

Library Bangladesh

PN-AA X-820

A PLAN

...

To improve the marketing of
products being made by women

in

BANGLADESH

Prepared for

NATIONAL WOMEN S DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY

By

D. N. SARAF
Consultant, USAID

Dacca

December 1979

CONTENTS

- I INTRODUCTION
- II WOMEN AT WORK - products made by women in Bangladesh
- III INSTITUTIONS/SYSTEMS - offering marketing opportunities;
domestic sales and export
- IV A PLAN - to improve the marketing of products made by women:
- i) Survey
 - ii) Marketing Conference & Clinic
 - iii) Training
 - iv) Commercial Intelligence Cell
 - v) Design Development
 - vi) Quality Control
 - vii) Pricing
 - viii) Rural Market
 - ix) Women Craft Markets
 - x) Showroom at Dacca
 - xi) Publicity and Promotion
- V RECOMMENDATIONS - a summary and suggestions for implementation

Annexure - A : Report of the Activities - undertaken during the consultation,
including contacts and studies.

Annexure - B : Functional Chart - NWDA - also its Organizational Structure.

Annexure - C : Union Development Centres - set up and others to be set up.

I - INTRODUCTION

While the undersigned was still working as UNICEF Consultant on Marketing, Sales & Design, with the BWRWF, a request was received from Mrs. Sallie Craig Huber, USAID, Dacca, through Mrs. Jowshan Ara Rahman, Programme Officer, Women's Development Unit, UNICEF regarding consultancy with NWDA, after the expiry of the UNICEF contract on 23rd October. We met and discussed the scope of work. This was followed by a couple of meetings with the contracting office.

I took up the USAID assignment on 24th October for six weeks (36 working days). During this period I have met several persons connected with the NWDA project, and visited a few places; much touring was not considered necessary in my case, because of my broad familiarization with various Bangladesh women's projects and products. A list of the contacts and the visits is included in the report of the activities - undertaken during the consultation - which forms Annexure - A.

It was required of me to assist the NWDA with the development of a marketing plan for local and external marketing of handicrafts and other products being produced by women's projects in Bangladesh. By way of clarification it was agreed that I would cover handicrafts mainly with a brief reference to other cottage industries, but not the para-agricultural activities such as duckery, poultry and pisciculture. Further, that the study should be confined to the governmental or government sponsored women's projects; since it would not be possible to review the wide range of voluntary organizations, barring a few important ones concerned mostly with marketing. Even then it would be covering a large canvas with small strokes - which, of course should have a fair cumulative effect.

Before plunging into a written marketing plan, which forms the main focus of this report - Chapter IV - it has been considered necessary to give a brief narrative of:

- (a) handicrafts and other products produced by women in Bangladesh (Chapter II); and
- (b) organizations offering marketing opportunities for domestic sales and exports (Chapter III).

Since the possibility of some advice regarding design, quality control, pricing etc. to NWDA and the other women's projects was also suggested in the scope of my work, I have touched these areas briefly, not in respect of technical but organizational aspect only which essentially concerns marketing in sub-sections v, vi and vii respectively under Chapter IV.

The recommendations for implementation of the proposed plan have been summarised in Chapter V, while body of the main report itself outlines them since the very nature of the plan is action-oriented. As will be seen certain actions are directly concerned with NWDA, there are others which the BJMS-as the parent body - and in its capacity as the National Organization for Women of Bangladesh - might consider and take up, from its broad platform.

It may not be out of place here to recall briefly that BJMS - the Bangladesh Jatiyo Mahila Sangstha - is the apex women's organization, and is authorized by the Bangladesh Government to federate various women's organizations. It was established in February 1976, for the purpose of social, economic, educational and cultural welfare of women of Bangladesh. The Sangstha has a National Committee of 50 members and an Executive Committee of 15 members. It has also established offices and committees at the headquarters of the 20 Districts, 40 Sub-divisions, and 350 Thanas. The general programme of these Committees includes, inter-alia, encouraging participation of women in cottage industry, cooperatives and marketing.

NWDA- the National Women's Development Academy was set up in January, 1977, for training both motivational workers and trade instructors. The Academy is staffed by eight wholetime tutors and seven part time specialists. A Functional Chart of NWDA - incorporating the present position, as well the conceptual future - also its existing organizational structure is given at Annexure - B.

According to a scheme of the BJMS approved by the Government of Bangladesh two Union Development Centres for women in each District are to be set up, each having three Vocational Teachers and one Sales Assistant (in practice it is an Accountant cum Sales Assistant). Eleven girls are selected from each Union for training at NWDA in non-formal education for a period of six weeks.

- Subjects:
- (i) Adult literacy
 - (ii) Health, hygiene and nutrition
 - (iii) Family Planning
 - (iv) Maternal and child care
 - (v) Cooperative
 - (vi) Home management and community development
 - (vii) Swanirvar programme (recently introduced).

Out of the eleven girls, one with better education is selected as the Union Director, while other ten act as paid VSW (Village Social Worker) each incharge of a group of villages, each Union being divided into ten groups of villages. She is helped by 3 village volunteers, who are also paid. Steps have been taken for starting a number of Union Development Centres. The position as at end of November is given in Annexure - C. The concept of the Union Development Centres is good and deserves encouragement.

The founder Chairman of BJMS Dr. Amina Rahman - who is also currently the Hon'ble Minister for Women's Affairs - provided me with much inspiring guidance in meetings with her. She graciously received some suggestions on marketing with generous appreciation. I also called on Mr. Rasheed Ahmad, Joint Secretary, Incharge, Ministry of Women's Affairs and had an interesting exchange of thoughts with him; he seemed to welcome my brief presentation of the marketing plan for NWDA/BJMS. The members of the Executive Committee of BJMS, too have been kind enough to hear me, lending their general support to my approach to the problems of marketing women's products. I am grateful to them all.

My special thanks are due to Ms. Hashmat Ara Begum, the Director of NWDA - for her excellent cooperation, during the brief time I worked with her - and to Mr. F. Karim, the Executive Officer of BJMS for the facilities and information kindly arranged by him, during the course of my consultancy. He has been very helpful, indeed.

I am also grateful to the authorities at the Dacca headquarters of various women's projects in Bangladesh who - who often at very short notice - helped me with information on their working, the products made by women, and their general marketing mechanism as well as problems. They also reacted well to whatever on-the-spot advice I had to offer regarding sales, design, quality control, pricing etc.

At the USAID I have had the benefit of advice and assistance from Mr. Gurney, Mr. Dumm, Mrs. Gomes and Mrs. Moldrem, besides the physical facilities provided by the Executive Office. Without these valuable segments of support I could not have possibly been able to complete the assignment in the short time at my disposal.

As advised by Mr. Gurney at the outset, before he went on leave in the first week of November, I have attempted rather a conceptual marketing plan, putting together such coherent ideas as seemed relevant and possible, without going into a schematic and financial exercise, which, in any case, would be premature at this stage. The points included in the plan have been broadly discussed with some of the members of the BJMS Executive Committee and the Director, NWDA. These have been briefly brought to the notice of Dr. Amina Rahman, the Hon'ble Minister continuing as Chairman BJMS, Mr. Rasheed Ahmad (Ministry of Women's Affairs) and Mr. Dumm (USAID). But this does not commit anyone at all personally or officially. It is my singular responsibility as well as privilege to submit them, vide this report for consideration of, and examination by, the concerned quarters. If even only a few of the submissions provoke further thought and investigation, and get developed into sound schemes/projects which are ultimately implemented, I shall consider my modest contribution worthwhile, and feel doubly rewarded.

D. N. Saraf

II - WOMAN AT WORK - products made by women in Bangladesh.

"Historically, an average women in Bangladesh has been relegated primarily to play the role of a docile daughter, a compliant wife and a dependent mother". It is undubitable, however, that women in Bangladesh contribute significantly to productive effort, particularly in the countryside. They undertake preparation of the threshing floors, drying of the grain, husking, seed processing and preservation, winnowing, transplanting, fuel procuring, poultry farming etc. over and above their domestic obligations. Women also generally undertake food preservation at home - dry green mango skins for future use in curry; make mango achar and chutney; dry ginger, onion, garlic, turmeric and chillies. They partly contribute in horticulture, animal husbandry and fish culture. The woman will sometimes make paddy into beaten rice (chira), puffed rice (muri) and fried rice (khowi) both for home consumption as a delicacy, and for sale. This and the sale of surplus fruit, vegetable and eggs, help her in making a little money.

Some organized groups of women are also engaged in confectionary - making of bread and biscuits, fruit jelly, jams etc. Processed fruit and vegetables, and other products - mango pickles, potato 'paper', preserved cauliflower and cabbage, a wide range of products based on pineapple, guava, lemons, jackfruits, besides mango - have good existing and prospective market; and women can contribute substantially to the cottage industries in this field. As stated in the introductory chapter, this is an area I am only touching very briefly. Comments/advice of a competent consultant on fruit and vegetable based cottage industries would be very useful. In fact, BJMS is already in contact with Mrs. Meherunnessa Islam, Consultant, UNICEF, Dacca, in regard to food processing and preservation. Her continued association and advice in this field, for a length of time, should be highly helpful, indeed. It would only say that a degree of standardisation, accompanied with certain common facilities, such as suitable and scientific packaging, would add to the marketability of the products of the cottage industries based on vegetables and fruits - with rich possibilities in Bangladesh.

Crafts

During the monsoon, when she cannot work outside a great deal, or during the day time whenever she has freedom from her multitudinous tasks, a woman may make:

- Bed quilts and mats
- Ropes, brooms, hangers (shikas) from grass, straw, jute coconut fibres etc.
- Baskets, winnower, sieves, etc. from bamboo.

These will be for family's use but, in some areas with a tradition for handicrafts, she will make those for sale also.

Among the crafts produced by women for the market following list should be fairly illustrative - not an exhaustive one:

- . Jute products : Shikas - plaited and twined jute hangers, used for holding pots and utensils in village homes. These are being made in large variety - Giant Dalin, Flower, Turia, Korani, Zumka are some of the popular trade names.

Bags - shoulder bags, shopping bags, tote bags, Wall hangings, decorative strands (purdah) for use as door cutrains, room dividers etc.; hammocks; glass holders; placemats; coasters; X-mas hangings etc.
- . Weaving : Sarees; loongies; gamchas, chaddar; bed covers; bed sheets; table covers and table mats, tapestry and running cloth. (Majority of workers are men except in Hill Tracts and Manipuri settlements where women weave. Women, however, help men in several preparatory processes in other places).

Training in weaving is being imparted to women in a number of centres followed by organized production in some cases - as in case of SWALLOWS in Thanapara.
- . Garments : Children's dresses; 'punjabis'; petty coats; shirts and blouses mostly.
- . Embroidery : Sarees; bed covers; table cloths; table mats and napkins; table covers; children's garments; shirts; stoles; etc.
- . Kantha : It is a special type of handstitched cotton spread with intricate colourful designs. Nakshi kanthas are specialty of Chapai Nawabganj, Rajshahi area. Wall hangings and table mats are also being made in this technique. (Under a Presidential Grant BSCIC have supplied raw materials worth Taka 50,000 to women artisans of Nakshi kanthas.)

- . Knitting : Knitted wool jersey; sweaters; socks; mufflers and shawls - made on simple hand operated machines. Also totally handknitted items.
- . Crochet work and Laces : A wide range of products includes hand crocheted bed spreads; table cloths and mats; chairback sets; shawls; T-shirts; evening blouses; poncho blouses; stoles; dollies, borders and decorative frills for garments.
- . Satranjee : Colourful cotton satranjees are woven at BWRWF Centre in Rangpur, by women trained under master craftsmen from Nishbatganj (BSCIC has constructed one artisan home at Rangpur to preserve and rehabilitate the satranjee industry of Nishbatganj).
- . Handprinted textiles : Batik, screen and block-printing. Of these batik is most common, while screen printing is also progressing. (Some women have recently been got trained by KARIKA in block printing in India under a UNICEF assisted project).
- . Toys & Dolls : Small quantities of toys are made from wood and bamboo, besides village clay toys. Dolls are, however, more commonly made. There are a number of centres imparting training in doll making. BSCIC's Designing Centre has produced about 800 designs and prototypes in dolls, over the years.
- . Pottery : Women help men generally in rural pottery; some prepare pots themselves - decorative work is mostly done by women. There are a few women's co-operatives also in this line. (Champaknagar Mahila Samity in Chagolnaiya Thana, for instance, is a potter women society with about 50 members. They are producing clay pots, plates and pans and selling their ware in the local market.)
- . Leathercraft : Women partly undertake embossing, screen printing and batik work on a variety of leather products such as wallets; cigarette and trinket boxes; jewellery cases; picture frames; slippers; handbags; shoulder bags; pencil holders etc.

