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A STRATEGY PAPER FOR INTEGRATING LDC RURAL WOMEN INTO THEIR NATIONAL ECONOMIES

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Prepared for the AID Percy Amendment Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Nutrition and Rural Development

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Foreign Assistance Act of 1973*

Percy Amendment

"SEC. 113. INTEGRATING WOMEN INTO NATIONAL ECONOMIES.—Sections 103 through 107 of this Act shall be administered so as to give particular attention to those programs, projects, and activities which tend to integrate women into the national economies of foreign countries, thus improving their status and assisting the total development effort.

Sections 103-107

"SEC. 103. FOOD AND NUTRITION.—In order to alleviate starvation, hunger, and malnutrition, and to provide basic services to poor people, enhancing their capacity for self-help, the President is authorized to furnish assistance, on such terms and conditions as he may determine, for agriculture, rural development, and nutrition. There are authorized to be appropriated to the President for the purposes of this section, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, $291,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1974 and 1975, which amounts are authorized to remain available until expended.

"SEC. 104. POPULATION PLANNING AND HEALTH.—In order to increase the opportunities and motivation for family planning, to reduce the rate of population growth, to prevent and combat disease, and to help provide health services for the great majority, the President is authorized to furnish assistance on such terms and conditions as he may determine, for population planning and health. There are authorized to be appropriated to the President for the purposes of this section, in addition to the funds otherwise available for such purposes, $145,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1974 and 1975, which amounts are authorized to remain available until expended.

"SEC. 105. EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT.—In order to reduce illiteracy, to extend basic education and to increase manpower training in skills related to development, the President is authorized to furnish assistance on such terms and conditions as he may determine, for education, public administration, and human resource development. There are authorized to be appropriated to the President for the purposes of this section, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, $90,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1974 and 1975, which amounts are authorized to remain available until expended.

"SEC. 106. SELECTED DEVELOPMENT PROBLEMS.—The President is authorized to furnish assistance on such terms and conditions as he may determine, to help solve economic and social development problems in fields such as transportation, power, industry, urban development, and export development. There are authorized to be appropriated to the President for the purposes of this section, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, $53,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1974 and 1975, which amounts are authorized to remain available until expended.

"SEC. 107. SELECTED COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS.—The President is authorized to furnish assistance on such terms and conditions as he may determine, in support of the general economy of recipient countries or for development programs conducted by private or international organizations. There are authorized to be appropriated to the President for the purposes of this section, in addition to funds otherwise available for such purposes, $39,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1974 and 1975, which amounts are authorized to remain available until expended.

*Public Law 93-189, 93rd Congress, S.1443, December 17, 1973.

The contents of this paper represent the thoughts of the authors alone and do not necessarily represent the views of their respective agencies.

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SUMMARY

Rural women are a significant force in the developing countries representing 38 percent of Asia's total population, 34 percent of Africa's and 21 percent of Latin America's. Most of these women participate in a wide spectrum of activities in their homes (as wife and mother), on the family farm (as producer of agricultural products), and in the rural economy (as farm or cottage industry labor for hire or as petty retailers or wholesalers). Yet their participation tends to be confined to the low skilled and low paid jobs which is both a consequence of and a contributor to their low status. To this vicious circle must be added a description of their physical well-being. Rural women have poor nutrition, poor health, high mortality rates, bear too many children, and work long hours at back-breaking tasks. These are their problems--poor physical well-being, unequal participation in the economy, and low status. The overall poverty of the rural community is the cause of the first, the existing socio-economic structure of the second and third. (See Figure 5).

There are three basic strategies for dealing with these problems: (1) increase the social services directed to rural women, (2) increase the productivity of women's labor, and (3) increase the productivity of the entire rural community. The first is token and the second partial; only through the third is a complete and equitable solution possible.

Strategy One. Providing more social services for women in rural areas (health, nutrition, family planning, child care, education) can improve their level of physical well-being. However many of these activities fail or have less than the planned effect because the overall poverty of the rural community limits the extent to which women can take advantage of the services.

Strategy Two. Increasing the productivity of women's labor responds to all three problems--physical well-being, unequal participation in the economy, and low status. If women are more productive, they will have more food, more money to spend on health or education, or more time to spend with their families or getting a better education. Programs would require combinations of training and investment to increase the productivity of women's labor and legal and institutional changes to insure that women would be the major beneficiaries of their increased productivity. Investment programs present a particular problem; they can be concentrated in areas where women workers predominate, but there is no assurance that women will have control over the increased returns to their labor (the family may decide otherwise); nor is there any automatic assurance that as the returns to labor rise, men will not displace women in these activities.

Strategy Three. The poor physical well-being of rural women is a direct consequence of rural poverty. And programs/projects to enable rural women to participate more fully in the economy will find limited acceptance unless sufficient productive opportunities are provided for all men and women desiring them. In many countries at least one-third of the rural population is unemployed and 60 to 70 percent of the remainder is underemployed. Often these levels of unemployment and under-employment exist side by side with increases in agricultural output. Here the real problem is to integrate all rural people--men and women--into their national economies. And the only rational and enduring means to accomplish this is by providing everyone with the opportunity to participate in a growing rural economy in whatever activities and level of decision making that their inherent intelligence and skills suit them for--strategy three.

Once the emphasis on material growth is altered to include people and their productive employment as a goal, the development profession is less useful. Conventional theories, which emphasize material growth over employment, productivity and the returns to the factors of production (i.e. labor), are inadequate. And conventional programs which focus on commodities or functions (research, extension, etc.) rather than people and jobs are also inadequate. Instead, complex systems of well co-ordinated programs, policies and resource inputs will be required. These programs will have to be designed specifically to reach significant numbers of rural men and women. For example, technologies and mixes of technologies will have to be designed which can be used by a broader spectrum of farmers, i.e. technologies which are appropriate for them, considering their resource base, management and technical skills and possibilities for improvement, and attitudes toward risk. Systems for distributing fertilizer, seeds, tools, knowledge, and credit will have to be designed so that many more rural people have access to the means of increasing their productivity. And alternative types of employment will have to be created for rural people who are landless or whose land base is so small that there is no way to provide them with a decent income level through raising the productivity of their land.

Throughout the development process special attention should be paid to the roles of rural women to insure that they are not displaced from activities in which they are already effective, or that the degree of their participation, the level of skills which they exercise, etc., is not downgraded. The ultimate goal is for women to be able to participate in the rural community in a broad spectrum of activities and at whatever level of decision making their inherent intelligence and skills suit them for. If this does not occur, society itself will lose, both in an output sense due to the misallocation of resources and in a social sense because it would be preventing a large segment of its population from developing their full human potential.

AID's alternatives are to (1) convert existing or proposed rural development projects, (2) to select a limited number of high priority impact projects dealing specifically with the problems of rural women and (3) help countries design and implement comprehensive rural development programs which concentrate on the rural disadvantaged and their productive employment. Alternatives two and three are recommended.

Convert existing or proposed rural development projects. Attempts to graft so called women's components onto existing projects will not represent a sufficient response to the Percy Amendment. Projects not designed with women in mind in the first place are not likely to incorporate the necessary policies, incentives, and safeguards which are necessary to insure that significant numbers of women will be integrated into the development process.

Select a limited number of high priority immediate impact projects. Projects which concentrate on women in their roles as producers of goods and services may be the most suitable type of limited impact project for AID. The advantages of such an approach are several: (1) it is innovative, (2) other development agencies, FAO, U.N., etc., will probably continue to finance the more traditional, social service projects, (3) this approach responds to all three aspects of women's welfare--physical well-being, participation and status and (4) by maintaining and/or improving women's participation in the economy, this approach would more effectively integrate women into the development process. Even these projects will have limited impact, however, unless designed as part of an overall planning and implementation framework (see Figure 7) which takes as its starting point the aleviation of rural poverty.

Help countries design and implement comprehensive rural development programs. For this reason AID should at the same time staff up to help countries design and implement multi-goal, multi-sector, integrated rural development programs which concentrate on the disadvantaged and their productive employment. Conventional theories and programs are both inadequate. The dimensions of the new program are outlined in Figures 5 and 7. AID does not have the staff needed to do this job, however; nor is one in the wings. Consequently, the starting place is to develop a core staff in AID/Washington with appropriate talent, authority, and responsibility to help interested countries plan and organize such rural development programs.

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INTRODUCTION

If the real purpose of development is to make people better off, countries cannot afford to ignore the welfare of half or more of their populations. Improving women's physical well-being is important but only one step in the process of improving women's welfare. Human welfare includes much more than being healthy, well-fed and even educated, as women in the developed countries are learning. Participating in a broad range of activities and decisions and being recognized for ones participation are equally important components of welfare. Only if women are fully utilized will they be able to develop their full human potential or make their maximum contribution to society.

The purpose of this paper is to (1) present a framework for analyzing the problems of Less Developed Country (LDC) rural women and (2) suggest a methodology for integrating LDC rural women into their national economies by including them in the development process as both participants and beneficiaries. Our arguments are based on personal observations, data from case studies and economic theory. Statistics on rural women are generally unavailable so there is no documentation of the type expected from economists. Statistics are a priority need, but their absence here should not diminish the importance of our arguments or the need to take positive action.

Because rural women are an integral part of rural society, attempts to alleviate their problems must cope with the causes of their problems--the social and economic structure of the rural community and the poverty of all its members. Success depends on nations' abilities to (1) conceive and implement multi-goal, multi-sector, multi-discipline approaches to rural development and (2) apply far more will and imagination and mobilize more and better resources than heretofore.

