

## **CHAPTER-I**

### **Introduction**

#### **Concept and Theory**

Human development occupies centre stage in global development debate and gender equality and gender equity emerge as major challenge to development too. Both in India and abroad struggle for women's right created a new history. These received momentum in recent time from Mexico to Copenhagen and from Nairobi to Beijing. Different global conferences show serious concern to this issue and contribute to movement of history. Human development paradigm addresses limitation of women-focused approaches by placing people at centre of development process. It views development as a process of expanding range of things that a person can be and do in order to improve human lives. People's choices can grow by enlarging their capabilities to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable, to have a decent standard of living and to participate actively in public life through democratic institutions.

In order to achieve these goals and assure human development, obstacles hindering people's choices – such as limited economic and educational opportunities, absence of civil and political freedoms and gender based disparities in access to resources and rights – have to be eliminated. Tasks of achieving gender equality and human development are therefore complimentary and mutually reinforcing. Achieving gender equality is in itself an important goal of human development. Failure to remove the obstacles to expanding opportunities for all men and women represents a serious threat. "Putting people first" cannot afford to deal in averages and aggregate indicators: right and welfare, choice and opportunity of every individual – woman,

man, boy, girl – have to be improved. Human development cannot take place when opportunity of half of humanity is restricted; therefore the task of achieving gender equality should be put at the heart of the human development process.<sup>1</sup>

Gender in context of human development must thus be broadly approached from two necessarily complementary angles:

How is gender equality affected by human development situation?

How does gender inequality impact the human development situation?

This study therefore introduces the concept of gender and human development (GHD) as a specific GAD approach. GHD incorporates a specific focus on women (and men), but necessarily places this analysis within the context of overall human development. It differs from a general GAD approach only in that it makes the “human” component of development explicit, and thus specifically addresses development questions according to the now well established human development paradigm.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, GHD highlights the increasing attention of gender analysts and experts to the links between macroeconomic and other development policies, and their differentiated impact on men and women, as well as the negative impact (economic, social and other) of gender inequality on the overall human development situation.

This means, in concrete and practical terms, an NHDR that adopts a GHD approach must: a) understand and adopt a human development perspective b) understand and adopt an approach that does not marginalise women or gender as a separate theme, but posits these as an integral and indivisible aspect of human development more generally c) look at situation and status of *both* women and men and identify any disparities in their capabilities and choices (i.e., rights, resources, and opportunities to

gain access to and enjoy these) d) adopt methodology that allows for analysis of gender differences going beyond differentiated outcomes e) analyse cause(s) of any gender disparities f) analyse the impact of these disparities not only for women or men, but for human development and the prosperity and well-being of the nation as a whole g) explicitly posit and analyse the links between gender disparities in different areas of focus (e.g., poverty, participation, education, health, etc.) h) identify and analyse significant disparities among women as a group or men as a group (vis-à-vis age, ethnicity, regional or rural/urban differences, social status, level of education, etc.) i) incorporate use and analysis of indicators that reveal various aspects of gender and human development in an instructive way (e.g., GEM, GDI and others) j) establish a participatory production process that allows for and values equally the inputs of both women and men.<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that gender should never be highlighted as a priority focus. In certain situations, this is warranted and certainly.

The first important gender-related objective is to confirm the importance of gender equality within the human development paradigm. This includes highlighting the overall costs of inequality, as well as the benefits that enhanced equality brings not only to individual women and men, but to societies overall. The NHDR policy objective here thus concerns bringing gender sensitivity and awareness to public policy processes, particularly macroeconomic and development planning. Practically, this means including gender as a central development issue, rather than as a marginalized or “special interest” concern.

A second gender-related policy objective of NHDRs is to draw policy makers’ (and others’) attention to pressing concerns in the area of gender and development. The policy objectives here entail enhancing the information and analytical base on gender as well as the advocacy of recommendations (including concrete policy initiatives) to

alleviate these burning gender concerns. Practically, this requires in-depth analysis of those aspects of development where gender inequalities are a top priority – they might include sectorised issues such as gender equality in education or the labour market, or cross-cutting issues such as human rights or weak policy frameworks. They may also address specific gender concerns, such as violence against women or the caring economy and unpaid reproductive labour.

