

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The heightened consciousness among the groups of policy makers, Government officials, academicians as also activists about the crucial role women play in the economic well being and improving living standards of families and nations, has resulted in an earnest bid to (1) chalk out a conceptual framework for studying gender, and (2) given a focussed thrust to building empirical, policy-relevant and action oriented research work.

With the growing recognition of role of women as 'economic actors', there has emerged a consensus that women need access to *inputs* like education, health, training, credit and other catalytic agents of growth and change. There are a plethora of studies underscoring the critical aspects of gender based disparities that serve to depress the conditions of women. Statistics in the circulated documents during the Beijing 1995 World Conference on Women drew attention to the fact that women constitute 70 per cent of the world's 1.3 billion poor and 2/3rd of the illiterates. Almost every set of statistics points to the harsh reality that women lag behind men in spheres of literacy as indicated by enrollment in primary/ higher education, specialised skill development, health as indicated by higher morbidity/ mortality rates, gainful employment etc. There have also been research studies, though scanty and largely exploratory, focusing on 'women and credit'. However, no comprehensive work is available on the level and extent of women's interactions with the formal financial sector. This study is an attempt to explore the depths and dimensions of female participation in banking, both as depositors and borrowers.

With a view to make the literature review more meaningful, the present chapter is divided into three sections. Section 2.1 examines the conceptual changes in the treatment of *gender in Economics* over time; Section 2.2 reviews studies relating to

gender and development; and lastly Section 2.3 reviews the few studies on *gender in banking*.

2.1 GENDER IN ECONOMICS

Having achieved the status of being the 'most scientific' among all the social sciences, Economics, particularly neo-classical economics, has tended to define all concepts as manageable which can be mathematically counted and statistically tested. The 'Homo - Economicus' or the 'Economic Man' is the average man who is not only 'rational' but has evolved to such an extent that he can adjust to circumstances in the economy in such a way as to benefit himself the most.

But in this pursuit of rigour and quantification of Economics, human reality and psychology of their interactions have been banished, as they are viewed to lead to 'chaos'. The implications of this kind of structure in the domain of Economics is that many issues, which are relevant and are an essential part of reality have been sidelined and anathematised. Gender is one such issue (Krishnaraj and Deshmukh, 1993).

Economic theories have tended to concentrate on similarities, i.e., under specific circumstances, human beings behave similarly. The various laws of Economics, like the law of demand and supply, have their origin owing to such similarities in human behaviour. But conversely there are also differences. The differences of sex, family, religion, race, class, nationality, colour, creed etc. determine the social, cultural and economic standing of a person. These differences of human circumstance result in conflicting behaviour. However, in the contemporary neo-classical Economics, 'differences' along with the resultant 'conflicts' are largely ignored. It is not recognised that exchange between two individuals can be unequal owing to social - political - cultural context to which they belong and that the outcome of such exchanges may have little to do with marginal productivity. It is an a-priori fact that

the outcome of exchange in case of women is loaded against them even before they enter the arena of exchange. The basic thesis propounded by 'Women's Studies' is that human beings become 'gendered' through the assimilation of socio-cultural stimulus received from the society and not because of any anatomical factors.

Nonetheless, there have been certain refinements over time in the discipline of Economics in its approach to gender. Attempt has been made to list these approaches in their chronological order as under :-

2.1.1 CIVIL RIGHTS APPROACH

Early writers like Mary Wollstonecraft (in 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women', 1792) and John Stuart Mill (in 'The Subjection of Women', 1869) emphasised the Civil Rights' approach to the issue of gender in economic thought and advocated extending equal rights to women. Basing his argument on the premise that economic independence is essential for the dignity of women, Mill opposed the protective labour legislation since it inhibits the earning capacity of women (Madden, 1972).

2.1.2 LABOUR MARKET DISCRIMINATION THEORIES

One aspect that has been extensively studied by academicians is that of discrimination faced by women in the labour market. Women face discrimination in the labour market in several ways. These can take the form of wage discrimination (paying differential wages for similar kind of work); employment discrimination (hiring members of a favoured group/ gender); occupational segregation (assignment of members of different groups to different jobs); crowding (confining women to less favoured occupations); and statistical discrimination (selection of individuals for employment and training on the basis of attributes such as gender believed to be related to productivity).

