

Resources, power and women

Proceedings of the African and Asian
Inter-regional Workshop on Strategies
for Improving the Employment Conditions of Rural Women,
Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, 20-25 August 1984

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PREFACE

As part of its continuing effort to encourage debate, discussion and formulation of alternative strategies and actions for promoting employment and income earning opportunities for rural women, the International Labour Office (ILO) organised an African and Asian Inter-regional Workshop on Strategies for Improving the Employment Conditions of Rural Women, in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, from 20-25 August 1984. The Workshop was co-sponsored by the Centre on Integrated Rural Development in Africa (CIRDAFRICA) and funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

The purpose of the Workshop was to exchange information and views on successful and innovative projects for rural women, to draw lessons from successful experiences, and to strengthen ongoing projects and stimulate the initiation of new ones.

The lessons from the field give priority to a number of strategies. Firstly, effective participation - the freedom to organise - is key to rural development. Without organisation poor rural women would not get their rightful share of the productive resources or participate in the decisions that affect their lives. Secondly, development and training of cadres/catalysts is essential since they play a critical role in sustaining people's initiatives. Thirdly, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other intermediaries need to be strengthened as they are often better equipped than governments to introduce innovative strategies and actions.

Women's issues are central and not peripheral to development. The struggle for equality is not a struggle between women and men - it is a struggle to change social structures and attitudes.

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We would like to thank H.E. Gertrude Mongella, the Chairperson, B. H. Sethi and Felicitas Baleña, the Vice Chairpersons and Vina Mazumdar, the Chief Reporter of the Workshop.

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Rounaq Jahan was the consultant for the organisation of the Workshop and she prepared this report. We are indebted to her.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Objective and Background

The Arusha Workshop provided a timely forum for a stimulating debate on alternative strategies to improve rural women's employment conditions in Africa and Asia. The participants, both women and men, came from different nationalities and backgrounds, yet they shared a common concern about rural development and women. They were acutely aware of the processes that were pauperising and marginalising a large section of the rural population, particularly women; at the same time, they were familiar with a number of strategies and initiatives that were being taken in different countries to address the issue of rural poverty and underdevelopment. The knowledge of the approaching end of the United Nations Decade for Women in 1985 - when a stock-taking of accomplishments and problems of the last decade should take place - was also present in the participants' consciousness; so was the awareness that women's problems which had been created over centuries could not be solved in just one decade, that long and short term strategies for action for the next few decades would have to be worked out carefully, yet with a sense of urgency. The venue of the Workshop - the United Republic of Tanzania, where debates about rural development strategies are a critical national concern - highlighted the significance of the topics under discussion; and the divergent experiences of the participants - high level government officials with planning responsibilities, representatives from Employers' and Workers' organisations, researchers and grass-roots activists, representatives of inter-governmental, non-governmental and donor agencies - added a richness to the debates.

The major objectives of the Arusha Workshop, which was conceived as a dialogue between policy makers, grass-roots activists and representatives of non-government and other organisations, were the following:

- to evaluate what has been learned and accomplished after a decade's work with rural women;
- to suggest lessons and strategies for actions from field level experiences; and
- to encourage more effective and follow-up policies, programmes and projects for rural development with poor women.

The Workshop was co-sponsored by the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Africa (CIRDAFRICA). It was part of an inter-regional ILO project funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) on the "Identification of Successful Projects for Improving the Employment Conditions of Rural Women". The project grew out of a common concern among women researchers in Africa and Asia to move away from pure research identifying why rural development has not helped women to documenting initiatives which are working in some way to improve the economic and social conditions of poor rural women.

The criteria for determining "success" of any initiative were laid down as:

- improvement of women's material conditions of life along with an increase in their economic and social independence and autonomy;
- enhancement of their access to productive resources and their access to and control over household income;
- full participation in the initiatives at all levels, especially in the decision making process together with enhancement of their confidence and solidarity;
- capacity to demonstrate the value of women's work; and
- potentiality of the initiative for sustainability and replicability.

From 1982, the ILO project helped researchers and activists to identify and document nearly 50 cases in Africa and Asia as "successful". They demonstrated ways in which initiatives supportive of rural women can contribute to rural and national development. As a result, the project was able to draw a few "lessons" about what constitutes "successful" projects, what are the forces that promote and support such initiatives, and what kind of follow-up actions are required. In the Arusha Workshop, a number of such "lessons" were presented in the context of concrete case studies to facilitate debate, discussion and formulation of strategies for action. Since the primary theme was "strategies to improve the employment conditions of rural women", the various panels of the Workshop focused on a few selected strategies, viz. promoting special projects and programmes for women (Panel 1), giving women access to and control over resources (Panels 2 and 3) and organising and conscientising women for participation (Panel 4). Following analysis and debate of the major issues in the panel sessions, three working groups were set up to suggest follow-up strategies for action.

This report of the Workshop is organised in eight chapters. Chapter 1 describes the objective and background of the Workshop and reports on the inaugural and introductory sessions. Chapter 2 summarises the major issues and strategies for action discussed in the plenary and the working group sessions. The suggestions for follow-up include not only those specifically identified by the participants but also those that emerged naturally from the discussions. Chapters 3 to 7 report on the different panels of the Workshop. Each chapter briefly notes the panel presentations, followed by general discussion. There were five panels, viz. Women's Projects and Programmes (Chapter 3), Access to and Control over Resources: Land/Forest (Chapter 4), Credit and Marketing (Chapter 5), Organisation, Conscientisation and Participation (Chapter 6) and Approaches to Technical Co-operation (Chapter 7). Chapter 8 reports on the strategies for action suggested by the three working groups. The Annex contains a brief note on the field trip, the agenda and documentation for the Workshop as well as the list of participants. The full text of the inaugural address by the Chief Minister of Zanzibar, the Honourable Sief Shariff Hamad, which the participants felt was a significant statement on strategies to improve the employment conditions of rural women, is also annexed.

1.2 The Introductory Sessions

The Workshop participants were welcomed by Ibrahim M. Kaduma (Director, CIRDAFRICA), Dharam Ghai (Chief of the Rural Employment Policies Branch of the ILO) and Henning Kjeldgaard (Ambassador of Denmark to the United Republic of Tanzania). The Workshop was then addressed and inaugurated by the Honourable Sief Shariff Hamad (Chief Minister, Zanzibar). He stressed that genuine rural development is possible only when employment conditions of rural women are improved and this can be done by integrating and giving preferential treatment to women's concerns in all rural development plans. John Seal (Director, ILO Office in Dar-es-Salaam) proposed a vote of thanks.

The Honourable Gertrude Mongella (Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office of the United Republic of Tanzania) was elected Chairperson of the Workshop. B.M. Sethi (Employers' representative) and Felicitas Baleña (Workers' representative) were elected as Vice-chairpersons and Vina Mazumdar was elected as Chief Reporter. A statement was read out on behalf of Shimwaayi Muntemba, the Project Co-ordinator of the ILO project on Identification of Successful Projects for Improving the Employment Conditions of Rural Women, who for medical reasons had been unable to travel to Arusha; she wished the Workshop every success. Then some introductory information on the ILO's programmes on rural development, women's programmes and the Workshop was presented by Dharam Ghai (ILO) and Martha Loutfi (ILO).

Dharam Ghai touched on ILO's approach to its work on rural development and rural women workers. Since its inception, the ILO has been preoccupied with questions of social justice. This concern has found concrete expression in measures to promote the status and well-being of workers throughout the world. Over the years a body of labour standards has been developed covering a wide range of issues of concern to workers. These standards have had a significant impact on national labour legislation.

The ILO has also developed practical programmes of assistance in a number of fields such as training, industrial relations, workers' education, co-operatives, social security, conditions of work and employment promotion. In the early years the bulk of the efforts went into programmes for workers in the organised sectors. Since the initiation of the World Employment Programme in 1969 and, more particularly, since the World Employment Conference in 1976, the ILO has been devoting increasing attention to rural development and workers in informal and unorganised sectors. Its approach to rural development has been characterised by a focus on poverty and disadvantaged groups; the need to develop programmes and measures to increase incomes and material welfare through promotion of remunerative employment and enhancing the access of the rural poor to productive assets and skills; and promotion of rural workers' organisations and their effective participation in rural development programmes. In addition to the areas outlined above, the ILO has carried out work on characteristics and dynamics of rural poverty, employment and income distribution, the impact of different agrarian systems, the impact of state policies on migration, labour markets in rural areas and participatory organisations of the rural poor.

With respect to rural women workers, the programme has comprised a set of inter-related activities in research, workshops and seminars, pilot field projects and advisory services. The approach has been to focus on critical but neglected questions, to build up a knowledge base for launching of practical programmes and to encourage involvement of researchers and NGO's in grass-roots action with women's groups. The Arusha Workshop and the preceding activities under the project are part of the continuing efforts to promote the overall objectives - an equitable, self-reliant and participatory pattern of development which includes women as well as men.

Martha Loutfi explained that the origin of the ILO's project on Identification of Successful Projects for Improving the Employment Conditions of Rural Women lay in the belief that positive, often isolated steps were being taken especially by rural women themselves, in spite of the negative impact on them of many development projects and policies. In their effort rural women may need allies in the structures and

sympathetic officials need more knowledge of the people's needs and priorities. The principle of this ILO effort has been to facilitate learning from the field and from each other. Inspiration for the project came from African and Asian activists, as did the criteria for success and guidance for the project. It has generally been found that cross-fertilisation, at various levels, is an effective method of encouraging more appropriate initiatives and extending knowledge, inspiration and courage, for which the ILO plays a catalytic role.

One could see as much failure as success in the cases documented under the project (granted difficulties with indicators and perspectives of evaluators). They represent as many questions as answers and no formulae but they show, within general processes of change, some constructive elements and signs of encouragement on which one can build.

Some general lessons emerged from the reports prepared for the Workshop. One must take account of the overall context - constrained national economies, inequalities in societies and deep-seated barriers to greater power and influence of women. One should start where people are, e.g. supporting women workers in what they are doing or choose to take up to meet their own and their families' needs. Certainly, access to assets (especially land), credit and markets are important, but an organisational base is at the heart of success and sustainability, and is most effective when of the people's own choosing to pursue goals they set for themselves. Yet supportive infrastructures (governmental, academic, etc.) are often very important. Other issues which emerged include improving the channels of information between the grass-roots and higher levels, expansion (or replication), the relationship of people's organisations to government and the legal status of women (including property laws).

The project - and the Workshop - represented guarded optimism that the many setbacks for rural women have been part of a process of learning and strengthening that lays the ground for more relevant, constructive initiatives by those who, like the participants in the Arusha Workshop, are in a position to contribute in some way to the struggle of the poor, and especially women, against poverty and oppression.

CHAPTER 2

MAJOR ISSUES, CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTED FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS

There were lively debates on a number of issues in the Arusha Workshop. This chapter attempts to highlight only the major ones. The remaining chapters describe in detail all the issues raised, conclusions drawn and strategies suggested.

Debates centred around several strategies that have been promoted in recent years to improve rural women's working and living conditions and give them, in general, a greater role in developmental decisions that affect their lives. These were strategies of (1) special projects/programmes for women; (2) special structures for women, including national machineries; (3) giving women access to and control over resources, and (4) organising and conscientising women for participation.

2.1 Women's Projects/Programmes

In the last decade special projects/programmes for women, particularly income-generating projects, have been promoted as a vehicle to improve their employment and working conditions. The Workshop debated the problems as well as the potentials of this particular strategy.

The problems of adopting a "project approach to development" in general and women's projects in particular, are many. The "project approach" is often reformist in character and does not plan for or contribute to structural changes. It is generally top heavy in administration and has limited multiplier effect. In many instances, women's projects and programmes marginalise women's concerns instead of integrating them in mainstream development. They are often designed as hobbies - part-time activities to give women supplementary income and ignore women's main economic activities and their critical need for full-time employment and income to sustain themselves and their families. They generally maintain and replicate the existing sexual division of labour and do not give women skills and knowledge to adapt, change and advance with changes in technology and labour markets.

In spite of the above limitations of the "project approach" and especially of women's projects as they are generally designed, a consensus (with certain qualifications) emerged at the Workshop to continue a strategy of special projects and programmes for women in the next few decades. It was argued that the "project approach" was necessary because most national development plans and programmes are broken down in the form of projects and projects are one way of demonstrating what can be done to field level bureaucrats and implementers who may otherwise either lack the

initiative to launch a programme or resist it. In addition, projects/programmes can provide poor women with opportunities to handle resources, manipulate power and make decisions - opportunities which many of them would not have in the absence of these projects. The importance of this experience in tackling the issues of underdevelopment and dependency was emphasised.

However, the orientation of women's income-generating projects should be changed from welfare to development. They should be based on women's main economic activities and should be economically viable and profitable.

The promotion of special projects and programmes for women does not imply a lack of commitment to an integrated approach of development. Indeed, the importance of well articulated national policies and specific objectives on women's participation in development and their reflection in national development plan documents was stressed. But it was felt that to redress the historical inequalities between men and women, preferential policies and policies of positive discrimination in favour of women are called for. The simultaneous pursuit of integrated and separate approaches to development has to be understood and appreciated in this context.

For more effective projects and programmes a number of strategies were suggested, most notably the following:

- the two-pronged approach of promoting women's participation in integrated projects and having separate projects for women should be used as a major strategy;
- in the planning stages of all national projects, roles for women should be carved and target population and beneficiaries should be disaggregated by sex. Specific proportions of resources (finance, facilities, personnel) of mainstream development projects and their preferential allocation have to be made available to women's programmes and projects;
- safeguards should be built into all project plans to prevent women suffering negative effects;
- projects should be self-sustaining and economically viable and should give women income, upgraded skills and participation in project decisions.

2.2 National Machineries

The strategy of creating special structures for women, particularly national machineries, was another major topic of debate. Again, the problems, limitations and future role of national machineries were discussed.

Similar to special projects and programmes, national machineries too can be limiting. In many cases they have been marginalised in the power structures and in many others they have not effectively mobilised women's issues and interests, particularly at the grass-roots level. However, it was felt that in spite of these problems national machineries have made important contributions in creating awareness of women's issues and in the next few decades, instead of being dismantled these machineries should be strengthened and made more effective by the allocation of adequate resources, the establishment of a grass-roots base and the acquisition of a mandate to affect the programmes and plans of other ministries.

