moser, 1987). 'They consume many hours a day fetching water and fuelwood, but the most time-consuming activities involve the production, processing and preparation of food for family consumptions', and 'with the effort of development programme too often women are left with labour intensive traditional technologies as men modernize their tasks'. In Roger's view,<sup>17</sup> continued neglect of women's productivity was a costly mistake that planners could no longer afford to make. The issue was not so much that women needed development, but that development needed women. It was this kind of argument which in the end, was most persuasive among the development agencies, since it appeared to feed directly into their concern with the efficient allocation of resources. It has helped to give the efficiency approach its current prominence in WID policy at national and international levels (Kabeer, 1994, 25)<sup>18</sup>

Thus women's projects, whatever their original conceptions today, are more likely to recognize women's double responsibility of work and family care. Women - only projects focus more and more on activities that provide a realistic economic return, while sectoral programmes have begun to include an understanding of women's family responsibilities in their design. Therefore, the question before the practitioners is how to avoid the fragmentary nature (ICPEDC:1986) in project design? How to integrate women in regular sectoral programmes and its original design not as a 'women's component' but as self reliant and self-sufficient human resources. In other words, how to eliminate the biasness or persistent inequalities, though many women's projects continue to appear strongly in a 'welfarist' mode mixed with the ideas of participation and self sufficiency to reduce longterm costs.

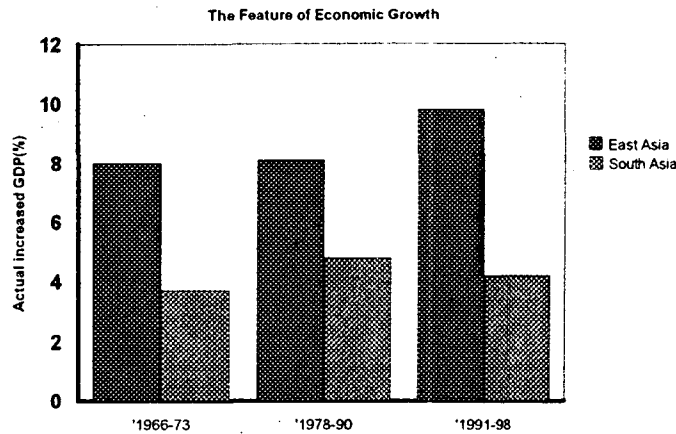
Bangladesh Government as a recipient country set up Women's Affairs Department to foster the programmes designed by the parental organization. So it is evident that governments do not foster destabilizing programmes. Though "existing inequalities may be further deepened and new inequalities may emerge in the current development context where integration into the global market directs development, where there is accelerating technological development change, where national economies are destabilized by transnational processes and where the ecological crisis facing humanity is at its worst. In many cases the structural collapse of some centrally planned economies and nation states, the casualization of work, cuts in social security, childcare and revenue for human development as countries undergo transition or structural adjustment to compete in the international market - all these have affected the livelihood and life-chances of women in the nineties more explicitly than the period preceding the world conference to mark the end of the Decade for Women (Nairobi)" in 1985 (B.M.P. report; Hyderabad, India, 1999, P-5).<sup>19</sup>

So the feminists pointed out that 'female sphere' (Jaquette: 1982) is a distinct one, which was not properly addressed by previous theories. They stressed that, inequalities persist

because the world is run by men and for men. Even in the early stages of development when WID practitioners began to design projects for women, they were influenced by current operating theory of the funding agency, namely liberal economic theory. This theory looks at what is happening in society and how the ills and problems can be corrected within the existing structures of authority and power, that is without any structural change. This frame of theoretical analysis is still present in the development paradigm. They identified that the benefits of modernization were generated in the modern sector and the cash economy via the agency of the market, and the public sphere, would automatically improve women's status. Thus they fixed 'equality' as ultimate goal for human being which is by nature universal and fundamental. It is beyond the differences of culture and class. "This equality derives from the mental capacity and the property of individuals to choose the best means to achieve their goals". (Kabeer: 1994: 27).<sup>20</sup>

They further stress that, women are treated in the society different from men, which is not natural but cultural or social. Beyond this cultural differences, however, women and men everywhere shared the fundamental human capacity for reason and were equally entitled to the opportunities and benefits of development. Though they believe that patriarchal men-women relations persist in socialization process, this relation can be changed through education or different forms of socialization. The discrimination against women in the fields of politics and employment can be abolished by giving girls more access to higher education and training. To them the claim for equal access to education and women oriented contents of education would go a long way towards improving the status of women (Mies, 1986: 21).<sup>21</sup>

The Human Development report on South Asia, 1997 reveals that, till now very little has been implemented and invested to empower women to utilize their opportunity offered by development, to increase women's fundamental capability in society (Mahbub-ul-Haq, 1997, P-20).<sup>22</sup> The GDI or Gender Related Development index and HDI or Human development index of South Asia shows that, the condition of women in South Asia is at worst. (Figure is given below):



**Fig:3 Gender Index in South Asia**

|  | South Asia | Sub-Sahara | East Asia | Developing Country |
|--|------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Adult Literacy (%) 1993                      | 34         | 45         | 98        | 60                 |
| The Listed I,II,III class ratio(%) 1993      | 43         | 37         | 76        | 51                 |
| Average year in Education 1992               | 1.2        | 1.3        | 6.2       | 3                  |
| Economic Opportunity                         |            |            |           |                    |
| Average Portion of Income (%) 1993           | 25         | 36         | 27        | 31                 |
| Economically Active Population (15+) (%)1994 | 30         | 52         | 62        | 50                 |
| Administrator and Manager (%) 1990           | 3          | 10         | 5         | 10                 |
| Human Development Index                      |            |            |           |                    |
| HDI 1993                                     | 0.43       | 0.38       | 0.88      | 0.56               |
| GDI 1993                                     | 0.4        | 0.37       | 0.81      | 0.53               |
| GEM 1993                                     | 0.23       | 0.28       | 0.28      | 0.35               |

Source: ILO 1994; IPU 1994; UN 1994c; 1994f; 1995b;1996b UNESCO 1994b, 1995a, UNICEF 1995, WHO and UNICEF 1996.

On the contrary, those who seek the solution of women's problem in different way (such as, Leacock 1977, Saffiotti 1977, Zetkin ) blamed development for the policies which 'are ultimately based on capitalist tenets': They refer to all social phenomena to the ultimate determining structures of production, private property and class (Kabeer: 1994, P-49).<sup>23</sup> They argued that, the inequalities between women and men could not be understood in isolation from the polarizing tendencies of 'peripheral' countries of the Third World in a relationship of dependency with the metropolitan centres of the First World within an inegalitarian world order. The so-called development could not release women from oppressive social economic and political institutions, it merely defined 'new conditions of constraint' (Leacock, 1977).<sup>24</sup>

Saffiotti (1977) exposed this oppressive situation with the argument that, women's situation resulted from two intersecting contradictions: 'the contradiction between social classes, which is dominant in capitalist social formations and the contradiction between sexes, which is subordinate in the same type of social formation, sexual division reflected in the

legislation and social prejudice of specific societies which were also divided by class, class was the fundamental contradiction for 'surpassing the limits of the system'.

However, the fourth Women's Conference was held in Beijing in 1995 against this background. Here women raised their own issues i.e. eliminate all forms of inequalities and establish human right. They stressed that, inspite of their considerable contribution to the society, they face constraint to gain access to land, home, education, employment or empowerment. So women's right as human right remains the burning issue for women.

Hence, it is clear that, what women 'needed' was not integration but a fundamental reorientation of existing development paradigm (Benirra, 1982).<sup>25</sup> Because women's subordination could not be divorced from an analysis of political and economic structures within which women were located. Thus the Third World feminists pointed out that, it was not the lack of integration but the exploitation and unequal conditions under which women were being integrated in the production process that had caused gender inequalities, that their greater integration in the prevailing development strategies would only exacerbate the inequalities. So the protagonists of this approach articulated three major concerns for women

- (1) The need to link gender, class and race-based inequalities and discrimination and the struggle for gender inequality must be accompanied by struggles against other forms of inequalities and discrimination.

- (2) It was necessary to look at social structures, development paradigms and macro policies rather than simply addressing social norms and cultures and WID focused policies

- (3) Improvements in women's lives and opportunities are possible only through structural changes and changes in macro-policy environment. That means the total transformation of the development agenda from a gender perspective (Jahan: 1995: P-8).<sup>26</sup>

Therefore, the alternative vision of development approach emerged with the notion of gender equality in the opportunities of development and in the decision-making processes as well as women's involvement in all spheres of life in the process of social and economic transformation (Jahan and Papanek, 1979, P-11).<sup>27</sup>

The Asia Pacific Centre for Women and Development (APCWD) asserted that 'oppression of women is rooted in both inequalities and discrimination based on sex and in poverty and the injustice of the political and economic systems based on race and class (C. Bouch and R. Carillo: 1990, P-77).<sup>28</sup>

It is the opposite view of the understanding of development where the idea was, that, women's main problem, specially in third world, was insufficient participation in an otherwise benevolent process of growth and development ( Sen & Grown: 1987:15).<sup>29</sup> So the



'Developing Strategies for the Future: Feminist perspective' New York, in 1980, stresses that, unless women define their own needs, goals and strategies, even 'benign' governments won't change the basic structures which keep women in a subordinate position (as quoted in IWTC 1980:6). Therefore, Dakar Declaration emerged (1982) with a women's vision of "Another Development", where structural transformation is the prime principle, which challenges the economic, political and cultural forms of domination, which are existing in the international, national and household levels:

accordingly, at the international levels, Another Development should replace the forms of dependent development and unequal terms of exchange with that of mutually beneficial and negotiated interdependence. . . . Nationally, models of developments have to be based on the principle of self reliance. . . . and the building of genuinely democratic institutions and practices. . . . At the local and household levels, the vision of Another Development ought to reject existing structures that create or reinforce a sexual division of labour. (Development Dialogue 1982, 13-14).<sup>30</sup>

Thus the Dakar statement indicates the solution of gender inequality debate which attempts to redress this (sexual) inequality, the very comprehension of the roots of this inequality "could show a path for reducing all other inequalities". (Devaki Jain, 1983, 20).<sup>31</sup> Therefore, a Third World Women's Group formed to define the issues of development from the vantage point of women, namely, DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) argued that:

both poverty and gender subordination must be transformed by our vision. . . . in a world and in countries riven with differences of economic interests and political power, we cannot expect political will for systemic change to emerge voluntarily. . . . It must be fostered by mass movements that give central focus to the 'basic rights' of the poor and demand reorientation of policies, programmes and projects towards that end. . . . The transformation of the structures of subordination that have been so inimical to women in the other part of our vision. . . . Changes in laws, civil codes, systems of property rights, control over our bodies, labour codes and the social and legal institutions that underwrite male control and privilege, are essential if women are to attain justice in society. (Sen and Grown, 1987, P-80-81).<sup>32</sup>

Thus it can be said that 'development' is not a value neutral concept rather it has socio-political and economic aspect. The 'women question' uncovers the underpinning ideology of development paradigm, which shows that 'development' has a political and economic motive that caused to persist inequality.

This notion will be further clear if we look at the macro policies of a developing country like Bangladesh.

## Notes

- (1)Jahan, Raunaq, The Elusive Agenda, UPL, Dhaka, 1995.
- (2)Jaquitte& Staudt,1988, cited in Naila Kabeer, Reverse Reality, Kali for Women, 1994.
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- (9)Percy Amendment,1994
- (10)UN Report, 1995
- (11)Huq,Mahbub-UI, Human Development Report, 1997.
- (12)Ibid, 1997.
- (13)UNDP Report, 1994
- (14)Khanam,A, Address by the Representative of Bangladesh at the 15th Congress of NFIW, held from 30 January to 2nd February, 1999, at Hyderabad, India.BMP, Dhaka, 1999.
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- (25)Beneria, Lourdes, ed. Women and Development: The Sexual Division of Labour in Rural Societies, Praeger, New York, & ILO, Geneva, 1982.
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(27) Jahan, Raunaq & Papanek, Hanna, eds. Women and Development: Perspective from South and South East Asia, BILIA, Dhaka, 1979.

(28) Quoted in C. Bouch and R. Carillo, 'Feminist Perspectives on Women in Development' in Irene Tinker, ed. Persistent Inequities, Oxford University Press, New York, 1990.

(29) Sen, Gita & Grown, Caren, Development Crisis and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives, Monthly Review Press, New York 1987

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(31) Jain, D., 'Indian Women: Today & Tomorrow', Mainstream, 21(32) April, 9, 1983.

(32) Sen, Gita & Grown, Caren, Development Crisis and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives, Monthly Review Press, New York 1987.

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## CHAPTER 3 : DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

In the last chapter an attempt has been made to review the shifts in debates about women and development. In this Chapter, I will seek to understand the macro strategy of development and its changes, if any, over time in both the pre and post independence period of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a predominantly rural, peasant based society. It was earlier a part of undivided 'Pakistan'. Pakistan was divided in two parts viz. 'West Pakistan' and 'East Pakistan'. In 1971, through a liberation war, the East Pakistan got independence and emerged as a - new country, known as Bangladesh. In this section, I would discuss the development strategy in erstwhile East Pakistan and then the shift, if at all, in the strategy of Independent Bangladesh. The focus here is on the macro policy level.

### **3.1 Development in Erstwhile East Pakistan**

Since the end of colonialism when 'Pakistan' emerged as a politically independent nation, it adopted a development model which was indifferent to the Eastern Part, where a vast majority of people lived in rural areas. Pakistan had adopted 'growth-with-equity' model of development with the notion that the capital and technology of the developed countries would help to reduce the 'gap' among the classes in the society.

The objectives and process of development were viewed in economic terms. 'Green Revolution' and 'Poverty alleviation programme were also evaluated in the same way. Emphasis was given to economic factors and centralized decision making to achieve results. The framework which Wignaraja:1993 states generally, is also applicable for erstwhile East Pakistan, where development strategy was assumed to be that of rapid economic growth that of with central planning and control of the economy (by the State or the Private Sector) as a 'top-down' process, with emphasis on industrialization, modernization and urbanization. To achieve this goal, it was assumed that foreign aid and technology will play an important role to accumulate internal capital. The benefit will 'trickle down' automatically in the modern sector or 'at best to be headed down in an administrative fashion or delivered. Material accumulation in public or private forms would be expected to solve other human problem'. (Wignaraja : 1993:8).<sup>1</sup>

But in reality, the presumption of the model does not work to achieve its goal. The role of the state was neither that of the equalizer, liberator nor that of the modernizer or mobilizer. Rather it adopted a repressive role towards those who raised their voice against

existing development plan, who pointed out that the state had failed to unify its whole people under one development plan. (Reference Tables have given below )

**Table-1 Percentage of Allocation of Funds for Development Projects**

| Item  | West Pakistan | East Pakistan |
|---|---------------|---------------|
| Foreign Exchange for various Development              | 80%           | 20%           |
| Foreign Aid (Excluding USAID)                         | 96%           | 4%            |
| USAID   | 66%           | 34%           |
| Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation           | 58%           | 42%           |
| Pakistan Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation | 80%           | 20%           |
| Industrial Development Bank                           | 96%           | 24%           |
| House Building  | 88%           | 12%           |
|   | 77%           | 23%           |

Source: Bangladesh Document, 1973.