- . Wood work : Painting on wood is partly done by women, while turning and engraving is usually men's job. Products include toys; candle and lamp stands; and various decorative items.
- . Cane and bamboo work : A craft with long tradition and wide spread of local utility items, mostly baskets of all types engages men as well as women. Sets of cane and bamboo baskets, in graduated sizes, are a popular export item.
- . Fishnet making : Besides fishing equipment made of bamboo in many places, fishnet making out of cotton, and now partly nylon thread also - is practised by women of Manipuri Community (There are 20,000 women in a population of about 50,000 spread over the Sylhet District). BWRWF are setting up a centre at Habiganj for training 25 women in this craft.
- . Leaf Grass & Straw Crafts : Palm leaf fans; grass and straw mats of various types, specially the sital pati of Sylhet; decorative work from wheat straw - including greeting cards on paper.
- . Hand painted greeting cards : A small number of women are engaged in hand painting of greeting cards, too. This, of course, is an urban craft; certain artist - women being the pioneers in the field.

Suggestions for intensive development

Following crafts are proposed for intensive development, since there is good existing and still better prospective demand for them:

- . Carpet weaving : Handknotted jute and woolen carpets in good quality and typical designs have a growing demand. Market for floor coverings of all types is increasing all over. Women have started learning carpet weaving; this process can be expanded considerably. It takes a girl or woman about a year to learn carpet weaving. BWRWF have made a successful beginning in jute carpet weaving at their Bogra Centre. This example could be replicated in a number of other places.

- . Hand printed textiles : Printed bed covers, bed spreads, table covers and T-shirts, table mats, curtain, besides sarees, have growing local demand. There is vast scope in the domestic as well as export markets for printed textiles, especially printed garments, bed covers and table mats, provided design, workmanship - and of course basic cloth are good. With silk weaving expanding in this country, printing of silk sarees and scraves can have considerable growth possibilities - former for the home market principally, and the latter for exports mostly.
- . Garments : This is another line with growing local demand, as well as vast export potential. It, however, needs proper organization and certain centralised operations, while the actual stitching can be arranged on a decentralized cottage industry basis. A very large number of women adequately trained in this line can find fairly remunerative employment - part-time as well as wholetime.
- . Baskets and Mats : Good cane and bamboo baskets should be promoted for local use - not the hideous looking plastic ones. Made in graduated sizes all sorts of baskets have export possibilities too. Bangladesh has rich tradition in making of baskets and mats of all types. With its rich natural resources of grasses, reeds and leaves besides bamboo, Bangladesh has practically unlimited export possibilities in basketry, mats and small items of casual furniture. The interest in products of such natural materials is growing fastly in USA and West Europe. (Would suggest organizing a special exhibition - Baskets of Bangladesh).
- . Toys & Dolls : Typical toys and dolls for country's children - as well as educational toys made of local materials have much scope of development. Export market can also be built for them. Faces of dolls are generally stereotype; many more beautiful Bangladeshi faces could be introduced in Character-dolls. (The experiments being undertaken at the UNICEF assisted Village Education Resource Centre at Savar, and the Shishu Academy, Dacca, are commended for brief training of, followed by production by groups of women, in this fairly prospective line).

- . Coir products : The quality of coir produced on cottage industry basis-needs much improvement - some skilled women need to be exposed to the experience in Sri Lanka, Philippines and India. It may be noted that Bangladesh produces over 20,000 tons of coir fibre. A good part of it could be put to making of useful coir products.
- . Pottery : This is another line in which women could be involved increasingly. BJMS may collect available information in clays, glazes, kilns etc. and disseminate the same among interested groups. It may also arrange getting some women potters trained abroad in artistic pottery.
- . Jute handicrafts : As regards jute handicrafts this industry is already well developed, as many agencies have promoted export of shikas and bags. Research and other services are needed, however, to promote hand produced jute carpets (especially out of woolenised jute yarn), fabrics, and new sorts of decorative items from this fibre.

Note: Since Sericulture is already attracting considerable attention, it has not been specifically included in the above list. Silk spinning and weaving should, however, proceed speedily, as the cocoon rearing progresses as fast as planned by the Sericulture Board. Bee keeping is another agro-based cottage industry with very good prospects. Honey has local as well as export demand. Bee's wax too, fetches high enough price in export markets

.....

**III - INSTITUTIONS/SYSTEMS - offering marketing opportunities:
domestic sales and exports.**

Rural Marketing

In the countryside, the primary system of sale of cottage industry products alongwith agricultural produce, is the village bazar and 'hath'. Here men sell their products as also those made by women. It is all right when a man from the family is helping the woman, but it is usually the outside middleman who comes into the picture. When women's groups and cooperatives have been formed - as is progressively the case - it is much better if they take up direct marketing, rather than depend on middlemen.

Agriculture Minister of Bangladesh, Major General (Retd.) Nurul Islam, inaugurating a national seminar on 19th November 1979 on 'Rural Market Development in Bangladesh' has also underlined the urgent need for developing rural markets and 'haths' - which play most vital role in the country's agrarian economy.

Urban Markets

For crafts and cottage industry products meant for urban markets, important towns, other than Dacca city, do not seem to have given much attention to them. Comilla, however, is an exception, where Jahanara Cottage Industries - a prominent woman-enterprise - also Anwara and Farida Kutir Shilpa, are operative. As a part of movement to popularise local products in the country, certain positive steps need to be taken; establishment of craft markets in Dacca and other important towns may be one important course. Even rural people will take pride in using more of handmade products when they see the city people using them increasingly. Otherwise, as is the case, too much of imported stuff in the towns exerts its bad influence - as an 'evil fungus' - in the rural areas too. One redeeming feature, however, is that there are a number of shops all over which sell local handloom sarces, gamchas and loongies, also chaddars, bed spreads and bed covers. According to a recent survey the handloom industry provides employment to about 8.48,000 persons - partly women). At Rangamati there is one Mrs. Manjulika Chakma, weaving centre with sales shop which is doing very well. (In the Hill Tracts area, BSCIC is also maintaining a show room at Village Hazar Char. This provides sales avenue to about 250 girls/women engaged in weaving).

One also comes across jewellery shops in important towns. Some shops sell cane and bamboo ware, mats, etc. A few shops sell leather goods. Other items sold are ropes made of coir, jute and hemp, fishnets, and products of cottage industries for domestic use, such as washing soap, candles, pottery, footwear and other items of leathercraft, household utensils, spices and pickles, bakery and confectionary. BWRWF have small sale centres attached to their regular training cum production centres - (54 in number). In Dinajpur and a couple of other places, however, they have proper shops. In Rangpur too, they have recently moved to a new place, which, though, is not in a shopping area. BHCF have a branch operation in Chittagang, where the New Market has also a number of handicraft shops, among many others. Souvenir craft items sell at Cox's Bazar, being a place of tourist attraction.

Dacca

We may have a brief review of Government sponsored/assisted agencies with marketing operations in Dacca, and other places.

KARIKA

The Bangladesh Handicraft Co-operative Federation (BHCF) has a retail show room - KARIKA - at 27, DIT Super Market, Dacca, opened in April 1975. One of its aims is to create marketing outlets locally and abroad. KARIKA has a Design Committee, which advises artisans on new designs/products - so important for any progressive organization.

The annual sales of KARIKA have moved up from less than Tk.9.00 lakhs to about Tk.23.00 lakhs in 1978-79. Textiles represent about 40% of the sales. Other important lines are leather, jute products, clay items, cane and bamboo, horn and shell products and dolls.

KARIKA has also developed an export section, which exported goods worth about Tk.5.00 lakhs in 1976-77. By 1978-79 the exports have gone upto Tk.24.00 lakhs.

Most of the suppliers of KARIKA, it is gathered, are craftsmen and women belonging to lower income groups in rural areas.

Bangladesh Handicraft Marketing Corporation (BHMC)

A subsidiary of BSCIC, this Corporation came into being as a successor organization to Bangladesh Handicrafts Export Corporation. It has recently opened a show room on the New Elephant Road, Dacca; the BSCIC show room at Motijheel has been closed and merged with it. BHMC has sold goods worth about Tk.3.00 lakhs since its operation from about end of May this year.

BHMC exports all types of handicrafts. Its exports in 1978-79 were about Tk.33.00 lakhs, against Tk.3.00 lakhs in 1974-75. Largest increases has been in jute handicrafts. About 60% jute products are from Narsingdhi, Dacca District, mainly from women co-operatives. Cane and Bamboo products also now represents an important export line. BHMC works with TCB and EPB too.

Under an IDA project BJMC is training 1500 artisans (30% of whom are women) in jute, cane and bamboo products. Ten thanas one each in 10 Districts have been selected for this purpose. The IDA project also expected to provide consultancy in marketing and designs. BHMC is partly instrumental in supplying credit to artisans through banks, under an IDA credit line.

BJMS

BJMS - though national in character, but still rather young as an organization - have a small show room-cum-Sales Emporium at its headquarters at Baily Road, Dacca (its working has been discussed separately). They are fixing up a show room at the NWDA building, where representative samples of women's products will be displayed.

BWRWF

BWRWF has 2 sale centres in Dacca - one at Baily Road adjacent to their two WCTI and the other in Mohammadpur next to WVTC (Women's Vocational Training Centre). The total annual sale if their Training-cum-Production Centres throughout the country, is about Tk.8.00 lakhs. (The total number of trainees turned out so far by these centres is over 12000). BWRWF are additionally running another 40 centres under an IDA assisted programme. They have trained over 4000 persons and have recently formed 74 cooperatives of ex-trainees. The production and sale of these centres is quite low so far.

Under a UNICEF/ILO assisted project - Women's Skills Instruction - BWRWF is going to have a team of International experts, one of whom would be for Marketing, Sales and Design (for 9 months from January, 1980). This project covers 6 selected centres, and 12 sub-centres to be started, 2 in each area.

BWRWF is planning to open a new show room in Dacca, where selected products from various centres, it is gathered, will be displayed and sold.

Rural Social Service

RSS of the Department of Social Welfare have their retail show room 'SUNDAR' on North-South Road, Dacca, where products from Mother's Clubs (MCs) and other women centres supported by the Department are kept for sale. Its annual sale is between Tk.60,000 to Tk.70,000. The MCs and other centres carry on their direct local marketing mostly. MCs have made some exports also through IUCW.

Beginning from 1975 over 760 Mother's Clubs (with about 28,000 members) have been established. Among their multidimensional approach, income generating activities have a significant place; they have over 300 Trade Instructors in 19 thanas.

It is understood that the Department of Social Welfare is organizing the marketing function. They have a scheme of market research, design service etc.

IRDP

IRDP Women's Cooperative (685 in number as on October 1979 with membership of about 29,000) under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Co-operatives, are mostly concerned with agricultural and para agricultural activities. Some of them are engaged partly in tailoring, weaving, bamboo craft, pottery and coconut oil making. With more money being channelised to women's cooperatives (the current amount of loan is Tk.19.00 lakhs, against share capital and savings of Tk.16.00 lakhs), through banks, there would be more of disposable production, with the consequent problem of marketing.

The IDA assisted programmes with RSS (Mothers' Clubs), BWRWF and IRDP Women's Cooperatives are being expanded. There is also a proposal for a Marketing & Design Cell being set up in the Population Control and Family Planning Division of Ministry of Health and Pop. Control, to assist these programmes. All these social programmes addressing themselves to village women find that the productive activities act as incentive since women need additional income to provide for their children - and for better life. The income generating activities cover a wide range from agricultural and para agricultural activities to cottage industries and crafts, as stated earlier - the marketing being admittedly a weak area, particularly in respect of crafts, which needs guidance and help.

Production against orders

For organized cottage industry or craft unit, especially those set up under the various social programmes, an important point of sound production policy is to work against orders, as far as possible. While some organizations such as BWRWF profess to follow this policy, many of their centres seem to wait for orders.

Working against orders should not mean a passive function, but an active, resolute and, if necessary, aggressive order securing effort. It is then alone that the minimum number of workers, supposed to be maintained or engaged by a centre, can actually be provided with work, and ensured reasonable earnings. Otherwise the sales situation becomes disappointing, as it actually is in case of many centres run under social programmes. Referring to such centres the UNICEF, Dacca, Feasibility Study on income-generating activities for women in Bangladesh (1977) observed:

"Although the programmes should remain social i.e. not for business purpose, but for improving the living conditions of the people these production activities must be organized on a more systematic basis".

Voluntary Organizations

Besides the programmes undertaken by governmental or government sponsored agencies in vocational training and income-generating skills for women, appreciable initiative has been taken by the local voluntary organizations, many of whom receive financial assistance from government as registered societies; and foreign organizations as well as those locally established with foreign financial help or initiative, namely - Asia Foundation, CARE, CONCERN, CORR, HEED, International Union for Child Welfare, International Voluntary Service, International Federation of Terre Des Homes, Jagroni, Jalchatra, Mennonite Central Committee, Swallows, YMCA, etc. Mention may be made of the following few prominent marketing organizations:

Jute Works

The Jute Works is a marketing and export outlet for small producers; its export operation provides, part-time work to about 15000 women in or near their homes. The products are marketed mostly by ecology-minded or concerned groups such as Bridge and Tearcraft in England, Gepa in West Germany. Erkaerung von Bern in Switzerland, Eza in Austria, and Mennonite Central Committee in USA and Canada. According to an RIS Study undertaken by Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (under USAID consultancy), Jute Works predicts expansion and diversification of jute handicrafts for a long time to come. The biggest problem, it is added, is not marketing, but providing education for women producers.

