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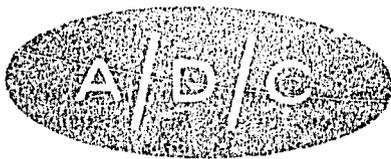
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9. ABSTRACT

This summary draws upon research done in: German Democratic Republic, Poland, USSR, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, U.S., Lebanon (and other areas of the Middle East), Nigeria, Kenya, Peru, Mexico, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia, and China. Issues and trends covered are: 1) rural women in general; 2) impact of industrialization on women's roles in agriculture; 3) socialism and the position of women; 4) training, educational attainment, and employment of rural women; 5) effect of economic development and modernization on the status of women; 6) economic independence and participation in decision-making; 7) agricultural mechanization, modernization, and employment for rural women; 8) women, research and development; 9) the "value" or ethical question.

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The Changing Role of Women in Rural Societies: A Summary of Trends and Issues

GELIA T. CASTILLO

This is a summary report on one of the Seminar Sessions organized by the Fourth World Congress for Rural Sociology which was held in Torun, Poland from August 9-13, 1976. Assistance and support for selected participants was provided by The Ford Foundation and The Agricultural Development Council through its Research and Training Network. Ms. Elinor Barber and Dr. A. M. Weisblat helped in identifying professionals engaged in research directly related to the theme of the seminar.

Dr. Barbara Tryfan of the Institute of Rural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences served as Secretary of the Seminar and was instrumental in inviting participants from East Europe. Ms. Ruza First-Dilic was the Resource Person. More than fifty male and female professionals from 24 countries participated in the seminar. The naivete on all sides about how rural women in other societies live their lives was obvious, and one can only hope that this represents the beginning of a continuing process of interchange and learning.

In this summary an attempt is made to provide some flavor of what one might find in the individual papers, in order to stimulate a greater demand for and a wider circulation of them.

*Gelia Castillo, Chairperson
Seminar Session on
"The Changing Role of Women
in Rural Societies"*

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Although in the industrialized countries of the world the rural population has declined considerably and the labor force engaged in agriculture has been markedly reduced, the majority of the people in the world remain rural and agricultural. Even in the developed countries the rural sector is still very much a fact of life.

Recently there has been a rising awareness that in most rural settings the burden of women's work and the constraints that custom and tradition place on her may deserve special scrutiny in the context of a world-wide commitment to "development." Are the resources and gains of development being equitably shared? What are the consequences for rural women? The Seminar Session on "The Changing Role of Women in Rural Societies" held during the Fourth World Congress for Rural Sociology is a reflection of this concern. It is encouraging to note that enough studies on the subject are currently available to enable us to move from exhortative rhetoric to more empirical analysis. This summary draws upon research done in the following countries: German Democratic Republic, Poland, USSR, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, Federal Republic of Germany, United States, Lebanon (and other areas of the Middle East), Nigeria, Kenya, Peru, Mexico, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Philippines, Indonesia and China.

From the review of more than two dozen research papers, the following trends and issues emerge:

1. *Rural women in general.*

Whether in developed or developing countries; in socialist, capitalist, or communist societies; in Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa or Asia, one can make a universal generalization that the long,

hard hours that rural women work are only marginally reflected in labor force and income statistics. To illustrate this generalization in more specific terms, we have the following description of life for the wife of the Danish self-employed farmer:

"In most cases, employment outside the farm has given the farmer's wife a double workload. Thus the traditional pattern of sex roles according to which it is left to the wife to undertake the most important items in the home, making her chiefly responsible for the housekeeping, the care and upbringing of the children, has not undergone any noticeable change as a result of her increased participation in work outside the farm. Besides attending to most domestic duties single-handed, practically all farmers' wives have an extra burden of work compared with other married women, by making themselves food from their own farm products, including home-slaughtering and tending a kitchen garden. A particularly heavy burden of work rests on women who work on the farm as well as outside it, as these women are not relieved of domestic chores to a larger extent than the other wives." (Morkeberg)

The UN Commission for Africa reports that in many parts of Africa, "production of food has always been a major role played by women. It has been estimated that women perform 30-60 percent of the agricultural labour in Africa. They cultivate, weed, harvest, process and store food crops. They also assist men in the production of cash crops." Even among the Muslim communities of Africa, "women participate actively in farm work. It is only in mechanized agricultural areas such as the Gezira where women's activities are curtailed at least partially by the requirement that they do not come into contact with 'strange men.' However, the women in these communities are far from idle. Rice cultivation in Guinea, Gambia, Mali, Niger and Upper Volta is chiefly done by women. In the North African Muslim countries, women sow, clear away weeds and spend much time in animal husbandry, milking, watering the calves and taking care of the sheep, goats and the few transport animals usually kept around the home."