Several suggestions with regard to role, function and scope of national machineries were made, viz:

- national machineries should play a co-ordinating and catalytic role in influencing mainstream development policies and programmes;
- for effectiveness in influencing policy, national machineries should be located in the most powerful structure in the government, i.e. President's or Prime Minister's offices or Ministries of Finance and Economic Planning;
- special women's units or departments in the sectoral ministries should be created where they do not exist and strengthened where they already exist to enable effective integration of women in the ministries' plans and programmes;
- the national machineries should call for annual reports from central government ministries and agencies and state/regional governments for review of achievements concerning women and should undertake publication and dissemination of the information;
- national machineries should be active in mobilising the contributions and capacities of women's organisations, especially at the grass-roots level, as well as those of other structures and individuals, such as NGO's, trade unions, universities and national and local development structures.

2.3 Access to and Control over Resources

Discussions on the strategy of giving women access to and control over resources mostly focused on issues which are critical but have not yet received priority attention of policy makers.

Land was identified as a significant productive resource over which women have little control. This, in turn, limits women's access to other resources, viz. credit, seeds, fertilisers, irrigation, training in agricultural extension, etc. The role of law in determining access to land was emphasised. In many cases women do not have legal rights to own land and even in situations where they have the legal right, customary law, family traditions, inheritance systems and their acceptance of subordination often prevent women from exercising that right. Often there are contradictions within the laws - between different forms of ownership (communal, corporate, individual, state) as well as between different systems of rights under uncoded customary, coded scriptural and statutory secular laws. In addition, land reforms and land settlement schemes have often neglected women.

Although the issue of women's rights to land had been discussed in many international forums, including the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD), the deliberations of these bodies and the decisions taken have not been adequately disseminated or implemented. Noting the complexities and contradictions of the existing laws, it was suggested that a priority area of action is research to identify contradictions in laws relating to ownership of land, family laws (including customs), constitutional guarantees of women's rights and laws for the protection of workers. CIRDAFRICA was urged to organise a study and a seminar on the above theme to provide some documentation for the World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985.

The access of poor women to forest (on which they depend heavily for fuel, fodder and food) is eroding fast in many places and this is another critical area of concern. Afforestation policies, including social forestry, have tended to ignore the needs and views of women and to encourage plantations which provide quick financial returns for commercial interests. Since it is the poor rural women who have to bear the brunt of adjustments to fuel, fodder and food scarcity, a number of strategies were suggested to give women access to forest, including the following:

- women's groups should be involved in social forestry projects and due consideration should be given to their preference in the choice of species for plantation; and

- women should be trained at local and national levels in technology relating to forestry and they should be recruited in forestry departments.

Credit is yet another significant resource to which women have little access. Poor rural women suffer from a number of handicaps, i.e. illiteracy, lack of time, lack of collateral, need for consumption loans, etc., which few credit schemes address. Although their rate of repayment is generally high and in many countries their savings are mobilised by major banks and small savings societies, women are still suspect in terms of their credit worthiness and they face discrimination.

However, in recent years two innovative methods of extending credit to rural women have been introduced in several countries. The first is providing credit through mobile credit officers, sensitive to women's needs, often without collateral; and the second is organising poor women to form their own financial institutions in which they participate both as beneficiaries and as decision makers. The importance of strengthening and expanding such schemes was emphasised. Two specific actions were suggested:

- women's development banks with mobile credit officers should be established at the national and local levels to provide credit, skill training in productive activities, marketing and other supportive services to women's groups; and
- participatory credit institutions should be organised at local levels to support and disseminate the services that may be developed by institutions like the women's development banks.

Marketing is another major problem of women producers. More and more women need to produce for the market, yet they lack knowledge of input market, pricing, accounting, quality control, product markets, etc. They have little holding power and cannot afford delayed payments for their products. Dependence on intermediaries for selling their products has made many rural women producers easy victims of exploitation.

The formation of local producers' organisations to protect their interests was suggested as a strategy. Another strategy is development of infrastructural services, i.e. roads, transport, storage facilities, raw materials banks, production units to improve techniques and quality of production, marketing information and training, etc.

2.4 Organisation, Conscientisation and Participation

Organisation based on grass-roots initiatives and control was identified as the most effective strategy to give women access to and control over resources and to promote their participation in development. It is important for women workers' organisations to develop an awareness of existing exploitative and oppressive structures and relations in order to be able to devise strategies for long-term structural changes. The role of catalysts in sustaining organisations and conscientisation was highlighted and the importance of training catalysts/cadres was noted.

A number of strategies were suggested to promote the role of participatory organisations and training of cadres/catalysts, most notably the following:

- organisations should ensure that rural women share equitably in the fruits of their labour and in national resources, and should demand that governments give substance to the rural development rhetoric contained in official plans and policies;
- organisations must enable people to identify their own needs and priorities as well as their own solutions to problems. They must ensure participation by all members and leadership should be collective;
- there should be a continuous process of conscientisation - its purpose is the development of the critical social awareness that power is ultimately with the people themselves; it is a process in which people from their own reflection achieve a deepening awareness both of the social reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality;
- concrete and local issues should be points of entry for conscientisation and organisation. Often this could be a means through which rural women (and men) could come to a realisation of the wider national and international structures which condition their lives;
- for more effective organisations, cadres/catalysts should be carefully and systematically mobilised and trained. Although the best form of training is through involvement in concrete action, cadres can also benefit from formal and informal courses, more particularly from cross fertilisation of experiences. The ILO was urged to organise national, but preferably regional or inter-regional, courses for potential cadres; and

- funds should be provided not only for training but also for the institutional support of cadres.

The role and responsibility of trade unions in supporting rural women's organisations was stressed. Trade unions were urged to demonstrate their commitment to women's issues by facilitating the formation of strong women's committees in trade unions or strong women's trade unions. The role of some employers' organisations and companies in rural development, including their work with catalysts, NGO's and universities was noted.

The extensive debates in the Workshop on the roles of national policies, structures, programmes, projects, laws, resource distribution, skill development and organisation did not imply the workshop's insensitivity to the role of ideology, values and culture, of patriarchy and socialisation processes, in determining women's employment and working conditions. The ideological and cultural forces that limit the implementation of laws and of well-intentioned, well-designed policies and programmes were stressed. Patriarchy creates resistance to change and constrains the vision of the future. Women's organisations have a critical role to play in raising the consciousness of women with regard to the persistent burden of patriarchy.

CHAPTER 3
WOMEN'S PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

3.1 Panel Presentation

In Panel 1, Women's Projects and Programmes, case studies were presented by Filomina Steady (Sierra Leone) and Sarala Gopalan (India). Terry Kantai (Kenya) and Rounaq Jahan (Bangladesh) were discussants (many others "contributed" - these were the formal discussants).

Filomina Steady presented an account of two "successful" projects in Sierra Leone. The first, co-sponsored by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of Sierra Leone, involved the introduction of a new fish-smoking technology using imported materials in the fishing village of Tombo as part of a community project to improve artisanal fishing. The project was planned for six years and has a budget of 12.11 million Deutschmarks and 900,000 leones.

The project has enabled village women, traditionally processors of fish for sale to professional market women, to increase their efficiency and to control the price at which they sell fish because of improved storage facilities. Some have become boat owners with control over their own fish supply (otherwise bought from men).

Although the project is successful by several criteria, it raises a number of problems: it demands scarce foreign exchange to maintain its imported technology, e.g. oven parts, petrol driven boats; it leads to indebtedness as people borrow to acquire the new technology; it is top heavy in its expensive (foreign) administration of experts and it is profit-seeking. In short, it creates the dependency that development ought to overcome. The benefits to the men and women of Tombo are no way near the benefits to the foreign executing agency, the foreign suppliers of vehicles and materials and the foreign staff.

The second is a self-help project. The Gloucester Development Association Project, founded in 1977, aims to foster development in the village through improved farming methods and the provision of market stalls for sale of produce, supported by day care centres, bulk buying of food supplies, adult education, etc. Although it operates on a modest budget of 500 leones its achievements are significant, self-sustaining and replicable.

The major lessons drawn from the two projects are the following:

- The success of a project should not be measured by the size of its budget. High profile expensive projects that are dependent on imported technology and expatriate staff are generally not self-sustaining;
- utilisation of local resources in human as well as physical and fiscal terms better ensures replicability of projects; and
- access to resources and services are critical to the success of projects. Acceptance of a project is easier if it demonstrates a capacity to improve income earning opportunities and provides intervention in other areas such as provision of water and better public health and sanitation measures.

Rural women's economic problems are problems of underdevelopment and dependency. There is a danger that projects may deal with symptoms rather than causes. Since projects are usually reformist in character rather than promoting structural change, their contribution to improving women's status is normally self-limiting.

In her presentation of a case study of a successful programme of employment and income generation for women in Kerala, India, the Trivandrum Experiment, Sarala Gopalan highlighted the successful linkage between the government's policies for poverty eradication and the women's welfare organisations. The programme's catalyst was a female government official posted in Trivandrum as a district collector. She was faced by an imponderable demand from a large number of literate and educated unemployed women for jobs.

She offered them an alternative incentive of credit through nationalised banks to set themselves up in petty trades or production for the market. Negotiations initiated with the nationalised banks elicited a positive response; the banks who were not utilising the 1 per cent of their advances earmarked for the weaker sections of the community were given an opportunity to do so. Since the banks had no machinery for ensuring repayment and it seemed to be a bottle-neck, government functionaries and block development officers (who were normally concerned with nutrition or extension work) were given this responsibility. These officers supervised the repayment of loans on a regular weekly basis and the banks were satisfied with the repayment of the loans.

Loans were taken for a variety of schemes. Self-employment, however, proved difficult for many. So it was decided to involve the Mahila Samajams (welfare oriented women's organisations started under the Community Development Programme of

the 1950's) in the organisation of production and marketing. The establishment of women's industrial co-operatives earlier had failed because there had been a lack of links with the market, follow-up, sufficient inputs and detailed planning.

Project implementation became more effective as the Mahila Samajams were involved in production and marketing and a special post was created within the government in 1975 to supervise production, to monitor credit flow by liaising with banks and to assist the organisations in procurement of raw material, etc.

Although the district collector who initiated this project was transferred, she kept in touch and requested her successors to provide some support. Even with declining support from the Collector's Office, the scheme was sustained because the Mahila Samajams were able to build rapport with the banks to help procure loans. Linkages were also built with a number of other developmental organisations, such as the State Marketing Corporation, the Central Social Welfare Board, the Khadi Board, etc., to promote more employment programmes for women. Mahila Samajams were encouraged to form a District Level Federation to establish showrooms, organise training programmes and provide bridge finance.

Amongst the initial schemes, loans were successfully utilised for purchase of sewing machines, bicycles for fish vendors and for a dairy project (which proved to be most successful). Fish-net-making, food processing, garment-making and handicrafts were the major varieties of income generating activities.

In highlighting the success of this experiment it was noted that:

- the role of the catalyst was important in helping women to understand the market and in providing the necessary linkage for women's need for skills, markets and capital;
- women's organisations with proper motivation could change their orientation from welfare to development and become an important instrument for employment generation;
- even general government programmes such as a directive to banks with regard to DRI (differential rate of interest) and special attention to disadvantaged sections, could be interpreted to suit the specific needs of schemes for women's development;

- initial problems and temporary setbacks are necessary parts of a programme's development, and successful strategies can be built on the basis of lessons learned from failures; and
- the success of an enterprise depends very much on the quality of leadership which could provide a proper direction. The democratisation of organisation of work at a very early stage could affect the enterprise negatively.

Rounaq Jahan (discussant) observed that the two case studies identified three common factors as necessary elements of a successful project/programme.

- The role of dynamic individual leadership and field staff in initiating and sustaining projects/programmes. This raises the issue of mobilisation and training of development cadres who must be committed but need not necessarily be highly educated;
- the need for a flexibility of approach which enables a project/programme to learn from actual experience, to recognise participants' needs and to adapt project/programme goals and direction to the changing needs of beneficiaries; and
- the judicious use of existing structures and networks such as the government machineries and women's formal (e.g. India) and informal (e.g. Sierra Leone) organisations and, when necessary, change in traditional orientation to suit the development strategy of a specific project/programme.

The issue of long-term continuity of projects and programmes was raised, particularly in cases started by outside intervention.

The problems inherent in the "project approach" to development are evident in the dependency syndrome it tends to create. Concentration of resources in a single project is limiting in its financial and multiplier effect. Often "showpiece" projects and programmes are developed to the detriment of other projects and programmes. Moreover, unless a project or a programme is linked to a major government or national policy there is no spill over effect.

Macro policies and special projects/programmes for women often work at cross purposes - the various development policies pursued by a state may result in loss of

employment and income earning opportunities for a far greater number of women than would women's special projects and programmes.

Do women's projects and special structures marginalise women? It was suggested that the promotion of women's projects and special structures had been adopted as a short term strategy to better integrate women's needs, interests and rights into development policies more effectively, but, to bring this about, the role and function of these projects and structures should be carefully delineated. Women's projects and special structures should not be substituted for a comprehensive development approach which could be incorporated into national policies and national structures. Projects should provide an indication of the possibility of work on a wider scale and special structures should act as catalysts and monitor the effect of development policies and programmes on women in all areas.

To be successful, projects and programmes must take account of women's present roles and status, but caution should be exercised in order that the existing sexual division of labour is not perpetuated. Projects should build on the skills and knowledge women already possess, but forward planning is necessary to anticipate future changes in the labour market and to prevent the now familiar trend towards the replacement of women's work or its relegation to low returns with every technological innovation and change.

A project/programme has to recognise the needs of the individual as well as the family and should plan for areas of both family co-operation and conflict.

Self-reliance at the grass-roots level is a necessary and welcome strategy but it should not be used as a substitute for rural development projects undertaken by governments. At the local level, people can be most effectively organised around local issues that are relevant for their day-to-day existence but the linkage between local, national and international issues must be made. The effect of national policies and international interests on the grassroots should not be ignored.