TARGET GROUP - RURAL WOMEN

There are approximately 532 million rural women in the developing countries (excluding mainland China). Rural women account for 38 percent of Asia's total population, 34 percent of Africa's, and 21 percent of Latin America's. By providing 60-80 percent of farm labor, women contribute significantly to the output of their country's food and fiber. Rural women also bear primary responsibility for maintaining the rural family--the cornerstone of rural society. Important as these roles are, women are prevented from full utilization of their potential at great cost to society.

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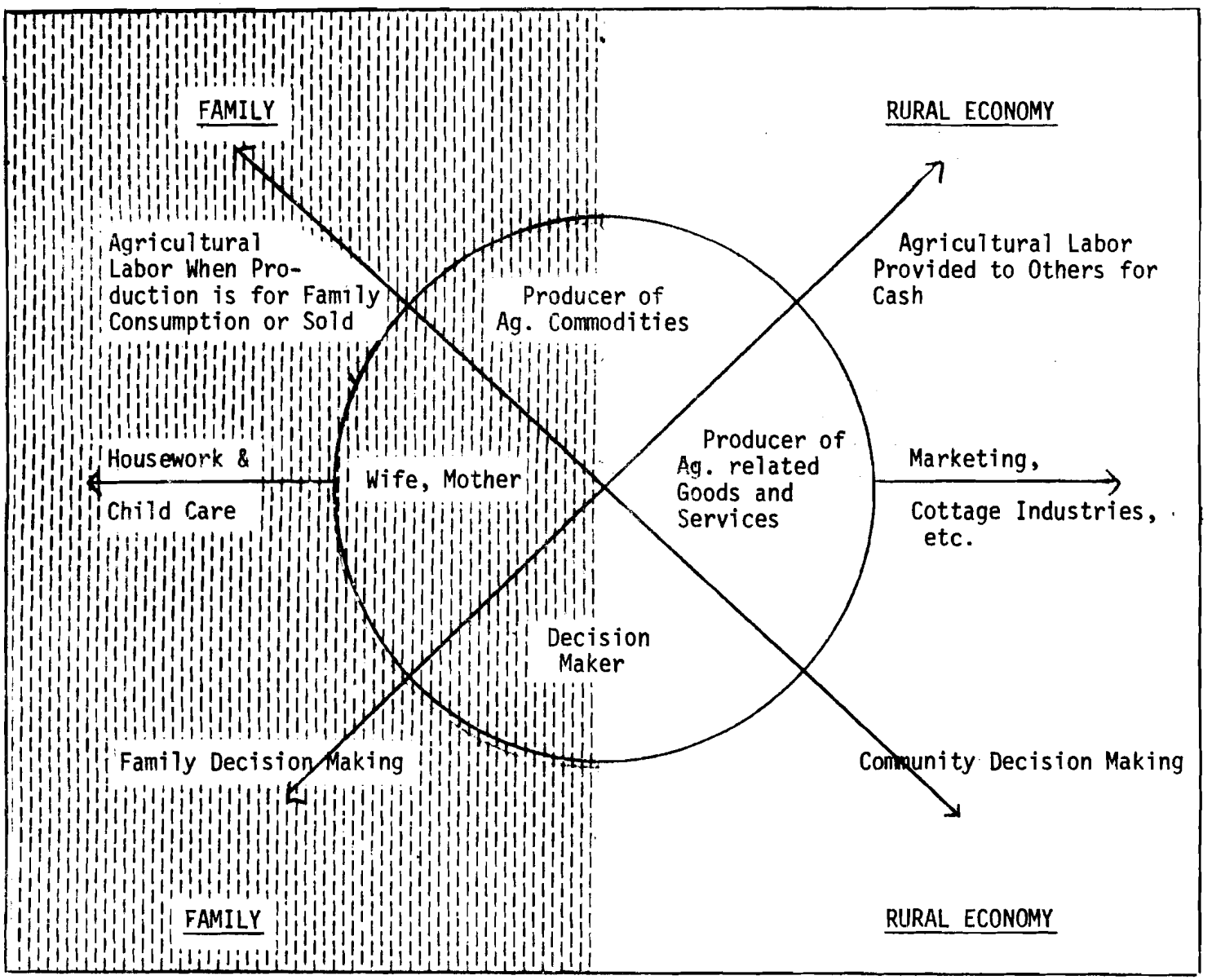
Figure 1--The Multiple Roles of Rural Women



Multiple Roles of Rural Women

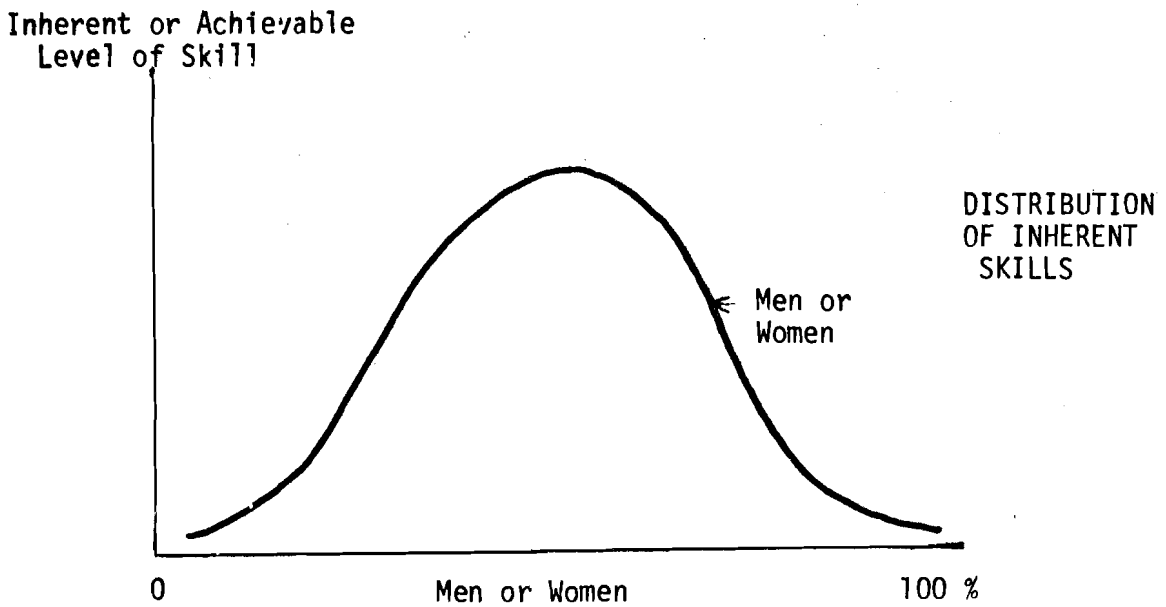
Most rural women participate in a wide spectrum of activities in their homes (as wife and mother), on the family farm (as producer of agricultural products), and in the rural economy (as farm or cottage industry labor for hire or as petty retailers or wholesalers). Women, of course, are responsible for the entire range of home management functions--food preparation and preservation, household maintenance, health and sanitation, bearing many children, and child care. Yet lack of general education and technical training have prevented rural women from improving the performance of their household tasks--maintaining their homes and the health of themselves and their families.

Women are an important source of agricultural labor. In subsistence agriculture they are often the major source of labor. Tasks performed by women include soil preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting, and the selling of produce in the market. Despite their importance, agricultural modernization has not treated women well. Where subsistence agriculture was modernized by the introduction of more intensive methods of production and greater yields, the share of agricultural labor provided by women has actually increased. Yet little was done, in many of these cases, to teach women modern methods of agriculture or the use of modern equipment. In cases where such shortsightedness prevailed, agricultural productivity and consequently rural incomes have not risen to their fullest extent. In other cases, women have been displaced from the fields, but not provided with alternative productive employment. Rural women also participate actively outside their families, but their participation tends to be confined to the low skilled, low paid jobs, with few represented in the higher paying and higher status jobs such as skilled agricultural laborers, agribusiness and marketing professionals, agricultural technicians, and rural politicians.