In a Pakistan village where women are in *purdah*, S. A. Khan reports that:

"A typical village woman works for 14 hours on a normal day, i.e. a day outside the hectic harvesting or sowing seasons. Of these 14 hours at least 5 hours a day are spent in animal care, collecting, carrying and preparing fodder. Other major daily activities are milking and churning, cooking and carrying food to the fields. Planting, harvesting and processing seasons intensify the physical chores of the village women. During the wheat harvest for example, women spend about 10 hours a day in the fields. They also take part in husking, winnowing, and storing of wheat. They help their husbands in rice transplanting and sowing. Picking cotton and chillies are also major annual activities. Women living in mud houses have to renovate them twice a year after the end of the rainy seasons.

"The rural woman in Jhok Sayal is an active but unrecognized participant of every economic and social activity inside and outside her home. She leads a very

hard life. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that her life is filled with drudgery and few rewards. She is usually an unwelcome child; grows up with the idea that she is inferior to men; seldom is able to enhance her abilities through education; gets married when she is merely a child herself; rears half a dozen children or more; knows valuable skills but cannot use them to increase her standard of living. She performs all the duties of a wife, a mother, and a daughter-in-law and simultaneously shares the burden of field work with her husband."

For women in Slovak agriculture, it has been found that:

... "in spite of generally lesser out-of-family professional duties of women in comparison with men, their working duties if we take into account household work are much bigger in all social groups of women, both in week-days and week-ends. Every day women spent a lot of time in housekeeping and nursing children. In week-days they work in the house about three times more than men and during week-ends two times more. Excepting the category of housewives who are not employed, the most time for housekeeping was spent by women in the country—members of agricultural cooperatives about 372 minutes in week-days and 488 minutes in week-ends. The least time for housekeeping is spent by women white-collar workers/253 minutes in week-days and 411 minutes in week-ends. The longer time spent in housekeeping by rural women is caused mainly by the fact that they work in the garden and about a private house which takes more time than keeping a flat. The job of food preparation, housekeeping, care of clothes and shoes take up the most time." (Zukalova)

2. *Impact of industrialization on women's roles in agriculture.*

The changing roles of women in rural societies is nowhere more dramatically demonstrated than in the *feminization of agriculture* which has been cited in the papers on Poland, Yugoslavia, and Roumania. (Tryfan, First-Dilic, and Cernea) Industrialization, collectivization and mechanization of agriculture, and rural-urban migration have involved mostly male peasants. Women have had a slower exodus from farming, and as a result have taken over a very important group of agricultural activities which in previous decades were carried out by men. As Cernea puts it: "If agriculture is a task to be carried on the shoulders of giants, these giants are nowadays mainly the women." Feminization, which has been most prevalent in private farms, is also accompanied by changes in the age distribution of those who make up the work force; those who work on family farms are likely to be middle aged and older women. Therefore, where a big portion of the land is still in private rather than collectivized agriculture, First-Dilic asks: "What is the quality of the agricultural work of these farming women when they are overburdened, illiterate and old?" Furthermore, part-time farming is also on the increase and perhaps has its corresponding productivity implications.

The opposite trend of *masculinization of agriculture* has been observed in France, where there has been a

faster outflow of rural women than of men. Even the young women who remain in the rural community look for employment outside agriculture, in local smallscale industry or in trade or services. The agricultural population of France has become sharply more male, a situation which has led to a doubling of male celibacy in the past 50 years. For some regions, the proportion of single men in the 30-34 age group has reached as much as 45 to 49 percent. The problem has become so serious that many young farmers consider abandoning the land just so they can find a marriage partner. (Tryfan)

In trying to account for these two opposing developments, First-Dilic explains that "in the early stages of industrialization, focus on heavy industry and construction, women remained on peasant family farms and carried out their traditional female tasks as well as the chores of deagrarianized men. In the following period, the development of light industry within the secondary sector created favorable conditions for employment of female labor although the share of economically active farm women (in Yugoslavia) still remain high, 68.3 percent in 1961. Only the more intensive development of the tertiary sector could result in more rapid non-agricultural employment of present-day farming women, which has already begun to be reflected in the lower share of economically active women in agriculture, 55.4 percent in 1971."

