

*Review*

# Development studies discourse: How gender-sensitive are sustainable livelihood frameworks?

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Over the last two decades development studies professionals are drawing on Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) framework to understand the various livelihood strategies available to rural people. The unadventurous development top-down approaches identify only 'one' livelihood strategy in the form of 'employment' that supports them. This paper discusses the SL frameworks from the viewpoints of United Kingdom Department for International Development's (DFID) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and maintains that despite the many advantages of SL as diagnostic framework in development studies discourse, the framework lacks specificity on what 'activities' provide a means of living. Without a clear explanation of the activities, their livelihood analysis can be best characterized as gender-insensitive because there is a high risk of overlooking certain non-market activities, such as women's housework. This deficiency in the SL is epitomized from a feminist perspective, problematizing the increasing devaluation and undervaluation of women's reproductive, productive and community management work in the modern economy and the need to deconstruct structural barriers to gender equal relations.

**Key words:** Gender, women, sustainable livelihoods, productive, reproductive, community responsibilities.

## INTRODUCTION

The underlying concept of inequality is a social construction that occurs on the basis of a person's gender, class, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation or nationality. Gender inequalities are very complex, and different social tools have been employed to explore the issue in order to comprehend why and how gender inequalities persist as well as what can be done to eliminate them. Gender inequalities are known to have played an important role in allowing women and men differential access to participation in development activities. The question of how to make development gender-balanced in terms of both participation and benefits has had a long history in the field of development,

and particularly in rural development. From gender related approaches over the years, it

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<sup>1</sup>Moser (1993) identifies five different approaches to the issue of women in development that can be further grouped into three phases. The first stage was represented by the welfare tactic, which was introduced in 1950-60. This approach was based on structural functionalism, the underlying principle being that, society consists of structures and institutions that contain indispensable functions. Thus, functionalists focus on the status quo, on description, integration and pattern maintenance (Heitlinger, 1979). Consequently, the aim of the welfare approach was to bring women into development as better mothers. During the second stage, such models of development as Women in Development (WID) and Women and Development (WAD) were introduced. In spite of some differences between them, all three emphasize women's rights in the public domain in general and paid employment in particular. As a result, these approaches advocate getting women into the paid labour force without taking into consideration women's reproductive responsibilities. Thus, these approaches accommodate women within the existing male-dominated institutions without leading to any structural change. Gender and Development (GAD), the most recent approach, recognizes the limitations of targeting

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has become apparent that although useful in their overall contribution in understanding gender issues, they are inadequate for several reasons. The failure to take a holistic view on women's participation and contribution to their development by taking into account women's productive, reproductive and community work concerning. Another shortcoming is the failure to transform social relations that determine gender relations through structural change. Within this problematic context, we argue that the concept of Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) can potentially address the aforementioned deficiencies of traditional approaches to gender and development matters.

This paper presents a review of the SL concept and examines from a feminist perspective how extensions of the SL framework in the work of UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), still lack gender emphasis.

## ORIGINS OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS THINKING

In their quest for a sustainable development framework, the Brundtland Commission's Advisory Panel on Food Security, Agriculture, Forestry and Environment in 1987 first formulated the Sustainable Livelihoods Security. The main principles that guided the development of the SL were food security for rural poor and ways to mediate environmental concerns. Chambers (1986, 1988, 1995) and Chambers and Conway (1992) have further developed SL framework for as an alternate approach for rural development. The SL framework is described as not only more holistic, but also promotes ecologically sensitive, economically sustainable and socially just ways of living.