**Table-2 Agriculture Development Project**

| Item   | West Pakistan                               | East Pakistan                               |
|--|---|---|
| Fertilizer Distribution during in 1000 metric tons'      | 1964-68<br>739-66%                          | 1964-68<br>371-33%                          |
| Improved seed distribution during 1964-69, in '000 tons' | 342 - 89%                                   | 40-11%                                      |
| Increase in Fish Production in '000 metric tons'         | 1951-52, 1966-68<br>56 153<br>273% increase | 1951-52, 1966-68<br>173 256<br>48% increase |
| Distribution of Tractors                                 |   |   |
| Wheel type, numbers                                      | 20,069                                      | 1,825                                       |
| Other large numbers                                      | 2,000                                       | 350   |
|  | 91%   | 9%  |

Source: Bangladesh Document 1993

**Table-3 Social Welfare**

|                                    | West Pakistan | East Pakistan |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Population                         | 55 million    | 75 million    |
| Total number of Doctors            | 12,400        | 7,600         |
| Total number of Hospital Beds      | 26,000        | 6,000         |
| Rural Health Centre                | 325           | 88            |
| Urban Community Development Centre | 81            | 52            |

Source: Bangladesh Document 1993

The state created disparity between two regions. It served the interest of the one particular group - representing the elite sections - who had no clear idea about rural people, their culture, norms, values and complexities of rural problems.

It was observed that, those who formulated the plan were comparatively wealthy, well educated and better placed in the society, who felt affiliated with neo-colonial ideology and neo-colonial system which is revealed through the development plans which had political,

economic and military ramifications. In other words the planners have direct connection with modern western education system where they are well informed about the analysis of Mill-Bentham, the parameter of Democracy, October Revolution or the theme of capital of Keynes, but they were ignorant of the root causes of rural poverty. They believed that capital and production are the main sources of economic growth. Therefore they prescribed a path to invest resources for capital and production, but ignored necessary steps for improvement of agriculture and mobilization of human resources (Ahmed: 1981).<sup>2</sup> That means what Kothari: 1993 stated for South Asia in general is also appropriate for erstwhile East Pakistan development model, where 'this model of development produced a structure of opportunities that was inequitable and pitched against the masses.' The emphasis on capital accumulation for rapid industrialization and associated patterns of urbanisation and modernization as being outward oriented (from the village to the metropolitan centres) inevitably distributed resources unevenly, to the detriment of the poor.(Kothari: 1993).<sup>3</sup>

West Pakistan accumulated Capital from the rural sector of East Pakistan worth approximately TK. 581.5 crore, which was invested in the Industrial Sector of West Pakistan. With State initiatives the industries were set up in West Pakistan of which the ownership passed on to the hands of West Pakistan where 12% of the total enterprises were set. The private and Government together formed 68.5% enterprises of which the monopoly of ownership belonged to West Pakistan (Papanek, 1967).<sup>4</sup>

It is a hard fact that the development Plan of Pakistan reveals itself to be full of disparities. (Ref. Table is in the next page:)

It was observed that the bulk of development expenditure was made in the West though 55 percent of the population lived in the East. The privatization of economy resulted in curtailing the public expenditure. The Central Government of Pakistan imposed a system of centralized change control, import licencing and quantitative restriction to the detriment of the Eastern Wing. ( Datt and Others, 1973).<sup>5</sup>

Eastern Wing's share of foreign exchange was more than half but the share of Import was in the range of 29 to 32 percent. Agricultural market was squeezed by the state policy where the producer was deprived of proper value of the goods. The producers had no control over their product, rather it was controlled by the businessmen. Maintenance of overvaluation of the rupee was taken for the favour of flourishing capitalist class. The capitalist class with state initiatives transferred the resources from East Pakistan. Mahbubul Haq stated that the amount of the resources per annum was upto Rs. 20 crore till 1957-58. As a result social

### The Development Plan Expenditure Feature in Pakistan

| Period               | Development Plan Expenditure |        |         | Out side Plan | Work Plan | Total Dev' Expend 2+5+6 | Total Expend | Dev' Expend. Regions as % of All Pakistan Total |
|----------------------|------------------------------|--------|---------|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|--------------|---|
|                      | Total                        | Public | Private |               |           |                         |              |   |
| 1                    | 2                            | 3      | 4       | 5             | 6         | 7                       | 8            | 9   |
| <b>East Pakistan</b> |                              |        |         |               |           |                         |              |   |
| 1950-51 to 1954-55   | 1,000                        | 700    | 300     | -             | -         | 1,000                   | 2,710        | 20  |
| 1955-56 to 1959-56   | 2,700                        | 1,970  | 730     | -             | -         | 2,700                   | 5,240        | 26  |
| 1960-61 to 1964-65   | 9,250                        | 6,250  | 3,000   | -             | 450       | 9,700                   | 14,040       | 32  |
| 1965-66 to 1969-70   | 16,560                       | 11,060 | 5,550   | -             | -         | 16,560                  | 21,410       | 36  |
| <b>West Pakistan</b> |                              |        |         |               |           |                         |              |   |
| 1950-51 to 1954-55   | 4,000                        | 2,000  | 2,000   | -             | -         | 4,000                   | 11,290       | 80  |
| 1955-56 to 1959-60   | 7,570                        | 4,640  | 2,930   | -             | -         | 7,570                   | 16,550       | 74  |
| 1960-61 to 1964-65   | 18,400                       | 7,700  | 10,700  | 2,110         | 200       | 20,710                  | 33,550       | 68  |
| 1965-66 to 1969-70   | 26,100                       | 10,100 | 16,000  | 3,600         | -         | 29,700                  | 51,950       | 64  |

Source: Bangladesh Document 1993

inequalities increased among the classes and a small group of ruling class established their control over state power. The policies were made for the interest of market and market became the 'unifier' instead of state. In the name of development it brought in consumerism in the society. Therefore this particular class followed a particular culture of consumption, which is often perceived as the 'American mass culture' and formed an 'elite culture' through their consumption, amenities and lifestyle.

However, the leaders of the people of East Pakistan's started to mobilize people against this Development Plan and demanded a proper share of state power. The ruling class felt the threat of being ousted from power and the donor agency specially USA, were frightened of losing their market and thereby disrupting the existing system of accumulation of

capital. During this period, the Socialist Block also emerged as one of the great international power who were interested to increase their power block. East Pakistan had given emphasis on equal distribution, which gave an impression to the West Pakistan ruling class that, East Pakistan is trying to come closer to the Socialist Block. The donor agency of USA felt, that if the relationship between the East Pakistan and the Socialist Block is established, then the Socialist Block also will enter into the local market. To resist the entrance of the Socialist Block into the regional market and to keep monopoly over local market, the USA was hostile towards the eastern population. It is a fact that, those who reach the 'High-tech' stage invest more resources to produce armament as part of their production system which is more profit-oriented. This type of production services only through suppression of the poor and retaining control over them within the nation and outside the nation over developing countries.

In 1971, the people of the East Pakistan started their struggle for an independent country, with the notion that they would not be treated as underdeveloped and as a periphery supplying resources.

### **3.2 Independent Bangladesh & Development Policy**

After the liberation, a new state emerged, called Bangladesh and established a direct relationship with global society. The new Government had declared four basic principle for social development such as Democracy, Secularism, Nationalism, and Socialism. As a new born baby, Bangladesh needed capital to reorganize post liberation economic revival and reconstruction. They had adopted nationalization policy for their big industries, bank enterprises and reform of the land system. 100 bighas i.e. 33 $\frac{1}{3}$  acres was the 'ceiling limit and land revenue was scrapped for those owning upto 25 bighas of land.

The planners had no knowledge of the negative impact of conventional paradigm which in the name of modernization had created impoverishment in the rural areas and made them dependent on an unequal development orders.

Therefore, the planners took a reformist approach where they tried to incorporate following issues into their development plan:

- (a) social justice or redistribution of wealth
- (b) people's participation in top-down planning process
- (c) a continuous process of transfer of a proportion of income and technology from urban to rural through system of nationalization.

But this reformist approach still emphasized 'development' as an economic exercise, subject of allocation of scarce resources by government and big private sector corporations. They tried to incorporate a 'conflict free' social frame work for change, where the vision of 'one



world' continues to spread the international rhetoric, with the assumption that, these changes "brought about under existing conditions and within unchanged structures - will result in an orderly and continuous transfer of resources" from urban to rural.

It was the belief of the planners that the problem is rooted with the poor i.e. in the rural areas. To eliminate this problem it was necessary to take some assistance from developed countries in the form of technology and financial assistance with some consultation of people to bring a positive social change. The poor were treated by them as an object and the targets of the process and were at best to be provided with a safety net; while adjusting to an inequitable global system and a national system devoid of vision or capacity.

During this period (1972-1974) the development plan was under state control. In 1975 the former President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was murdered in a coup and a new government came to the power. Therefore to understand the development process of Bangladesh, it has to be noted that 1975 is a demarcation line for development process.

Before 1975 the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Late Tazuddin Ahmed declared that after liberation, Bangladesh will not receive any grant from them who were against the Liberation and will not receive any conditional fund from any one (Islam: 1986).<sup>6</sup>

After '75, it was realized that, the donors specially who were against the Liberation became powerful and could exercise their power in internal political issues. For example, the Times of India 1988 April 18 wrote that, the prominent opposition leaders had visited the US and some other countries with the mission to inform them "what is happening in the country such as suppression of fundamental rights and holding of farcical polls in the name of democracy". They further stressed that "they had every right to brief the donor countries about the "anti-democratic" action of the Government."<sup>7</sup>

After 1975 the people of Bangladesh experienced four development plans. During this time period, people experienced Military and Civil Governments though they themselves had no representation in power process. Rather they were treated as an object of power.

The similarity in these four plan periods after 1975 is that, the development plans are more donor driven. It has to be noted that, the donor driven situation is the consequences of 1974-75 socio-political problems. It is a hard fact that, in 1974 Bangladesh economy was facing an acute problem of food crisis. The world economic crisis of 1973, natural calamities with war devastated economy meant that Bangladesh was not able to give social security to its people. As a result people faced famine in Bangladesh. Furthermore, USA denied to send 'food aid' on the plea that, Bangladesh had violated the PL 480 by exporting Jute commodities to Cuba.

It can be said that foreign aid has come to be the engine of the development programmes (Islam: 1986)<sup>8</sup>. A considerable amount of foreign aid helped to increase the country's productive power such as Garment Industry and Agriculture. Because of this, in rice and wheat grew at 1.9 percent per year over the period 1973-86 compound to 1.5 percent over 1950-71 (Abdullah ed: 1991).<sup>9</sup> As a result, the multiplier modern technique effect of invested money keeps the level of economic activity in a static position (Ibid:1991).<sup>10</sup> But the overall socio-economic problems remain the same.

It is worth noting that, with constant help of foreign aid the deep rooted socio-economic problems of the country has not been uprooted, rather day by day it has intensified. The experience of agricultural and the industrial sector has given the impression that, the feature of the development is that of 'buying time'. (Ibid: 1987).<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, urban and elite oriented policy of the development made a negative impact on the country. The social inequalities have broadened. Poverty problem has become acute and cultural lag is visible in every aspect of life.

The existing trend of development suggests that it is helping the rich to accumulate resources (non-earned income i.e. misappropriated foreign aid and wealth) and they are spending this money for consumption. As a result the multinational corporations have benefited and consumerism in general has spread. The strategy of the development is that:

(1) of patronizing consumerism where people spend on foreign goods. A report of Mahbub Hossain shows that, 100% of marginal budget and a major portion of main budget of the rich is spent on imported goods. As a result a big amount of income goes outside the country through (a) capital accumulation (b) consumerism which is dangerous for foreign trade of the country and makes it difficult to pay off debts. Where there is a crisis of money for importing agri-ingredients and raw materials and machineries for industrial production, a big amount of foreign money is spent by the government to import consumer goods for these parasitic section.

(2) City centered or outward development cannot reduce the excessive pressure on Agriculture. For even now 70% people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. (Islam: 1987 ).<sup>12</sup>

After 1975, one of the basic principles 'socialisin' was eliminated from the constitution during the period of Ziaur Rahman and decentralization and privatization were accepted as main policy for social development. In 1982, General Ershad's government also continued with the process of privatization and liberalization of economy. In 1991, Begum Khaleda Zia's

government kept on supporting previous policies and Sheikh Hasina's government has given emphasis on free market economy.

If we evaluate the result of this period it would be clear that:

- (1) the polarization of classes took place gradually.
- (2) the economy of Bangladesh was tied firmly with world capitalist Block and market expanded into the deep interior of villages.
- (3) the pauperization of poor was not stopped by welfare programme such as food for works, food for digging canal, food for education, vulnerable group development (VGD) for destitute women. It has rather continued to impoverish the poor.

It is interesting to note that there is a similarity in development plan between erstwhile East Pakistan and after 1975. It is stressed by the economists that in both periods, development plans were outward i.e. urban oriented and placed women in marginal status. (Hossain :1987, Jahan: 1987 ).<sup>13</sup> Both plan had given emphasis on the urban sector and rural sector always received marginal status. Though Rural Development programme started before liberation, where Rural Workers programme and Thana irrigation programme worked under IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) programme, the result was mostly negative. These programmes did not serve the interest of the poor, rather it helped the rich farmers (Islam: 1987 ).<sup>14</sup>

It was assumed that, through the IRDP the poor will get access to the credit and can solve their problem of capital. But, it was not realized by the planners that, the village structure also changed over the time and has influenced by the development strategy. Thus when the planners has given emphasis on poor or middle farmer, they had given emphasis only on their economic factor. They thought, by forming a new cooperative and by providing access to the loan is the solution of rural poverty.

But in reality the poor had small amount of land and they were scattered. The IRDP were giving loan for power pump, which need a vast area for irrigation. Therefore, for technical reason they were compelled to include rich and medium farmers who own vast plots of lands. In this process, gradually the rich farmers got benefited from the programme and started accumulating capital. It was observed by the researcher that the money thus grabbed was then lent to the poor.

