

**WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN
SOLOMON ISLANDS:
AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH**

by

Derya Dikbas

Fourth Year Honours Thesis

Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

Department of Social and Cultural Studies

Faculty of Arts

Victoria University of Technology

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



3 0001 00474 4308

December 1995

FTS

THESIS
305.420
99593
DIK

WER THESIS

305.42099593 DIK

30001004744308

Dikbas, Derya

Women and development in
Solomon Islands : an
alternative approach

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgments	iii
Synopsis	iv
Rationale	v
Introduction	1
1 Failure of mainstream development models in addressing women's needs	4
2 Women and development in Solomon Islands	16
3 Contemporary government policy on development and women in development	23
4 Alternative approaches to economic development and the impact on women in development	37
5 Conclusion	46
Bibliography	50



Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgments	iii
Synopsis	iv
Rationale	v
Introduction	1
1 Failure of mainstream development models in addressing women's needs	4
2 Women and development in Solomon Islands	16
3 Contemporary government policy on development and women in development	23
4 Alternative approaches to economic development and the impact on women in development	37
5 Conclusion	47
Bibliography	50

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Throughout this year, I have been indebted to many people. My gratitude to Heather Wallace for her supervision of this thesis is immeasurable and greatly appreciated. I also owe thanks to my Solomon Islander friends Alice Pollard, Phillip Jionisi and Cherry Galokepoto for their assistance in my trip to Solomon Islands. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for putting up with my mood swings throughout the year. THANK YOU.

SYNOPSIS

The overall aim of this thesis is to stress the inadequacy and inappropriateness of mainstream development models in meeting the needs of Solomon Islands women. A main argument of the thesis is that an alternative development model, one which is gender and culturally specific, is required. The organisations best suited for implementing a decentralised, gender and culturally specific and people-centred approach to development are Non-Government Organisations.

The colonial legacy of growth centred development as followed by Solomon Islands government has failed to adequately address women's concerns. It is not a matter of adding Solomon Islands women to development theory or incorporating them 'into' development. Therefore, a fundamental reassessment of the very foundations of development theory and practice is required.

RATIONALE

During 1994, I travelled to Solomon Islands and I was able to meet with women from many different strata within Solomon Islands society. I also spent some time conducting research into the activities and approaches adopted by a number of non-government organisations. This provided me with insight into development processes within Solomon Islands and confirmed my interest in Women in Development issues. My principal concern was how current forms of development impact on women within 'traditional' village communities.

INTRODUCTION

... 'development must be by people, not only for them. People must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives'. In other words people must be allowed to play a significant role in the governance of their country. And 'people' include women who make up at least half the world's population. (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995).

In the opening speech at the Beijing Women's Conference, held in August 1995, Aung San Suu Kyi stressed the urgency of involving people and women in the process of development. This is not a recent phenomenon. 'Economic development' has been an area of concern for some time. With the accelerating rate of globalisation, the situation for many women in 'Third World' countries has become pressing. Indigenous, local communities and women of the 'Third World' are being caught up in this vortex of development and the pressures exerted by the global enterprises of First World nations.

Solomon Islands, classed under the category of 'Third World', requires a different definition and understanding of 'development'. In order to effectively address the needs of women and local communities, a shift from the mainstream economic-growth based model to an alternative development model must be considered. Such a paradigm shift is one which strives for social equity for women and well-being of all people. The principle aim must focus on local, decentralised and people-centred approaches to development.

The government's social and economic policies on Solomon Islands development have failed to adequately address women's

concerns. It is the needs of women, in particular, which have not been met. It may appear that advances have been made by the government's Women in Development approach. However, these efforts to incorporate women in its policies, are both tokenistic and unrepresentative. This approach has also failed to recognise the culturally specific contributions of Solomon Islands women. With this double burden, the task for women has not only been to take part in the highly bureaucratic 'development' process, but also to initiate an understanding which recognises that their roles and needs are not identical to those of 'western' women.

A successful alternative development strategy which would best suit the needs of women must include the participation of Non-government organisations. Non-government organisations emphasise participation by a people centred approach. The Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) is one such organisation. Its alternative development strategies reflect a more appropriate gender and culturally specific approach. In particular, it encourages mobilisation at community levels to empower women at all stages of the development process.

The first chapter draws together various arguments which set the agenda for mainstream economic development and Women in Development issues. These are viewed in contrast to the more recent literature on alternative development thinking. This background information is critical in understanding the failure of mainstream economic development models when

addressing the specific needs of Solomon Islands women.

Chapter two considers the traditional roles of Solomon Islands women during pre-colonial and colonial times. The aim of this chapter is to highlight the significance of socio-environmental formations of new forms of post-colonial indigenous societies which, I argue, must be given recognition in an alternative development model.

Chapter three examines the contemporary Solomon Islands government policies which are largely based upon western models of economic development. It evaluates the detrimental effects these policies have on Solomon Islands women and the environment.

Chapter four specifically examines alternative development strategies as a way of improving women's participation. The chapter focuses on the role of NGOs, such as the Solomon Islands Development Trust, stressing the importance of working with local communities and women.

The overall aim of this study is to stress the inadequacy and inappropriateness of mainstream development models in meeting the needs of Solomon Islands women. A main argument of the thesis is that an alternative development model, one which is gender and culturally specific, is required.

CHAPTER 1:

FAILURE OF MAINSTREAM DEVELOPMENT MODELS IN ADDRESSING WOMEN'S NEEDS

A fundamental reassessment of the very foundations of development theory and practice is needed. It is not a matter of adding women to development theory or incorporating them 'into' development. The issue of gender should not be placed under the same umbrella as agriculture or income generation as components of development. It must be an essential part of the development process (Underwood 1991). However, the integration of women into the mainstream of all development processes has so far proved to be a difficult task. Although there has been considerable discussion and much emphasis placed on 'Women in Development' (WID) issues within the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UNDP leaves a lot to be desired. Critics such as Kardam (1991) and Braidotti, R., Charkiewics, E., Hausler, S., and Wieringa, S. (1994) have argued that the UNDP has been vague and unclear in its guidelines relating to women, in the past. The only areas identified by the UNDP, as needing improvement, were those in education, agriculture, food production, handicrafts, and health services. There was no mention of women's participation in the political and economic domains (Kardam 1991). Braidotti et al. (1994) also draw attention to the lack of reference to women in the UNDP reports. They stress that although the UNDP views economic growth only as a means to achieving human development, not an end in itself, it lacks

the bottom-up approach that is needed for a people-centred development and one that is gender aware. However, it should also be noted that, contemporary UNDP reports have shown a shift in ideas. They are now one of the few organisations who promote sustainable development and people's participation. Their major aim, now, is to "bring development into balance with the coping capacities of societies and the carrying capacities of nature" (UNDP 1994).

It was recently stated at the United Nations (UN) Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing 1995, that progress has been slow, even during the years of 1975 and 1985, which was designated as the 'Decade for Women'. The participants who attended the 1995 Beijing conference agreed that most of the goals set out in the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies had not been achieved (Beijing Declaration and platform for Action 1995). It was recognised that:

...the status of women has advanced in some important respects in the past decade but that progress has been uneven, inequalities between women and men have persisted and major obstacles remain, with serious consequences for the well-being of all people (Beijing Declaration and platform for Action 1995).

The mainstream development models have failed to address the needs of women. The principle aim of development has, so far, centred around economic growth. This has also been the case for Solomon Islands.

Development, according to Hettne (1990), is historically derived from a Western mode of thinking.. Arguably the most

powerful of all Western concepts, development, in its original context, symbolised growth. The meaning of this Eurocentric concept has shifted with historical changes. For example, with the rise of capitalism, the advent of the industrial revolution and the rival doctrines of socialism and liberal capitalism. Both were premised on models and conceptions of ongoing economic growth and industrial development (Hettne 1990).