Equally relevant to this phenomenon of *feminization* and *masculinization* of agriculture are C. Barberis's conceptualization of the three main functions of women in the labor force, vis-a-vis men:

(a) The function of *substitution*, which occurs when responsibility for work traditionally done by men is shifted to women. An obvious example is the increased female employment in agriculture which occurs when industry has attracted the male labor force but opened up no opportunities for the women who remain on the farm.

(b) The function of *integration*, when the woman is doing what has traditionally been regarded as woman's work nevertheless exerts a unifying or integrating force on the family enterprise. Such activities are predominantly carried out by the wife of the household head, and it is this situation which offers scope to their integrative function. Book-keeping and accountancy for women in agriculture are some examples, but a more intriguing integration function is found in tourism. The Federal Republic of Germany, for example, has over 34,000 rural housewives each year who, after the necessary professional training, entertain tourists who wish to spend their holidays on a farm. (Parenthetically, the choice of spending holidays on a farm in Germany and the attraction that some American affluent families find in living in a farmhouse, either all-year round or in the summer,

represent an intriguing redefinition of what constitutes "the good life.")

(c) The function of *competition*, when the woman competes with the man for equal conditions in work and equal possibilities to participate in social and political life. In agriculture, this occurs when women become managers of big farms, etc. (First Dilic and Tryfan)

3. Socialism and the position of women.

In the papers from USSR, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Roumania and the German Democratic Republic (Ryvkina and Koriakina, Zupalova, Pesheva, Cernea, Muller and Fleischer), the role of socialist transformation in the "harmonious" realization of virtual equality between the sexes is emphasized. Zupalova cites V. I. Lenin's statement as the main premise of female social emancipation: "If a woman is to be completely freed and to be really equal to a man, it is necessary to establish socialist economy and for her to take part in common productive work." The establishment of agricultural production cooperatives changed the status of women in agriculture by specifying that women farmer members are owners enjoying equal rights. "In the G.D.R., women in agriculture account for 13.1 percent of all executives and 44 female members of cooperative farms are members of Parliament. About 15 percent of all women working in agriculture have a license for driving trucks and tractors and a permit for operating large machines and milking units." To enable women to participate fully in social production, kindergartens, creches, canteen meals, holiday homes, uninterrupted vacations, and multi-shift systems have been provided. (Muller and Fleischer)

The USSR, of course, shows a very high degree of achievement of equality. As Ryvkina and Koriakina point out: "By educational attainment, participation in occupational and public activity, women are not lagging behind men, and virtually in many cases have left them behind. According to the 1897 census, women were employed as household servants (57.5%); labourers (25%); in manufacturing (3%); in education and health services (4%). At present women make 51% of total employed in public production; in manufacturing, 48%; in trade and public catering, 76%; in health, 85%; in art, 45%; in education and culture, 73%; in science, 48%; in governmental and economic management bodies, in cooperatives and public organizations, 62%. Women make 59% of senior and junior college graduates employed in the soviet national economy." (Ryvkina and Koriakina)

However, the socialist transformation is not without its problems of conflicts among women's roles as worker, mother, wife, and member of the cooperative. Cernea's analysis of the Roumanian situation sheds light on this matter:

"The woman has to perform a three-fold economic role: (1) the role of a cooperative farm member, simultaneously co-owner and laborer in a large scale enterprise; (2) the role of laborer on the family plot, a piece of land assigned by the cooperative farm to its members for their needs and as a reward for their attending work in the cooperative farm; (3) the role of housekeeping and managing the consumption unit of the peasant family. These are partly complementary and partly cross-cutting and conflicting roles which are intimately bound together due precisely to the fact that they are emergents of the same family economic infrastructure. For the time being, the fulfillment of role (3) and the need for completing the consumption resources of the family requires the women to perform both roles (2) and (1). The nonfulfillment of role (1) would jeopardize the allotment of the personal plot to the family or would diminish this lot. While the time allocation for the role (3) remains more or less constant for the peasant women, the emphasis put by the woman in fulfilling her (1) and (2) roles depends on whether her husband is working on the cooperative farm or is employed in an industrial job outside the village."