Macro-level studies shows that:

in most development activities, women were either deliberately bypassed or adversely affected, since they seldom owned land and were hardly visible in agricultural activities, like processing and storage (as they work mostly indoor). They were not touched by the effects of land reform, or extension work. On the contrary, mechanization of rice husking, weaving and fishnet manufacturing

encroached the limited areas of employment and work available under traditional division of labour. Women has always been targeted in the family planning campaigns. Women rights, interests and safety have never received importance in these campaign (Abdullah, 1990).<sup>15</sup>

Another study shows that:

though the global norms is for women to have a higher life expectancy, in Bangladesh inspite of overall improvements in life expectancy between 1974 and 1985, women's life expectancy has fallen relative to men and it is lower than man's (54 for women and 55 for men). Moreover, in spite of, higher male infant mortality, 113 males to 104 females per thousand live births, the death rate of girl children between the ages 1 to 4 is higher (16 girls per thousand to 13 boys). This reversal in trend from a higher male mortality to a higher female mortality within the first four years of live demonstrate how quickly girls face discrimination after birth. The incidence of chronic long term malnutrition (57 percent for women, 54 percent of men), and acute malnutrition ( 9 percent for women as compared to 6 percent for men) is also higher for women. Between two nutrition surveys 1975-76 and 1981-82 adult males have increased their calorie intakes while adult females have suffered a decrease (Jahan: 1989).<sup>16</sup>

Besides gender differentials in health and nutrition's one can cite differentials in many other areas - women's literacy remains half that of men. Also the dropout rate is higher for female students. In 1984-85, 60 percent of females compared to 49 percent of male had no access to education, one fifth of the females and one fourth of the males had education upto class four. Only 9 percent of females compared to 18 percent of males go beyond class 5. Only one-third of the college educated population are female (Ibid:1989).<sup>17</sup>

Women share in civil service is still very low (6 percent in 1976 and 7 percent in 1984-85) despite a quota reservation of 15 percent for females (Khan, 1988).<sup>18</sup>

There is another point that needs to be mentioned, that, the decline of Soviet Union made an important change in development paradigm. The fact that economy become the part of the global economy went unchallenged and people's attitude towards privatization became more positive.

Privatization policy inevitably strengthens the emergence of sharp difference between classes. The ruling class (including civil and military bureaucracy) merges with business classes and capture state power. It is worth mentioning that, in Bangladesh, there was no traditional classical capitalist, but foreign aid and investment created a "middle class elite" who accumulated huge capital by exploitation. This particular class with state patronization started to exploit the rural people and misappropriated foreign aid. That means in urban economic permutation, a middle class elite emerged with collaboration of businessmen and government bureaucrat; and a similar 'class' emerged in the same way in rural economy. The rich farmers

with the help of bureaucrats established monopoly to enjoy the foreign fund (including fertilizer, irrigation facilities, pesticide) and accumulate capital through development programmes, and thus created a rural bourgeois (Sobhan, 1982).<sup>19</sup> Kothari made a general statement about the development process of Third World which is relevant for Bangladesh also, that, corruption in high place has become a predominant social vice in development process (Kothari:1993).<sup>20</sup>

It is viewed that in post liberation period the state is no more a protector, rather it has worked as an instrument of oppressor. The state failed to exercise its autonomy to formulate its policy for transformation, improvement in condition of people's life. Instead it performed as a mediator for statusquoists.

In these circumstances a new phenomenon emerged in social structure called NGOs, who raised their voice against the failures of the state development programme. In other words, the state fails to make a self sustained accumulation of development strategy. They felt that, it is necessary to consider human development, growth, equity and technological change within the development plan. They stressed that, to formulate such strategy, the people, locally available resources and knowledge system should be the critical instrument, instead of 'replicable model'. It would be wise to create a new one, based on one's own socio-cultural specificity and to chart one's own social transformation. The economist, journalist, sociologist social worker at different levels also sought a new model of development, which can address people's needs irrespective of class, gender or caste. Those who raise their voice for transformation, are addressed as 'activist' by Kothari. He says that they are 'essentially drawn from the conscious and enlightened and troubled streams of the middle class engaged in a wide range of activities'. Activists include also people engaged in humanitarian type of constructive work and NGOs involved with development projects which will lead to more struggle oriented political work.

In this context, foreign capital and technology would be viewed as a supplement to the new approach. Here the experience of previous model of development would show the real path that how to hit the poverty in all its manifestations, where poor would be viewed the subject of the process (Wignaraja:1993).<sup>21</sup> Because people within their life experience form their own idea about the 'social issues'. The development worker need to 'identify' 'what went wrong and how to get it right'. In Bangladesh, the governmental development strategy choose to highlight the 'issues' which will usually have more to do with the perpetuation of their rule than with the possibilities of real social development. 'For example the Ershad Regime had publicly identified population growth as the 'number one problem'. "The purpose of this ploy

would appear to be two fold: first to exculpate itself in advance for Bangladesh's economic problems in effect ascribing them to the people for 'breeding like rabbits' and secondly to please donors who like to see Third World countries adopting such a stance'. (though it is well recognized as a real and important problem it is hardly number 'one') (Abdullah ed: 1991).<sup>22</sup>

It is therefore important that, the government should not have a monopoly over the task of identifying issues and appropriating measures to solve the problem. People or general public should have equal access to a wide range of alternative diagnosis and prescriptions. Thus South Commission provided the concept of 'people centred development' where human development would be the yardstick of development. The UNDP (1990) report demonstrates the "Human Development" concept where they had given emphasis on education, health, nutrition growth rate, GND, military expenditure etc. All these information would help to formulate a new strategy based on peoples creativity, local resources and local knowledge system. Thus peoples participation in development as well as government decision making process is needed. In conventional paradigm it was assumed that, development and democracy worked on harmonious basis. This model does not tell about the interests of different groups in the society which conflict with each other and do not focus on the sharp relationships of dominance and dependence. These relationships give power to the dominant, (the landlord, the trader, the money lender the bureaucrat etc.) bringing about a crisis of immediate survival for the poor. There are even social divisions based on caste, religion, gender, age etc. These divisions make people reluctant to take economic social and political initiatives collectively to improve their lives and their inability to change their lives individually, further compound their difficulties. These factors also prevent them from benefiting from technocratically evolved development package.

Therefore, the NGOs (Women's Organization, different NGOs and intellectuals) in Bangladesh raised the voice for participatory development. They stressed that, without the participation of large numbers of people, who are poor and vulnerable, any sustainable development would not take place. They pointed out that, participation should be representative. That means power should be shared at the local level. Participation means to ensure equal access to resources i.e. land, education, food, health. In other words commitment to a more egalitarian society.

The very nature of participatory, self-reliant development activities is such that they will eventually attract, the attention of the power structure. According to Wignaraja, "if they are properly linked and multiply themselves through the process of mobilization,

conscientization and organization they can become a countervailing power in the social context and help to widen the political space for change even further" (Wignaraja: 1993).<sup>23</sup>

Thus NGOs started to mobilize the grass-root people with:

a new politics of distribution. . . where NGOs played a greater role in service delivery inspite of, on behalf of, and sometimes in conjunction with government. . . The principal issue was who delivers the benefits of development and to which groups in society (James V. Riker: 1995).<sup>24</sup>

The NGOs have greater diversity, credibility and creativity than ever before. In developing countries, they have often managed to engage with local population and to command their trust in ways which governments find impossible. NGOs have frequently demonstrated their ability to help those most in need and those missed out by official aid programmes. They have pioneered new approaches and challenged development orthodoxy. Particularly many Southern NGOs have successfully challenged socially or environmentally damaging programmes pursued by their own governments. And their counterpart have used the media, mass lobbies and other devices to bring international environmental and social issues from virtual obscurity on to the political agenda.

Thus NGOs are more likely to see as political rather than technical, problems and so seek political remedies. Organizing the poor to stand up for their rights demanding access to the pure water supply and campaigning internationally for debt cancellations might set its approach.

The NGOs reveal that it is the conventional development, which has been unable to address to the needs of ordinary people and to the environment. Indeed the focus on wealth production, rather than wealth distribution, production for export, rather than for the needs of local populations, extracting of natural resources, rather than environmental protection, and western style technologies for example in agriculture, have often compounded the problems which are now regarded as critical.

The NGOs of Bangladesh, are beginning to force through the implementation of legislation concerning minimum wages, feudalism and modern day slavery (bonded labour) legislation which, though progressive, had largely remained ignored. Bangladesh Mahila Parisad, a local-funded NGO worked for the social, economic and political right for women. They pointed out that though women have equal right in constitution, in practice, they have limited access to enjoy these rights due to lack of adequate law. Thus they challenge the government on behalf of women to take action in High Court, in the State Parliament and through the media. As a result, 'Dowry Prohibition Act of 1980' and the 'Cruelty to Women

Deterrant Punishment Ordinance of 1983' were promulgated and now they raised their voice for Uniform Family Code.

The NGOs have raised their voice for environmental problem which is the consequence of excessive exploitation in the name of development. 'The Government still appears incapable of taking significant action' (Clark John, 1995)<sup>25</sup> against the long run ecological problem. They pointed out that the environment is something to be preserved here and now. It cannot be left to the good intentions and pious declarations of governments but must become part of people's own concern, an organized concern at that, including agitation and movements to restrain the state and corporate interests from running amok and running the life chances of both present and even more of future generations and indeed of non-human species and plants as well (Kothari:1993), This Statement which Kothari made for the Third World is also applicable to Bangladesh. The same is applicable in regard to health, food and nutrition. NGOs raised these issues that, it is no more the specialists, experts and ministries, rather these are people's issues. Because the negative impact created in the name of development, affect the people only. Thus concern for nature today is a political issue of masses both world wide and at local levels.

Now in development paradigm a new phenomenon has been included called 'grassroot movement', where women are playing a vital role. This new movement is organized with the notion that it would give birth to a dynamic social force which will help the state to develop a resource basis and will play a vital role between state and society. For these, an alternative movement is needed under innovative leadership where the unorganized sector i.e. the poor can raise their voice and can take a part in it. Therefore they raise the issue of empowerment, which stresses the interests of the disenfranchised groups of society (Kabeer: 1994).<sup>27</sup>

The concept of empowerment is clearly rooted in the notion of power and in its reverse, powerlessness or the absence of power, while earlier analysis tended to focus on powerlessness - the powerlessness of the poor, of women, of ethnic minorities - there has been a shift away from this location because of its static connotations. Moreover, powerlessness suggests a total absence of power where as in reality even those who appear to have very little power are still able to resist, to subvert and sometimes to transform the conditions of their lives (Ibid: 1994).<sup>28</sup>

The NGO society believe that, donation, unemployment allowance or subsidy is not needed for the poor, what is needed, according to them, is equal access to equal opportunities and a space where they can compete equally. Thus they believe that not by income transfer but by wealth accumulation is the only way to bring change in the poor's life. They notice that the women are the most dependable one, who can work efficiently within or organized and cooperative environment (Mahbub-Ul Haq: 1997).<sup>29</sup>



Thus NGOs were started to mobilize women's group, though women got emphasis since 70s when trickle down theory and basic needs approach dominated development paradigm and started projects for landless and target groups to involve them in development activities. During this period small projects got emphasis for development and through this NGOs get integrated into international development paradigm. By 1990s there was an important change noticed in NGOs' activities. Many of the women's organizations shifted their orientation from welfare to development, enabling poor women to obtain access to credit, employment, income, literacy, health and family planning and increase activity in rural areas, mobilizing rural women on a regular basis. "While women field workers and rural women's group meetings were oddities in the early 1970s, by 1990, according to one estimate, more than a million poor women were engaged in regular group meeting and activities and over one hundred thousand women field workers were involved in projects to link poor women with development resources and services" (Jigging: 1987).<sup>30</sup> Why did these changes occur or why did they shift their vision?

Before 1990s, it is observed that those who raised their voice for women in political domain, were given a marginal place. The Awami League, the claimant for a well balanced constitution, had not given equal status to women as stated in the constitution. The BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) though it stated that the aim of emancipation of women's labour, their underpinning ideology was to attract foreign investment and encourage privatization and to exploit cheap women's labour in labour market (Guhathakurta, 1986).<sup>31</sup> The Jatiya Party in Ershad's regime promulgated several Acts and Ordinances, (though it believes on conventional role of women) such as (The Cruelty to Women Deterrent Punishment Ordinance of 1983, The Family Court Ordinance 1985), pressurized as they were by women's organization, specially left oriented organization viz. Bangladesh Mahila Parisad, The Communist Party and Socialists tended to see to 'women's issues' as part of the class struggle (Irina Sen: 1990)<sup>32</sup> and denied to see 'women' itself as a class.

Thus the women's movement challenged the conventional politics where 'women issue' were seen as issues of personal and private world, Women's movement brought women's issues in politics and pointed out that women's issues are no more personal or political. The issues raised by womenfolk (health, sanitation, environment) were no more left to feminism or women only but to all democratic movement, be it environment or disarmament movement. Because women and children are the first who are victims of any calamity, natural or social. They are the worst affected. Therefore the new approach pointed out that, women are the main players who would bring the change through this movement.

There are several micro experiences (such as Grameen Bank, credit to the poor, BRAC community development for the poorest, Proshika, skills for the poor etc.), which show that, women as well as poor have the potentiality to take greater responsibility for community development, which challenges the conventional notion of development paradigm. These experiences are giving one indication that it is a new reality which has to be understood in a new way, with a new methodology where:

partly, a macro transformation will come through the non party political process, partly through counter-cultural and alternative movements that are global in scope and partly through 'nationality' types of movements for regional autonomy and for texturing a pluralist social order supported by a decentralized political order (Kothari: 199 ).<sup>33</sup>

However, what impression we get from this discussion is not the real picture. Apparently it seems that the NGOs policies are very progressive towards the people, but it should not be forgotten that, after Second World war the donors specially the World Bank, United Nations Organization and USAID have promoted a style of development, which has often been insensitive to the needs of ordinary people and to the environment. 'Indeed the focus on wealth production, rather than wealth distribution, production for export, rather than for the needs of local population, extraction of natural resources, rather than environmental protection and western style technologies for example in agriculture, have often compounded the problems' which now are regarded as critical. Typically the Third World Countries like Bangladesh, pursued policies which served the elite, who feel affiliated with the western notion of development. It should not be forgotten that, before 1971, the development policy did not fulfill the aspiration of the people of East Pakistan. The modernization and industrialization model of development, created inequality between two parts of Pakistan. Thus the eastern part raised their voice against inequality and emerged as a new independent country viz. Bangladesh.

After 1971, Bangladesh had specified the policy towards development, where they followed reformist attitude. Then their policy had been changed after 1975, and followed the principle of market economy and tried to manage the adverse impact created by the development model from time to time. Therefore, the changes of development policy over the years created a complex situation in Bangladesh as well as the role of donor agencies and NGOs.

The next chapter will give an idea about what is actually happening in Bangladesh today and what is the role of Donor, NGOs and the Government.

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(Note) Human Development Index (HDI) is introduced by UNDP to measure the status of development of a given society. In this purpose, the variables chosen by them are such as, Education, Health, Nutrition, Growth Rate, GNP, Military expenditure etc.

## CHAPTER 4 : DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY: THE ROLE OF DONORS AND GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH.

In the last two chapters an attempt has been made to review the shifts in debates on women and development and the strategies adopted at different times in Bangladesh. In this section I would like to discuss the development strategy and the role of Donors and the Government of Bangladesh.

Development planning is not simply a technical concept responding to different empirical variables and demands. It is implicitly also a struggle over ideologies and priorities which are a result of the competing interest groups in society, which influence the targets and goals of development. The result is that, not all interests and aspirations get equal representation in the political-economic processes. Just as effective demand in market is essentially determined by purchasing power, and not by the range of existing demands. Similarly policy formulation is influenced by effective demand of the political power. It essentially undermines the demand for equality.