Korten (1990) states that development has been defined in terms of growth in the economic sector. The growth or decline of total economic output determined by market mechanisms, has become the sole indicator of national advancement and well-being. In this context, capital investment is the essential element promoting growth. Third World countries are often lacking investment in the areas of infrastructure, industry and agriculture, and therefore, require input of capital investment for First World countries. The result is the belief that foreign exchange earnings and increased exports will rise to acceptable growth levels (Korten 1990). Korten promotes an alternative view that emphasises the need to shift from economic-centred to being more people-centred.

The 1950s to 1970s saw the categorising of this mainstream development paradigm take many forms. Hettne (1990) described it as the modernisation paradigm where the society moved from a 'traditional' to a 'modern' one. Underdevelopment, in this context, was defined according to the areas of economic,

political, social and cultural differences between rich and poor countries. In practice, this meant that the Third World countries would gradually assume the qualities of the industrialised nations by reproducing the path which had been set by Western nations.

Rostow (1971), one of the main contributors to modernisation theory, maintained that modernising societies all evolve in successive stages. Modernisation, a development theory, follows a similar line of argumentation to that of the structural-functional theory of Talcott Parsons (1977). Parsons (1977) categorised 'traditional' society as being rustic and unprogressive, whereas the 'modern' society was categorised as civic and progressive. Rostow (1971) further reinforced the notion of transition from a 'traditional' to a 'modern' society as a rule of the modernisation paradigm. For Rostow, the end product of modernisation resulted in the establishment of a modern mass consumption society. His five stages: the traditional society; the pre-takeoff society; takeoff; the road to maturity; and the mass consumption society, through which all developing nations had to pass, set the agenda for the theory of development in the late 1950s to 1960s.

Global institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, constantly design development programs for Third World countries. The main aim is to guide these countries into achieving sustained economic growth (Aw

1989). Friedmann (1992) argues, the 'structural adjustment programs', designed by these institutions centre around neoliberal economic dogmas. Structural adjustment programs require governments of 'developing' countries to design policies along free enterprise lines. Generally these include policies of deregulation, privatisation of public enterprises, abolishing tariffs on imports, boosting export production through devaluation of national currencies, removal of subsidies and so on. In short, the role of the IMF and the World Bank is to encourage the laissez-faire system of developing Third World countries (Friedmann 1992).

The impact of such economic centred development approaches, has had on the changing of cultural, political, social and environmental formations in indigenous communities, in countries like Solomon Islands, has given rise to the increased circulation of literature on alternative development. Within this alternative development framework there are two different approaches: the structuralist and normative approach.

The alternative structuralist approach is one which highlights "the role of global economic structures in its explanations for 'Third World countries' impoverishment" (Braidotti et al. 1994, p.107). Writers in this field argue that the world capitalist system has had a negative impact on the Third World. Changes need to be brought about within the structural framework of First World countries, regarded as the capitalist

centres. The constraints of this approach, as Braidotti et al. argue, are its lack of reference to non-state organisations and grassroots organisations, and its basic concentration on the state viewed within an economistic framework.

The 'normativist alternative approach' as coined by Sheth (1987, cited in Braidotti et al. 1994) concentrates more on practical experience. Unlike the structuralist approach, Braidotti et al. contends:

Alternative normativists propagate a more holistic understanding of human well-being than do the alternative structuralist by emphasising the role of self-reliance, alternative lifestyles, culture and material as well as non-material human needs. The notion of economic activity and growth as the central basis for the satisfaction of human needs is seen as secondary (1994, p.108).

The main criticism of the normativist alternative model is its reliance on a universal framework. The validation of norms and values within a general framework propagates the same dilemma as that of the dominant mainstream development model. Foucault (cited in Braidotti et al. 1994) warns of the dangers of any type of universalism because it represents domination.

A further strand of argument within development literature focuses on the notion of people-centred development. Within this vision, authentic development is viewed in terms of justice, sustainability and inclusiveness. Korten states:

It views development as a people's movement more than as a foreign-funded government project. It looks to government to enable the people to develop themselves.

It seeks a synthesis of the change of objective of the environmental, human rights, consumer protection, women's and peace movements. It seeks a new human consciousness in which the more nurturing, enabling and conserving dimensions of female consciousness gain ascendance over the more aggressive, exploitative and competitive dimensions of male consciousness that have so long dominated the social and economic life of human societies (1990, p.5).

In light of this argument, however, most of the Women in Development debates are aimed at incorporating women into the mainstream economic development processes. The main concern has been to highlight women's potential in the political and economic domains.

Historically women's inclusion into the development process has evolved through many different stages.

In the 1950s, 'welfare approach' was the first of these stages. Women were viewed only in their reproductive and domestic roles and the development programs devised for women were mainly in handicrafts, knitting and sewing (Momsen 1991). Kabeer (1994) argues, that women were brought into the development policies on very sex-specific terms, where they were only viewed in their roles as housewives and mothers. Hence, women were assigned to the marginal 'welfare' sector, while men were the target of mainstream development programs (Kabeer 1994, p.5).

In the 1970s, the global recognition of Women and Development agendas and their importance, were first demonstrated by Ester

Boserup in her book, Women's Role in Economic Development. Boserup (cited in Kardam 1991) illustrated the detrimental effects of ignoring women in the development process. She argued that men were the primary beneficiaries of modern technology while women became further entrenched in the home and lacked recognition in this process. As such, Boserup dismissed the notion that economic development benefited all, as women had been excluded in this process (Tinker 1990). Boserup's seminal work set the agenda for further action being taken in relation to women in development (WID) and also led to a substantial increase in WID activities by the United Nations. In the 1970s, the theme for WID activists was geared towards the inclusion of women in development thinking, which is more commonly referred to as the 'Equity Approach' (Young, Samarasinghe & Kusterer 1993). Tinker (1990) argued that lack of recognition given to women for their activities in the economic development process was the principal focus for women in development. Within this stage, greater emphasis was placed on women's productive roles, such as in the area of agriculture.

The 1975 World Conference of the International Women's Year, held in Mexico, led to the declaration of a women's decade from 1975 to 1985. The Mexico conference was followed by a mid-decade conference in Copenhagen in 1980 and an end of decade conference in Nairobi, in 1985 (Kardam 1991). The outcome of these conferences were in line with the Equity Approach. The main aim being to satisfy the demand for

equality between the sexes and to amalgamate women into mainstream economic development (Braidotti et al. 1994). This was followed by the 'Anti-poverty Approach', which saw women's poverty as a predicament of underdevelopment rather than one of subordination.

In the 1980s, the emergence of the Efficiency Approach, as labelled by Caroline Moser (cited in Grant and Newland 1991), emphasised the importance of women's contribution in the development process with regard to policies on economic stabilisation and adjustment. In a similar vein, Kardam (1991) further reinforces this notion:

Efficiency and equity justified attention to WID issues. It was argued that discrimination is not economically rational; if women are marginal to economic development programs, it is at the cost of greater productivity. Ignoring women also hinders equitable development because any strategies that disproportionately favours men cannot be considered an equitable approach (Kardam 1991, p.12).

The women's movement in the South, led by Third World women, expanded in the 1980s. It strongly criticised the WID approach and the assumption that women wanted to be integrated into the patriarchal Western system of development (Momsen 1991). Moreover, they sought to define alternative paths of development which gave indigenous populations the opportunity to choose a model of development that was specific to their own needs. This new concept was labelled the 'Empowerment Approach' (Braidotti et al. 1994).

In more contemporary discussions on development and women

related issues, there has been a tendency to look at this problematic issue in terms of 'gender and development' (GAD) rather than 'women in development'. This shift in academic writing arose as a result of the limitations faced in addressing biological differences rather than social/gender relations (Braidotti et al. 1994). It is argued that GAD, distinguishes and exposes the differences between women and men from different social groups (Antrobus 1991).