Thirdly, NHDRs may wish to demonstrate and advocate gender mainstream. Even if gender is not considered the focus of the NHDR, integrating gender concerns into the discussions of priority issues or themes should be a baseline approach for all reports. Practically, this means assessing the gender implications of any number of development policy issues discussed in the report and providing recommendations on how to use gender mainstreaming as a policy-making strategy.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of gender, another important step in conceptual development of an NHDR is to decide how and to what extent gender will be presented as a theme. Gender can be approached by NHDRs in two ways:

- i. Mainstreaming, or integrating, gender concerns into general NHDRs or those looking at other specific questions.
- ii. Focusing on gender inequalities, including the status of women, as a specific area of concern. This may take the form of one chapter, or of an entire report dedicated to this question.

As mentioned above, even if the specific approach is followed, this does not cancel the need to integrate gender concerns in other chapters or subsequent reports. A

special focus on gender is warranted, which comes over and above, and not in place of, mainstreaming:

- \* If gender inequality is noted as an especially urgent development or public policy priority
- \* To strategically coincide with major national initiatives on gender issues (e.g., an anniversary of CEDAW ratification, a major national conference or event on gender equality, etc.)
- \* To strategically coincide with global or regional events (e.g., follow-up conferences on Beijing; linking with the designated theme of global or regional reports)

At the same time, when a mainstreaming approach is adopted, there is a tendency to stick to issues where women can be compared with men (education, health, labour market). This might make important issues invisible, such as gender-based violence, unpaid labour and caring economy, or female genital mutilation. These concerns affect women specifically as women. Their neglect in a mainstreamed approach stems from fact that standard or status quo is often seen from male perspective. In practice, then, there may be a need to mainstream gender concerns while also highlighting specific gender issues.

### **Necessary Connection: Gender and Human Development**

GHD approach demands that NHDRs analyse both causes of gender-differentiated human development outcomes, as well as impact that these differences have not only on women and men, but on the prosperity and well-being of nation as a whole. Moreover, achievement of gender equality should not only be examined as a goal in

itself, but also as an important prerequisite for overall human development. Links between overall development situation and incidences of discrimination against women and men are, for most part, still absent from human development analyses, including NHDRs. Approach, or theoretical conceptualisation of relationship of gender to human development, plays a significant role in determining types of policy recommendations that might emerge and overall usefulness of analysis. Whether discussing gender-specific issues or mainstreaming gender into other policy areas, this type of analysis is critical in order to ensure any policy impact by NHDRs.

### **Rules for Applying GHD Analysis in NHDRs**

- (1) “What-why?” Analysts should point out what disparity is, but more importantly, why disparity exists. This applies in cases where data and statistics on women or data that is sex disaggregated are mentioned. For example, simply noting that women represent only 23 per cent of the economically active population does not highlight important reasons why this disparity exists. Is it due to cultural prohibition, direct discrimination, within labour force, limited opportunities, caused by low levels of education, poverty, poor health, unpaid work responsibilities? In all cases, data should be used to support claims. If causes are unknown, hypotheses, according to the principles of gender-based analysis, should be put forward, including the caveat that further research must be undertaken to verify them. For example: “Although no research has been done on the causes of these disparities, low female participation is likely due to both direct discrimination within the labour force structure, as well as pervasive cultural norms that do not encourage women in the remunerated workforce. Further research needs to be undertaken to identify the precise causes of this

phenomenon.” This is crucial in terms of educating users of the NHDRs about the chain-reaction effects of gender discrimination and inequality.

- (2) “So what?” This rule describing or noting gender disparities should be accompanied by an analysis of their impact on human development. For example, if girls are discriminated against in terms of allocation of food and education, what impact will this have not only on the girls as they grow older (increased vulnerability, decreased opportunity), but on the development of the nation as a whole? As women represent half of the population, poor health and low education levels of half of the population cannot be without serious overall human development repercussions. Other ways of classifying approaches differentiate welfare, anti-poverty, equity and empowerment approaches. Rights-based and WED (women, environment and development) approaches are also commonly cited.

Moreover, explicitly highlighting links between different spheres in which inequalities are manifest is key. This may mean, for example, pointing out how traditional attitudes keep girls from higher education, which is linked to low levels of women in top political positions or to low levels of women in top management in the private sector, which influences women’s control over resources.

- (3) “What-how?” NHDRs often mention policies, laws, organisations, institutions or other initiatives intended to enhance gender equality or address inequalities. However, while it is informative to mention what these might be, it is more instructive to note how and how well they function in practice.<sup>5</sup>

For example, noting that constitution prohibits discrimination on basis of sex, or that CEDAW has been ratified, underscores de jure equality, but de facto equality also needs to be addressed. How are these legal provisions enforced in practice? Why does evidence of discrimination persist if it is “against the law”?

