

WOMEN'S STUDIES IN ACADEMIA AND DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

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Maithreyi Krishnaraj

1. Introduction

I shall begin with its avatar in the academic setting and then proceed to show its link to development 'discourse'. I confine myself to the social sciences, as their impact on development agendas has been substantial. There is quite bit of work in the humanities, including, philosophy, history and literature and more recently in the physical sciences. That would take me far afield. I touch very briefly only history because we carry the baggage of the past with us.

Much has been written about women and by women during the ages. During the nineteen century a social reform movement addressed the oppression of women among the higher castes and was instrumental in promoting women's education. Educated women began analysing their situation in Hindu society and their writings took the form of autobiographies and anecdotes. (Kosambi 2007, 2012)

Women's Studies as a *systematic study*, took its birth around the mid nineteen seventy five with the setting up of a separate 'unit'(which became a centre later) by the first women's university in Mumbai under Dr.Neera Desai. Around the same time came the 'Towards Equality Report' published by the Ministry of Education, Government of India and whose main author was Dr. Veena Mazumdar. The alarming revelations of this report on the ground reality of Indian women's poor record in education, health, paid employment and participation in public bodies led to the initiation of a programme of Women's Studies by the ICSSR (The Indian Council of Social Science Research). Prof. J.P. Naik's enormous support for this initiative coupled with Dr. Mazumdar's untiring efforts spearheaded WS in India. The University Grants Commission under the women chairpersons like Dr.Madhuri Shah and Dr. Armaity Desai gave further fillip to its expansion in the higher education system. In other words WS came to be established through official patronage and primarily through the pioneering role of women leaders and mentors assisted by concerned men. Women's movement and WS ran parallel for sometime before forging closer links to draw from each other. (Krishnaraj 2012).

WS has come of age and it is no longer necessary to vent one's spleen lobbying for it. At the beginning, it was either dismissed as a harmless indulgence by women to be tolerated with grace at best or with a smirk at the worst. The publication record of WS in books, journals, articles and news reports, stands witness to its success as an academic enterprise. Howe ever, whether it has retained its original vision is debatable. Now it is nearing four decades of its existence. Much water has flown down the Ganga since its inception.WS now exists as teaching and research in higher education across the country. What are its achievements as contribution to our knowledge and as inputs into Development policy and programmes?

2. WS as a discipline

WS can now lay claim to the title of a discipline by itself (Krishnaraj 2002). How does WS justify such a claim? Disciplines are domains of inquiry, that share objects of study, problems for investigation, values, terms, concepts, methods and assumptions governed by a general set of rules and categories guiding the pursuit of knowledge. Many WS scholars are trained in one or other of academic disciplines. Within its own limits each discipline recognises true or false propositions. What WS did was to push back the acknowledged territory of a discipline beyond its conventional borders. Anthropology, cultural anthropology, sociology, social psychology, economics, and political theory were drawn upon in varied ways. This de-stabilising of boundaries meant, many themes hitherto set aside as 'outside' the concern of the discipline began to enter 'within' the discipline for example, dowry, domestic violence, intra-household distribution of resources became issues for inquiry in economics, which has one of the strongest barriers to any encroachment of its territorial boundaries. Inter-disciplinarity is the hallmark of WS. It meant an integration of more than one discipline to create a new epistemology, build new organising concepts, methodologies, skills and reciprocal assimilation within disciplines. New conceptual schema like gender, patriarchy, sexual division of labour, distinction between production and reproduction in their composition, were all new pathways. Fundamentally, the destabilising of disciplines lays in the exposure of androcentric bias of academic disciplines.

Disciplines were found guilty of:

- Taking what applies to males as equally applicable to females
- Make man stand for human
- Recording the experiences of men only
- Regarding the experiences of men as more important
- If including women, to do so from the point of view of men
- Women not given a chance to build theories or create knowledge.

In other words, in the intellectual heritage of human civilisation, the contribution of women- both in the past as well as in the ongoing present, found no place because of a socially constructed invisibility and bias. Most of all, WS tried to remove invisibility of women in society. Data systems were scanned for this purpose, to highlight problems specific to women. A workshop at the women's university in Mumbai in 1982 examined our Census, NSSO and National Industrial Classification. Before the 1991 census, Unifem intervened to make improvements (Krishnaraj 1990). WS sought to locate sources of inequality, injustice and oppression and seek answers on how to remove these maladies and lastly identify sources of powerlessness for women. The findings of WS research were expected to be incorporated in teaching and policy and bring a transformation in society where gender would no longer be a tool for discrimination but would serve more as an analytical category. We began with high hopes about the transformative potential of new knowledge but failed to realise that knowledge is not enough to counter centuries of prejudices, in built biases and rigid ways of thinking. WS tried to open the doors of reality; but facts are not necessarily what is 'true' but what people believe to be true.

The major departures and innovations in the conceptual schema of WS, was first of all by the notion of gender to replace the biological male -female sex distinction by demonstrating its social construction. Today the word gender is used nonchalantly by everyone in many contexts, without realising what a radical invention this feminist intellectual apparatus was. It changed our ways of

looking at social phenomena in new ways. The concept captured at one go many constituent factors. a) it could refer to traits such as the notion of masculine and feminine with different psyche b) it could be associated with a sense of identity. There are those with indeterminate genitals who are now labelled 'transgender' c) as performing specific roles d) as social relations e) as a symbolic system and f) as ideology.