Among the early 20th century economists, Millicent Fawcett (1918) was one of the first advocates of the 'overcrowding hypothesis'. She maintained that trade union rules, employer rules, employer prejudices and social customs work together to deny skilled occupation to women resulting in overcrowding by women in the unskilled occupations with low wages. Edgeworth (1922) also rooted his causal framework to occupational segregation. Joan Robinson (1934) analysed pay inequalities in labour market from supply side. Instead of a perfect competition market (since women do not have free access to all occupations), she assumed a monopsonistic labour market for explaining the gender divergence in the wage levels. In such a market, since the supply curve differences are apparent to individual employer, his demand is determined by labour conditions as well as marginal revenue product of labour.

The traditional Marginal Productivity Theory could not logically explain the wage differentials across races and gender. Two broad based approaches emerged to explain the causes for gender discrimination in wages viz., (1) Human Capital Approach and (2) Market Prejudice Approach.

2.1.3 HUMAN CAPITAL APPROACH :

The chief proponents of Human Capital Approach were Mincer and Polachek (1974). They deduced that lower wages to women was on account of their preference for stereotyped occupations with low investments in acquiring special skills, uncertain job tenures, greater emphasis on family responsibilities etc.

2.1.4 MARKET PREJUDICE APPROACH :

Becker (1985) provided a theoretical framework for market discrimination. According to this approach, the full cost of employing a woman would not only include the wages but also a discrimination coefficient ($\delta_t > 0$) emerging out of the male workers' dislike for working under women/ with women and customers'

perception that goods produced by women employees cost them higher to the extent of the discrimination co-efficient.

2.1.5 THE MARXIAN PERSPECTIVE

The inadequacies of the neo-classical principles to capture reality due to the propensity to use purely economic determinants, diverted many scholars to Marxian formulations where there is greater scope to fuse together the social, economic and historical dimensions in exploring power relationships. While the primary focus of Marxian ideology was class conflict, both Marx as also Engels have highlighted the female oppression in society.

The Marxian writers argued that the three basic requirements for ensuring the participation of women in the society as free agents were (1) creation of jobs for women due to the process of industrialisation, (2) social ownership of capital to eliminate the motive for exploitation, and (3) establishment of communistic households for liberating women from private household drudgery. It was prophesised that the collapse of capitalism would herald the emergence of the new order.

Many scholars have used the Marxian framework, though not necessarily all its conclusions, to discuss the gender question. Authors like Paddy Quick (1977) and Marilyn Power (1983) have tracked the women's shift from home based production to wage labour and the class nature of gender oppression. Others like Heidi Hartmann and Ann Markusen (1980), Maria Mies (1980), Gabrielle Diétrich (1982) etc. have integrated the class structure to the patriarchal system for analysing the forms and dimensions of female subjugation.

From the foregoing review, it is revealed that study of gender is anchored in two basic paradigms - the Neo-classical and the Marxian. The neo-classical tenets do not

accommodate non-economic determinants, and altogether fail to offer explanations on gender. Not only is the neutered genderless 'economic man' far removed from reality but such attributes as utility, marginal productivity, revenue, the mechanical operations of market forces etc., do not in any way account for social structures in which patriarchy, hierarchy and discrimination play dominant roles. For instance, in the analysis of women's labour force participation, demand and supply factors are taken, no cognizance is however taken of the determinants of each and their interdependence. Unequal distribution of resources, the power originating out of ownership of assets, barriers to information etc. are crucial in determining the outcomes of operations of the market forces. Further, the high level of abstraction where primacy is accorded to 'method', is largely responsible for the neo-classical tenets being far removed from reality.

Similarly, neither Marx nor Engels discussed gender as an analytic category. In the marxian paradigm, primary focus of the entire analysis was the overthrow of one particular mode of production with another. All other considerations were subsumed under this focus.