AARONG

Rural Craft Centre - opened in December 1978, this show room (in a residential house, converted for this purpose) is under the management of MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) and BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee). Its purpose is to promote sale of handicrafts. Its monthly sale is about Tk. 1.00 lakh. The suppliers include about 100 individuals, mostly women especially in garments. The voluntary organizations supplying goods are:

YWCA - Wall hangings and cushions
HEED - Carpets, placemats, napkin sets
IUCW - Cane and bamboo
MCC - Greeting Cards

An Outreach Team of AARONG travels to different parts of the country in search of quality products and also provides design assistance and marketing information to the producers.

It may not be out of place to say a few words about MCC and BRAC which participate in AARONG Handicraft Shop.

MCC is imparting training in jute handicrafts in Dacca; about 650 women have become producers and organized into cooperatives and their business turned over to Jute Works. They also have a wheat straw project providing employment to about 500 girls in their homes. It also helps a project in Saidpur (Rangpur) where 105 women are employed at home stitching jute hessian bags, also a project of producing decorative jute sandal tops, employing 400 women (the output being sold mostly to Batas) - MCC exports its products through exporting agents to Europe.

BRAC

Among its other activities BRAC groups of women have been formed for trial production of :

Textiles : Weaving, spinning, sericulture, block printing, embroidery, batik.

Cottage

industries: Mat weaving, fisnet making, cane basket weaving, etc.

Food

Processing: Achar, vinegar, chira, chana-chur, pithas and papir making.

HEED Handicrafts:

They have recently opened a nice big show room, with an art gallery on Green Road, called SHETULI. Earlier there was a smaller Handicrafts Centre on the same road. Products from their training/production centres mainly - carpets, tapestry, handlooms fabrics particularly Manipuri weave from Kamalganj, and straw work, besides woodcarving and betigrass goods from Dacope, Khulna District are being displayed for sale.

More about Voluntary bodies

Among local voluntary effort, mention may be made of only a few organizations - the Bangladesh Mahila Samity, Dacca; Mahila Samities in almost all important towns; National Women's Federation, Dacca; Bangladesh Girlguides Association, Dacca; Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Kushtia; Bangladesh Mahila Samaj Kallan Association, Jessore; Gandhi Peace Foundation, Jessore; Rangpur Self-help Aid Society; Women's Industrial Home, Brahmanbaria; and a number of U.C.D. (Urban Community Development) projects throughout the country. It is estimated that there are over 350 registered women's voluntary organizations in Bangladesh. It would be worthwhile for BJMS to put them on a coordinated plan of action.

According to an inventory and sample survey of training programmes conducted by UNICEF, Dacca, in 1977 over 200 centres run by non-governmental institutions and organizations offering training to women were identified. After training, follow up action to see that the trained women find work becomes a natural concern and interest of the sponsors of training. Many of them have some sort of their own local marketing arrangements, while others have tie-up mostly with marketing outlets in Dacca.

Since the quality and standard of training ultimately determine the production of marketable goods, and as most of the training centres are doing an average - or even below average type of job, it would be worthwhile for NWDA/BJMS and UNICEF to undertake jointly another survey of the training programmes for women - especially to assess their quality vis-a-vis marketing facilities or avenues open to trainees after they enter into production. Such a survey should be a great service to the country in as much as it will throw up revealing data based on which certain standards could be developed - to arrest apparent widespread mediocrity in workmanship and designs, following many half-wrought trainees producing low quality goods. The marketing problem hitches on the prevailing production situation.

Private Agencies

In Dacca there are a number of private agencies and shops in DIT market, in Hotel Intercontinental arcade - at the New Market, on Elephant Road, Green Road, Ramna Bhavan and other places - which handle sale of handicrafts, including those made by women. As mentioned earlier, there are scattered handicraft shops in other places in the country.

Survey of Marketing Agencies

It seems necessary to conduct a proper survey of the various marketing agencies - both in the public and private sectors - and to see - how they can contribute more effectively to increasing sale of products made by women - also providing design, quality and costing guidance to the craftswomen and their groups engaged in production. Simultaneously, a listing of exporters of handicrafts made by women could also be built up with the help of the Export Promotion Bureau. Reference has been made to more information on exports, to be collected and disseminated, in Chapter IV, under Commercial Intelligence Cell. Suffice to say here export is a specialized job which needs training and/or experiences. As far as possible, the number of unnecessary middlemen in the cottage industry distribution, should be eliminated.

IV - * A PLAN - to improve the marketing of
products made by women

Marketing is the crux of the whole problem of handicrafts and other cottage industry products. It requires product information, knowledge of markets, and appropriate selling techniques. It also calls for initiative, interest and intelligence. Training, too, is an important factor in imparting and improving marketing skills.

NWDA as a potent development instrument of BJMS, can play a significant role in the improvement of marketing of products made by women in Bangladesh. BJMS, it may be recalled, has been established as the apex women's organization of Bangladesh, authorized by the government to federate and affiliate various women's organizations - a process which can certainly be speeded up, to enable it to assume a really representative role on the national scale. Its aims and objectives include inter alia, fostering technical and vocational training for women, and encouraging their participation in cottage industries, co-operatives and marketing. It is striving through a number of committees and offices set up, 'to provide a general forum for the women and bring about a change in the mental outlook of the women most of whom live in the remote backward rural areas, to enable them to improve the quality of life and to become economically productive and active contributors to the general development in the country'.

Since neither BJMS nor NWDA are commercial organizations, their objective, it is understood is not to 'buy and sell', nor to engage themselves in manufacturing activities - except to the extent these operations are incidental to promotional and training activities. However, among their other areas of endeavour, anything which can help promote marketing of products made by women in Bangladesh appropriately falls within their purview - as contribution towards overall socio-economic development of women of Bangladesh.

In consultation with NWDA, - and based on the information gathered regarding products produced by women, as well as existing local and external marketing opportunities and organizations in Bangladesh as briefly outlined in Chapters II and III an 11-point plan has been developed which hopefully, can help to improve, directly and indirectly, the marketing of products made by women in Bangladesh. The points have been narrated in the following paragraphs briefly. Each point can be developed further, as appropriate, for formulation of detailed schemes and projects, as the availability of resources - funds, personnel and other important inputs - warrants. With its expanding work the NWDA would require additional staff too. Even now the Director needs atleast an Assistant Director in the interest of more efficient discharge of her multifarious duties. It also seems necessary to bridge information gaps between the NWDA, the office of BJMS and the concerned external agencies and organizations.

* The preceding chapters may be treated as background to this PLAN.

The plan-points are sketched below, one by one, not strictly in order of importance. Action can and may be taken simultaneously on a number of them, depending on their inclusion in the plan as may be finally approved for implementation.

i) Survey

assist

For any planned endeavour to/ marketing of products made by women, it is necessary to have a detailed survey of the products made by women, and the existing marketing channels. While for working purpose some broad information on these aspects has been gathered and given in the preceding chapters, the information must be authenticated, supplemented and quantified by a proper survey. The proposed survey should bring forth much relevant information on women's organizations - groups and cooperatives - as well as typical self employed women. It must also give a general idea of the current volume of production and problems hampering growth in production and sales.

Such a survey could be conducted conveniently with the help of High School or College girls - during their summer vacations - technically assisted and supervised by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics or some other professional body, which will first provide an orientation course to the selected surveyors. The field offices of BJMS - established in all District Headquarters, Sub-divisions and 350 Thanas - should prove very helpful links in conducting the desired survey.

The dimension of the survey could perhaps be extended to cover the triangle of training, production and marketing - as the latter essentially depends on the quality of the first two. There are a number of training schemes for or open to women in crafts and cottage industries operating in the country. NWDA itself is, inter-alia, concerned with training instructors in this field.

In 1977 UNICEF had prepared an Inventory and Sample Survey of Training Programmes for Women in Bangladesh. Being concerned with income-generating activities for women - as providers for children - UNICEF may get interested in conducting the proposed three dimensional survey, in collaboration with NWDA/BJMS. At least, the possibility could be explored; when the proposal is made it would need advocacy.

During the survey, samples of certain unusual items, including specimen of crafts getting extinct, should be collected, for reference. Concurrently certain master craftspersons could also be identified, during the survey, and their help enlisted in training women - apprentices under them, for higher skills which will ultimately result in expanding production

of quality goods. Very often, bad or indifferent quality of goods, in any line, can be traced to poor or ineffective training received by the workers. Eventually this results in a marketing problem. The proposed apprenticeship training system, under master craftspersons, and schemes for upgrading of skills in regular training centres should receive priority attention. The location and number of such scheme, could be decided on the basis of the proposed survey, besides other actions to emerge out of it.

ii) Marketing Conference & Clinic

It would be very useful to hold a conference of various organizations, groups and societies engaged in marketing of handicrafts and cottage industry products made by women in Bangladesh. A few representatives of independent craftswomen should also be called to this conference. NWDA could possibly involve, among others, BSCIC and its subsidiary, the Bangladesh Handicraft Marketing Corporation, in arranging the proposed conference. The conference will discuss problems connected with the marketing of women's products, and more positively how to expand their sales in the domestic markets, and also to develop exports to the extent possible. Some of the suggestions made in the following paragraphs of this plan could also be placed before the conference.

Side by side with the conference, a marketing clinic may be held in which representative samples of women's products shall be subjected to a diagnostic study by a group of select merchandising persons, exporters, designers and technical experts. They could discuss various aspects of the crafts with the craft representatives, and make concrete recommendations, product-wise, for specific improvements needed - in respect of raw materials, manufacturing process, design, quality, price and packaging - for their better marketability. Such clinics in respect of crafts have been tried in certain other countries and found very successful.

iii) Training

(a) Marketing Management Course

Bangladesh is particularly deficient in marketing management skills. NWDA would do a great service if it developed a 2 to 3 months course of

NOTE: Since formation of women's cooperatives is receiving active attention in Bangladesh - a movement which must grow in the best economic interests of women - the possibility of a training course in co-operative marketing of products may also be considered. BARD, Comilla, may be the best place for it. (A brief reference to this suggestion was made, during, casual discussion with Mrs. Jaushan Kadir of Women's Development Section, BARD, on 24th November.)

marketing management for women, with the help of and at Management Development Centre (MDC). The course could be tailor-made keeping in view the educational standard and background of the women to be invited to the course.

The trainees may be drawn in groups, from various organizations and societies engaged in marketing products made by women. Very few of them, if at all, have trained managers. Even if there are some who have gained practical experience, their inclusion in the training programme could be in the nature of refresher's course. To begin with 10 to 15 women may be inducted in the proposed course - which of course, would cover theory and practice, in a healthy proportion, say half and half. A list of the institutions where the trainees might be taken for practical training could be drawn up jointly by NWDA and MDC.

(b) Sales Course

Equally, and perhaps even more, imperative is the need of organizing a regular course for training girls in salesmanship. First of all NWDA needs to train the salespersons for various Union Development Centres being set up by BJMS. There is a provision of one salesgirl in each one of them. (For the time being however, an office assistant-cum-accountant - is expected to handle sales too. Incidentally, only the centre at Dakhinkhan is doing some sales, so far.) Then, almost every organization engaged in production/sales of products made by women needs trained sales girls. 8 to 10 weeks course for 20-25 girls at a time may be organized. A syllabus for the course could be developed with the help of the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dacca. Again, besides theory, a good deal of practical training, including in-shop experience at places like KAFIKA and AARONG, should be an essential part of the training. NWDA may also develop a small pamphlet titled 'Hints for Sales-girls', compiling points a good salesgirl should keep in view including:

- How to greet a customer ?
- How to handle and show the merchandise ?
- How to develop sales points ?
- How to help the customer in making his/her choice ?
- How to close a sale ?
- How to thank the customer ?

Bangladesh has bright girls who can make very good salespersons, provided they are groomed for this profession, which can offer opening to many educated girls, and even semi-educated ones in case of rural areas. When NWDA succeeds in developing a course for sales-girls successfully, it may receive requests from, and cater to the demand of private trade also.

(c) Buyer's Course

Buying is also an art. Another course NWDA could develop for buyers. (It may be of 6 to 8 weeks duration). It is not often realized how important it is to have trained buyers for location, proper selection and pricing of product handled by a marketing organization. The women's projects visited by the Consultant seem to suggest a crying need for proper buyers. Some of them, who select the goods for their sale sections, no doubt, have experience with general aesthetic appreciation. However, the need of training of selected women in the art of buying, which also includes checking of costs and quality cannot be gainsaid. The contents of a course like this could also be developed with the help of the Institute of Business Administration as well as in consultation with some outside institutions such as Small Industries Training Institute (SIET), Hyderabad and Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), New Delhi - in India, if considered necessary.