This statement gives a new insight into the development paradigm and its initiators. To get an overall idea, I would like to look at two organizations, viz. the World Bank and the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), who are known as multilateral donor agencies and who have a critical role to initiate and formulate development policy, project and programme in Bangladesh as well as Asia.

### **4.1 Policy Objectives**

To understand the policy formulation for development strategy it is necessary to look at the objectives of donors. The objectives can be divided into two: (a) substantive (b) process - focused instrumental objectives. Substantive objective refers to women's advancement, gender equality, women's empowerment and so on, and process focused instrumental objective emphasizes women's integration in mainstream development. Mainstreaming means women are to be made a central part of this development. "The emphasis on integrating women's concerns into development planning reflects a certain disappointment with earlier attempts to enhance the achievements of women as participants in and beneficiaries of development" (ESCAP: 1992:P.iii).<sup>1</sup>

In other words, instead of treating women as beneficiaries mainstreaming development would treat women as agents of judgement and change. "In respecting an individual, the society must take note not only of what would promote his or her welfare, but also of all the things he or she has reasons to value and would want to promote (whether or not they relate to the person's own welfare)" (Sen. A: 1992:3).<sup>2</sup>

## **4.2 Theoretical background**

The above idea is rooted theoretically in the gender roles framework (GRF) which was developed at the Harvard Institute of International Development in collaboration with the Women in Development Office of USAID (US Agency for International Development) and subsequently used with the staff of USAID, the World Bank and a number of other donor agencies (Kabeer: 1994: 60).<sup>3</sup>

The Gender role framework offers a methodology for integrating gender awareness into project design. It incorporates a bargaining model of household where individual is of prime interest. It stresses that within household women may have shared interests, separate interests and also may sometimes have opposing interests (Cloud, 1985, P.25). This model of thought is based on a matrix of questions and these questions are used as its analytical tool. These questions focus attention on gender divisions in production as well as in access and control over resources and benefits. They have addressed two questions to the production system i.e. "what is produced" and "how it is produced". That means, production system, according to them can be divided in two ways: (a) market based production and (b) family based production. In other words, the aim of GRF is to draw the attention of planners, as to 'who does what' and 'who enjoys access and control'. It suggests that individuals either would be able to make use of given resources or they would decide, how to use these resources. This framework emphasizes only the efficient allocation of resources. Here women are to be consulted about the implementation of a predetermined agenda which was evolved out of particular development priorities and practices.

The assumption which GRF makes is that women oriented projects will automatically benefit women. It presumes that women will have control over the resources being allocated to them and also have control over the results of the projects. However, the GRF model neither questions the basic framework which underlines the planning and execution of a project, nor its priorities. And these factors which are ignored, are what finally decides the success or failure of a project vis-a-vis women.

So it is clear that the model discussed above is not for total change or transformation of structure which keeps women in a marginalized position. Rather it is willing to manage the disparity in society through structural adjustment. Structural Adjustment means to overcome economic crisis and imbalance caused by internal or external shocks and past mismanagement of the Society (Wood hall, 1991, P-10, cited in M.Carnoy, 1995). Within globalization of economic activities, it is viewed that the competition is growing among nations for markets and there is a widespread impact of the information and communications revolutions on

changing feature of global economic activities. This process makes economics become more complex, consumption more varied competition increased. Knowledge and information are more critical to the production and realization process. All national economies (and sub national regions, industries and most firms) have had to adjust to this new 'structural' reality. Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) emerged as a dominant paradigm at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and to a lesser extent, at the World Bank, in response to debt problems of developing countries. Thus imposed a set of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) on developing countries that reflected in the economic as well as in the development paradigms (Carnoy.M. 1995: P-655).<sup>4</sup>

### **4.3 The Role of Donor Agencies and the Government of Bangladesh**

Now we should look at the donor agencies to understand their response to women's issues which were raised over time. Rounaq Jahan stresses that:

the donors were initially responsive to the integrationist perspective. Instead of changing policy, programme and investment priorities, they took an 'add on' integrationist approach - adding a few specific measures, and WID staff and projects. The institutionalization of WID, rather than its operationalization, became a priority concern. Donors spent the greater part of the Decade for Women advocating the adoption of WID mandates, policies and measures. In 1983, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) adopted a set of WID guiding principles. . . The DAC/WID guideline principles, which were later revised in 1989 in the light of the 1985 Forward looking strategies, endorsed 'integration' as the objective and urged DAC member donor organizations to adopt a series of measures grouped under four categories: (a) mandates policy guidelines and plan of action (b) administrative measures (c) implementation and (d) coordination, consultation and development education. The guiding principles which were regularly monitored by the DAC Expert group on WID, which facilitated institutionalization of WID in multilateral agencies as well as bilateral agencies (Jahan: 1995: P-10).<sup>5</sup>

In the post Nairobi period the donors' 'commitment to and resourcing of WID' increased. The operational guidelines as well as complementary strategies aimed to integrate gender issues into macro economic policy framework and policy dialogues.

It is evident from several researches (UNDP, 1990, Jahan, 1991, CIDA 1993)<sup>6</sup> that from 1990s donors felt a need to change their WID policy because of its failure to achieve its goal. ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) undertook a research project during the period 1989-91, to assist the Governments of Asia and the Pacific to improve women's situation, by developing and promoting the use of a set of guidelines to integrate women's concerns fully into development planning (Ahmed, 1992, UN).<sup>7</sup>

With this background, it is necessary to look in depth at donor's strategies, which gives an idea about their concern for women and their position in development paradigm. It is

evident from several researchers that, multinational donors have strong influence in policy formulation of aid recipient countries. "The World Bank through its conditionalities often dictates policy reforms to aid recipient governments" (Jahan: 1995).<sup>8</sup> "With support from the World Bank and other donors, the government of Bangladesh launched a programme of structural reforms in the early 1990s to establish a more open, market based economy and to accelerate economic growth, and would move towards gender equity. Fiscal and monetary restraint and improved public resource management were complemented by some trade reform, deregulation of industry, exchange rate liberalization and a sustained increase in the levels of domestic savings and investment. The Government also, started the process of bringing private sector investment and managerial know-how to bear in its money losing state owned enterprises and banks". (World Bank: 1). In this report World Bank stresses on five themes to accelerate economic growth, which underlines the World Banks' strategy:

- improving macroeconomic management, which is essential for rapid, sustainable economic growth
- promoting a competitive private sector as the engine of growth
- promoting better public-sector management and better public services
- accelerating agricultural growth and rural development and strengthening links between agriculture and non-agricultural development and
- promoting faster and fairer human development through a long term vision in education, health, nutrition and population. (Ibid:3).

The UNDP as the largest provider of fund within the United Nations systems along with the World Bank, have a strong impact on policy analysis i.e. what they advocated and what they omit or marginalize, gets emphasis in policy and investment decision of the aid-recipient countries (Jahan: 1995: 15).<sup>24</sup>

The ESCAP report shows, that, NGOs in Bangladesh today remain as heavily dependent on foreign funding, as they did two-decades ago. As of 1992, the NGO sector received some 8 percent (about US \$ 120 million) of the country's overseas development assistance, with the 30 largest NGOs receiving 80 percent of that total and the eight largest receiving 50 percent (Holloway R. 1988, P.P. 214-215).<sup>25</sup> At the same time, it served approximately 15 percent of the country's population, concentrating on the rural poor (Ibid:1988 P-27).<sup>26</sup> The Human Development Report 1997, reveals that, the big NGOs are dependent on the donors, and donors are, in their turn, interested in giving subsidy in community development projects through NGOs. NGOs are considered by them as reliable and business oriented vehicles for implementing the projects. Approximately US\$ 500 million worth projects get approved by the donors every year (Mahbub-UL-Haq, 1997: P-102).<sup>27</sup>



The World Bank report stresses that, even for economic and social development, a direct investment from foreign donors is taking place in Bangladesh. "Between 1991/1992 and 1996/1997, the Board of Investment approved investments worth 83.5 billion with actual investment amounting to \$ 1.4 billion. There has been a steady stream of foreign investment in Bangladesh's vibrant export processing zone sector, amounting to about \$ 30 million to \$ 35 million annually which rose to \$ 54 million in 1996/97" (World Bank: P-1).<sup>28</sup> The Report of the Task Forces on Bangladesh Development Strategies for the 1990's, Dhaka, also shows (Ref. Tab-1) that, Bangladesh is heavily dependent on foreign aid. Development budget is almost entirely dependent on external aid flows which is gradually increasing (Sobhan; 1990, P-7).<sup>29</sup>

**Tab - 1 External Aid to Bangladesh since 1971 to 1990 (US\$ million)**

|                                   | Food Aid     | Commodity Aid | Project Aid   | Total Aid     |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>Commitment</b>                 |              |               |               |               |
| Grant                             | 3,835        | 3,476         | 4,893         | 12,204        |
| Loan                              | 763          | 4,069         | 9,500         | 14,332        |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>4,598</b> | <b>7,543</b>  | <b>14,393</b> | <b>26,536</b> |
| <b>Cancellation or Adjustment</b> |              |               |               |               |
| Grant                             | 43           | 11            | -91           | -37           |
| Loan                              | -            | 114           | -270          | -156          |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>43</b>    | <b>125</b>    | <b>-361</b>   | <b>-193</b>   |
| <b>Disbursement</b>               |              |               |               |               |
| Grant                             | 3,674        | 3,190         | 3,237         | 10,101        |
| Loan                              | 763          | 4,012         | 5,851         | 10,626        |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>4,437</b> | <b>7,202</b>  | <b>9,088</b>  | <b>20,727</b> |
| Pipe Line 30<br>June 1990         | 204          | 467           | 4,943         | 5,614         |

Source :Task Force Report, 1990, P - 271

The above Table reveals that, Bangladesh was not able to utilize external aid to its maximum economic potential, instead it (foreign aid) has created greater dependency on western countries and other donors, whose say in the indigenous development strategy formulation has increased. It has to be noted that, the foreign aid often comes to Bangladesh in the form of food aid, commodity aid and project aid (Guhathakorta: 1987: P-3).<sup>30</sup> Among them, project aid gets prime emphasis and usually forms around 50 percent of the total foreign aid. (Ministry of Finance, 1981).

UNDP, World Bank and other donors have funded research projects seeking to identify potential areas for resource allocation. This explains the heightened interests that the investors have shown in the country's natural gas sectors which has provided new possibilities for investment. Similar has been the case with fertilizer and telecommunication sector.

This kind of research does two things. One, is identifying the area of weakness of the recipient country, and second, marking ways to exploit these weaknesses for the profit of the donor country. This is done by formulating their development strategy for the weak areas, explicitly to strengthen the recipient country, but implicitly to serve their own donor's interests. For example, in Bangladesh one area of weakness is in the nature of growth of population. Donors show their interest to provide aid in this sphere, by targeting the women as the beneficiary group. However, the catch is that they provide aid on the condition that women use contraceptives produced by the donor country. This kind of strategy reveals two things:

(1) It would expand the market of the donor or set a link with the global economy.

(2) The recipient country serves as a guinea pig for donor, to try out new products to check their effectiveness, and also to see if it is safe for human emancipation. For example, Nor plant, a new birth control product, was first tried out in Bangladesh along with other developing countries. The product turned out to have harmful side effects, which harmed the recipient population. After a furore was raised, the advertisements of the product still continued, but with a warning. That was the only change. The product still continues to be marketed in the recipient country, but not in the donor's country.

This discussion explains how the recipient country, or Bangladesh, as is relevant for this study, gets influenced by the conditions and objectives laid down by the donors, because of financial imperatives. We should seek to know clearly the policy objectives of these multilateral donors as well as that of Bangladesh.

#### **4.4. Objectives and Proponents**

The two multilateral donors that are being discussed here used both the substantive and the process focused instrumental objective. However, they did not formulate a formal policy when they started to implement their project in aid recipient country. The reason given for having both the objectives was that a combined approach would best suit to serve their needs and constituencies. It is worth remembering again how "women's questions" has been placed in the development paradigm. In 50's and 60's women got emphasis in a welfarist approach. From 70's onward the emphasis has been changed due to the feminist movement and an increased awareness of gender issues. "Early in the decade, the emphasis was on an integrationist approach. Attempts were made to find and add-on WID issues in each sector. As a result, gender issues were discovered in a wide variety of economic sectors. But the feminist demand to transform the development agenda through gender lens slowly led agencies to turn to an agenda - setting approach. In the post Nairobi decade, agencies increasingly embraced the approaches advocated by the women's movement. Women's

empowerment has found a place in the agency document" (Jahan: 1995:21).<sup>31</sup> As a result, donors simultaneously articulated substantive and instrumental objectives and integrationist and agenda - setting mainstreaming approaches.

Why did they take this approach? The answer can be found in ESCAP report where it articulate their concerns. "The Asia-Pacific region is currently under the spell of a development model premised as a liberalized and market central economy where economic growth is viewed as the ultimate goal. The principal mechanisms for the application of this model are Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs)". (ESCAP report, 1998, UN).<sup>32</sup>

The UNDP's Guideline does not tell more about gender equality. Rather it emphasizes country specific contexts and promises a larger role for women, by the 'integration of women as participants and beneficiaries in all of its development programmes and projects'. (UNDP, 1987)<sup>33</sup> which is matched with the Structural Adjustment Programmes. Before 1987 UNDP's policy identified women as 'disadvantaged' group needing 'special consideration'.

The World Bank, like UNDP, referred to a broad objective 'enhancing women's participation in economic development', and has given emphasis on an integrationist approach. In 1994, the policy paper of the World Bank addresses three issues regarding women's agenda: poverty, entitlement and investment. Women's development is justified on the grounds of social justice and poverty alleviation as well as economic growth. (The World Bank, 1994).<sup>34</sup>

Though the constitution of Bangladesh guarantees women's equal rights (Article 28(1), 28 (2), 28(3), the demand for empowerment, uniform family code is still unaddressed officially by the Government.

This information gives us a clue to understand the policy domain where (the five year plan which has been discussed later) WID issues are discussed. From these plans it is clear that Bangladesh Government shifts its language from welfare to integration to mainstreaming. But there is no evidence that this shifting has taken place with much internal debate or discussion (Jahan: 1995: 27). Rather it gives an impression that, the donors have contributed significantly in the WID National Policy formulation, National Action Plan Development, Beijing follow-up and general awareness raising regarding empowerment of women and mainstreaming women into development (Jowshan. A. Rahman, 1999).<sup>37</sup>

This existing development model of Bangladesh, however, does not fulfill the 'demand articulated by Alternative Development vision, where gender equality goes hand in hand with equality between classes, races and nations. 'The Southern feminist underscored the need to change the existing development models and practices which perpetuate different forms of

inequality and exploitation." The donors highlighted gender equality, within a exploitative structure of production and have given emphasis on productive resources.

We will now examine the advocates of the WID policies. How did these policies come to be institutionalized within Agencies and Governments?

