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## **Incorporating Gender into Poverty Reduction Strategies**

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**Essay (Third Session):  
“Incorporating Gender into Poverty  
Reduction Strategies”**

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# INCORPORATING GENDER INTO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES\*

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper Explain the rationale for incorporating gender in PRS and describing the three-step process to incorporating gender into poverty reduction strategies. It also analyzes the different tools and methods available to identify gender issues in poverty analysis? And discuss the differences between the poverty constraints faced by the women and by men. The paper suggests methods that can be used to analyze gender differences? Finally the paper explains the Pakistan's country-specific experiences regarding incorporating gender into PRS and discusses the differences between the theoretical aspects of the PRSP process versus the field experiences of the PRSP.*

## KEY WORDS

*PRSP, Gender and Poverty Reduction, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, incorporating gender into PRSP.*

## I – INTRODUCTION

Poverty is experienced differently by men and women. A full understanding of the gender dimensions of poverty can significantly change the definition of priority policy and program interventions supported by the Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS)<sup>1</sup>. There are strong evidences that gender-sensitive development strategies contribute significantly to economic growth as well as to equity objectives by ensuring that all groups of the poor share in program benefits. So far differences between men's and women's needs are often not fully recognized in poverty analysis and participatory planning and are frequently not taken into consideration in the selection and design of PRSs. It is essential,

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<sup>1</sup>Hence forth PRS will be used instead of Poverty Reduction Strategies

then, to integrate gender analysis into poverty diagnosis and to ensure that participatory consultation and planning processes are specifically designed to give voice to all sectors of society—women and men as well as different age, ethnic, and cultural groups.

This essay is mainly based upon the tenth chapter (Gender) of the Sourcebook for Poverty Reduction Strategies, published by the World Bank<sup>2</sup>. So, this essay may be considered as a summary of the chapter on gender that will be our main reading. One of the messages of the Bamberger et al (2001) is that conventional poverty research and analysis tools can address most gender issues, and when this is not the case, the problem lies mainly in a lack of recognition by policymakers and planners of the importance of gender as a key development issue. If the right questions are asked, conventional poverty research tools can provide most of the gender-related answers; but, as is often the case, if the right questions are not asked, poverty analysis will frequently ignore many of the important gender differences in the experience of poverty.

The main objectives of the essay are given as following: *Firstly*, Explaining the rationale for incorporating gender in PRS and describing the three-step process to incorporating gender into poverty reduction strategies, as proposed in our main reading. *Secondly*, Analyzing the different tools and methods available to identify gender issues in poverty analysis? *Thirdly*, To discuss the differences between the poverty constraints faced by the women and by men. And what methods can be used to analyze gender differences? *Fourthly*, explaining the Pakistan's country-specific experiences regarding incorporating gender into PRS. And *finally*, discussing the differences between the theoretical aspects of the PRSP process versus the field experiences of the PRSP.

The essay is organized as follows. Section – II explains the gender issues in the PRS and rationale for incorporating gender into PRS. Section - III explains the process of incorporating gender analysis into poverty diagnosis. Section – IV discusses the various tools for identifying the gender issues in the poverty analysis. Section – V describes the differences between the poverty constraints faced by the women and by men. And what methods can be used to analyze gender differences? Section – VI analyzes Pakistan's country-specific experiences regarding incorporating gender into PRS. And the last section (VII) concludes the essay.

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<sup>2</sup> Bamberger, Michael. Mark Blackden, Lucia Fort, and Violeta Manoukian (2001)

## **II – GENDER INTO POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGIES (PRS)**

Although women and men share many of the burdens of poverty, they often experience poverty differently, have different poverty reduction priorities and are affected differently by development interventions. These gender differences are insufficiently captured in conventional poverty analyses, designs and monitoring systems. This deficiency weakens the chances of success of poverty reduction interventions (Zuckerman, 2002). Addressing the gender dimensions of poverty and creating gender responsive interventions enhances the likelihood of success of poverty reduction strategy efforts (Bamberger *et al*, 2002). Thus PRSPs must be engendered to effectively reduce poverty. PRSPs must be also be engendered because research compellingly correlates greater gender equality with greater poverty reduction and economic growth (King and Mason, 2001).

There are many terms used interchangeably in the gender literature like “incorporating gender”, “mainstreaming gender” “Integrating gender” and “engendering”. Mainstreaming gender aims to ensure that both women and men are involved in development design, planning, implementation and follow up and that development projects promote equality between men and women. Mainstreaming gender requires analyzing the potential impact on women and men of all development interventions (Zuckerman, 2002). Engendering also means mainstreaming gender. This use of engendering was popularized with the publication of the World Bank’s 2001 flagship Policy Research Report, Engendering Development (King and Mason, 2001).