### **Indicators Measuring Gender Equality/Inequality**

Any research on gender equality from the human development perspective should start from analysis and measurement of gender equality/inequality. Purpose of indicators used in human development reports is to reflect progress made in expanding the capabilities of all people, men and women. Gender-related indicators address same goal and provide a snapshot of gender inequalities as well as measure progress made towards eliminating them. These indicators can be broadly divided into following categories: Quantitative indicators measurement: female enrolment in secondary education Qualitative indicators:

- a) Fact: discrimination against women in labour market.
- b) Traditions/public opinions: customary practices preventing women from controlling and inheriting land.
- c) Perceptions: it seems the official indicator on women’s share of paid employment (waged and salaried) in non-agricultural activity is inaccurate using indices of human development – HDI, GDI, GEM, HPI.

As inequalities between women and men manifest themselves across a wide range of areas, in a variety of ways and forms that vary significantly from place to place, NHDR teams should be selective and innovative in order to reflect national/regional conditions. Although there is a wide range of areas where gender inequalities exist –



such as in access to resources and services; de facto and de jure rights in decision-making at national, municipal and household levels; and labour market – it is plausible to start research on gender equality and human development by examining basic aggregate indicators that will provide a general picture of present situation and trends.

### **Identifying and Evaluating Causes Contributing to Gender Inequality: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques**

Once scope of gender inequalities is recorded, it is important to analyse why gender inequalities persist. What are the factors that contribute? What is priority ranking of these factors? Although these factors have different natures, it is possible to put them under the following categories:

1. Lack/limited political will. Political will is a necessary requirement for achieving gender equality. If governments put achieving gender equality at heart of their policies, real progress can be achieved.
2. Failures/limitations in design of public policies, institutional failures. Although many countries have made tremendous strides in assuring equality of men and women in formal institutions by reforming, for instance, existing legal frameworks, gender inequalities continue to persist partly because patterns of public policy-making remain unchanged. Some policy makers tend to ignore nature of gender inequalities and disregard the impact of such inequalities on overall national human development. These limitations can be resolved by mainstreaming gender into all government policies and programmes.
3. Culture/traditions. In some countries, customary and religious laws prevent women from enjoying same rights and opportunities as men. For example,

despite formal right to own, control and inherit land and other resources, women's rights are drastically limited as property is usually controlled by men in family. Due to complex nature of causes of gender inequality, it is often easy to understand them – but harder to measure them. Use of qualitative data and indicators is crucial for NHDR analysis. For example, attitudes and opinions, survival strategies, personal costs of discrimination, self-esteem, pervasiveness of stereotype and discriminatory attitudes are all crucial parts of gender equality picture that are often best reflected through qualitative data. Qualitative data can be presented in terms of case studies, personal testimonies, excerpts from transcripts of round tables or community forums, interviews with community members and prominent personalities, excerpts and analysis of media reports and stories, etc. become more clear.

### **Studying Impact of Gender Inequality on Human Development**

How does gender inequality contribute to human development? What is the impact of progress made in achieving gender equality on human development? Is it possible to assess cross-sectional impact?

Although disparities in opportunities – to live a healthy and long life, be knowledgeable and enjoy a decent standard of living, as well as participate in decision-making at the household, municipal and national levels – take their most direct toll on women and girls, the costs of gender inequality affect everyone. Gender inequality is a factor contributing to poverty, low economic growth, high infant mortality rates low literacy rates and lack of good governance. Moreover, gender inequalities in one sector or sphere compound and perpetuate inequalities in other areas. In order to design policies and programmes for eliminating gender inequality

that could have a significant impact on human development, it is vital to select and design gender indicators. Indicators that assess cause and impact are often taken from other spheres for example; indicators of labour market inequalities may show the impact of education inequalities. However, assessing impact is always an approximate endeavour, as cause and effect is in most cases impossible to completely isolate. For this reason, the GDI, GEM and sex-disaggregated indices of human development (HDI, HPI, POPI, etc.) are often helpful as “general indicators” that can be used to assess the overall impact of inequalities on human development. First and foremost, it is important to note that the absence of gender inequality in and of itself points to failure to achieve sustainable human development. Gender equality must continue to be recognised as an end in itself. At the same time, gender inequalities and disparities present concrete and specific barriers to the attainment of human development goals in all sectors and spheres of life. Explicitly calculating and naming this impact situates gender equality firmly within a human development paradigm, while also highlighting the urgency of addressing these issues.

### **Human Development on Gender Equality**

Slow and uneven human development exacerbates gender inequalities. Policies that ignore that they have different impacts on gender groups are usually sub-optimal and may be potentially harmful for human development. Policies should therefore incorporate gender analysis and gender sensitive tools to monitor progress, and support women’s opportunities in coping with poverty; influencing decision-making at the national, community and household levels; and sustaining fragile ecosystem.