Gender works through all spheres of activity none excluded and it is a measure used for rewards and punishment because of the way it renders social meaning to male and female. Women transgressing accepted sexual mores are more severely punished than men routinely having that privilege. By defining appropriate tasks for each gender, it organises the distribution of all resources be they land, livestock, housing, income, information, knowledge and skills. Generally, positions of power and authority, rest with men, barring exceptions in some regions of our country like in the North East and South West communities. Women appeared to have some authority and power in our early history. As of now Gender decides who one is, what one can do and what kind of entitlements one can have.

The second exploration in both theory and practice is the way sexual division of labour works. This division is not just an innocuous and convenient division but has consequences that affect both men and women- the women more severely. It structures rewards and punishments, entitlements, obligations and responsibilities. Despite the enormous presence of women in economic activity, they are primarily assigned to the domestic sphere.

Patriarchy is seen as an over arching male dominance. Unlike earlier formulation of Patriarchy as a universal, WS unravelled its manifestations in different context so that we are dealing with 'patriarchies' modulated by class, caste and ethnicity (Sangari 1995). Patriarchy, began to be understood as operating through three channels: control of female labour, female sexuality and female reproductive power. The regime was not either rigid or non permeable. Through history women have contested gender rigidity.

Thus WS, directed a search light on how gender impacts on women and on how incompletely women are accommodated in many spheres of society including the academic disciplines. The struggle of WS then was i) to correct the insufficient or biased incorporation in disciplines ii) to use this to engineer a balanced human development by inserting women's perspective in development 'discourse'. How was this achieved?

3. WS within disciplines:

a) Anthropology

Anthropology has had a notable impact on WS because it offered a cross cultural as well as a historical perspective that corrected a uni-dimensional view of patriarchy. Work by Sanday (1981), Leacock (1981, 1983), Ardner (1986), Reiter (1982), Dube(1986, 1988, 1993) identified various factors that influenced the strength or dilution of patriarchy. These were: systems of marriage (monogamy, polygamy or polyandry); inheritance patterns-through male line or female line; lineage (through male line or female line), economic participation of women, distinction between public and private, symbolic representation of the relative importance of the contribution of male and female to human reproduction –that is man as the seed giver and woman as mere receptacle or soil. The Mother Goddess worship in ancient

societies, including India (Bachofen 1861) implied sacralisation of female regenerative power. Women are credited with inventing agriculture and basketry.

Ironically, in contemporary society, worship of mother goddess does not translate into real power for real women!(Krishnaraj 2010). In the real world, female secular power is dependent on practical circumstances that govern women's access to scarce resources. Male and female power rules are cast when people create their sense of people hood. Sexual division of labour is formed by people's adaptation to environment in the pursuit of the necessities of life. However, as economies develop and subsistence production gives way to wage based production, this division becomes dysfunctional. It inhibits women's capabilities and constrains their mobility both physical and skill wise. Kinship studies have given us valuable insights into a married woman's status in her natal home and matrimonial home in Hindu society. The family has a hierarchy based on age and authority (Palriwala 1993, Ganesh 1994, Risseuw and Ganesh 1998). Saradamani 1992, documented the demise of matriliney in Kerala. While western scholars were concerned with advanced capitalist societies, feminist anthropologist in India made sense of the historical transitions in India that retained pre capitalistic features.

b) Sociology

Sociology has given more space to Women's Studies.(Rege 1997). Sociology's major contribution in WS is the deconstruction of the family to show that it's so called harmony is based on acceptance of subordination by women out of a lack of a fallback position and the need for security and support in the absence of alternatives. In Hindi Cinema, when a woman leaves home, this is symbolically portrayed with thunder and lightning. She faces hazards all the way and can fall into agents of brothels. Individual members of a family are a collective-where there is both cooperation and conflict (Sen1990). At the present juncture, with the assiduous efforts by the women's movement under the premise that 'personal is political', domestic violence has come out of the closet for public scrutiny. Marxist sociology which paid attention only to the sphere of production was found wanting in not paying attention to relations of power in reproduction. In most cases women have no say in whether or not they want children or how many. Secondly the value of a son is internalised by women. Even today, in the daily newspaper, there is a report of a man killing his wife because she bore a female child. Women's labour, sexuality and child bearing capacity gets interlocked.

c) Economics

What is known as mainstream economics is also called neo- classical economics which has an unshakable position today as the Brahmin among the social sciences. It puts out very clearly its basic assumptions and the rules it applies using didactic logic. This irresistible predilection to deductive reasoning from sets of more or less plausible but entirely arbitrary assumptions to precisely stated but irrelevant theoretical conclusions has had unfortunate results in understanding the real world. However today, the fact that it employs mathematics is part of its allure and intellectual appeal.

Economics has also had its heterodox versions. There is no one version of economics- we have macro theory, and institutional economics. The former is what is the underlying

framework for Development theorising. Macro theory focuses on how economic growth takes place. Reducing to its bare essentials, it goes like this: to make an economy produce more, investment is needed; this can come from savings. If savings are not enough we can borrow either from the market or from foreign agencies or print more money. Capital –Output ratio will tell us the degree of productivity we can garner. Economics has the closest connections to the world of business and government among social sciences. All these variations in economics, have problems. What is missing is that economics as a discipline lacks even a fringe field devoted to the study of women. Hence feminists took to do interdisciplinary work-a choice which was fruitful in so far as everything has a gender aspect. Neo classical economics has in its theorising in all its forms has relied on the atomised individual as the unit of social action and behaviour. The individual's entire behaviour is to rationally maximise his utility and the invisible hand of the market is supposed to bring equilibrium.

