

# Integrating Women in Development Models and Theories

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## ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the critique posed by feminist theory that women's issues have been left out of macro analyses of national development. It attempts to integrate women's issues into contemporary models of development, re-assessing their utility, both in understanding the problems and inequalities which women experience, and in developing mechanisms to promote change. Five models are considered a) the social welfare approach b) the grass roots networking and participatory democracy approach, c) the culture of poverty thesis d) entrepreneurship, and e) neo-imperialism. This review draws extensively on original data gathered during two periods of fieldwork in villages in North India.

The topic of this paper was prompted by a major debate which developed during a recent conference on Caribbean development, held in Halifax, October 1984. A panel entitled "Rethinking Development" which focused on macro models, resulted in uproar as women present in the audience protested that women's issues were left out of the analysis, this despite having one woman panelist. The recognition of the exclusion of women came as something of a shock, since theorists concerned with macro economic models have not generally been oriented to the consideration of women. In the conference it proved very difficult to respond to these criticisms or to propose strategies for inte-

grating women in a meaningful way into existing models of development.

The seeming irrelevance of prevailing theories, and the need for a new approach which would be more appropriate to the needs and situations of women, is the central theme of a recent address by Peggy Antrobus to the United Nations annual conference for non-governmental organizations on "New Approaches to Development: Building a Just World" (Antrobus 1984). The main thrust of her argument is that current debates which focus around political ideological labels such as East-West; Capitalist-Communist; Developed-Developing; appear of

little relevance to the daily lives of ordinary women engaged in the struggle to care for their families. Similarly, the great debates and resolutions of the United Nations, the meetings of leaders, the testing of weapons and the development of new high technologies, seem of no immediate interest to the millions of ordinary women who live in poverty. The gap is too great between the macro deliberations of leaders and the micro level of daily lives. Models of development which emphasize the economy and socio-economic differentials between nations are inadequate as tools for development because they seem to ignore too much. They gloss over the pockets of poverty and despair within even the developed nations and miss entirely the blatant inequalities between sexes.

Two dominant models of underdevelopment are that of Capitalism - which sees the problem as one of inadequate quantities of skilled labour, capital, and technology, and the solution as the transfer of these resources from rich to poor, and the Communist model which contradicts it, pointing to the exploitative nature of Capitalism and its concern for profits over people. Whatever the differences, both models are criticized for focussing exclusively on the economy and for taking for granted a centralized decision model with power in the hands of small elites. Neither is people-centred, both are patriarchal and fail to take into account the needs, perceptions, and strengths of women (ibid. 6).

The solution endorsed by Antrobus entails a deliberate shift of emphasis away from macro concerns with national economies and international politics to a more intimate focus on human development and basic human needs for food, shelter, good health, and a sense of self worth. Termed a people-centred approach, this focus on basic needs is seen as having an elective affinity with the feminist movement. Women's issues are necessarily central to a people-centred approach since women make up fifty percent of the population and play a major role in repro-

duction, nurturing, and in sustaining the total society. The feminist movement, Antrobus argues, may provide an ideological synthesis for diverse models of development, since it is in essence a political perspective - calling for transformational politics (ibid. 10). This perspective clarifies the links between the oppression of women and patriarchal models based on elitism, authority, and domination. Women's inequality, moreover, promises to hold the key to understanding all other forms of inequality, since it occurs in the basic unit of the family. The feminist movement calls for a new methodology in the promotion of human development - namely networking among women to encourage cooperation and a spirit of self-reliance, decentralization and people's participation in decision-making and planning at all levels, promotion of the creative impulse in each person, and an emphasis on the intrinsic right of each human being to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness (ibid. 7). Ultimately, Antrobus hopes that feminism has the capacity to overcome militarism because of female characteristics, stemming perhaps from their reproductive and nurturing roles, which include "their overwhelming desire for peace, their sense of responsibility for others, their will to survive, their rejection of hierarchy" (Jain 1983), in essence, a greater concern among women for equality and for humanism, as opposed to profit and power.

The feminist approach, as laid out in the Antrobus paper, has immediate appeal in laying bare the inadequacies and narrowness of focus of much current theorizing on development. The first important contribution of this perspective is to underline the need for different measures of development which go beyond simplistic economic indices such as the gross national product to include such people-centred measures as illiteracy rate, unemployment rate, life expectancies for women and men, infant mortality, morbidity rates, and female participation rates in major social institutions. Seen in the light of such measures the last two decades of 'development' must

be judged a failure on almost all counts, no matter what may have happened to the GNP of different countries. Secondly, the paper forces recognition of the fact that women have not been integrated into traditional models. They are ignored, either as part of a generalized lack of attention to inequality in the distribution of economic goods and resources within developing societies, or dismissed from attention on the simplistic assumption that they are not in the economy at all, their needs being provided for by men. These observations echo complaints raised by researchers in Latin America, Europe, and Asia, that current theories of development systematically ignore women's issues. (Elliott 1977, 1-8; Pala 1977, 9-13; Tinker, 1976, 23; Nash 1977, 161.)

As an alternative model of development, however, the human development approach has a number of weaknesses. Refreshing as is its critique of the macro analyses of development planners, the micro focus leaves out too much. In an effort to avoid analytical abstractions which are devoid of relevance to immediate human lives, it falls into the opposite trap of descriptive generalizations which lack an explanatory framework. The causal processes which determine the lived experience of underdevelopment remain unexplicated. Goals are more easily specified than the means to achieve them. When Antrobus suggests methodologies or formal approaches for development, it proves impossible to avoid the implicit adoption of political ideologies earlier criticized as irrelevant, even if the labels are avoided. The central concern with networking and the encouragement of cooperation and the spirit of self reliance, especially when combined with an emphasis on equality, for example, form important principles underlying the socialist model of development. Similarly, the values of decentralization and people's participation are reflected in the participatory democracy approach long favoured by the United Nations, while concern with promotion of creative impulses in individuals taps