Terry Kantai (discussant) argued that the problem lies not with the concept of project but with the planning approach. Should one design projects specifically for women or for the total life of the community? Women's projects which had failed had mostly adopted a top-down approach without paying due regard to people's situations, priorities and motivation. Access to information had often been a critical factor in stimulating grass-roots action.

Women work within an ideological/political structure which must be understood if women are to share power. They must take into account existing power structures, such as the governments, banks, etc., and establish relationships with other significant groups and organisations. Women must understand the process of commercialisation that is changing their lives.

At present, rural women are dependent on a few unstable channels to establish linkages with resources and power structures. These channels need to be strengthened and stabilised - for information, encouragement, the making of contacts, training in new skills. In short, responsive, committed and intelligent support, which could help rural women to use and manage the power machineries and the monetised society, must be given. Rural women already contribute to and manage family resources - although their legal status needs critical examination - but they must now enter the process of planning and they must learn the necessary techniques.

3.2 Discussion

The general discussion following the panel presentation focused on the issues involving women's projects/programmes and special structures as well as the broader concerns of women's participation in development.

There was a lively debate on the "project approach" to development. It was suggested by many that the "project approach" to development should continue to be used as a major strategy. It was made clear that the term "project approach" refers not merely to separate women's projects but also to other development projects. All development plans and programmes are broken down and undertaken in the form of projects. The reasons given in support of adopting a strategy of promoting women's projects were the following:

- women are invisible in mainstream development plans and this is one way to break the barriers;
- the projects provide examples of what can be undertaken to field level bureaucrats and implementers who often lack the initiative and creativity for launching programmes on their own;
- the projects serve as a way of breaking resistance at lower decision making and implementation levels and of changing attitudes in order to bring about a realisation that women have as much right to development assistance as others; and
- projects can provide productive employment opportunities for women.

Projects can also play a critical role in bringing about fundamental changes in attitudes and in providing women with opportunities for exercising power and making decisions. The importance of this experience of manipulating power in tackling the issues of underdevelopment and dependency was stressed. It was pointed out that projects should be regarded as a means to an end rather than an end in themselves.

It was also argued that some projects do address themselves to questions of underdevelopment and dependency; they can be rooted in women's lives and contribute to structural change.

It was stressed that women's income generating projects, when designed as additional activities to rural women's existing farming and household responsibilities, put additional demands on the women's time and efforts. To overcome this, projects should be designed on the basis of women's main economic activities, e.g. coffee, cotton projects, etc. The advantage of this approach in increasing the return to women's labour from their main economic activity was emphasised.

It is also important to change the orientation of women's economic projects from welfare to development. The present tendency to look at projects as ways of "assisting women" perpetuate dependency. It was suggested that projects be designed and implemented with a view to fostering self-reliance and growth through economically viable and profitable projects. Careful analysis of marketing opportunities, effective organisation, management development and skills training is needed.

It was noted that the proliferation of different organisations and agencies working separately to "assist women" and getting recognition had resulted in wasted energy. It was therefore suggested that all activities should be co-ordinated and that organisations and agencies should work together for optimum use of existing resources.

Finally, the importance of women's projects as vehicles of development was stressed. The following were cited as necessary conditions to promote women's equal participation:

- the need for change in traditional attitudes including women's perception of themselves;
- change in the socialisation process; and
- need for change in legal and educational structures for the effective involvement of women in development.

It was pointed out that it is difficult to achieve the above when women are discriminated against in mainstream development activities. Women's projects can provide opportunities for women to take the first steps in learning the tools, techniques and skills of politics, administration and management, in developing their self-confidence, incitating a power base and in earning much needed income.

In the discussions, several points were raised regarding the main theme of the Workshop, i.e. improving the employment conditions of rural women and regarding women's effective participation in development.

Reservations were expressed over the use of the term "integration of women in development", which makes it appear as if women are not participating. It was pointed out that the major problem is that the contributions women make to the economy are not quantified or given a monetary value. Suggestions were made on how to measure the value of women's work, create different opportunities for women and avoid projects which exploit women.

The real issue is not that women are not participating but the fact that they do so under difficult conditions. It was suggested that policies and programmes be made to:

- alleviate women's burdens and increase returns for their labour; and
- benefit women through preferential and positive discriminatory policies, as is being done in some countries for selected disadvantaged groups.

It was argued that improving the employment conditions of women is key to raising their status. Use of appropriate and better technology at home and in work can alleviate the burden of women and relieve them from long, arduous hours spent in fetching water and fuel, cooking and storing food and in various farming activities. Training in productive and appropriate skills and knowledge, e.g. land utilisation, land conservation, food storage, food preservation, agricultural extension, management, etc., will improve returns to women's labour. Rural women's productivity and income can also be improved by literacy programmes, since illiteracy contributes to their receiving low returns for their labour.

The importance and advantage of government policies which recognise the disadvantaged position of women was highlighted through the example of the Tanzanian Government's policy of positive discrimination for women. A special quota of seats is

reserved for women in Parliament on the argument that without correcting the imbalances created by historical and traditional factors, effective and equal participation of women cannot take place.

The importance of using the existing power structures to improve women's working conditions was also pointed out.

The policy implications of looking at women as factors of development rather than as isolated entities was stressed. A case in point is the problem of food shortages and women's role as main food producers in Africa. There, a strategy of improving women's productivity would result in improved food production.

A different view which was expressed was that the central issue was development, and not special privileges for either men or women. To achieve a classless society, there should be integrated development for society as a whole.

Summing up the discussions, the Chairperson felt that the following issues needed careful consideration:

- Women come together in projects because they need more income to support their families. Projects should be more multipurpose and responsive to the different needs and possibilities of rural women. While taking adequate account of the historical background of the group, projects should help women get gain new knowledge and skills and improve their productivity and income. Unfortunately, however, most women's projects promote hobbies and part-time activities instead of focusing on women's major economic activities. Women are the main producers of food. Why are they not thought of when governments plan for increased food production? Why are not projects for cotton or coffee thought of as women's projects?
- Are all the problems of rural women to be solved through a project approach? What are the additional methods necessary to improve the balance between resources, infrastructure and marketing? How should the low returns of most projects be improved? How can projects be sustained and replicated?
- The issue of women's legal status needs examination, particularly in relation to property rights. How can women's legal rights be guaranteed both in theory and in practice?

- How can the linkage between national economic policies, programmes and plans and rural women's projects be developed and strengthened? How can projects be made integral parts of long-term processes of development?
- It is the labour of rural women that supports most African societies. One should not talk of helping them - but how can their rightful role in determining the direction of development be ensured? What should be the role of national machineries in this process?
- Dynamic leadership plays a critical role - how can such leadership be generated?

CHAPTER 4

ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES : LAND/FOREST

4.1 Panel Presentation

In Panel 2, Access to and Control over Resources: Land/Forest, case studies were presented by Marjorie Mbilinyi (Tanzania) and Vina Mazumdar (India). Ruvimbo Chimedza (Zimbabwe) and Noeleen Heyzer (Malaysia) were discussants.

The presentation by Marjorie Mbilinyi highlighted key issues and contradictions from seven case studies (by a team of researchers) in Tanzania where the question of access to land has to be understood within the framework of state ownership. There are marked differences in terms of availability of land ranging from abundance to scarcity. The real issue is putting the land to work. This raises related questions of who has access to and control over: labour, organisation of labour, means of production and benefits from increased production.

The differentiation between groups with consequent effect on households' relations, within the village and within co-operatives, affects women's access to means of production as well as benefits from production.

Decisions affecting land use are influenced by the valuation of cash crops over food crops and the increasing pressure to produce for the market. But often women are not interested in producing more if they have to continue producing as petty commodity producers and seasonal or full-time labourers. Moreover, in many cases the whole village is being pauperised, even the rich peasants are losing, and the whole village has to go out to find work.

This dire need for cash has opened up new avenues for income generation by women, such as beer brewing but this has also resulted in men relinquishing their family responsibilities. Moreover, as mechanisation is introduced and profits increase in women's enterprises, there is a tendency for men to take them over.

Women have a high degree of consciousness; they resist threats to their access to resources and increasing labour burdens and they organise themselves. They are also using the mechanisms of co-operatives to promote collective ownership and lessen their labour burdens through the communal ownership and use of machines.

One contradiction that has to be addressed is the problem of power relations within co-operatives and the need to democratise some of these organisations. This

would promote participatory decision making and the dignity of the human being. Women members do not have basic information on the workings and finances and do not feel that they own the co-operatives' assets.

The power machineries of the government, the banks and the donor agencies tend to support large scale private and state enterprises rather than small, grass-roots co-operatives. This has increased their isolation and vulnerability, especially in the case of women's co-operatives.

It is important to work on developing alternative possibilities for women to organise themselves and to generate new sources of power.

Vina Mazumdar reported on a project involving landless, totally assetless women agricultural labourers from forest and hilly areas of India. Deforestation has forced these people into seasonal labour in other districts. Both men and women are migrating but there is a differential impact of seasonal migration on women and men. Women meet with physical hardship, infant mortality, reduced life expectancy and sexual oppression by contractors and employers.

A labour camp for women was organised in West Bengal by the State Government to inform women of their rights and to discover and understand their priorities. Women addressed the problems of deforestation and seasonal migration and stressed the urgent need to identify and formulate action. It was also evident that women were ready to organise but they needed assistance.

As a result of this camp a project was started, supported by the ILO. It sought to give women full time wage income not simply supplementary income. In one area women were given access to six hectares of wasteland and they started sericulture on it. There were three organisations with 900 members. Women themselves suggested other activities for the project, i.e. production of plates out of forest leaves with the help of small machines.

The State Government of West Bengal was amazed to find that the project was fulfilling three of its major policy objectives, i.e. local employment generation and prevention of deforestation and of soil erosion. The State Government consequently provided some wage support for the project.

The success of the project is immediately visible in the growth of trees that women have planted. The survival rate (98 per cent) of tree saplings has far surpassed that of the Forest Department (40 per cent). To the amazement of the

sericulture experts, trees have also grown faster as women are tending and watering the plants carefully. The original six hectares were soon expanded to nine hectares for sericulture production. A secondary product of the project is fuel and fodder. Manufacturing of plates and bowls has also been started with the help of simple machines but there have been difficulties in transport and marketing the plates. Yet there is great excitement among women in learning a mechanical skill which perhaps is due to their learning a new skill and getting collective ownership of an asset, i.e. the machine. Literacy classes have also been started.

The project had both an economic and social impact. It gave poor women not only much needed income but a source of livelihood. More important, it gave them confidence and fostered solidarity across villages and organisations. Personhood is understood for the first time and social barriers, maintained by centuries of caste and class ideologies, are breaking down. Tribals and untouchables who previously never mixed are now meeting and socialising together. High caste women who never worked in the forest before are now going out to work because of the income it brings. There is very little resistance from the families with regard to women going out to work, again because of the economic necessity of the income they generate, which benefits their families.

The project has succeeded in transforming the status of poor women because for the first time it gave these women:

- a sense of collective strength;
- access to development resources; and
- ownership of major assets of production, e.g. land, machines, etc.

Collective ownership is given not to families but to women's groups. Women had previously worked on the family farms but that work always remained invisible; but now the production of sericulture on land owned by women's groups can no longer be ignored or remain invisible. Women of this region participated in peasants movements in the 19th Century and also more recently (in the mid 1970's) but each time after the end of the movement patriarchy restored and extended its hold, keeping women out of leadership positions and socialising them to internalise women's subordination as the natural order of things. As a result of developing their own separate organisations and leadership, and identifying their issues, these women are now gradually becoming able to challenge patriarchal values which the political system, despite constitutional acceptance of sex equality, failed to dislodge in four decades.

The collective organisation of women has generated a new source of power. With that women can not only demand rights of access and control, more importantly they can now combat patriarchy and the resistance to change of existing structures.

Ruvimbo Chimedza argued that the question of land can not be discussed in isolation; control over choices, control over means of production, control over proceeds are all related issues. Ownership of land per se is not sufficient unless there is also access to other means of production, such as labour, seeds, fertilisers and water. Women may have access to land essentially as labourers but they may not have control over the proceeds of land. Historical development, cultural values and agrarian systems are also to be taken into consideration. However, in general, lack of land is a problem in Asia whereas in Africa there is lack of availability of inputs.

Different types of ownership have different effects. Traditional rules relating to communal land in most instances had protected women's right of access but there is evidence that with a shift to new laws governing land, including that of private land ownership, women's traditional rights were often lost. How to protect communal land ownership is a critical issue in the African context.

The impact of land reforms and resettlement schemes on women's access to land must be looked into more carefully. In resettlement schemes, often only single women and widows are given land ownership. Marital status of women also affects their access to and control over land. In addition, the multi-nationals' control over land are changing the picture. How that affects women must also be analysed.

Noeleen Heyzer (discussant) observed that access to and control over resources is a necessary part of women's struggle. The nature of how inequalities are maintained and reproduced should be made clear and strategies to break these vicious circles have to be worked out.

Women's lives are structured differently from men's. They are more oppressed by increased work burden and hierarchical situations. Since conditions of women's work are also influenced by larger systems that produce inequalities, attention should be given to them. Macro issues, such as general developmental policies and the international division of labour are critical elements affecting women's access to and control over resources. Resources are both tangible and intangible (e.g. solidarity, networks, knowledge and rights).

A lot can be done for women by projects but they must be placed in the larger context of social change. Inequalities in structures and processes should be removed.

4.2 Discussion

In the general discussion following the panel presentation, law and access to power were identified as major factors determining access to land. Customary law can neutralise statutory law and vice versa. For example, in Zimbabwe the new constitutional reforms establish women's right of land ownership but in practice customary law, which regards women as perpetual minors, limits the exercise of this right. In Kenya, despite new egalitarian laws among the Luo, customary laws of inheritance favour males. Women's assets and income are seen as belonging to men and wives' income is taxed at their husbands' marginal rate. On the other hand, in Lesotho under customary law a widow could inherit land but under a 1979 law a land committee is given the right to give land to a male child or, otherwise, the whole family decides on the heir (with the widow having little chance). In many other instances, statutory laws, particularly private land ownership, have eroded women's traditional rights to land, particularly communal land.