This paradigm has not gone unchallenged not only by feminists but many economists themselves- as an unrealistic model of human behaviour. The branch of economics called Welfare Economics focuses on inequalities and advises taxes and subsidies as well as more of public goods by the State to correct imbalances. In Marxist theory of capitalism, while gender gets attention, it fails to theorise women's unpaid labour, sexual division of labour and the role of gender ideology. Institutional economics tried to incorporate the role of institutions that affect economic behaviour by employing mainstream analytical tools supplanted by other disciplines. It brings to the foreground the circumstances that provoke particular forms of behaviour. Market, family and the state are after all interconnected. Unfortunately this framework has remained on the side lines. Feminists have critiqued mainstream economics for its blind spots regarding gender. "What has been the impact of WS on the discipline of economics? The larger question is a political one. Has the impact if there is one, resulted in the reorganisation of the structure of economic activity in society so as to bring about positive outcomes for women?" (Krishnaraj 2001, p1425)

Gender critique of economics:

Exchange for money is taken as what constitutes economic activity. Our data systems exclude activities which are non -commoditised and thereby miss out a large part of activities of people involved in production, consumption and distribution of material objects that lie outside the economic boundary. A survey of our data systems was carried out by the Research centre for Women's Studies with the collaboration of the Women and Child development of the government of India and UN agencies. Unfortunately, while UNRISD was supposed to publish this, it never happened and the manuscript is available only in the form of a mimeographed copy (edited by this author) lies buried in its archives, and totally forgotten. So often we reinvent the wheel! New scholars are picking up the same issue in recent years.

Market exchange is only one form of exchange. There are many forms of reciprocal exchange like the ' jajmani' system among castes, where landowners provide some rudimentary social security like free meals, contributions for marriages, social functions and so on to workers, which ensured at least the subsistence level of workers. Under this form exchange, it was more a patron-client relation and while it was not a just and free exchange, it protected the workers from the vagaries of the market. Market is not neutral and power relations do obtain in its functioning- be it wages, credit or investment. Many 'modern' economists blame the poor for their lavish spending on social functions, not realising that these confer a measure of social esteem, social status as well as build social

networks which some call social capital and have a rational basis for their behaviour given the low level at which they are operating, a leap into a higher level for the poor is well nigh impossible. (Banerjee 2011)

Ironically despite its sophisticated methodology, on gender sensitivity economics is really the Big Bad Guy. In theory and practice economics has influenced policies and outcomes in a major way. Data systems undercount women's work and this continues to be an issue. The definition of what constitutes work is taken from wage economies and WS demonstrated how inappropriate it is for India by calling attention to four main deficiencies: i) work is defined as only that which obtains exchange value ii) women's domestic work is given no value iii) much of women's work tends to be located within the household or its neighbourhood precincts iv) in rural economies, they are engaged in collection of fuel, fodder, water and non timber products in forest areas like berries, resin, leaves and so on. It is by highlighting these anomalies through intense struggle by national and international women's organisations (Waring 1988, Goldschmidt 1987, Krishnaraj 1995) as well as the support of UN organisations responding to these agitations finally led to a new system of national accounts that takes cognisance of women's non market work. But while it is *recorded* it does not find a place in a country's national product (GNP). The unpaid work of women contributes significantly to GNP in terms of value and is the base for all other economic activity. The new nomenclature of Care Economy does some justice to this provided it does not talk of 'housework' as in a wage economy which is confined to taking care of children, elders and the sick and processing food but includes nonmarket substitutes in an insufficiently commoditised economy. (Agarwal 1985). The model of economics assumes that in the aggregate, labour is a *non-produced factor of production* unlike capital. In reality, labour IS a produced means of production through care of offspring, care of the worker to make him or her ready for the workforce. Here female labour is more involved than the male through child birth, breast feeding and nurturing through adulthood. The female is also doing social reproduction, that is replicating the given social norms of society.

Prices, wages, costs, decisions regarding investment are claimed to be gender neutral, but discrimination exists to a large degree by segregation of women's jobs and by subjective definition of skill. Senior Noble laureate economists like Gary Becker argued that this maximised returns as each gender specialised in what they could do best. (Becker 1981) This assumes that women have a choice. Secondly, once women quit market work, they lose skills. Critics of mainstream economics theory are plentiful. The basic assumption of rational behaviour by each individual as an *independent agent* whose only goal is maximising satisfaction has been called into question by many. A recent work has exemplified this in today's context (Basu 2010). Other social goals intervene to modifying the play of rationality. By and large, mainstream economics as a *discipline* cannot make room for altruistic or collective behaviour nor deal with issues of justice because this lies as an externality outside its core theme of efficiency in allocation of scarce resources. Some recent attempts to bring women's role into analysis is casting the household as a bargaining model where men and women negotiate to get their interests fulfilled. While this may be an advance in theorising, it is a moot point that the terms of bargaining are not decided upon by women. To conclude this foray into economic behaviour, economics is grudgingly accepting the importance of social mediation and realises that women's work is primarily oriented to family maintenance except in urban professional settings or corporate sectors.