Chambers (1986, 1988, 1995) and Chambers and Conway (1992) noted how conventional concepts and methods are unable to capture and adequately deal with the problems of the rural poor because they lack an understanding of rural people's lives. First, rural dwellers use diverse and multiple strategies to obtain a living (Chambers, 1986). In this context, Chambers compares the rural poor to foxes from Archilochus' proverb: 'The fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing'. Traditionally, however, development professionals,

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women in isolation. This approach represents the third stage of advancement of the women and development issue. Such a shift in emphasis became possible due to changes in feminist thought to the realization that gender is a social construct. Consequently, the GAD approach focuses on women in relation to men, and the way in which relations between genders are socially constructed. This allows GAD to concentrate on a bigger picture on inequalities by looking at who has decision-making power as well as power to control and distribute resources at the household level, community and the state levels. In addition, GAD assumes that it is unequal gender power relations that prevent women from full participation in development as well as from benefiting from the process. However, in spite of all its merits and advantages, GAD remains mainly a theoretical concept. This means that, in practice, WID still is the most popular and mostly widely applied approach in the field of development.

trained as hedgehogs, also think that the rural people as hedgehogs who depend on one source for their livelihood. In other words, conventional development interventions have often tried to turn foxes into hedgehogs with 'employment' as the only way to make a living. Such a narrow-minded development perspective that focuses mainly on the economic well-being of the poor, cannot tackle the complexities of rural realities (Arku et al., 2008).

Second, Chambers cites Menchek who argues that 'for every problem there is a solution that is simple, direct and wrong'. Chambers demonstrates this point using the case of how development professionals have conventionally used family planning projects to tackle population growth issues. Such a direct intervention did not generate the anticipated results because it failed to take into account rural people's rationale for having many children. For them, having many children increases parents' chances of having somebody to care for them at their old age, given the high infant mortality rates within their setting. Moreover, many children imply that you have more people in the labour force that can be dispersed into different areas of livelihood strategies. These motivations ultimately provide multiple possibilities for securing a livelihood and can be considered strategies for dealing with poverty and insecurity. This therefore calls for a better understanding of the root causes of any problem at hand instead of attempting to cure symptoms with direct interventions.

For Chambers, another reason for the ineffectiveness of conventional interventions to poverty is because 'people' - the most important - are missing from the development process. According to him, if at all they are included, they are added last after the technocrats have devised technical solutions (Chambers, 1997). Typical of traditional developmental practices, people/beneficiaries have been deemed mere implementers; which he referred to as a top-down approach. Chambers puts forward the idea of Sustainable Livelihoods as a concept of development that 'starts from people', is holistic, non-sectoral, participatory, and comprehensive in its understanding of problems of the rural people and the potential ameliorative actions.

Before discussion loopholes in the sustainable livelihood frameworks from the feminist perspective, the next section looks at the definitions of sustainable livelihoods from the viewpoints of DFID and the UNDP.

## LIVELIHOODS AND THEIR COMPONENTS FROM THE DFID AND UNDP PERSPECTIVES

The DFID adopts Chambers' and Conway's (1992:7) definition of a livelihood as comprising "the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living". In the DFID's SL framework, capabilities are closely related to the

vulnerability context, structures and processes, and the assets are the most important because assets are the core resources that people draw on to make a living. Borrowing from Scoones' (1998) definitions of capital assets, the DFID's assets relate to capital assets, and they include: natural capital, social capital, human capital, physical capital and financial capital. Stocks that provide resource flows from which livelihoods are derived such as land, water, wildlife and biodiversity are natural capital. Social capital represents social resources including networks, relationships of trust and access to wider institutions of society. Human capital includes skills, education, health conditions and ability to work. Basic infrastructure such as roads, bridges, transportation, shelter and communication, and equipment for production form part of physical capital. Financial capital consists of financial resources that people can access either through income from employment, savings, remittances or credits and loans (Carney, 1998).

For the UNDP's definition of a livelihood, a slight variant of the Chambers and Conway's definition is used. The UNDP defines livelihood as the "means, activities, entitlements and assets by which people make a living" (Hoon et al., 1997). Means and entitlements are directly linked with the vulnerability assessment. Like the DFID, the UNDP singles out and elaborates on capital assets. The UNDP believes that natural/biological, social, political, human, physical and economic capital is necessary for making a living (Helmore and Singh, 2001; Singh and Titi, 1994). The UNDP's definitions of natural, human and physical capital coincide with those of the DFID.

Economic capital is defined in the same terms as DFID's financial capital. From the UNDP perspective, social capital consists of community, family, as well as other institutions, including cultural ones. Political capital is somewhat a problematic area since it is not always singled out in a separate category. Political capital is defined in terms of participation and empowerment, but when this concept does not stand on its own; its elements are included into the category of social capital. Like the DFID, the kinds of activities that are required for making a living are not explained.