It is also important to understand how a woman's rights to land can be constrained by her marital status. For instance, in Nigeria, under the new land-use decree everybody has access to land but it is difficult for divorced women to obtain a Certificate of Occupancy. Polygamy poses special problems which the new laws seldom comprehend. Some south-east Asian countries (e.g. Malaysia, Indonesia) legally confer joint ownership to husband and wife but the latter has little control over the former's decisions. A new government policy in India states that joint titles for husband and wife shall be provided for land being redistributed by the state under land reform, but in practice this is yet to be implemented in most places.

There are contradictions within legal systems between different forms of ownership (communal, corporate, private) and between different systems of rights (uncoded customary, coded scriptural, statutory secular, etc.). New state laws governing the distribution of land and forest often contradict the rights of women guaranteed under customary or family laws or the rights of workers guaranteed under labour laws.

The critical importance of giving women access to land was brought forward with an illustration from China. In the pre-revolutionary days, many peasant women could not own land in their own names. After independence, Chinese women received the right to own land in their own names and when land was transferred to co-operatives, they got full membership. This resulted in women playing a significant role in production brigades and it fostered agricultural production. Now land has been distributed to

families so that the more productive will obtain more benefits and women are playing an important role in the rural responsibility system. In China, women's problems and projects are fully integrated with national problems and policies.

Access to power was also viewed as critical in ensuring access to resources, particularly land. Women need to have socio-economic power in order to act and access to political and bureaucratic power and decision making bodies is necessary in order to improve their conditions. Resistance should always be expected from groups with vested interests and women must combat it. They should not be deceived in the name of peace in the family and in the society. True peace will come only after women share power.

Other less obvious avenues of power, such as the power of traditions, need to be recognised. Power can also be identified in sensitive individuals (men and women) within bureaucracies. Women can harness much support from such people in power to obtain assets for rural women. Because of such support in Kenya, 1721 rural women's groups had obtained commercial plots which would never have reached them otherwise. The issue is more one of management of power rather than only of having women in power positions - such women may not always be ready to or capable of assisting women.

Power and assets are inter-related. While access to power is one way of ensuring women access to resources, control over resources in its turn empowers women.

Summing up the discussions, the Chairperson observed that land is a critical issue. If women do not own and control land, access to other inputs for production will not help them. Moreover, access to other resources, i.e. credit, fertilisers, training, etc., are often determined by access to and control over land. Women in Africa had fought for independence from colonialism to obtain better access to land but are now being deprived of that access.

A complicated set of factors determine women's access to and control over land. In many cases laws deny women equal rights but even where the laws are not discriminatory they seem to have failed to protect women's rights to own and use land. Family traditions, inheritance systems and women's own acceptance of subordination stand in the way. Women labour on the land but they give power and control to the men.

Access to power structure is a strategy to give women access to resources but rather than depending too much on individual women in power positions, it is more important to build alliances across sectors with different levels of bureaucracy. and

with political parties, academics, media and organisations, particularly women's groups at grass-roots levels and above. Women should not just concentrate on to women's issues but deal with the underlying principles of society. For example, provision of clean water would help not only women but the whole community.

There are many women who had quite by accident proved themselves to be extraordinarily dynamic leaders. It is important for them to undergo training in how to transfer their human leadership skills to others, to train a new generation of leaders.

CHAPTER 5

CREDIT AND MARKETING

5.1 Panel Presentation

In Panel 3, Credit and Marketing, case studies were presented by Jaya Arunachalam (India) and Margo Russell (Swaziland). Hameeda Hossain (Bangladesh) and Patricia Bwerinofa (Zimbabwe) were discussants.

Jaya Arunachalam of the Working Women's Forum (WWF) in Madras, India, reported on the role of organising unorganised women workers (the majority of whom could be classified as heads of households) into unions for improving their access to credit, markets and alternative employment for better bargaining power. The women are victims of harsh working conditions, unemployment and lack of legal protection because of ineffective laws and male alcoholism leading to family neglect and oppression.

A "women intensive" strategy was evolved in which factors that came in the way of development, such as class, caste and gender were taken into consideration. The women were organised into unions to fight against discrimination and for better wages through better credit and marketing organisation.

The WWF is a people-based organisation and it has evolved a number of activities according to suggestions that have come from the participating women. The WWF has acted as a catalyst with its team of organisers who have been oriented to the requirements of these poor women and have formed the bridge between the women and other institutions. The Forum thus promotes the creation of self-managed, self-organised groups of women workers.

The WWF has adopted multiple strategies to combat different situations. Where money lenders are the real exploiters, it has promoted credit as the strategy and has succeeded in de-linking the women from money lenders. When the enemy are the middlemen and contractors, who usurp a large part of women's earnings by cutting bigger profit margins for themselves, marketing is the strategy. When child labour exploitation is the problem, family planning is propagated as the strategy. In Dindigul, the problem was of unequal and low wages. A strategy of promoting alternative employment was adopted there to enforce equal and minimum wages for the women workers. At Narsapur, a study made by ILO revealed exploitation of women lacemakers by exporters who were making large profits for themselves. With the ILO's help, production centres were organised for the lacemakers, a marketing cooperative was established and the Ministry of Commerce was pressurised to help the Forum with export orders.

The WWF's experience indicates that women workers are disadvantaged both ways - some are over employed but for low returns, others are under-employed at discriminatory wages. A lack of mobility, imposed by caste taboos (as in the case of Narsapur lace workers) is another problem resulting in lack of options or bargaining power for the women. Diversification of product through simple technology was considered a better strategy for the less productive women.

The WWF believes in two principles:

- self management of workers - that for their economic struggle it is necessary for workers to have their own organisations;
- the need for separate women's organisations, particularly for the most disadvantaged group of women's workers, so long as the inequality between men and women remains.

Margo Russell presented the experience of women handicraft and petty commodity traders in Swaziland. Market women in Africa, as elsewhere, are subject to external pressures and fluctuations but their responses do not always display the strict economic rationale of market behaviour. In southern Sudan, when a settlement of expatriates was suddenly introduced, women from nearby villages started bringing food products to this new community of buyers but they maintained a preference for certain favoured customers instead of adopting the principle of maximisation of profits and minimisation of costs.

Since handicrafts often do not have a local demand, careful and innovative exploration of markets is a necessity. The case study of successful marketing that was presented was one of a group of Swazi women traders who took women's handicrafts from Swaziland to sell in South Africa, mainly to White buyers. The handicrafts were primarily made from materials that the women gathered free. The skills were traditional but the items were non-traditional, adapted to the requirements of the South African market. For Black buyers, on the other hand, the women procured products made from purchased materials, as they were in demand.

Successful women traders needed kin connections in South Africa to extend their trading operations. They also brought back second-hand goods, e.g. garments which they sometimes obtained as barter, in exchange for the Swazi products - to resell in Swaziland at a profit. Some of these women traders have been earning good money. The Swazi women producers do not perceive the women traders as exploiters or middlemen and

appreciate their role - as it has expanded the market for their own products. (The women traders in the Manzini market, for example, have to compete with big capitalists.) It is an example of accomodation by a few entrepreneurs to a segregated and restricted market.

Most women's projects neglect marketing and financial management. The harnessing of markets has to be done very carefully and intelligently; it is essential to study:

- consumer behaviour and consumer tastes;
- the nature of the product; whether it is a necessity or a luxury item will determine its turnover;
- whether it is an item in short supply as against demand and is based on the availability and continuous flow of raw materials;
- the marketing channels and accessibility to them;
- the capacity to hold on to production when markets are seasonal; and
- the flexibility in operations according to changing conditions.

The great risk that women's ventures run, however, when they are very successful, is that they attract big capitalists who may take over the business. There is often a dilemma between high-risk high project enterprise and low-risk low-wage jobs and there is a tendency for women's groups and economically weaker sections to opt for the latter. Some women choose risk and become entrepreneurs while others choose wages and become proletariat.

Hameeda Hossain (discussant) pointed out the practical problems that made credit and marketing a difficult world for rural women to enter. Firstly, they are ignorant of the characteristics of the market and of its competitiveness. Secondly, the physical and social distance between producers and buyers have made women easy victims of a plethora of middlemen.

The commercial system does not protect the producers. It is a great challenge for women to produce and enter into the handicrafts markets, yet they have to do this as a means of survival. It is, therefore, essential to help women survive in this competitive situation. The organisation of producers is necessary to penetrate the

market but supportive structures are equally essential for the organisations. Karika - a marketing federation of handicraft producers in Bangladesh - offers two types of services, viz:

- opening new markets; and
- providing support to producers by procuring raw materials and improving quality.

Other important strategies that need to be adopted are:

- organised pressure on the public sector and import policies to protect handicraft markets;
- establishment of production units to improve techniques and quality of production;
- establishment of rural warehouses and raw materials banks;
- innovative strategies for market management to increase women's bargaining power; and
- innovative credit and banking policies to reach poor craftswomen.

The efforts of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to provide group loans (60 per cent of these loans have gone to rural women) has made a distinct impact by making women conscious and confident of their economic roles and has raised their status in the eyes of the community. Since in most countries it is no longer possible for women to return to subsistence production, they must learn to deal with markets.

Patricia Bwerinofa (discussant) referred to the fact that the development process cannot take place without attention being paid to credit and marketing. Commercialisation and competition called for flexibility in approach and maximum use of existing structures. Access to credit is critical but it is a complex problem. There are different sources (institutional, informal) of credit and demand for credit is generally greater than its supply. Procedures for getting credit (i.e. filling complicated forms) are too complex for poor women and often the availability of credit is not timely.

Credit schemes for the poor are generally costly and have a bad reputation. Savings and credit are often not linked and this creates problems of sustainability for credit schemes. An emphasis on repayment of credit is critical for banks as failure to repay would discourage further lending. The issue of government subsidies to underwrite loans for small projects has to be carefully weighed.

Supportive structures for marketing, i.e. improved infrastructure, are absolutely essential but it is equally important to provide women's groups with training in costing, planning and managing their enterprises. Dependence on local raw materials should be a preferred strategy and market surveys and market research are necessary before women's projects are started.

5.2 Discussion

The general discussion following the panel presentation was about the deliberate action programmes that would be required for improving the accessibility of women to credit, markets and better organisation. The importance of supportive systems and the building up of strong infrastructure for credit and marketing was emphasised.

It was pointed out that careful feasibility studies, carried out both formally and informally, should be made available to women and women's groups for strengthening their economic activities and reducing the rate of failure of women's economic ventures. Women often lack information about credit, input market and product market. They also have little knowledge about what is fair pricing. A strong delivery system for dissemination of information, particularly relevant and "timely" information is essential. Yet much can be learned from non-formal credit systems used by women and they may need institutional support.

The building up of effective catalytic agents, both organisations and persons, is necessary to establish different linkages for viable projects. It was argued that the ideology of marketing for poor women who are struggling for survival and subsistence is different from that for others who are marketing for accumulation. Poor women are the labour reserve and they often do not have no choice but to become proletariat.

It is therefore important to have buffer organisations to counter exploitation of the economically weaker sections by intervention in marketing, credit and raw material supply by the government and other agencies so as to give the primary producers a better deal. The structures that do exist, e.g. marketing boards, should function more efficiently so that the poor do not have to resort to middlemen.

Within the groups it is necessary to give training to leaders and build up a second and third line leadership to reduce dependency on single leaders. With greater participatory methods within the groups, it would be possible to establish a system and reduce dependency. The system should be self-reliant and self-generative with a minimum of subsidies from government which has a tendency to breed corruption and cause discrimination.

A strong network for savings and credit should be built up and the possibility of establishing national development banks for women could be considered. Some countries are already experimenting with innovative schemes of providing credit to the poor without collateral and of using mobile credit officers sensitive to women's needs. These have resulted in significant increases in women's access to credit. In a few other countries, poor women's groups have organised their own financing institutions. These initiatives need to be strengthened and expanded.

CHAPTER 6

ORGANISATION, CONSCIENTISATION AND PARTICIPATION

6.1 Panel Presentation

In Panel 4, organisation, conscientisation and participation, case studies were presented by Edel Guiza (Philippines) and Aster B. Selassie (Ethiopia). Ayesha Imam (Nigeria) was a discussant.

In her presentation on PROCESS, an NGO in the Philippines, Edel Guiza observed that PROCESS used consciousness-raising as a strategy to stimulate changes in structures and relationships between the rural poor and the local élites and it aimed at overcoming previous negative experiences of the rural poor with development agents. The participatory approach was used to enable the rural poor to be conversant with issues affecting them and to develop strategies for dealing with these. Field community organisers were selected from among the local people, conscientised and then sent to organise others.

Through PROCESS the rural poor were made to realise their individual powerlessness and the value of collective strength. Their organisation helped them gain visibility, access to land, social forestry and credit and savings for collective schemes and to push for laws restricting commercial fishing boats from coastal waters. They explored and achieved success in securing organic fertilisers to reduce dependency on imported fertilisers. Skills were imparted in problem solving, management and accounting to increase people's capacity to deal with problems that faced them.

PROCESS developed a number of strategies for influence and action. It:

- drew upon sympathetic allies within the government bureaucracy;
- managed to develop a critical collaboration with the government on the basis of the organisation's needs without jeopardising its interests;
- developed a collective leadership;
- provided a system of financial accountability;
- mobilised students, particularly law students to disseminate information on legal rights and legal protection;

- promoted alternative technology and alternative resources to counter the oppression and exploitation of existing technologies, laws and resource structures;
- built networks with other groups which shared a focus on common issues and policies to evolve a common strategy; and
- used participatory evaluation methods.

Evaluations were previously made by planners but now the people rather than external evaluators and planners do the job.

It collaborated with other groups, e.g. human rights groups, arranging for intensive sharing and exchange visits for purpose of cross-fertilisation.

As a result of working with poor people, PROCESS has drawn a number of lessons. They are:

- the need for continuous conscientisation to counter the growing strength of the power élite;
- access to timely information and basic knowledge of issues which are necessary elements of participatory involvement;
- the importance of establishing national and international links to create the political space necessary for organisations to survive;
- effective use of law as a resource for poor people, organising for legal reforms and imparting legal education which are necessary strategies for empowering people; and
- clear reasons for the existence of the organisation and public accountability of governments has to be established.