d) Political theory

What constitutes political action or politics is under question. Women's participation is under recognised if we only we look at elected bodies or participation in governance in a direct way. Often women support men's role and have made an important contribution in people's struggles. (Stree Shakti Sanghatna 1989; Thapar-Bjorkert 2006; Mukhopadhyay and Singh 2007; Kumar 1993; Murthy and Dasgupta 2011) . With the 50% representation in Panchayatiraj institutions , many women have come into elected and decision making bodies. There have been struggles to resist the despoliation of our natural resources and WS has related gender and sustainable development. (Krishnaraj 2011). WS has not only documented the participation of women in political struggles and in political activity apart from national parliament. The proportion of women in the Lok Sabha , Rajya sabha and legislative assemblies, legislative councils is still very small but they have been vocal on women's issues. WS has analysed the relation of the State to gender. All these efforts by women have borne fruit in some ways but are resisted by male hegemony. WS has drawn attention to social and institutional factors that impede full participation. Citizenship implies that we are not merely individuals but members of a collective, sharing partnership in national public life. There is a reciprocal relationship between the citizen community and the individual citizen's rights and these rights require a supportive political culture. (Narayan 1997). Liberal theory has clear cut formulations though their assumptions are disputable. Liberal theory espouses five basic tenets: i) it regards human beings as atomistic, rational agents whose interests are ontologically prior to society ii) society should ensure the freedom of all its members to realise their capabilities iii) the ultimate worth of an individual is expressed in freedom where the individual can act unobstructed by others iv) the individual is rational and competitive in maximising his/her gain v) there is a clear separation between the private and public. WS has exposed the contradictions in this formulation. There is here the notion of autonomy, which carries with it the idea of subject hood and agency. The notion of the private here is freedom from control of the state (Davis 1997). The 'private' becomes the area where men are free to exercise power within the family. The controversy over promulgating a Uniform Civil Code induced opposition by religious groups who follow their own Personal Laws. In the notion of the individual in Liberal thought, the individual is a solid self contained unit, not defined by or in need of anything other than itself. In the notion of a community, there is fusion of self with other selves, a sharing of subjectivities. However there is opaqueness in this notion of 'community' (Young 1990). Identity politics suppresses differences within it, especially gender differences. As of now subaltern groups like dalits articulating their rights, have raised questions of what would ensure justice and voice to different groups. Ethnic differences have become another problem. While endorsing the rights of these groups WS has been concerned with women's rights *within* these groups. For example dalit women are asserting their rights in the emergence of dalit feminism. WS is now faced with many challenges to rethink on several fronts- that of rights of individuals and groups, of citizenship, of polity, of democracy and notions of justice and equality.

e) History

History is another area where feminist critique and scholarship have impacted on history and historiography. History is a past record of people's experiences. What is accepted as history is

what is preserved in stone, drawings, writings and various artefacts. Fossils belong to pre history according to conventional history. Confident assertions are made about early human life with little basis on actual experiences. We have all been brought up on the 'cave men hunting food and women tending the hearth'. The Discovery of India exhibition at the Nehru Centre in Mumbai museum replicates this with clay sculptures. When I wrote to the historian who designed this she refused to accept my pointing this out that women's food gathering and hunting of small animals provided the major part of food while hunting big animals was an occasional treat. The ILO publicised this famous statement: Women produce 75% of food, generate 10 % of income and hold 1% of assets. The museum curator's response shows how disciplines are gender blind whether the practitioner happens to be man or woman. Conventional history carried the male bias of undervaluing women's role. If women are included it is done very selectively, including only elite women. Feminist historians have criticised this partial view. In the history of the Vedic age, Maitreyi and Gargi are mentioned as contestants of the philosopher, Yagnavalkya. Uma Chkravarty and Kumkum Roy pointed out that the mention of hundreds of 'dasis' (menial servants) are conveniently omitted. (Chakravarty and Roy 1988). Until recently history paid inordinate emphasis on discreet events like wars and conquests and paid less attention to tracing how new traditions arose, how people's lives changed. WS began by filling in women's contributions, by changing periodisation to mark critical events in the lives of women. Thus, the major departures were: tracing major historical changes in the condition of women like the industrial revolution, social reform, birth control; reinterpreting sources, adding issues not so far included; focusing on collectives struggles of women over the years and cultural changes in codes of behaviour and migration. Women emerged as economic and political agents and were not mere victims. (Shah 2005).For this they used new material like autobiographies and diaries and letters of women. Feminist studies on Devadasis (called sacred prostitution) de-sacralised it to demonstrate its material and social underpinnings. Cultural activities like the lawanis in Maharashtra became vulgarised under decadent feudalism. (Rege 1995).

I include just a line or two on psychology and literature to make the story complete. Davar (1995) found mental illness dominant among married women due to the stress of adapting to the unfair demands on them . There is a vast amount of writing in English and in regional languages on women's issues.(Tharu and Lalita 1994).

4. The Contribution of WS to Methods and Methodology

It is nearly four decades since WS emerged as a formal, specialised inquiry into women's condition and women's issues. To obtain knowledge, we identify the problem, collect data, analyze the data, and seek relationship between variables. These are exercises common to all domains. In general there are distinct levels in this process. At the lowest level is the technique of data gathering. In social sciences, they consist of observation, survey, case study or interviews. Natural sciences us experiments. At the second level, is methodology, is an account of the general structure of the theory in any discipline. In other words data is always theory laden. At the third level is epistemology, which is how do we know what we know. This leads us to philosophical issues such as: are our senses reliable; what is the connection between our subjective experiences and outer reality; is what we know mediated by our perceptions. All three levels are interrelated. At the methodological level one might use building blocks like gender relations and may use this to cast it within a materialist, liberal or post modernist frame of reference. There are three positions: empiricist, standpoint and post

modernist. The empiricist- also known as positivist assumes the existence of a world independent of the human knower and relies primarily on the senses. Harding expressed the difficulty of feminist theory (Harding 1986, 1987). As an alternative, standpoint theory of knowledge was propounded by Sandra Harding. Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Harding and Hintikka 1983) She argued that women have a special standpoint- their own as that of the subordinate as well as the view of the oppressor. Others argue that the standpoint is not an independent category in as much as women live in a gendered society and can only have gendered experiences.