Thus, both the DFID and the UNDP consider a broad range of capital assets in their analysis to allow for a better understanding of various sources that rural livelihoods depend upon. Both agencies do not specify what activities are "required as "required for a means of living". Without an explicit elaboration on this either in the definition of livelihood or capital assets there is a high risk that certain non-market activities, such as women's housework, will be neglected in the livelihood analysis. This, in fact, is a gender-insensitive starting point for the analysis of people's livelihoods. In order to exemplify this issue further, we turn to a feminist analysis of women's lives and problematize their omission of gender analysis in the SL frameworks.

## **SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS FRAMEWORK: THE LOOPHOLES FROM A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

A lack of specificity in both the DFID and UNDP SL framework of activities, hypothetically subsumes women's work within the home domain under the theme of what is "required for a means of living", giving it little value or relevance. If women's care work is important enough that society is willing to face the implication of emphasizing this work, it will take a centre stage in the SL framework. Hence, this brings to question: Who are the protagonists of the DFID and UNDP SL framework? Are there women involved? Did women have a voice in this process? Did the women participants speak for the Developed Countries' women, Developing Countries' women, and women of different races and classes or they spoke for themselves alone? What is the ideology behind the DFID and UNDP institutions and how do these ideologies promote the interests of both genders? These are questions that require answers if big progress on addressing women's issues can be made.

The extensive body of feminist literature that explores the issue of women and economic development (Beneria, 1982, 1997; Molyneux, 1985; Dwyer and Bruce, 1988; Mose, 1989; Sen, 1990; Young, 1997; Mohanty, 1997, Folbre, 1988) shows how women around the world entered paid employment in large numbers as the labour markets expanded in the process of modernisation and industrialisation. Diaw (2005: 182) citing Scotts (1995) pointed out that:

"The World Bank's shifting representation of women from one that virtually ignored the category in 1981 to a strategy that attempts to incorporate women in structural adjustment programs (by representing women as target of state policy and as a safety net during the deepening of capitalist development) are also significant... The shift should be read alongside the Bank's focus on reducing women's fertility and its view of women as potential contributors to what Kardam describes as "neoliberal value system," one that stresses "capital accumulation" and "export expansion" .

This change, however, did not translate into women achieving adequate bargaining power for promoting greater gender equity, especially since this was not the aim of the shift. Women's access to education and other economic opportunities have not changed their status, which Hollos (1998) blames on patriarchal ideologies and institutions that have kept power out of women's reach. Thus, structural change towards gender equality was not achieved.

According to Folbre (1994: 248):

"Both the expansion of markets and the enlargement of state participation in the economy empowered women ... just enough to destabilize the patriarchal organisation of

social reproduction, but not enough to generate a non-patriarchal system that might fairly and efficiently meet the needs of children and other dependents”.

Feminist scholars have identified different aspects of the persistence of gender inequalities. For example, Grown and Sebstad (1989), among others point out that gender biasedness exists in the very definition of work. Economic analysts, policy makers, as well as both the men benefiting from women’s reproductive responsibilities and the women performing them, typically view unremunerated activities as unproductive work. Tracing the historical trajectory of the creation of the division of work into productive and unproductive categories, Folbre (1994) noted that long time ago housework was considered economically important and productive. In the 1861 Census of Great Britain, for example, the ‘housewife’ role was regarded a productive occupation. But as economic theories evolved, the concept of ‘unproductive work’ has come to existence and totally devalued activities outside the marketplace. As early as 1920s, women’s non-market activities disappeared from official statistics. Later, the ‘unproductive housewives’ construction was exported to many countries in developing economies. So we imagine, what was the motivation of this change to devalue non-market work? Such denigration of women’s contribution to production is absurd even from the stand point of human capital theories that recognize the skills and attitudes of workers as resources to an organization. This is given that workers cannot put their skills and attitudes to effective uses on the job when they are psychologically unstable because of instability in and lack of support from the home.