With the husband out of the home most of the time, the *decision-making authority* of the wife-mother within the family group is increasing. But more than that, her participation in the cooperative farm has pushed her to "a more visible position and frequently to an institutionalized leading position in the organization of farm activities."

As in the socialist countries of East Europe, China's blue-print for macro-social transformation consciously provides for deliberate measures to redefine the role and status of women. As Croll points out:

"The Chinese Communist Party has argued that the presence of female solidarity groups which are devoted to protecting and furthering women's economic and political interests were necessary to draw women into new economic and political activities and to facilitate their access to and control over, not only the products of their labour, but also the economic and ideological resources of society. . . . During the successive government policies to displace individualized peasant production with collectivized agriculture through land reform, the collectivisation and communisation of agriculture and the establishment of rural industries and projects of capital construction in the countryside, it was the women's groups in the villages which encouraged women to take advantage of the new opportunities available to them to take a full and wide-ranging role in production. Small cooperative production units of rural handicrafts and all-women production teams working in the fields have often coincided with the basic organisation of the local female solidarity groups in the villages. In the production units, it was often these groups which made arrangements for and encouraged women to learn new skills and break into new spheres of work which were traditionally male preserves. . . . The female solidarity groups also acted as pressure groups to expedite the implementation of government policies to accommodate women's biological role, introduce public health measures to reduce infant mortality and the means to give women control of reproduction and to end discrimination against women in favour of the policy of equal pay for equal work."

4. *Training, educational attainment and employment of rural women.*

Although the developed and developing countries are expected to differ in training and educational level attained by their rural women, it was observed in practically all the countries studied that rural women were generally less well trained and had lower educational attainment than their urban counterparts. This fact limits their employability. Being engaged in agriculture is, therefore, not necessarily a choice on their part but is often a consequence of lack of alternatives.

For many farmers' wives, taking care of backyard and family plots and the seasonality of farming activities is more compatible with the fulfillment of their other roles as mothers and housekeepers. It is ironic, however, that a related observation by Hull in her study of the new Javanese rural middle class is that "the education systems seems to be geared to preparing people for civil service positions in towns and cities; a rural woman with a high school education feels she has no realistic goals or opportunities in the village. It is also clear, however, that there are not enough jobs even in the cities to absorb all the graduates of the school system. It is not surprising, then, to find that there was a prevailing attitude among middle class Maguharjo women that the only real justification for the education of young girls is to prepare them to be better mothers." She asks if education and other vehicles of modernization simply help "create a rural elite in which women will be less prepared to participate in development? Is the experience of formal education and contact with western ideas in fact associated with women becoming more dependent economically on their husbands: in becoming more oriented toward the nuclear family rather than a wider network of female kin and non-kin; in taking on many of the characteristics of urban life in their consumption patterns; in having larger family sizes because of freedom from traditional restrictions on fertility; in placing great emphasis on the maternal role and condemning working roles for mothers?" She suggests the need to evaluate the extent to which changing patterns among the middle class actually do represent "progress" or "regress" in relation to overall development goals and to the specific integration of women into the development process.

Hull's questions emphasize the confusion that arises if we have not properly defined what "integration of women into the development process" really means. Can it only be accomplished if large numbers of women work outside the home? Too often, all that has brought to women is a tremendously heavier work load and burden of responsibility. Is there no other way to define equal opportunities for reward and advancement, equal access to resources, equal

sharing in whatever material or psychic benefits "development" offers?

5. *Effect of economic development and modernization on the status of women.*

An examination of the situations in developing countries reveals a number of issues on the effect of economic development on the status of rural women.