The post modernist denies that there is one truth and it is a question of representation by different voices. (Nicholson, 1990) If we accept that cognition is a human experience, we can grant that there is no one way of apprehending reality and that there are several instruments in our armoury: perception, intuition, conceptualisation, inference, representation, reflection, imagination, remembrance, conjecture, rationalisation, argumentation, justification, contemplation, ratiocination, speculation, mediation, validation and deliberation. Never the less, we have to ask for a minimalist standard of rationality that requires that belief be apportioned to evidence and that no assertion is immune from critical assessment. (Hack 1998). These matters of knowledge sources are not settled and can be hotly debated. More importantly, authority should not be the only basis for our acceptance but we should keep ourselves open to new knowledge, learn new ways of looking at things. For instance, it is scientific finding that the human male's genetic structure is what determines whether an offspring will be male or female that absolved the blame on the female if she failed to produce a son. However the strong son preference led to other methods of genetic engineering to get the desired sex. In India, such tests resulted in sex selective abortions. The strength of the social condition overruled science and demographic balance. Sex ratio that is the number of female babies to thousand males and the resulting infant and adult sex ratio is now a clear marker of female status in society. It is our notions of justice that will propel us to remedy these aberrations.

When we talk of new methods, we are not inventing new ones but refining old ones. Such refining exposes the theoretical presuppositions. For instance, if we hold the household to be homogeneous, we fail to investigate the differences within it. If we believe that man is innately aggressive, we will condone all sexual crimes because 'he' cannot help it, poor fellow. Sandra Bem's Hypothesis is that aggressiveness and gentleness are in a continuum, not polar opposites (Bem 1993) and men and women can have both in varying degrees. (Krishnaraj 1996).

Mainstream social sciences claim: i) they are exclusively rational in their conduct of research and analysis of data ii) that they are oriented to carefully defined structures and are impersonal iii) they are geared to control events iv) they seek replicability of events and procedures v) they have the capability to produce a completed analysis of a research problem vi) they address problems with pre defined concepts.

WS in a feminist approach accepts a more tentative formulation. i) it has tried a mix of intuitive and serendipitous approaches ii) oriented to process rather than product iii) treat phenomena for their meaningfulness iv) uses a mix of subjective and objective approaches v) does not seek a grand unified theory however aesthetically appealing it might be vi) does not omit unique events even if they occur infrequently vi) generates concepts in vivo.vii) there has to be an ethic about non exploitative methods. WS adopts a methodology that pays heed to contexts. It looks at established ways of looking with a different eye; detects relationships where none was suspected earlier; discovers new sources of data. This list is an ideal list not followed in practice for reasons of constraints in the academic institutions about what is permissible.

In 1989, a regional workshop was held by the Indian Association of WS held at Bangalore which covered the theme of 'Feminist Perspectives and the Struggle to Transform the Disciplines'. The workshop had arrived at the following conclusions. Feminist knowledge may have been added to Sociological literature, but gender has not been acknowledged as a central issue by major theorists like Habermas, Giddens and Bordieu. As for Economics, the issue of defining and measuring women's work, the concept of the household as a homogenous entity, the implications of sexual division of labour and the assumption that all players in the market are equal remained. Gender perspectives have not yet been integrated in mainstream economics. In clinical Psychology, women's mental health was seen as related to their biology while men's was attributed to external causes. Referring to cultural studies, the workshop highlighted how the nationalist movement created a fixed position for women as culture bearers. Several other themes were explored like theology and dalit question. The conclusion that the workshop arrived at was that the core assumptions of disciplines were not influenced by the critical perspective of WS.

From this digression into academic disciplines, the following conclusions emerge: economics has paid insufficient attention to women's work; politics either gave no space for women's participation or ignored their different style of their participation; history invisibilised women's historic role or was ridden with male bias. A similar story exists in literature and other humanities. These have repercussions on Development process because these very biases are incorporated in development practice.

5. WS and Development Discourse

Having traversed the terrain of WS, it is time to see how do the findings of WS relate to Development agenda?

Let us look at a concise version of development economics which is the base for planned development. The goal of development is to enhance national output by initiating a virtuous cycle where growth will become self sustaining. As India like other ex-colonial countries suffered from delinking of their indigenous path to development due to colonialism, after independence, the State had to play a major role in development. Initially, it was ruling over the 'commanding heights' of the economy and built the public sector for industry and services in a very big way. Women found a more equitable place in public sector. Indian economy was faced with a dualism: a traditional sector with high employment of labour, lower capital and an advanced sector with more capital, technology and higher productivity. However the productivity edge of the modern sector has to be large enough to grant higher wages, possible only if the market is large enough. This did not happen because the traditional sector was too large to be eliminated and the amount of capital needed was beyond what the national economy could provide. Hence the traditional was retained with some enabling special provisions to enhance its viability and was expected to take care of consumer goods, while the capital intensive sector would build the heavy industry that would minimise our import of these from abroad. While the system worked well in the beginning it ran into trouble by excess capacity in heavy industry and administratively, the discretionary power vested in the bureaucracy-pejoratively called 'licence permit raj' stifled development and did little to eliminate poverty. We have idle resources which are unemployable, lacking skills and education for employment in a modern sector. Thus because development was unable to generate sufficient remunerative employment, creating employment became a welfare objective as 'food for work'. We therefore have severe contradictions between productivity and employment. So, the question is what is development for?