the central idea of cultural orientation towards entrepreneurship important in the capitalist models and models of dual societies and the culture of poverty. It suggests, therefore, not that such models are irrelevant, but that their relevance for the situation and prospects of women must be more clearly explored. The seeming irrelevance of major issues such as weapons and high technology for the daily lives of women, may also be more apparent than real. Expenditure on weapons, high technology, chemicals, world trade, cash cropping, and multinationals, may all have vital effects on the immediate concerns of women with food costs, farm yields, investment credit, the health of themselves and their children, demands for their labour, and thus their daily consumption, even if the links are not immediately clear. Pockets of poverty and inequality in developed nations may also be due directly to these same major causes of imbalance in worldwide and regional trade. The major thesis of neo-imperialism elaborated by Gundar Frank, for example, gives central attention to demonstrating the mechanisms by which economic decisions made in developed metropolises, especially in the USA, both cause and perpetuate the under-developed of poorer countries. Other researchers have argued that the creation and perpetuation of patriarchal family relations within colonized societies can be traced directly to historical relations of imperialism. Apodaca (1977,78-82) describes the efforts of the Spanish church in Mexico to advance the image of women as self-sacrificing and obedient, subject to the authority of men, thereby perpetuating the ideology of women in domestic work and as a reserve pool of cheap labour. Leacock argues that similar direct pressures were imposed by the colonizing white society on the tribal communities of North America, the actions of both law and church serving to undermine women's autonomy and to privatize their social and economic relations (Leacock 1977,15).

This paper attempts to integrate women's issues into contemporary models of develop-

ment, re-assessing their utility, both in understanding the problems and inequalities which women experience, and in developing mechanisms to promote change. The goal is to take a new look at old theories, in the light of the feminist critique outlined above, to ask how they need to be modified to include women's issues, and their utility as explanatory frameworks through which the immediate lived experiences of women can be better understood, and more adequate practical strategies designed to meet basic human needs in development.

The models considered below are a) the human relations or social welfare approach; b) the grass roots networking and participatory democracy approach; c) the dual society and culture of poverty thesis; d) entrepreneurship; and lastly e) the broad thesis of neo-imperialism. The original data referred to in this paper were gathered during two periods of fieldwork in villages in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, in North India. The first fieldwork was conducted during 1971-72, and focussed on models of choice with respect to adoption by villagers of the innovations included in government sponsored agricultural extension and rural development programmes. Subsequent research conducted during 1978-79 was concerned directly with the operations of development programmes for village women and children.

#### **a) Human Development and Social Welfare**

This focus is not new in the field of applied development projects. In fact, there is much evidence that this has been the dominant approach to programmes aimed at women, an approach somewhat contemptuously referred to by Frank as "latrine building" (1969, Ch.9). Policies tend to focus on men as producers and thus the primary recipients of projects oriented to the economy, while women are relegated to welfare projects, their roles seen as confined to those of homemakers and childbearers (Safa 1976; Rogers 1980). When separate bureaus have been estab-

lished to promote development for women, they have typically been attached to educational and welfare agencies (Mazumdar 1979, xv; Papanek 1981, 217-9; Lewis 1982, 102-3; Buvinic 1983, 27-8). Rather than over-attention to the economy to the detriment of other human concerns, women's projects are accused of neglecting economic needs, with the result that women have been driven out of modernizing economies. A focus on poverty implies integration of women in the economy and thereby far-reaching changes in the distribution of jobs and money, but welfare projects do not challenge accepted social values concerning women's place and are much easier to implement. Such projects frequently look impressive on paper but have minimal practical impact where women remain trapped in extreme poverty. In Sri Lanka, for example, a spacious, well equipped health centre provided with a one-million rupee grant from Norway, could make little or no impact on the health of those suffering the consequences of poverty such as exorbitantly priced food, polluted drinking water, impossibly poor housing and sanitary conditions, overwork among women, lack of paid jobs, and too little pay even when jobs were found. The project helped only to sidetrack the fact that health is an economic and political issue (Skjonsberg 1982, 103).

Projects for women and children which I studied in rural North India took a much broader, wholistic, approach to development, including wide ranging projects in nutrition, health, hygiene, birth control, sewing, income generation schemes, and adult literacy, and they tried to work through village based clubs and networks among women. Yet almost all of these objectives designed to improve the lives of women, failed because more fundamental economic and political problems were not addressed.

The applied nutrition programme tried to organize village women into clubs, to give them periodic lectures and demonstrations in cooking, soap making, sewing and knitting, and also

to promote vegetable gardens, subsidized goats and chickens. A second programme, the integrated child development scheme, set up nursery classes for pre-schoolage children in 150 villages, providing nutrition supplements, vaccinations, nursery education, and also supplementary nutrition to pregnant and lactating mothers. In the afternoons, the nursery school teachers held adult education classes for women, covering literacy, and also crafts and small income producing schemes. Together, these schemes covered all the goals of human development considered by Antrobus, but their effective impact on the lives of women and children appeared so limited as to raise questions about the utility of such social programmes apart from large scale economic changes.

Straightforward advice on nutrition, such as mixing lentils to increase protein content, went largely unheeded because men, not women, have veto power in the family over what is eaten and they often objected to the strange taste. Preserves such as jams and jellies were not adopted because rationed white sugar was too expensive. The advice to eat more animal proteins, such as eggs, fish and meat, was also largely ignored, less because of commitment to vegetarianism than because of cost. High caste families, especially men, did habitually eat meat and eggs when they could afford them, but they remain beyond the reach of the majority of villagers. One kilo of meat costs four to five times a kilo of lentils, and feeds fewer people. The educational programmes ignored the socially produced malnutrition of women which results from the traditions of women eating last and eating least. Given that village Hindu women are expected to eat leftovers when the men and children have finished, they might well be worse off nutritionally if they bought expensive meat, since it would likely be eaten by men, with little left for the women, and no money to spare for additional cheaper vegetable proteins. Women are also subjected to much greater dietary prohibitions and fasting than are men, as a consequence

of religious traditions. None of these practices, however, were challenged by the programmes. In effect, the educational programmes could work only on the assumption that ignorance, rather than poverty, scarcity, and differential access to food, determined poor diets. Advice on hygiene also had little impact because the poor are dependent on old, crumbling wells for water, and soap was viewed as an idle luxury for the rich. The list of misplaced efforts could go on.