2.1.6 THE NEW HOME ECONOMICS PARADIGM : HOUSEHOLD AS A UNIT OF ANALYSIS VIS-À-VIS UNIT FOR ANALYSIS

One of the important criticism of the neo-classical Economics has been that even where the concept of household has been used, it has been used as an unit *of* analysis and not as an unit *for* analysis. When the household is made a unit *for* analysis, many things like type of household, kinship and family patterns, types of marriages, system for division of property etc. that shape and determine the role of women, get more sharply focussed. Further in the mainstream Economics, household is deemed to be primarily a consumption unit, when in reality the household encompasses within itself consumption, production as also distribution values. The household reproduces labour power and also distributes within itself consumption

and work. The overweening view of family as a democratic and altruistic unit maximising welfare for all its members is, however, far removed from reality.

In the new Home Economics paradigm, the core micro-economic theory of allocating scarce resources among competing ends to maximise utility was applied in case of household decisions (Ferber and Birnbaum, 1977). The 'household' as in case of an individual is taken as an entity maximising a single utility function. This utility is a function of quantities of market goods and non-market time consumed. This concept establishes the relationship of children to women's labour force participation. Since children are 'time-intensive', women's participation in labour force is inversely related to the number of small children in the family. It was visualised that with increase in women's participation there would be decrease in birth rate and simultaneously with the rising demand for child-care facilities, there would be greater availability of child care facilities. One major contribution of this theory was to remove the invisibility of household work and make it part of economic analysis. Nonetheless, it captures only one dimension i.e., the opportunity cost of labour in the market when in reality the concept of gender division of labour is multi-dimensional.

Welfare Economists like Amartya Sen have attempted to capture this multi-dimensionality in the gender division of labour. Sen (1983 and 1985) has presented the concept of distribution of work and consumption within the household through the method of 'bargaining' as also 'entitlement systems'. Focussing on the problems of sexual division in general and sex bias in particular, Sen has asserted that the widely used concept of 'bargaining' in Economics can also be used to analyse family economics. According to Sen, the problems of sexual division should be seen as an exercise in 'co-operative conflict' which is distinct from other class conflicts, since men and women live together against the background of a social system demanding overtly co-operative behaviour. Members of a household face simultaneously the problems of co-operation (contributing to the total availability of resources) and

conflict (dividing the available resources). Social arrangements regarding who does what and gets how much, reflect the problems of co-operation as also conflict.

Sen has postulated the following responses within the overall 'bargaining' format :

(1) Breakdown response (within which if the fall-back position of one person becomes worse, then the chosen collusive solution will become less favourable to his/her interest), (2) Threat response (where one person can severely threaten, explicitly or implicitly, the other with possible dire consequences, then the chosen collusive solution will become less favourable to the threatened person's interest), and (3) Perceived contribution response (if a person is perceived to be making lesser contribution to the common kitty, then the chosen collusive solution will become less favourable to that person).

Another alternative approach with regard to sexual bias put forward by Sen is through the analysis of 'entitlement system', which was earlier used by him to analyse the problem of command over goods and services in the context of starvation and famine. Though the concept of 'entitlement', which is actually a legal concept dealing with rules that govern who can have the use of what, may not apply within a household in a legal sense, there is a deep-rooted sense of 'legitimacy' that make certain relations and distribution acceptable within the household. The two basic parameters used by Sen in the theory of entitlements when applied within the household economy are : (1) 'endowment' (i.e., what is initially owned) and (2) 'exchange entitlement mapping' (i.e., exchange possibilities that exist through production and trade). A woman's opportunity to outside employment is seen as an important variable enlarging the 'entitlement mapping', since outside source of earning gives women : (1) better fall back position, (2) better ability to deal with and even use threat and (3) a higher 'perceived contribution' to the family's economic position.

2.2 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

Beginning with Ester Boserup, whose ground breaking book “Women’s Role in Economic Development” (1970), set off a tidal wave in the area of women’s studies, women researchers and activists began to make women visible as active participants in production, both within the household as also other sectors of the society. The expansion of women-and-development studies opened the way not only for new areas of studies but also the creation of new research methodologies. Researchers focussed increasingly on the major roles that women play in agriculture, other formal & informal sectors as also on the complexity of their reproductive roles. Simultaneously, the basic premises of the development policies and programmes also began to be questioned. The high rate of failure of the development policies/ programmes/ projects was attributed, not insignificantly, to the lack of understanding of women’s productive and reproductive roles.