The obsession with growth model did not abate. The rhetoric changed but the model did not. Data on the impact of development on women began to pour in from many parts of the world. International agencies like the United Nations spearheaded these investigations. A schism developed between the west and what came to be called the Third World (to distinguish from the First world being Western Europe, North America and Australia; the second world being the socialist countries of Eastern/southern Europe). Western women wanted equality within the existing system. For much of the third world the basic issue was the model itself. The significance was not the increase in total output but its composition and what and how much went to whom. In the absence of institutional changes to alter the power and privileges of entrenched classes, development became destabilising especially for women given their inferior position. Given inequalities of class (in the case of India, caste), rural- urban, ethnicity and men and women, these inequalities got intensified. Feminism itself does not speak in one voice as the politics of language and difference poses difficult and conceptual and methodological challenges.

7. Impact of WS on Development Studies

WS began to enter development discourse through these stages:

- Theories of development and feminist theories of patriarchy
- Empirical investigation of the impact of development and feminist theories
- Opening up of gender issues neglected in theory and practice of development
- Incorporation of gender in micro economics theory
- Redefining development
- Mainstreaming gender

The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy began ex-post analysis of gender in budgets. These exercises have been repeated at state level too. However, they are concerned with outcomes and so far gender has not been centrally incorporated in budgetary process though there may be allocations for the department of Women and Child Development.

A new promising development is the organising of the National Alliance of People's movements. There is greater coming together of the women's movement conferences and the Women studies conferences. Our agenda should be a shared conception of women's liberation. For this we have to understand the problem of inte-connected sources of power.

- i) The organisation of systems of production
- ii) The social construction of sexuality and gender
- iii) Oragnisation of human reproduction
- iv) Ranking by race, ethnicity, class, caste
- v) Ideological legitimisation of he relationships to which these forms of power give rise to.

The contradictions we perceive between WS as an academic enterprise that has in some ways become an intellectual endeavour divorced from real issues, and the women's movement can be resolved only when we evolve a shared conception of liberation and go beyond 'isms' that address one or the other of interconnected sources of power. This involves struggling against some women's power over others as well as men's power over women. Women's collective power entails a critical questioning of the nature of power. There are many categories of power: the authorised power enshrined in law; the power of custom and interpersonal power.

8. Redefining Development

From 1990, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) introduced human development as the measure of development of a society and formulated indicators that moved away from preoccupation with GNP/GDP to indicators based on literacy, number of years of schooling, work participation and public participation. A Human Development Index and a Gender Development Index for, each region-country, regions within each country began to be constructed. There was also gender empowerment index. UNDP formulated millennium goals to be achieved by 2025:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Achieve gender equality and empowerment of women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/Aids and other diseases
7. Ensure environment sustainability
8. Develop global partnership for development.

For each of these quantitative targets were specified.

India's rank stands 117th in HDI in the community of nearly 150 countries, which places it below Bangladesh and Sub-Saharan Africa! Of what use is our 9% or 6% or now 5.6% "growth" ?

9. Globalisation

Globalisation involves:

- i) Liberalization of trade between countries. Usually national governments restrict imports by either banning them or imposing heavy duties so that the price at which they sell in the local market will not be competitive with local products. A country might encourage exports by giving subsidies so that the price in the export market is competitive. If the export price is lower than the cost of production, subsidies cover the gap. This enables foreign goods to enter freely. However, countries importing our goods can impose non-tariff barriers –that is give reasons for rejecting our goods on issues other than price like use of child labour, use of inflammable material etc.
- ii) There is free flow of money and capital across national borders. There can be foreign direct investment or money into speculative transactions called hot money which can be withdrawn at short notice creating problems. This is what happened in South Korea.
- iii) There is transfer of money from our country to Switzer land which is non transparent

If we look at how globalised we are, in India's economy, foreign trade is only 12%. How ever what happens is because of unequal relations- the rules of the game are laid down by the richer countries. They can sell cheaper because their productivity is higher and also because they give lavish subsidies to some of their products. In EEC, agriculture and dairy products receive 40%subssidy. We are competing with those who can mass produce at lower cost while our products are produced by the

masses at lower productivity and hence costlier. Only 9% of the population is engaged in agriculture in Europe while in India 67% live on agriculture with poor technology, insufficient irrigation and large number of small and marginal, unviable holdings less than half an acre. Europe can produce 'butter mountains' and the US can create 'wheat mountains'. Hence free trade will give them our markets but our capacity to go into their markets is more difficult. The silver lining is India's IT success. Already there is resistance by the US on their companies outsourcing to India. Inequities arise due to patents that do not promote diffusion of technology or socially relevant ones. Globalisation distorts allocation of resources that privilege the private over the public sector.