The concept of women as not part of the economy but rather as dependents of men who may be in need of supplementary incomes scuttled what might have been the most important aspect of the programmes, that concerned with income generation. Instead of encouraging large scale entrepreneurial projects as a base for regular employment for women, the projects focused on petty schemes, such as making jams and jellies, paper-mache dolls, and sewing toddler clothes. The idea was that such goods could be sold for income in local markets. No attention, however, was given to organized marketing. As I left the area, the organizer had a storeroom full of toddler clothes which no one knew what to do with. It is little surprise that hard pressed women, desperately seeking work as casual labourers or domestic servants, had no time for such make-work projects. Women who went to the classes were exposed to information on scientific farming, and new developments in high yield seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, but there the information stopped. The classes included no concern for the infrastructure of banks, cooperatives, and loans. In effect, the women were excluded totally from the business side of farming.

The last area of education, adult literacy similarly failed to raise much response among villagers. The village women recruited to teach the courses were given no instruction in techniques of adult education and already overworked women could see little value in spending endless hours in rote memorization and repetitive copy-

ing of letters into notebooks in order to learn to read, when they had nothing to read in any case. The environment in which literacy for women might be an asset has to be established first, before women will be attracted to such courses, and this the programme could not accomplish. In the final reckoning, however, the very evidence of educated village women finding jobs with the development agency, may have done more to promote an interest in the education of girls than all of the formal projects put together. It continues to be true for the majority of women that opportunities to turn education into income are far more restrictive for them than for men (Skjonsberg 1982,93-4). While this remains true, education projects for rural women are unlikely to have much appeal.

In summary, the projects, for all their genuine concern with improving the living conditions of women and children, appeared to accomplish little, primarily because they failed to address the deeper problems of women's marginal relation to the money economy and resulting dependence and political powerlessness. Policies of human development and social welfare require as a co-requisite, a political and economic transformation of social structures, as Antrobus acknowledges, but recognizing the need is a far cry from knowing how to achieve it.

#### **b) Grass Roots Networking and Participatory Democracy**

The criticism launched against much development planning as elitist, with decisions on policy made at the top, without the involvement of people who are the intended beneficiaries, is a just one. It is particularly so with respect to programmes for women, given the reality that there are very few women representatives in any senior ranks of either development agencies such as the United Nations, or National political institutions. The token character of their presence renders them ineffective as advocates for reforms for women. Dependent as they are on

male support for any objectives they hope to achieve, they become necessarily conservative and petitioning in their approach, seeking only small, piecemeal gains which do not meet with opposition from male mentors (Whyte & Whyte 1982,55-59). The desperate efforts of a handful of women associated with the United Nations to get support even for a motion to consider women's issues on the agenda of a conference on technology and development, itself testifies both to their powerlessness, and to the inefficacy of petitioning as an approach to social change (Leet 1982,149-178). Painfully apparent also in Indian politics, is the yawning gap between the experiences and objectives of elite women and the rural masses. Socially they inhabit different worlds with different priorities, which the shared status of being female scarcely begins to bridge. This gap itself acts as a warning that the concept of "sisterhood" may be a utopian vision, rather than a reality, either actual or attainable. A study by Omvedt describes at length the abortive efforts of the Communist Party of India to organize women in Orissa as a political force for change. She concludes that, ultimately, bourgeois feminism is not capable of leading women. The social cleavages between them are too great (Omvedt 1980). Similar themes are evident in the literature on development in Latin America. The simplistic emphasis on women as a class in opposition to men both ignore inequalities between women and distorts development objectives, tending to favour a focus on legalistic equality rights favoured by middle class women, to the relative exclusion of concerns with poverty. The focus itself is implicitly sexist, seeing women through a male perspective simply as 'not-men' (Schmink 1977, 175; Safa 1977, 135; Burkett 1976, 18-26).

The development projects which I studied in North India focused on the limited objective of organizing networks of local women, within separate villages, to promote interest in development projects, in the form of clubs which were open to all women, and run by a local woman

president. In the second programmes, local women were hired as nursery teachers and as helpers, and classes were set up in village homes, which were intended to be open to women from all social ranks. The failure of these attempts to attract more than small cliques of elite, high caste, high class women on any regular basis suggests that in these deeply stratified communities even networking among women may be less a methodology for development than a goal, itself dependent on prior structural change. Right from the beginning the educational clubs were in trouble because they challenged male control over women in the villages. Their introduction was frequently vetoed by men who dominated the village councils on the grounds that it would not be proper for women in their households to appear in public. Village women were never even informed that such clubs were a possibility (Hale 1977a, 411). In Bangladesh, similarly, when organizers of the Comilla project approached leaders of men's cooperatives to get approval for opening clubs for women only, 12 of 57 contacted agreed to it (McCarthy 1977, 363-376). Female networking in these villages occurred only with male permission. Women themselves are isolated from each other in private homes, the majority living in seclusion, in accordance with the practice of *purdah*, which gives little opportunity for contact with other women outside the immediate kin network. The nursery class scheme got around this problem of seclusion when the programme was being initiated, by their policy of visiting every household in the locality to survey the number and ages of children eligible for the nursery classes and the supplementary nutrition. The young women, by virtue of their authority as the mothers of infants, could meet directly with organizers of the programme without requiring the formal approval of male household heads, as was the case with the clubs. But this face to face contact was still not sufficient to integrate them into a village-wide network of mothers, nor to encourage more than a tiny minority of them to attend the afternoon literacy classes. Problems

were many. Stratification based on caste, landholding, wealth, and education divide women so deeply, even within a small village community of about 100 families, that it dwarfed any community of interest based on being women. Boserup's early work is important in this regard in underlining the fact that these differences cannot be simply reduced to the dimension of financial need or security, but entail wide diversity of lifestyles and culture. She identifies within the microcosm of a single Indian village, the four different types of female work patterns characteristic of various parts of the world - the elite stratum of veiled, non-working women, typical of the Middle East, the middle stratum of domestic wives who contribute little to farming, as in Latin America, the active worker in small family fields common to South-East Asia, and the "African type" who cannot expect to be supported by her husband and must accept whatever work she can find (Boserup 1970,69). Women from these different strata do not mix comfortably within the villages and would probably never have entered each other's homes or even each other's streets in their lifetimes, except for the poorest women who work as domestic servants in elite homes. When clubs and classes were organized in elite homes women from the lower strata did not feel comfortable or welcome. The radios, sewing machines, and monthly newspapers provided to the clubs became regarded as the private property of the family of the club president and only those visitors welcome in her home had easy access to them.