Generally, there is an alliance of insiders and outsiders working together to institutionalize the policies in the donor agencies and the aid recipient government. In multilateral agencies, powerful members of the governing boards - especially from Nordic Countries, Netherlands, the USA and Canada - together with feminist advocates and the top (male) leadership played an influential role in instituting WID measures. Women's lobby groups in donor countries were the major outside pressure groups. In the partner countries, national machineries were the only inside advocates and they were generally weak and ineffective. Women's organization and the top (male) political leadership often worked as effective outside advocates. Donor agencies also were a major outside influence" (Jahan: 1995:30).<sup>35</sup>

There are international networking procedures existing for institutionalization of WID policies. The southern feminists were often invited to discuss gender issues before Northern audiences and the male decision makers of donor agencies. Similarly, feminists from the North and WID officials from donor agencies raised gender issues in dialogues with aid-recipient Governments. "The net-working between feminists from donor agencies and those from partner countries proved to be a very effective strategy in institutionalizing WID measures in both donor agencies and aid recipient countries" (Jahan: 1995).<sup>36</sup>

In Bangladesh the feminist and autonomous women's organizations had limited political influence. The Government of Bangladesh established a national women's organization to mobilize women's political support. Instead of acting on the voice of the women to the Government, these organizations tended to act as the Government's voice to the women.

However, non Government women's organizations have increasingly gained in strength and begun to lobby for Governments, Parliaments and Political Parties. The Governments in turn, have also begun to recognize the important role of the non-governmental organizations.

In Bangladesh, the strategy of inside outside feminist alliance was largely missing and there are fundamental differences between two groups. The feminists of women's movement are called activist - who are working on voluntary basis and mainly come from middle class. But the NGOs and the feminists inside the bureaucracy, draw their salary from their own organizations i.e. NGOs or Government. "The member of women within the Government was small and the absence of a critical mass made the women insecure and reluctant to develop a

strategy of alliance building either inside or outside the government. National laws also discouraged such political strategies as bureaucrats were expected to be non-political and non-partisan. In the absence of an 'inside outside' coalition, donors often stepped in to play a bridging role. The donors reached out to both the official and unofficial women's organizations, establishing forums where both official and NGO women could meet on an equal basis". The 'inside outside' alliance is weak in both the World Bank and the UNDP.

Jahan stresses that:

Women Organizations within the donor countries exerted some influence, but only indirectly through the governing boards, women's movements and feminists from the South had very little access to these agencies specially the World Bank. The major push for WID in these two agencies, came at the end of the Decade for women. In both, the main advocates were the Governing Board, particularly Board-Members from the donor countries and the Corporate Heads - Barber Connable of the World Bank, William Draper of the UNDP. However, though at the UNDP and the World Bank top management pushed WID issues, no attempt was made to involve the whole agency in drafting a WID policy and Action plan. WID policy formation was left largely to the WID directorate in both the agencies. The agency as a whole did not have a sense of ownership of its WID policies.

In both of these agencies the pressure of Board Members from the donor countries - especially western donors - was coupled with funding incentive from these countries for WID. This concentration of advocacy and finding support gave WID the image of being predominantly a 'donor's issue' in these agencies. The absence of networking with women's organizations from the South, and the relative lack of enthusiasm from Southern members of the governing board, further exacerbated this western donor-driven image of WID. These two agencies depended on an alliance between 'inside' advocates and western donor board members.

In the aid recipient country's the inside advocator, the national machineries, lacked the perspective gained through building strategic alliances with non-governmental women's organizations and other Government Departments. It is a fact that sometimes the top decision makers turned out to be strong WID advocates, such as Ziaur-Rahman. But in this way women are being put on the development agenda as a donor attracting issues rather than using the knowledge, expertise and commitment of their own feminist and autonomous women's organizations to optimum effect.

Now we look back to the operational and institutional strategies of the donors, where their outlook would be more visible towards aid recipient country. Jahan stresses that, prior to the decade for development none of the donor agencies or the aid recipient Governments had any administrative structure specifically responsible for women's issues. The Mexico

Conference legitimised women's need in a specific structural way where Governments and International Organizations feel the urge to establish specific administrative structures of responsibility for women. As a result, by the end of the Decade of Women, the donors' agencies as well as national governments had set up their WID responsibility structures. Still there is a confusion in donor as well as national countries' planning that where they should set up the WID offices in the overall organizational structure and what would be their main mission. The donor first started with single WID advisory positions in the late 1970s, in mid 1980s they increased WID resources and created separate WID divisions. But by 1992-93 the agencies had moved away from separate WID divisions to either single advisory positions or to the so-called flat structure in which the programme team is co-equal with several other teams working on cross-cutting themes.

The Bangladesh Government also followed a similar pattern. Starting first with WID advisory positions in the President/Prime Minister's office and later moving on to create separate ministries or separate departments within ministries. Even after twenty years, these special machineries in donor agencies and National Governments have remained largely peripheral to the mainstream of the agencies and Government's work ( Sobhan:1992).<sup>38</sup>

## **4.5 Development Strategy**

### **4.5.1 Structure and Function of WID Machineries**

It is visible from the donors agency report over time, that they often shifted their positions on the debated issues, like what would be the structure of WID/GAD responsibility or what is the function of WID/GAD? Initially they made a single WID advisory positions in the central locations in the organisations. For example, The World Bank placed its first WID advisor in the Vice-President's office in 1975 and the UNDP appointed a WID advisor in the bureau of policy planning and evaluation in 1976. These advisory positions were all at junior levels and lacked a voice in the agencies' decision making bodies. With nearly a decade of working with the advisory positions donors enhanced resources and status for WID. It is worth mentioning that the Nairobi Conference in 1985, 'created the momentum for separate WID administrative units to be created with staff and budget in the UNDP and the World Bank'. The UNDP and the World Bank created their WID divisions in 1986 and 1987 respectively. In the World Bank, the position of WID director was four levels below the top management and it was at junior management level, who had no direct voice in decision making process. In 1992-93 UNDP and World Bank shifted GAD programme from separate WID division, but the budget and staff resources remained the same. So when the complexity arose around WID issue that who will receive greater agency resources, the top management

of the agency argued that WID resources should be more selective and strategic. Thus when environment and population received greater resources within WID programmes, it would be explained by the management that as a strategic technique it gives the impression of WID occupying a secondary status in the whole mechanism. Even WID projects in both fields and headquarters give an impression that it is a 'women's job', because of the way the staff, in the offices are recruited women, for the WID position. For example, it is evident that the high officials' wife were supposed to be appointed as the WID advisor, which make WID positions less professional. "In the agencies, men and even women interested in furthering their carrier path were reluctant to serve in these positions, as there was no incentive or reward attached to them, and performing well in these positions did not facilitate carrier advancement on the corporate ladder. Indeed, WID positions were often regarded as dead-end jobs". (case study commissioned by OECD/DAC, mimeo, 1993).<sup>39</sup>

In Bangladesh, semi-official national women's organizations and separate women's wings in political parties and trade unions existed even before the decade for women. But offices within the Government responsible for women were set up only during the Decade. "It can not be argued that there was a strong domestic pressure to create women's machineries in this country, the impetus came mostly from outside. As many international organizations and National Governments started to set up special machineries, Bangladesh just followed their examples" (Jahan: 1995:42).<sup>40</sup>

For the first time Bangladesh established offices responsible for women in 1976. It was established without any demand from the women's movement from within the country. It appeared during the Military Government of Ziaur Rahman, whose vision was to use WID to portray his image as a modernist and development oriented, as well as be acceptable to the greater donor agencies. So he picked up themes like 'population and women' which are popular to the donors and help in gaining their financial assistance in national budget. As he came to power as a result of a 'coup detat' in 1975, he picked up these themes with the notion that, it will be an additional incentive for political support among new groups and a new area of potentially large constituency.

In February 1976, the Government set up a National Women's Organizations viz. 'Bangladesh Jatiya Mohila Sangstha' (BJMS), whose functions were not specific but wide ranging. In April 1976, a special assistant to the President for Women's affairs was appointed, primarily with an advocacy and advisory role. In December 1976, a women Affairs division was created which gave special assistance to both staff and budget. In 1978, a full fledged Ministry with a separate Minister for Women Affairs was established, which was later

combined with the Social Welfare Ministry under a single Minister for Social Welfare and Women's Affairs. The Planning Commission also had a focal point for women which is relatively at a Junior level. The government recently assigned WID focal point responsibilities to staff in Ministries from different sectors (Khan: 1990, Jahan: 1995, Sobhan: 1992).

The structure and function of national machineries have followed the same pattern as that of WID office in donor agencies, moving from single advisory positions in strategic central locations, primarily with an advisory function, to a separate sectoral ministry heavily involved in the implementation of field projects.

#### **4.5.2 Monitoring, Coordination and Accountability**

The national machineries initially emphasized advisory work. The feminist movement pointed out that national machineries ignored to fix development strategy monitoring and coordination. Rather they have given emphasis on implementation of special projects for women. For example, in 1977, a group of women from Bangladesh, submitted a 'memorandum' to the Government (following the first regional South and Southeast Asian WID Conference held in Bangladesh) that, the national machinery's prime role should be policy development, monitoring functions and coordinations. The capacities of sectoral ministries and other important Government offices, such as the Planning Commission and BBS (Bureau of Statistics) should be strengthened to address gender issues in their work. "To ensure institutional ownership the memorandum suggested that the sectoral ministries should establish their own task forces comprising both women and men to suggest ways and means of addressing gender issues in their policies and programmes"(Papanek and Jahan, 1979, P-18-20).<sup>41</sup>

The Government of Bangladesh however, ignored the feminists' plea for a mainstreaming approach. The women's movement was relatively weak and failed to mobilize public support to lobby for their vision of the national machinery. In 1978 the Government established a full-fledged Ministry of Women's Affairs (MWA) with idea that, women's participation in the total development process would be of central importance. To achieve this goal, the Ministry started to prioritize the implementation of special training and income generating projects for women (Khan:1988, Jahan: 1995). Besides the realization of importance of women's participation in development process the UN funds from different sources (Khan: 1988) for such field projects worked as an incentive.

It would be interesting to see the kind of system that the donor and Government have for accountability and evaluation.



One recent phenomenon that is being observed is the growing interest of the donor agencies to institutionalize operational research. The focus is more on staffing, policy formulation and monitoring capacity and not on any accountability structure. The result being that there is no way to account for the success or failure of the WID measures that have been undertaken in the development strategy, both on the part of the donor and the National Government.

Though donor agencies introduced several instruments to ensure internal accountability for WID (such as staff performance, appraisal, project/programme screening, approval, evaluation etc.), the evidence shows that, UNDP's performance appraisal was introduced on an experimental basis in the Bureau of policy planning and evaluation with a hope that it would introduce a 'rewards system' and motivate middle-management staff for moving up the corporate ladder to improve their WID performance. On the other hand the World Bank and the National Government did not try to use WID criteria in the appraisal of the performance of their staff, though they established a 'top-down' administrative structure for WID. There is no project screening procedure for WID in the World Bank and WID office has no voice in approval of project or programmes.

The scenario in the National Government is not different from that of the donors. The authority of the Minister in Charge of Women's Affairs is limited. The other sectoral Ministries have no accountability towards WID goals though the Ministry of Women's Affairs promotes the policy and programme for WID.

The World Bank and the UNDP each has a governing body to whom they are accountable. The governing boards, consist of representatives of different countries. The discussions of the governing boards generally take place in closed door situation. 'Media and citizen's groups had very limited access to these discussions or to the documents' (Jahan: 1995), prepared by the multinational (UNDP, World Bank) organizations. The World Bank documents were the most inaccessible ones. In the donor country, multiparty system, parliament, media and different citizens groups as well as feminists to some extent work as watchdogs, though donors are not directly accountable to the public interest groups.

In Bangladesh a culture of accountability to the public is weak. There are very few political parties who champion the cause for gender equality. Though ten percent parliamentary seats are reserved for women in Bangladesh, there is no evidence that they ask any tough question or hold their government accountable for their actions on women's advancement (BMP report, 1997, P-10). This is because, the women parliamentarians are selected by members of the majority party in parliament whose manifestos have never

championed for gender issues or gender equality. The media, citizen's group or NGOs are not able to play a watch-dog's role for gender issues, because their freedom is limited. Though the number of NGOs have multiplied in the last two decades, they have concentrated their work in the service sector rather than advisory and lobbying for change of policy. This is because, these NGOs are largely funded by donor who have granted their fund for the running of projects. As a result, these NGOs have been heavily involved in implementing development projects funded by donors. "Since donor funding in most cases had to be channelled through the Governments, the NGOs avoided the path of open criticism of Government actions" (Jahan: 1995).<sup>42</sup>

It is evident, that there is no donors' accountability to the Government of Bangladesh. The attitudes of donors towards Bangladesh is that of a 'Big-Boss'. They believe that Bangladesh should be accountable to the donors, because aid recipient country is receiving the funds from donor for their own development purposes. But, the donors never feel accountable to the aid recipient country "though many of their policy prescriptions often lead to disastrous results" for the recipient country. The aid is generally negotiated between donor agency and the Governments. The concerned groups such as women's groups have no participation in the process of aid negotiation and at every step they are left uninformed about the donor's policy-packages and their potential impact on the people. But it is a fact that the citizens have to live with the consequences (many times disastrous) of assistance from donors and also repay the debt.

It is evident that there is a lack of coordination between donors and aid recipient countries like Bangladesh. In Bangladesh donors have established their own mechanism called Local Consultative Group (LCG) which was formed by the World Bank. The Bangladesh Government was invited to participate in LCG meeting. The WID group within the structure of donor agency has always been active in establishing a network and compared to the recipient group has become more powerful, thus gaining the status of a subcommittee of the LCG. Through this WID network the donor often played an important role in policy formulation of recipient country. For instance, during the formulation of Bangladesh's Fourth Five Year Plan, the WID network was instrumental in including gender issues in the plan as well as in donor's policy discussions. On the other hand, the Government established national women's coordination councils which failed to play its role. The Okhya Baddha Nari Samaj was formed in 1987. It is an association of organizations who deal with issues concerned with women. As the need of a particular situation demands the different organizations come together and often after completion of the task they disperse again. This sort of coordination

however has some limitation due to the different nature of NGOs who are a part of this association. The primary difference is that, the donors funded NGOs have limited freedom compared to the autonomous NGOs. In 1993, the donors took the initiative through their funded NGOs to coordinate with autonomous organization around the issue of preparation of the World Conference on Women (WCW'95). The donor's WID network has easy access to NGOs, autonomous organizations as well as Government. In 1990, a joint Government donor task force was created, which established five working groups to review existing projects and programmes in different sectors : (Jahan: 1990).<sup>43</sup>

For implementing women's agenda donors introduced some monitoring mechanisms. This monitoring system used three techniques viz. annual reporting requirement, WID action on project-reporting formats and statistical reporting on donor assistance. The annual reporting requirement explains the WID activities of the agencies. The statistical reporting format explains the agencies' progress in allocating resources to WID, and is used to monitor inter-sectoral and inter-departmental WID performance. WID action on project-reporting format explains donors' own intentions by reviewing all staff appraisal reports. The World Bank and UNDP used 'WID action on project reporting format', which basically provided information about participations of women in all new and ongoing projects. The UNDP reviewed its WID implementation policy during 1989-90, which underlined the intention to build up a database for future monitoring (UNDP, 1990).<sup>44</sup>

The World Bank uses the same format and gives importance to WID 'intention'. WID 'intention' can be explained by breaking it into three parts (a) operations which are WID specific (b) operations carried out with discussions on WID issues with no follow-up actions and (c) absence of or superficial WID treatment. Organizations use WID intention to make their activities more acceptable and legitimate to the monitoring system, which assess the progress of gender analysis in economic as well as other sectoral work (including the linkages to Bank's lending operations). (The World Bank: 1994).<sup>45</sup>

On the contrary in Bangladesh, the Ministry of Finance which is responsible to prepare the annual economic survey for budget also submits the detailed reports of activities and budget of Ministry of Women's Affairs.