2.2.1 WOMEN-IN-DEVELOPMENT (WID) APPROACHES :

In the mid-1970s, spurred particularly by the International Year of Women (1975), the policy to ‘integrate women in development’ gained a footing among the development agencies, particularly in the western world. The basic assumption behind this approach was that situation of women could be improved by including them in development projects and programmes. Caroline Moser (1993) identified three broad WID approaches that emerged, though without any strict chronological development or time-frame separation of the approaches, viz., equity, anti-poverty and efficiency.

According to Moser, ‘equity’ was the original ‘WID’ approach which addressed the unequal relations between men and women in the family and the market place. Considerable emphasis was placed on economic independence and integrating women into wage work. The equity approach attempted to meet women’s practical

requirements for income alongwith their strategic gender needs for equality with men through top-down legislative interventions by government and aid programmes. However, since the concept of 'equity' was considered confrontationist and involved unacceptable interference in the donee country's culture and traditions, there was considerable antipathy to this approach.

'Anti-poverty', which is identified as a second WID approach, differs from the equity approach in that it links economic inequality of women to poverty rather than to female subordination. Programmes ingrained with the WID approach were directed to the low-income women through small income generating projects.

The 'efficiency' approach emerged in the post-80s in the background of deterioration in the world economy. To ensure that policies of economic stabilisation and adjustment are effective and more efficient, women's economic contribution is deemed to be important. The role of 'women' in this approach is largely seen in terms of delivery capacity and it is assumed that women are under-used labour force that can be utilised for economic betterment.

None of the WID approaches question the prevailing models of development. The critics of these approaches pointed out that WID relies on top-down intervention, focuses paid employment without taking into consideration the enormous amount of unpaid and drudgery ridden work that women are already doing, views women as untapped labour source, which can be harnessed for economic growth, and above all, these approaches fail to include women's perspective in planning and policy-making. Further, by focussing only on women, both at the policy and implementation level, it isolates women's concerns from the mainstream of developmental activities.

2.2.2 **SHIFT FROM WID TO GAD :**

Simultaneous to the emergence of the WID approaches, women scholars and activists began to develop new paradigms of a more people-centred development model. The emphasis was on bringing women from the margins to the centre of the development programmes and institutions. The process of mainstreaming would imply that not only are women participating in the development programmes but their perspectives, needs and concerns constitute the basis for redefining 'development' itself. The shift from 'integration' to 'mainstreaming' since the mid-80s has been accompanied by shift in focus from women to gender. The new approach, commonly known as GAD (Gender and Development), focusses on socially defined and constructed roles of men and women as distinct from their biological roles. GAD has helped the creation of alternative development strategies which go beyond economic analysis and include environmental, sustainable and other qualitative aspects.

The terms WID/ GAD, though emerging in the course of development of the world wide women's movement, have however, proposed a social, economic and political programme for change not merely for women, but for society as a whole.

2.2.3 **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT & THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT INDICES**

An extremely path-breaking contribution of Human Development Report - 1995 (UNDP, 1995) has been the construction of gender-related development index (GDI) which measures the disparities in human capabilities in the areas of (1) health as reflected in life expectancy figures, (2) literacy and (3) an appropriately adjusted real GDP per capita (in purchasing power parity dollars) to serve as a surrogate for command over resources required for a decent standard of living. The GDI concentrates on the same variables as the HDI but goes beyond looking merely at average levels of achievements, and relates the female-male disparity to the overall

achievement in the society. There is a penalty imposed for inequality such that GDI falls when the disparity between the male-female achievements increases. Therefore, greater the gender disparity in basic capabilities, lower would be the country's GDI compared with its HDI.