(d) Deputation abroad

Exposing some of the members of the Executive Committee, selected managers, sales persons and buyers to the experience of neighbouring as well as developed countries can, itself, be a very useful exercise. Recently some craftsmen have been deputed by KARIKI to India, sponsored by UNICEF, and the experience is reported to be rewarding. Similarly, in the marketing and sales side of crafts and other cottage industry products deputation of women to countries like Thailand, Philippines, Japan and India could be very useful. Selection of candidate could be made from various women's organizations. A group of at least 5 women - one at Manager's level, and four from sales and buying operations - may be deputed at a time. A minimum of 3 weeks study tour is suggested. In a year 2 to 3 groups may be deputed depending upon satisfactory arrangements having been made well in advance. The importance of proper pre-planning in this regard cannot be overemphasized. The institutions to be visited should be such as have the experience which can suit the stage of development at which the Bangladesh women in the relevant fields generally are. Information gathered through Bangladesh Missions abroad, as well as consultation with the concerned foreign missions in Dacca can be helpful in deciding upon the places and programme of visits. Correspondence with national women's organizations in the countries of interest can be an additional source of helpful advice and assistance.

iv) Commercial Intelligence Cell

Information is the most important marketing tool. Practically no regular market study or survey for products made by cottage industries has been, or is being conducted in Bangladesh. NWDA can give a lead to the women's income-generating projects and marketing organizations in Bangladesh by organizing a Commercial Intelligence Cell.

This Cell will compile, process and interpret market information and supply it to various organizations - its federated units, affiliated bodies and others - as relevant to them. NWDA can take help of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in organizing such a cell and also training the staff to work in it.

The information gathering could be done through the field staff of BJMS and other organizations associated with it. A beginning may better be made with a few selected products and areas, Dacca being the first one. Later the operation can be extended to more products and markets.

In due course, demand of selected foreign markets would also be studied through the help of various organizations and agencies. This could be supplemented by sending out study-teams from Bangladesh. A team should consist of knowledgeable persons who should carry samples of selected products for eliciting market reaction. Occasional organizing of exhibitions abroad, with competent hands to collect market information, besides studying buyers' reactions can also prove very helpful. Help of the Export Promotion Bureau (EPB) and the Display and Sales Centres set up by it abroad could be tapped additionally. EPB should also be able to advise in organizing the export market part of the Commercial Intelligence Cell at NWDA. A beginning could be made with collection of addresses of importers of Bangladesh products; information regarding customs duties and other formalities in importing countries, including concessions available in certain countries such as EEC; Generalised System of Preference (GSP); and the export formalities in Bangladesh. This information would be very useful for women's organizations interested in exports. Many of them do seem to need it, by way of guidance.

Further, the proposed Cell at NWDA could also collect and disseminate information on how and where to buy raw materials for economy in prices, what type of technical help is available from organizations like BSCIC and how and where to get easy credit. All this will lead to better marketing of products made by women in Bangladesh.

v) Research & Design Development

Design is the very soul of handicrafts. It can be an important element even in case of simple unsophisticated products of a cottage industry. In Bangladesh beauty has invariably been an accompaniment of utility even in ordinary things used in rural homes; this has been part of the great aesthetic tradition of this country. Unfortunately here, as elsewhere, much of the traditional wealth of good designs is being lost. This must be retrieved, preserved and developed. It is appropriately a function of national design movement. And, BJMS, as a national women's organization, can play an important part in this field. Women are generally known to have good taste, and use most of the hand-crafted or handmade things for their households.

In Bangladesh, a beginning has been made by the Government in design development through BSCIC's Design Centre. Much more, however, needs to be done in this direction. If NWDA can develop a Design Unit, properly staffed and equipped, it could do much useful work, in liaison with BSCIC's Design Centre, acting as extension agency for the designs developed at the latter, besides doing some original work on designs. Two or three designers working, with master craftpersons can do much useful work for the guidance of women's production centres. Collection of traditional designs and studying them - with the help of experts at BSCIC Design Centre, and others operating independently - for suitable adaptation to meet the market demand (or to create new demand). Among other design resources, the Design Unit could draw on the information and samples of the traditional cottage industries, collected by the Folk Art Museum in Sonargaon.

The design needs of various women organizations could also be studied and coordinated by NWDA/BJMS. And, possibly the proposed Design Unit could be a collaborative venture of the BJMS and other government sponsored agencies dealing with women's projects, namely BWRWF, IRDP (Women's Co-operatives) and RSS - Mothers' Clubs. A few bright young ladies with art degree/diploma may be got trained at BSCIC's Design Centre for orientation. Thereafter, they could work in the NWDA/BJMS Design Unit. Learning from and working with craftswomen, they could adapt traditional designs and motifs to modern needs.

Research in tools, techniques and materials.

The Design Unit must conduct research not only on design, but also on tools, techniques and materials used by women. The importance of improving tools and introducing better techniques in crafts and cottage industries cannot be overstressed. Here the experiences of some other countries could be made use of - by gathering information, securing samples of tools used, and also deputing some craftswomen to a few selected places where the knowledge of better techniques could be usefully gained, to the advantage of Bangladesh.

Research in materials is on areas almost totally ignored in most developing countries. Bangladesh for instances, produces a variety of grasses, leaves and reeds. Not many types of them are being put to use. Even palm-leaves which could be used in making a variety of items are used sparingly in craftwork; one mostly sees rather crude hand-fans made out of these leaves. The small unit proposed cannot possibly undertake basic research on materials, but it can certainly collect information on, or refer problems to appropriate research institutes in the country and abroad. For instance, the work done by the Jute Research Institute on woollenised jute could be studied and extended to carpet weaving units. Similarly, technical information available with the Tropical Research Institute (Commonwealth Secretariat, London) on grasses and leaves, including their dyeing, could be secured and utilized. Some work also seems necessary on fastness of colours for textiles, as very little knowledge seems to exist on this subject among indigenous dyeing units serving handloom weaving industry.

Research in vegetable dyes

One of the great traditions this sub-continent had was that of vegetable dyes. It is too valuable a heritage to be lost completely. It is desirable and possible to conduct research on the basis of available material, evidence and experience here and in the neighboring countries. Technical work could be entrusted to some Research Institute or Laboratory. The available knowledge, as well as results/formulae emanating from research could be utilized especially in high quality fabrics, handprints and carpets. For exports, in particular, use of vegetable dyes can be a plus point. In Bangladesh where dyes are mostly imported, while the country has rich vegetable kingdom, more work needs to be done in the revival of good vegetable colours.

The proposed Design Unit at NWDA could collect much helpful information from women's organizations in other countries too. NWDA/BJMS can establish active contacts with them and even arrange training of some women deputed from here, in various fields, as relevant to conditions in Bangladesh. Dyeing and hand printing of textiles, making of palm leaf and coir products, weaving of medium and fine quality carpets - are but a few examples. Study of revival of vegetable colours too, as presently conducted at the Central Handicraft Centre, Bangalore (India) could be very useful.

There can be no two opinions on the need and importance of drawing on the rich design resources of Bangladesh and to use them appropriately to suit the present day market requirements. It should be known and appreciated that good designs are not meant only for sophisticated people or for export-which, no doubt, can be important areas of support to craft development movement. But basically handicrafts are crafts of the people. They must utilise more of the handcrafted things in their life, even when the life style changes with the time. As it is, many handmade and hand woven items are still used by people. The Design Unit could popularise good taste in simple things of domestic, daily use - stressing constantly combination of beauty

with utility - thus introducing an element of joy in otherwise drab lives tending to be surrounded too much by monotonous machine made products.

Apart from sentiments for use of Bangladeshi products, it is of utmost socio-economic importance for this country that introduction of new designs, tools and techniques is speeded up for better production and marketability of products. In addition to collecting resources material on local design, BJMS may also obtain catalogues and photographs of corresponding products in other countries, not for copying them, but for getting to know the trends - for general education and comparison. Bangladeshi crafts should, indeed essentially remain Bangladeshi in inspiration and idiom.

The scheme already prepared by BJMS/NWDA might be suitably amended, in consultation with BSCIC's Design Centre. Also consult Handicrafts Board, Delhi & Handloom Board, Bombay. They have rich experience in this line.

vi) Quality Control

Quality control is often used as a term in theory but almost ignored in practice, particularly in the domain of handicrafts and cottage industries. Implications of quality control in this field are also not generally understood; ensuring control of quality in the sense that certain minimum standards are strictly followed, is also not that easy.

Areas of quality control

Quality of a craft product depends on the use of proper raw materials, adherence to required size and dimensions, and freedom from obvious defects. A design, it may be clarified, is not normally subject to control, though design is an important aspect of a handcrafted object. There can be almost an endless variety of designs, depending on the choice of customers. Good designs and colours; can, however, be distinguished from the bad ones.

Here, it would suffice to say that it is tremendously important to introduce quality control, atleast in selected crafts - especially these for which demand has grown or is growing. It has been seen that with increase in demand for crafts, quality is generally the first casualty. Very often sudden export demand is responsible for much of mushroom growth in a line not caring for sound good quality. It is particularly true of jute crafts in Bangladesh. One comes across some good quality items among a lot of low or poor quality ones.

Since there is no quality control machinery, or evidently even policy in Bangladesh, in respect of handicrafts, it seems necessary and feasible for NWDA/BJMS to take a lead in the matter, in respect of certain products made by women. Cooperation of various women's organizations, in this endeavour, could, it is presumed, be secured easily, as there is a felt-need with them too, to introduce quality control.

Technical Specifications

Firstly, a committee of knowledgeable persons should be formed to decide on the technical specifications and standards to be introduced in the selected crafts. A representative of the Bangladesh Standards Institute (BSI) must be included in this Committee. In fact the guidance of BSI can be very helpful in finding out about the experience of other countries in regard to quality control. Japan is an outstanding example. The Committee may consider jute handicrafts (selected items - such as bags, shikas, mats), handwoven fabrics and garments, embroidered goods, and cane/bamboo products, to begin with, for determination of standards and introduction of quality control.

Mechanism

The proposed Technical Committee could also decide upon the minimum required machinery for voluntary quality control - to be exercised through trained/qualified staff working in various women organizations. In the items selected for voluntary quality control, an agreed mark could be introduced - to be applied by approved agencies, which could be the cooperating women's organizations themselves.

If considered necessary Government could be approached for fixing floor prices in respect of certain export items the quality of which is fastly going down - jute bags and shikas apparently could be among such items. (The floor price principle can work only for items for export, since these have to be cleared through customs.)

Training

Training of staff will be the next important step. It is suggested that two women, from each district may be trained in the discipline of quality control - to be posted at the district level to start with. BJMS may provide them office space in their district offices. These offices could also promote the idea of quality control at the production level - by holding meetings between the Quality Control Officers, and the production groups and organizations. In fact, short training courses may have to be arranged at these offices, for production managers, to understand the importance, implications and mechanics of quality control.

Education & Publicity

No quality control scheme is successful unless the producers and customers are equally educated about it. This requires a publicity campaign, including meetings with the producer groups and personal talk with the craftswomen.

For customers, especially buyers abroad in case of export items, it should be widely publicised that there exists some machinery - when actually it comes into being - for quality control. The proposed Quality Control Officers could also undertake, in due course, pre-shipment inspection of the consignments for export, on the request of the parties.

vii) Pricing

Price is an essential attribute of any product for sale. Fixing a right price is as important as producing a right article. The traditional method of putting a fixed percentage on cost has limited application. This can and may hold good when the percentage has been arrived at after a good deal of thought and study. Very often it is almost an administrative decision as to what should be added on cost, and not a figure arrived at after an exercise of analysis and comparison.

Reasonableness of price

When an item for sale has little or no competition - direct or indirect - to face, or so to say it has a seller's market, we can add an arbitrary, but reasonable percentage on cost. However, when there is competition, as is the case with most of the items, we must understand what the 'traffic can bear', that is what the market can afford, or what the 'customer' would be willing to pay. Even in case of the goods, falling outside the zone of competition, or having monopolistic position, the demand can go down if the price is beyond reasonable limits. Demand for handicrafts is generally elastic; it can easily be squeezed and stretched depending on price and other factors - most important of them being the beauty and utility of the particular product. A study, therefore, of the market prices of comparable goods is absolutely necessary, so that neither one undersells nor prices oneself out of the market.

Three systems

Goods may be produced, purchased or received on consignment for sale. In case of the former it is firstly the question of working out the cost of production on the simple basis of: raw materials + wages + incidental charges and reasonable overheads.

Then one could work out a mark-up or percentage for adding to the cost, subject to the overall consideration of being competitive in the market.

In case of goods purchased outright for sale, utmost care should be exercised in buying from the right source - the craftswomen or their groups or cooperatives. Middlemen must be avoided as far as possible, to reduce unnecessary margins. Efficient buying leads to profitable business, as they say a profit is made at the time of buying, it is only realized at the time of sale. Buying is an art, no less important than selling. It needs a background, training and experience. A buyer has to be well acquainted with the line she is handling. She should know the art of calculating roughly the cost of the items she is buying, and the comparative sale price of the corresponding or comparable products in the market. From the sale price, one can work back the likely price at which some other party had purchased an item. A record of purchase price of similar items in the past, with cost break-up - should be handy and useful. Good buyers are well acquainted with information, besides their general intelligence.