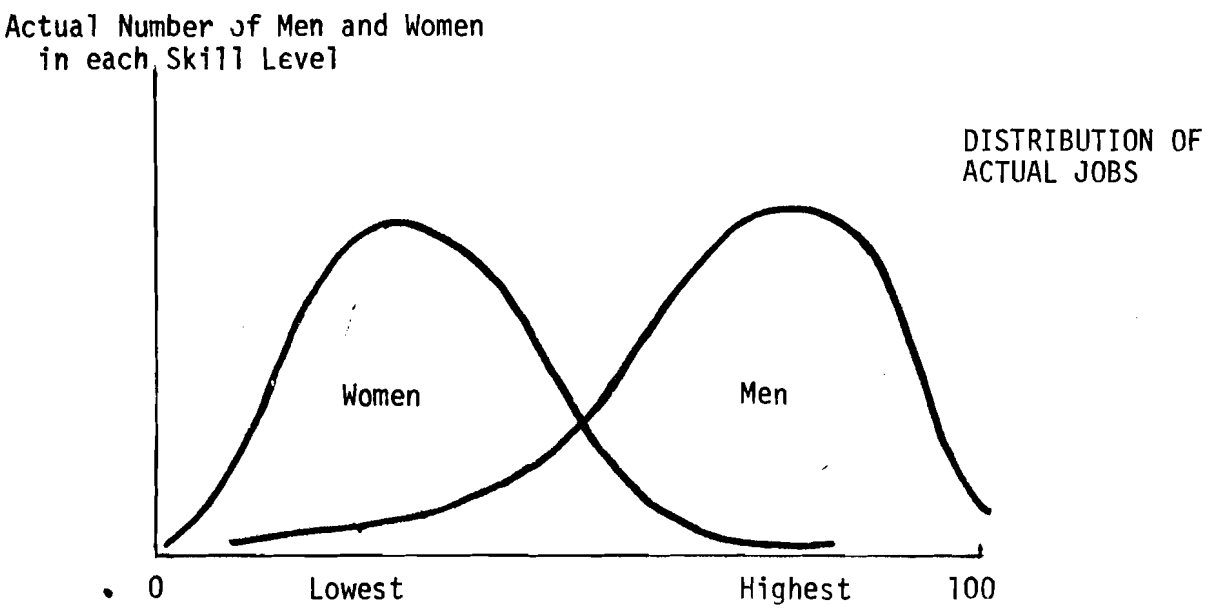
Lack of Integration

While rural women in the LDC's participate in a wide spectrum of activities in their homes, on the family farm, and in the rural economy, the majority of these jobs are physical in nature and do not make full use of their inherent intelligence or skills. Although inherent intelligence and skill potential are randomly distributed within a population (see Figure 2a), rural women are concentrated in the jobs which require fewer skills (see Figure 2b), pay less, and which have less status. Although often permitted to participate in family decision making, rural women seldom participate as decision makers outside their families, or in their communities. This is an indicator of and a consequence of their low status. Women's lack of educational opportunity is also an

Figure 2.--Theoretical Distribution Between Men and Women



(a)



Jobs Ranked According to Level of Skill Required

(b)

indicator of their low status in the rural community, and is a major reason why they are unable to participate in the higher status, higher paying jobs. Rural women also have poor nutrition, poor health, high mortality rates, bear too many children, and work long hours at back-breaking tasks.

Improving the Welfare of Rural Women - The Goal Defined

These are the problems of rural women--poor physical well-being, unequal participation in the rural economy, and low status. The overall poverty of the rural community is the cause of the first, the existing socio-economic structure of the second and third. These categories of problems can also be used to help define the goal (see Table 1). As goals, improving the welfare of rural women, or making rural women better off, are too general. Statements of goals are needed which can be made operational, i.e. they can be used as a basis for specific programs and progress toward them can be measured. In this paper, improving the welfare of rural women has been defined to mean--improving their physical well-being, increasing the extent and level of their participation in the economy, and improving their status. The next step in specificity will have to be taken by countries themselves.

Countries should begin this process by developing profiles of their own rural women. Such profiles, by describing the problems of rural women, can provide a basis for defining goals and designing and implementing programs to improve the welfare of rural women, once the goals are defined.

Measuring the physical well-being of women should be easy. Levels of health and nutrition, mortality rates, access to health care and family planning services, amount of backbreaking labor performed would seem to be relatively straightforward indicators. Goals could be set by comparing indicators for LDC women with some ideal (what women eat compared to what they should eat for good nutrition, for example), or with indicators for developed country women. However, the type of data needed to make these comparisons is not available in developing countries nor, in many cases, in developed countries. One of the first priorities then is to develop relevant data. Special studies will also be needed in order to define the extent to which women participate in the rural economy and society. Such studies would identify the types of activities in which rural women are involved and the degree of intelligence and skill required by each job. Goals could be set by comparing the extent and level of women's participation with the totality of activities and decision making levels available. Status, a more complex component of welfare, can be measured by comparing the

Table 1--Defining the Goal

Categories of Concern	How Measure?-- (indicators)	How Women Score?	What Are the Goals?
Physical Wellbeing	1. Nutrition 2. Housing 3. Health & Health Care 4. Family Planning 5. Arduousness of Labor	Poor	Improvement--Improve nutrition, health care, housing, family planning.
Participation In the Economy	Descriptive comparative analysis of functions performed by women including the spectrum of activities in which women are involved and the degree of intelligence and skill required.	Skewed toward low skilled, low paying, and low status jobs.	Involvement--Maintain or widen spectrum of activities in which women participate and increase their degree of participation in areas which require greater levels of skill and intelligence.
Status	Descriptive comparative analysis of 1. Degree to which women participate in decision making by type and level. 2. Degree to which benefit by their participation in the economy in terms of income, education.	Low	Equality--Increase women's participation in decision making at all levels. Increase the extent to which women benefit from their participation in society.

=IMPROVEMENT IN WOMEN'S WELFARE

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degree to which women vs. men participate in the decision making process at all levels. Another way is to evaluate the extent to which women vs. men benefit from their participation in the economy in terms of health, access to services like education and health care, income, etc.1/. Although statistics are not available to substantiate it, some would argue that Figure 3a accurately describes the status of LDC rural women. A series of individual country profiles will be needed to support or contradict this assertion.

Once such profiles are completed, countries can begin their discourse on goals. Although it may be preferable for countries to reach a consensus on goals (see Figure 3b, for example), they may have to be content with an agreement that change is necessary and on the general direction of that change.

Why should a society improve the welfare of its women?

1. To improve individual welfare

   The real purpose of development is to make people better off. Since women represent 50 percent or more of the population of most societies, improving their physical well-being, widening their participation in society, and improving their status should be major goals of development.

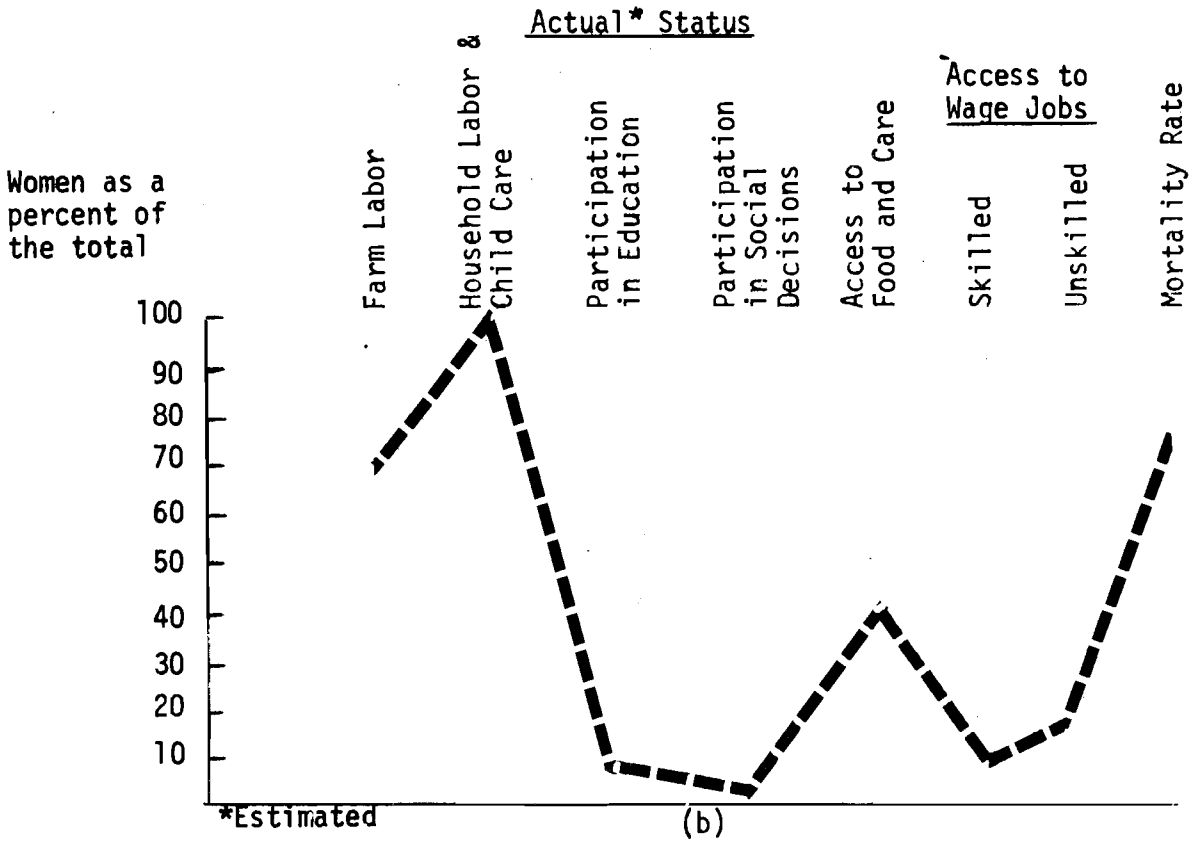
2. To improve social welfare

   Considering that intelligence is randomly distributed throughout a population, a society cannot afford to ignore half or more of the brain power available to it. Women are an important resource and their improper utilization can retard both the level and rate of growth of an economy.