When all these factors were controlled, however, the overwhelming limitation on attendance proved to be lack of time on the part of the working poor. A few classes were held in public buildings and run by lower caste teachers but still the lower caste women did not come except for brief noon-hour visits during the lunch break. They would have had to lose half a day's wages as casual labourers or forfeit their work in the fields in order to attend the afternoon literacy classes. The view of women as idle dependents of

men, rather than as workers in their own right, had resulted in the organizers making no accommodation to their work schedules. While classes for men were held in the evenings, with hurricane lanterns provided, those for women were in the middle of the afternoon when all the poorer women would be working. These same women are likely to be working all evening as well, preparing food and caring for their children. Children of labouring mothers who were most in need of the supplementary nutrition were the least likely to receive any, since their mothers left for work at around eight o'clock in the mornings and had to take the children with them, rather than wait until the classes opened at ten o'clock.

Even among the employees in the programme itself the gap between strata was not bridged. Illiterate, and predominantly low caste women were hired to work alongside teachers as helpers - fetching children, cleaning classrooms, and the like. They were invaluable in the early stages of the programme in that they accompanied teachers in their surveys of the villages and helped to gain access to the homes of women in the low caste backstreets. But they were never treated as equal members of the development team. They did not participate in the monthly meetings arranged for teachers, they were never consulted, and their special advantage in promoting contact with low caste women was never exploited, beyond the early weeks. Teachers, for their part, were supposed to visit the homes of pregnant and lactating mothers in the village to distribute vitamin pills and supplementary nutrition and to check on the health of infants too young to come to the classes. It was too much to expect, however, that many of these educated women would break purdah restrictions to the point of openly walking the streets to call on private houses, and especially to do so in the impoverished hamlets of the low castes. Helpers would have had no such inhibitions but were never considered competent to be given such authority. The result was that the home visiting

programme was never implemented, except on paper, with the consequence that some children, desperately in need of supplementary nutrition and vitamins, did not receive any. Twice during the research period children were observed in the backstreets obviously suffering from severe malnutrition and deficiency diseases, despite a functioning nursery class programme in the village. The benefits of the aid had not reached them and their parents seemed largely unaware of its provisions. Doctors in the area assured me that they saw dozens of such children every month.

In effect, the aim of both the programmes to promote cooperation among village women in local clubs and classes failed to break down the seemingly impenetrable barriers of stratification. Networking was the goal but no one knew how to achieve it.

#### *Participatory Democracy in Programmes for Men*

The principles of participatory democracy, with local level involvement in decision making on development and local accountability, are not unique to the feminist perspective. They have been advocated strongly in United Nations publications over the past decade and related institutional patterns have been shown to correlate positively with indicators of effective development in different nations of Asia (Uphoff and Esman 1975). Yet in India such links do not appear to hold. All the formal institutions of participatory democracy exist, with village councils elected on the basis of universal adult franchise and with systematic linkages established between these councils and block, district, regional, state, and national level planning institutions. Government development workers, both male and female, are required to work closely with the village councils in the delivery of extension services. Despite this institutional framework, however, India ranked among the lowest in terms of Uphoff and Esman's indicators of rural development, with the benefits of

development not spreading evenly across these divided communities. Notwithstanding universal franchise, the councils in the villages which I studied in North India were uniformly dominated by the local landowning elites which were able to exploit most of the benefits of government development programmes for their own clique (Hale 1977b,118). Local democracy has not benefited village women because they are largely excluded from the councils and are unable to exert influence over them. The same is true for men outside the dominant faction. The villages are too hierarchically stratified for the councils, however elected, to represent their opposing interests. Uphoff and Esman acknowledge that a "reasonably widespread ownership of assets" seemed to be a condition for the relation between participatory institutions and development indicators (1975,97), and they further argue that the functions of those institutions "should be separate, or at least insulated from partisan or political activities" (ibid. 74), but they do not suggest how such insulation might be achieved. The India data suggest that causal primacy in the argument should be reversed, with priority given to the equitable distribution of ownership of assets among men, and between women and men, as a prerequisite for any form of local level democracy or networking to be effective. Without it, concepts both of "grass roots" involvement and "sisterhood" are myths, positing a unity of interest based on locality and on sex which does not exist.

### c)The Dual Society Thesis and the Culture of Poverty

This thesis conceptualizes the primary difference between developed and poorer nations as one of propensity for innovation, with some cultures and people more willing to innovate - to adopt new technology and to break from traditional patterns of behaviour than others. In the Parsonian model societies are characterized in terms of pattern variables, with the modern, affectively neutral, universalistic, specific, and

achievement oriented relations being associated with development, while emotional, particularistic diffuse and ascriptively oriented relations characterize the backward and traditionalistic societies (Parsons, 1951). As modified by Rostow (1962), the steady diffusion of modern attitudes and institutions, along with technology, promised to promote dynamic changes which would lead to self sustained growth. Rogers later combined this same thesis of cultural differences with the culture of poverty model, seeking to explain failure to innovate and thus failure to develop economically with traditionalistic cultural traits, which included - limited world views and low empathy, mutual distrust in interpersonal relations, dependence on and hostility to government authority, perceived limited goals, and lack of deferred gratification (Rogers 1969, Ch.2). Differences in cultural orientation or attitudes explained the gap between the economically progressive elites and the masses who fail to innovate.

This thesis was more popular in the late '60's than now and has been widely discredited as an explanation for lack of agricultural innovation. It warrants consideration here, however, because the underlying assumptions are still widely applied to women, with the implicit explanatory framework that their dominant roles as wives and mothers, homebound, family oriented, and concerned with socialization and religious training of children, make them naturally conservative and traditionalistic and hence less ready to take advantage of development opportunities than men. In fact, in Parsons' model, mothers are explicitly enjoined to behave in accordance with the backward cultural norms, to stress emotions, diffuse and particularistic family ties, and ascriptive values, while men take care of instrumental roles (Parsons 1955). That these ideas are still alive and well is demonstrated by a recent collection of articles on purdah entitled *Separate Worlds* (Papanek and Minault 1982). Although rich in descriptive insights concerning the relationship between the purdah system and broader

social institutions in which it is embedded, the functionalist explanatory framework nonetheless condemns women to secondary and passive roles in economic development, while giving primacy to their importance for the maintenance of traditional values. The majority of authors defend the seclusion and subordination of women to men as functional for the harmony of extended families and village communities. Conceptualized as "symbolic shelter," norms that limit women's mobility and visibility outside the home are seen as protecting women and enhancing family prestige and honour, while their subservience, humility, and self sacrifice in the home uphold the family and kin structures that are vital to the wellbeing of all members of the group. Women's exclusion from public affairs of the village is also justified in that women enter the community from outside when they marry and so are not true members like the men who grew up there (Papanek 1982, 34-38; Vatuk 1982,57-75; Jacobson 1982; 99-100).