There is international division of labour where by production can be fragmented and located in different regions. We have our Special Economic Zones catering to exports with special concessions like land, infrastructure and tax rebate by the government. Women workers in these SEZs do have some gains but also losses because of restrictions about unionisation. These events of globalisation affect women and the poor. Currently, the government has introduced the controversial FDI in retail. We have to know how it will affect our millions of petty traders, whether it will really create as many jobs as envisaged and whether it will really benefit our farmers. If big companies buy from the farmers, the rule of monopsony –that is the monopoly power of big buyers- can come into play.

Liberalisation induced opening the economy to the market and retreat of the State from its primary responsibility of providing universal health and education. The introduction of user fees, the private public partnership and other innovations have privileged the corporate sector. Even in the latest XII plan health care will receive only 2.5 % whereas most countries spend on an average of 5 to 6% of their GNP.

10. A Gender Critique of Development

The greatest impact on development studies that WS have had is its challenge to development agendas through a gender critique of our planned economy.

The term 'developed' signifies a state of maturity to use a biological analogy. The imagery suggests that all those countries that are not like Europe and North America, Japan are deficient and need 'development'. Development can be conceived on the other hand as a desirable state of society based on a set of criteria. One widely accepted goal of development is the elimination of mass poverty, where improvement of productivity is seen as the crux of the problem. The method adopted in the economically advanced countries has been industrialization and use of technology. Whatever the variations on this theme, this essentially involves an accumulation model, which presumes the possibility of replication by all countries.

However, the present less developed countries cannot reproduce the kind of industrial revolution that took place in the west, where there was an intense diffusion of mass consumption through increased wages relative to labour productivity. In addition they had access to colonies. This is because in most poor countries, this model leads to acute concentration of income and wealth as a result of capital intensive technology employed in selected sectors, to increase productivity. This results in slow absorption of labour. Consequently, as wages in the economy in general remain low, there is widespread unemployment and underemployment. There is little prospect of mass production of consumer goods through economies of scale.

For real development to take place, major structural changes are necessary, whereby the balance of power in the international economy shifts in favour of poor countries to enable priorities of development are recast to facilitate improving the standard of living of the majority of the poor.

Questions that arise are: Who sets the priorities? How do we arrive at a consensus? Who has the power to bring changes or resist changes? Who is able to corner rewards? Since all these changes are determined by the political process, the fewer the number of people involved in this process, the less control people have over their environment and resources.

If development is a complex process, the extent to which it meets social goals, agreeable to all members' ultimate interests- as opposed to what may be perceived at a point of time in the light of limited experience-is the true test of real development. To advance one's interest, every individual needs power, knowledge and experience. Every individual and group must be so equipped to play their role in society.

What is under development? It is to be vulnerable and powerless. Illiteracy, unemployment, lack of productive assets, lack of control over assets even if one owns them, lack of knowledge –all these- create powerlessness. Similarly anti development like excessive consumerism and commoditisation cause vulnerabilities that might end up in people losing control over their lives. These result in the poor and especially women exploited by those well endowed with resources because all the indicators of vulnerability listed above apply more to poor women. The women in the richer or middle classes do not escape discrimination on the basis of gender. There are many issues that confront them like sexual harassment at work, domestic violence, inadequate property rights, denial of the rights of a girl child to survive in the face of dominant son preference and so on.

If development implies creating opportunities for all human beings to fulfil their potential, in being and becoming, women too must receive such opportunities. Detailed studies across Asia, Africa, and Latin America have revealed the disparities women face. How does development process bring this about? Two major trends were identified. a) disparities in opportunities for women in all those needs that ensure survival b) the increasing degree of new forms of oppression and subordination brought about by changes in society. How does development process bring these effects about? Conflict and competition inevitably accompany the dialectical process of development. What are the latent processes that sharpen conflicts for women?

Women's status in society is inextricably bound in an exploitative system that the development model ushered in. The model chosen failed to eliminate poverty and created dual economy despite our planned development. Constraints of natural resources, population growth, and absence of institutional reforms in agriculture were some of the reasons. Women displaced from traditional occupations lost skills and became menial workers and migrants in urban areas or urban periphery, losing security and facing shrinking areas of autonomy and self esteem. There have been many studies on displacement caused by big dams, projects that acquired land for industry or export production. Inevitably, a large subsistence economy which had an integrated relation to environment got disrupted. Monopoly of economic resources by commercial interest, the waning of common property resources led to deforestation and fuel, fodder, water, collected by women, became less freely available and women had to walk further and further to collect them or find alternatives. Political economy was subject to patriarchal power. Patriarchy or male dominance was sustained by socialisation, marriage practices and patrilocality where the bride moved to the marital home (except in the Northeast and South west communities where matriliney or property rights of women exist) was thus not just an ideological device but was buttressed by a strong material base. The

bride's position in the marital home was asymmetrical because the bride taker had more power than the bride giver. Dowry and violence related to it led to severe oppression often ending in virtual murder of the bride. Given this structural configuration which governed gender relations, the development model did nothing to weaken this as a precondition for wider participation. Added to this was politics based on caste. Thus retention of patriarchy severely distorted the effects of development. Denial of authority and power to women, sustained by class, caste and gender relations skewed the position of women in work participation with respect to men. Technological change altered occupational structure in ways that benefitted men and marginalised occupations such as crafts, household industry and agriculture that employed large numbers of women. Sexual division of labour further uphold this asymmetry. Women accept family taboos about kinds of work they can take and where. The main purpose of women's work has been to keep the family afloat, not their own progress. The UN System of national accounts has documented the enormous work load of women, much of it unpaid. Employment per se is not an unalloyed good- we have to see whether the work in question, is not arduous, affecting health of the worker, that the products manufactured advances social welfare and women's health. Excise tax on liquor is the major source of income for the government. In poor families men's drinking, condoned by society, severely affects the economy of the household and places burdens on women. The plea that they take recourse to it to 'drown their sorrows' is a specious plea. Do women get to drown their sorrows? They keep tending their families under the greatest odds. With a burgeoning middle class the 'white goods' take precedence as against wage goods, needed by the majority of the poor.