Aster B. Selassie presented the case of the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (REWA) which has now over 5 million members, 21,000 basic associations, 541 district associations, 110 provincial associations and 15 regional and one national association.

REWA aims to create the necessary conditions to enable women to become producers, mothers and citizens on an equal footing with men. To make this goal a reality, REWA has a general assembly which meets every two years during which elections from base associations to all other levels take place and during which time the national plan for REWA is approved.

All women above 15 years of age are automatically members of REWA. To enable its members to develop, REWA encourages women to take advantage of literacy campaigns for the illiterate, to attend political education classes and to be involved in productive activities. There is no discrimination against women in the allotment of land. The base associations have a meeting once every two months when women discuss and decide on development activities and family life, and are given political education.

REWA believes that projects for women should be a training ground for new skills. They should be labour-intensive and employment-creating, use locally-available raw materials and enable women to earn income. They should be interesting to the women, beneficial to society, and integrated into national development plans.

A successful water project by REWA which is serving about 50,000 people was cited; women are managing, maintaining and keeping accounts of the project.

Ayesha Imam (discussant) felt that the need for participation was now generally accepted. Most of the successful cases presented at the Workshop resulted from the women themselves identifying their needs and objectives.

Conscientisation requires critical analysis. Participation, to be real, must be at all stages. Even if initiated by leaders, a collective organisation must move towards increasing group effort and group responsibility. The role of the external agent must be one of a facilitator only and not that of a leader; but if people take a wrong direction the facilitator must guide them by means of explanation. Facilitators should also help create awareness of national and international links, of problems and of people's struggles against them.

6.2 Discussion

In the general discussion following the panel presentation a number of issues were raised. It was pointed out that in most countries rural women are increasingly compelled to produce for the market, whether as commodity producers or as seasonal or

full-time labourers. Families, whole communities and the entire people of many nations are being pauperised and marginalised as expendable people. At the same time, international and other financial institutions have a growing influence on the development strategies of many governments.

The need to examine the impact of these developments on rural women was stressed. It was pointed out that sometimes grass-roots organisations were manipulated by local, national and even international élites to enhance their control over poor rural women and men.

There is also the need to distinguish among different forms of exploitative and oppressive relations. There is a difference between the large transnational corporations which net big profits from women workers and the small business women selling handicrafts door to door in exchange for second-hand cloth. Small business women and men are being squeezed out of the market and represent potential allies for the rural poor. In most countries the majority of women represent a labour reserve. Links between the urban and rural poor women need to be built up.

The strategy of working with existing structures in the villages was also questioned since in many cases they are oppressive of women. Formal leaders can not be ignored but they are not necessarily those in whom the people trust or for whom they have respect.

The role of catalysts or cadres in organising people and promoting a process of conscientisation was highlighted. It was pointed out that though local catalysts could provide the most effective leadership, in certain situations, external catalysts might be necessary but whether local or external, catalysts must identify other potential cadres. Leadership is not only spontaneous, it can also be developed through training and consciousness-raising.

The training and conscientisation of cadres requires priority attention as a necessary element of development strategy. In this context, the risks a cadre takes while organising poor people was mentioned. In many countries, the environment is not conducive for organising poor women. Careful strategies of organisation and cadre development should be worked out to combat such situations.

The form of organising women - in integrated or separate structures - was debated. It was argued that integration was the ultimate objective. In many countries and situations women can be organised in integrated structures but in many others women can best be organised and conscientised only in separate women's structures.

Mediating organisations and institutions, e.g. NGO's, universities, etc. can play a critical role in conscientising and organising women. Links and networks amongst these intermediary institutions should be built and strengthened.

Finally, it was emphasised that the right of rural women to decide their own priorities, to make their own mistakes and to learn from them must be honoured. Outsiders can give support and point out alternatives but the final decision rests with the rural women themselves. Organisation and conscientisation would help develop critical awareness and enable rural poor women to identify their needs and rights and find a solution to their own problems.

CHAPTER 7

APPROACHES TO TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION

Martha Loutfi in her presentation on Approaches to Technical Co-operation emphasised the fundamental characteristics of ILO's technical cooperation concerning rural women, that is:

- primary attention to an organisational basis which is necessary for the people's needs and priorities to be articulated and for the people to develop and manage their own projects and thus to become self-reliant;
- making use of local expertise as well as use of local resources to meet local needs (or where local resources are not available, sought from nearby areas or countries);
- supporting intermediaries who work on a basis of collaboration and reciprocity with the rural poor with people who are willing to go and stay in the villages;
- assessing the viability of activities considered before introducing new activities, by making market surveys and carrying out participatory evaluations of existing projects and situations; and
- promotion of dialogue, exchange and collective analysis among the people.

A few examples were taken up. Reference was made to the presentation on West Bengal, India, in Panel 2 (see Chapter 4) which started with a labour camp for 34 participants and has led to a major wasteland development programme through women's organisations. This evolution which could not have been foreseen, shows how much there is to be learned from rural women. In Senegal animatrices were involved in activating co-operatives of fish processors as well as palm oil producers to gain access to local technologies, with the expectation that the method of work of animatrices could be made more responsive and participatory.

In Somalia three years ago, during drought followed by floods, refugee women were encouraged to take up activities in which they could use their own skills and local materials to produce priority goods for distribution. Six hundred women were engaged in mat-making. This evolved into an integrated project with male and female participants engaged in poultry raising, soap making, vegetable growing and other gainful activities. The very dependent situation of those refugees may now turn into

their ability to manage their own situations as some of them have joined with local staff to create their own organisation ("Haqabtir" - "to satisfy a need") to take over the project activities and expand their effort in favour of disadvantaged groups in rural areas.

Key elements of technical co-operation from the ILO's perspective are the following:

- donor support being committed before a detailed spelling out of inputs and equipment, expertise, activity and specific outputs, etc. (however, with clear objectives and means of action);
- additional flexibility of funding with some fund allocation not being specified at all (an "aid fund") so that quick responses according to emerging needs at the grass-roots become possible; and
- acceptance of the reality that development, especially among poor women, is a slow process and needs time to reach its goals.

Without these key elements, neither participation nor workability of the projects is possible. Projects should preferably also be intercountry or interregional to serve a valuable cross-fertilisation purpose and to encourage new initiatives.

Finally, the value of participatory research and meetings should be emphasised - it is too easily undervalued not only by donors and international agencies but also by governments. Research is often the best way to start action although it cannot necessarily always be predicted (let alone assured) in advance. This became apparent in the case of lacemakers of Narsapur in India (where about 4,000 women workers are now organised through the National Union of Working Women) as well as with women plantation workers in Sri Lanka (where research led to discussions among women trade union members, recommendations to their union leadership, plantation level committees and a co-ordinating committee whose leaders helped sister workers in Malaysia). Research on rural fuel, work and linkages with family nutrition is leading to action in five countries in three continents.

Meetings should be considered essential at the grass-root level but they are also valuable at the national, regional and inter-regional level for advancing thinking, strategies and action. And some action is, of course, an expected result of any researcher going to a village: e.g. taking findings back, discussing and helping people to formulate their own schemes.

In the discussion that followed the best ways and approaches to improve working conditions of the deprived part of the population were raised. It was questioned whether it could be done best by projects or by organising; whether people's movements should be built first and whether organisers and leaders were needed or whether collective leadership to avoid dependence was possible.

The value of research per se was questioned. It was pointed out that research can be dominating, patronising and colonial too. It is the type of research that matters as well as who is participating in it and who has access to it. The need for critical and participatory research was emphasised.

It was also questioned whether people in all cases could come out with project proposals without first being exposed to more information.

CHAPTER 8

STRATEGIES FOR ACTION: REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS

Following the panel presentations the Workshop identified three major problem areas and divided itself into three working groups, viz. (1) Women's Access to and Control over Resources, (2) Organisation, Conscientisation and Participation, and (3) Women's Projects, Programmes and the Role of National Machineries. The working groups were primarily concerned with suggesting strategies for action. Each working group briefly identified the major issues and then suggested a number of strategies as follow-up. In light of the discussions held and points of views expressed in both the working groups and the plenary, the following suggestions were made:

8.1 WOMEN'S ACCESS TO AND CONTROL OVER RESOURCES (WORKING GROUP 1)

The working group discussed six major topics, viz. land, forest, food, co-operatives, credit and savings and marketing.

8.1.1 Land

The group noted that while generalisations were difficult, examples presented by the group's expertise indicated a negative trend on women's access to and control over land. Traditional laws and customs with regard to communal land had generally protected women's right of access - if not ownership of land but there is evidence that with a shift to new laws including that of private land ownership, women's traditional rights have sometimes been lost even when other laws extended property rights to women.

There are often contradictions within legal systems, e.g. between new laws and prevailing common law, affecting women adversely and on many occasions even when laws exist to protect the rights of women, they are not necessarily implemented.

The group noted with concern that the policy debate on this issue and the decisions made by governments in the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) to remove all legal disabilities for women's ownership of land are not known to rural women. If women were made aware that their rights to land were a global issue, this very information could encourage them to mobilise despite centuries of conditioning to passivity and inferiority.

The group, however, recognised that the issue of access to and control over agricultural land in Africa and Asia has become increasingly complex with coexistence

of different forms of ownership (communal, corporate - e.g. joint family ownership in Asian countries, corporate firms' ownership of plantations in both regions, individual and State), differing systems of rights - under uncoded customary (local, community, tribal), coded scriptural (Islamic, Hindu, Jewish, etc.) and statutory-secular laws (Land Acts, Tenancy Acts, Marriage and Inheritance Acts, Labour and Small Farmers' Protection Acts, etc.); and uneven relationships between rights of use, alienation and control.

Noting that variations in availability of land (from acute scarcity to non-utilisation of land) and competing policy goals (maximisation of agricultural productivity, better distribution of wealth) preclude any uniform policy prescription, the group made the following suggestions:

1. The Programme of Action ("The Peasants' Charter") of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) should be implemented and women should be given equal rights to own land and control its products, not just rights to work on it.
2. Decisions regarding women's rights to land taken at international and national levels should be disseminated to rural women through women's organisations, the media, and national and regional institutions for rural development, including CIRDAFRICA and CIRDAP.
3. Communal land rights should be protected since privatisation exposes women to landlessness which entails vulnerability to exploitation and destitution.
4. Research should be undertaken to identify contradictions in laws relating to ownership of land, family laws (including customs that prevail in practice), constitutional guarantees of women's rights and laws for the protection of workers.
5. CIRDAFRICA should organise a study/seminar on the above theme drawing on available information to provide some documentation for the Nairobi World Conference on Women, 1985.
6. Women's wings should be created in CIRDAFRICA and CIRDAP and their national counterparts to promote two-way flow of information from governments to grass-roots.

8.1.2 Forests

Recognising that forest policy is far more than a technical issue to be left to experts and that poor rural women often depend heavily on forest product (fuel, fodder, food and other products for commercial purposes) for the survival of their families, the group noted with concern that poor rural women's capacity for survival and earning have been negatively affected by deforestation and by the substitution of plants which no longer provide for women's food, fuel and fodder needs but are required by major industries (papers, pharmaceuticals, industrial construction, etc.).

Afforestation policies, including social forestry, have tended to ignore the needs and views of women and to encourage plantations which provide quick financial returns for commercial interests. Rural women have not been considered as having any role in forest policy either at the national or at local levels and have sometimes been driven to organise protests by physical action (eg. the Chipko Movement in India). However, some case studies of landless women's attempts to develop sericulture and fuel fodder plantations on unused land to provide employment for themselves indicate that they have also contributed to improving ecological balance and transforming non-productive land to productive assets. These developments should feature in forest policy discussions.

Considering that poor rural women have had to bear the brunt of adjustments to fuel, fodder and food scarcity, the group suggested the following strategies:

1. Women's roles in forest policy should be articulated through representation and studies.
2. Women's groups should be involved in social forestry projects and due consideration should be given to their preference in the choice of species for plantation.
3. Women should be trained at local and national level in technology relating to forestry (nursery techniques, seed selection, etc.) and they should be recruited in forestry departments.
4. Greater investment should be made in technical innovation in the area of alternative fuels and the dissemination of such information to rural women.
5. In regions of land scarcity, poor women's groups should be encouraged to use marginal or unused land for reafforestation.

8.1.3 Food

Women are the major producers of food, particularly in Africa, yet most of them work under extremely harsh conditions with poor tools and low levels of inputs in terms of new knowledge of production techniques, seeds, fertilisers, irrigation, etc. The international development community is already concerned with the growing food crisis in many parts of Africa. Some of the issues that link this crisis to the neglect of women as primary producers of food have been identified in the recommendations of the Government Consultation on the Role of Women in Food Production and Food Security (Harare, 10-13 July 1984). The group recognised that pricing and wage policies have differential impacts on food production, women's status and nutrition of families. Where women are the main producers and sellers of food production, higher prices of food crops would undoubtedly help to increase production and the women's income, but where a large section of the rural poor are landless and thus purchasers of food, as in many parts of Asia, high food prices would lead to increased malnutrition among women and children in particular.

Recognising women's critical role in food production and noting inadequacies of data and statistics, the group suggested the following:

1. Women should be given access not only to land but also to better tools, seeds, fertilisers, agricultural extension services and newer appropriate technologies to improve their skills, knowledge, productivity and returns.
2. Careful field research should be undertaken in regions and sectors where there is a declining trend in food production. Women's role in cash crop production needs to be better understood with a view to making policies more relevant to their needs. Attention should also be paid to the implications of food aid for both food production and for women's status and the nutrition of their families.
3. Official statistics on food production, particularly on the subsistence sector should be improved with a sex breakdown of producers and wage workers.
4. Incentives for increased food production should be provided by price and wage policies; at the same time due attention should be paid to the food security needs of the poor.