Similar devolarization of housework took place in the countries of the former socialist bloc and the West. Their transformation of social relations of production enhanced the value of market labour (or formal economic activities). On the other hand, non-market activities such as childcare, cooking, cleaning, subsistence activities, unpaid work in a family enterprise, domestic production and volunteer community work, were devalued. According to Heitlinger (1979), in the early stages of the former Soviet developing their economy, Strumilin, a prominent former Soviet economist at that period, suggested that all social forms of labour that contribute to the welfare of society should be considered productive. In this context, the work of Soviet housewives was regarded socially necessary and therefore productive. In 1930, however, Soviet statistics began to distinguish ‘between social activities that directly created national income (that is, labour that is eventually embodied in material products), and those that only share in its utilization’. As a result, housework was assigned to the category of unproductive work. Is it because housework is labour that shares in the utilization of material products, not in their creation? This simplistic view and short-sightedness of the direct impact of housework on the production process can only be explained by apathy and patriarchy that pervade society today. A

number of professional development programming continues to draw attention to the value of home life on the productivity of workers. For example, a growing interest in programs and courses for on-the-job skills development around work-life balance indicates a strong relationship between the home sphere and outside the home.

Eisenstein (1981) shows that the differentiation of social life into private (home) and public (work) domains<sup>2</sup> is based on patriarchal principles that are ideologically grounded. This division assigns wage employment to the public domain and non-market activities to the private sphere. Therefore, the public/private concept separates social life into male and female spheres, designating men to the public domain and women to the private. The legitimization of this division becomes possible through the notion that women are naturally bound to the private sphere. Women’s biological ability to bear children is extended to include rearing and caring for dependants and adults, and also proclaimed natural. According to Walby (1986), this is how capitalism deliberately marginalizes women’s work in its interests through patriarchy. Within her model, she argues that housewives comprise the producing class, and husbands, the non-producing class. Walby regards exhausted husbands as one of the objects of domestic labour; his wife’s means of production. She sees and accounts for the wife’s work in replenishing the labour power of her husband. Her labour power is thus possessed by her husband who uses it in another mode of production. And it is her husband’s work that is recognized as productive while her work becomes invisible. Folbre (1982) supports this line of argument in noting that commodities in the wage employment are not produced by the means of commodities. They are produced by labour that is performed by a labourer, and a labourer, in turn, is also produced. In this formula, the production of commodities is performed by the means of the reproduction of labour power of a labourer by the housework of his wife.

Yet in the DFID and UNDP models of SL, social capital is described as social resources such as networks, relationships of trust and access to wider institutions of society that individuals draw on to make a living, and as consisting of community, family and other institutions including cultural ones, respectively. While these definitions seem to subsume a woman’s domestic work under ‘family’, we argue drawing on Fobre’s analysis of the relationship between the wife and husband that the women’s work in the home sphere is a source of economic capital, not social capital. This is one reason that women’s work should be accounted for in economic

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<sup>2</sup> The concept of the public and private spheres of social life is traced back to the post-enlightenment period. Habermas’ definition of the concept is widely accepted. In accordance with Habermas (as discussed in Yastrzhemska, 1999), the public domain constitutes a space where public opinion, for instance, is constructed in the process of interaction between individuals. Habermas argues that the private domain is juxtaposed to public power and consists of civil society and family.

analysis. Their domestic work provides immediate benefits to the production process (supporting husband's labour) and long term benefits of preparing children for the future labour market.

Undoubtedly, the woman's labour is not only invisible in the economic statistics, they are juggling multiple roles. It is well documented that it is women who continue to perform a disproportionate share of these non-market economically important activities. Focusing only on women's productive roles in the public domain practically is a flaw. While women are working outside the house the same hours as their husbands, they are still responsible for biological reproduction of children as well as their social reproduction along with the reproduction of 'household members' (that may include non-nuclear family members). They are faced with dual demands of the 'double day'. Moser (1989) adds women's community responsibilities as another role that has to be taken into consideration. She describes women as having 'triple roles', which not only increase women's responsibilities and working hours, but also negatively affects their extent and nature of involvement in activities outside the home. The impact of this on women is far reaching in the sense that, in an attempt to de-labour themselves from this overwhelmingly irksome roles, have sought to employing girls as nannies/house-helpers. These helpers have become the bearers of housework, and often the dumping ground for women's stress from public work and marital tension.

