



POST GRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

MDS 502: SOCIAL POLICY AND GENDER DEVELOPMENT

DATE: 30TH MARCH 2026

DURATION: 3 HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 60

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. **DO NOT** write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains **FOUR (4)** questions.
4. Question **ONE is compulsory**.
5. Answer any other **TWO** questions.
6. Question **ONE** carries **30 MARKS** and the rest carry **15 MARKS** each.
7. **Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided**

QUESTION ONE

Read the Case Study below carefully and answer the questions that follow:

CASE STUDY: SOCIAL POLICY AND GENDER DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Gender-responsive social policy is essential for addressing persistent inequalities and fostering inclusive development. Social policies that integrate gender perspectives can help dismantle structural barriers, empower women and girls, and promote equitable access to resources and opportunities. This case study explores the role of social policy in advancing gender development, highlighting real-world interventions, their impacts, and the challenges faced in implementation.

Political and institutional factors are crucial in shaping gender-sensitive social policies. The political will of governments, the influence of advocacy groups, and the priorities of policymakers all determine whether gender considerations are integrated into policy design and implementation. Institutional barriers, such as bureaucratic inertia or lack of expertise, can slow progress. Strategic alliances among stakeholders and evidence-based advocacy are essential to secure buy-in and ensure that policies address the specific needs and rights of women and girls. Social policies are traditionally designed to address poverty, vulnerability, and social exclusion. However, without a gender lens, these policies risk reinforcing existing inequalities. Gender-responsive social policies recognize the distinct needs, vulnerabilities, and contributions of women, men, girls, and boys. They aim to transform harmful gender norms, promote equality in relationships and opportunities, and support the full development of all individuals.

Social policy shapes gender relations by influencing how resources, opportunities, and responsibilities are distributed within households and communities. For example, policies that provide cash transfers to women can increase their decision-making power and financial independence. However, policies that do not challenge traditional gender roles may reinforce existing inequalities. Social policies can also affect community attitudes by promoting awareness of gender issues and supporting initiatives that encourage equal participation of all genders.

Key Features of Gender-Responsive Social Policy:

Equitable Access: Ensuring equal access to education, health, and economic resources for all genders.

Empowerment: Strengthening women's agency and voice in household and community decision-making.

Protection: Addressing gender-based violence and discrimination.

Transformation: Challenging and changing harmful gender norms and stereotypes. **Strengthen Gender-Sensitive Design:** Integrate gender considerations from the outset. **Build Implementation Capacity:** Invest in training and resources for gender-responsive delivery. **Monitor and Evaluate:** Ensure ongoing assessment of gender impacts.

Comprehensive, Gender-Responsive Design of Social policy should be designed with a clear gender lens, ensuring that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women, girls, men, and boys are addressed. This includes targeted interventions such as cash transfers to women, education scholarships for girls, and programs that challenge harmful gender norms. For example, UNICEF's ONGEA radio drama in Tanzania engaged both adolescents and caregivers in discussions about gender roles, leading to positive changes in attitudes and behaviors. The process has challenges including Resistance to changing traditional gender roles, lack of adequate funding, and insufficient data to inform policy design.

Social policies should empower women and girls by increasing their access to, ownership of, and control over resources. This can be achieved

through programs that provide women with economic opportunities, leadership training, and support for education and health. ODI research highlights that when women have greater agency, household and community dynamics become more equitable. Deep-rooted social norms may limit women's participation, and implementation may be inconsistent across regions. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning could be used to solve the challenges. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are essential to assess the impact of social policies on gender equality. This includes collecting gender-disaggregated data, engaging with beneficiaries, and adapting programs based on feedback. UNICEF's approach of mainstreaming gender socialization into early childhood development programs is an example of adaptive, evidence-based policy. Limited capacity for data collection and analysis, and the risk of unintended negative consequences if programs are not carefully monitored.

Effective social policy is a powerful tool for advancing gender development. By integrating gender perspectives into design, implementation, and evaluation, policymakers can address inequalities, empower marginalized groups, and foster inclusive development. However, success depends on overcoming challenges such as resistance to change, inadequate resources, and weak monitoring systems. Ongoing commitment and innovation are essential for achieving lasting gender-transformative change

Required:

- a) From the case above, explain in what ways social policy shapes gender relations within households and communities.

(10 Marks)

- b) Examine five roles of political and institutional factors play in shaping gender-sensitive social policies.

(10 Marks)

- c) Discuss the significance of international instruments and conventions on women's rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

(CEDAW), and analyze their implications for development processes and social policy. **(10 Marks)**

QUESTION TWO

- a) Discuss how understanding gender as a social construct influences approaches to gender equality and development in contemporary society. **(9 Marks)**
- b) Explain the concept of gender mainstreaming and discuss how it relates to gender development. Provide examples of strategies or approaches used in mainstreaming gender perspectives into development policies and programs. **(6 Marks)**

QUESTION THREE

- a) Examine the importance of fostering policy changes that increase women's land ownership. **(2 Marks)**
- b) Explain two main barriers women face in (a) above. **(2 Marks)**
- c) Assess two strategies governments and civil society can use to promote women's land rights. **(2 Marks)**
- d) Evaluate the importance of addressing gender issues in the planning and implementation of rural infrastructure for agricultural livelihoods. **(6 Marks)**
- e) Discuss the social and cultural problems that contribute to the oppression and exploitation of women in African societies. Support your answer with examples of practices, beliefs, and their impacts. **(3 Marks)**

QUESTION FOUR

- a) Discuss the importance of addressing gender in the planning and implementation of rural infrastructure for agricultural livelihoods.
(5 Marks)
- b) Give your understanding of “gender” in the context of politics and governance. How does it differ from “sex”? **(5 Marks)**
- c) Describe the difference between “governance of gender” and “gender governance.” Provide examples.
(5 Marks)