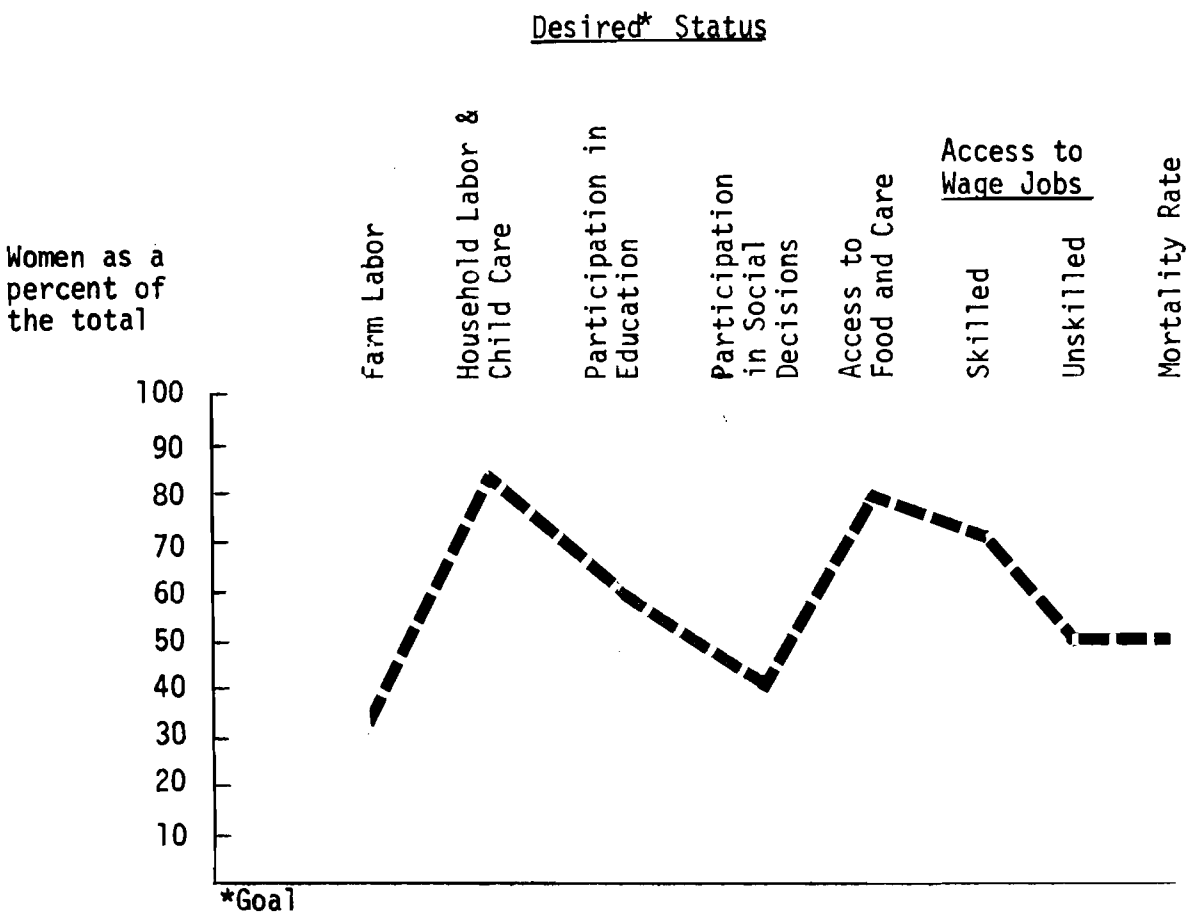
In other words, women's welfare is a necessary means to an end--national growth and development--as well as an end in itself.

1/ Rural women have the status of residual claimants on economic benefits, e.g., $a + bx = 1$ (where a = others, b = a multiplier, x = women). If members of the "a" group are primary claimants, and if their claim is greater than zero, the "b" coefficient of x (women) will vary from less than 100 to zero. Empirical evidence indicates that the beta coefficient is near zero in the LDC's. Technically, however, a pre-determined, non-arbitrary, non-zero solution is not possible in a system in which at least one member is a residual claimant. Therefore, it cannot be safely contended that women benefit if the primary claimant benefits. The above equation can, however, be expressed in equality terms by a simple conversion and setting the conversion equal to one: $a/bx = 1$.

Figure 3--Profile of LDC Rural Women



(b)



One objective of this paper is to explore the ways and means available to each society (with or without the help of AID) to improve the ranking and welfare of its rural women. Another is to propose a strategy whereby AID can assist countries in this vital process.

Assumptions About the Target Group

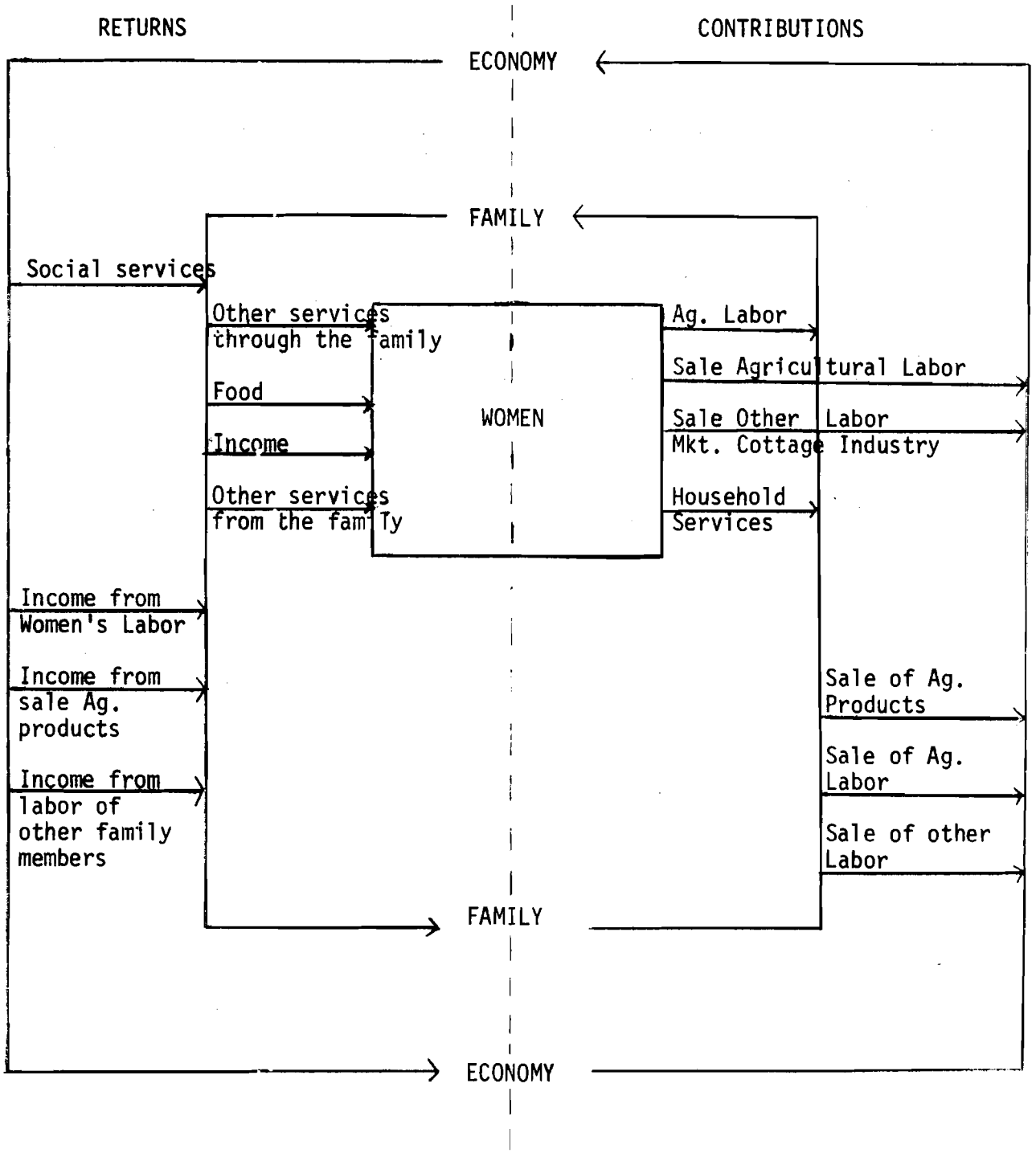
We do not mean to argue that women are more equal in their effect on economic development than men, but that they can contribute equally with men and therefore should be given the same opportunities. An increase in the options available to women will not be sufficient, however. Programs must be designed to increase women's abilities to exploit these options. Existing barriers to equal exploitation of opportunity may include lack of money, time, knowledge, and social acceptance. These barriers will have to be dealt with directly.

We also recognize that most rural women are an integral part of some rural family (see Figure 4). Their participation in rural society, their status, and their physical well-being is directly affected by the role and status given to them by their families. Strategies designed to improve women's welfare will not succeed unless these linkages are recognized and explicitly dealt with. Nor will these strategies succeed if their net effect is to minimize the role of women in the rural family.

Improvements can be made in women's welfare in the short-run. Programs to provide women with more general education can make them more upwardly mobile. Health, nutrition, and family planning programs can improve their physical well-being. Technical training programs to increase their skills or programs to provide them with alternative employment can provide them with additional income. These programs are inadequate as a long-term strategy, however. Integrating women fully into the development process will require countries to deal with causes--not effects. Rural poverty, the cause of women's lack of physical well-being, must be diminished and socio-economic structures will have to be changed to enable women to participate more equally in society and the economy and to increase their status.

Our final assumption is that rural women are representative of all women. The problems of rural women as workers, wives, and mothers and their lack of status are representative of all women. Accordingly, solutions to their problems should indicate what can be done for all women.

Figure 4--Rural Women: Linkages to their family and the community



ALTERNATIVE WAYS AND MEANS OF REACHING RURAL WOMEN

Once a country decides to improve the welfare of its rural women, it faces another set of questions:

1. How many women can or should be reached?
2. How much can be done and over what time period?
3. What changes in the structure of rural society are needed to achieve maximum women's benefits? (The problem differs from culture to culture.)
4. What changes in women's roles are necessary? For example, to increase their level of education may require a decrease in the amount of time spent in the field or on household chores.
5. What changes in national policies, laws, social attitudes, etc., are necessary both to increase the opportunities available to women to improve their welfare and to make sure that significant numbers of women can take advantage of these increased opportunities?