Very often goods are also received on consignment basis, when the consignor usually fixes the sale price, while the consignee shop/showroom charges certain commission. Here too great care is needed to ensure that loading of commission on the consignor's retail price does not make an item more expensive than it is available elsewhere, including consignor's own sale place if one is there. Usually, a good consignor also takes care that his/her goods do not remain on the consignee's shelf for long.

As regards cooperative marketing, the persons in charge of selling should exercise the same criteria of judgement and comparison, while receiving goods from members or production section, as the buyers or consignees would advisedly exercise.

Retail & Wholesale

Prices differ in case of retail, wholesale and export. While in retail of handicrafts a mark up of 20 to 30% is reasonable, for wholesale 10 to 15% should do. The mark up mainly depends on the demand for the item and its turn over rate. That is, an item moving fast has a lower mark up than an item which has to wait for sometime before finding a customer. For wholesale business each agency should have a policy of quantitative discounts - more discount on larger volume orders. Again, the limits for wholesale differ from product to product. For instance, wholesale quantum in case of ordinary bamboo baskets should be different, and much lower, from that of 'Kanthas' or carpets.

Export prices

Export prices need to be worked out taking a number of factors into account - namely; packing, freight, insurance etc. The prices may be quoted F.O.B. (Free on Board delivered at the railway, the ship or the airlines concerned), or C.I.F. (cost, insurance and freight paid upto destination). Usually the importer indicates whether he wants F.O.B. or C.I.F. prices. An exporter must have information and practice to calculate both types. In quoting export prices, an exporter also takes into account the benefits to be received from the Export Performance Licence or any other export incentives. (Detailed information, in this behalf, can be had from the Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh).

Price List

It is useful to prepare price lists of the items meant for sale. These are specially helpful in wholesale and export business. The items whose prices are given should also have proper code numbers, which should also appear on the labels. A number should be simple and such as can easily trace the origin, age and other important particulars of a product.

Mark down

While we have talked about mark-ups to generate gross profit on cost, it is also necessary to have some policy or regulations regarding mark-down. Usually when the stock becomes old, damaged or obsolete in style and fashion, it must be reduced in price to recover atleast the bare cost, or even sold below cost to avoid further deterioration and loss. Very few organizations give thought to this - and thus accumulate lot of old, non-moving stock which besides locking capital, has a demoralising effect on the organization. Moreover, the power of genuine reduction in prices to a

reasonable extent should be delegated to the operation level, and not centralized at the top-as is generally the case with government bodies, or government sponsored agencies which choose not to move away from rigid or restrictive - and generally too conservative - government rules and regulations. Business efficiency demands flexibility of operations all round. It also places trust in people. Of course, authority and responsibility should go together; delegation of power of any type and accountability have to be a twin operation.

It is suggested that a guideline pamphlet on pricing, including some of the principles stated in this sub-section, and with the help of organization like KARIKA, AARONG, Jute Works and E.P.B. may be prepared and circulated.

iii) Rural Markets

The primary system of sale of cottage industry products is the village/small town bazar and 'hath'. Sales in these places are mostly in the hands of men. And, the benefit margins of these middle-men are generally high, nearly 100% even for ordinary items like bamboo baskets. A corner of bazar or 'hath' being reserved for women with a few facilities can be helpful in enabling women to get in touch with the consumers directly and have better earnings. Where groups/cooperatives have been formed - and this process can be accelerated - they should try, as far as possible, direct selling, atleast in the local markets, rather than depend on middle-men, as they are at present doing in many cases.

While social factors are not quite favourable to rural women coming out for sale, the proposed women's corners might provide a possible lead in this field. In certain selected rural thana headquarters, and at a few unions and villages - which may be identified as suitable to start with - simple and functional shed; with thatched roof, bamboo mat walls, but a pucca floor (from 300 to 1200 sq.ft. area) may be put up for women's corner of the rural market. Women can bring their products for sale under this shed. Here they will have protection from sun and rain, a small seclusion, a sense of security, alongwith a feeling of active participation in a community market. It would not cost much to put up an attractively designed simple rural structure. Possibly the Ministry of Women's Affairs could invoke the help and even joint initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, in this venture.

The proposed Rural Markets - Women Corner - could also be utilized as one of the convenient meeting places between producer - women and visiting design and quality control staff, who should be able to assist the market women with ideas on improvement of designs and observance of quality standards, with possible occasional demonstration. This concept, if properly developed, can open a new field of active marketing role by women in the sale of their products, as well assimilation of new ideas, and valuable consumer reaction.

Union Development centres being set up by BJMS, too have a provision of a sale section, with a Sales Assistant-cum-Accountant. If properly run this can prove an additional channel of distribution in the area concerned. Presently only a part of one of the rooms in a centre is supposed to be for the sale section. However, when stocks and sales improve, a separate room - may be an extension to the present centre, or a shop nearby - would be necessary. Also a wholtime, trained salesperson.

Besides keeping some stocks for sale at the centre, a small exclusively women's 'bazar' may also be organized in and around the centre. A place like Bejoypur, situated very near to town (Comilla), may give trial to this suggestion. Properly advertised, the 'bazar' in the compound of the centre should be successful. Dakhinkhen should also be a good place for this.

ix) Women's Crafts Markets

At Divisional headquarters - to begin with and later at District headquarters - Craft Markets may be set up with 15 to 20 (or more required) shops allotted to different women organizations and groups to sell their products directly. The Government may put up simple, yet attractive structure to be artistically designed by local, sensitive architects. The place may be provided with cultural amusement and entertainment corner to attract many people, who should also feel proud in buying and using Bangladeshi products. This should be part of a movement to encourage increasingly use of local products, and combating the market invasion of non-essential imported items. Addressing a meeting of the National Economic Council on August 10, 1979, President Ziaur Rahman said: "We import large number of items which could very well be produced in the country. We must avoid spending foreign exchange on small items in future". Women's craft markets can be visualised to popularise the products they make.

x) Women's products
showroom at Dacca

Dacca, has a few good handicraft shops. However, this growing city needs an exclusive, good showroom of women's crafts. NWDA has made a beginning at their headquarters by utilizing (going to be opened shortly) the biggest room they have on the ground floor which still would be a small showroom-cum-library, from a national standard. The NWDA building is located on a lane off a side link road branching out from New Baily Road. With the experience gained, NWDA/BJMS should, in due course, move the showroom to a ^{here} bigger and better place. It should also seek more cooperation of the women's organizations and groups in collecting representative samples of their products. The many Committees and field offices of BJMS can play an active role in persuading the women's bodies in their areas as well as individual women who are in a position to make supplies to participate in their showroom.

The Government of Bangladesh may be requested to allot a special site for a prestigious showroom of women's products. Two alternative sites are suggested:

- i) Secure a long and wide enough rectangular space from the compound of the new Museum Building, facing the Elephant Road, and construct an attractive showroom;

or

- ii) secure permission to build a big House-beat on the tank next to the Museum Building facing the Elephant Road. It could be done up tastefully, with women's crafts mostly utilized, in the decor itself.

In either case, the showroom should be a special attraction at Dacca both for local people and the tourists.

The principal function of NWDA showroom should be to display women's products in a beautiful setting - utilizing functional display as a means of education and attraction. Each item should be backed by adequate commercial information. A system of a card for each item - tracing its producer, and giving full particulars of its size, material, quality etc. should be introduced. Information on position of present and prospective suppliers should also be available on the basis of which sufficient initial interest can be created among wholesale buyers particularly to whom this showroom should primarily cater, its main job being to put suppliers in contact with buyers, charging a nominal service charge on orders booked through its agency. The showroom will thus serve as a standing as well changing exhibition of good quality products made by women. It may organize occasionally special displays of selected crafts - for the benefit of buyers in the line.

For the benefit and facility of retail customers, a small sales-counter may be kept in a corner of the showroom or its porch or in a side room. Its object should be to popularise use of local products, and thus act as a promotional measure.

Sales Emporium

The present Sales Emporium located in a part of the BJMS office premises, should, it is suggested, be reorganized totally, if it has to be a successful sales place besides being a moderately good showroom, to give publicity to women's products. The place has its obvious limitations, in both respects.

The present annual sales of this Sales Emporium - which certainly is a well kept small showroom - are at a very low level of about Tk. 8000/- The emporium has about 50 suppliers, of whom approximately half in number supply their goods on consignment basis, while bulk of them belong to Dacca. Hardly a dozen of them have crossed Tk. 500/- in their total supplies in a year. The mark-up on cost price is 10-25%.

The showroom displays jute goods, woven fabrics, Rajshahi silks, household linen, sarees, and garments, embroidered goods, batik prints, 'nakshi kanthas', satranji wall hangings, wooden figures and other objects, clay items, cane and bamboo products, toys and dolls, leather goods, preserved food products, paper flowers, and handpainted greeting cards.

Some, on the spot, suggestions have been made for the expansion of sales and improvement in the system followed. Briefly these are :

- . Increase the number of suppliers and the amount of goods procured from them, ensure that the majority of the suppliers are direct producers.
- . Ensure that prices are competitive. Take particular care of goods received on consignment as these prices are inclined to be higher than the prices at which the consignors themselves sell the goods to customers - except in cases where maintaining parity of sale price is a matter of deliberate concern.
- . Have one or two trained sales girls, besides the Sales Officer, with increase in sales. (Also consider introducing a system of incentive on sales).

- . Introduce a system of code numbers for all articles. The number should appear in the stock ledger as well as on the label and recorded on the cash memo or the bills at the time of sale. (A visit to KARIKA, by the Sales Officer, was suggested, with a view to study the system of labelling).
- . Steps should be taken to dispose of old stocks, on reduced prices, if necessary. The system of code numbers, referred to above, should also indicate age of a stock at a glance - so that steps can be taken for disposal of old stocks, without delay.
- . Have a system of wholesale/export prices besides retail rates. Try to book wholesale/export business, after exposing the Sales Officer to some orientation at KARIKA, the Jute Works and the Export Promotion Bureau.
- . Keep the place open like a shop and not as a Government Office; adjust working hours and holidays accordingly.
- . Advertise the place to attract customers. (Maintain a record of visitors to judge how many are coming. Also record their comments).
- . Hold small, attractive exhibition of special women's products at the premises occasionally. This would attract a certain number of people and the place will get better known, so long as the Sales Emporium continues to be on the BJMS Office premises at 145, New Baily Road.

xi) Publicity & Promotion:

Two important steps of national character may be taken up by NWDA/BJMS:

- (a) Bringing out of an illustrated catalogue of the products made by women in Bangladesh. The job should be entrusted to a competent professional agency. The selection of items, taking of photographs, collecting and organizing sufficient product information - all these steps would require proper planning.

- (b) Holding an annual exhibition of the crafts and cottage industry products made by women on a proper scale - and combining with it a sellers and buyers meet. Buyers from foreign countries should also be invited to the exhibition. Lot of preparatory work would be necessary to make the exhibition an effective publicity medium, as well as successful instrument in booking business. Help of the Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh and the International Trade Centre, Geneva, may be invoked and obtained - to make the exhibition an event of international standard. The first exhibition held by BJMS in 1977 is stated to have been quite successful. The next one should be a marked improvement over it.

.....

V - RECOMMENDATIONS - a summary and suggestions
for implementation

The recommendations which emanate from the foregoing PLAN to improve marketing of products made by women are summarised below:

(i) Survey	: A detailed survey of the products made by women, and the existing market channels.	Ø	<u>Action</u>
	Also a study of the situation regarding training, production and marketing schemes of various women's projects.	Ø	Consultant Bureau of Statistics if they could give an orientation to High School or College girls for field work, in the proposed survey to be conducted during vacations.
	Identify, during the survey mastercraftsmen and women whose services could be utilized for apprenticeship training schemes under them.	Ø	Also have a dialogue with UNICEF if the survey could be sponsored by them and conducted jointly - as UNICEF/NWDA project.
	Also collect samples of unusual items, during the survey.	Ø	Ø
(ii) Marketing : Conference & Clinic	Organize a conference of various women's organizations, groups and societies to discuss problems connected with marketing.	Ø	Send a circular request to, and hold meetings with, the representatives of prospective participating organizations, to have their reaction, suggestions and agreement on the details of the proposed conference.
	Have a Marketing Clinic also alongwith the conference, in which experts would study diagonostically various aspects of selected products.	Ø	In due course, consult with some marketing persons, designers and other technical experts regarding their interest and availability for a diagonostic study in the proposed clinic.