8.1.4 Co-operatives

The group noted the emergence of co-operatives as important channels of access to credit and other inputs to improve productivity and income. However, the picture of women's participation in such co-operatives is not very clear. In many instances women participate more readily in all women's co-operatives but are marginalised in integrated organisations. Although there has been a distinct increase in the formation of women's co-operatives during the last decade case studies presented at the Workshop and other studies reported two trends, viz: (i) concentration of decision-making power in the hands of a few leaders with the majority of members remaining ignorant of the most basic information on co-operative functioning, and (ii) failure of many co-operatives because of the members' lack of information, managerial and accounting skills that are necessary to meet the complex laws governing co-operatives.

In some cases, through co-operatives, poor rural women have successfully obtained access to land and credit, while in others they have been dominated and exploited by more articulate members (generally men).

Recognising the potential role of co-operatives in improving rural women's income earning opportunities, the group suggested the following strategies:

1. Laws governing co-operatives should be simplified to enable women who are illiterate or have low levels of education to participate more effectively.
2. Training in co-operative organisation should be given to rural women both at institutions (e.g. co-operative colleges) and through mobile training teams.
3. Community workers should organise rural women into informal groups to teach them the principles of co-operative functioning preliminary to their formal registration as co-operatives.
4. Federations of women's co-operatives should be organised to improve their access to credit and marketing information and resources and their linkages to larger development programmes and institutions.

8.1.3 Credit and Savings

Recognising that poor rural women do not have working capital or collateral to obtain loans, the group noted the emergence of two innovative methods of extending

credit to rural women in the last decade. The first is providing credit through mobile credit officers, sensitive to women's needs, often without collateral and the second is by organising poor women to form their own financial institutions in which they participate both as beneficiaries and as decision-makers. Apart from providing credit, these institutions, being aware of women's handicaps (illiteracy, lack of time, lack of collateral, their need for consumption loans during crisis period, etc.) also provide supportive services (management training, marketing services, child care, health care, bulk purchase of raw materials, legal services, etc.). The success of these ventures has encouraged some of the states in India to establish Women's Development Corporations to provide credit and allied services for poor women's economic ventures.

There has been a trend in many countries towards mobilising women's savings through major banks and small savings societies. There is no study, however, to indicate whether these savings have been channelled to improve women's economic opportunities.

Noting that financial institutions, by and large, have neglected women's need for credit and do not have sensitive cadres or a system to provide the package of services to poor women, with the exception of the few specialised cases mentioned above, the group suggested the following:

1. Women's Development Banks with mobile credit officers could be established at the national and local level to provide credit, productivity training, marketing and other supportive services to women's groups.
2. Participatory credit institutions should be organised at local level to support and disseminate the services that may be developed by institutions like Women's Development Banks promoted by the government.
3. Information on Women's World Banking, an association of women bankers, which underwrites loans to women's groups through conventional banks, should be widely disseminated.
4. Studies should be undertaken on the extent of women's savings deposited in financing institutions and the extent to which they are invested in women's development ventures.

8.1.6 Marketing

Successful marketing rests on adequate information and infrastructure for co-ordinating demand and supply. Intervention by experts with knowledge of distant markets or by governments with expectations of high demand for women's products, such as handicrafts, have sometimes resulted in over production and falling prices. Rural women producers have little holding power and cannot afford delayed payments for their products. Dependence on government structures like Marketing Boards or other intermediaries for selling their products at distant markets have sometimes reduced them to penury. Inadequate communication and lack of transport services from rural to urban areas provide a tremendous obstacle to extending markets.

Noting that the absence of markets and dependence on outside traders lead to exploitation of poor women producers, the following strategies were suggested by the group:

1. Organisations should be formed by local producers to protect their interests.
2. Infrastructural services, i.e. road, transport, storage facilities, marketing information and training, should be developed.
3. Government marketing organisations should introduce procedures for prompt payment to small producers.

8.2 ORGANISATION, CONSCIENTISATION AND PARTICIPATION (WORKING GROUP 2)

The discussions of the working group centred around two major issues:

- The roles of organisations in promoting people's participation and conscientisation and in bringing about political, economic and social transformation.
- The roles of catalysts, governments, trade unions and donors in relation to organisation, conscientisation and participation.

8.2.1 Organisation

The group stressed that organisation with grass-roots initiative and control is crucial for people's participation and conscientisation. It is important for women's

organisations to develop an awareness of existing exploitative and oppressive structures and relations to be able to devise strategies for long term structural changes.

A basic issue is the right of freedom of association. The forms of effective/feasible organisation depend upon the situation. These might be: non-governmental organisations, local community groups, trade unions, co-operatives and so on.

Organisations' strategies should ensure that rural women share equitably in the fruits of their labour and in national resources, as well as demanding that governments give substance to the rural development rhetoric contained in official plans and policies. Organisations must also ensure participation by all members at all levels. For accountability, continuity, and to avoid instituting new forms of élitism, leadership should be collective. It must reach and articulate the needs of rural people and must include an effective and systematic development of critical awareness.

The crucial point, however, is the definition of "participation". Very often "participatory" projects are means whereby the state shifts its responsibility for the provision of social services or infrastructure on to the people (particularly women) so that, for instance, it is not state resources but people's unpaid labour that maintains schools or provides water. On the other hand, projects may enable people to reduce the expropriation of surplus (e.g. by controlling labour conditions or marketing directly) and, thus, retain direct control over resources and their use.

Organisations must enable people to identify their own needs and priorities and the solutions to them. People should be allowed to make their own mistakes and learn from their own experiences. At the same time there is the problem that not all demands are of equal significance; thus there is a need for conscientisation.

Participatory organisations are developed through a continuous process of conscientisation or consciousness-raising. The purpose of conscientisation is the development of the critical social awareness that power is ultimately with the people themselves. Furthermore, a careful analysis of the situation is required to establish the socio-economic realities and feasible strategies for change (such as in which contexts women's issues may be subordinated to other interests). By "conscientisation" is meant a process whereby people from their own reflection achieve a deepening awareness both of the social reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality.

To promote the growth of participatory organisations, the group suggested the following strategies:

1. The ILO should call upon member countries and governments to ensure that rural women are able to exercise their right of freedom of association to improve their employment and living conditions. Member governments who have not yet ratified the Rural Workers' Organisations Convention, 1975 (No. 141), should be strongly urged to do so.
2. Concrete and local issues should be points of entry for conscientisation and organisation. Often this could be a means through which rural women (and men) could come to a realisation of the wider national and international structures which condition their lives.
3. Existing organisations supportive of rural women's struggles for equal rights should be used and strengthened.
4. Links and networks between and among people's organisations should be established through various forms of communication to broaden the impact on society.

8.2.2 The Role of Catalysts, Governments, Trade Unions and Donors in Relation to Organisation, Conscientisation and Participation

Catalysts

The group agreed that local cadres/catalysts, i.e. those who are indigenous to and resident in the community, could provide the most effective leadership. None the less, the perspectives of local catalysts may be broadened by exposure to training and interaction with outside groups. In cases where people are submerged in the difficulties of their local situation, external catalysts may be required to stimulate the process of conscientisation. The focus of the external catalyst must be on identifying and developing local leadership and organisation.

Cadres, both internal and external, require two basic qualities: a correct political awareness (an understanding of the socio-economic system, a recognition of the need for change and of feasible strategies for doing so, a commitment to women's equality), and skill in interpersonal relationships (a love of people, approachability, willingness to listen, non-patronising attitude, etc.).

Depending on local situations, cadres could be voluntary or paid (albeit at very low rates). They could be individual or members of organisations. Institutions may also act as catalysts.

The group recognised the need to identify and conscientise potential cadres. Experience has shown that leadership is not only spontaneous but that it is possible to develop it through training and conscientisation.

Again, from experience, it was pointed out that the development of cadres, of local leadership, must be careful not to lead into a new form of elitism. Cadres must be accountable to the people and to their organisations. They must be able both to pressurise governments and to know when certain government policies should be resisted. The task of a cadre is not to run projects but to enable an organisation to be self-sustaining and to bring about structural change where necessary.

The group identified the following strategies for effective catalytic action:

1. Catalysts or cadres must first carefully study the situation, the socio-economic structure, the needs, and the surrounding environment, as far as possible with members of the community.
2. They must make contacts in the community, establishing a relationship by living and working with the people and speaking their language.
3. They should work at identifying potential catalysts who can provide good leadership. Formal leaders cannot be ignored but they are not necessarily those in whom the community trust or for whom they have respect.
4. When beginning a process of consciousness-raising and education, the cadres must always be careful to validate it with the community. They must stimulate the process of organisation within the community but should not create a dependence on themselves.
5. Cadres should be carefully and systematically trained. Although the best form of training is through involvement in people's struggles, cadres can also benefit from formal and informal courses, more particularly from cross-fertilisation of experiences. The ILO was urged to organise national but preferably regional or inter-regional courses for potential cadres.

6. Funds should be provided not only for training but also for the institutional support of cadres.

Government

The roles played by governments vary from state to state. From the case studies presented at the Workshop, it was evident that the most successful projects were those run by non-governmental organisations. Government bureaucracies are inherently hierarchical which militates against both participation by the local communities and flexibility of response. However, it was reported that in some countries the government not only calls for, but implements policies and actions to improve women's and rural communities' development.

Noting the actual and potential role of governments, the group suggested:

1. Sympathetic individuals in governments should be identified for support.
2. Grass-roots organisation and national machinery for women should be promoted as a two pronged approach. The national machinery should not block women's initiatives for self-organisation; instead they should provide conditions conducive to the promotion of grass-roots organisations and it should be accountable to them.

Trade Unions

Recognising the role of trade unions in providing support for women's organisations, and in giving professional status to women's work and greater bargaining power for their demands, the group urged the trade unions to demonstrate their commitment to women's issues by encouraging the formation of strong women's committees in trade unions or strong women's trade unions.

Donors

The group expressed the caution that too often aid has been used for ideological purposes (to provide showpieces), and has been tied to conditions such that most of it, in fact, never leaves the donor (in equipment payments, consultancy fees, salaries).

It was also pointed out that the aid process has its own biases as between small and large groups as well as between small and large projects. There is, thus, a need

to organise the beneficiary groups in such a manner and for such programmes that the support of donors can be attracted.

Agreeing that aid needs to be more flexible and more responsive to small groups which are locally initiated as well as supportive of larger programmes, ways were discussed in which this may be effected. One suggestion was that donor agencies should make much more use of local researchers and/or activists in finding out what projects/organisations/resources already exist so that they can evaluate where direct support of local projects and initiatives would be most significant.

8.3 WOMEN'S PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND ROLE OF NATIONAL MACHINERIES (WORKING GROUP 3)

The working group focused its deliberations on the following issues:

- Nature of projects and programmes to meet the needs of women and ways of planning and implementation of effective projects for women consistent with national, regional and local priorities and other emerging women's needs and priorities; and
- national machineries which should be set up and/or strengthened to ensure the effective integration of women's needs and interests in the national planning and implementation of government programmes and policies.

8.3.1 Projects and Programmes

Recognising the importance of well articulated national policies and specific objectives for women's participation in development and noting that women should form an integral part of all mainstream development programmes and projects, the group stressed that special and specific projects and programmes for women in social and economic spheres should be made part of the national priority. Additionally, women's projects have to be framed in the national and international context rather than in isolation.

Highlighting the bottlenecks in the areas of data, dissemination, project planning and implementation, the group suggested the following strategies:

1. Since data and statistics on women are weak, all data should be disaggregated by sex and more complete data should be collected. In particular, for project and programme planning, monitoring and evaluation, the target population and beneficiaries should be distinguished by sex.

2. Alternative methods of collecting information through qualitative and in-depth research should be developed to facilitate awareness and understanding, and problems should be tackled in a pragmatic manner. Universities and research institutions could be involved for this purpose.
3. Such data and information should be disseminated widely both inside and outside the government.
4. In determining national priorities, it is essential to involve grass-roots organisations of women and to decentralise the planning process. The involvement of conscientised women and men in the planning machinery is an imperative.
5. The two-pronged approach of promoting women's participation in integrated projects and having separate projects for women should be used as a major strategy.
6. In the planning stages of all national projects from the grass-roots level to the regional and national levels, roles for women should be carved. Areas for consideration and action should be identified to ensure the effective participation of women.
7. Specific minimum proportions of resources (finance, facilities, personnel) of mainstream development projects and their preferential allocation have to be made to women's programmes and projects.
8. In all projects, safeguards should be built in the project plans to prevent women suffering from negative effects.
9. Implementation of projects requires conscientisation, creating awareness and developing skills, including:
 - a) creating the awareness of the needs of women within the project target area;
 - b) conscientisation of government and non-government agents to women's issues so that they do not exert negative influences;
 - c) minimising the negative impact of certain cultural and religious influences through developing awareness, the dissemination of information through mass media and the dissemination of other innovative items such as songs, audio-visual material and special publications; and

- d) development of appropriate skills by organising training programmes in project management, finance, credit, marketing, etc. for the project team, beneficiaries, governmental and non-governmental officials and other concerned persons. The use of innovative training methods was emphasised.
10. Mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation with the full participation of beneficiaries and the participation of other intermediaries should be built into all projects.
11. Collaboration and coordination of agencies (intermediaries) including NGO's, women's organisations and government agencies should be promoted which can be supportive of the project at all levels for improved effectiveness.

8.3.2 The Role of National Machineries

The working group recognised the existence of national machineries in the different countries with varying compositions, functions and targets. Noting that they have made important contributions and exerted considerable influences in creating awareness of women's issues, it was stressed that national machineries could be greatly strengthened and made more effective by the allocation of adequate resources, the establishment of a grass-roots base to which they should be accountable and a mandate to affect the programmes and plans of other ministries.

The following strategies were suggested:

1. The role of national machineries for women should be made clear; the group identified it as primarily that of co-ordination and promotion and of acting as a catalyst in influencing mainstream development policy and programmes.
2. Considering the implications of power relations and status, the national machinery should have very high status and be located in the most powerful structure in the government for effectiveness in influencing policy. Since women's issues cut across many ministries, the national machinery in a powerful central location is in a better position to influence other ministries. For example, Presidents' offices, Prime Ministers' offices, Ministries of Finance and Economic Planning were identified as powerful structures.