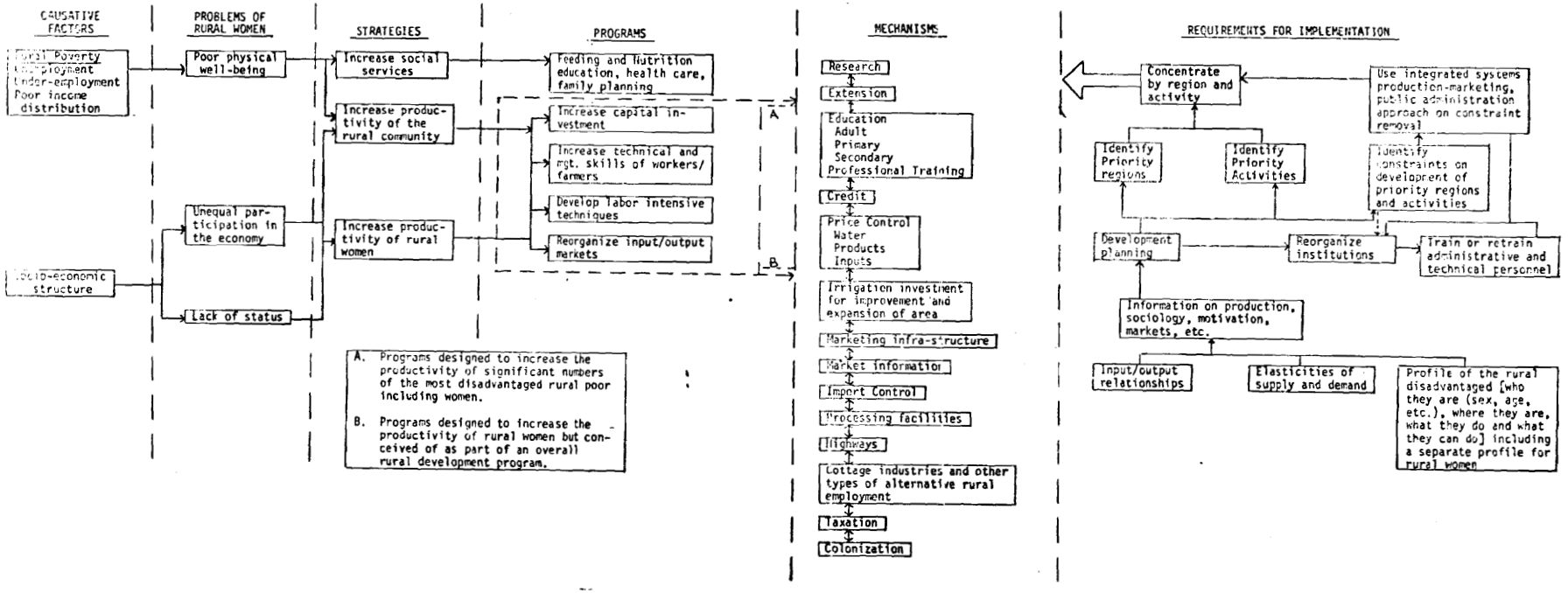
Answers to these questions, to be adequate, must be based on a thorough analysis of the status of rural women, the extent and level of their participation in the rural society and economy, and their physical well-being. Answers, of course, will differ from country to country, depending on how each culture has defined the status and role of its rural women.

This paper identifies three alternative ways of reaching rural women (see Figure 5).

Increasing the Social Services Directed to Rural Women

First there is the direct approach--an increase in the social services provided for women in rural areas: health, nutrition, family planning, child care, education. Such programs deal directly with some of the problems affecting women, especially their level of physical well-being. These activities are usually provided by the central government and paid for by taxes on other activities in the economy. However, many of these activities fail or have less than the planned impact because women are unable to take full advantage of these opportunities due to the overall poverty of the rural community. Education programs may fail because women cannot be released from the field without a decline in production and men are unable or unwilling to take their place. Nutrition programs may fail because the food destined for women and children is consumed by men whose health and stamina may be viewed as more vital to the survival of the rural family.

Figure 5--Strategies for Integrating Rural Women Into National Economies



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In the longer run, providing more women with more general education, including high school and university training, will have the greater impact on increasing their status and their level of participation in the rural economy and rural society. With more and better education women may be able to increase their physical well-being by improving their own and their family's nutrition, for example. Since the level of ones education is also a measure of ones status in many societies, increasing the level to which women are educated can have a direct impact on their status as well as enabling them to participate in the rural economy and society at higher skill and decision making levels. Education may also have a direct impact on women's well-being in the sense of enabling them to more fully develop their potential as thinking reasoning human beings.

Increasing the Productivity of Women's Labor (see Table 2)

The second direct approach is to increase the productivity of women's labor. A woman producing food for family consumption and sale could, by learning new production and management techniques, for example, substantially increase the food available for family consumption and/or increase the amount of food sold, increasing family income. To the extent that this woman, through the family decision making process, is able to use the benefits of her own labor to improve her own nutrition, health, etc., increasing her productivity will have a direct impact on improving her physical well-being. Or to the extent that a woman can use her extra time and money to increase her education, for example, increasing her productivity can have a direct impact on her status and the nature of her future participation in the rural economy. Similar arguments can be made for the need to increase the productivity of women workers in cottage industries and other agricultural and related jobs where women work for hire. As Sir Arthur Lewis put it in The Theory of Economic Growth: "To create more paid jobs for women is the surest way simultaneously to raise their status, to reduce their drudgery, and to raise the national output."

Because rural women have such low educational levels, designing and implementing training programs to increase their technical skills will have the most immediate impact on increasing their productivity. These programs can be directed specifically toward women. Productivity increases can also be achieved by adding complementary inputs to women's labor (fertilizer, seeds, new tools, etc.). However, programs designed to supply these additional inputs, either directly or by providing credit to purchase them, will have to be directed toward financially independent units. In cases where women are not financially independent, governments will have only limited control over the extent to which women will participate in and benefit from such investment programs. These programs can be concentrated in areas where women workers predominate, but there is no assurance that women will have control over the increased

Table 2--Strategy II: Increase the Productivity of Rural Women

Types of Labor	Mechanisms for Reaching Women		Impact on Women and Their Welfare (Physical Well-Being, Extent & Level of Participation, Status)	
	Direct	Through Family or Firm	Impact on Women	Relationship of Impact to Their Welfare
Household	Training in household skills, health, nutrition, etc.	Increased investment (eg. well closer to the house	Increase in time for: a. Leisure b. Extra productive work in or out of household c. Education	To the extent that a woman, through the family decision making process, is able to use the benefits of her own labor to improve her own nutrition, health, etc. increasing her productivity will have a direct impact on improving her physical well-being. Or to the extent that a woman can use her extra time to increase her level of education, increasing her productivity can have a direct impact on her status and on the extent and level of her future participation in society and the economy. The extent to which the family controls the disposition of the fruits of womens' labor may depend on whether it is produced within or outside the family. In other words, women hired workers, entreprenuers, and professionals may have more control over their income.
Agricultural Labor On Family Plot	Training in agricultural skills (time to plant, proper spacing, how & when to fertilize, etc.	Increased investment in complementary inputs, (fertilizer, seeds, new tools)	Increase in: a. Time for leisure, other productive work, education b. Output for home consumption c. Income-if extra output sold	
Agricultural and non-agricultural labor for hire	Training in skills required on the job	Increased investment in complementary inputs	Increase in: a. Time for leisure, education b. Income	
Entrepreneurial activities such as marketing	Training in management as well as well as specific skills required by the job (eg. grading for those active in marketing). Increased investment in complementary inputs		Increase in: a. Income b. Level of participation c. Status	Direct impact on level of partipation and status. Increased income can be used to purchase better nutrition, health, etc. (indirect impact on increasing physical well-being)
Professional Activities	General leading to professional education		Increase in: a. Income b. Level of participation c. Status	See above

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returns to their labor (the family may decide otherwise); nor is there any automatic assurance that as returns to labor rise, as a result of the additional investment, women will not be displaced from these activities.

Where women participate as entrepreneurs, complementary inputs and/or credit to purchase them can be provided directly to women. Providing these women with management training as well as specific skills required by their work (e.g. techniques of grading, inventory control, or organizing co-operatives for women in marketing) will also increase their productivity. However even these types of programs must be specifically designed with women in mind. Certain policies, incentives and safeguards will be necessary to insure that women do in fact benefit. It may also be necessary to include women in the planning--implementation process. However, in the long-run the most constructive and enduring approach is to provide sufficient productive opportunities for men and women alike.

In terms of the practical mechanics of designing programs whose objective is to increase the productivity of rural women, the first step for a country is to identify all those areas where women are now productively employed. The next step is to design policies/programs/projects to more fully utilize these women (i.e. increase their productivity). Second, when development programs/projects displace women, other opportunities for them to participate in productive activities should be created. In fact, special attention should be paid to women throughout the process of development to insure that they are not displaced from activities in which they are already effective or that the degree of their participation, the level of skills which they exercise, etc., is not downgraded.