Callan (1990) also reinforces the importance of the change from 'women in development' to 'gender in development'. She states:

For successful economic development policies and programs we need to understand the nature of the relationship between men and women, and the implications of differences between men's and women's economic roles. Introduction of the more relational term 'gender' reflects this recognition (1990, p.42).

However, GAD is not without its limitations. Braidotti et al. argue that the main limitation of GAD is its lack of criticism of the dominant development paradigm. Its assumptions are firmly entrenched in the logic of modernisation and the economic growth model. In other words, GAD searches for equality between the sexes within the economic development framework.

The area which has received increased attention in the 1980s has been the debate surrounding women, environment and sustainable development (WED). The WED debate continues to criticise the deficiency of the economic growth model with

reference to gender relations. However, it differs from WID and GAD because it criticises the whole economic development process, rather than trying to raise awareness of women's roles in the informal, rural, market economies and in the management of natural resources (Harcourt 1994).

A derivative of Women, Environment and Sustainable Development, is the establishment of the discipline of 'ecofeminism'. This paradigm focuses on men or male dominated activities as the major cause of environmental degradation. Ecofeminists such as Mies and Shiva (1993) recognise that economic models of development, measured and supported by economic growth and modern technology respectively, are the major contributors to environmental desolation, particularly in Third World countries. The underlying argument of this feminist critique, is the belief that men hold power over decision-making processes, and therefore, are responsible for the undesirable consequences. Males are labelled as manipulators of capitalism (Mies and Shiva 1993). Ecofeminism, constrained by the parameters of its discipline, can at times lack the lateral perspectives and approaches to policies on nature and ecology. However, despite the limitations of its absolute focus on the power relations of gender within environmental policies, ecofeminism can still be a useful tool in certain real life cases; for example the critique of social and economic policies employed by male dominated governments and institutions such as that of Solomon Islands.

X The following chapters analyses issues surrounding economic development, alternative development, and the changing focus of the inclusion of women in development. These debates will be assessed in relation to the empirical evidence and developmental experiences of one Pacific Island country, namely Solomon Islands, with reference to women, environment, and the cultural identity of local people.

CHAPTER 2:

WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOLOMON ISLANDS

The development of the cash economy through colonisation has brought with it lasting effects on Solomon Islands' local communities. Women, in particular, have been affected by the changes brought about by 'development'. Consequently, for Solomon Islands women, there is a period of transition from a subsistence to a 'modern' economy. This has meant that they are faced with increased expectations which often overlook their traditional roles and lead to increased workload in day-to-day lives. Rostow (1971), argues, that this is an essential part of development. However, rather than Rostowian 'progress' many problems have arisen. These problems include: economic dislocation and changes as a result of urbanisation, population shifts, migration and environmental damage caused by natural resource exploitation and manipulation (UNICEF 1993). Women have not been the chief recipients of Solomon Islands development and have, in fact, often borne the brunt of these changes.

Solomon Islands prior to colonisation was a country where the ultimate rule was one of self-sufficiency (Howard, Plange, Durutalo & Witton 1983). Waddell (1993) also contends, that before colonisation by the British, Solomon Islands was a country which was self-sufficient and self-reliant, without debt to other international organisations and which was part of a system that the Islanders were content with.

The process of modernisation has also effected the lives of women to a degree where they are no longer content. The challenges and difficulties they face in trying to become equal participants in their communities' development and their lack of influence in the policies which affect their day to day lives has begun to take its toll on the women of Solomon Islands.

Contemporary policies concerned with agriculture and the environment, in particular, are affecting women because they do not take into consideration traditional practices and roles of Solomon Islands women. in order to have a better understanding of how these government policies are affecting women, clear understanding of these traditional roles is needed. The following section will offer an overview of traditional roles within local communities in the pre-colonial times.

Traditional Roles of Women

Solomon Islands women were traditionally the food producers, resource managers and child educators as well as being the manufacturers of household items such as clothing, mats, kitchen utensils, fishing nets (Howard et al. 1983). Lateef (1990) states that Solomon Islands women were: "known for their untiring hard work, industriousness and determination to adequately provide and care for their families" (p.ii). The

vital role that they played in the economics of the family unit, as well as their ability for hard work, which made them a valued economic resource was recognised in the traditional social system where bride-price payments were practised. This system offered woman a higher status which was acknowledged within the community (Lateef 1990). Lateef's argument, although valuing women's roles, is very much developed within the confines of a western WID model. For example, she places economic and monetary values on the roles performed by women within the family unit by referring to them as 'hard workers', 'industrious' and 'economic resources'. Traditionally, women's roles were more than just of economic consequence. Their significance in the socio-political connections with the local communities as well as the important bearing their decisions had on the ecological systems cannot be ignored. Ishtar (1994) argues that traditionally, women have always been the guiding force of local communities in the Pacific.

Solomon Islands women in pre-colonial times, were the managers of natural resources. Women's traditional knowledge and interactions with nature meant that conservation through subsistence was a regular part of their daily lives (SIDT 1994). Hviding (1992) also contends, that Solomon Islands women were more in tune with the ecosystems of the islands. As such, concerns over their immediate environment should be taken into account. He states:

Women should play a key role in formulating and planning coastal conservation. Specifically, any warnings from women about possible disruption of ecosystems and food systems should be taken very seriously, since their

familiarity with ecological 'buffer' zones like mangroves allows them to perceive changes at an early stage (1992 p.10).

Embersen-Bain (1994) argue that the stark difference between traditional Pacific islands society and colonial society, ^{7 rested} resisted in the fact that sustainable practices were integral to the indigenous society. However, the process of colonisation itself has helped create the Europocentric belief, present in contemporary discussion, that 'sustainable development' is a novel concept. This has resulted in the North selling the concept back to the South (Embersen-Bain 1994).

The special relationship between women and the environment, through which they and their communities have made a living, has resulted in a special bond between the country's ecosystem and Solomon Islands women. The next chapter reveals that any imbalances caused to this relationship by contemporary government decisions is undesirable for the long term sustainability of Solomon Islands.

Colonisation

Solomon Islands did not adopt a western model of development by choice. Rather, the forces exerted by the process of British colonisation has built the foundation of what Solomon Islands is today. Understanding the socio-cultural and political changes that have taken place during the colonial period is a necessary step in gaining an insight into the current position of women.

British colonisation of Solomon Islands began in 1893, where a group of islands including Guadalcanal, Savo, Malaita, San Christobel and New Georgia were included in the protectorate. In 1900, the remaining islands of Santa Isabel, Choisel, Shortland Islands and Ontong Java also became a part of the British colony. The British colonial administration was established by 1940 (Howard et al. 1983). With British colonisation, came the development of the export oriented cash economy. International conglomerates quickly moved into this uncharted territory. Lever Brothers were one of the first, purchasing 193,450 acres of land from the colonial government, thereby ensuring that they would have a dominant role in the future political economy of Solomon Islands (Howard et al. 1983). In the colonial period, Solomon Islands became a major exporter of copra linking to the capitalist world economy (Howard et al. 1983).

The colonial economy was always export-oriented and set to

benefit the mother country, namely Britain. Exploitation of natural resources accommodated the 'colonial mind-set', that the British had put the Islanders on the right path to development (Waddell 1993).

The 'colonial mind-set' generated numerous problems for Solomon Islands communities. The diversity of cultures which existed within Solomon Islands, posed a problem for the 'capitalist economy'. Such a system required a more centralised and unified national identity in comparison to the traditional systems of Solomon Islands societies. Within Solomon Islands, the family, clan and the language district, or what is more commonly called 'wantoks' (that is, 'one-talk', referring to a group of people sharing the same language and hence, a special bond) still form the basis for cultural and ethnic identity in contrast to the Western concept of 'individualism' (Foanaota 1989).