Both Beneria and Folbre, among others, argue that gendered structures can constrain women's penetration into institutions of the formal economy. Hiring practices continue to discriminate on the basis of gender on the assumption that, women cannot commit to certain jobs because of their role in home-bound work.

Women taking sick and maternity leaves to care for their dependants more often than men further limits their choices in the wage labour force and employment opportunities since employers try to dodge potential costs by not hiring women. In consequence, women are segregated in the least remunerative jobs that require long hours with less pay. Colley et al. (2010) study of career and training choices of UK students indicate how women continue to specialize largely in occupations that they think are most suitable for women to allow extension of their 'natural' skills in caring and nurturing into the formal economy - where their skills are not highly valued and rewarded. Perhaps, the problem is not so much to do with the career choices of women. Rather, it is the low value and reward accompanying such jobs. Society needs to deliberate on the following: Is caring for the sick and elderly, children, husbands and family important to society? It is bizarre to think that a woman sacrificing to take on the role of reproducing and maintaining society is met with disgruntlement. This we argue is not surprising! Society has misplaced many priorities by undermining women's support to the household [husbands] that Peet

and Hartwick (1999) noted without which the production process is unviable.

Sexual division of labour existed before colonization, but it was colonization which deepened it. Colonization imposed wage-earning male, male-dominance, and unequal distribution of resources and privileges to replace egalitarian and interdependent principles evident in early human history. Today we have been recruited into co-creating classist, individualistic and competitive societies. Buenaventura-Posso and Brown (1980), for example, showed how the pre-colonial social organization of the Bari society of Colombia was classless and sexually symmetrical. The Baris do not exercise power over one another; the labour of each member of the society is viewed as socially valuable. Each one has equal opportunities. Certain tasks in Bari society are performed by women, others by men while the majority of tasks require involvement of both sexes at different stages of the task performance. Sexual division of labour is flexible with no strict assignment of a certain activity to one gender only. Those few tasks that are carried out by one sex serve to reinforce the interdependence of the sexes. Such division of labour does not lead to the situation where one sex or group is assigned more importance than the other sex. The Baule society in Ivory Coast is another exemplar. Etienne (1980) points out that even though they are organized around sexual division of labour, this practice did not lead to gender inequalities because the tasks carried out by women and men were both vital and complementary to each other. The livelihood of the Baule people depended mainly on yams and cloths. Men grew the yams while women produced cloths. However, the performance of each task required the involvement of the other sex at certain stages of production. Therefore, the sexual division of labour among the Baule, based on the principle of interdependency, did not assign greater importance to the performance of one task over another.

And this is what capitalism continues to disrupt with its subtle non-violent approach to making the pursuit of the socio-material embedded with patriarchy, the most important object of society.

Feminists influenced by Marxist thinking, relate the power of material, gender and patriarchy to the oppression of women. The appropriation of women's domestic labour and surplus labour in paid employment to serve the interest of the dominant class is what the Marxist feminist describe as enslavement of women. Hence, they call for elimination of the capitalist-driven economic system to free women from this oppression (Weiler, 2009). This situation suggests that we look closely at the value we place on women's work both in the public and home sphere in an effort to re-value them, instead of leaving it in the hands of the *MARKET* - which is not free from patriarchal notions of sexual division of labour. While a revaluation of women's work, we expects can provide higher value for their work, how

much value and reward is enough? For some women, reproductive work means more than can ever be paid for.

Exclusion of women in lucrative work has meant that women striving for these jobs will have to contend with male-intact standards within the formal economy. The maintenance of male standards forces women to compete to become like men in the supposedly male domain without making men take part in the home/women's sphere. Therefore, even if and when women enter the wage labour force, opportunities are not equally distributed and accessible to them. Under such circumstances, new levels of social structures have become patriarchal in their essence, but they are under pressure.