## **Indicators Reflecting Diversity Among Men and Women**

While a GHD approach begins by identifying disparities between the situation and status of men and women, it is also crucial to remember that neither “men” nor “women” represent homogenous categories. Thus, another pitfall to avoid in a discussion of gender and human development is the tendency to lump all women or all men into internally identical groups. Undoubtedly, while certain common trends in a country might be documented among women (for example, lower wages for equal work) or among men (for example, lower life expectancy), both women and men are heterogeneous categories. Other factors that can introduce great disparities between groups of women, or groups of men include:

- Age
- Race and ethnicity
- Regional or rural/urban differences
- Class or social status
- Level of education
- Culture and/or religion

Such differences may be very significant for the design and implementation of human development interventions. For example, some NHDRs note urban/rural or provincial differences in the GDI composite measure (e.g., Cambodia 1998, China 1999, Viet Nam 2001). This is helpful and instructive for analysing differences not just along gender lines, but cross-referenced with other socio-economic factors.

India’s contribution to global women’s movement has been diverse and unique. Gender equality has been central to Indian social thinkers for more than a century. The 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries witness successive women’s movement for

education, widow-remarriage and property right for women equality. Constitution of India not only guarantees equality of women but also tries to empower them through affirmative action. The constitution further enshrines fundamental duty of every citizen to renounce practice derogatory to dignity of women. Since commencement of constitution of India, Government of India and state governments appointed different committees on status of women in India and multi-prolonged strategies are adopted for development of them. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment acts guarantee 33 per cent seats for women in rural and urban local bodies for women. A separate department of Women and Child Development (WACD) is set up under Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Besides, National Commission for Women is also established to look into matter relating to constitutional and legal safeguard of women, review existing legislation and looking into complaints regarding deprivation of right of women. Similar commissions are also being set up in different states of India.<sup>6</sup>

Despite several measures a very large section of women still lives under absolute poverty and remains as the poorest of the poor. Women are worse affected in process of growth, economic transformation and development. In all indicators of Human Development Index (HDI) such as standard of living, education, nutrition, health etc., women are worst affected and their plight is also visible in the North Eastern region. Keeping this in view the present study of gender and human development of Hailakandi District of Assam attempts to address to gender as a central issue to development outcome, transforming unequal gender relation to promote shared power, control of resource, decision making and support for women empowerment.

## **Gender and Human Development: A Conceptual Framework**

According to UNDP Human Development Report (1990)<sup>7</sup> human development may be defined as a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical ones are to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated and to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and self-respect.

First HDR focuses on development as concerned with both a process and level of achieved well-being, which is called outcome. The term human development here denotes both process of widening people's choices and level of their achieved well-being. It also helps to distinguish clearly between two sides of human development. One is formation of human capabilities, such as improved health or knowledge. Other is use that people make of their acquired capabilities, for work or leisure or for being active in cultural, social, and political affairs.

UNDP has observed that, "Real objective of development is to increase people's choices". In HDRs from 1991 to 1994, emphasis is laid on productivity, participatory, well distributed, and sustainability elements of concept of human development. As far as productivity is concerned, people must be enabled to increase their productivity, and to participate fully in process of income generation, to achieve higher economic growth, which is a subset of human development models. Productivity is not the only means to achieve welfare in a society. People must have access to equal opportunities. All barriers to economic and political opportunities must be eliminated so that people can participate in, and benefit from opportunity. These benefits also need to be distributed over generations. Access to opportunities

must be ensured not only for present generation, but for future generations as well (Nayak, 2010).<sup>8</sup>

Founder of Human Development Reports, Mahbubul Haq<sup>9</sup> also observed that the context of human development where he puts human at centre of any development process. He opines that-

“Basic purpose of development is to enlarge people’s choices. In principle, these choices can be infinite and can change over time. People often value achievements that do not show up at all, or not immediately, in income or growth figures: greater access to knowledge, better nutrition and health services, more secure livelihood, security against crime and physical violence, satisfying leisure hours, political and cultural freedoms and sense of participation in community activities. Objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.”

Thus, human development is a process that counts production and distribution of commodities, and also the expansion as well as use of human capabilities. It ensures fulfilment of basic needs and also people’s active participation in development process. People must be at centre of development. Development has to be woven around people, not people around development. Process of development is, therefore, being people-oriented.