(a) Stoler, in her Javanese study, argues that class relations are analytically prior to women's status vis-a-vis men; that women cannot be viewed as a homogeneous group in village society, nor can it be assumed that exploitation will occur primarily along sexual lines. Changes in the structure of present-day Javanese peasant economy have not fostered an increased bifurcation of sex roles, but rather an increased scarcity and concentration of strategic resources. Such changes affected adversely *both* men and women at the lowest rung of village society. Women at all socio-economic levels participate in productive labor; this enables them to secure their own livelihoods and, therefore, affords them some degree of economic independence vis-a-vis men. However, in villages characterized by wide differentials in the distribution of wealth, the primary strategic resources of land and capital are limited to certain members of village society. For men and women without land, the only significant resource is their own labor. Within this group, women are clearly at an advantage. They have access not only to more kinds of employment opportunities but, more importantly, to regular sources of income.

In a similar vein, Castillo's analysis of Filipino women concludes that "it is not the inequality between males and females, but rather the disparities between rural and urban and between Metro Manila and the rest of the country, which come out as the most significant disparities. . . . The quality of life of Filipino women is not a blessing or a suffering peculiar to them as the fair sex, but rather the conditions of her life are very much a function of the more general estate of development in the country. Men enjoy or suffer from this just as much as women do."

(b) Young, in her analysis of changes in two Mexican communities, suggests that economic development has, on the whole, been detrimental to the majority of women. She attributes this to the decline of handicraft production which makes households more dependent on cultivating a cash crop, the proceeds from which are controlled by men although the work is provided by the women. Increasing economic stratification has put an ever greater burden on the human resources of the poor families, resulting in the physical oppression of the double day for adult women or the expulsion from the rural area of girls with low educational levels and limited employment prospects. The problem, she points out, is not merely

an economic one but stems from the unequal relationship between men and women. Local people rationalize the lower wage paid to women by describing it as not a real wage but a complement to someone else's wage. As they express it: "A woman does not work, she helps." It is further argued that "low wages and increasing employment of women in agriculture is actually beneficial not only to individual capitalist farmers but also to the wider system."

(c) Deere argues from another setting (the Peruvian Sierra) that the transition from servile to capitalist relations of production has been improved and deteriorated the socio-economic condition of the women directly and indirectly involved. She observes that for the mass of rural women who have rid themselves of servile obligations there has been an absolute decrease in the potential and effective length of the working day as the surplus labor time which was appropriated by the *hacendado* is eliminated. But the increased pauperization of smallholdings due to the decreasing resource base have increased (in terms of time) the relative costs of production and reproduction of labor power. As men are forced to seek wage income to complement the family's subsistence, women's work on the *minifundio* increases both relatively and absolutely. Deere suggests, therefore, that within the *minifundio* women's increased responsibility for production and reproduction of familial labor power improves her status and self-esteem. On the other hand, the increased economic possibilities for women within the cooperatives have not generated a concurrent increase in women's status or participation in decision-making.

(d) Das Gupta's analysis of a North Indian village presents dissenting views on Boserup's thesis which attributes women's low status to their being involved in subsistence agriculture rather than in the most prestigious cash-cropping which is the sphere of men. Das Gupta argues that in the village she studied, no distinction of role or status can be related to which crop is for subsistence and which for sale. Women do most of the manual work in agriculture, anyway. It is suggested that women's low status lies in the traditional structure of society and in their non-ownership of the means of production, rather than any lack of participation in the process of production. Because the men form a structured, organized group, while the married women in the village have little chance of perceiving themselves as a group, they take on the group identities of the men. The close interdependence between men and women makes it meaningless to speak of women as a depressed group in the same terms as one might of lower classes and caste groups. Their problem is, therefore, a less tractable one than that of most depressed groups since they cannot mobilize themselves to improve their situation. Whereas in the traditional world, knowledge was the least equal, in a modernizing world the structured

dominance of men in society has been used by men to control access to knowledge about the urban world and the opportunities it offers; hence the widened gap between men and women. Men, for example, have profited more from educational opportunities than women; thus development has changed the *role* of women much more than their status.

According to Das Gupta, the major problem as perceived by the Indian women is lack of control over their own and their families' lives. The lifelong maltreatment to which they are subject in the household would be very difficult to change. Thus, she says: "remedies to low status suggested by the Women's Movement in the West—equal employment opportunities, creche facilities and so on—are not only impracticable but also irrelevant to these women. . . . Only measures which break into the structure of the family and the household can succeed in this task. . . . If such resources could ever be made available, they would be better spent on reducing other inequalities in society, signified by extreme poverty and malnutrition in general, which would in itself alleviate the problem which is probably the most pressing these women face."