### **Rationale for Incorporating Gender into PRS Process**

Men and women experience different constraints, options, incentives, and needs, women and men frequently have different priorities and are affected differently by many kinds of development interventions. For these reasons, a full understanding of the gender dimensions of poverty will significantly improve both the equity and efficiency of PRS efforts. So, the reasons for incorporating gender into PRS are:

1. *Incorporating gender into poverty reduction strategies improves Efficiency of PRS Process*
2. *Incorporating gender into poverty reduction strategies improves Equity in PRS Process*
3. *Gender sensitive development strategies contribute significantly to economic growth, equity objectives, etc which can reduce poverty*

4. *The use of participatory processes is considered essential in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the PRS. So, to ensure the participatory process the integrating gender in PRS is essential*

### **III - INCORPORATING GENDER ANALYSIS INTO POVERTY DIAGNOSIS: A THREE-STEP PROCESS**

In this section we discuss the three-steps to integrate gender into the poverty diagnostic stage of the PRS as described by Bamberger *et al* (2002). These three steps are:

**Step 1** Ensuring that gender is addressed across the four dimensions of poverty: opportunities, capabilities, security, and empowerment.

**Step 2** For each of these dimensions, documenting the experiences of poverty.

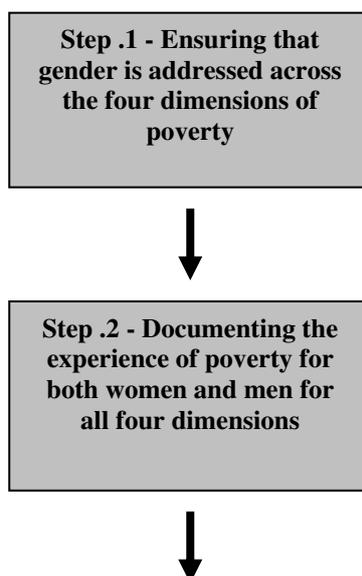
**Step 3** Undertaking gender analysis of the data gathered and integrating findings into the country's poverty diagnosis.

The three steps for integrating gender into the PRS (see figure 1) aim to improve the quality of poverty analysis by examining the differences in how poverty affects men and women.

#### **Step 1: Addressing different dimensions of gender and poverty**

The gender and poverty diagnosis should be structured around the four dimensions of poverty (opportunities, capabilities, security, and empowerment). This analysis will often require the use of different data collection methods to produce key indicators on the four dimensions of poverty.

**Figure – 1: Integrating Gender into Poverty Diagnosis**



**Step.3 – Conducting gender  
analysis of the data  
gathered and integrating  
findings into poverty  
diagnosis**

These four Dimensions of poverty are:

*Opportunities* indicators reveal gender differences in access to the productive resources and opportunities needed to escape from poverty and to promote economic growth.

*Capabilities* indicators can identify current gender gaps and monitor changes in the basic welfare indicators for women and men over time such as employment and health and nutrition status, can change fairly rapidly and, therefore, can be used to measure the short-term impacts of interventions such as improved access to schools or health. Others, such as life expectancy, change much more slowly and are used to assess longer-term structural changes.

*Security* indicators identify vulnerability to economic shocks, natural disasters, and violence. Although the *World Development Report 2000/2001* focuses mainly on economic risks and economic vulnerability, domestic, public, and conflict-related violence are also a major security concern for women.

*Empowerment* indicators measure gender differences in participation and in access to decision-making in the political process at the national and local levels and in control over resources within the community and the household.

## **Step 2: Documenting the Gendered Experiences of Poverty**

There are two types of the issues in documenting the gendered experiences of poverty, as described in Bamberger *et al* (2002):

### ***i) Special Data Collection Issues for Gender Analysis:***

- Administering special modules directly to sub-samples of household members.
- Interviewing women in the absence of the male household members.
- Ensuring that interview teams include both men and women and also fluent in the local language.
- Combining quantitative and qualitative methods at the individual and household level.

- Combining quantitative and qualitative definitions of poverty to address the differences in the way that men and women experience and perceive poverty.

***ii) Selecting the Right Mix of Data Collection Methods:***

- Administration of special modules to sub-samples of household members.
- Conducting interviews with at least six to eight focus groups (to ensure that all important population groups are covered).
- Carrying out the accurate estimate of the cost of a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

**Step 3: Undertaking Gender Analysis of the Data Gathered**

After collecting quantitative and qualitative data, the next step is to identify the practices that cause the observed gender differentials. For each of the gender dimensions of poverty (opportunities, capabilities, security, and empowerment, there are a number of barriers that differentially affect men and women. Gender analysis needs to consider the imbalances in the gender division of labor—including rigidities in labor allocation—as well as the diversity of households and intra household relationships, the gender-based differentials in productive resources, and the implications of the invisibility of women's work in the system of national accounts (SNA). The analysis will inform policy choices and interventions and the M&E of outcomes and impacts (Bamberger *et al*, 2002).