So, what kind of development will advance women's and society's welfare?

- It should not be linear process of surplus generation
- Resource mobilisation, technical services, should have appropriate social organisation
- Institution building should be priority
- Education and health should be universally available and is the primary responsibility of governing bodies. The existence of parallel private schooling with more resources undercuts the quality of publicly funded and managed schools. A common school system will have tremendous effect in reducing inequality.
- A nonlinear model will pay heed to human costs and not only material costs
- A model of development that does not dichotomise life, work and creativity
- Unlike the present model where development does not have within it eradication of poverty but needs a separate anti- poverty programmes
- Not compensatory programmes for women and the poor but eliminates roots of subordination

Why is macro theory gender blind?

- a) Macro theory assumes distribution of output and relative prices as given, then seeks to explain how total output and general prices are determined
- b) Micro economics assumes general prices and output as given then explains how distribution to individuals are determined
- c) Because macro theory deals with aggregates, it is blind to gender, sector and location.
- d) While theory tells us that supply and demand determine wages, perception of employers about the value of a worker influences wages. Women are paid lower on the assumption that their productivity is less than that of men. Skill definition is very subjective.
- e) Physical relocation of work previously done outside the market nexus, disadvantages women
- f) Women's work tends to be based on family work compatibility

- g) In theory the market allocates labour among competing uses, but this applies only to those activities that are market oriented.
- h) Economic theory omits intra household distribution of resources based on prevailing gender relations
- i) By dealing with only production of for the market, the theory has only partial coverage of economic activity in society
- j) The opportunity cost of female labour is ignored .if women enter the labour market, it severely impacts on child care and hence raises the cost of human reproduction
- k) The efficiency criterion used ignores the cost to society
- l) Ignores the institutional context within which production takes place. Economics is unable to deal with power satisfactorily as it assumes all participants are equal. The unit of analysis is taken as free standing unsullied by social conditioning.
- m) Environment is taken as 'given' not understood as finite, shaped by man's own activity. Scarcity is socially constructed. As Gandhi said 'there is enough for every one's need but not for every one's greed'.

Fundamental to both eradication of poverty and improving women's status is women's ownership and control of productive assets and effective participation in community affairs. For this improvement of women's capabilities must improve.

11. New Challenges

There are many choices available by way of alternate low cost technology, greater use of bio mass which can reduce the enormous subsidy on petroleum products, rain water harvesting and sprinkler irrigation to save water wastage, sun drying of seasonal vegetables, and many such alternatives that can be fostered. Given adequate markets, storage and transport these measures can boost women's income and survival and can reduce rural –urban divide. Indeed there are immense possibilities of a better world.(Basu and Kanwar. 2008). Are we ready to take them?

Women could until now look to the State as the arbiter and mediator to enforce women's rights. Thus the women's movement depended primarily on the State for support and over the years a plethora of laws were enacted dealing with violence, sexual harassment, dowry prohibition, property rights, marriage and divorce, setting up of Family Courts, labour rights, maternity protection and so on. While the law provides safeguards and legitimacy, unless social attitudes change, women's issues remain in the back burner. Today the State no longer is the upholder of women's rights and Public Interest Litigation and the Right to Information have been frequently resorted to as well as popular agitations and appeal to the judiciary. Except in the Supreme Court many high court judges betray gender insensitivity. National Commission of Women and the state commissions of women can only investigate and send reports but cannot prosecute. The members of these commissions are appointed by the government and tend to be on political considerations and not on the basis of their credibility on gender sensitivity. There have been some good initiatives like gender sensitive budgeting. There is provision for 30%allocation for women. The National Institute of public Finance and policy has been conducting ex-post audit of Budgets for gender outcomes. However if this has to bring a change in the rigid sexual division of labour, the allocation should provide for new opportunities for women to participate in emerging technologies. We need a thorough study on how has this allocation actually worked. For the first time, it was during the sixth plan that the Five year Plan had a separate section on women. This was confined to identifying 'women prone industries' with some sundry recommendations for assisting these. A 'Women

Economists Group' was formed during the XI plan inspired by Devaki Jain, Aasha Kapur and Mridul Eapen. The group made substantive recommendations but how much of these were incorporated were not given by the Planning Commission. A Gender Critique of the XII plan approach paper was also done by the group and submitted to the Planning Commission. Once again, we have no information on how many of these recommendations were incorporated .

As for the spread of WS in the university system, while this has been a great advance by the University Grants Commission, the quality of WS has been uneven with many new centres not having enough expertise or understanding of the perspectives of WS.

To conclude: The agenda for WS is big and growing and requires many dimensional inputs, a vigorous women's movement and corruption free law enforcers who are aware of women's issues. Many changes in law have not deterred rising incidence of sexual assault, rape, domestic violence and generally violence against women. Whether the underlying causes are uneven development, migration, unemployment we cannot say. However, what emerges is that men's attitude to women in some sections of our society are still regressive. May be some men cannot accept women's liberation because they lose their privileges.

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