The above discussion indicates that, the donors' monitoring system mainly follows process and activity oriented research where WID 'intention' and 'efforts' get prime interest rather than result. In other words, the donors are less concerned about the result which is the consequence of agencies operations, which affect the aid recipient countries.

### **4.5. 3 Evaluation, Training, Research and Country Programmes**

For the purpose of evaluation, donors use several yardsticks. These can be called 'the term of Reference (TOR) of evaluations', where they include gender issues in their guideline, checklists and specific methodologies. 'Evaluation' is considered as an assessment mirror, where a whole picture would be visible. In 1987, the WID policy framework of the UNDP, felt the need to include gender issues in its project evaluation procedures. The World Bank also very recently started to include gender issues in the evaluation of Bank sponsored projects. The 1994 policy paper of the World Bank reiterates the above fact where the Bank promises to include gender issues. (The World Bank).

But it is a fact that, though donors have emphasized to include gender issues in their evaluation process, it is only a small percentage of evaluation procedures which address gender issues systematically. In 1987, a desk review of fifty general UNDP evaluations conducted over the year reveals that, the WID/GAD issues gets a marginal treatment (UNDP, 1987).

On the other hand, the Government of Bangladesh still has not made a WID/GAD guidelines for evaluation. An assessment conducted by DAC's donors found that, only 70% of a sample of agency operation addressed gender issues, in their terms of references, and only '40% of evaluation reports contained a full discussion of gender issues' (Zulia,Z, Patrons: 1994).<sup>46</sup>

The UNDP and the World Bank with their corporate leadership, publicly expressed a concern to increase women's membership in their agencies, particularly in management positions, which needs to take initiative for women in the aid recipient countries. As a result, recipient countries adopted several policy instruments to increase the number of women on their staff, quotas, targets and career development policies. The donors, in their terms of reference (TOR) specify their needs when they grant their aid for the recipient country. They have several measures 'to include gender considerations in their evaluations'.

After UN women's Decade the UNDP and the World Bank have been trying to institutionalize WID structure, which succeeded only in 1990s. It is worth mentioning that (Ref. Tab - 2 in below) in the UNDP, from '75 to '93 women's representation in professional categories increased from 20 to 26 percent and at the senior- management level it increased from 3 to 8 percent respectively. Only in 1990 for the first time UNDP discussed their personnel policy including women's shares of employment, recruitment of consultants, project staff and career development of female staff etc. (Jahan: 1995).<sup>47</sup>

**Tab-2 Women in Professional and Management Job Categories (%)**

| Year  | Junior Professional | Senior Professional | Junior Professional | Senior Professional | Total |
|-------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------|
| '1995 | 46.5                | 14.7                | 6.8                 | 3                   | 20.6  |
| '1980 | 44.2                | 18.2                | 7                   | 3.1                 | 23.2  |
| '1986 | 35.7                | 18                  | 7.8                 | 5.5                 | 22.3  |
| '1988 | 36.6                | 22.4                | 8.3                 | 6.5                 | 23.3  |
| '1990 | 38.7                | 24.6                | 8.7                 | 8.3                 | 26.2  |
| '1993 | 35.6                | 21.4                | 8.5                 | 10.1                | 29    |

Source : UNDP (above) World Bank (below)

| Year  | Junior Professional | Senior Professional | Junior Professional | Senior Professional | Total |
|-------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------|
| '1976 | N.A                 | 2.2                 | 0.6                 | 1.2                 | 1.6   |
| '1985 | 17.1                | 6.4                 | 3                   | 1.2                 | 12.5  |
| '1988 | 19.3                | 5.2                 | 4.4                 | 3.1                 | 15.3  |
| '1990 | 21                  | 10.7                | 6.2                 | 2.7                 | 10.7  |
| '1991 | 21                  | 11.6                | 6.9                 | 3.6                 | 16.9  |
| '1992 | 23.1                | 13.2                | 7.9                 | 6.5                 | 16.1  |
| '1993 | 24.2                | 13.5                | 9.5                 | 8                   | 16.9  |

On the other hand, the World Bank's Women's representation increased between 1976-93 from 1 to 17 percent. From the above discussion, it can be said that, the UNDP and the World Bank are reluctant to make any effort for establishing or monitoring targets for the recruitment and promotion of women.

Compared to donors' agencies, the Government of Bangladesh incorporated a female quota system in public sector recruitment. This, in the long run this has resulted in viewing women as a special category, where they are given an entry point into the structure, and then they are ignored. So women do not get equal opportunity to climb the employment ladder, and their position remains unequal. The quota system only help women to enter into the job market in a lower position and the senior management jobs remain virtually unaffected (Ref-Tab-3 in below):

**Tab- 3 Male Female Employment Status in Government Service (Excluding National Industries) from 1976-85**

| Service Category                               | Male    | Female | Total   | Female as% of Total |
|--|---------|--------|---------|---------------------|
| Deputy Secretary and above                     | 3,391   | 70     | 34,618  | 2.02                |
| Below Dept. Secretary and upto 1650-3030 scale | 32,018  | 1,606  | 33,624  | 4.78                |
| All other employees                            | 327,919 | 41,168 | 369,087 | 11.15               |
| All Class IV Employees                         | 195,245 | 5,243  | 200,488 | 2.61                |
| Total  | 558,573 | 48,087 | 606,660 | 7.93                |

Source: Khan, Salma, The Fifty Percent: Women in Development and Policy in Bangladesh 1990

Training, it appears to the donor, is an effective instrument to raise awareness and expertise of agency staff on gender issues. From the early years of their WID programmes, World Bank is prioritizing training while UNDP have started recently their staff training. 'Training methods and modules evolved only in the last two decades'. World Bank is following the GRF model (which was stated earlier in this section). UNDP is using its own training methodology. One thing should be noted that, most of agencies though organized initially for separate WID training, later shift into gender issues in an integrated way. For example, in UNDP in 1987, training was emphasized after the creation of the separate WID Division. In 1989 review report shows that less than 15% of agency staff received WID/GAD training (UNDP,1990). In 1990 actually UNDP started for building WID trainers and a systematic training programme.

Though the World Bank was the initiator of WID training in the early 1980s, research and country programming was given initial priority. In the last few years one of the regional WID coordinators in the Bank have started to highlight the importance of staff training to raise awareness and build expertise on gender issues. In 1994, the Bank again gave importance to training and promised for improving staff skills through 'an intensive training programme. They recognize the importance of training for raising awareness, as well as for providing tools and practical knowledge for policy and project design (The World Bank).

It is observed that, there is a dilemma of training. One part believes that, training should aim at removing attitudes, values and fears that are inhibitors to action. Others believe the feasible strategy is to change behaviour through incentives and disincentives and limit training to imperative knowledge and expertise (Rao et al: 1992). Apart from this the study further emphasized adoption of training methods and modules to the need of the audience which would be 'building skills, providing information, changing behaviour and attitudes to gender issues' where impact cannot be assessed over a short time (Rao et al: 1992, P-61).

Research is a very crucial activity undertaken by the donor, Government and NGOs. The way in which research is conducted influences plan formulation and flow of funds. So this aspect needs detailed discussions.

Research played an important role in making gender issues visible and in recognizing it as a critical strategy for programming. It serves two things for the donor (1) by generating quantitative and qualitative data it raises awareness about gender issues (2) works as a basis for developing operational tools.

It is needed for preparing the WID profile or situation analysis to formulate country WID/GAD strategy. Research often provides information for policy formulation. UNDP,

World Bank uses research to draw lessons about best practices in a wide variety of sectors, such as agricultural extension, credit, technology, natural resources, management and so on. Donors, especially the World Bank, focused on policy analysis to elaborate gender issues in sector and macro economic policies. Findings from theoretical research, helps to formulate concept, models or redesign analytical tools in a given situation. For instance, UNDP research reveals women's increasing role in agricultural field, attract planners and policy maker's attention on women. On the other side World Bank is interested in allocating resource, so it commissioned research on it priority sectors - credit, education and populations.

There are two kinds of research involved - theoretical and operational. It is often seen that operational research takes precedence over policy analysis and theoretical research in aid recipient countries (Jahan; 1995). In donor countries theoretical and operational research fund is available for the university and non-profit making and consulting agencies respectively. But in the aid recipient countries there is no local institutional fund for theoretical research or training. They often take fund for their research and training from the donor agencies. However, in contrast to what happens in their own country, the donor agencies do not have separate funds for theoretical and operational research for the recipient country. So the result is that when the aid recipient country asks fund for theoretical research the donor gives the money set apart for operational research. In the end, in the absence of adequate resources the aid recipient countries have to make a balance between theoretical and operational research, in the way that is favourable to the donor agency.

Donors are interested in women specific projects. Such projects would help to identify the obstacles to women's participation in development programme. Thus the NGOs of Bangladesh usually develop action projects in an innovative way where they identify the development resources and chalk out ways in which the identified resources can be used so that it is beneficial to the targeted group of women. Though the apparent intention is progressive, what actually happens is that the identified resources are exploited in a way that it gives high social and economic returns to the donors, with hardly any substantial improvement reaching the women.

It is evident from the statistics given by 'Women for Women', a foreign funded NGO that, in 1988, TK 256,3 million was given as credit through different organisations to the women. In 1993, TK 17463 million was given as loan for the same purposes. It is worth noting that 90% loan has been returned by the women. However, there is no visible comprehensive change in the situation.

**Tab : 4 The status of Women in Credit Sector**

| Agency                | Given Loan million | No.of Women (in thousand) | Given Loan million | No.of Women (in thousand) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| BD Small Cottage Ind. | 15                 | 9                         | 68                 | 21                        |
| Swanirvar (NGO)       | 860                | 300                       | 988                | 367                       |
| Grameen Bank          | 2,015              | 387                       | 14,195             | 1,364                     |
| BRAC                  | 73                 | 91                        | 2,260              | 700                       |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>2,563</b>       | <b>747</b>                | <b>17,463</b>      | <b>* 2,452</b>            |

Source: Hossain and Afser (1988) Ahmed 1991, Annual Report (1993) Grameen Bank, Swanirvar, BRAC, BSCI

Though several NGOs took initiative to raise women's marginal status through some social and economic (credit and income generating) programmes, (health, population, family planning , nutritional) it has not changed the situational feature of women in society. "it was argued that instead of leading to replication and mainstreaming, the special projects were resulting in an alibi effect, (Buvinic: 1986)<sup>48</sup> creating women ghettos (Jahan: 1995).<sup>49</sup> Critics pointed out that the special projects focus has deterred consideration of gender issues in macro and sector policy frameworks and in major programmes. The special project retargeted poor women to mitigate the adverse impact created by the structural adjustment programmes. They have given emphasis only on income generating activities and are not interested to improve overall situation which needs a structural change. Though the NGOs of recipient country are vocal for women autonomy and improvement, again it should be noted that they are explaining autonomy and empowerment as a part of structural adjustment programmes. Autonomy and empowerment both are political issues. It is interesting that the donors are providing fund for raising voice of autonomy and empowerment which again work as a strategy of structural adjustment programmes, which bypass the class consciousness. Rather it gives emphasis on participatory approach only in the project, but discussions are not 'widely disseminated and they rarely informed policy dialogue or formulation during country programming exercises' (Jahan: 1995).<sup>50</sup>

Ample research shows that projects are always formulated for a 'target population' where donor as well as government are tended to include gender analysis and planning tools primarily for the 'project', but not for the 'people oriented'. This approach gives a clean picture of the development strategy both taken by donor as well as aid recipient countries. It is an interesting thing to notice that when donors shifted their attention from simply meeting people's basic needs to appropriate macro economic policies, the project undertaken by different organization, both government and Non-government organization, had shifted the vision but the policy remained the same.



Like training and research, country profile is also seen as important tool for situation analysis. The donors have developed country programming based on three instruments:

- (1) preparation for WID/GAD country profiles
- (2) WID/GAD country strategy and action plans
- (3) a package of WID components in major sectoral projects and programmes

(Jahan: 1995)<sup>51</sup>

Among the donors, the World Bank used these strategies in a systematic manner. World Bank is the most influential funder for Bangladesh, which played as a pull factor for taking long-term initiatives by different organisations in the population and education sector.

In UNDP, 37% of country programmes addressed WID/GAD issues (UNDP; 1990).<sup>52</sup> Since 1987, the World Bank, too, has started to emphasize country programming as a strategic entry point for addressing gender issues. In selected countries, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan, India and Kenya, the Bank prepared detailed situation analysis of women. This was followed by dialogue with partner governments and the preparation of major programmes in the Bank identified priority sectors: education, population control, family planning and agricultural extension.

UNDP's 1989 review shows that, though 41 percent of country's programmes during the previous programming cycle referred to WID issues, only nine country programmes actually translated this general reference into concrete programmes and projects (UNDP).

For Bangladesh, the major instruments of national planning were the five year and annual development plan exercises, which is accepted as vehicle for a Government's declarations of priorities (Sobhan: 1992).<sup>53</sup>

Over the years, these plans have increasingly referred to WID/Gender issues, in large measure due to donor pressure and incentive, and lobbying by women's groups. For example, in Bangladesh the Five Year Plans paid successively greater attention to women (Jahan: 1995).<sup>54</sup>

Rahmen Sobhan, however, stresses that, the dependence on external resources i.e. on foreign fund, eroded the autonomy of the planning exercise, which means there is no domestic control over plan priorities. The Five Years Plan thus has a limited operational validity (Sobhan: 1992).<sup>55</sup>

Now it would be interesting to have an overview of Five Year Plans and examine how these plans have addressed the issue of women's role in the development process,

#### **4.5.4 Five Year Plans of Bangladesh**

The First Five Year Plan (1973-1978) gave no explicit focus on women as a sectoral category for resource allocations (World Bank: 1990). Assistance to women were part of the

commitment to rehabilitate victims of the liberation war under the Social Welfare Division. There were five projects in the First Plan involving women and were related to the social welfare and rehabilitation of war victims (Sobhan: 1992). However, these few projects were not implemented in time. As a result, an interim Two Year Plan (TYR 1978-80) was needed to formulate where two more projects were added for women. However, by 1980, only two projects out of seven were completed. The reference Tab -5 shows that only TK 2.98 million was allocated during 1973-1980 to these projects. 'This was less than one percent of the plan allocation in both time period' (Sobhan: 1992).<sup>56</sup>

The Second Five Year Plan (1980-1985) was the first to have an explicit allocation to women (Government of Bangladesh, 1980). It reveals one fact that, in 1978 Bangladesh became one of the few countries in the world to establish a separate ministry for Women like 'Ministry of Women's Affairs'. Through this Women Affairs/Projects and the direct allocation for women gets an institutional focus. The goals identified for women within the Second Plan were 'creation of a social psychology designed to make participation of women in development increasingly possible; expansion of educational opportunities and specified training facilities for women, so as to promote skill formation for women, provision of credit for women and widening opportunities for their participation in income generating activities and provision for better protection and care to children'. The Second Five Year Plan programmes for women covered diverse areas such as population, health, education and employment generation.