All subsequent HDRs acknowledge a common definition of human development as a process of ‘enlarging people’s choices’. Particular wording varies over time, with later reports engaging language of freedoms and capabilities more often. The 2000 report defines, “Human development is process of enlarging people’s choices, by expanding human functioning’s and capabilities. Human development thus also

reflects human outcomes in these functioning and capabilities. It represents a process as well as an end.”<sup>10</sup>

It is in this context, human development approach shares a common vision with Amartya Sen’s “capability” approach. In capability approach, life of a person is seen as a sequence of things person does or states of being he or she achieves and these constitutes a collection of ‘functioning’s’- ‘doing and being’ person achieves. Relevant functioning’s may vary from such elementary things as being adequately nourished, being in good health, avoiding escapable morbidity and premature mortality, etc. to more complex achievement such as being happy, having self-respect, taking part in community life and so on. Sen opines that if a person is entitled to such functioning he can enjoy a better standard of living. However, well-being, according to Prof. Sen, must assess amongst other things, freedom to achieve along with actual achievement. Thus, notion of capability is essentially one of freedom – range of options a person has in deciding what kind of a life to lead. In this approach to development, expansion of freedom is viewed as both primary end and as principal means of development. When we say that primary objective of development is to acquire freedom of different kinds, role of freedom will be ‘constitutive’ i.e. achievement of freedom here constitute development. On other hand, if we say freedom is principal means of development what we actually mean is development can be reached through achievement of various types of freedom. Role of freedom in this case will be instrumental. Development in this approach, thus, defined as process of acquiring and securing freedom that people have reason to value.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, from above it can be viewed that human development is a process of enlarging people’s choices. Enlarging people’s choices is achieved by expanding human capability and functioning. At all levels of development three essential capabilities for



human development are for people to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these basic capabilities are not achieved, many choices are simply not available and many opportunities remain inaccessible. But realm of human development goes further: essential areas of choice, highly valued by people, range from political, economic, and social opportunities for being creative and productive to enjoy self-respect, empowerment and a sense of belonging to a community. So goal is human freedom. And in pursuing capabilities and realising rights, this freedom is vital. People must be free to exercise their choice and to participate in decision making that affects their lives. Human development is about creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests. People are real wealth of nations. Development is thus about expanding choices people have to lead lives that they value. It is thus much more than economic growth, which is only a means – if a very important one – of enlarging people's choices. Fundamental to enlarging these choices is building human capabilities – the range of things that people can do or be in life (HDR, 2001).<sup>12</sup>

### **Human Development Index**

From the outset of its introduction in 1990, HDI caught the attention of academics, researchers, policy makers, and development activists. It was praised for its broader perspective of human well-being, yet it was seriously scrutinised in terms of its analytical framework, methodology, data etc. There have been several academic critiques of index, reviewing its internal consistency, robustness, predictive power. In academic journals, articles focusing on the index started to appear. Most of these articles were constructive criticism of HDI and suggested different refinements to methodology of index. Policy makers were also interested in seeing whether in

diverse situations index can still be applied as useful policy guide. Development activists were concerned with more innovative use of index for advocacy purposes. Responding to such diverse requirements needed constant refinements of index – both in terms of methodology as well as search for better data. Needless to say, Human Development Report Office (HDRO) responded to this challenge quite effectively, leading research in area of refining index and also looking for more robust data. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen along with Sudhir Anand led this effort on behalf of HDRO. As a result, index underwent a series of analytical and methodological refinements. When the HDI was first introduced in Human Development Report 1990, it had following five characteristics. First, HDI was constructed from a deprivational perspective. Composite of average deprivation was identified first going through deprivations in each variable and then HDI was represented as 1 minus composite average deprivation. It reflected a roundaboutway of deriving the HDI. Second, in educational attainment component, there was only one variable – adult literacy rate. Third, in terms of discounting income, income, irrespective of levels, was logged. Fourth, for each variable, maximum and minimum were observed ones. Fifth, HDI was constructed only for 130 countries.

Over the years with better understanding of issues, academic reactions, policy responses, demands from development activists, the HDI has undergone a series of methodological refinements. Even though the HDI, within a few years after its introduction, was widely appreciated as a major policy instrument and a useful policy tool, it was recognised early on that it is a measure of average achievements in human development. It can neither reflect distributional aspect of development, particularly issue of inequality, nor can it measure deprivational aspect of development. Over the years, attempts were made to rectify situation. First, in 1995, composite indices were

constructed to account for gender inequalities in human development. Second, in 1997, a composite index was proposed and constructed for measuring the multi-dimensionality of poverty. Third, these composite indices were disaggregated in terms of regions, states, provinces, by gender, races or ethnic groups, along the rural-urban divide.