It has become increasingly evident that women are resisting this gendered place, but according to Weiler (2009) gender analysis can only be understood in relation to how race and class as well as subculture (e.g., patriarchy) influence gendered experiences. Depending on whether one is white or non-white and in upper class or lower class, males and females will have different experiences.

Weiler believes human beings are agentic because they are able to contest and redefine the ideological messages from society, including school, in their way of resisting cultural reproduction. Claire Thomas (1980) study of school girls in England shows how girls rejected the dominant view on 'proper girls' behaviour by exaggerating femininity or being aggressively defiant to assert their individuality (e.g., prevalence of romance and marriage among middle class girls versus careful sexual relationship among working class girls). The role of women teachers' and mothers' socialization of children in reinforcing the current skewed division of labour cannot be overemphasized.

Teachers may encourage students to pursue domestic curriculum and few women take mathematics and science with prospects for professional jobs with high earnings. Girls have to fight several pressures including racism, sexism and patriarchy in school. In order to overcome these barriers, Fuller (1980), noted three main ways that girls seek self-control: their being controlled by others in and out of school; their wish for control for themselves at some time in the future; and their need to exercise forms of self-control and resentment now in order to achieve self-determination later. For example, girls may work hard to excel in exams to gain control of their lives. Weiler citing Gaskell noted:

".....schools, operating in their traditional function, do not simply reproduce sex-stereotypes or confirm girls in subordinate positions. Certainly they do that much of the time. But they have also long been a vehicle for women who wish to construct their own intellectual lives and careers". (Weiler, 2009: 226).

There is hope for girls. They are making their own way in spite of several forms of oppression.

## THE WAY FORWARD

From the foregoing conclusion, the following implications can be drawn. Introducing women into the paid labour force (formal economy, public domain), even though an important and positive step towards greater equity of opportunities, is not capable of tackling gender inequalities on its own. This is the case because gendered structures of constraint are more complex and cannot be reduced to a single source of gender equalities. Gender equality cannot exist within the context of patriarchy. A more holistic approach is necessary. A holistic model means deconstruction of such ideological dichotomies like productive versus non-productive activities and public versus private domain, and recognizing gendered activities in any SL framework which we have discussed.

In this regard, Usher and Ross (1986) concept of the whole economy that is inclusive of both the formal economy (wage economy) and informal economy (a range of activities outside economy accounts carried out by individuals<sup>3</sup>), cooperative enterprises, community organizations and enterprises, voluntary activities, barter and skills exchanges, mutual aid, and household activities. Engberg (1995) further develops the whole economy approach for addressing gender concerns of home economics. She categorizes economic activities into three sectors: market production, non-market production and the in-between sector. The latter includes collectives and cooperatives. The market economy consists of those activities that involve the exchange of money, goods or services within the public domain which includes big formal businesses and industries as well as local formal and informal market enterprises. Community service, household and subsistence, human resource production constitutes the non-market economy. Community service includes voluntary activities, religious services, participation in ceremonies, skills and goods exchange, and mutual aid and support. Household and subsistence production refers to goods and services produced by a household for its own consumption in order to escape the need to purchase them. Human resource production comprises biological and social reproduction and socialization of children as well as care for adults and other dependants such as the sick and disabled. Engberg then applies her concept of the whole economy to individual family members. As a result, she developed a Household Livelihood System which adequately accounts

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<sup>3</sup> In Usher's and Ross' framework, this includes the work that individual men and women do for one another without exchanging money. Household activities such as meal preparation, laundering, care of children are elements of the informal economic sector. Engberg (1995) further develops the whole economy can serve as an appropriate conceptual tool. Usher and Ross consider big businesses and the public sector to be structures of the formal economy. Informal sector on the other hand constitutes small-scale, collective and household is not a fully unified and cooperative unit as it is traditionally assumed. To the contrary, the household is a place of struggle of different interests and priorities that cut across gender lines, among other factors (Netting et al., 1984; Guyer and Peters, 1987; Guyer, 1981).

for productive, reproductive (both biological and social) as well as community responsibilities of women. Contrary to Engberg's analysis, we argue that human resource production and household and subsistence, are both formal and informal because education of children for example, also takes place in the family/home institution. The skills obtained outside formalized training institutions have become highly important especially because of the growing knowledge economy where credential inflation has meant that employers are taking into account tacit skills such as work commitment, trust, flexibility, cooperation and social skills in selecting successful candidates who can contribute to high performance in the workplace (Lloyd and Payne, 2002).