- (iii) Training : (a) Marketing Management Course: 0
Drawing of 10 to 15 women 0 Consult MDC. Also have a
from various women's 0 dialogue with prominent
organizations, as the first 0 women's organizations who
group of trainees, in a 2-3 0 would be interested in
months course to be developed, 0 deputing their candidates
with the help of and at MDC. 0 for this training.
0
Also, consider possibility 0 Consult, BARD, Comilla
of a training course in 0 for a course in cooperative
cooperative marketing, as 0 marketing.
women's cooperatives would 0
benefit from it. 0
- (b) Sales Course: 0 Consult Institute of
Develop a course of 8 to 10 0 Business Administration,
weeks duration at NWDA for 0 University of Dacca.
training in the art of selling 0 (Also write to All India
- most important for turning 0 Handicrafts Board, Govern-
out good sales-girls. 0 ment of India who have fair
0 experience in conducting
0 such courses.)
- (c) Buyer's Course - 0 Consult again the Institute
Buying is also an art. It, too 0 of Business Administration
needs training, besides general 0 for developing a 6 to 8
common sense and aesthetic 0 week course. (Also write
appreciation in case of 0 to SIET, Hyderabad, IIFT -
handicrafts and other artistic 0 New Delhi, India, if
products of cottage industries. 0 necessary.
- (d) Deputation abroad: 0 Consult Bangladesh Missions
Expose some of the members of 0 abroad, foreign missions
the Executive Committee, 0 in Dacca, and correspond
selected managers, sales 0 with some national women's
persons and buyers to experience 0 organizations in the
of neighbouring as well as more 0 countries of interest.
developed countries. A group 0
of 5 women may be deputed for 0 Also have a dialogue with
3 week's study at a time. 0 women's organizations in
0 Bangladesh regarding their
0 needs in this area.

- (iv) Commercial Intelligence Cell : It is very important to study the markets regularly and disseminate information to interested organizations and groups. Besides information on local markets, information on exports of women's products could also be built up with the help of E.P.B. Another useful direction could be to collect and disseminate information on availability of raw materials - sources, prices etc.
- (v) Design Development : Design is the very soul of handicrafts. Developing designs, based on rich local tradition, also keeping in view market requirements of today, is very important - for expanding marketability of products. To include research in design resources, also tools, techniques and materials. The scheme already prepared by BJMS/NWDA might be suitably amended.
- (vi) Quality Control : It is tremendously important to introduce quality control atleast in selected crafts, especially those for which demand has grown.
- Consult Bureau of Statistics, also Export Promotion Bureau to obtain their guidance and help in organizing the proposed cell.
- Consult BSCIC Design Centre for developing a Design Unit which would do extension work, as well as some original design work. Also consult All India Handicrafts Board in respect of handicrafts and All India Handloom Board in respect of handlooms. They have gained rich practical experience. (If some knowledgable person or persons could study their working, it would be very helpful.)
- Set up a Committee of knowledgable persons to decide on technical specifications and standards. (BSI could be of help in this field). Consider training of quality control persons and placing them at District headquarters.

- (vii) Pricing : It would be helpful to educate marketing organizations, especially new persons working in them in the art of pricing of products - retail, whole-sale, and export prices. These have to be reasonable and competitive.
- (viii) Rural Markets : The primary system of sale of cottage industry products is the village/small town bazar and 'hath'. Here men generally sell things, including products made by women, and the benefit margins of these middlemen are high. It would be appropriate to encourage women to enter sales field, by building a corner for them a thatched place with bamboo walls and pucca floor at selected village bazars and 'haths'. In addition, develop sales section at the Union Development Centres. Also organize occasional bazars for women's products, around them.
- (ix) Women's Craft Markets : At Divisional headquarters -- to begin with and later at District headquarters, women's craft markets may be set up with 15 to 20 shops allotted to different women organizations. These could be attractively designed and structured, and should prove helpful in popularising use of products made by women.
- Prepare a guideline pamphlet on pricing, with the help of organizations like KARIKA, AARONG and Jute Works also E.P.B., and circulate it among women's organizations, groups, etc. including BJMS's Union Development Centres.
- Consult various women's organizations to develop this idea. Also the Ministries of Agriculture and Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives.
- For Sale Section at the Union Development Centres, advise Union Directors to provide display and sales facility for products made by women in the area.
- Consult women's organizations, local authorities and sensitive architects to explore the idea further.

- (x) Women's products Showroom at Dacca : This capital city needs a really good, big showroom of women's products, with beautiful, functional display. The showroom will serve as a standing as well changing exhibition of good quality products made by women in Bangladesh. The main purpose of this showroom should be to put buyers and suppliers in touch with each other. The samples shown should be backed by adequate commercial information.
- A sales corner or counter may also be set up.
- Existing Sales Emporium of BJMS needs to be reorganized.
- (xi) Publicity & Promotion : Two important steps are suggested:
- (1) Bringing out an illustrated catalogue of selected women's products.
 - (2) Holding of an annual Exhibition with Buyers and Sellers Meet.
- Work out details in consultation with women's organizations, Bangladesh Export Promotion Bureau, and a competent professional publicity firm. (Also collect relevant literature from other countries.)
- For No. (2) consultation with I.T.C. experts working with E.P.B. at Dacca may be helpful.

Note: Suitable strengthening of staff at NWDA as well at BJMS headquarters, to handle the existing and expanding workload with better efficiency and speed has also been suggested in the body of the report. What has not been mentioned elsewhere, but is considered rather relevant, is the need of a better and bigger premises for NWDA. It would be rather desirable for this Academy to have its own, well designed building where a number of its activities including hostel facilities can be properly located.

Priorities:

While all the recommendations, and proposed actions are important, each in its own right, I am attempting a sequence of priorities, as advised:

- (i) Recognize the Sales Emporium at BJMS Office premises as advised. ∅
∅ Also advertise
∅ these places.
- (ii) Expedite setting up of the showroom at NWDA building and collect representative samples of women's products for its, backed with adequate information. ∅
∅
- (iii) Revise the scheme of Design Centre, in consultation with the agencies proposed - adding research in tools, techniques and raw materials.
- (iv) Hold a meeting with women's organizations, important groups and societies to discuss with them the need, scope and mechanics of
 - a) Survey (also consult UNICEF)
 - b) Marketing Conference & Clinic
 - c) Training - including deputation abroad
 - d) Commercial Intelligence Cell (also consult Statistical Bureau and E.P.B.)
 - e) Preparation of catalogue (also consult a competent advertising agency.)
 - f) Exhibition - Sellers and Buyers Meet (consult E.P.B. also.)
 - g) Quality Control (consult BSI, too)
 - h) Rural Markets (consult Ministries of Agriculture and LGRD).
 - i) Women's craft markets in Divisional towns
 - j) Decent showroom at Dacca.

May follow, the above order for action if all the ideas are agreed to, or else as the consensus opinion suggests - and funds and other resources permit. Action for a respectable showroom at Dacca, however, may be initiated early enough.

- (v) A critical study of the staff position, and the additional strength required to cope with the increasing work may be undertaken simultaneously - even before the plan enters into implementation phase. A number of women may have to be specially trained for the jobs they are expected to handle. USAID's Technical Assistance Project should be fully availed of in this direction.

.....

A Report of the Activities

undertaken during the consultation
24th October to 4th December 1979

Briefing
at USAID

Soon on taking up the consultancy I had a couple of briefing sessions with Mr. C. Gurney, Mr. J.J. Dumm and Mrs. Louisa Gomes of PHAW- USAID. As per discussions held with Mrs. Sallie Craig Huber, prior to the consultancy contract, it was made clear to the officers of the USAID that, among products made by women of Bangladesh, my coverage would be handicrafts principally. It was also agreed that while NWDA/BJMS as a national body is expected to have a countrywide operational canvas, for purpose of a marketing plan and services in this connection, it might make a beginning by bringing within its consideration zone firstly the government or government sponsored agencies- and that my rather rapid and broad study will be limited to them. With regard to exploring the existing local and external marketing opportunities and organizations, however, the reference scope could be slightly wider.

Discussions at
NWDA/BJMS

I was introduced to Dr. Amina Rahman, Chairman, BJMS (in her chambers as Minister for Women's Affairs), by Mr. Gurney on 26th October. She recalled having seen me earlier on two occasions:

- (a) When I was working as consultant UNICEF in 1977, conducting a Feasibility Study on Income-Generating Activities for Women, and
- (b) as Consultant of the World Bank Mission in April 1978.

As both occasions I had an opportunity of acquainting myself with the working of BJMS. Dr. Amina Rahman's main stress on the first day of our meeting, this time, was an extension of USAID financial support to NWDA in their on-going project. Still I made a point that, hopefully, funds would not be a constraint in respect of any recommendation, which are approved for implementation of the Marketing Plan which I was expected to develop, with and for the use of the NWDA.

On 29th October, the Chairman introduced me to the members of the Executive Committee of BJMS. I briefly explained to them the scope of my consultancy during the time-frame of six weeks from the 24th October. I also requested them to give me, in due course, any suggestions they might have for improving the marketing of products made by women. The Chairman nominated a

small committee for a discussion with me. Next morning I met her again at the Ministry, to clear some broad suggestions I had regarding the role and scope of NWDA/BJMS in the field of marketing. She was highly appreciative.

The committee consisting of :

Mrs. Sarwar Rahman	Vice Chairman, BJMS
Mrs. Fatima Salam	Secretary, BJMS
Mrs. Kaniz Sarwar	Joint Secretary, BJMS
Miss. Hashmat Ara Begum	Director, NWDA

met me on 6th November at a long evening session. Mr. F. Karim, Executive Officer was also present for a while. Rather than make any observations/suggestions themselves the members wanted rather to hear me. Before developing some of my preliminary points, on the basis of my knowledge and general study of the situation, I sought clarification re: the objectives of the organization. It was confirmed by the members of the committee that it was neither the object nor the function of BJMS to 'buy or sell' not to undertake manufacturing operations - except as incidental to developmental or promotional activities. After this they listened to my presentation with great attention. They also welcomed the various points I had to make. These have since been further developed in Chapter IV on "A PLAN - to improve marketing of the products made by women in Bangladesh".

Study Visits:

NWDA

From BJMS Headquarters, where I found myself a place to work, I visited NWDA 3 or 4 times. Once Mrs. Vivekka Mouldrem and Mrs. Louisa Gomes of USAID were with me. At another occasion Miss Hashmat Ara Begum personally took me round. In the area where training in skills is provided, I saw some looms, and silk spinning wheels. There was the Trainer in weaving, but no trade classes were on. In the same compound, BJMS proposes building more sheds for accommodating new lines of training. The Academy proposes to add the following trades to the existing three ones - names weaving, tailoring and sericulture:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| . Batik and screen printing | . Bamboo craft | . Carpet weaving |
| . Leathercraft | . Pottery | . Knitting |
| | . Food processing & preservation | . Hosiery |
| . Bakery & confectionary | . Pisciculture | |
| . Poultry | | |

On 3rd December, Mrs. Fatima Salam and Miss. Hashmat Ara Begum went round with me, to see the newly fitted showroom and library room at the NWDA premises.

Sales Emporium - NWDA

In one of the rooms of the BJMS office, NWDA is running a Sales Emporium - a nice little showroom but very poor sales - Tk. 8000/- approx. in a year. There is hardly any publicity for this emporium located away from the main road. The Emporium, as separately suggested needs to be reorganized.

Mrs. Rokshana Wadud, Sales Officer, listened to my suggestions regarding appropriate labels with code numbers, collecting goods from the rural areas and districts, proper pricing etc. I had some comments to offer on procurement system too; supplies should be obtained from craftswomen or their groups/co-operatives directly as far as possible.

Other places visited at Dacca are :

KARIKA

Mrs. Parveen Ahmed, Secretary, BHCF showed me round. In 1978-79 KARIKA did a retail sale of about Tk. 23 lakhs and exports about Tk. 30 lakhs worth of goods. Its suppliers include women artisans and their groups too. They are prepared to extend their marketing support to any other reliable sources of supply, so long as they can supply quality goods. They have a good set of quality controllers on their staff.

AARONG

A recently come up bright sales place - a joint enterprise of MCC and BRAC. Sister Michael Francis took me round. They claim to provide direct sales avenue to rural craftsmen and women. They have an outreach team which goes out to locate craftpersons, a design committee which gives new ideas to craftpersons, and a quality control service. Less than a year old AARONG has built up sales of over Tk. 1.00 lakh a month.

SHETULI - BEED
Handicraft Centre

A new show room opened towards end of October this year. I was shown round by Mrs. Peggy Boswell. They have about 100 women working for them in Manipuri weaving at Kamalganj; some are under training, others are already trained. There is a good display of their products, besides the carpets and tapestry hand woven in Dacca. Jute goods, cane and bamboo, and straw work are the other lines of display. At this new place they have also an Art Gallery. A few craftsmen and women at work, demonstrate their skill too.

46

SUNDAR

The shop of the Social Welfare Department - on North South Road near the Office of the Department, shows representative products from UCD, RSS voluntary units and Mothers' Clubs. The average daily sale is between Tk. 200 to 300, jute goods, bamboo and wooden articles representing bulk of the sale.

Others:

A number of shops selling handicrafts and handlooms were visited in the DIT Market, New Market, Elephant Road, Stadium Market and Ramna Bhavan. A single shop on the Maghbazar Outer Circular Road - SHADE - too, was seen. Also saw the handicraft shop at the Hotel Intercontinental.