### **Gender-related Development and Gender Empowerment Measure**

Development should be an integrated, holistic process that meets people's economic, social, political, cultural and environmental needs and improves quality of life for all. This understanding of development includes concept of human development, which is measured not only according to economic indicators such as gross national product (GNP) but also according to health (life expectancy) and education (literacy and enrolment). This is basis of UNDP's Human Development Index, which ranks countries worldwide according to these three indicators. Human development has two key elements, the development of human capabilities and development of opportunities for people to use these capabilities. It brings together production and distribution of commodities and resources and the expansion and use of human capabilities.<sup>13</sup>

Importance of human development for women is recognition that "if it is not engendered it is endangered" (UNDP, 1995). Human development cannot be equitable, sustainable or holistic unless it addresses gender inequalities and the needs of both women and men.

An important contribution to the advancement of gender equality within human development paradigm has been design of two new indices, gender-related development index (GDI) and gender empowerment measure (GEM). These indices

are used to compare gender inequality in human capability (GDI) and inequalities in key areas of political and economic decision-making structures (GEM) (UNDP, 1995).<sup>14</sup>

In its approach to gender analysis, GMS includes human development indicator and also looks to such areas as participation in political decision-making and appropriateness of legislative and administrative systems.

A Gender-related development Index (GDI) and a Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) emerged in 1995 to take into account gender inequality in achievement of basic capabilities (GDI) and gender inequality in opportunities in economic and political areas (GEM). The GDI measures achievements in the same dimensions and the variables as the HDI does, but takes into account inequality in achievements between women and men. The greater gender disparity in human development, lower is a country's GDI compared to its HDI. The GDI is simply the HDI, or adjusted downwards, for gender inequality. GEM indicates whether women are able to actively participate in economic and political life. It focuses on participation, measuring gender inequality in key areas of economic and political participation and decision-making. It thus differs from the GDI, an indicator of gender inequality in basic capabilities. Both GDI and the GEM have served useful purposes:

- GDI, through its construction, incorporates degree gender inequality aversion of the concerned society and as such reflects social choices in this regard.
- Both GDI and GEM have been used extensively by women's groups, feminist activists and civil society movements as a useful advocacy tool. They have been used in Fourth World Conference of Women in Beijing in 1995.<sup>15</sup>

- Policy makers have found them extremely relevant for formulating policies and programmes with pro-women biases.

### **Theoretical Orientation**

A particular study does not develop out of air. It is a product of time and history and requires an understanding of socio-political and intellectual context out of which theories of knowledge develop. It is result of interwoven and mutual defining set of relation between one theory discourse and many others, which may help to assess constructive and critical contribution of knowledge out of which the study gender and development is formed. Though, feminism or feminist theory to politics is viewed from different ideological background, it gets classified into Liberal, Socialist and Radical Feminism.

**Liberal Feminism** argues both men and women are entitled to same or equal right, freedom and privilege and there is no place of any artificial distinction so far as right is concerned between men and women. Pioneer of liberal feminism is Mary Wollstonecraft who published ‘A Vindication of the Rights of Women’ (1792).<sup>16</sup> J.S. Mill is another important thinker of women cause who published ‘The Subjection of Women’ (1869).<sup>17</sup>

**Socialist Feminism** is quite different from liberal feminism in the sense that when the later states that difference between women and men mainly relate to male domination in all spheres of society and distribution of rights and privileges in favour of men former is of opinion that relation between women and men is rooted in social, cultural and economic structure of society. Socialist thinkers like Marx and Engels have exposed real character of exploitation of women in any capitalist society. However, Marxist approach to feminism and political practice and Marx himself offers in his

own writing little encouragement of feminism. According to feminists both are unwilling to give priority to gender equality.

**Radical Feminism** focuses its attention on fact that half population comprises women and patriarchal structure is that this half is controlled and guided by other half consisting of men and until and unless this patriarchal structure is abolished there is no possibility of emancipation of women. One of earliest radical feminists is Simone de Beauvoir points out in his “The Second Sex” (1949).<sup>18</sup> Status and physical status are determined not by natural difference between women and men but by social and material conditions and forces and they are created by men and forcibly imposed upon women to satisfy demand of patriarchy. Kate Millett in his ‘Sexual Politics’ (1970)<sup>19</sup> believes that chief source of women’s oppression is patriarchy and this can be removed through revolutionary change as prevailing social, political and economic structure is not suitable to fight against all types of oppression. Thus, a radical revolution was prescribed by radical feminist for emancipation.