**IV – TOOLS TO IDENTIFY GENDER ISSUES IN POVERTY ANALYSIS**

The different tools and method to identify the gender issues in poverty, as described in Bamberger *et al* (2002), are discussed as following:

***Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)*** “A country-level index. It concentrates on gender differences in income, access to jobs classified as professional, technical, administrative, and managerial, and the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women and men” (UNDP 1995).

***Country Gender Assessment (CGA)*** to address the nature of gender-based differences and disparities. The CGA normally comprises: a country gender profile; a review of the country's institutional and policy context and its gender implications; and a set of suggested policy and operational interventions.

***Gender- (or Sex-) Disaggregated Data and Indicators.*** Statistical information that differentiates between men and women; for example, “number of women in the labor force” instead of “number of people in the labor force.” This allows one to see where there are gender gaps.

***Gender-Related Development Index (GDI)*** (U.N. data). “Gender-related development index. A country-level index that compares women’s and men’s life expectancy, educational attainment, and income (UNDP 1995).

***Gender/Women’s Budgets or Gender-Sensitive Budgets.*** This refers to a variety of processes and tools that attempt to assess the impact of government budgets, mainly at the national level, on different groups of men and women, through recognizing the ways in which gender relations underpin society and the economy. Gender or women’s budget initiatives are not separate budgets for women. They include analysis of gender-targeted allocations, such as special programs targeting women; they disaggregate by gender the impact of mainstream spending across all sectors and services; and they review equal opportunity policies and allocations within government services.

***Women in Development (WID).*** An approach that focuses on the analysis and removal of constraints on women’s economic, social, and political participation. This is frequently contrasted with gender and development approaches, which focus on the economic, social, and political relations between men and women.

***Gender And Development (GAD)*** An approach to development that focuses on the economic, social, and political relationships between women and men. It examines how the social definition of these roles can constrain the development and welfare of both sexes and of the low-income population in general. This is contrasted with the Women in Development approach, which focuses on the analysis and removal of constraints to women’s economic, social, and political participation.

## **V – DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POVERTY CONSTRAINTS FACED BY WOMEN AND MEN**

Men and women experience many aspects of poverty differently. Average household, or per capita, estimates of consumption and expenditures can underestimate poverty among women and girls. Women consume and spend less than men in most of UDCs. In most societies women are subject to socially imposed constraints that further limit their opportunities to improve their economic conditions or to enjoy equal access to public services and consumption goods.

Women suffer poverty more than men because of their triple responsibility: child bearing and rearing, household management, and productive activities. Although women have different health needs and priorities than those of men, such as reproductive health or HIV/AIDS prevention needs, these services are not as accessible to them.

Where women work for wages, they generally earn less than men, even when women and men have the same education and work experience. Labor market segmentation frequently limits women to lower-paid occupations. There is evidence that women work considerably longer hours than men. Other pitiful fact is that sometimes women loose their rights as land owning when they get divorce; or punishments for adultery are excessively more painful for women than for men.

Other factors of a low quality of life are that women are underrepresented in political decision making at the national and local levels. Also, disparities between women's and men's access to, and control over, resources are associates with systematically lower access to health and education facilities for women and less than optimal participation in income activities. For each of the four dimensions of poverty (Opportunities, Capabilities, Securities and Empowerment) there are various barriers that differently affect men and women.

### **Analyzing These Gender Differences in Poverty Constraints**

To analyse gender differences, a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods is necessary.

#### ***I - Quantitative Methods***

- *Household Surveys*: Household composition and household welfare.
- *Attitude Studies*: Analysis of attitudes toward different organizations or prioritization of needs and projects.
- *Willingness and capacity to pay*: Estimates of how much households are currently paying for services such as health, water, education, and transport and assessment of their willingness and capacity to pay for improved services for different household members (boys versus girls, and so forth).
- *Time Use Studies*: Estimating the time women and men spend on collecting water and fuel, traveling to work, domestic activities, unpaid and paid productive activities.

#### ***II - Qualitative Methods***

- *Stake Holder Analysis*: Identifying main groups affected by or affecting planned or actual policies and determining their interests, influence, and importance.
- *Institution Analysis*: Evaluating the efficiency and client friendliness of the main public and private sector agencies providing services to the poor.