Increasing the Productivity of the Entire Rural Community

In a zero growth economy, increasing the productivity of rural women could put men out of work. Or what is more likely, as activities now performed by rural women become more remunerative, men will move into them displacing women. Even if there is growth in gross national product (GNP) and agricultural output, the masses of rural people may benefit little from this growth if it is concentrated in the urban sector or if it has been produced by only a small segment of wealthy farmers. Under such circumstances the majority of the rural population may face zero or negative growth even though the overall rural economy is growing. In economies where this situation prevails, attempts to increase the productivity of rural women could be regarded as competitive with men and therefore unacceptable.

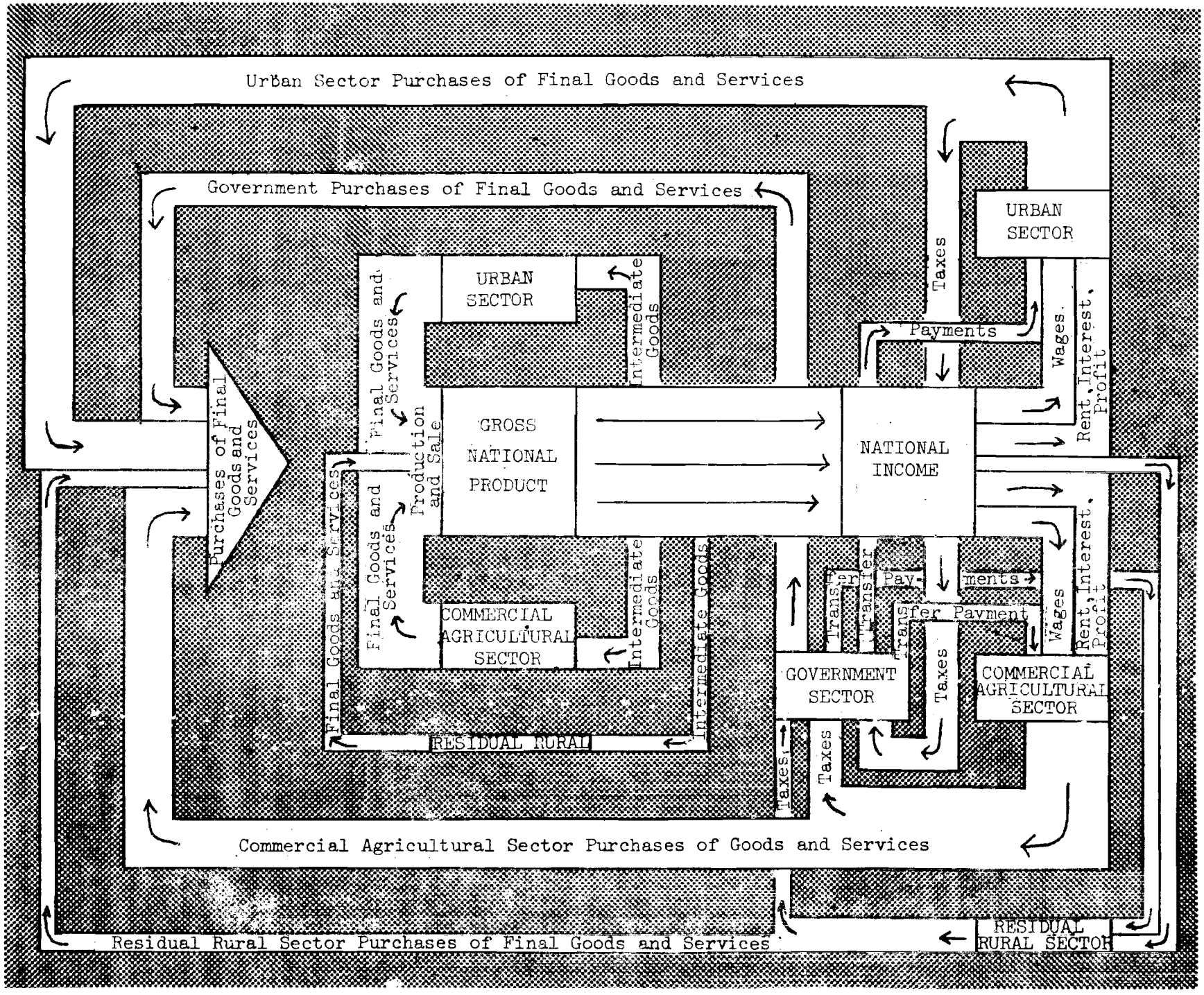
Figure 6 describes the income and expenditure flows of such an economy. Although 40 percent of the total population is in the "traditional" or "residual" rural sector, it contributes little and receives little from the rest of the economy (the level of income or expenditure is indicated by the width of the flow). Here is a case where rural women are not the only group which has been by-passed by the development process. This society must find ways and means of integrating all its rural poor into its national economy--not just its women. Rural women, because of their inferior economic and social status, have been most victimized; they are the poorest of the poor. Yet both groups will have to be dealt with simultaneously.

For years the development profession ignored these types of problems preoccupying itself with the problem of growth (increasing the width of the total flow in Figure 6). For many "growth" of output became synonymous with "development" and physical technology with "modernization." Once development was defined as growth in output, theoreticians and practitioners alike found it necessary to concentrate on relationships between inputs/investments and output/growth (the production function). Government planning offices and lending agencies set as their goals certain rates of growth of output. And all projects, technologies, institutions were evaluated on the basis of their contribution to these growth rates. People, however, were viewed primarily as contributors (inputs) to this growth rather than as ends in themselves, or even as factors of production which have rights to benefits from this growth.

Once growth became synonymous with development increases in GNP, per capita GNP, or output of particular products became sufficient measures of success. This follows even though each of these measurements is an abstract statistic and in no way measures peoples actual standard of living. Even per capita income (total GNP divided by total population) is a poor measure of people's welfare. For example, growth in GNP may be concentrated in a narrow-sector of production and its benefits may accrue to a small minority of the population (see Figure 6); market prices do not necessarily reflect social values; and important elements may be outside the sphere of simple monetary evaluation.

The term "modernization" was also misused coming to refer to a technical relationship between inputs and outputs rather than changes in the socio-economic structure of a nation. Modern industry became equated in some people's minds with a technique (capital intensive) which was peculiar to the developed countries rather than the system for organizing labor and capital to produce and distribute a commodity. A similar confusion exists in agriculture where the term modernization is used to refer to the adoption of physical technologies ignoring the transformation of the rural society and economy which is both a prerequisite for and consequence of the adoption of this technology.

Figure 6--The Income and Expenditure Flow of a Hypothetical Less Developed Country



By accepting these concepts, the development profession blinded itself to what actually was happening to the masses of LDC rural poor. Yet evidence grows daily that few people have shared in the growth process and many have suffered an actual reduction in the quality of their life. In many countries at least one-third of the rural population are unemployed and 60 to 70 percent of the remainder are underemployed. And more and more of these people, no longer linked to society through their traditional roles and shorn of jobs which is the important link in the new order, are being shoved to the margin of life under the joint effects of population, disease, malnutrition, and ignorance. A thorough analysis of several more direct indicators of human welfare--health, education, housing, labor force participation--would have made these failures obvious much sooner.

More recently we have begun to remember that economic growth is only the means to an end--improving human welfare--and that development implies structural changes in society as well as increases in magnitudes of output. But our traditional emphasis on physical growth makes it difficult for us to cope with our new perception of reality. Our goals have changed (as indicated in the latest AID legislation or AID's new initiatives), but we are still saddled with the old theories whose basic concepts are inadequate for our new purposes.

TOWARD A THEORETICAL BASIS FOR PEOPLE ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

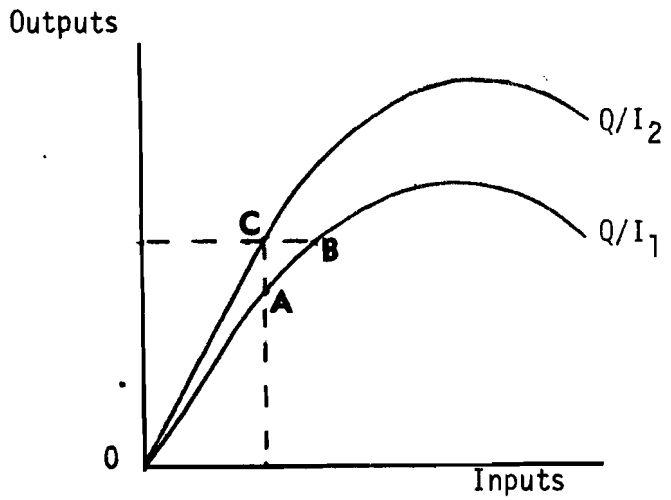
Growth Model as the Decision Mechanism

Primary Relationships	-- between inputs and outputs, e.g., the production function
Objective	-- to determine what technology and input combinations will maximize output
Success Indicators	-- growth in output (e.g., GNP, per capita GNP, yields of wheat, corn, coffee, etc.)

As long as nations were primarily interested in growth of output, it was rational for them to concentrate on the national or individual commodity production functions (Q/I_1 and Q/I_2 in Diagram 1). This model provides a framework for decision makers to use in selecting technologies and input combinations that maximize output--the objective of the model. Output can be increased by (1) adding more inputs (moving along the

production function from A to B), (2) selecting or developing a new technology (moving from A on Q/I_1 to C on Q/I_2), or (3) a combination of the two. Although labor is included in the system as an input, what happens to it as a result of changes in the production function, whether labor is displaced for example, is incidental to the analysis. As expressed in Figure 6, the growth model system is concerned primarily with total flow of output (and how to increase its rate and level) and only peripherally in how the flow of output and its benefits is or can be distributed among the sectors and factors of production.