6. *Economic independence and participation in decision-making.*

On the issue of women's economic independence, two contrasting cases which are equally intriguing are presented by Simmons' paper on women in the Zaria villages of northern Nigeria and Castillo's report on Filipino women.

a. Among the women of Zaria, certain aspects of the male-female relationship and the division of roles within the household result in women's expressed need for independent financial resources:

- (1.) While the male head of household is largely responsible for the care and maintenance of the household, women are expected by their husbands to provide for the personal needs such items as soap, cosmetics, room decorations, and some clothing, and for part of the dowries for their daughters. Most rural women also apparently provide for their own midday meals and those of their small children.
- (2.) Because there is little companionship between the men and women of the compound, women develop independent social lives with other women and children. In these friendships, gift relationships are an essential part and, therefore, financial resources are required.
- (3.) Women try to maintain close ties with their children, in part because when they are old and widowed such relationships will be their only form of social security.
- (4.) There is a norm that a married woman must have an occupation in order to establish herself as a respectable adult in the community. Only

young newly-married girls and anile old women are "allowed" to have no occupation. It is said that a woman who does not try to engage in some independent economic activity when the conditions are right should be shunned by other women.

- (5.) The ease with which men can divorce their wives and recognition of the fact that one wife in a polygamous marriage is more expendable on practical grounds than a single wife in a monogamous union leads to a prevalent feeling that one must not depend too strongly on one's husband.

b. The decision-making pattern in the Filipino household is more egalitarian and joint-with-husband rather than patriarchal. In contrast to the women of Zaria, the Filipino wife is the keeper of family finances. She participates in the management not only of matters concerning household and family, but also of farming and livelihood. The issue, therefore, in the Philippine case is not the degree of authority and influence which a woman exercises in farm and family-related matters, but rather the quality of her input into the decision-making process and what might be done to enhance the content of what she contributes.

7. *Agricultural mechanization and modernization and employment for rural women.*

Several of the papers from the developing countries have pointed out that modernization and mechanization in agriculture is seen mainly in the activities which men do, while women's work in both farm and home have remained predominantly manual. The dilemma of wanting to relieve women of burdensome work while at the same time seeking to improve labor absorption is evident in the observations, for example, that increased cropping intensity has increased women's work. On the other hand, there is some "lament" about the fact that rice-hullers are replacing hand-pounding and displacing labor which used to be performed by women.

The ILO Report on *Employment, Growth and Basic Needs* (1976) also expresses this dilemma:

"Especially in rural areas, most women in developing countries are overworked rather than underemployed, and a more appropriate technology for the tasks they perform implies labour saving, in order to improve the quality of their employment rather than employment creation. Much emphasis is often placed on the relief of drudgery in agricultural work by mechanisation, but this unfortunately in many cases reduces employment opportunities at the same time. There is much scope, however, for relieving the drudgery of women's household work by the provision of accessible water points, rural electrification and simple technological improvements in the processing and preparation of food in the home."

In the more developed countries, the problem is of a very different nature as illustrated by Cernea in his Roumanian study:

"Although the woman's burden of housework is still very time-consuming, it has diminished as compared to the precollectivization period, due to the diffusion of domestic electrical appliances and various labor saving devices. . . . But saving women's labour time does not necessarily mean increasing their leisure time, rather it means pushing them out of the home for undertaking work in the cooperative farm or other seasonal jobs. At the same time, the needs and expectations of the peasant family as to the quality and variety of the food, for instance, have increased. Therefore, it has become necessary for the peasant woman to spend more of her time preparing meals for her family instead of doing just one dish which can be served throughout the week once it has been prepared. The same sort of changes occurs with respect to child care activities. There is a new notion of maternity and of child-raising in the village . . . and although the peasant woman's birth rate has declined and she has less children than in the past, she spends more time to take much greater care of them. By and large, the traditional roles of the wife (housekeeper) and mother might have changed in their content but were not reduced as to the time they require. Instead the macro-social changes embodied by industrialization, collectivization and migration do increase the requirements built in the provider role fulfilled by the peasant woman, i.e. her economic role(s)."