On 30th November, I accompanied Mrs. Kaniz Sarwar and Mrs. Rokshana Wadud to the Moharram Fair at Azimpur, Dacca, for a while, where we saw a number of pavement stalls selling toys, wood work, baskets, pottery etc.

Visits outside Dacca:

- (i) Comilla (November 24) - Accompanied by Mrs. Kaniz Sarwar, Joint Secretary BJMS and Miss. Hashmat Ara Begum, Director, NWDA visited District Office of BJMS at Comilla and the Bejoypur Union Development Centre. Met the Union Director and the VSWs of Village Dakhin Bagmara (also visited this village) and Village Shaktula. The Director suggested creation of some fund to help the cottage industry workers - a sort of revolving fund. It is a good idea which needs consideration. The centre also needs some fund for contingent and recurring expenses.

Looms were being fitted at the centre; soon the training would start. Training in sericulture was on; training in spinning was pending production of own silk.

We paid a brief visit to BARD, Comilla, and also passed by Didar Cooperative Society. Its story of growth 'nine annas to nine lakh takas' is fascinating, indeed.

- (ii) Dakhinkhan Union Dev. Centre (November 25) - Besides the Union Director, met the Chairman of the Union Parishad and the Chairman of the Union Coordination Committee. The centre has an active weaving training and production programme, besides other activities. It has made sales of Tk. 42,695 from 29th November 1977 to 13th June 1979.
- Suggested separation of accounting and selling parts of training and production goods.
- The idea of an occasional women 'bazar' around the premises, where women will sell women's products was welcomed by all present when I briefly sounded it.
- (iii) Savar (November 25) - Union Development Centre nicely located. Looms are very nearly fitted there and the training is expected to start very soon. The training in cutting and tailoring, also sericulture was on.
- The Union Director took us to the nearby VERC - (Village Education Resource Centre).
- (Note : Mrs. Fatima Salam, Secretary, BJMS and Miss. Hashmat Ara Begum, Director, NWDA accompanied me to Dakhinkhan Mrs. Salam suggested the idea of research in vegetable dyes).
- Visited Gala Union Development Centre, alongwith Miss. Hashmat Ara, Director, NWDA and Mrs. Kaniz Sarwar, Jt. Secretary, BJMS.
- Four looms have been fitted at the centre. The first supply of yarn to the centre went with us. Trainees have already been selected; training in weaving should now be starting. Training is already on in sericulture, though not in spinning yet. At the centre we met VSV's working in Brahman Kuchha, Bartha, Barshoil, Agbethoir, Rasoolpur and Agbikram Hath. We discussed their activities in the respective villages.
- We also visited a nearby village and saw the cane-basket craft there. On our way back we stopped at the Karatia 'hath' about 5 miles from Tangail; this is one of the biggest 'haths' in the area, I was told. A wide variety of products/ commodities is sold here; the number of people - participants and customers - runs into a few thousands.

4/3

Other contacts/meetings:

- i) Mr. J.A.D. De Lanerolle, I.T.C. Senior Trade Promotion (October 24). Adviser, Export Promotion Bureau
- ii) Mr. P. Miuruguso, Special Assistant to Vice Chairman (October 24)

Talked to them re: export of handicrafts from Bangladesh. Also visited the Export Display Centre and the Information Centre on November 26.

- iii) Mrs. Najma Ahmed - Executive Director
- iv) Mrs. Moshfequa Mahmud, Director of Planning, Prog. Trg. & Ev.
- v) Mrs. Sufia Begum, Director (Finance & Marketing) (October 26-27)

Discussed with them the marketing problems of the products made at BWRWF centres.

- vi) Sister Michael Francis - Committee Member
- vii) Mrs. Coleta Nakreck - Administrative Assistant-cum-Secretary
- viii) Mrs. Razia Quadir, Designer
- ix) Mrs. Nuzhat - Quality control (October 31)

Discussed with them the working and systems followed at AARONG.

- x) Dr. A. Sattar, Secretary, Population Control & Family Planning Division, Ministry of Health & Population Control (November 1)
- Briefly talked about marketing problem of products made at the IDA aided centres - for vocational training - schemes handled by BWRWF, IRDP and RSS Mothers' Clubs.
- xi) Also met Kazi Raqibuddin Ahmed, Dy. Secretary, Population Control & Family Planning Division (November 16 and 28).
- Discussed with him their Ministry's proposal to set up a Central Marketing & Design Cell, for promotion of products made by the IDA's assisted programmes of income generating activities among women.
- xii) Mr. Qamrul Hassan, Retired Director, Handicrafts & Design Centre, BSCIS (November 2).
- Had his views on the need of design guidance and extension services for women's organizations and groups engaged in income-generating activities.

- xiii) Mrs. E.M. Hull, Director, ILC, Dacca (November 2).
Regarding ILC's Project 'Assistance to Cottage Industries in Bangladesh'. Again met her on November 16 alongwith Miss Broisman of ILC Regional Office, Bangkok.
- xiv) Mr. Ayubur Rahman, Chairman, BSCIS (November 2 & 14). Talked to him re: cottage industries, with special reference to women which have growth possibilities in Bangladesh.
- xv) Mrs. Parveen Ahmed, Secretary, Bangladesh Handicraft Cooperative Federation (November 10).
Talked to her re: KARIKA operations and the assistance offered to women artisans.
- xvi) Mr. Maksud Alam, Chief Executive, Bangladesh Handicrafts Marketing Corporation Ltd. (November 12).
Discussed with him the IDA assisted Scheme of training 1500 artisans, design assistance/extension, and credit vis-a-vis women's involved in the programme. Also about the progress made by the Corporation in export of handicrafts.
- xvii) Mrs. Taherunnessa Abdullah, Joint Director, IRDP. (November 14)
Discussed with her the progress of the IRDP Women's Programme.
- xviii) Mr. A.M. Shafiq-ul-Haque, Deputy Director, Department of Social Welfare, (November 15).
Talked to him re: marketing of products made at various centres supported by the Department of Social Welfare.
- xix) Mr. Nizam Ahmad, Director, SHADE, Bengali Utility Crafts & Appard, Dacca. (Nov. 20)
- xx) Mrs. Jowshan Ara Rahman, Programme Officer ◊ Women's Development Unit
- xxi) Ms. Afreen Huq, Research & Programme Asst. ◊ UNICEF, Dacca.
- Discussed with them (at several occasions) the need of carrying out a detailed survey of women's organizations engaged in training/production, and marketing with a view to study their problems. Also the desirability of holding a seminar on the training and other aspects of income-generating activities relating to women.
- xxii) Dr. Michael E.K. Irwin, Resident Representative, UNICEF, Dacca; he introduced me to his staff officers, before my delivering a talk on 'Cottage Industries'. (November 21).
- xxiii) Mrs. Roushan Kadir, Women's Development Section, BARD, Comilla (November 22)
- xxiv) Mr. U.N Mahmudul Islam, Deputy Director, E.P.B. (November 26).
- xxv) Mr. Enayetullah Khan, Managing Director, Pearls Paradise, Dacca (DEC.1)
- Discussed export possibilities as studied by him during his participation in Berlin Exhibition - and visit to some other countries.

Officials Contacts:

- A - USAID
- i) Mr. John Wiess, Executive Officer ∅ For clarification
 - ii) Quazi M.S. Hafez, Personnel Officer ∅ of certain terms
∅ of the contract
 - iii) Mr. C. Gurney ∅ For discussion of
 - iv) Mr. J.J. Dumm ∅ the scope of work -
 - v) Mrs. Louisa B. Gomes ∅ PHAW as well some
 - vi) Mrs. Vivika Molldrem ∅ thoughts on the
proposed
Marketing Plan.
- B - BJMS/NWDA
- i) Dr. Amina Rahman, Chairman.
 - ii) Mrs. Sarwari Rahman, Vice Chairman.
 - iii) Mrs. Fatima Salam, Secretary.
 - iv) Mrs. Kaniz Sarwar, Joint Secretary.
 - v) Mrs. Moshfequa Mahmud, Member Executive Com.
 - vi) Mrs. Khurshid Alam " " "
 - vii) Mrs. Jahan Ara Imam " " "
 - viii) Mrs. Hasna Hazari " " "

Staff

- i) Mrs. Hashmat Ara Begum, Director, NWDA
- ii) Mr. F. Karim, Executive Officer, BJMS
- iii) Mr. Nazimuddoula, Coordinating Officer, BJMS
- iv) Mrs. Nurmahal Islam, Programme Officer, NWDA
- v) Mrs. Rokshana Wadud, Sales Officer, NWDA

Books, Documents & Reports studied (with a few extracts)

- i) Women's Development Project - the scheme submitted by BJMS to the Planning Commission on 15.9.1978.

'What the women need is opportunity and scope to develop their potential and personal qualities, participation in productive activities for their own benefit, for contribution to their families' income and to the development of nation'.

'The Sangstha (BJMS) will make a comprehensive approach to the problems of women and organise integrated programme. The programme will include training and motivation in economic production and welfare activities'.

'Marketing Cell' a component of which is the Sales Emporium again will function as a free sale and display center of the produces of women who have little or no marketing facilities. The trend of design, the variations of market rate, the difficulty of sale and supplies can be recorded from the operation of the Emporium. This is of utmost importance for evolving a marketing strategy. The central showroom will also have feeder centres in the development centres, in the sub-divisions and the Unions.....'

- ii) Project Grant Agreement between the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the United States of America for NWDA - dated September 30, 1979.

Project goal as given in Annex - I

'The ultimate goal of the BDG and this Project is an increased participation and integration of women in the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. The Project sub goal is to establish an outreach network from national to village level providing skills, new ideas, procedures, methodologies and practices to rural women in the area of handicrafts and other income-generating activities and to improve family life and health'.

Item (a) Under Activity Target needs: ' 40 Unions being served by Academy graduates providing specialized skills and economically productive training to rural women '.

Item (b) Under Project Output needs: ' Rural based trades instructors trained in basic vocational and/or handicraft skills at the NWDA and working at Union Women's Development Centre '.

iii) **Situation of Women in Bangladesh-1979**
Edited by Women for Women Group.

In rural setting women are engaged in various types of handicrafts and agricultural-based cottage industries ... Among many diversified crafts and skills the following are the names of a few which are traditionally done by women. Kula (winnowing fan), Dala (baskets), Shika (pot hanger) and Mats and other jute handicrafts, Kantha (the embroidered quilts), Fishing nets, weaving, coir, jute and hemp ropes, and pottery. These types of vocations have great prospects and relevance in the lives of our rural women, as they provide them with income and employment, but in the absence of ORGANIZED MARKETS many of these traditional skills are threatened with extinction'.

iv) **Scheme on Production & Market Development of Selected Handicrafts - Bangladesh Handicrafts Marketing Co-operation (July 1978 - June 1980).**

The scheme which aims at export market development of selected cottage industry products - Jute, Cane & Bamboo is expected not only to help earn the scarce foreign exchange for the country, but will also immensely provide large scale employment to rural people specially womenfolk'.

v) **Bangladesh Economic Association - March 1977**
Role of Women in Socio-Economic Development in Bangladesh
Proceedings of a Seminar held in Dacca - May 9 - 10, 1976.

It is undubitable that women in Bangladesh contribute considerably to productive effort, particularly in the country-side husking, seed processing and preservation, winnowing, transplanting, fuel processing, poultry farming, over and above domestic obligation -- non-monetized contribution, and as such not recognized under the existing national accounting system.

vi) **The Hard Working Poor - A survey on How People use their Time in Bangladesh by A. Farouk and Ali Muhammad - Bureau of Economic Research University of Dacca - December 1977.**

Rural women's productive hours vary between ten to about fourteen, whereas the productive working hours of men vary between ten and eleven ... And larger the size of the family. the heavier is the burden of work as housewives'.

- vii) Report on National Seminar on Rural Development in Bangladesh March 27-31, 1979 sponsored by Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Co-operatives - Mrs. T. Abdullah ; Paper on 'Women in rural development'.

" Development programme for women should address the problems that rural women are concerned with solving - economic motivation is central to rural women's behavior. Women need money not only to contribute to the family as a whole, but also to save for emergency and for the time she and her family is in distress"

" There is need for viable village organization for women through which women can be approached and through which already existing services can reach them Women's cooperatives are our such viable village based local institutions which can improve the condition of village women '.

- viii) A report of the National Workshop of the ESCAP/FAO Inter-country project for Promotion and Training of Rural Women in Income raising activities - 12-15 March 1979. Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development - Comilla.

Dr. Amina Rahman, Minister for Women's Affairs, speaking on 'Mobilising of Resources'.

" During the last $2\frac{1}{2}$ years the Government has been continuously trying to effectively harness the productive power of women. This is being done in the background of universal recognition that no meaningful and and balanced development can be achieved when half of the productive population is kept idle".

- ix) Rural Industries Study - Phase I Report - May 1979 - Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies.