- *Focus Groups and Community Forums*: Seeking the opinion of community groups on their problems and priority needs and their experience with the projects and programs being provided—a valuable complement to household surveys.
- *Participatory Rural Appraisal (and Other Participatory Methods)*: These methods are used to understand the world of the poor and to listen to their concerns and priorities rather than asking them to respond to a set of survey questions prepared by outside agencies.
- *Photographs and Videos*: Photographs provide a dramatic complement to written reports and an effective way to document physical and economic change over time (by taking photographs from the same location at different points in time)

## **VI– GENDER INTO PRSP AND PAKISTAN: A COUNTRY SPECIFIC ANALYSIS**

Though the interim PRSP (IPRSP) of Pakistan didn't address the issues of gender but the full PRSP includes this issue. One of the noteworthy additions to the Poverty Reduction Strategy in the full PRSP is the focus on some economy-wide issues like gender mainstreaming, employment and environment. These issues cut across many sectors and policy regimes and have been addressed above at those levels. This section highlights those aspects of the new issues which have not been dealt with earlier while avoiding repetition of policies and measures described earlier. Different measures for the gender equality and women empowerment were suggested in the Draft PRSP (Government of Pakistan, 2003).

*“The Government of Pakistan firmly believes that any poverty reduction effort must address the gender dimension in order to address poverty meaningfully. Gender is a cross cutting theme therefore it is integrated in all sectors, interventions and policies. Gender mainstreaming is a policy of the Government, committed to the Beijing Platform for Action. Mainstreaming gender issues into policies, development plans and programs is the key strategy to promote gender equality in Pakistan. In the longer term, the government will support the use of gender sensitive budgeting (GSB) in analyzing the federal and provincial government budgets to determine the extent to which resources are allocated to address gender inequality. This will not only improve women's status but will also contribute to national, social and economic development of the country.”* (Government of Pakistan, 2003)

Government of Pakistan makes amendments in the Constitution and promulgation of Local Government Ordinance, 2001; at least 33 percent of seats in each tier of local government are women. In the National Assembly, more than 60 seats are held by

women out of 332 seats while over 128 seats are held by women out of 728 seats in the provincial assemblies. Similarly, there are 17 women in the Senate out of 100 members. While most of these women have been elected on reserved seats, some have won on general seats. Women participation in politics as voters, candidates and political activists is increasing. Representation by women is better than in most countries of the world, including the largest democracies of the world. This provides a good opportunity to address the gender gap in the social, economic and health sectors.

The Gender Equality table shows the goals, targets and instruments that will reduce gender disparity in the country and contribute to improving the status of women in Pakistan. Monitoring indicators including input, output and impact on gender equality are also shown in Table 1.

**Table No. 1:** Gender Equality through Sustainable Socio Economic and Political Empowerment of Women

Key Instruments	Indicators	Baseline 2000-01	Target 2005-06
<b>Gender Equality Through Sustainable Socio Economic and Political Empowerment of Women</b>			
Gender Sensitive Macro Economic Policy Reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty head count by gender</li> <li>• % of govt. budget allocated to readdress gender inequalities</li> </ul>		
Improving Economic efficiency of women	<input type="checkbox"/> Rate of economically active women % <input type="checkbox"/> Proportion of women working outside agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> Employment rate of women in the formal sector % <input type="checkbox"/> Female unemployment rate	13.7%	
	<b>Agriculture</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No of men and women with land use rights <input type="checkbox"/> No of women and men with micro credit facility	9%	
Improving Women Participation in leadership and decision making	<input type="checkbox"/> No of women holding positions of Ministers <input type="checkbox"/> Managers <input type="checkbox"/> Professionals & Technical		
	<input type="checkbox"/> No of seats held by women in Parliament, <input type="checkbox"/> Senate <input type="checkbox"/> Local government <input type="checkbox"/> Civil services by grade <input type="checkbox"/> Judiciary		
Providing better social services to women	<b>Education</b> Literacy rate by gender <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	48%	
	Ratio of girls to boys enrolled in <input type="checkbox"/> Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Drop out rate by gender from <input type="checkbox"/> Primary o Male o Female	32%	
		0.72	
		0.68	
		30%	



most acute in the poorest countries. Across and within countries, gender disparities in education, mortality rates, health, political participation, financial assets and other social and economic indicators are greatest within poorer income groups. Gender inequalities impose large costs on the well-being and health of the poor, diminishing their productivity and potential to reduce poverty and ensure economic growth. In most societies women have more limited opportunities to express their needs, improve economic conditions and access services than do men. Usually women and girls bear the brunt of gender inequalities. Identifying and redressing these inequalities tends to have high social, economic and financial returns.

In fact, it appears that promoting gender equity in education and employment would further result in economic prosperity and efficiency, promote other critical human development goals such as lower mortality and fertility, and it would be intrinsically valuable as well.

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