Along with changes to the economy, British colonisation also led to changes in the role of women. Waddell (1993) accredits the missionaries and colonial administrators for these changes. He argues:

regardless of what they observed of the role of women in the occupied territories, the foreigners attempted, with a good deal of success, to recreate in the colony a replica of the society which they had left behind in the mother-land. The foreigners, it should be noted, were almost without exception members of the middle and upper classes and for them it was not at all proper for women to go out to work; the women's place was in the home and her main role was to bear and raise children (1993, pp.26-27).

The legacy of colonialism has shaped government policy. The policies on women, environment and traditional society have been modelled by Eurocentric ideologies. Women have been brought 'into' development on very sex-specific terms, based on the western notions of women's roles. As has been the case in the Western nations, the policies adopted by Solomon Islands government have been along the lines of the Women in Development programs outlined previously. The failure to acknowledge the specific needs of Solomon Islands women, as articulated by Solomon Islands women has been a major setback for the society as a whole. Unfortunately, the European transference of values and ethics which undermine traditional values of Solomon Islanders have persisted through to postcolonial times.

Lasch states;

Modern bureaucracy has undermined earlier traditions of local action, the revival and extension of which holds out the only hope that a decent society will emerge from the wreckage of capitalism (cited in O'Connor 1995, p.45).

The next chapter examines contemporary Solomon Islander society, and analyses the policy directions of the government focussing, in particular, upon the forms of development in the years of Independence and the WID related issues.

CHAPTER 3:

CONTEMPORARY GOVERNMENT POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT AND WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Contemporary Government Policy on Development

Following the establishment of Independence, in 1978, Solomon Islands government has continued the colonial legacy of economic based development (Waddell 1993). The people of Solomon Islands are currently facing a period of conversion, from their familiar traditional subsistence lifestyle to one that is increasingly monetised, urbanised, and modern. This is recognised by UNICEF who argue that:

The deeply held values characteristic of the 'Melanesian way' which emphasises equality, communalism, self-sufficiency, consensus, and respect for tradition, are changing as a result of social, economic and political change. The locus of social values are shifting toward social stratification, individualism, dependence and conflict (UNICEF 1993, p.27).

Solomon Islands is yet to reach Rostows' (1971) last stage of modernisation. Mass consumption has not been fully developed throughout both urban and rural settings. Nevertheless, the post colonial government is following many of the neoliberal economic, guidelines set down by International organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank. The government's social and economic policies are consistent with those of market liberalism. Such an approach favours; the openness to foreign investment, part assistance combined with a heavy reliance on the export sector, deregulated institutional structures and an open free market economy. It is assumed that such policies

will achieve an acceptable level of economic growth and rising living standards. Consequently, emphasis has been placed on maintaining and improving the cash economy in order to compete with other countries within the economy. This has meant that there have been increased advances in the areas of cash-cropping and the exploitation of natural resources such as forests and fisheries. How does this affect the women, environment and all local people of Solomon Islands?

The 'independent' Solomon Islands government has proceeded with the expansion of its private sector through increased ventures with international corporations. Although this has increased export earnings, it has also raised dependency on investments by foreign owned companies (Howard et al. 1983). Moreover, the Solomon Islands government has also been heavily dependent on Australian and New Zealand for aid (Lechte 1982). As Lechte (1982) argues, this not only results in the government's dependence on money for development assistance, it also leads to increased control by the donors. As such, foreign investors and donors are able to set agendas, cultural forms and shape values within Solomon Islands society (Lechte 1982). These foreign corporations, advisers, consultants and aid agencies fail to hear the needs of the Pacific Islands women. The question 'who benefits from these short term unsustainable and unequitable strategies?' needs to be asked. In the case of Solomon Islands, it is the economic needs of foreign countries such as Australia, Japan, United States, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, which are met, rather than the

social-economic requirements of Solomon Islands' local communities (Crocombe 1981). Writers such as Hettne (1990) and Korten (1990) argue that this is a consistent trend around the world, where third world countries, are increasingly integrated into the international economy, becoming deeply dependent on the actions and policies of the First World.

The main problem in post colonial period stems directly from the actions taken by the government and its national policies for achieving development. Despite Solomon Islands government's development process being very much reliant on foreign investment and foreign aid, the central government can and should still be held accountable for the effects on its domestic domain. It is the development strategies undertaken by the government which has repercussions on Solomon Islands environment, local communities and women. Therefore, they should not be ignored.

Kabeer (1994) states that Gross National Product (GNP) is not an appropriate measure of development as it does not adequately represent the well being of the majority of the population. Yet, Solomon Islands government continues to use GNP and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as the primary indicators of development. The relevance of such an approach is questionable in a society where most of the population still practices subsistence economy and the recorded income increases come only from those few elites who live in the urbanised and monetised sector. Moreover, GDP overlooks the contributions made by women in the subsistence economy. It

? who

only acknowledges a minority group of women (have benefited through increased access to tertiary education and paid employment, where their so-called, standard of living has actually improved, when measured by this 'western' indicator (UNICEF 1993). Government decisions based on the GDP levels are not only unrepresentative but also detrimental to the economics and the development of Solomon Islands. Friedmann (1992) argues that despite GNP having imperfections, national governments around the world are constantly using this as the universal measure of development. He maintains that GNP is inadequate because it fails to take into account social and environmental consequences of capitalist production.

The agricultural sector is the primary area which the Solomon Island government views as the best means for achieving economic development (Antony & Fleming 1992). Siwatibau (1991) believes that this approach is a valid one. He argues that economic development and economic independence should be built around agricultural based investment, for the simple reason that this sector, subsidises the majority of the Pacific Islands' population.

Ilala (1992) argues, in a similar manner, that Solomon Islands way to achieving economic development is by maintaining its openness to foreign investments, along with its reliance on the primary sector for export earnings. Reflecting on Solomon Islands current situation, Ilala claims:

The production and export of palm oil and kernel, fish, logs and timber are handled largely by foreign-owned

enterprises and joint-venture companies (Solomon Taiyo Ltd and Solomon Islands Plantations Ltd.). Direct benefits arising from their export performance are principally enjoyed by the government (taxes), land owners (royalties) and the organisations themselves (as a large component of their costs is foreign) (1992, p.231).

Ilala (1992) further argues, that the national government must continue to complement this process with structural policies in order to sustain these benefits in the economic development process.

The major characteristics of Antony & Fleming (1992), Siwatibau (1991) and Ilala (1992) the aforementioned economist^s, revolve around the process of economic liberalisation. That is, the deregulation with the opening up of markets. The rationality behind economic liberalisation is not, however, without its critics.

The government's dependence on agriculture, as a result of seeking short-term economic gains, has lead to its reliance on income generated from logging, mining and fisheries. Logging, in particular, is the area of major concern. Forestry is the biggest foreign exchange earner in Solomon Islands. It accounts for 60 per cent of all merchandise exports. Licence holders are currently granted permission, by the government, to export up to 1.5 million m³ of logs. Recommended sustainable levels only allow for 300-325,000 m³ to be commercially logged (AIDAB 1995). Solomon Islands environment is far too fragile to sustain the logging industry at its present level of exploitation. This was reinforced by the

members of Greenpeace at the conferences held in October 1994 to review government action in relation to these areas of concern (Papuka 1994). Any recurring belief, by people such as Friesen (1993) and Marten (1981), who argue that logging in Solomon Islands is a necessary practice for achieving economic development, therefore, need to be dismissed. Claims made by UNICEF (1993), Lateef (1990) and AusAID (1995) recognise the unsustainability of this practice, and attribute this to the lack of regulatory governance.

Government regulation on logging is an area which requires urgent attention. In July 1993, yet another policy was added to the existing 'Forest Resources and Timber Utilisation Act' of 1963, which is the main government legislation in relation to forestry. Its policy goals were as follows:

sustainable management; minimisation of environmental damage; biodiversity conservation; establishment of investment and regulatory regimes which encourage private investment; sharing of benefits from forestry to all sectors of the community; and provision of basic needs (AusAID 1995, p.7).