According to the report, each society can select a specific value for its 'aversion to gender inequality' or 'equity preference' (ϵ), depending upon initial position and the time-bound goals it sets for itself. If there is no aversion to inequality, which implies an ϵ value of 0, then we have the HDI itself (which ignores gender inequities). The higher the 'aversion to gender inequity' the larger the value of ' ϵ ' for calculating the weights. Thus, a society with higher literacy level but differences in the literacy levels of male vis-à-vis females, would rank lower than a society where literacy levels are slightly lower but there are no or only marginal differences in the literacy achievements of males and females. The report submits that policy makers must make an explicit choice of the weights they wish to assign to their preference for gender equity. The report proposed for the calculation of the GDI the value of $\epsilon = 2$, this being the harmonic mean of female and male achievements. The incremental achievement of women has four times the weight of men's, if the ratio of male to female achievement is two and $\epsilon = 2$. If the ratio of male to female achievement is lower than 2, the incremental achievement is given less weight, though the value of ϵ remains the same.

Taking the basis for measuring the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) devised by the UNDP's Human Development Reports 1995 & 1996, several researchers have attempted to construct GDI/ GDM at sub-national level. They have also discussed the limitations of the mainstream data system in helping construct a realistic measure of GDI, suggested methods to overcome them and have presented alternative conceptual frameworks for measuring gender development.

A K Shiva Kumar (1996) has, based on the methodology used in the UNDP report for constructing gender-related development index (GDI), computed the GDI values for 16 Indian states. The paper also discusses some of the data problems in constructing disaggregated GDI at the sub-national level. By using the GDI to rank the 16 Indian states along with 130 countries of the world for which HDR 1995 has computed the GDI values, the paper reinforces the well known fact of severe gender inequalities within the country and also provides a measure of how badly Indian states are doing vis-à-vis other nations of the world.

The above paper throws light on the startling inter-state differentials in the country. Kerala, as expected, has the highest GDI and Uttar Pradesh the lowest. Ranking the Indian states along with other countries of the world, however, Kerala comes way down at 73rd place among the 130 countries ranked in HDR 1995. Further, there are only 13 countries in the world that have a lower value of GDI than Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The two states with the combined population of 225 million, have twice as many people living in abysmal conditions of deprivation than in the remaining 13 countries that had lower GDI value. The low values of GDI reflect not only the extremely low levels of average achievements in human capabilities but also the serious problem of gender inequalities in Indian states, posing thereby the dual challenges of ensuring participatory development and reducing gender inequalities.

Mehta, Aasha Kapoor (1996) has tried to construct three measures of gender empowerment based on : representation in Lok Sabha, state legislatures, gram panchayats, panchayat samities and zilla parishads; the literacy levels; exercise of right to vote; life expectancy and income. The scores and ranks obtained by the 16 states in each of the above variables have been used by the author to reveal gender based disparities that can be meaningfully used by policy makers and analysts.

Mukerjee, Mukul (1996) has, while discussing the problems and prospects inherent in developing a data base that can effectively address emerging issues including a more

sensitive approach to gender-related development indices, provided an overview of the state of statistics in four key areas that determine the quality of human life, viz., education, work participation, health and political participation. He has observed that our mainstream data systems are capable of responding to data requirements in the context of the newly evolved development measures presented in UNDP's HDRs, 1995 & 1996.

Prabhu et. al. (1996) have, however, drawn attention to the problems associated with the construction of GDI at the sub-national level in developing countries using data for 15 Indian States. Their analysis indicates the variety of ranking of gender related income attainments and the GDI that can be obtained for Indian states using various measures of workforce participation rates and wage rates. Using the data from census (1991) as also NSS (43rd round), sharp changes in the ranks of the states were observed. The authors have, therefore, cautioned the using of such exercises for deriving policy recommendations.

In another critique to the GDI and GEM as conceptualised by the UNDP, Hirway and Mahadevia (1996) have argued that the concepts suffer from several drawbacks, viz., 1) they measure gender development at the individual level ignoring thereby the macro and structural aspects of gender development and 2) they are narrowly defined in terms of their coverage. The authors have presented an alternative conceptual framework for measuring gender development in the south (naming it GDM) and have computed GDM-I, GDM-II and GDM for the 15 major states. They have considered as many as 33 variables for constructing GDM-I and 14 set of variables for constructing GDM-II. After assigning different weights to all the variables they have constructed a composite index for measuring GDM of the 15 Indian states.