Also, we propose to amend Engberg's concept in regards to its starting point so that the relationship between the individual woman and man becomes an initial unit of analysis in any development discourse. This change can draw both the DFID's and UNDP's attention to the analysis of livelihood strategies on the level of gender relations in the household instead of having rural needs within the household to exemplify the existence and the nature of such a conflict. A number of other studies (Arku et al., 2008; Francis, 1998, 2001; Irwin and Bottero, 2000; Folbre, 1998; Kabeer and Van Anh, 2002) show that women prioritize the family's wellbeing and needs over their own interests, while men are inclined to spend part of their earnings on such items like alcohol and cigarettes. Hence, starting the analysis on the level of household gender relations lends a better opportunity to account for gender differences in the distribution of and control over resources in various sectors of the 'whole economy'. According to Folbre (1994), gender constraints in relation to access to power limit choices for women, therefore, more power for women means weaker, fewer and less binding constraints. An explicit recognition of the women's role in their SL framework as both economic and social assets are necessary in conscientizing and deconstructing patriarchal notions on women's work to facilitate the structural changes that are needed.

Worth noting is that, household structures can vary within and between societies, as well as over time and within the same society (Netting et al., 1984). According to Guyer and Peters (1987) and Guyer (1981) the household should be understood as part of broader social structures as well as processes. Household arrangements may change in response to changes occurring in a wider environment because they are not static. This allows for a constant pursuit of seeking in order to understand the constantly changing nature of households and their subsequent needs.

Folbre notes that gender is not the only constraint that leads to differential distribution of responsibilities and resources. She identifies five other structures of constraints in her analysis, namely age, sexual preference, nation, race and class. Though similar to the view of Weiler (2009), it is important to bear in mind that this

does not represent an exclusive list of constraints. Different combinations of constraints can exist in various social, cultural and political contexts.

At the same time, the DFID and UNDP need to assess the voices and ideology they portray in their analysis of SL. This will assist in determining any potential voices that are missing in their work in order that their frameworks will better reflect the reality of women around the world. A rigorous contemplation on their own ideologies are important in identifying how these make their way into the SL framework to disfavour the interests of women.

Further, women's contribution in economic and social spheres should be explicit in the economic statistics as such Gross Domestic/National Product. This is because women's contribution will become important when it is named and supported with statistical evidence. This will encourage employers to recognize women's contribution to not only the immediate work, but also to the future labour and skills as they nurture and educate children in the home.

Finally, the production process needs to be deconstructed. By deconstruction, we equalize the value to women's contribution vis à vis men's and recognize the interdependence between men and women necessary for a thriving economy and society. Folbre (1994) argues that public acknowledgment of caring for dependants as

a productive activity is an important step towards the creation of a culture that values family labour in the same way that it appreciates wage employment. She adds that the costs of social reproduction should be more equally re-distributed between women and men. And that revaluation of non-market activities can be achieved through gender negotiations in the process of which two dichotomies, of productive/non-productive activities and private/public domains, can be de-constructed to enable gender equality. As this occurs, girls would not have to resist feminine roles because of the poor value it holds in society. Everyone will contribute their capabilities to the economy and society at large.

## CONCLUSION

Sustainable Livelihood Frameworks broadens our understanding on how rural people in developing countries make a living. However, the framework lacks specificity on what 'activities' provide a means of living. Without a clear explanation of the activities, livelihood analysis can be best characterized as gender-insensitive because there is a high risk of overlooking certain non-market activities, such as women's housework. In order for women's domestic work to be recognized as important, hence its inclusion in Sustainable Livelihood Frameworks; effective policies and interventions that could reduce the existing gender inequalities must be cross-examined at different levels: household/family, the



community, the market and the state levels. Although the different levels have both horizontal and vertical linkages, each level requires different and appropriate intervention policies and strategies

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