**Tab - 5 Allocation for women's Sector in Five-Year Plans in Bangladesh  
(Taka in million)**

| Plan Expenditure  | First Plan & Interim 2 Year Plan (1973-1980) | Second Five Year Plan (1980-1985) | Third Five Year Plan (1985-1990) | Draft Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-1995) |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Total Plan allocation   | 84,160                                       | 160,600                           | 386,000                          | 672,300                                 |
| Five Year Plan Allocation for Projects for Women Sector                           | 298  | 900                               | 500                              | 880                                     |
| Annual Development Plan allocations for Women in Five Year Plan Period            | 89   | 310                               | 400                              | ...                                     |
| Realised Public Expenditure on Women During Plan Period                           | 17   | 235                               | 273                              | ...                                     |
| Share of Women's Sector in Five-Year Plan Allocation (2 as % of 1)                | 0.35   | 0.56                              | 0.13                             | 0.13                                    |
| Annual Development Plan Allocation in relation to Plan allocation (3 as % of 2)   | 30   | 34                                | 80                               | ...                                     |
| Realised Public Expenditure on Women in Relation to Plan Allocation (4 as % of 2) | 5.7  | 26.1                              | 55                               | ...                                     |

Source: World Bank Bangladesh Strategy Paper on Women in Development Washington D.C. World Bank 1990, GOB, Planning Commission, Second Five Year Plan, 1980 and GOB Planning Commission Draft Five Year Plan 1990.

which are under the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The Ministry of Women's Affairs was responsible to coordinate projects directed to women in other line ministries. Reference table - 5 reveals that about 0.2 percent for the Second Plan allocation was invested in 25 projects which means for 25 projects, TK. 70 million (or TK 318 million in 1985 prices) was invested in these projects. Of these allocation TK 287 million (1985 prices) was retained through annual development plans of which only 87 percent was actually utilized (Khan: 1988, Sobhan: 1992).<sup>57</sup>

The Third Five Year Plan (TFYP 1985-90) expressed its commitment towards women by aiming for the full integration of women in development activities, which means women were brought in development activities with their full potential. The plan retained its focus on education, training and health care for women. Rural women got emphasis in the plan and women, specially in education sector, were recruited as primary school teachers, which visualized Government's true intention to involve women in development programmes.

The Second Five Year Plan provided quota system which fixed 10 percent of jobs in public sector as reserved for women. The Third Five Year Plan increased this quota to 15 percent for women and in health and population sector the women's quota of jobs was to be increased to 60 percent. Finally to provide access to credit resources, women were to be provided training opportunities for entrepreneurial activity.

The Third Five Year Plan expressed its concern for women through seven major programmes. The areas were skill development programmes in poultry, dairy, livestock, food processing, garments and handicraft; services for working women through development of hostels backed up by efforts of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to promote self employment for women; strengthening of the National Women's Academy and the National Women's Organizations as vehicles for skill development and training and evaluation studies of ongoing projects, training and rehabilitation of socially handicapped women.

The Third Five year Plan allocated TK 500 million for women's projects which was supervised by the Ministry of Women's Affairs while another TK 500 million was to be spent through line ministries. A further TK 160 million was to be committed to women's concerns through NGOs. In total, only 0.4 percent of the allocation in the Third Plan was targeted at women, out of which only 0.2 percent was for projects under the women's Ministry. (Sobhan: 1992).<sup>58</sup> The dynamic for promoting women's concerns during the Second and Third Plans remained largely donor driven and was sustained by the expectation of the more ready availability of funds for such concerns. Regarding allocation of resources from external funds targeted at women, estimates are that between 1980-1986 nearly 19 percent of some US\$ 4.4

billion of foreign project aid went to projects. Of this US\$ 850 billion, 13 percent, was mediated through NGOs and such organizations as the Grameen Bank (Jahan: 1989 cited in Sobhan:1992).<sup>59</sup> This information reveals one fact that, the allocation priorities of the donors were concerned with women rather than Government. But it is interesting that the donors' and Government's priorities were reflected in the same gender stereotyping. For instance, health and family planning got prime emphasis by the donor where they allocated 57 percent fund for that projects, while 25 percent for self-help projects, 12 percent for education and training and only 3 percent for public works.

The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-1995) got attention of women's organizations as well as concerned agencies of the Government over the integration of women into mainstream of the development process. 'An increasing number of micro and some macro studies on women have been funded by donors whose strong position on women's issues has been registered with the Government' (Sobhan: 1992). The plan proposed 11 major strategies for integrating women in the mainstream. The strategies included multisectoral programmings; WID targets in sectoral programmes, gender based human resources planning, diversification of women's employment; increased credit facilities and skills training and improvement of women's health, nutrition and productivity (Jahan: 1995).<sup>60</sup>

In the Draft Fourth Five year Plan of Bangladesh, a section 'women's Development' has been incorporated into Chapter XIII on 'Socio-Economic Infrastructure'. Here the concerns of women have to share equal attention with four other sections on 'Social Welfare', 'Youth Development', 'Culture' and 'Mass Media'. The section on 'Women's Development' in the plan has given importance to deprivations of women and their more visible role in the national economy. "The plan argued that different strategies were needed to bring the two groups of women- 'relatively poor' and 'relatively better off' - into the economic mainstream. For the poor, the plan proposed group-based strategies to raise consciousness of rights and to give access to and control over productive resources. For the relatively better off, it proposed increased opportunities in education and employment' (Jahan: 1995).<sup>61</sup> The Draft Fourth Year Plan tried to integrate women into the macro plan but then failed to do in its macro chapter. However, the specific goals set for the plan period includes:

- (a) increasing women's participation as beneficiaries in various sectors of the economy;
- (b) raising the share of women in public sector employment from 6 to 15 percent during the plan period;
- (c) increasing female literacy from 15 to 30 percent;
- (d) expanding credit facilities;

- (e) expanding investment in accommodation for working women and in day care centres;
- (f) more general goals of alleviating poverty of women, making the community more gender responsive and improving the self-image of women..

The plans call for establishing a 'National Council for Women's Development' under the Chairmanship of the President of Bangladesh, to give direction and to supervise programmes for women which is dispersed across various ministries. Along with investments in the physical infrastructure for women, the plan envisages an expenditure of TK 880 million during the plan period, presumably on projects under the women's Ministry. Of this TK 250 million will be on projects carried over from the Third Plan. It is significant that the expenditures directly committed under the plan are TK 100 million below expenditures committed to women's programmes in the Third Plan of which TK. 500 were spent on projects under the Women's Ministry. As a result, the share of such expenditures on women by the women's Ministry had declined from 0.26 percent in the Third Plan, to 0.13 percent in the Draft Fourth Plan. As with the Third Plan, this does not take into account expenditures related to women in other sectors of the plan for which no figures are at hand. But the explicit allocative commitments do not indicate that the Government today is anymore committed to remedy the deprivation of women than it was in the Third Plan (Sobhan: 1992).<sup>62</sup>

Now it is clear from the above information that the Fourth Five Year Plan has given greater effort to mainstream gender issues compared to the previous plan. But once again the programmes appear to persist in the traditional areas which constrained earlier plan efforts (i.e. training, credit, infrastructure projects).

Therefore, it can be said that, the Fourth Five Year Plan is 'remaining for removed from the climate of heightened awareness and concern for women's issues which permeates some of the most recent plan documents in South East Asia' (Sobhan: 1992). In other words it did not establish any time bound quantitative target to achieve gender equality or did not elaborate the institutional mechanisms and financial arrangements needed to implement the strategies identified in the plan. There is no evidence from both sides, that is, the aid recipient and the donors that they have explored any innovative approach to meet the cost of 'investing in women', though for other sectors different financial mechanism were found.

This is despite the fact that the women's movement of Bangladesh within the Government itself and by various donor agencies all of which emphasize the need for giving priority to integrating women into the mainstream of the development process (Hamid, 1988 Jahan 1989, Khan 1988 and 1990, UNDP 1989, Women for Women, 1990, World Bank 1990).

#### **4.5.5 Macro Economics**

Macro economics is one of the areas where the potential for women's participation in the development process has not been adequately explored.

The World Bank, IMF and UNDP during the last decade have given greater emphasis on macro economics policies rather than projects. It is because of IMF's and the World Bank's given priorities on Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). At present SAPs constitute nearly a third of the total aid package (Jahan: 1995). 'In the last few years research from around the world has highlighted the gender differentiated impact of SAPs, and this had led donors and national Governments to develop gender awareness approaches to Structural adjustment'. (Elson: 1991).<sup>63</sup>

Macro economic policies include fiscal and monetary policies employed by Governments to encourage growth and employment and to reduce inflation and domestic and international debt (Perkins: 1992).<sup>64</sup>

The Bank's 1989 progress report noted that two of the eight fiscal structural adjustment operations in 1988 and three of the twelve fiscal operations in 1989 'set some conditions' or include 'some actions to help women's contribution to macro economic adjustment or to improve their future productivity' (The World Bank, 1990).<sup>65</sup>

There is a debate around the impact of SAPs that it would generate gender differentiated impact on other macro policies. For instance, it has been argued that the macro policies of taxation, subsidies, public services and public employment can all have gender differentiated impact (Susan, 1988).<sup>66</sup> It is argued that, the burden of direct taxation may fall more heavily on men since they are more in formal employment sector and earn more than women, while women would bear indirect taxation as they disproportionately support the lower income household (Jahan:1995).<sup>67</sup>

So in this context, the donor as well as aid recipient country feel structural adjustment as well as macro-economic policy would help to protect the disadvantaged group from vulnerability and market-oriented economy may help to overcome gender specific constraints on equal participation.

In summary it can be said that, the donors agencies are playing a dominant role in formulation of development policy in Bangladesh. The Government of Bangladesh is exercising less autonomy to formulate its own development planning. The UNDP and the World Bank are the major donor agencies for allocating funds for Bangladesh. The substantive and process focused instrumental objective shows that, the strategy of donors is to expand market economy and to integrate women into it. Thus they asked two questions: 'what is

produced' and 'how is produced' . Their prime interest is individual and try to integrate women as an individual in the mainstream development. In 1990s the donor agency had changed their policy towards women issues. It became a legitimate institutional concern of WID GAD issues. The Government of Bangladesh also change their policy by the pressure of donor agencies. The establishment of WID responsibility structure was often the first and major step in WID institutionalisation and although the structure and function of these offices varied these appears to be a common pattern. Starting with WID advisory positions, the agencies and the government increased WID resources in the mid 1980s, but by 1990s, WID specific resources shrank, though WID/GAD remained a priority theme of assistance. (Jahan: 1995-56).

It is viewed that there is a gap between formal institutionalization and actual practice. Accountability, coordination mechanism are weak in both the donor agencies and aid recipient country. There is no evidence that the donor agencies have adopted employment equity policies which reveal from their staffing pattern. There is a gap between implementation and impact assessment and gap between articulation and implementation. There is no indicator to monitor the achievement of their goals. There was progress in identification of gender issues in a wide variety of economic sectors and in social sector progress was achieved in redefining issues from a gender perspective. Research and public debate on gender issues has increased, but access to productive resources and access to decision making process for women remain unequal in both the donor agencies and the aid recipient country.

## Notes

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## CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Introduction

As has been outlined in my introduction and elaborated through the other chapters of this dissertation, the objective of this study was two-fold. One was to seek an overview of Bangladesh's macro development policies and two, to see how gender was integrated in the development measures. Bangladesh, as the study has sought to show, had a difficult history. After British rule, present day Bangladesh became independent as part of Pakistan, but in 1971 after a bitter struggle, became free. These specific happenings had their impact on the kind of development issues, that took place in Bangladesh. Indeed the overriding influence of western aid agencies and 'donor' influence also has to be understood in that light.

Indeed this widespread presence of donor agencies and innumerable Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have meant that, 'development' is a key terms in the public life of Bangladesh. However, the overriding influence of donor agencies have meant that both the development programmes and action and evaluation of the programmes are seen on the lines suggested by the donors. That is studies on development and gender are more evaluation studies of specific NGO programmes.

Very rich data has been generated from the field but a tendency has been to study the local separately from the ongoing impact of macro development policies both at the state and international level. Significantly a very large number of academics including university teachers work as consultants for the various development agencies. The scope of independent, academic research on the overall development process therefore becomes extremely limited. It was against this context that I felt that a broader appraisal of the impact of donor agencies is required. At the same time the attempt was to assess how 'gender' was understood in their development scholars and what impact did the various formulations of women and development have on the grassroot.

In the next section I seek to summarize the main findings of its various chapters.

### 5.2 Findings of the Study

As seen in Chapter 2, the 'women's question' is increasingly being referred to as political, rather than as an economic issue. This chapter reveals that, development process affects men and women differently. Women's developments was seen as a logistical problem, rather than something requiring a fundamental reassessment of gender relations and ideology. 'Adding women' to development strategies has not altered the basic framework of gender relations. It shows that, unless this is changed, the 'patriarchal ideology', the social

construction of gender roles and relations would remain the same. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the 'women's question' in the light of overall social structure, development paradigms and macro policies, and only then can one understand, 'women's struggle against inequality and discrimination' accompanied by other forms of struggle of inequality and discrimination.

The third chapter of this dissertation shows that, in erstwhile East Pakistan, the development plan did not achieve its goal, though they had adopted the 'growth-with-equity' model. In this model they had given emphasis on economic growth and tried to serve the interest of particular groups.

It was expected that the benefits of this model will be trickle down automatically to the bottom of the society. But in reality this 'growth-with-equity' model did not achieve its goal and created inequality into two ways (i) inequality among the classes within West Pakistan's society and (ii) inequality between the two parts of the country. The people of East Pakistan raised their voice against inequality and demanded proper share of resources and power. This led to the emergence of a new independent country viz. Bangladesh.

In Independent Bangladesh, development strategy was again growth oriented and served the interest of market economy. The foreign aid played an important role in development policy. It is viewed that there is a demarcation line in development paradigm in Bangladesh, which clearly divide development policy in two ways, - one before 1975, the other after 1975. Before 1975, the development policy addressed itself to socialism and social justice, that is it had given emphasis on more distributive aspect. After '75, the development model had given emphasis on privatization and the market played an important role in development strategies. Privatization policy strengthens the emergence of classes and state became an instrument of serving the interests of rich and powerful classes. That means the state has played an active discretionary role in the construction and perpetuation of class and gender bias in the maintenance of men's and women's unequal access to social and economic resources.