This thesis, linking economic backwardness to individual values and attitudes - both as initially applied to the dual society of men characterized by innovative elites and backward masses, and to the dual society of men as producers and women as tradition-oriented homemakers, is problematic on two counts - descriptive and analytical. Firstly, the model is not accurate as a portrayal of prevailing attitudes, either among lower strata of village men, or among women. In my own research on the recruitment of women into jobs in the development service, prevailing theories prompted the predictions that such jobs would appeal only to an elite clique of western educated, cosmopolitan women, or to the destitute, while all other village women would reject employment outside the home as demeaning to their social status and detrimental to their reputations as morally respectable women. This was particularly likely, given that the area researched was known locally as a backward region where *purdah* was extensively practiced. As recently as the last state

election women from this area had refused to break *purdah* rules to attend a public meeting even though it had been organized exclusively for women and with women speakers. However, all the predictions about reluctance to take jobs outside the home were falsified. Women from all sectors of the villages who had the minimum grade eight education, or middle school pass, clamoured and even fought over the available jobs. Women were clearly ready to abandon traditional norms as soon as new opportunities arose. Some of the new recruits were widowed and desperate for money, but over two-thirds of the teachers indicated they were married women from reasonably comfortable homes. Even among those who did work primarily for the money, many said they would continue working by choice even if they won a lottery and did not need to. Notwithstanding their own values, the employed women still tended to impute traditional values to other village women, often suggesting that housewives would hold them in low respect as either poverty stricken or loose women exposing themselves in public. But a survey of housewives revealed that far from condemning them 40 of the 45 housewives, or 90% approved of and envied the employed women, lamenting their own low education and limited opportunities. It turned out that village men were much more likely to hold traditional attitudes about women's roles than women themselves, with one-third of the 23 men interviewed on the subject having reservations or openly condemning women who took jobs outside the home.

These data suggest that much of what passes as a description of Indian village culture in social science literature is derived from research directed primarily at men, rather than women and men. To the extent that male household heads are considered legitimate spokesmen for all, it is male perspectives which become rigidified as cultural norms, while what women think is systematically hidden from view. The articles noted above on the functions of *purdah* are a particularly pointed example. The tragedy is

that women tend to internalize such values to the extent of believing that when they are employed other women will disapprove or denigrate them, when this is false.

The second problem with the cultural model of underdevelopment is analytical, in that it treats attitudes as independent variables which are causal determinants of individual choice without examining structural bases of these attitudes in different social experiences. In an earlier article I have argued that this view of the link between attitudes and choice in relation to village farmers' decisions on the adoption of agricultural innovations is inadequate (Hale 1975a). Everett Rogers' model of the character traits of peasants who fail to innovate can be more directly explained as a realistic response to experience, rather than as entrenched traditionalism. Limited world view and low empathy are products of restricted information flow; mutual distrust in interpersonal relations and dependence on and hostility to government authority reflect very real experiences of collusion between government agents and village elites in the systematic exploitation of lower caste farmers; perceived limited good and lack of deferred gratification are similarly realistic responses to lack of access to resources, and to the impossibility of saving money in the face of inadequate and irregular incomes. In effect, these structural factors of information flow, corruption, and access to resources, are fundamental determinants of choice, limiting the alternatives known, their perceived likelihood of successful outcome, and access to necessary inputs for innovation. These structural factors directly explain both failure to innovate and attitudes which go with such behaviour.

The same broad thesis applies equally to the majority of village women, as to the most disadvantaged stratum of men. In these North Indian villages women had the most limited access to information of any group. Rules of *purdah*, strongly reinforced by men, excluded them from

all public lectures, slide shows, radio clubs and young farmers' clubs organized by the government development service. They could attend only those classes expressly and exclusively designed for women and even here male elites in many villages prevented clubs from being established, without even consulting the women. As the studies of *purdah* emphasize, village politics run very much along the lines of male kinship ties, these embedded in local caste structures. Adult women who enter the village society through marriage are considered outsiders and are given at best a token role in politics, exerting some influence indirectly through their husbands. This pattern changes somewhat with age, as older women who have adult sons enjoy much greater freedom of movement and public influence. But these older women have little interest in pressing for greater latitude and independence for younger brides. When clubs for women were established with male consent, their membership remained largely confined to women from the circle of elite families which comprised the dominant male faction in the village council. The seclusion of women in separate houses minimizes the exchange of information among them. For those few who do attend clubs and classes on a regular basis and so have access to new information, there are many barriers to effective persuasion. As noted above, the gap between educated planners and impoverished labouring women makes much of the advice - such as animal proteins, jams, jellies, paper mache dolls, soap and closed latrines - seem idle luxuries, or items of middle class snobbery, rather than genuine proposals for improving their health. This is especially so when critical details such as the link between flies, exposed faeces and disease, or soap and bacteria, or even the nature and intent of vaccinations, are omitted. Village women as a class also have the worst access to resources. Even women from wealthier households have no collateral since they almost never own land. Family lands are transferred from father to sons (Sharma 1980, 9-10). Even a woman's dowry does not belong to her but to her

husband or his parents. Hence they are barred from all regular sources of credit, such as banks and cooperatives. They must rely on local moneylenders at exorbitant interest rates (ranging from 32% to 72% per year, or 3 - 6 pice per rupee per month), or tiny amounts of money which women pool and share among themselves for emergency loans. The fact that women are not at the forefront of innovation can much more readily be explained in terms of these structural barriers than attitudes and culture - that is, the structures of politics, stratification, and power.