Diagram 1



Distributive Model as the Decision Mechanism

Primary Relationships -- between employment, productivity, and the returns to labor.

Objective -- to determine what technology, input, and output combinations will optimize returns to factors of production--i.e. labor.

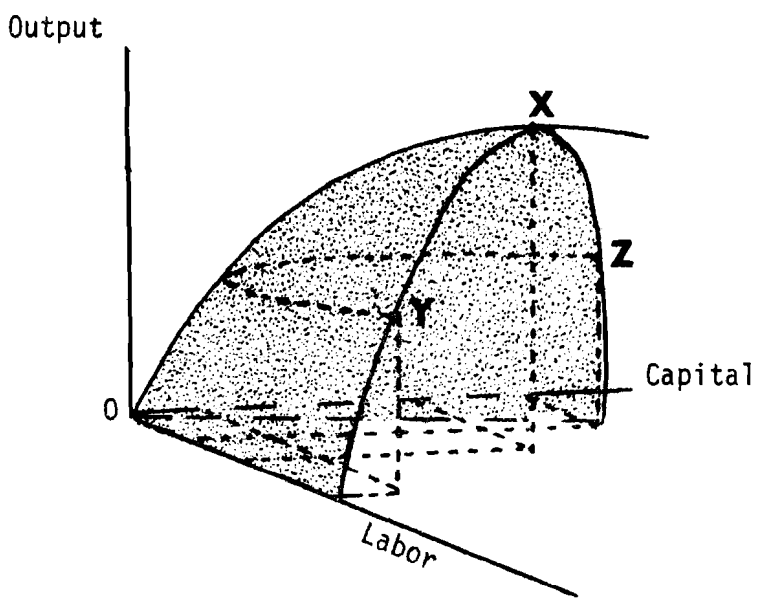
Success Indicators -- should include direct indicators of well-being (health, nutrition, housing) as well as numbers participating in labor force and returns to labor.

However, once nations become interested in people's welfare, they must concentrate on how people participate in and benefit from growth

itself. The most rational and enduring way for the rural poor to share in the benefits of growth is for them to participate in its production. In other words, the best way to integrate the rural poor into their national economies is to design policies/programs/projects which provide opportunities for productive employment for all those who desire it. By increasing the numbers of rural people participating in the economy, and by improving the level of their participation (e.g. increasing their productivity), the size of the flow to and from the rural sector would increase (see Figure 6). If correctly designed, programs which increase these flows could add to the total flow (growth) but not diminish the flow going to and from other sectors (redistribution).

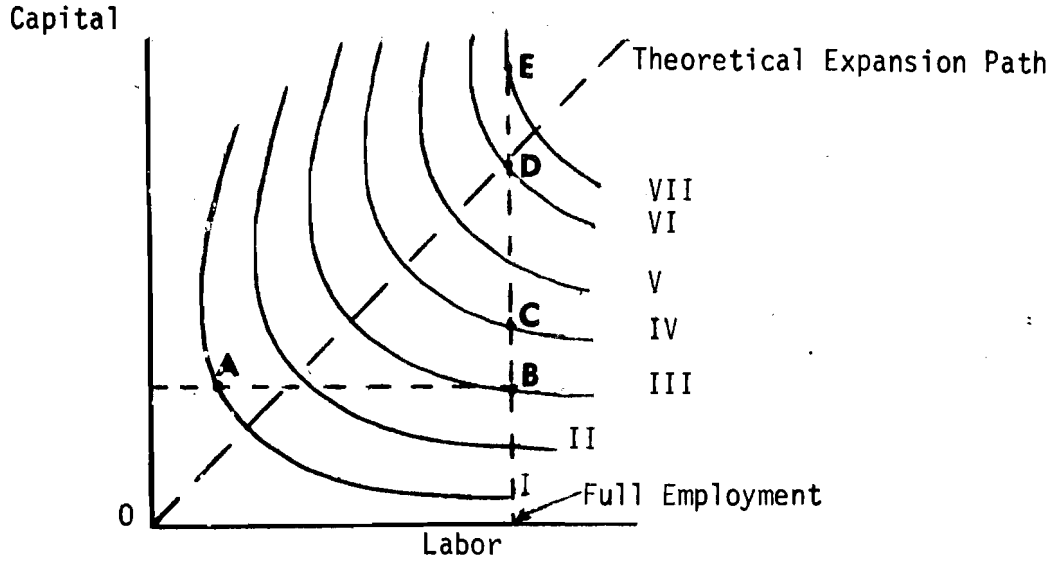
Once nations take this step, they must become concerned with a new set of factors--full employment, labor productivity, and returns to labor--as well as growth. Distributive growth models could provide a mechanism for relating these concepts. The first step is to expand Diagram 1 to show the relationships between labor, capital, and output (see Diagram 2). Output is maximized at point X; this is the most productive combination of inputs from a technological point of view. But it may not be an optimal solution for individuals/firms who allocate their resources based on the relative prices of capital and labor. Nor is it necessarily an optimum solution from society's point of view. If a country's goal is to increase rural employment, point Y, which uses large amounts of labor per unit of capital, is the more logical choice. Point Z which has a much lower labor input would reduce employment below the levels of both X and Y. If a country has multiple goals--to increase both employment and output--some point between X and Y will be most logical. Governments can and do influence what is optimal behavior for individuals by manipulating prices, developing technologies, etc.

Diagram 2



If enough Option Y programs/projects/techniques are selected, a country could fully employ all its rural labor (move from point A to point B in Diagram 3, where each curve shows the various combinations of capital and labor which can produce the same level of output. Output level I equals the dotted line YZ in Diagram 2, for example).

Diagram 3



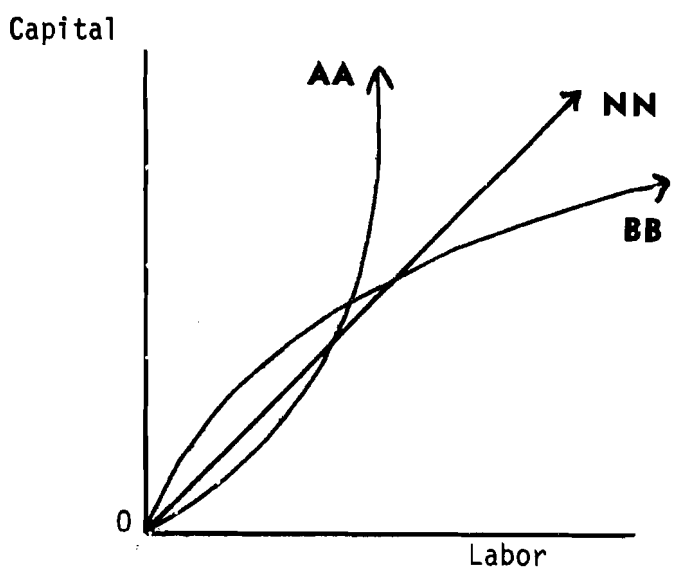
By employing AB more people, the economy moves to a higher output level (from I to III output level). But at B each individual would receive less return for each unit of his labor because the marginal productivity of his labor is less at B than at A. (Labor's marginal product is less at B because each unit of labor has less capital to work with; therefore, even if the price paid for each unit of labor's output remains the same, labor, which receives the value of its marginal product, receives less). Point B is not an optimal solution from society's point of view as long as its goal is to increase the welfare of significant numbers of individuals in the rural sector and not merely to employ everyone in the sector. Economic theory tells us that the returns to labor can be increased by increasing labor's productivity. Economic theory also tells us that increases in labor productivity can be achieved by increasing workers skills, by increasing the amount of capital used with labor (more fertilizer, more irrigation pumps, more thrashers, etc.) or by adopting new, more productive technologies (improved seeds, or machinery, for example).

An increase in capital is represented on Diagram 3 by a movement from B to C; output is higher at C and labor is more productive. Adding

technology to this system complicates it slightly. If the new technology is "neutral", the relationships between capital and labor will be unaffected. If an economy at C in Diagram 3 adopts an improved but neutral technology, its relative usage of capital and labor will remain the same; in terms of Diagram 3 the economy will remain at C, but output level III will represent a higher output level than before. A new technology is said to be capital using when, at a constant capital-labor ratio, the marginal product of capital increases relative to the marginal product of labor. If the new technology adopted is capital using, the economy will move to a new higher output curve where relatively more capital is used with each amount of labor. If the new technology is labor using, the economy will also move to a new higher output curve but one where relatively more labor is used with each unit of capital. New technologies can be embodied in capital (new machines, new seeds, etc.) or in labor (increased skills).

In market economies, technologies are also developed and implemented in response to factors like relative prices. If the combined response of individuals and firms is to adopt primarily capital using technology, over time this will result in a decline in the rate of growth of employment (Expansion Path AA' in Diagram 4. Diagram 4 is Diagram 3 with the output levels removed to make it easier to read). If one of society's goals is to maintain full employment, this is not a socially optimum path. Expansion path B, which is based on the adoption of more labor using technology, is a preferable course.