NGOs have emerged with the notion that, it is necessary to produce a new model of development where the people, local available resources and local knowledge system would be viewed as critical instrument for a new development strategy, which will address the people's need irrespective of class, gender and caste and include people to identify the issues for social development.

Thus NGOs have mobilized grassroot people for a new policies of distribution where NGOs will play an important role and benefits will reach to the poor. They raised the issue of empowerment where 'power' is viewed as core concern for development.

As seen in the fourth chapter, the role of NGOs and the Government of Bangladesh reveals, that, development planning is not simply a technical concept, but ideological, which influences the target and goal of development.

The objective of the donor agency for policy formulation can be divided into two, one is substantive and two is process-focused instrumental objective. First one refers to women's advancement, empowerment and equality and second one refers to women as an agent of judgement and change.

The donors' are following 'Gender Role Framework (GRF)', where individuals gets prime interest and they question gender based production system; who does what and who enjoys access and control over resources and benefits.

It is viewed from the policy objective of the donor and the Government of Bangladesh, that, there is some contradictions in the WID policy objectives and approaches. Donors highlighted the objectives of integration and mainstreaming, the Government high-lighted gender equality. Donors focused on giving women access to productive resources, Government prioritized legal and institutional reforms, education for women. A major focus of the donors' WID policies was the agency itself, and changing internal processes and procedures was a dominant preoccupation. The policies of the Government, on the other hand, were less concerned with changing their own machineries and were primarily targeted at women, (Jahan: 1995, 34).

In Bangladesh NGOs are heavily funded by the donors' and it is found that, they consider themselves as "development organisations" i.e. empower-oriented service delivery mechanisms (ESCAP, 1998).<sup>5</sup> The local funded NGOs are involved in "active advocacy" for legal reforms because the Government of Bangladesh did not fully subscribe to the UN Convention as the elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women and had reservations on Articles 2, 13 (a) and 16 which concern women's equal rights in all family matters (UNDP; 1994).<sup>6</sup> The foreign funded NGOs are involved in project oriented works that means their focus is on poverty alleviation and economic self-reliance through provision of services and means of income generating, e.g. provision of credit and skill training.(Ibid, 1994).<sup>7</sup> Along with these programmes they are also raising their voice for empowerment, the term which was introduced by donors in Bangladesh's development paradigm. The empowerment issue has not been raised by the local NGOs, rather they adopted it from the donors to draw foreign fund in favour of their organizations. So it can be said that, the NGOs in Bangladesh also are less independent to formulate their own policy for local development. But they are working for the 'women's improvement' under donors' supervision.

The donors' agency as well as aid recipient country actively pursue 'development' through policies for institutional strategies as well as operational strategy. However, if a balance sheet is drawn for women in the economy, what would be visible for all to see, is that, a large number of women have entered the labour force; access to education in most region is gradually increasing, a slightly larger proportion of managerial and technical jobs for women is now accessible. But it is a fact that the rate of improvement in all of these indicators was slower than in the previous decade, which means that the terms of remuneration and conditions of work has not registered improvement. Therefore, women's unemployment rates tended to be higher and overall incomes declined. Poverty particularly affected women, as a sole income earner in the family. It is a growing phenomenon.

The balance sheet on social condition of women gives a mixed impression. Improvement in legal conditions, in access to goods and services and education have been registered. But it is also observed that, maternal and infant mortality increased in some developing countries in the decades, due to reduction or cut in social services as part of adjustment packages. Jahan suggested that, in Bangladesh maternal and child mortality rates (600) is still high. Only 5 percent of birth were attended by trained personnel.

On the other side, despite economic progress measured in growth rates, the progress of women in majority of the developing countries have virtually stopped. Social progress has been slowed, and in many cases social well-being has deteriorated due to unfulfilled social and economic role of women in the current development strategy (United Nations: 1989).<sup>8</sup>

It is viewed that, the development strategy of Bangladesh constructs 'Women's position' in public sphere in the way, where development strategy was designed without regard for women. The strategy gives an impression that, the ideology of the development was influenced by the nature and culture debate, where they associate women with nature and men with the domain of culture, in other words public and economic arena is for male and private and domestic arena is for female.

Since 1950s, many development models have been experimented within donors' agency as well as aid recipient countries. None could change the situation of women who are treated as 'unproductive and dependent' (Khan:1990).<sup>9</sup> Circumstances around the development paradigm gives an impression that 'women' are marginalized due to a poor understanding of women's reality.

Development paradigm often addresses 'women issues' - through 'males' lens. A number of feminist studies pointed out that most of the development programmes and policies are having negative impact on women in particular. Though 'equality' principles have been

articulated in development paradigm with a strong notion that participation in public life would help to change women's status in household as well as society, in reality it imposed double (economic as well as household) responsibility on women. Development is therefore more a 'women's issue (Yonus: 1990).<sup>10</sup>

There are two types of protagonists around the women issues in development paradigm. The first one argued that investment in women would lead to economic growth as well as poverty alleviation (Moser:1993 ).<sup>11</sup> The second one challenged the basic assumption, theories and model of development. It argued that, unless there is a change in organizational rules and cultures towards a 'people centred development', where participatory process gives space to raise women's voice in decision 'making level' as well as greater transparency and accountability and so on (Jahan: 1995),<sup>12</sup> women's status will remain marginal within the society.

The World Bank and the UNDP as well as aid recipient country took the position in favour of the first line of argument which only talked about involvement of women in public area, an economic aspect, and thus ignored structural changes. When women needed redistribution of power and resources in specific area, (i.e. gender equality in responsibility in reproductive labour, or gender equality in decision-making process or land or property rights) both organizations (donor agency and aid recipient country) are less responsive. The donors as well as aid recipient governments are more interested in quick economic returns (i.e. income and employment projects, micro enterprises, export led growth strategies) rather than women's right or promotion of women's empowerment (Ibid: 1995 )<sup>13</sup>. In other words the donor as well as aid recipient country emphasized WID policies and its instrumental aspects (i.e. integration and mainstreaming) rather than the subjective aspects (i.e. gender equality and empowerment).

There are two kinds of criticisms against donor agencies as well as aid recipient countries- one that 'aid business' or 'aid dependency' does not bring real benefit for the target groups. And, two, that the direct relationship between the donor and aid recipient agencies makes unhealthy competition, which may help to breed corruption and waste on both sides. To counter the critics, donors as well as aid recipient country have showed some examples which are worthy of mention. For instance, Education, Health, Environment, Population, Cattle, Fishery, Disaster Management - Plan etc. where the cooperation of the donors aid recipient agency is visible, in the side of implementation and where result and benefit can be quantified (Mahbub-UL-Haq-1997)<sup>14</sup> Grameen Bank is an appropriate example against these critics. One of the heads of a donor agency stated that, 'we support initiatives like the

Grameen Bank, which directly benefits a million of poor women in Bangladesh' (personal interview taken by Jahan: 1995).<sup>15</sup>

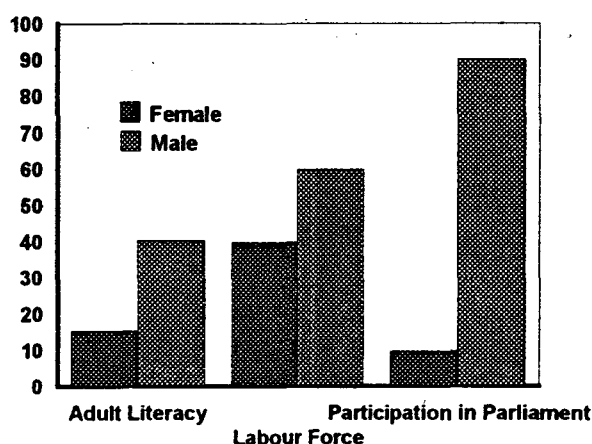
On the other side, an alternative approach of development has been articulated by the Southern Feminist which states that, existing development programme is not able to change women's situation due to structural causes, because the donors and the aid recipient country are interested to seek solutions within the model of structural adjustment. The WID programmes thus 'focuses on women and their experience, and places its major emphasis on individuals and their capacity for self betterment. It therefore, emphasises the importance of 'role models' or outstanding women who have gained social recognition in public sphere' (Kate Young, 1993).<sup>16</sup> But it does not address the main features of social organization, economic and political life, which shapes the particular aspects of society. Though it is true, there has been considerable success in raising awareness and expertise in gender issues and increasing the number of WID projects and programmes (Jahan: 1995: 78)<sup>17</sup>, they further argued that poverty and inequality continued to grow. So the position of a given society within the wider international system which is a part of these analysis, itself is absent in this development paradigm. It ignores the culturally specific forms of social inequality and divisions, where gender is interlocked with other forms of social hierarchy (Kate Young: 1993 P-135)<sup>18</sup>.

Secondly, the donor as well as aid recipient country are preoccupied with macro policies, which are only engaged with WID institutionalization and special projects for women, but there is no adequate monitoring system to measure the impact of macro policies on gender. DAWN argued that, 'macro policy instruments, pushed by the donors in the 1980s, especially the Structural Adjustment Programmes, resulted in a negative effect on gender equality, by cutting back on social-sector investment, especially in education and health. These policies were seriously undermining the realization of some of the key goals of the Forward Looking Strategies. The aim of these was to eliminate illiteracy by the year 2000 and to increase the life expectancy of all women to at least sixty five years of good quality life (ESCAP, 1998, UN: 1986).<sup>19</sup> Evidence from many countries, especially from Asia Pacific Regions, shows that the prevailing growth models have largely failed to address the critical issues of absolute poverty, distributive justice and equal participation (ESCAP, 1998, P-14)<sup>20</sup>, or in other words progress in quality of life indicators had stalled (Jahan: 1995)<sup>21</sup>, and aggravated social and environmental problems (ESCAP, 1998, P-14)<sup>22</sup>.

Thirdly, donors as well as aid recipient country have failed to establish yardstick to measure the achievement of WID policy goals. It is evident from different sources (such as donors' policies, programmes, guidelines etc.) that donors' are busy in generating quantitative



data in three areas: gender distribution of agency personnel, WID classification of budgets and WID classification of projects. These data are primarily used to monitor the agency's progress in employing women, directing assistance in improving women's condition and achieving gender issues in agency operations but ignoring the impact of their assistance to achieve gender equality or improving women's condition in aid recipient countries. On the other hand, aid recipient country also failed to generate qualitative targets and incentive to reduce gender gap in human development over a planned period, that means there was a gap in planning and programming tools which failed to assess its result (Mahbub-UL-Haq,1997).<sup>23</sup> The following Table-1 and Chart will give an impression on human development indicator which is presented here as an example:



Source: Mahbub-ULHaq, Human Development Report-1997

Tab:1 Human Development Indicator :  
Gender disparity 100= equality

|                             |       |     | Female | Male |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----|--------|------|
| Expected Life Expectancy    | '1993 | 100 | 60     | 60   |
| Adult Literacy              | '1993 | 52  | 25     | 48   |
| Average year for Education  | '1993 | 29  | 0.9    | 3.1  |
| Enlisted for Primary School | '1992 | 82  | 105    | 128  |
| Combine list for Education  | '1993 | 76  | 34     | 45   |
| Labour Force                | '1993 | 72  | 42     | 58   |
| Part of Income earned       | '1993 | 30  | 23     | 77   |
| Economic Activity Rate      | '1993 | 73  | 62     | 85   |
| Administrator/Manager       | '1992 | 5   | 5      | 95   |
| Participation in Parliament | '1998 | 11  | 10     | 90   |

Source: Mahbub-ULHaq, Human Development Report-1997

Though, the Government of Bangladesh has given greater importance on quantitative targets and incentives to lower fertility rates and importance for the use of contraceptive, it is evident that they have not given attention to the other side of women's lives such as reduction

of maternal and child mortality rates and the incidence of anaemia or improvement in access to health care service. (Jahan: 1995:79).<sup>24</sup>

Fourthly, it is evident that in donor agencies, WID programmes staff or women's share of job in professional categories increased to over 10% between 1975 to 1993. But the position of WID in the institutional structure is placed in a Junior level, which gives the impression that, there is a gender disparity in management level in both agencies, which means that 'elimination of all forms of discrimination' is not successful in case of integrating women in mainstreaming paradigm. In other words, the feminist from south criticized the mainstreaming paradigm for simple 'body counts' which means having more women professionals and managers would not necessarily result in making the agencies operationally more gender sensitive, rather it is evident that 'women agenda' is largely ignored due to "male control" (The World Bank: 1989, P-11)<sup>25</sup> of policy formulation. Additionally, it could be mentioned that, both the agencies treated women issues as largely confined to population control, health, nutrition, education and agricultural sector which is known to development paradigm as service oriented sector. Between the two agencies, the UNDP uses human development Index to measure the rate of integration in mainstream development (Human Development Report, UNDP, 1994).<sup>26</sup> On the contrary, the World Bank Report of 1992 had not made any effort to highlight gender issues in the annual discussion, for instance, it focused on the environment, completely ignored women's roles in natural resource management (The World Bank: 1992).<sup>27</sup>

The women's movement is weak in Bangladesh. The network established with the assistance of donor agencies and Ministry of Women Affairs' authority is also limited. So donors' have the opportunity to bridge the gap between different women's groups and government along with their own agency. The NGOs and the Government are heavily dependent on foreign aid. There is no 'share of responsibility' between donors and aid recipient country. Aid recipient country only follows the policy which is provided by the donor, without further assessment. In this way the donors help to establish global linkage which unifies donors' as well as recipient country within a market economy, and helps the donors to shift their cost on to the aid recipient country in the name of free competition and efficiency. The donors hold power and resource in global market, which help them to shift their cost on to the aid recipient country and thus accumulate more (Mies: 1986 Jahan :1995).<sup>28</sup> Therefore, 'development' is not an innocent term though a change has been attempted by the pressure of women's movement towards a more humane society (BMP Report 1999).<sup>29</sup>

The major findings of this study is that, the development strategy of Bangladesh reveals that they followed two types of approaches over the decades. Before '75 the approach was

reformist where they tried to give emphasis to 'growth-with-distribution' model. This model also followed the western notion of development where they tried to "adjust" social and ideological obstacles such as nationalization and privatization within the then development paradigm.

After '75 the strategy is directed to private initiated development, where they "remove" social and ideological obstacles such as "socialism" and switched over to privatization in order to increase production. As a result, the whole development effort has been heavily dependent on foreign aid (Sobhan, 1992), and development policy has been determined, to a certain extent, according to the wishes of the donor. Therefore, it is difficult to exercise their authority to determine their own policy for development.

The new phenomenon, viz. NGOs introduced a new term in development paradigm i.e. 'people's participation', which is articulated by the Southern Feminist and gives an impression that, they are trying to introduce a third model of development, which might solve the problems of previous model (which marginalize poor and women) and will be able to solve the dichotomy of development paradigm.

The process of development as adopted by the policy makers, instead of bringing integration, resulted in their marginalization of women. There is a big gap between the donor agency and the aid recipient country's planning and programming tools regarding improving women's condition of life. The need is to eliminate this gap, which can be only through generating awareness and creating public accountability and public participation in the development process.

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