This legislation, despite its limitations is still economic-centred, and has been very difficult to implement and regulate. It has been vulnerable to abuse by foreign logging companies (UNICEF 1993). With current unsustainable rates on logging, there is no doubt that an alternative approach to logging for development needs consideration.

Logging as well as the development of cash cropping has, in many cases, generated new and aggravated existing problems for

women. Women now have to walk long distances to collect and carry water and firewood to their villages, as the closer sources of fuel wood and water have become polluted or depleted due to logging (Lateef 1990). Males have signed away customary lands to foreign companies in return for cash rewards for short term benefits. In the long turn, it is the women who suffer as a consequence, by having to work harder and longer to support the family (Lateef 1990).

Significantly, the government has targeted the male population in the process of primary sector development. It ignores the fact that women have traditionally been responsible in the food production and the maintenance of crop cultivation as their principle economic activity in their local communities (Lateef 1990). Therefore, Solomon Islands women have not been adequately supported in the development policies of the agricultural sector. Based on the western models and perceptions of the family unit, development strategies in Solomon Islands have tended to follow the same path to that of the First World. That is, ignoring women or devising strategies which are only based on their role as a 'housewife' (Lateef 1990).

For the majority of Solomon Islands women, environmental degradation as a result of development "has resulted in an increased workload, diminishing source of fuel-wood, depletion and pollution of water sources, domestic violence and decreasing access to, and control over, traditionally

inherited land" (Lateef 1990, p.48). It should be acknowledged that, in the past, land was inherited through the females, in some parts of the country. In turn, this descentance of customary land through the females provided political power and status. This has now been diminished in most parts of the contemporary Solomon Islands society. This has been yet another consequence of modern day development (Foanaota 1989). In short, inappropriate development planning and devastation of their natural environment has brought with it numerous problems for women.

Contemporary Government Policy on Women in Development

The Solomon Islands government, rather than rectifying the situation, is actually contributing to the problems of women in their local communities. This is not surprising when it is considered that women are under-represented within the decision-making mechanisms of the government. The significance of this, is that traditionally women have been the decision makers and caretakers of agriculture in their local communities, and therefore had a responsibility for taking care of their immediate environment and its ecological systems. Yet, within the government body it is the males who are required to make the decisions in an area where they lack the necessary knowledge and sensitivity (Lateef 1990).

Women continue to be marginalised in the development decision making process in the Pacific Island countries. Emberson-Bain (1994) argues that this irregularity needs to be rectified as women are feeling the effects of social and environmental changes resulting from the 'new' economic order. Ecofeminists such as Mies and Shiva (1993) argue that the marginalisation of women, accompanied by the domination of men in decision making, is the major contributor to the damage caused to Solomon Islands environment.

Clearly, Solomon Islands government is very much adopting a WID approach in its effort to include women in the economic development process. As indicated in Chapter one, critics such as Braidotti et al. (1994), Momsen (1991) and Callan (1990) have all highlighted the limitations of WID approaches. Yet, Solomon Islands government, by employing the WID model, is once again relying on an inadequate and inappropriate tool for development.

In the past all governments which have been in power in Solomon Islands have agreed that it was necessary for women to be integrated into the development process (Solomon Islands National Council of Women 1992). However, good intentions are not enough. Women, in reality, have been excluded from development projects, in general. In 1985-89, the National Development Plan's objectives were as follows:

- (i) Promote an increased and more effective role for women in decision making and national development.
- (ii) Improve the availability and circulation of information and resources relating to the welfare of women and the family unit.
- (iii) Facilitate women's training programs to develop appropriate knowledge and skills for women to improve their participation in development (Solomon Islands National Council of Women 1992, p. 25).

In relation to the first objective, it should be noted that to this day there is only one female representative within the parliament of Solomon Islands (Wagapu 1994). In other words, there are a very limited number of women who occupy positions which have influence over national decision making bodies.

In relation to the second point, it should be noted that Solomon Islands government is taking a 'welfare approach,' as been the case in initial Women in Development programs of the West in the 1950s. Referring back to Kabeer's (1994) argument on this approach, there needs to be a shift away for this model. *from* and its tendency to confine women to a narrow band of reproductive and domestic roles.

In reference to the third objective, the literacy levels of women and their access to education need to be analysed. The customary role and authority of women in the subsistence sector has deteriorated. Women's participation in development has become limited due to the lack of access to principal resources such as education. Literacy is a big problem within Solomon Islands with 85 per cent of the population living in rural areas and not having adequate access to educational

programs. The 1986 population census showed that no formal education was received by 40% of the population over the age of ten years. However, the census also made it evident that women were more disadvantaged than men (Fong & Mamtora 1991). The Census also showed that at the primary level only 44% of students were female. This dropped to 31% at secondary level and 22% at university level (Fong & Mamtora 1991). From a WID point of view, this reinforces the low status of women and their lack of participation in the development process. Women do not have equal access to the education system in the country and the places offered to them in this sector are few and far in between. When we look at the boarding schools we find that only a third of the dormitories are allocated for female students (Roughan 1994).

There is no doubt that access to education for women is a major problem when measured by WID standards, particularly in an urban setting. However, does literacy through formal education really pose a problem in traditional lifestyles for local communities? Do local communities need writing and reading skills to survive in their immediate environments? Part of an alternative approach would be to move away from the formal education system to more informal, culturally specific educational programs. This has been a part of the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT) alternative development strategy, which will be elaborated on in the following chapter.

Women in Solomon Islands have the right to vote and the freedom to participate in the political process, as long as they have reached the age of twenty-one. Yet, in most instances the vast majority of women have little knowledge of such citizenship rights. Therefore, their constitutional equality and their legal rights don't mean much as they are rarely used to their advantage (Wagapu 1994).

The government's WID approach has led to the establishment of two key women's organisations, which focus on women's needs and participation in the economic development process. These organisations are: The Women and Development Division (WDD) and The Solomon Islands National Council of Women (SINCW). In 1989 the Women's Interest Office, first established in 1964, was upgraded to become a division within the Ministry. It was then, named Women and Development Division. Its main purpose was to direct training programs for women in the areas of home economics, health and child-care. To a lesser extent, training has recently included income generated activities on leadership skills in the economic domain (Lateef 1990). The National Council of Women, formed in 1983, was set up with the intention of acting as an umbrella organisation to further assist WDD in women's development (Alice Puia).

Although the government puts some emphasis on women's development, most of the projects undertaken by these organisations do not seem to reflect the real needs of Solomon Islands women. They focus on women's roles as 'housewives'

which appears to be taken directly out of a 'western' model. After all, the relevance of projects on cake-decorating and crocheting can be questioned. Solomon Islands women who live in thatched huts, cook in earth ovens and maintain food gardens among many other activities have specific expectations from development projects. Before implementing such development projects, appropriateness of 'western style' development schemes must be questioned. Braidotti et al. sum up Pacific development in the following manner;

It has become increasingly clear in recent years that development, which has been conceived as a Western project to modernise the post-colonial societies, did not bring the promised improvement in the living conditions of the people in the South. Instead, the development process contributed to the growth of poverty, to an increase in economic and gender inequalities, and to the degradation of the environment which further diminishes the means of livelihood of poor people, particularly women (1994, p.1).

Atu Emberson-Bain (1994) also reinforces the belief that there are important repercussions for the Pacific islands following the global market-driven economies, especially in the areas of social relations and the environment.

In light of this, part of an alternative development approach is not to build on or improve the current economic growth model of development, which Solomon Islands government has adopted; as this has placed too much strain on the local women, social systems, and the environment. An essential focus of an alternative approach must be to shift away from the mainstream western model of development, to one which is culturally specific.