Where a national machinery is composed of representatives of various agencies, the composition of members should include high level government officials, influential representatives of organisations such as NGOs, committed women and academics, trade unions, etc.

3. The national machineries should have adequate resources - finance, personnel, facilities - to meet their mandate effectively. The officers of the national machineries should be both men and women who have demonstrated a commitment to women's issues and who have an understanding of the workings of the governmental and non-governmental structures as well as the professional competence to do their work effectively.
4. For effective co-ordination and influence, special women's units or departments in sectoral ministries should be created where they do not exist, and strengthened where they already exist, to enable effective integration of women in the ministries' plans and programmes. These units should also make periodic (at least annual) reviews on the progress of implementation of the plans and programmes for women under the ministries.
5. The national machineries should call for annual reports from central government ministries and agencies and state/regional governments for review of achievements concerning women and undertake publication and dissemination of the information.
6. In order to co-ordinate projects and programmes for women under different departments and ministries there should be co-ordination cells at the local, district, regional and national levels comprising representatives of the different departments and ministries. Information on coordination activities has to be fed to the national machinery for incorporation into the national reviews.
7. National machineries should be active in mobilising the contributions and capacities of women's organisations, especially at the grass-roots level, as well as those of other structures and individuals such as NGOs, trade unions, donor agencies, universities and national and local development structures.
8. National machineries should use the media and other communication techniques for disseminating information on women's issues and mobilising support and pressure for influencing government policy and public opinion.
9. Advantage should also be taken of the potential in regional and other international networks for solidarity and for increasing the power of national machineries.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

AFRICAN AND ASIAN INTER-REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIES FOR
IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS OF RURAL WOMEN

Arusha, Tanzania : 20-25 August 1984

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AFRICAN AND ASIAN INTERREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIES FOR
IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS OF RURAL WOMEN

Arusha, Tanzania : 20-25 August 1984

A G E N D A

Monday, 20 August 1984

09.30-12.30 OPENING SESSION

Welcoming Addresses: I.M. Kaduma, Director, CIRDAFRICA
Dharam Ghai, Chief, Rural Employment
Policies Branch, ILO Geneva
Henning Kjeldgaard, Ambassador of
Denmark, Tanzania

Inauguration : Sief Shariff Hamad, Chief Minister,
Zanzibar

Vote of Thanks : John Seal, Director, ILO Office,
Dar-es-Salaam

PLENARY

Election of Office Bearers

Introduction to Workshop: Dharam Ghai
Martha Loutfi, Co-ordinator,
Programme on Rural Women, ILO

14.30-18.00 PLENARY

Panel 1: Women's Projects and Programmes: Case Studies

Presentations: Filomina Steady (SIERRA LEONE) Executive Director, International
Women's Research & Consulting Institute, Wisconsin

Sarala Gopalan (INDIA) Secretary, Revenue & Housing, Govt. of
Kerala Secretariat, Trivandrum

Discussants : Terry Kantai (KENYA) Office of Vice President, Ministry of Home
Affairs

Rounaq Jahan (BANGLADESH) Professor, Dept. of Political
Science, Dhaka University

18.30 RECEPTION

Tuesday, 21 August 1984

09.00-12.30 PLENARY

Panel 2: Access to and Control over Resources: Land/Forest

Presentations: Marjorie Mbilinyi (TANZANIA) Professor, Institute of Development
Studies, University of Dar-es-Salaam

Vina Mazumdar (INDIA) Director, Centre for Women's Development

Studies, New Delhi

Discussants : Ruvimbo Chimedza (ZIMBABWE) Department of Land Management,
University of Zimbabwe
Noeleen Heyzer (MALAYSIA) Asian and Pacific Development Centre,
Kuala Lumpur

Panel 3: Credit and Marketing

Presentations: Jaya Arunachalam (INDIA) President, The Working Women's Forum,
Madras

Margo Russell (UK/SWAZILAND) Social Science Research Unit,
University of Swaziland, Kwaluseni

Discussants : Hameeda Hossain (BANGLADESH) Executive Secretary, KARIKA
Patricia Bwerinofa (ZIMBABWE) Ministry of Local Government and
Town Planning

14.30-18.00 PLENARY

Panel 4: Organisation, Conscientisation and Participation

Presentations: Edel Guiza (PHILIPPINES) PROCESS, Manila
Asler B. Selassie (ETHIOPIA) Revolutionary Ethiopia Women's
Association (REWA)

Discussant : Ayesha Imam (NIGERIA) AAWORD representative

Approaches to Technical Co-operation
Martha Loutfi

Wednesday, 22 August 1984

09.00-12.30 Working Group Meetings

14.30-18.00 Working Group Meetings

Evening FILM

Thursday, 23 August 1984

Field Trip

Friday, 24 August 1984

09.00-12.30 Working Group Meetings

14.30-18.00 Presentation of Working Group Reports

Saturday, 25 August 1984

14.30-18.00 PLENARY

Presentation of Draft Report

Closing Session

Addresses: Dharam Ghai, ILO
I. Kaduma, CIRDAFRICA

DOCUMENTS PREPARED FOR THE WORKSHOP*

- GENERAL
- Rural development with women: elements of success, by Madhuri Bose, Martha Loutfi and Shimwaayi Muntemba
 - Identification of successful projects for improving the employment conditions of rural women: Summaries of the African, Asian and Pacific cases, ILO 1984
- PANELS
- Panel 1
- Women's work in rural cash food systems: The Tombo and Gloucester development projects in Sierra Leone, by Filomina Chioma Steady
 - The Trivandrum experiment, by Sarala Gopalan
 - Irrigated gardens, Molepolole, Botswana: A case study by William Duggan
- Panel 2
- Co-operation or exploitation? experiences of women's initiatives in Tanzania, ed. by Marjorie Mbilinyi. In particular see the Chapter on "The politics of co-operative organisation in Isange Village"
 - Role and participation of women in the 'Chipko' movement in the Uttarkhand region in Uttar Pradesh, India, by Kumud Sharma, Balaji Pandey and Kusum Nautiyal
- Panel 3
- Improving working conditions for rural women through creation of alternative employment options: A case study of the working women's forum, Dindugal dairy women's project and Adiramapattinam Fisher-Women's Project, by Nandini Azad and Research Team
 - The production and marketing of Women's handicrafts in Swaziland, by Margo Russell
 - Savings clubs: The mobilization of rural finances in Zimbabwe, by Ruvimbo Chimedza
 - The role of women in production and marketing. A study of their linkages and development through co-operatives as seen in the case of: (1) The Bangladesh Hasta Shilpa Samabaya Federation Ltd (2) The Munshirhat Mahila Samabaya Samity, by Hameeda Hossain
- Panel 4
- An experience in the improvements and employment conditions of rural women in Ethiopia: Two case studies, by Alasebu G. Selassie

Other Background Papers

1. Initiatives for improving employment conditions of rural women: Illustrations and lessons from the field, by Shimwaayi Muntemba
2. Women workers in rural areas, their struggle to organise, by Zubeida Ahmad

3. Toward strategies for improving the employment conditions of rural women, by Martha Loutfi
4. Women workers in rural development: A programme of the ILO, by Zubeida Ahmad and Martha Loutfi
5. Etude de quelques associations des femmes rurales du centre-sud de Cameroun, par François Essomba Balla
6. The cases of the Shah Kot training and income-generating and the Sungli income-generating projects for women, Pakistan, by Systems Limited
7. A study of two co-operatives for female ex-combatants, by Patricia S. Bwerinofa
8. Successful rural women's projects by Mumbwa Case, Zambia, by Dorothy Chiyoosha Muntimba Stjernstedt

*These discussion papers were prepared in limited quantities. Edited versions are being prepared for an anthology.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF MINISTER, ZANZIBAR,
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA,
H.E. NDUGU SEIF SHARIF HAMAD
AT THE OPENING OF THE INTER-REGIONAL AFRICAN AND ASIAN
WORKSHOP ON STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING THE EMPLOYMENT
CONDITIONS OF RURAL WOMEN

ARUSHA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, 20-25 AUGUST 1984

Mr. Chairman, honourable guests, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

May I take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the organisers of the Workshop for this invitation extended to me. This is a great honour and I appreciate it very much. I would also like, on behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, to welcome all the distinguished delegates to our country generally, and to Arusha in particular.

For some of you, this may be the first time you have come to Tanzania and Arusha, while for others, this may be one of the many visits you have made to our country. However, to all of you, I wish to express my sincere hope that you will find your stay in Arusha both fruitful and enjoyable, and I sincerely hope that your visit will not end only in Arusha. Instead, I hope that you will stay a bit longer so that you may explore the countryside where the majority of the women are, as well as visit the scenic beauty of our game parks. Indeed, although your programme includes a field trip to villages in and around Arusha, it might provide you with a better insight into what is happening in Tanzania if you were able to visit other areas as well.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the International Labour Organisation for their initiative towards this Workshop, and also for involving CIRDAFRICA in this most important subject. I know that this is part of the ILO's continuing effort to encourage debate, discussion and formulation of potential strategies and actions for promoting employment and income-earning opportunities of poor rural women. For only through frank discussions and exchange of our respective experiences can we, in the Third World, make strides ahead. Indeed, it is gratifying to note that over the last two years the ILO has identified as many as 50 successful initiatives in Asia and

Africa on the subject, a few of which will be presented at this Workshop as cases for review by the participants. We, in Tanzania, look forward with great anticipation to drawing lessons from those experiences.

In this connection also, I should like to use this opportunity to commend the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) for funding both the ILO programme that has led to the identification of these experiences, as and this Workshop. I sincerely hope that DANIDA will use this experience to look into the possibilities of supporting follow-up actions by CIRDAFRICA on the Workshop's findings.

I am aware that this Workshop has brought together participants from nine African countries and five Asian countries comprising high level government officials concerned with planning for rural development, representatives from employers' and workers' organisations, persons who have documented and analysed selected case studies, activists with experience of working with grass-root organisations, and representatives of intergovernmental, non-governmental and donor agencies interested in working with rural women. I am told also that it is the first inter-regional workshop of its kind.

The gathering as it is, a very strong contingent of distinguished people, is capable of seeking appropriate strategies and actions for promoting employment and income-earning opportunities of our poor rural women. This is indeed a crucial question on which, I hope, you will have enough time to delve in depth. To this end, I would like to use the opportunity you have given me to share with you my own thoughts on the subject - albeit very generally.

I do believe that most of you in this Workshop have good experience of the working conditions of poor rural women in your respective countries. Most probably the conditions are more or less the same, and if it is so, this will provide you with a common forum that will, in some way, facilitate your discussion. Definitely you will get an opportunity to evaluate what you have experienced and accomplished. At the same time you will have a basis on which to formulate guide-lines and strategies that could aim at improving the existing working conditions of our rural women. Mr. Chairman, it is my sincere wish that this Workshop will prove a success.

When we are intending to seek solutions to improve employment conditions of the rural women, it is logical that we should at least try to analyse their present situation. To date in most African and Asian countries the poor rural women work not by choice but by necessity for the survival of their families. Their working conditions are not favourable. Their working days are long, and they use simple tools

such as the hand hoe and the matchet. On top of all this, they have to care for large families and work outside the modern sector, they have less access than men to benefits of development. They bear the brunt of poverty and are often fully engaged in the fight for survival.

If we compare the rural woman with the urban one, it is evident that the latter is in a better position because many of her domestic needs can be obtained within her premises or purchased in the nearby market. But that is not the case for the rural woman.

But at the same time, it should not be forgotten that these conditions of our rural women have a historical origin. First, in most societies of Africa and Asia, the activities closest to home belonged to the women, while those far from home such as trading, herding and others belonged to men. With this division of labour between the sexes, the belief that a "woman's place is in the kitchen" is still dominant. Secondly, although over 80 per cent of the food production of the household was being done by women, men were considered to be more honourable while women were treated as underlings, and their contribution was given little recognition. Thirdly, social beliefs in some societies hinder women's engagement in other production roles besides that of child bearing. Therefore, it is the duty of our respective governments to educate the masses on the negative impact of such retrogressive beliefs. Beliefs which hinder the development of our people, and especially those which deny women the rights to engage in productive activities, should be globally discouraged.

Mr. Chairman, and participants, I think we all agree that women have a major role to play in development. Women today constitute about one-half of the world's population and it is believed that they also constitute one-third of the world's economically active population. Statistics show that at least 46 per cent of women of working age are in the labour force, and of this an estimated 65 per cent are to be found in the developing countries. In Tanzania for instance, it is statistically known that nearly 51 per cent of the population are female. Thus, considering our population of nearly 20 million people, and considering the fact that about 85 per cent of our people are in the rural areas, it means that we are dealing with a population of 8.7 million people or about 4.4 million of people who can effectively participate in productive activities. This is a large number of people who can have a great impact on the prosperity of the economy if their energies are properly harnessed.

The question is, thus, what considerations do we need to give towards this group in order to make it more productive in the economic and social development of the country? I hope you will agree with me that these hard working, shrewd and productive

women can be both agents as well as beneficiaries of development. As such they are resources upon which development planners should draw. Some of the pressing problems emanate from the fact that our planners do not plan on fully engaging women in productive roles, besides the mothering one. I believe the solution of many basic problems, including the world food insufficiency, depends to a large extent on improving the productivity of all workers, including that of women. It should be remembered that women's ability to perform their domestic and mothering tasks is determined to an important degree by their broader role in socio-economic activities. For instance, if women are more efficient and spend more time producing efficiently, then it is reasonable to expect a reduction in child labour.

One can even venture to assume that population explosion, due to a high growth rate which affects most developing countries, could be relatively reduced if women were more engaged in productive ventures. Therefore, women should not be merely considered as part of the development problem but they should be taken as a means of solving the problem.

Mr. Chairman, there is no doubt that women, especially low income rural women, are possibly the most under-rated development resource of the Third World. Though they have long been recognised as reproducers of mankind, they have steadfastly been ignored as producers of wealth. The economic roles that the rural women engage themselves in vary from country to country, yet such roles will always include some of the following: food production, food processing, food storage and food preservation. In addition, water and fuel carrying, house repair, care of livestock and poultry and home production of other household goods and services are economic undertakings that are done by women. Indeed often women carry out such activities under very hard conditions.