### **Entrepreneurship and Political Structures**

Theories concerned with the promotion of entrepreneurship as the basis for economic development tend to form a special branch of theories of choice behaviour. Frederick Barth, borrowing from an earlier definition by Belshaw, defines an entrepreneur as "someone who takes initiative in administering resources and who pursues an expansive economic policy. ... To the extent that persons take the initiative and in the pursuit of profit in some discernable form, manipulate other persons and resources, they are acting as entrepreneurs" (Barth 1965, 5-6). Implicit in this definition is the concept of entrepreneurs as charismatic figures, individuals with special skills and initiative which ordinary villagers lack. But the question considered here is whether personality or position within established political and economic structures best explains who will become an entrepreneur.

Among village men in the five north Indian villages which I studied the big entrepreneurs were all men drawn from the locally dominant, large landowner class (Hale 1978, 280). It was these men who had the prestigious businesses, with retail stores, flour mills, oil presses, rentals of tractors and tubewells, ice makers, and the like. Some businesses were also evident among the lower strata of men with little or no landholdings but on a very much smaller scale, re-

quiring minimal capital outlay. These included roadside vending of sweets, snacks, local cigarettes and pan, or cycle repairs, while others continued the traditional trades of their caste, including barbers, shoemakers, leatherworkers, blacksmiths, potters, washermen, and so on. Entrepreneurship among women was doubly restricted by lack of capital and limited mobility, but there were still women who tended tiny shops attached to their homes, selling such items as tea, sugar, spices, and sweets, or preparing cooked food which they or their children would sell from baskets at the bus stops, or keeping a few hens or a goat, to sell eggs and milk. Their enterprises were generally so tiny as scarcely to appear in government statistics or the gross national product. One census area, for example, listed only 19% of women as employed, while a subsequent study suggested as many as 42% - all in menial work such as cleaning pots in several houses, and petty trading, - but nonetheless earning some income (Singh 1984,87).

Ultimately, the difference between the big businesses and the petty was not lack of entrepreneurial spirit, but lack of access to capital. It is no coincidence that the biggest businessmen in the villages were also the biggest landowners who dominated the villages' councils and the cooperative societies. From their commanding position in village politics, they were able to monopolize available government loans, grants and credit facilities for themselves and their clique. They had privileged contact with government officials and so were the first to be informed to pass on or withhold. They controlled not only information on availability of grants and loans, but also eligibility, modes of application, and rules governing repayment. It is little surprise, therefore, that most applications for major loans come from elites within the politically dominant faction. They also directly controlled the allocation of funds between applicants, particularly for loans from the cooperative society, and determined where funds for village amenities would be spent.

Their power as brokers, mediating between the government and illiterate villagers, was not limited to influencing access to funds. Their position also provided a base for direct entrepreneurial, or profit generating activities, albeit of an illegal kind. This took the form of outright embezzlement of funds and fees for service, including speed money, without which applicants could wait indefinitely for their funds, manipulation of cooperative society receipts to get double payments, and even using low interest loans from the society to finance their private money-lending business. Much of such illicit funds found their way into the legitimate business enterprises of the brokers concerned.

The position of women is akin to that of lower caste and landless men. Having no collateral, they could not get commercial bank loans and they had no direct influence over village councils or cooperatives. There were no records of any credit, loans, or grants going to village women through these institutions. They were thus left at the mercy of local moneylenders, whose interests rates were so high that they could only be used for short term, emergency loans, and not for investment. Women thus continue to be engaged in petty trading, using only capital which they can carry in baskets on their heads. There are no effective avenues open to them to expand their businesses. Women have benefitted directly only from the development projects channelled exclusively to them through women's clubs - the one avenue which has bypassed male control, albeit partially. Through these channels they gained access to subsidized goats and chicken units which could provide the basis for small businesses in selling milk and eggs. However, large animals, such as cows and buffalo, which are capable of producing sufficient milk for a larger milk distribution business, or valuable young bullocks for sale, remained the prerogative of men. Subsidized goats cost between Rs 100 to Rs 150, within the reach of women who could manage to save a rupee or so at a time, but cheap cows which may cost Rs 1000 were beyond the

reach of their savings, or the credit which they could raise.

The only other avenue for illicit enterprise among women in the villages studied was through control of supplementary food supplies for the child nutrition programme and equipment such as sewing machines and radios, intended for the women's clubs. Here the women employed in the projects proved no less willing than men to exploit their positions for profit. A substantial number of teachers, estimated as many as one-third of the 150 women by the senior project officer, were selling some of the free food in the open market. By the simple expedient of not opening classes every day and recording more children present than actually attended an unscrupulous teacher could siphon off a half or more of the food supplies for private consumption or sale, with minimal risk of being caught. A few teachers were also caught renting or pawning equipment to raise money. The most blatant case of such illicit entrepreneurship concerned one of the three supervisors of the programme. She was implicated in an extensive extortion racket, bullying teachers under her supervision to give her supplies of free food, under threat of reporting them absent from duty and cutting their pay. She is also reputed to have encouraged teachers to take leaves of absence without informing the project officer. She and the teachers would then split the unauthorized salary and food supplies between them. Such activities, however questionable morally, still fit the broad definition of entrepreneurial activities given above.

These data suggest that women are capable of running business enterprises when they have access to resources. The major barrier to such enterprise among women as a class was not lack of business initiative or acumen, but lack of access to sources of credit or capital. The exploitative aspect of the enterprises undertaken by some of the employed women also challenges the myth of sisterhood, the mythical view of

women presented by the Antrobus article at the beginning of this review, which perceives women as somehow naturally more imbued with a sense of responsibility for others, and a concern for equality and humanism. The major difference between village women and men in entrepreneurial activity, as with the difference between elite men and the landless poor, were not differences of attitudes or values, or enterprising spirit, but differential position with respect to opportunities to exploit political and economic institutions.

#### e) Neo-Imperialism and Village Level

This last thesis of neo-imperialism focusses directly on structural determinants of economic inequality between nations. It examines the mechanisms by which the underdevelopment of third world countries is created and perpetuated as a direct result of relations with developed, capitalist centres. Frank's model comprises five primary mechanisms - capital accumulation, investment, market relations, labour relations, and lastly political power - all of which secure the economic expansion of rich nations at the expense of the poor (Frank 1969). In an earlier paper I discuss how these same broad mechanisms operate between strata at village level (Hale 1975b). With small modifications the insights can also serve to explain the perpetuation of the disadvantaged economic position of women.