2.2.4 DATA & MEASUREMENT ISSUES :

While on the one hand there are theoretical and conceptual limitations of using the existing gender constructs, on the other hand there are problems of limited utility of the data collected by the official machinery. Several studies conducted to capture women's contribution in the economic arena, have found fault with the method of data collection. For instance, in a study on assessing work participation rates, it was found that whichever methodology was used, while the male participation rate was very similar to the rate emerging either from the 1971 census for those villages or the NSSO estimated for the states from the 27th and 32nd round, that for females and children revealed wide divergence. In the third world countries, the areas demarcating domestic work and economic work are quite blurred. Much of the contribution of women's labour is essential for the survival of the household. However, the limited and more often biased approach of the official machinery results in gross under-enumeration of the data relating to gender leading to what has been called the 'statistical invisibility of women'. Not only does a substantial fraction of India's labour force consists of women but their time disposition, work pattern, labour force participatory behaviour and occupational structure differs greatly from those of male workers. Consequently, there has been a vociferous demand from the researchers in 'women studies' to make changes in the data collection methodology (Sardamoni, 1989, Pandey, 1989, Kundu and Premi, 1989, Krishnaraj, 1989, Deshmukh, 1989, Mukherjee, 1996). These demands have been largely ignored by authorities due to the reason that comparability of data across years would become difficult. Since policy analysis is an important area of economics, existence of a just and unbiased data base is an absolute must. Inadequate data, concepts and definitions will result in ill-equipped policies.

2.3 **GENDER AND BANKING**

Though banking statistics in India covers almost all operational aspects, there was hardly any data base on participation of women in banking prior to 1996, when for the first time gender aspect was integrated in the Basic Statistical Returns of Reserve Bank of India. The lack of gender disaggregated data on women's access to banking facilities, both in deposits as also advances, in a way reflected on the relatively minor degree to which women participated in and were afforded the services of the formal financial institutions. Several studies based on small surveys and interviews with bank officials report that bankers saw no tangible reason to maintain sexwise data on deposits and advances, as the insignificant proportion that women constituted in the total borrowers and depositors, rendered quite worthless the efforts involved in such record keeping. This premise has been confirmed in the small-survey results conducted so far.

A study based on primary survey of sample branches conducted by Elavia & Chellani (1995) has been seminal in terms of generating data base which can be used for measuring women's participation in commercial banking operations. The study also provides an analytical framework for examining gender responsiveness in the credit system and suggest guidelines for ushering in gender centered banking. A primary survey of 20 bank branches was conducted for obtaining genderwise data on two banking parameters, viz., deposits and advances, with reference to two time frames. For obtaining a cumulative picture and an overview, outstanding data as on 31st March 1993 was collected and data for 1992-93 was collected for getting a picture of the current situation. Data was also obtained for an evaluation of recovery performance.

The survey results revealed that the share of women was higher in the year 1992-93, compared to the cumulative shares as at end March 1993, both in the number of accounts and the outstanding amount in deposits as also advances, indicating that the

participation of females was increasing. The study also revealed a higher preference of women for savings and term deposits. As regards advances, the results indicated that of the total borrowal accounts and amount granted to women, an overwhelming share was under the state sponsored poverty alleviation programmes as compared to normal lending. Comparing the repayment performance of men vis-à-vis women, it was revealed that ratio of recovery to outstanding advances in case of women worked out more than twice than that of men, indicating that women are “better risk” as compared to men.

In another study (Sunder, 1983) of thirty-eight branches of major banks in India, it was revealed that only 11 per cent of the borrowers were women. Of the total female borrowal accounts, 14 per cent was due to the intervention of a social worker who guaranteed the loans and also supervised repayments. Another 6 per cent of the female borrowals were granted credit through a special programme for low income women run by an intermediary group using guarantee procedure. In one branch, the proportion of loans to women was observed to be higher because it was an identified women’s branch. However, even in this specially identified branch, for every 3 loans to women, 5 were granted to men. Further, as against 11 per cent borrowal accounts, the credit disbursed to women was at a lower 8 per cent. Data on the number of rejected applications revealed that only 20 per cent of the credit applications by women were rejected. This may lead one to conclude that banks were responsive to the credit needs of women and the low level of participation was largely on account of lack of demand for credit from women. However, deeper probing by the author revealed that the bank managers employed a screening process prior to giving the application forms. Women denied application forms, therefore, did not get reflected in the rejection statistics.