*and which builds on and values
the daily physical, political, social and
environmental challenges facing people,
especially women, at the local level.*

The next chapter analyses the role of NGOs in women and development related issues and argues that NGOs are more effective at operating at the grass roots level. The discussion highlights alternative development strategies and projects which focus on local development rather than specifically focussing on western developmental models.

CHAPTER 4:

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE IMPACT ON WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

Western development, in Solomon Islands, has raised issues surrounding gender inequalities; a new concept to the traditional local communities. WID programs emerged, designed to involve women as equal partners in the development process. However, constrained by the western model of development, WID has proved to be unsuccessful. A more, culturally specific, decentralised alternative approach to development thinking, as perceived by theorists such as Korten (1990), Hettne (1990), Friedmann (1992) and Braidotti et. al (1994), is what is required.

After reviewing the development programs and strategies of Solomon Islands government, it becomes apparent that most emphasis has been placed on economic development. However, a nation's development should not solely be judged on its economic performance. Pieterse argues:

What alternative development means in a particular social and cultural context may vary considerably from society to society. The role of grassroots movements in this articulation process is crucial for a bottom-up process of change; the involvement of people's own visions of how to deal with their problems is imperative. This view opens up new possibilities for the reconstruction of the South, away from only one valid model of development towards polycentric and polyphonic developments (Nederveen Pieterse 1991 cited in Braidotti et al. 1994, p.108).

'Development' as a western construct, through a century of

colonisation and two decades of neocolonisation, has managed to break down the traditional characteristic of self-sufficiency. In turn Solomon Islands has now become a country, which is categorised by western writers, as dependent, underdeveloped and Third World. With all the emphasis placed on modernisation, industrialisation, technology and measured in GDP levels, important factors have been neglected. The most important players, vital within a nation's 'true' development program have been overlooked; the local people, particularly women.

In the last section the question of whether 'western style' development projects were really appropriate to Solomon Islands women was posed. In light of this point, it should be noted that, all development projects need to be culturally specific. Women's roles vary from one culture to another. The projects designed for these groups also need to consider and build on their differences, rather than fit all women into a single category. As Momsen (1991) contends, even 'feminism' as a political movement, from a WID perspective, is based on the experiences of white western women and their ideals about women's place in the world. Even they stress the notion of individualism rather than communalism for development.

An alternative development strategy for Solomon Islands would, first, be for the government to undertake significant changes to its current policies on development. Part of this adjustment would be to adopt a bottom-up development process,

where central power is shifted to the village (Pacific UNDP Report, 1994).

Development should begin at the bottom rather than starting at the top. Access to participation for women, as well as men, in this process can more easily start at the village level rather than at the central administrative level. The traditional nature of these societies, as discussed in chapter two, was to include all community members, particularly women. When discussing an alternative development plan we must take into consideration that Solomon Islands is formed by many small scale villages and not a number of densely populated towns. Therefore, such plans must consider the specific needs of the rural population. In other words, a village based national development strategy, which will meet the basic needs of the population, will work at a decentralised level and the use of appropriate technology to ensure self-dependency, must be established (Waddell 1993).

Development projects need to be based at the rural sector in order for cultural diversity to continue in Solomon Islands. The urban sector can not support its growing population. Therefore, it must be the rural sector which needs to be made attractive and offer an incentive for people to stay rather than migrate to the city. The solution to this problem cannot be found with increased investment in the agricultural sector through formal education and employment services, as The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the

Pacific (1994) believes. Such a development approach would only create further problems for Solomon Islands' rural people. The investors, foreign or domestic, will hold economic power, and therefore will be able to determine their own definition of development, as has been the case with logging and mining. This will also further reinforce the already existing 'colonial mindset' whereby the local people devalue their traditional systems (Waddell 1993). Part of an alternative development approach in achieving self-determination would be to eliminate this colonial mindset, where traditional beliefs and lifestyle once again become an integral part of any development program, where women will once again have decision making power.

Within a women, environment and sustainable development approach, local Non Government Organisations must and are able to play an important role. They are better able to represent people at the local level. Schrijvers (1985) argues:

Non-governmental organisations are, in many countries, emerging as substitutes for government planning, resourcing and organising development (cited in Schrijvers 1993, p.18).

This is also recognised by Kardam (1991), who suggests that it has been NGOs who played the biggest role in bringing women's roles in development into the spotlight of all development discussions. Accordingly, the alternative development which will meet the needs of women, the environment and all local people in Solomon Islands, needs to be based on the model presented by the Solomon Islands Development Trust.

The Solomon Islands Development Trust, the major Non Government Organisations (SIDT) in Solomon Islands, is committed to this type of alternative approach. It seeks to represent the local villagers at the grassroots level, and therefore provides an alternative to policies of central government. The SIDT raises awareness, by posing questions such as:

Who benefits from development? Does development always involve economic growth? Who controls the development process? What are the costs of development? and Who pays these costs? (SIDT 1993, p.10).

Their work conducted at the village level stresses the importance of: "focussing on village life as a normal and natural path to initiate sustainable development" (SIDT 1990).

The SIDT also plays a major role in women's development issues. In 1990, expenditure on women's special programs was at \$SI 28,136, featuring as the second largest expenditure area under the special programs category. The aim is the mainstreaming of women's issues in all SIDT projects. As Lateef states:

SIDT makes admirable attempts to fully integrate or mainstream women in all their activities and programs while, at the same time, realising the need to conduct some separate programs for women (1990, p.44).

Work done by the SIDT in relation to women's issues are evident in their monthly published magazine 'Link', where women are regularly featured and their importance in the development process is reinforced. Link also plays a

significant role in educating people on issues which are of importance to women such as, agriculture, violence against women and health. Editions published in 'pidgin' also reinforces the significance placed on women related issues - taking into consideration that the majority of Solomon Islands women use Pidgin ahead of English as their main source of communication. Furthermore, the activities of SIDT's Theatre Group signifies the importance of non-formal education and therefore acknowledge the traditional roles and needs of women. As was stated in the SIDT 1991 Summary Report:

with its emphasis on visual imagery, story telling and audience participation [the theatre group] is able to communicate complex ideas in a simple and direct way (1991, p.6).

Alice Puia (1995) contends that urban development has led to increased violence against women. There is more and more emphasis put on this issue by women's organisations as it has become a major problem. The SIDT recognises the importance of correcting this problem and, therefore, organises programs in educating both men and women (SIDT 1992). The SIDT works with other women's organisations, in conjunction with the police, in an effort to educate people on eliminating violence. Furthermore, with increasing urbanisation and the resulting loss of proximity to relations, customary mechanisms of remedy are no longer accessible to women who experience this type of violent behaviour. Women's organisations such as The National Council of Women and the Women's Development Division, state that the problems of low status of women, economic stress and rapid social change contribute to domestic violence (Puia

1994). It is also believed that the increase of the cash sector and the subsequent boost in the availability of alcohol intensifies domestic violence. This concern over the increased consumption levels of alcohol and its correlation to increased levels of violence against women, was reflected in the recent unsuccessful efforts made by women's groups to block the establishment of a brewery in Honiara (Puia 1994). The changing nature of family structures has had significant implications for women who live in urban areas where family members who could mediate conflict and control violence are now absent. The traditional system of compensation paid to the women's family and the women's ability to stay with her parents until the compensation was paid imposed a powerful check on the husbands' continued violence (UNICEF 1993).

Another factor which is viewed by the SIDT as being critical is 'appropriate technology' (SIDT 1992). As also acknowledged by UNICEF:

Diversity of culture, language, ecology and production are a valuable basis for self reliant and sustainable development and yet it is this diversity and self sufficiency which is most threatened by current approaches to national development (1993, p.20).