Firstly, with respect to capital accumulation, Frank shows how, despite foreign aid from rich to poor nations, the net flow of capital is reversed, in the form of debt repayments, forced currency devaluations, and cheap exports. In the villages likewise, access to all sources of capital favours the male elite of large landowners. Even funds explicitly intended for 'small' landowners went predominantly to the rich through the expedient of claiming separate sub-plots of land as 'smallholdings.' As noted above, women have almost no direct access to capital, either from

banks, or government loans and grants. To the extent, therefore, that capital flow promotes economic development, women are pushed out of the race while male landowners forge ahead.

The pattern of investment of such capital as does reach third world countries tends to favour the sectors monopolized by foreign capital, particularly export and service industries, but rarely finds its way into basic heavy industry which might promote economic independence. At worst, it promotes dependence on foreign technology and simultaneously undermines local manufacturing industries, which cannot compete with foreign imports. At village level, investment in capital intensive technology, usually controlled by elite males, has had a devastating effect on women's traditional niche within the economy. Development policies in which only men are perceived as producers, has worsened the position of women, both relative to men, and in absolute terms, contributing to their massive displacement from agriculture, industry, and trading occupations (Mazumdar 1979,xv). The stereotyped view of science and technology as masculine appears to be so ingrained that even many women subscribe to it. Only men have been trained in the use of new machines such as driving tractors, mechanized ploughing, mechanized spinning, or potter's wheels. The result is that traditional female roles in the economy have been systematically taken over by men, as the new technology has dignified them and raised productivity and incomes. Men get the combine harvesters while women make do with improved scythes. Inevitably, the women fall further and further behind (Leet 1981, 231-2). Not only women, but ultimately all members of the rural communities stand to suffer from this male bias since it results in an overemphasis on the male domain of cash cropping to the detriment of subsistence crops commonly produced by women. In Latin America no less than in India peasant families have suffered as capital intensive industrial projects have subverted subsistence production and so

increased their dependency (Elliott 1977, 5; Boserup 1977,xii; Nash 1977).

In many areas women have great need for modernized technology to reduce back breaking and time consuming labour. An international seminar on the role of rural women in development repeatedly called for appropriate labour saving technology to reduce the labour input required in domestic activities in order to release female labour for productive purposes (Mazumdar 1978, 7, 53, 104). Yet such calls remain largely unheeded, women's technological needs being denied importance in development planning geared primarily to the gross national product. Recognition of the very long hours still required of women in home production, particularly in cooking, points to the importance of labour saving devices in this field. Women from landless labouring households in Indian villages have been estimated to spend as much as six hours a day in collecting firewood, and four hours or more to bring water from distant wells (Charlton 1984, 91). Yet water for irrigation still received much more emphasis than water for cooking, notwithstanding the United Nations goal of clean water for all. Non-commercial cooking fuels, such as wood and dung, are estimated to account for as much as 50% of total rural energy consumed, and yet this is ignored in national energy statistics (Tinker 1981,80).

In the related area of market relations, Frank argues that the terms of trade consistently favour the economically developed centres, in the form of devalued exchange rates, cheapened exports and high priced imports. Internal markets are increasingly dominated by multinationals while local producers depend on unstable, local markets for limited goods, where they bear the full brunt of market fluctuations. Many of the old trades and crafts have been crushed by competition from foreign technology. At village level these same processes are clearly evident. The largest landowners, who have a near monopoly over capital intensive machinery, irrigation,

storage, and bulk transport facilities, can withstand vagaries of the weather, store grains to sell when prices are high or sell in city markets. Their large retail stores also carry the imported goods manufactured from plastics, steel, and artificial textiles. Poorer farmers, in contrast, must often sell their crops locally and immediately after the harvest, when prices are lowest, to get quick cash with which to pay debts or to buy necessities, often having to buy back food later at inflated prices. Village artisans, working with traditional materials, are unable to compete with high technology imports and so are pushed increasingly into the ranks of labourers. Women fare among the worst in local markets, having limited mobility or capital and virtually no institutionalized means of organizing trade. Many secluded women produce lunch food for sale, sending young relatives to hawk it, but the need for an infrastructure of cooperatives to help develop such small enterprises has been ignored by planners (Tinker 1981,76-78). Meanwhile, the conventional emphasis in planning on small craft projects to help women to earn pocket money has achieved virtually nothing, in the absence of any facilities for the organized marketing of the products. Handcrafts such as sewing, embroidery, knitting, basketry, and handloom weaving, which have all been considered suitable for women, are very time consuming, produce minimal income, and do not lend themselves readily to technological upgrading.

The same pattern holds with respect to labour relations. Frank shows how, at the international level, the developed economies extract high profits by exploiting cheap labour in third world countries, where workers have no rights, benefits, or bargaining power. At village level similarly, the large landowners have a virtual monopoly over employment opportunities for the landless, especially where the villages are situated far from cities. As wages have come increasingly to be paid in cash rather than in traditional proportions of the harvest, the real income of labourers have declined in the face of

inflation. Women, again, fare worst in the labour market. Poorly educated, immobile, and excluded from a wide range of jobs considered men's work, they have minimal bargaining power. Their position has been rendered even worse in recent years as they have been pushed out of traditional jobs. Projects which might have increased their incomes have been siphoned off by men. The introduction of grinding mills and oil presses, for example, have been estimated to have raised the national income by nine times the value of jobs lost, but this new technology benefited directly only the large farmers and the owners of the rice mills. Women, meanwhile, lost their jobs as millers and could not afford the new rice (Tinker 1981,70-73). Widespread use of chemical spraying in one province in India similarly deprived women of their traditional income from weeding. Already paid much less than male labourers for doing similar work, female labourers have been pushed still further back, either forced out of the labour market altogether, or impelled to accept wages at or even below subsistence levels, as with a group of secluded women who make lace at one-fifth of the minimum official daily wage. Still others have gone into prostitution in the cities (Charlton 1984,36).

