

The women in development perspective



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In the last three decades, the recruitment of women into the modern sector has been at the centre of the development debate in developing countries. Despite many years of practical feminist activity and numerous studies of everyday life, progress towards gender equality still reflects a growing concern. The term ‘women in development’ is primarily used to refer to operational objectives that incorporate women into the development process. Consequently, this paper will argue that the women in development perspective (WID) provides a useful approach because it clearly explores many dimensions of women’s subordination issue in capitalist countries and analyses gender division of labour which explain the durability of gender inequality, followed by concrete solutions such as incorporating women into development and providing women with training and education.

With Perspective explained that the reason of gender inequality in development countries is rooted in the principles of women’s subordination. First of all, it is noteworthy that women’s invisibility and the unequal treatments are not limited to the house area, but exist in all area of society. Keeping in mind that “the patriarchal system that placed women under the authority of fathers or husband.” Is certainly, taken to mean the dominance of all men over all women. Patriarchy seems to impose itself in gender relation as well as within capitalist society (Martinez, 2009). I believe that patriarchy is what produces gender divisions because the use of this word characterizes a domestic mode of production in which men as a class exploit women as a class. It is true that the system in which we live tends to make people perceive women as domestic labourers which reduces them “to the subordinate positions of minors” therefore women are expected to produce

labour power by looking after her husband and children (Martinez, 2009). It is worthy to point out that the title “housewife” is an evidence of deterioration in the position of women because people see industrialisation as a separation of home and work therefore creates gender inequality. In fact, men have organized capitalism in a way that they maintain patriarchal power, both within the market work and within the home. Basically, men extract surplus labour from women; this is shown with the example of south Asia when the micro-credit program was introduced. Searchers have indicated that most of the credit contracted by women end up in activities controlled by the man of the house (Pearson, p. 397). However, based on my understanding of capitalism, I support that women domestic labour which is used to explain gender division which subordinate women should be considered important because even if it is often forgotten, women’s domestic labour “make a direct economic contribution” in capitalist society in term of reproduction.

Pursuing this thought further, the male domination is frequently seen as a strategy for development process because its aim is to shift the burden of women form the development and create a complete “hegemonic masculinities” which means that the capitalist societies with a high masculinity expectation is specifically looking for “certain ways of being and behaving that are associated with dominance and power.” This is usual encouraged in male and discouraged in female (Pearson, p. 401). The truth is that as long as this ideology stays the driven force in developing countries, there will always be a durability of gender inequalities. It is relevant that male violence towards women has s long history which led to the

establishment of patriarchy and represents therefore a real creation of male dominance. Keeping in mind that power emanates from force, it weighs the point that men have used numerous “ practices of subordination such as violence against women” to maintain male domination in the house (Martinez, 2009). Unfortunately, male domination exists in all societies therefore; it becomes the universal explanation of the gender inequalities.

The perspective argues that the major complexity of gender inequality is based on the gender division in labour. When looking at the work market, it is relevant that there is a big difference in types of jobs women and men do, the pay they receive, the hours they work and the skills they acquire.

Therefore, the society has depicted as we call ‘ men’s work’ and ‘ women’s work’ proving that workforce in capitalist society is divided and attributed according to gender with ‘ women’s work’ being the lower. As stated above, this difference is the reason why people consistently value men’s work and regard it as demanding a certain level of skill which most women’s work lacks. As a matter of fact, Pearson explains that the Ecofeminism has been established from the idea of ‘ women as environmental managers’ because people link both “ spiritual” and “ conceptual sense” between women and nature therefore, think that environmental conservation is more appropriate to women (Pearson, p. 391). This hard gender segregation of the workforce is what makes it difficult for women to achieve equal pay with men. Men most of time occupy the skilled sectors of the workplace for example, in Canada; one is more likely to encounter a male manager and female secretary and never the opposite. Looking at this situation, I can only think that despite the

so called equality legislation, the adjustment of earnings between men and women is painfully slow.

The perspective provides various solutions to close the gap between men and women. Will be considered only two of them in this paper: the integration of women in development and provide required education and training to women. The first general solution of the strategy is to implemented women in development process both as agents and as beneficiaries. This proposition is very interesting because it implies that women should be assigned with a particular roles and responsibilities which put them in position to contribute fully in the economic growth. However, the problem with this solution is that it does not solve the issue of women's subordination. Also, speaking of role, how long will it last? Of course, women in development policy recognizes that development must involve both women and men in order to be more effective. In the same thought, capitalist societies are willing to integrate women in development process by creating more and more jobs whether full time or part time, mostly part time jobs in the idea of 'accommodating' women who have family therefore making women's participation in workplace extremely low. I think that women in development perspective misses the point here because, the problem is not that women are 'left out' but that they are integrated into a shaped gender division labour which always put them in a position of subordinates therefore no matter what "particular role" women play, it does not change the fact that women are still disadvantaged relative to men. Basically, the solution does not resolve the contradiction because it restricts the choice of jobs open to women and I do not think that encouraging part

time employment suggest any possibility of future changes in women's social status and economic relationships.

The second solution is to provide women with the required training and education. Indeed, in developing countries, the prestige of receiving an education and training may be the key factor in setting women's participation in development. The point if I understand well is to eliminate illiteracy and basic education by introducing whatever new programs. For sure this will reduce any obstacles to the participation of women in the economic growth. Moreover, I think this solution is reasonable because the reality is that in developing countries, the lack of knowledge and essential training has led to the development in which women are excluded as participants. However, there is a little concern about this project. When looking around the world, one can notice that women face barriers in education because of religious, economic and cultural consideration. For instance, in term of economic, not all women possess the resources needed to pay the education fees. In addition, the program itself must meet the women availability such as the time of the day, the duration of the program and its location. Another thing that is wrong with this proposition is that the education and the training do not reflect or they are not linked to employment opportunities that will permit them to put in application what they have learnt. Furthermore, in this context, it is particularly illuminating to examine the field of the program because if the training is for example focusing on liberal art, then I think it would be a waste of time because it might not be necessary linked to a job opportunity.

Finally, as it appears, several of the constitutive explanations of gender inequalities in developing countries is that in thinking about women's subordination and the gender division labour, one must accord full weight to their affects on the development process. Indeed, the women in development perspective provides a useful approach and offers concrete solutions, even if they still show some concern. One must actually pause and recognizes that the task is to learn how to participate in a constructive development and to put committed efforts in order to apply those solutions in the social relations and redress the worldwide gender inequality.