Tymowski similarly suggests that reduction of labour input in household activity, by relieving the time budget of rural women, will enable their greater activation on the farm. Although more leisure time will not necessarily result from making it easier to manage the household, he argues, at least they may have an opportunity to exercise a preference as to how the time saved will be used.

8. *Women, research and development.*

Pala, in a sobering statement on the current focus on women and development, says: "Exhortations are made by politicians and women's organizations urging women to 'join in building the nation,' but these are rarely accompanied by specific strategies for giving a more productive role to the majority of women who live in the rural areas under relatively poor conditions." She points out that despite growing recognition and widespread concern about women's potential in rural development, there is relative poverty in the planning and implementation to speed up its realization.

Abdullah and Zeidenstein, in their project to integrate rural women into the development process in Bangladesh, describe the difficulties they encountered in trying to get accurate information about women in *purdah*. Such information is crucial in developing programs which will enable women to have more to say in the family about their reproductive lives via a strategy which will provide them some economic autonomy using the credit/service coopera-

tive as its base. Considering the segregation of the sexes and the marked division of labor along sex lines, this attempt to reach rural women has very significant implications and presents considerable challenge.

Regarding women under similar cultural circumstances in the Middle East, Neson questions the "powerlessness" which is often assumed regarding them. She challenges the assertion made that there are dual and separate worlds of men and women in which the former world is public and the latter private. The following "Power" roles of women are cited:

(a) The woman as daughter, sister, wife, and mother acts as an "information broker," mediating social relations within the family and larger society. In this position, the woman can channel information to or withhold it from male members of the kindred.

(b) Women form their own exclusive solidarity groups which exercise considerable social control by seeking alliance and support from other women in the community, certain women achieve high social status and consequently exercise political influence.

(c) Women influence men through the religious or supernatural (witchcraft, sorcery, divination, and curing).

(d) The public image of a man is influenced by the particular behavior of his women—through ridiculing, gossip, shame and honor.

To what extent could the above-mentioned information be helpful and be taken into account in efforts to encourage the participation of Lebanese rural women in development? Traditional resistance to rural women's participation in organizations, objections raised by the family and lack of interest in change or improvement on the part of rural women were cited as problems limiting the effectiveness of programs for them.

On the neglected side of the women's movement are the old women, of whom we have more than of men. What is their role in the scheme of things for integrating women in development? What might they continue to give or to receive from society? Czajkowski presents an interesting model for reaching them nutrition-wise.

During the Seminar Session, a more general question was asked regarding how research could be more useful for policy formulation and program development and implementation. Studies on the role of women are always academically interesting, but their value for development and action program purposes has yet to be demonstrated.

9. *The "value" or ethical question.*

In the definition of what constitutes a "better" life for women, the same controversial issues that are raised about academic, cultural, economic and/or technological imperialism must be considered. Sex

roles (and not just women's roles) are already undergoing tremendous stress everywhere as new technologies and new economic conditions emerge. Within an accepted value system there may be no ambiguity in asking how the lot of women can be improved. But the culture and values of any people are very much involved in defining *what a woman should be*, and this definition is therefore as susceptible to violation and disregard and as sensitive to interference as any other aspect of a nation's political life. In a family-oriented society in which non-family or extra-family roles "adapt" or "adjust" to the dominant role of wife, mother and family member, who makes the judgment as to whether the preferred roles should be reversed? Who is to define what this "new woman" should be? What are the costs and gains to a society of transforming the traditional roles of women? If it is

fair to demand that the social and political implications of new agricultural technology be subject to a great deal of scrutiny, the impact of new and/or additional roles for women deserve as much, if not more thought. What happens to men, family and children and to society in general when traditional roles of wife, mother, and family member are altered, reduced or the differences even eliminated? To minimize role conflicts, a woman can forego being a mother; she does not even have to become a wife. What is the impact of this on the woman herself? To an incurable romantic (and one hopes that romance has not gone completely out of style), it is small comfort to a woman to be economically independent, gainfully employed, fully integrated, equal and liberated, if in the middle of the night she wakes up cold and alone.

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PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE SEMINAR

[Those with asterisk were included in the review for this summary because they were made available and were considered relevant although they were not prepared specifically for the seminar. Copies of the papers are available from the individual authors.]

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