In the wider labour market, protective legislation appears to have backfired against women in practice, with employers reluctant to hire women at all, or quick to fire them when they get married, in an effort to avoid the cost of maternity benefits. The provisions themselves have been honoured mostly in the breach, with unions disinterested in pushing women's issues and women themselves afraid to demand their rightful benefits for fear of being dismissed (Ranadive 1976,25-28; Whyte & Whyte 1982,136). Other legislation opposing sexual discrimination in hiring practices has been largely ineffective in overcoming deeply entrenched traditions of *purdah*, which define seclusion as the ideal lifestyle for women. Women who appear in public, such as when travelling to work, or in the

workplace itself, are likely to be perceived as openly inviting contact or verbal abuse (Singh 1984,96; Skjonsberg 1982,75; Charlton 1984,140). Hostility towards the employment of women is by no means confined to Asia. In many African societies, educated wives were characterized as "troublesome, critical, demanding, insubordinate, and neglectful of their husbands and children" (Little 1976,85). Nash similarly cites instances in Latin America where men have expressed major resistance to their wives working and have threatened and actually carried out the threat to withdraw support from the family when their wives took paid employment (Nash 1977,168).

These institutional barriers have not succeeded in excluding women from the labour market but they have served to make women particularly vulnerable to exploitation. They are routinely forced to accept wages well below those of men in similar jobs because they have fewer options than men. The combination of desperately low salaries, social disdain, non-support from families, harassment from men either on the way to and from work, or at work, plus exhaustion from travelling, and from the double shift of employment and housework, all play a part in the finding that many female factory workers were bitterly dissatisfied with their station in life (Devon 1980,137-8). This litany of institutionalized disadvantages facing women in the labour force are not unfamiliar in economically developed societies. They account in large part for the pockets of abject poverty found in these otherwise rich nations, female-headed households and elderly women in Canada being clear examples. In the third world such practices have immeasurably greater impact in restricting women's participation in economic development in the context of chronic lack of jobs and entrenched religious prescriptions of veiled seclusion as proper female behaviour.

Should these mechanisms of neo-imperialism be challenged at the national level, the developed

economies can fall back upon a variety of political mechanisms with which to protect their investments and to perpetuate their economic advantages in the third world. These include demands for repayment of debts, withdrawal of loans, investments, or industries, and in the extreme case, threatened or actual military intervention to protect their interests. At village level a parallel imbalance of power obtains, especially with respect to women who have no political clout in village councils and who are often totally dependent upon their husbands for their own and their childrens' livelihoods. Traditionally, Indian women have no control over resources, either of land or money. All the inflated dowry payments for her wedding go directly to her in-laws. Ironically, even her personal jewellery can become a device for control over her, since a woman bedecked with jewellery is dependent upon men to protect them from being snatched (Skjonsberg 1982,107). Income derived from women's labour is also traditionally controlled by men, since they market the products while women are confined to the home and often kept deliberately ignorant of household finances (Skjonsberg 1982,86; Maher 1981,76). When women begin to earn separate incomes outside the home men try to continue this control, even to the extent of granting them less power and autonomy than when they did not work (Safilios-Rothchild 1982, 122-124). The common pattern seems to be that women can obtain employment only with male consent and can rarely command the income from it, their wages being seen as a household resource, to be handed over for communal use. Very few women command sufficient resources to be financially independent and without this they remain subject to the command of their husbands. Their continuing subordination within families is revealed in many ways, the imbalance in sex ratios and the lower life expectancy of women relative to men, being perhaps its starkest indication. Girls are less welcomed at birth, breastfed for shorter periods, given less food at weaning, less health care, and generally poorer diets throughout their lives

(Skjonsberg 1982,44 & 101; Banerjee 1983, 1694; Charlton 1984, 47). If all else fails, male authority is maintained by force. Any exercise of power requires some cooperation by the powerless, and some system of justification, which is provided by the concept of purdah. But if and when socialization and dependence are not sufficient to keep women in line then the violence of the system may become overt. Wife beating is reputed to be common in the early years of marriage, particularly among the poor where the outcaste husband has few other sources of control, but is by no means confined to them (Skjonsberg 1982, 115-122). The ultimate expression of this control is murder of the bride by her husband or in-laws. Severe beatings and murder to extract higher dowries or to clear the way to a second marriage with a new dowry, are reported almost daily in the national press in India (Sharma 1984, 70-72).

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the model of "human development" proposed at the beginning of this paper, however appealing, does not provide a practical approach to ameliorating the position of women, because it is essentially descriptive rather than analytical or explanatory. It describes the current state of women and the ultimate objectives of development, but not the mechanisms responsible for the situation, or capable of changing it. The welfare approach, which has focussed on immediate needs and palliative measures, has proven disastrous for women, pushing them even further behind men in the struggle for economic improvements and breeding a welfare mentality which pacifies people while leaving the existing order intact.

It seems essential to focus on economic development for women as the basis for all other social change, including improvements in female status, higher priority to the education of girls, and their participation on a more equal basis in family and community politics. When the focus shifts from welfare to the alleviation of

poverty among women, what seems to be required in development programmes for women differ little from projects designed for men, namely, access to new technology to increase efficiency of labour, training in new scientific development in agriculture, access to energy resources, income generating schemes or jobs, and support services such as cooperatives, and credit, to develop small businesses. A focus on the economy, however, must necessarily take into account the structural barriers to the equal participation of women, such as restricted information flow, distrust, inadequate access to credit at reasonable rates of interest, discriminatory investment policies which ignore economic sectors in which women workers predominate, biased technology which accelerates the displacement of female labour, while ignoring the kind of technology which might benefit them most, the absence of cooperative and marketing infrastructures which could promote small enterprises, and the similar absence of organized labour unions, and legislation which might promote a more equitable distribution of profits. It entails the recognition that greater economic independence for women both requires and is a prerequisite for greater political influence. Ideologies of networking and grass roots participation alone will not suffice to change political oppression in the face of entrenched stratification.

In summary, these conclusions endorse those of many third world writers who have argued that women's liberation in developing countries must be integrated into the larger structure of national development. The goal of human development would seem to require a systematic attack on the mechanisms of neo-imperialism at both the national and local levels. Far from being irrelevant to the situation and concerns of women, these macro analyses, and the models of political power which underlie them, are central to the understanding of women's issues, and to the development of more adequate policies to promote social as well as economic change.

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