' Nearly a third of the rural population of Bangladesh are landless labourers and more than half is in need of income from other sources to supplement their agricultural income'.

' Rural non-farm activities may, therefore, be of crucial significance as sources of employment and income to rural poor '

- x) Report of the Regional Workshop on Income-Generating Skills for Women in Asia - Organized by ILO - ARSDP (the Asian Regional Skills Development Programme) at Chingmai - Thailand 27 August - 3 September, 1979.

A number of recommendations were made including coordination of women's programme on the national level, and an annual exhibition of women's products on a regional basis, also deputation of women from one country to others for exchange of experience.

xi) Training for Women in Bangladesh - an inventory and sample survey of training programmes - UNICEF - 1977.

' In the area of training for handicrafts and cottage industries which attract poor women in search of additional income, there is lack of coordination'.

' Co-ordination and exchanges are needed between voluntary and governmental organizations engaged in productive activities for poor women'.

' Production, marketing and training should have standards. The production side should receive more attention and the system of production and marketing should be reviewed'.

xii) ' Rural Women Workers in Bangladesh'

A Working Paper - By Florence McCarthy

Saleh Sabha

Roshan Akhtar

Women's Section, Planning & Development Division,
Ministry of Agriculture & Forests - Dacca - August 1978.

' The issue now facing the Government is how to maximize the direct involvement of rural women, in the national infrastructure. The interest in women, although couched in benign welfare terms, is implicit recognition of the impossibility of full exploring the resources and potential of the country without involving women as well as men in the type of development chosen by the country'.

xiii) A Report on Rural Women of Bangladesh by Aloma A. Mascarenhas, USAID Mission to Bangladesh, Dacca (Second Ed. May 1975).

' If the process of development is to be accelerated it is assential to reduce the high dependency rate of female population by encouraging them to participate in various economic programmes.'

Referring to Participant Training, the author adds:

' This is an area in which AID has some scope for the training and advancement of women..... Future and existing projects should be reviewed to determine ways and means by which the number of women participants can be increased'.

- xiv) Profile of Bangladeshi Women.
Selected Aspects of Women's Roles and Status in Bangladesh
Prepared for USAID to Bangladesh
by Suson Fuller Alamgir - Dacca June 1977).

Answer to Question No. 19 (out of 20 specific questions replied in the book is reproduced).

What role do the rural women play in handicraft production ?

' Women play a dominant role in the cottage craft production for both local and foreign markets. These include producing fishnets, baskets, mats, jute products, quilts, rope, fabric, some food products etc. But inspite of the fact that handicraft production may be a full-time occupation of some women, they are dependent on men to supply the necessary raw material inputs and to market the products'.

- xv) Report on Women in Development - Office of Women in Development, USAID, Washington - August 1978.

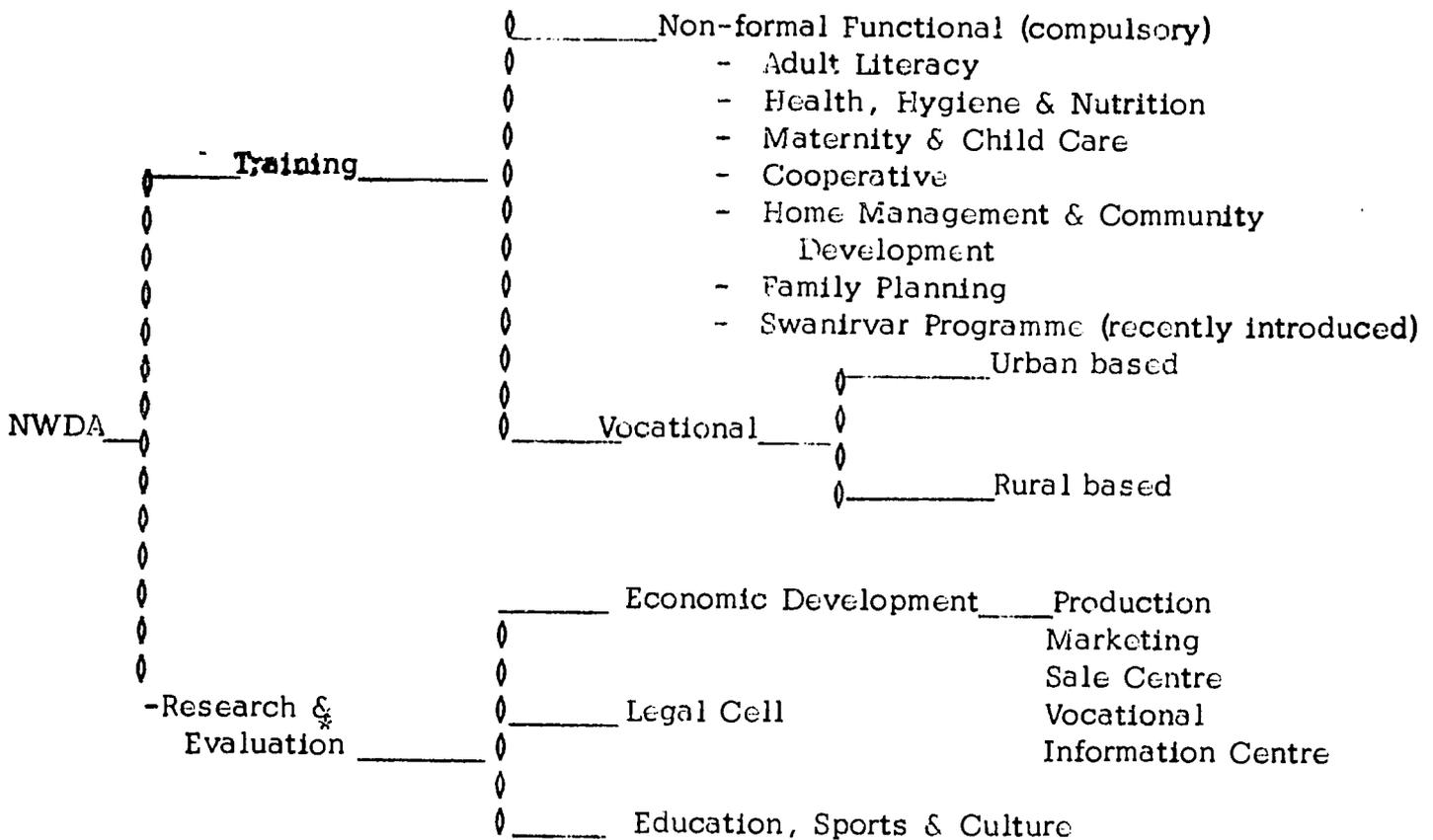
Re: National Women's Development Academy (Training) # 388-0028

' A.I.D. assistance is directed to approximately 1400 women as change agents and skills training, who will return to their home areas to provide motivation and skills training needed to enable local rural women to become economically productive. Courses include family health, nutrition, family planning, home management, cooperative principles, motivation and leadership training, and adult literacy.'

Notes : Also drew reference from the following two reports with which the consultant was connected earlier:

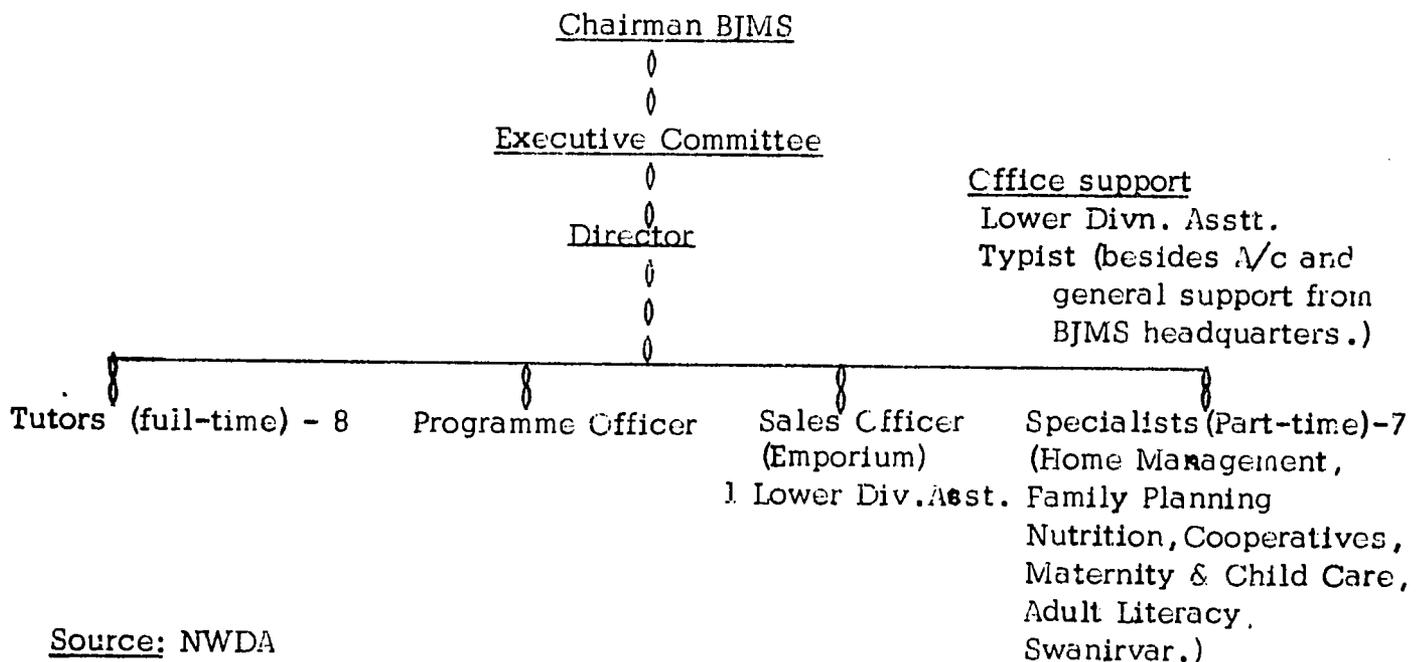
- i. UNICEF Feasibility Study of the income-generating activities of women (1977)
- ii. UNICEF assisted BWRWF project - Training of Women for Skills Instructions - Report on Pre-Project Activities by the undersigned (October 1979).

FUNCTIONAL CHART - NWDA



* Note:- For the time being a small Sales Emporium has been set up. A beginning was also made with the vocational information service.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE - NWDA



Source: NWDA

Annexure - C

Union Development Centres

(Position as on 1st Dec. 1979)

A Places where construction work is complete:

<u>Sl. No.</u>	<u>Names of Union</u>	<u>District</u>
1.	Dakhinkhan	Dacca
2.	Savar	Dacca
3.	Gala	Tangail
4.	Bijoypur	Comilla
5.	Ekhleshpur	Noakhali
6.	Kashipur	Barisal
7.	Aichgathi	Khulna
8.	Basundia	Jessore
9.	Noahata	Rajshahi
10.	Darshana	Rangpur
11.	Sundarban	Dinajpur

At Mazampur (Kushatia District) there was some problem of land (now the land is being donated) while construction work is going on at Chopinagar (Bogra District). At Chandva (Pabna District) construction is still to start. That completes the list of first 14 centres.

NWDA has trained 3 persons from each of these 14 centres in cutting and tailoring; hand-loom weaving and sericulture and spinning (besides the usual number of women for non-formal education).

B Place where land has been donated by people but construction has not started (Women from these places have completed their non-formal training).

1. Jainkathi (Patuakhali District)
2. Dikrirchar (Faridpur District)
3. Sharifpur (Jamalpur District)
4. Kazipur (Pabna District)

C Places from where 11 VSWs each completed their training on November 15, 1979, and where land has been donated by people :

1. Dhalbaria (Khulna District)
2. Dawgaon (Mymensingh District)
3. Pahartali (Chittagong District)
4. Bakulia (Chittagong District)
5. Deoli Bari (Tangail District)

D Names of Districts (names of unions to be finalized batch by batch) from where further batches of VSWs will be drawn for training, as per following schedule of non-formal education :

December 1 to January 15, 1980	-	4	batches	of	11	VSWs	each
February 1 to March 15,	"	-	4	"	"	"	"
April 1 to May 15,	"	-	4	"	"	"	"
June 1 to July 15,	"	-	3	"	"	"	"

Districts from where one Union each will be selected except for Sylhet where 2 Unions will be nominated:

Faridpur, Rangpur, Sylhet, Kushtia, Dinajpur, Barisal, Mymensingh, Rajshahi, Bogra, Noakhali, Jamalpur, Patuakhali, Jessore, Comilla.

With women trained from 15 Unions from these Districts and 23 Unions already covered, the programme of training women from 38 Unions, 2 each from 19 Districts will be completed. (Only Chittagong Hill Tracts District is not being covered in view of other programmes operating there).

Hopefully the construction work would be completed at all the 38 Unions by June 1980.

As regards the required equipment (looms, silk spinning wheels, sewing machines, etc.) centres nos: 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 & 10 in the above list A have got it. Others in this list, where construction work is complete, are in the process of receiving the supplies.

.....

Source: Office of BJMS and Director, NWDA