Social and ideological roots of gender subordination, concept of equality, process of women empowerment, gender determinant of power, advancement of women etc. were well articulated by **Third World Feminists** like Gita Sen and Caren Grown in ‘Third World Women’s Perspectives’ (1987)<sup>20</sup> and Neila Kabeer and Ramya Subrahmaniam in “Institutions, Relations and outcomes: Framework and Tools for Gender- Aware Planning” (1996).<sup>21</sup>

With advent of neo-liberal globalisation today much of thinking on development studies have tended to operate within parameters of liberal thought. Nobel Laureate Amartya Kumar Sen points out ‘freedom is means and end of development and human well-being should be chief goal of development’. This has lent his theorising

to an incorporation of urgent concerns of handicapped by patriarchy and disability within framework of a neo-liberal paradigm. He advocates capability approach to glorify the theory of justice as freedom. Maithreyi Krishnaraj in her “Towards Alternative Development Strategies: Problems and Possibilities for Women” (1996)<sup>22</sup> points out that search for alternatives must integrate within development theory itself reality of women’s lives and not seek merely to correct or add on programmes. Such integration requires us to modify macro in light of the micro so that women in third world have an access over education, health, employment, public and private resources.

The present study of gender and human development will try to use the above theoretical Framework to make the study scientific.

### **Operational Definition**

The term **gender** refers to array of socially constructed role and relationship, personality trait, attitude, behaviour, value, and relative power and influence that society attributes to two sexes on a differential basis. Gender is an acquired identity that is learned, changes over time, and varies widely within and across cultures. Gender is relational and refers not simply to women or men but to the relationship between them.

The term **gender relation** emphasises relationship between men and women as demonstrated by their respective roles in power sharing, decision making, and division of labour, returns to labour, both within the household and in the society at large.

A continuum exists for **gender mainstream**. **Gender-Negative** refers to development activities in which gender inequalities (norm, role, and stereotype) are reinforced in process of achieving desired development. **Gender-Neutral** activities are ones in which gender is not considered relevant to development outcome but the process and outcome do not worsen or improve gender norm, role, and relation. **Gender-Sensitive** views gender as a means and aim to redress existing gender inequality and gender norm, role, and access to resource so that goal is reached. In **Gender-Positive**, focus remains on development, but changing gender norm, role, and access to resource is seen as central to achieve positive development.

A systematic approach--social science methodology, examining problem, situation, project, programme and policy-- be use to identify gender issue and impact. There are number of tools available for conducting gender analyses. Gender analysis of a development programme involves identifying gender issues for larger context (i.e., structural factors); specific sites; and issues and differential impacts of program objectives, strategies, and methods of implementation. **Gender analysis** must be done at all stages of development process; one must always ask how a particular activity, decision, or plan will affect men differently from women in areas such as access and value of labour, property access and ownership, access to information and services, and social status.

An overall societal pattern where women are allotted one set of gender roles and men are allotted another set. An unequal **gender division of labour** refers to situations in which there is an unequal division of the rewards of labour by sex, i.e., discrimination. The most obvious pattern in gender division of labour is that women are mostly confined to unpaid domestic work and unpaid food production, whereas men dominate in cash crop production and wage employment.



**Gender equality** refers to absence of discrimination, on basis of a person's sex, in allocation of resources or benefits or in access to services. Gender equality entails concept of all human beings, both men and women, are free to develop their personal abilities and make choice without limitations set by stereotypes, rigid gender role, or prejudice. Gender equality means different behaviour, aspiration, and need of women and men are considered, valued, and favoured equally. It does not mean women and men have to become same, but their right, responsibility, and opportunity shall not depend on male or female. Inequality, discrimination, and differential treatment on basis of sex can be structural (i.e., it is practiced by public or social institutions and maintained by administrative rules and laws and involves distribution of income, access to resources, and participation in decision making).

**Gender equity** means fairness of treatment for women and men, according to their respective need. This may include equal treatment or treatment is different but considered equivalent in terms of right, benefit, obligation, and opportunity (e.g., equal treatment before law, equal access to social provisions; education; equal pay for work of same value). In development context, a gender equity goal often requires built-in measures to compensate for historical and social disadvantages of women. Specific measurements and monitoring are employed to ensure a minimum, program, policy and project implementation do not leave women worse than men in their peer groups and families and measures be taken to compensate for historical and social disadvantages.