The disparity in women’s access to agricultural credit compared to men has been documented in a study by Staudt (1975-76). The area surveyed, a district in the western province of Kenya, had approximately 40 per cent of farms managed by

women, either on account of migration of males or absence of menfolk. The survey revealed that nearly half of the female managed farms were never visited by the Government Extension Workers as compared to less than 30 per cent in case of the husband/ wife managed farms. 99 per cent of the female managed farms were not aware of the extension service's credit programmes. Data segregated on the basis of economic status, size of land holding, adoption of technological innovation etc. revealed that no factor other than sex better explained the limited access of women to agricultural extension services.

While documentation of women's credit needs and its fulfillment has been quite insufficient, their saving habits and preferred avenues have been even less documented and the data on savings are even more scant than that on credit. However, the few studies that have been done suggest that women use their savings for long-term investment and welfare rather than on short-term consumption.

Vyas and Sharma (1990) have in a report of People's Education and Development Organisation (PEDO) highlighted the group dynamics and the role of ROSCA (Rotating Savings and Credit Associations) in the women's savings societies in Bichhiwada Block, Dungarpur District, Rajasthan.

Delancey (1983) in her study of saving patterns among low income women at a tea plantation in Cameroon found that low income women wage earners used 45 per cent of their savings for security and welfare (largely for sickness and other troubles), 36 per cent for investments and development (largely for education of their children). Consumption appeared to be low in priority with only 19 per cent of the savings diverted towards it. Similarly in a savings programme in Zimbabwe, female farmers were observed to use their savings mainly for purchasing fertilizers and other farm inputs (Bratton, 1990).

A study by Kaplan & Romal (1992) to investigate who saves money and why in domestic households, some interesting observations about the saving habits of the genders have emerged. A mailing list to members of a college credit union yielded 105 usable responses to a 36 page exhaustive questionnaire. The questionnaire, divided into three sections, was designed to access various individual, demographic and financial characteristics of savers. The first part of the questionnaire asked about age, sex, employment, occupation, marital status and number of dependents. It also asked questions about long-term and short-term saving and spending including information on bank certificate of deposits, individual retirement accounts, other retirement savings, number of outstanding credit cards, and payment of mortgage and other loans. The other two sections of the questionnaire evaluated locus of control and self control. The results indicated that 72% of the respondents had a long term saving plan. For males, using the percentage of respondent's income as the dependent measure, the variables predictive of saving were (1) total income followed by (2) locus of control and self control scores. For females, the comparable analysis identified no variable in the equation with 't' values of $P < 0.05$. The two variables that contributed most to the regression equation for females were number of dependents and amount of monthly mortgage payments, with higher percentage of income saved when there were more dependents and larger mortgage payments. The results of the study showed that while for men, rate of savings may be more accurately assessed by including the two psychological variables, for women it appears that neither the economic nor the psychological models accounted for the rate of savings. The study concluded that women may be acting as rational consumers by optimising their rate of savings to allow for allocation of their future resources in an effective fashion.

CONCLUSION

Gender as a category of analysis is based on the premise that men and women are placed differently in terms of access to resources, opportunities, power, autonomy and control. Hence, injecting gender as a category of analysis in any discipline requires a paradigm shift in the conventional approaches, methods, framework etc. While, the effort in the direction of chalking out a conceptual framework, seeks to build new scaffolding structures in the researchers' respective disciplines, the endeavours towards building empirical and policy relevant data base results in research which can be translated into action. Eventhough, there is now a fair degree of maturity in the conceptualisation of the way gender affects participation in economic development, there is still considerable dearth of data / evidence in respect of female participation in any economic domain.

The review of literature above clearly reveals that the gap in empirical evidence in regard to women's interactions with the banking sector has been acute, owing mainly to the lack of a data base at the macro level. However, with the recent availability of gender segregated data on deposits and advances in the Basic Statistical Returns, it is now possible to integrate the vital element of gender in the evaluation of the banking system in the country. This study aims to highlight the extent of gender disparity in access to critical banking service inputs through a methodical empirical probe and suggest solutions to the problems of low participation of females in banking operations.

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