Therefore, when we talk of rural development plans we inherently have to talk of development of rural women and any rural strategies laid down for rural development must give preference to women. It is only by improving employment conditions of the rural women that we can hope for genuine rural development.

Mr. Chairman, I am convinced that the present employment situation of the rural women in Africa and Asia forces them to give a relatively smaller contribution towards our countries' development. There is still every chance of increasing that contribution if we are determined to do so. May I therefore take this opportunity to make a call to all African and Asian countries to acknowledge effectively the presence of, and make use of, the entire women's labour force in their rural development programmes?

Mr. Chairman, I have briefly tried to point out the employment conditions of rural women in developing countries. Today, the world over, talks of women's rights are heard. Workshops and seminars are always being conducted on this issue but most of us, when we talk of women's rights, tend to focus on wage employment, political leadership and decision-making for women. We pay less heed to liberating the rural women from the chores of labour resulting from their dedication to duty. At present, most of the rural women in Africa and Asia are left in labour-intensive sectors characterised by low productivity and low returns. I believe that the improved employment conditions of the rural women are a stepping stone towards the whole question of women's rights, as most women are found in the rural areas.

The questions which your Workshop has set out to answer, therefore, are very important and crucial if our womenfolk in the societies of the Third World are truly to break from this most agonising situation and cope with the modern needs of our communities in which the yearning for economic and social development is urgently real for everyone. Indeed, human equality cannot be attained if one sex is perpetually at the receiving end.

In order to uplift their status and well being, there is an urgent need to evolve programmes that reduce the burden of the woman in her role as mother as well as in her other responsibilities of fetching water, carrying firewood, cooking and washing. While it may prove difficult to ensure that men share equally in most of these responsibilities, it is certainly easy to evolve devices that can help the women ease their load in a number of these chores. At this juncture, may I take this opportunity to mention a few areas that need to be considered in planning strategies to help the employment conditions of rural women. First and foremost, we must try to develop appropriate technology that will at least enable them to sustain their families. The existing farm implements need to be improved so that they will require less labour and, at the same time, will be able to increase the output. These innovations must be suitable to the climatic conditions of the respective areas. Attention must be given to research that will yield a wider and more efficient range of farm implements, such as the plough, the planter, the harrow, the in-row cultivators and the cart.

There is also a need to think of more effective methods of controlling weeds. The present system of hand weeding is very tiresome and as a result the women sometimes choose to abandon their farms. We do not need sophisticated weeding machines but at least we can afford hand weeding machines and weed killers. What a disappointment it is to a poor rural woman who, on top of her task of child-carrying,

has managed to cultivate her plot and is then forced to abandon it because of weeds. Mr. Chairman, such occasions happen and during my visits to rural areas of Tanzania I have personally witnessed abandoned plots. I have no doubt that this case also applies to many other countries of Africa and Asia.

That being the case, it is obvious that if we intend to make a breakthrough in dealing with some of our problems we have to think of ways and means of training rural women in modern farming. The best way to train them, considering their level of education, is to show them by practical example. There is a necessity to organise research centres in rural areas where women will learn the proper use of fertilisers and better choice of seed appropriate to the kind of soil and other geographical conditions of the respective areas. Together with this is the question of land conservation and land utilisation. The rural women who cultivate form the bulk of the rural peasants. Hence, they must be trained to make better use of land so as to preserve the fertility of the soil and must also be trained to use minimum area of land to get maximum production. In short the improved technology in agriculture must help our rural women to produce more using less labour than they put in now.

Mr. Chairman, in spite of the fact that our women cultivate under very hard conditions, they sometimes harvest more than they expect to get. When this occurs, though not very often, there is a need for them to save their produce for future use. In many rural areas women have traditional methods of preservation of food. There is a real necessity to encourage them not only to continue with such methods but also to learn new and more appropriate methods of food preservation. I hope, Mr. Chairman, your Workshop will find a means of assisting the rural women with adequate technology that will help them in devising methods of improved crop preservation. Another laborious task that the rural women face is grinding grain. Most of them still use the grinding stone. This job can be more tiresome than cultivating itself, so there is a need to find a means of easing them of this task. Rural electrification programmes will help in establishing grinding mills and minimising the use of wood fuel.

Mr. Chairman, agriculture is not the only occupation of the rural women. Most of them, if not all, engage in local handicrafts. Their income generating activities require specialised skills and sometimes years of apprenticeship. At present, most of the crafts done by women are labour intensive and of very low productivity. Many societies tend to divide crafts for men and crafts for women. Personally, I tend to think that there is no logic in this division of labour because a specific craft may be done by men in one region and handled by women in the other. My conviction is that women can do any of the jobs that are done by men provided they get the opportunity and the training.

Mr. Chairman, the time has come to think of improving local handicrafts so as to improve the employment conditions and income of our women. This goal can be achieved by introducing appropriate technologies for these crafts. However, before any programmes are designed it is necessary to investigate the existing possibilities open to our rural women, based on traditional or easily acquired skills and also to study the present day demands of these products in local and if possible extended markets. We should try to improve the already existing skills by extending the range of crafts that are based on such skills. For example, a woman skilled in pottery can be trained to use her skill to make plates, tiles and bricks which will give her greater earning. Handicrafts are a means of increasing income for our women but we must select those which provide gainful employment.

In helping rural women to improve their employment conditions and promote their income earning opportunities, special attention should be given to co-operatives. Because, apart from the fact that co-operatives protect the income of members and increase employment opportunities, they also endeavour to raise the living standards of the people, including those of poor rural women. I personally believe that under the circumstances that face many a developing country, where capital is rare to find, co-operative societies can become a key factor in rural development. Rural co-operative societies, organised to supply farm inputs and those that engage in production and marketing of crops are surely a boost to agriculture. A higher form of co-operative will engage in agro-industries in rural areas. What is more, there is a need to run co-operatives that deal with small enterprises, such as those specialising in cottage industries.

All said, Mr. Chairman, I believe that the key role in development of our rural women should be played by women themselves. Our main concern here is to think of policies and activities which are fundamental to the inculcation of positive attitudes in our minds. Such policies should serve as catalysts in the process of development in rural areas.

I understand that the International Labour Organisation has been playing an active role in establishing and developing co-operatives that are organised on the lines of self help. Indeed, it is my hope that this commitment will continue and will be consolidated. The ILO needs a pat on the back for this commendable service it renders for the good of the people of the developing countries.

I hope that it is every government's intention to improve the employment conditions of rural women by formulating new and practical strategies. Such

strategies should aim at decreasing the problems facing women in their everyday activities while at the same time increasing their productivity so as to raise their earning capacity. To achieve that, it is indeed important that women should be able to formulate and manage their own projects. That being the case, there is a need to give rural women training that will help them increase their ability in project planning, project implementation and project assessment.

I suppose we all agree that our rural women work tirelessly. Hence, there is a need for our governments to make deliberate efforts to help them in their endeavours by providing them with some essential services. In order to help the working mothers, a conducive atmosphere should be created by establishing day care centres. Such centres, if well run, would enable rural women to discharge their responsibilities effectively as mothers as well as workers.

It should be borne in mind that the health of most rural women is not very sound. Ill health is one of the main stumbling blocks towards positive contribution to development. Therefore, while there is a need to increase health centres especially in the rural areas where most of the economically active population is found, the greater need is for rural women to be equipped with preventive techniques to combat the most prevailing diseases in their respective localities. I am sure this Workshop will also look into other services which are essential to the improvement of employment conditions of rural women.

Mr Chairman and dear delegates, many Tanzanian women and their counterparts elsewhere in Asia and Africa, are anxiously waiting for the results of this Workshop. The proposals for technological innovations that will be discussed in this Workshop will definitely will be directed towards improving the working conditions of poor rural women.

Such technological innovations must ensure women's development and economic self-sufficiency. The programmes and policies that may henceforth ensue should be economically viable. The skills to be introduced must be viable and directly useful to the women's daily lives. What is more, programmes and policies must be based on a clear knowledge of the fact of the women's lives and not idealised concepts. In addition to that, programmes and policies should seek to strengthen women's existing skills and to enable them to make full use of raw materials and resources that are readily available to them. Yet, what is more important is the fact that women in rural areas themselves should participate in all aspects of policy determination, as well as in programme and project formulation and implementation.

Finally, a small caution, care should be taken to foresee the likely consequences that the introduced innovations might have on all aspects of women's lives, especially their impact on the social and economic status of women, their health and the well being of their families.

Mr. Chairman, our women are ready to start schemes that would make them economically equal partners to men. What they need is a little encouragement and help. While enterprises that can be allocated to rural women are usually of small scale, their impact on the overall economy cannot be under-rated. Women are capable of taking responsibility for themselves and for their families. The improvement of their employment conditions will raise their status, increase their income generating capacity, strengthen their voice in decision-making and enhance their ability to act on their own behalf.

I realise, of course, that some of the proposals I am making might seem far fetched to some but probably it is equally true that in the long run they are the only way out. Indeed, we have to plan now for what we want to achieve in the year 2000 and beyond. It is on this basis that in Tanzania we have a long-term goal to make water accessible to all our rural communities, to build day care centres and distribute electricity to as many rural areas as possible; to build rural clinics, to improve the techniques of agricultural production through the use of the ox plough and where possible the tractor, and to plant forests for firewood and timber around the villages. For it is only through the development of these infrastructures that we can begin the march towards the liberation of womenfolk. At present the women in the rural areas are the ones suffering the most from traditional rigidities. It is, thus, essential that the governments should begin to pay greater and greater attention to the alleviation of their sufferings.

An educationist once said that, "when you educate a man you educate an individual but when you educate a woman you educate the home". By the same token, the Third World cannot succeed to emerge from its present underdevelopment if it fails to provide for the woman. The majority of the women who need this assistance live and work in the rural areas. I personally consider your concern for the welfare of these rural women a most welcome and timely development. I sincerely hope that our respective governments as well as the agencies endowed with resources will take the outcome of your deliberations seriously.

Mr. Chairman and distinguished participants, it is hardly necessary for me to remind this distinguished audience that this year, 1984, is near the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. As already alluded to earlier, the majority of women, like

the rest of the population of the Third World, is to be found in the rural areas. It is, thus, most opportune that you are meeting here to reflect on their plight. I sincerely hope, therefore, that your Workshop will also delve into the question of the achievements we have made for women generally and for rural women in particular during the past decade.

Once again I take this opportunity to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and the organisers of this Workshop for the invitation. I would also like to thank the participants for being very attentive throughout my speech.

Finally, on this note, it is my honour and privilege to declare this most important Workshop officially open.

Thank you.

A REPORT ON THE FIELD TRIP

The Workshop participants went on a day's field trip to visit three women's projects in Akheri, Singisi and Usa villages. The projects were in many ways typical of women's projects and illustrated some of the problems discussed at the Workshop. The projects encouraged women in activities which suffered from lack of raw materials, equipment and market. Only one project focused on women's agricultural work, while the rest promoted non-marketable skills and activities. A brief report on the three projects in the three villages follows.

1. Christian Women's Association Project in Akheri Village

Akheri Village was registered as a development village in 1976. The village has an area of 1299 square kilometres. The village comprises 450 families and has a population of 11,597 people, of whom 7,521 are over 18 years of age. The major economic activities are cash crop (coffee), food crops (banana, maize and beans) and livestock (cattle-525, goats-44, sheep-306, pigs-10, chickens-1,200). The village has a primary school, a maize mill machine, a village shop, a water pipe, electricity, telephone and a co-operative centre for buying coffee from villagers and selling inputs.

The Christian Women's Association was formed in 1983, with assistance from the church who provided 10,000 shillings as capital. The association has 70 members and has the following activities:

- (a) Tailoring Project: this project has three small sewing machines donated by the Danish Volunteer Training Centre. More machines are promised by the Centre.
- (b) Tie and Dye Project;
- (c) Knitting Project.

Members meet twice a week. Every Monday they work in the six acre farm owned by the church and Tuesdays are reserved for the above three projects. They are assisted by a Danish Volunteer who acts as an instructor. Products are sold within the village and revenue generated is given to the church for meeting various parish activities.

All the activities are, thus, part of women's volunteer community services. The Association members identified two major problems, i.e. they have no building of their own and have to use the church building and, more importantly, they are unable to acquire the materials required for the projects especially threads and colours for the tie and dye project.

2. Singisi Women Association in Singisi Village

Singisi Women Association was formed in 1974 and it has 120 members out of which four are men. The present membership fee is 100 shillings. The Association was formed with the aim of giving skills to school leavers (standard seven) who are not selected for further education. The Association has three projects:

- (a) Pottery Project for making pots and ceramic cups. They use both the traditional method and simple machines donated by the Small Industrial Development Organisation (SIDO) and the Danish Volunteer Training Centre. The Centre has also provided a volunteer to assist in the project.
- (b) Farm Project: the Association has a 12 acre farm, 14 acres reserved for bean and 4 acres for cattle fodder.
- (c) Dairy Cattle Project: the Association has ordered two high grade cows, the shed is already completed and fodder will be available from the four acres for cattle fodder. The Association also has a co-operative shop.

All members work in the farm project twice a week. A few trained members work in the pottery project and are paid an allowance calculated according to the amount of pots and cups made by each individual. After meeting all project costs the surplus is shared by members but this was only done in 1983. For all other years the surplus was used for expanding the Association's activities.

The Association members identified two major problems, i.e. lack of necessary materials and chemicals for the pottery project and lack of equipment for some of the other activities.

The Association had a tailoring and knitting project and had trained some members but unfortunately all machines were stolen and now the Association is looking for donors to assist them.

3. Usa River Tailoring Association

This Association was formed in 1981 by 11 members who contributed 500 shillings each. The Danish Volunteer Centre has donated sewing machines. They make dresses of all designs and uniforms for both adults and children.

They sell their products to tourist shops, Regional Trading Company and other retailers. The Association is, however, facing marketing problems. They have dresses worth 40,000 shillings which they have not been able to sell. The sewing machines of this project was also stolen but the project was successful in again obtaining donations of machines.