Instead of developing technology which will increase dependency on outside maintenance assistance, emphasis needs to be shifted towards developing low-impact technology that can be sustained at the local community level. Appropriate Technology for Community and Environment (APACE) is one such NGO organisation that aims to introduce such technology that

can be controlled, operated, maintained and repaired by the local people who use it. They also stress the importance of developing environmentally responsible technology taking into consideration the important role that environment plays in the lives of Solomon Islands people. Above all, their most important role is to educate people about the meaning of development and convincingly illustrate the legitimacy of an alternative model. The work which they have accomplished in IRIRI village, situated in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands, for example, has demonstrated that self-sufficiency is the central consideration of any development project. This will not only help the economy by saving foreign exchange and decrease export orientation, but will also help to keep the money within the country rather than being absorbed by foreign shareholders (Waddell 1993). As Waddell points out:

Colonial powers were accused of gross paternalism. This must not be replaced by more paternalism on the side of the providers of development assistance. New technology must not be foisted thoughtlessly on others. If a technology is to be transferred to another society, it must be mastered by that society and must not rely for its continued existence on outside skills and expertise. It has taken many years of dedicated voluntary work to enable the people of Iriri to reach their present mastery of the workings of the micro-hydrosystem. ...But enough is enough. The Voko people now wish to control their own destiny. They are well able to do so (1993, p.19).

Solomon Islands women need to determine their own path in the process of development. Organisations which are best suited to do this need to be culturally sensitive and implement culturally specific development programs. Non-government organisations such as the SIDT and APACE are two such organisations. Women's groups which work with the government

tend to be absorbed by the highly bureaucratic system and become limited in their approaches to women's affairs. However, NGOs such as the SIDT offer flexibility because they are not bound by government guidelines and are therefore able to offer an alternative to the existing economic based development strategies of the government.

This chapter has argued; first, the social and economic policies of the current Solomon islands government need to shift away from the economic centred model of development, to a more bottom-up grassroots approach, like the one adopted by the SIDT. Second, that there is a need to address the problems of gender inequality. A change of direction, away from a WID to a WED approach is required. In summing up, the core of an alternative approach must pay attention to the interrelationships between local people and communities and their life sustaining systems (Harcourt 1994). Rather than continue the current legacy of development which accentuates efficiency and growth as the best way to transforming human and natural resources into capital and material fortune, a more humane approach is required. As Hinewirangi Kohu advises:

WAKE UP WORLD! When the headlines show Indigenous people resisting governments' so-called "development", destruction of our Mother Earth, our forests, our oceans, our rivers, this is not some tug of war over a real estate deal: it is a matter of life and death, for we are part of the environment. It's all happening far from your eyes, but its in our backyard, and we are dead serious.

For we know that Mother Earth does not belong to us: but that we belong to Mother Earth (1994; cited in Ishtar, 1994, p.viii).

CONCLUSION

The debates surrounding the concept of mainstream development and Women in Development are very much applicable to Solomon Islands. The current development process adopted by Solomon Islands government is a common trend in most Third World countries. With continuing international pressures applied by foreign investors and international organisations such as the IMF and World Bank, Solomon Islands women and local communities are experiencing mass changes to their social, cultural and political lives. Moreover, this process is also hastened by centralised government decisions, which place heavy reliance on earning quick money through agricultural, particularly dependant on income generated from logging, mining and fisheries. This has further lead to devastating effects on the ecological system of the country.

Focussing on the empirical evidence presented in the earlier chapters, the literature on mainstream development and modernisation, as presented by theorists such as Rostow (1971) and Parsons (1977), cannot be sustained. As such, Women in Development thinking (Boserup 1970; Moser n.d.; Kardam 1991; Callan 1990; Antrobus 1991) is also improper. This approach cannot be applied to Solomon Islands women in a rural setting, as part of an alternative development strategy.

This research has found that the organisations best suited for implementing a decentralised, gender and culturally specific, people-centred approach to development are Non Government

Organisations. The Solomon Islands Development Trust and Appropriate Technology for Community and Environment are two such bodies who are better able to meet the requirements of women and local communities. Adopting a bottom-up approach and working at the grassroots level, they escape the confines of the government bureaucracy, and challenge the direction of current government policy by, at times, working with the government itself. By individually acknowledging the specific and relative needs of the culturally diverse communities within Solomon Islands, they offer resistance to the global forces of western economic development.

This study has been restricted to the experience of one Pacific Island 'Third World' nation. Throughout this paper, it has been reinforced that part of an alternative development approach is its specificity and sensitivity to cultural diversity. The NGOs which have been chosen for the purpose of this study have been limited in the context of Solomon Islands. Although their strategies are proving to be successful within Solomon Islands, they may not necessarily be applicable to other Pacific or Third World nations; or on the other hand they may become part of a global movement.

This study has been more concerned with the reasons **why** an alternative development approach is necessary for Solomon Islands women and local communities. Future research on women and development in Solomon Islands will focus on the **what** rather than the **why** of an alternative development strategy.

Since colonisation, and more recently neo-colonisation, the process of development in Solomon Islands has been 'for' the benefit of the colonisers and the elites, as a response to global pressures. Keeping this in mind, it is time that Solomon Islands women shaped their own future. The alternative views of theorists such as Korten (1991), Hettne (1990), Friedmann (1992), Braidotti (1994) and Kabeer (1994) must be brought to the forefront of all development agendas. This is reinforced by Aung San Suu Kyi in the 1995 Beijing Women's conference, where she states the urgency of the shift in ideology where development must be 'by' people and not just 'for' them.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- Australian International Development Assistance Bureau 1995, Melanesian Forestry Sector Study, Campbell Publishing and Report Service, Canberra.
- Antony, G. & Fleming, E. 1992, 'Agricultural exports and marketing authorities in the South Pacific: an overview', in Agricultural Export Marketing in the South Pacific: The future role of marketing authorities, eds E. Fleming & H. Couter, National Centre for Development Studies, Australia.
- Antrobus, P. 1991, 'Women in Development', in Changing Perceptions, eds T. Wallace and C. March, Oxfam, Oxford.
- Aw, E. 1994, 'What role for communication in development projects?', in Who's telling the story? A conference on media and development in Australia and the Region, eds P. O'Donnell & S. Cunningham, Community Aid Abroad, Victoria.
- Bauer, P., Siwatibau, S. & Kasper, W. 1991, Aid and Development in the South Pacific, Centre for Independent Studies.
- Bilney, G. 1994, Australia's relations with the South Pacific - challenge and change, Australian National University, Canberra.
- Braidotti, R., Charkiewics, E., Hausler, S., and Wieringa, S. 1994, Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development, Zed Books Ltd., London.
- Browne, C. & Scott, D. 1989, Economic Development in Seven Pacific Island Countries, International Monetary Fund, U.S.A.
- Callan, M. 1990, Women in Development - An Interpretive Essay, Deakin University, Australia.
- Chambers, R. 1983, Rural Development: Putting the Last First, Longman Scientific and Technical, England.
- Cole, R.V. & Parry, T.G. (eds) 1986, Selected Issues in Pacific Island Development, National Centre for Development Studies, Australia.
- Commonwealth Secretariat 1990, Engendering Adjustment for the 1990s, Commonwealth Secretariat Publications, London.
- Connell, J. & Lea, J. 1994, 'Cities and Parts, Cities Apart? Changing places in modern Melanesia', The Contemporary Pacific: A journal of Island Affairs, vol. 6, no. 2, pp.