The ability to recognise gender issues especially ability to recognise women's different perceptions and interests arising from their different social location and different gender roles. **Gender sensitivity** is considered beginning stage of gender awareness. Later is analytical, critical, and 'questioning' of gender disparity. **Gender**

**awareness** is ability to identify problems arising from gender inequality and discrimination, even if these are not very evident on surface or are ‘hidden’ (i.e., not part of the general or commonly accepted explanation of what and where problem lies).

**Women in Development** is an approach to development arises from women’s contribution for in and on development is being ignored. This situation leads to failure in development efforts. Accordingly, WID project frequently involve only women as participant and beneficiary.

**Gender and Development** approach shifts focus from women as a group to socially determined relations between women and men. A GAD approach focuses on social, economic, political, and cultural force to determine how men and women might participate in, benefit from, and control project resources and activities differently.

Gender planning approach recognises different roles of women and men in society as they often have different needs. A two-part typology developed by Caroline Moser (1993)<sup>23</sup> with **Practical Gender Needs** (PGNs) and **Strategic Gender Interests** (SGIs). PGNs are identified by women within their socially defined role as a response to an immediate perceived necessity (e.g., inadequacies in living condition such as water provision, healthcare, and employment). They do not challenge gender division of labor and women's subordinate position in society. In contrast, strategic gender interests (SGIs) vary by context and identified by women as a result of their subordinate social status. They tend to challenge gender divisions of labour power and control, as well as traditionally defined norms and roles (e.g., legal right, domestic violence, equal wage, and women’s control over their body).

## CHAPTERISATION PATTERN

For convenience, the study has been divided into following chapters:

Chapter I: The introductory chapter includes a brief **introduction** having **theoretical and conceptual framework** on Gender and Human Development. It also explains the terms and concepts used in this research work in the form of operational definitions. The chapter has been concluded with a chapter plan to serve the purpose of beacon light of the study.

Chapter II: This chapter discusses framework of study with background and origin of research problem, statement of problem, scope and significance of study, universe of study, research question, objectives, and hypotheses along with methodology and data collection. As many as 50 relevant literatures have been reviewed for study.

Chapter III: Chapter-111 is **profile of Hailaknadi district** and explains a brief account of district including geographical location and area, climate, sex ratio, density of population etc. with physical map of district. It also explains briefly gender challenge and problem of women in district.

Chapter IV: Explains growing '**feminisation of poverty in Hailakandi**' as a large proportion of women in district of Hailakandi continue to live in poverty. This happens due to added responsibilities, apart from family and household function. On women, to earn a living and skewed patriarchal system that denies access to ancestral wealth. While women work nearly 67% of working hours they earn only 10% of income and own less than 1% of land. Poverty often leads to economic exploitation and sexual abuse of women. Their labour has not been classified as an economic activity. Gender differences in work place continued to be widely prevalent. The most

dangerous aspect of this feminisation of poverty is inequality in access to and participation in economic activities as compared to men.

Chapter V: The chapter deals with **'inequality and women in Hailakandi'** as it prevails among women as compared to men in district due to less access to education and literacy. This lack of education denies women their right to productive employment as also their legal right. Due to lack of education inequality also prevails in access to health of women as compared to men.

Chapter VI: The chapter explains **'women and decision making process in Hailakandi'** as inequitable access of women to power and decision making in public domain as well as their private life is responsible for status of women's empowerment in the district. While women enjoyed right to vote for many years, they occupy only a small fraction of seats in state legislature and parliament. Although situation gradually change with 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendments that provide reservation of 33% of seat on panchayat and municipality, but this has yet to be translated at national and state level.

Chapter VII: The study by summarising the chapters explains the major **findings** that **'nature of gender subordination in district'** is due to traditional socio-cultural structure and social institution existing with primordial loyalties. Not only societal structure and institutions discriminate women but also state institutions function with ideology of patriarchy, for which gender inequality prevails in the district. The study has been concluded by establishing the linkage of the present research work with the Third World feminist approaches and developmental theories of Neo-liberal economists.

On basis of findings the study suggested following measures:-

1. Gender inequality affects Human development and it promotes underdevelopment in district.
2. Gender inequality discriminate women than men in society, polity and in other spheres
3. Gender discrimination is both attitudinal and factual
4. Gender disequilibrium prevails in economic activities
5. Change of governing values and institutions may bring gender equality and human development in district etc.

### **Conclusion**

Development is an all-inclusive process and cannot be completed if bulk of population excluded from such process. Removal of gender discrimination should be prioritised at time of taking decision at all level. Hence a well concerted effort of all stakeholders of society, NGOs, governments (both state and central) is essential to remove barriers of development and human development particularly. Suitable suggestions have also been given for further research on related topics in future.