- Crocombe, R. 1981, 'Power, politics and rural people', in The Road out: Rural development in the Solomon Islands, ed S. Oxenham, University of South Pacific, Solomon Islands.
- Development Bulletin, vol. 26, Jan 1993.
- Dixit, K. 1994, 'Global news - a view from the South', in Who's telling the story? A conference on media and development in Australia and the Region, eds P. O'Donnell & S. Cunningham, Community Aid Abroad, Victoria.
- Emberson-Bain, A. 1994, 'Sustaining the Unsustainable?', in Sustainable Development or Malignant Growth - Perspectives of Pacific Island Women, ed. A. Emberson-Bain, Marama Publications, Fiji.
- Fleming, E. & Couter, H. (eds) 1992, Agricultural Export Marketing in the South Pacific: The future role of marketing authorities, National Centre for Development Studies, Australia.
- Foanaota, L. 1989, 'Social change', in PLES BLONG IUMI: Solomon Islands The Past Four Thousand Years, ed H. Laracy, University of South Pacific, Suva and Honiara.
- Fong, E.C.R. & Mamtora, J. (eds) 1991, Literacy and Pacific Women, Fiji Association of Women Graduates, Suva.
- Friedmann, J. 1992, Empowerment: The Politics of Alternative Development, Blackwell Publishers, USA.
- Friesen, W. 1993, 'Melanesian economy on the periphery: migration and village economy in Choiseul', Pacific Viewpoint, vol. 34, no. 2, Oct., pp. 193-214.
- Friesen, W. 1994, 'Forest resources and management in Solomon Islands', Development Bulletin, vol. 31, July.
- Harcourt, W. 1994, Feminist Perspectives on Sustainable Development, ed. W. Harcourt, Zed Books Ltd., London and New Jersey.
- Hendey, D. & Billy, A. 1993, Women in Development: A draft review of Solomon Islands rural women's skills development project 1989-1992, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Wellington, New Zealand.
- Hettne, B. 1990, Development Theory and the Three Worlds, Longman Scientific and Technical, England.
- Howard, M.C., Plange, N.K., Durutalo, S. & Witton, R. 1983, The Political Economy of the South Pacific, James Cook University of North Queensland, Townsville.

- Hughes, H., Ahlburg, D. & Lee, S.H. n.d., 'Human Resources Development in the Pacific Islands Developing countries', in Human Resources Development in Asia and the Pacific: its Social Dimension, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.
- Hviding, Evarð 1992, Upstream Development and Coastal Zone Conservation: Pacific Islands Perspectives on Holistic Planning, Discussion paper commissioned by Greenpeace Pacific Campaign, May.
- Ilala, S. 1992, 'Commodity price stabilisation: a Solomon's perspective', in Agricultural Export Marketing in the South Pacific: The future role of marketing authorities, eds E. Fleming & H. Couter, National Centre for Development Studies, Australia.
- Ishtar, Z., D. 1994, Daughters of the Pacific, Spinefex Press, Australia.
- Kabeer, M. 1994, Reversed Realities - Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought, Verso, Great Britain.
- Kardam, N. 1991, Bringing Women In - Women's Issues in International Development Programs, Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc., United States.
- Kemp, M. 1993, 'The unknown industrial prisoner: Women, modernisation and industrial health', Australian Development Studies Network, Australian National University, no. 30, Jan.
- Korten, D. C. 1990, Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda, Kumarian Press, USA.
- Laracy, H. (ed) 1989, PLES BLONG IUMI: Solomon Islands The Past Four Thousand Years, University of South Pacific, Suva and Honiara.
- Lateef, S. 1990, Women in Development: Solomon Islands, Asia Development Bank.
- Lechte, R. 1983, 'Perspectives on Development', in Australia and the South Pacific: Conference Papers and Reports, ed B. O'Dwyer, The Australian National University, Canberra.
- Marten, K. 1981, 'Forest Resources', in The Road out: Rural development in the Solomon Islands, ed S. Oxenham, University of South Pacific, Solomon Islands.
- McCall, G. 1990, Sydney talk: Australia in the South Pacific, Centre for Pacific Studies, Australia.
- Mies, M. & Shiva, V. 1993, Ecofeminism, Spinifex Press, Melbourne.

- Momsen, H. & Townsend, J. 1987, in Geography of Gender in the Third World, eds J. H. Momsen and J. Townsend, State University of New York Press, Albany.
- Momsen, J. H. 1991, Women and Development in the Third World, Routledge, London.
- Moser, C. O. N. 1991, 'Gender Planning in the Third World: meeting practical and strategic needs', in Gender and International Relations, eds R. Grant and K. Newland, Open University Press, Great Britain.
- Nabalarua, E.K. 1994, 'Managing development in small island communities: the role of community participation in sustainable development', Development Bulletin, vol. 31, July.
- O'Connor, B. 1995, 'Christopher Lasch', Arena, no. 20, Dec-Jan.
- O'Donnell, P. & Cunningham, S. 1994, Who's telling the story? A conference on media and development in Australia and the Region, Community Aid Abroad, Victoria.
- Oxenham, S. (ed) 1981, The Road out: Rural development in the Solomon Islands, University of South Pacific, Solomon Islands.
- Paeniu, B. 1988, The Villager, The Basic Resource of the Development Approach of the Solomon Islands Development Trust (SIDT), South Pacific Commission, New Caledonia, Noumea.
- Papuka, P. interview, Nov. 1994.
- Parsons, T. 1977, The Evolution of Societies, ed T. Jackson, Prentice-Hall, London.
- Pettman, R. 1977, 'The Solomon Islands: a Developing Neo-Colony?' Australian Outlook, vol. 31, no. 2, Aug., pp. 268-278.
- Pollard, A. 1988, 'Solomon Islands', in Pacific Women: role and status of women in Pacific societies, ed T. Tongamoa, Institute of Pacific Studies of the University of South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.
- Puia, A. interview, Nov. 1994.
- Rao, A. 1991, 'Incorporating Gender Issues in Development Training' in Women's Studies International - Nairobi and Beyond, ed. A. Rao, Feminist Press, New York.
- Rostow, W. 1971, Politics and the Stages of Growth, Cambridge University Press, London.

Roughan, J. interview, Nov. 1994.

Schrijvers, J. 1993, The Violence of 'Development', International Books, The Netherlands.

Solomon Islands Development Trust 1987-1994, LINK, SIDT, no. 3-33.

Solomon Islands Development Trust 1990, Summary Report 1990, SIDT, Honiara.

Solomon Islands Development Trust 1990, Mid-Year Report 1990, SIDT, Honiara.

Solomon Islands Development Trust 1991, Summary Report 1991, SIDT, Honiara.

Solomon Islands Development Trust 1992, Mere Save, SIDT, no. 2, Oct-Nov.

Solomon Islands National Council of Women n.d., The constitution of the Solomon Islands National Council of Women.

South Pacific Commission 1994, Third Melanesian Women's Sub-Regional Caucus (Suva, Fiji, 2-4 February 1994), South Pacific Commission, Noumea, new Caledonia.

Suu Kyi, A.S. 1995, 'Document: Aung San Suu Kyi's address to the Beijing Women's Conference, August 1995', Arena, no. 20, Dec-Jan.

Tinker, I. 1990, Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development, Oxford university Press, New York.

Underwood, B. 1991, 'Gender in Development and Feminism: Related but Separate Issues', in Changing Perceptions, eds T. Wallace and C. March, Oxfam, Oxford.

UNDP 1994, Pacific Human Development Report, United Nations Development Programme, Suva, Fiji.

UNICEF 1993, A Situation Analysis of Women and Children in the Solomon Islands, Government of Solomon Islands, Jan.

United Nations - Women's Fourth World Conference 1995, Beijing Declaration and platform for Action 1995, unpublished.

Waddell, R. 1993, Replanting the Banana Tree: A study in Ecological Sustainable Development, APACE, University of Technology, Sydney.

Wagapu, E. interview, Nov. 1994.

Women in Development Division 1991, Mere Made Marketing and Training Centre: Findings of a Feasibility Study, Solomon

Islands Government.

Young, G., Samarasinghe, V., Kusterer, K. 1993, in Women at the Centre: Development Issues and Practices for the 1990s, eds G. Young, V. Samarasinghe, K. Kusterer, Kumariran Press, United States of America.