Diagram 4



HYPOTHETICAL EXPANSION PATHS
AA'--Capital using technology
A--Capital substitutes for labor
A'-Capital substitutes for land (and labor)
BB'--Labor using technology
B--Unskilled labor substitutes for capital
B'-Skilled labor substitutes for capital

Economists have developed these concepts to explain why economies have followed certain expansion paths, for example (positive economics). The task of the planner is to use these same concepts to show decision makers how to influence the path taken by their economy to make sure that the results correspond more closely to their society's goals (normative economics). In countries where goals include both full employment and increased output, the task of the planner is to chart a course somewhere between B and E in Diagram 3 where labor's marginal product is as large as possible without making the returns to capital so low that its accumulation and investment is discouraged.

Employment, in other words, is the mechanism for integrating the rural poor into their national economies. Once employed, their incomes can be increased by making various means of increasing the productivity of their labor (technical education, new technologies, additional inputs) available to them. However, this alone will not insure increases in their income. If increased productivity means increased output of a single product and if the effective demand for the product does not increase commensurate with the increase in its output, the price society is willing to pay for the product will decline. If demand for the product is inelastic, the price can drop far enough to wipe out all the gain to farmers due to their increased productivities. This is not as likely to happen in societies where the benefits of development are widely distributed; for people at lower income levels spend a larger percentage of a given increase in their income on food than do people at higher income levels. Even when income is poorly distributed, price declines are not an immediate problem as long as the increased output (1) displaces imports or (2) is exported (assuming that the country's exports are too small to have an impact on prices in the international market). However in the long-run, without a more equitable income distribution, crop diversification, and/or increased exports, the rural sector will not benefit commensurate with its increased productivity.

Another means by which people can share in the benefits of growth is by becoming recipients of transfer payments (see Figure 6). This mechanism has proved inadequate especially in the LDC's. Most leaders in the developed as well as the developing countries find that they cannot stay in power by taxing away much of what the "haves" have to give to the "have nots". A little perhaps can be taxed away and distributed to the rural poor in the form of social services--education, health, etc. But direct payments to the masses of rural poor would be (1) impossible for political reasons, (2) too difficult to administer, (3) a waste of a vast amount of human talent and energy, and (4) deprive large numbers of people of a meaningful position in the social structure by depriving them of a productive role in the economy.

How successful countries are in reaching the rural poor will depend on whether they and the international development agencies are able to: (1) develop an integrated approach to rural development which provides productive employment for all people and (2) apply far more will, imagination, and resources than either are now investing. The success of these programs will have to be measured in terms of direct indicators of human welfare (health, nutrition, education, housing, family size), as well as participation in the labor force, and returns to labor, etc. Once development is viewed as a social as well as an economic process, per capita GNP or other output measures are no longer satisfactory.

One thing is clear, however. No one program--not family planning, not education, not housing, not land reform, not credit, not agricultural price policy, and not agricultural technology--is going to change the situation for the LDC rural poor. For example, during the late 1960's, the new high yielding rice and wheat varieties were touted as the solution to famine in 1984.

By now it is evident that they have failed to fulfill this promise; nor have they succeeded in reducing wide spread rural poverty as many had hoped they might. Studies done during the early 1970's already indicate that the majority of the rural poor have been unable to take advantage of these new technologies because they lacked the necessary resources: land, capital, knowledge. In fact these particular varieties were designed to be of maximum value under only the most ideal of situations--while the majority of rural families face the most un-ideal of situations.

What happened was that farmers with better initial endowments (better land, access to irrigation, more capital, etc.) were able to capture most of the benefits of the new technology to the disadvantage of the larger number of less well endowed farmers to say nothing of the landless laborers. Moreover, only in societies where there was a relatively broad distribution of resources to begin with, have the actions of the primary beneficiaries of the new varieties benefited other groups of the rural disadvantaged. In other societies, consolidation of resources among fewer people, increased unemployment, and increased rural to urban migration have occurred. When this happens real social product decreases and there is a decline in the quality of life even though actual output has increased.

Even output increases cannot be achieved with a simple, single pronged attack--a better seed, a better plow, or fertilizer. Once the goal is broadened to include more equitable distribution of growth, an even more complex system of well-coordinated programs, policies and resource inputs will be required. Small farmers are especially dependent on the government to provide them with:

1. Passable local roads to good, nearby markets and storage for their produce;

2. Inputs which increase the productivity of their land and labor;

3. Price, trade, and tax policies yielding input/output relationships which provide incentives to adopt techniques which increase their productivity;

4. Credit on favorable terms for various uses;

5. Information/training on improved production techniques, marketing policies, prices, etc.

With the switch in emphasis to participation in growth, the government must redesign its policies/programs so that they reach significant numbers of the rural people, including the smallest and most disadvantaged. This may require it to:

1. Redesign technologies and mixes of technologies so they can be used by a broader spectrum of farmers, i.e. technologies which are appropriate for them considering their resource base, management and technical skills and possibilities for improvement, and attitudes toward risk.

2. Reorganize the system for distributing fertilizer, seeds, tools, knowledge, and credit so that a much larger number of rural people have access to the means of increasing their productivity.

3. Create alternative and/or supplementary types of employment for rural people who are landless or whose land base is so small that there is no way to provide them with a decent income level through raising the productivity of their land.

AID STRATEGIES

Past Experience

The U.S. Government is actively supporting the U.N. effort to identify "ways and means by which women in rural areas of developing countries can be helped to achieve their maximum potential..." In November 1972 the U.S. Delegation to the U.N. Commission on Social Development "stressed the importance of improving the position of women as a pre-condition to the success of national development." In 1974

the U.S. Delegation to the 21st Session of the U.N. Commision on the Status of Women was authorized to urge specialized agencies to "take steps to employ qualified women in more and in higher-level posts then has been the case to date in order that the concerns of rural women are treated at the planning and policy making levels of all bodies in the U.N. system."

Although we do not disagree with the philosophy behind these statements, even a brief review of AID's past experience with women's programs in the LDC's decreases our confidence in AID's ability to help implement such a philosophy. Our arguments are based on our own personal observations and the observations of others in the development profession. Sufficient time was not available to document AID's programs for rural women, not to determine the numbers of rural women that have been reached over time, nor to evaluate whether AID's programs were effective in improving women's health, education, employment etc.

Our strong suspicion, however, is that AID's programs have led to no visible improvement in the welfare of LDC rural women. This is because AID has refused to recognize that women's problems are only symptoms of more deep-seated problems of rural poverty and discriminatory social structures. Instead of attacking causes, AID dealt with symptoms, especially the most visible--women's poor health, poor nutrition, etc. AID's second error was to select projects which confirmed Western European concepts of women as primarily wives and mothers, ignoring their role as contributors to economic development even in cases where they were already active as producers of goods and services. The combined effect of these two errors was a portfolio of projects which concentrated almost exclusively on homemaking, family planning, health and nutrition.

A third error was the failure to insist that countries develop women's programs within a broader frame of reference--a profile of disadvantaged men and women, a set of goals, a plan. Establishing priorities among groups of projects, comparing alternatives, or selecting projects which have a cumulative impact are almost impossible outside of such a framework. Means and ends also get confused or omitted without such a frame of reference. For example, the often repeated demand to hire more qualified women has meaning only within a frame of reference which defines the term qualified, indicates numbers and types of positions and numbers of women available, and provides the means for obtaining qualified women if sufficient numbers are not available. Without this type of framework, such demands are not likely to be met. Similarly, various mechanisms have been used to improve the lives of women in the developed countries: (1) legislation to improve the

status of women, (2) labor legislation regulating wages and conditions of work, (3) trade unions and/or women's organizations, (4) women's bureaus. Yet such mechanisms can be meaningless if adopted by developing countries without being related to a framework of goals and broad strategies or without the necessary adaptations to the country's socio-economic structure (see Figure 5).

Redesigning AID Strategies

Convert existing or proposed rural development projects. Attempts to graft additional components onto AID's existing or proposed projects in order to increase women's participation in these projects or to make women additional beneficiaries is pointless. Projects not designed with women in mind in the first place and which do not reflect the socio-economic frame of reference are not likely to incorporate the policies, incentives, and safeguards necessary to insure that significant numbers of women will be integrated into the development process. As stated earlier, increasing the options available to women is not enough if they are not able to equally exploit these options because of a lack of time, money, knowledge, social acceptance, or legal standing. Programs/projects which do not take specific steps to identify and eliminate these barriers are not suitable vehicles for carrying out the dictates of the Percy Amendment. The Agency would do better to accept these projects for what they are and not expect them to have an impact on a target group whose members because of their inferior economic and social status are probably the poorest of the poor and among the most difficult to reach.

Select a limited number of high priority, immediate impact projects. The Agency can also implement a limited number of programs/projects designed to deal directly with rural women. In the past such projects have focused on the role of women as wife and mother. Women in their equally important roles as producers of goods and services have been ignored, meaning that AID has minimized the importance of women as contributors to economic development. This focus should be balanced if not reversed. Certainly additional progress can be made in improving the physical well-being of rural women through increases in the social services available to them--health care, supplemental feeding and nutrition education, family planning, etc. But success in these efforts will be limited by the overall poverty of their rural communities. Nor can women be effectivly integrated into their national economies by programs which focus only on their physical well-being.

For these reasons and because other development agencies such as FAO, U.N., etc. will likely continue to finance non-integrating types of projects, it would be to AID's advantage to concentrate on projects

which deal with rural women in their roles as producers of goods and services. The advantages of such an approach are several: (1) it is innovative, (2) such projects would have an immediate impact, (3) this approach attacks all three problems--physical well-being, unequal participation, and low status, and (4) by enabling women to contribute to growth of output, this approach would more effectively integrate them into the development process.

Appropriate criteria would be developed for screening and selecting projects. Preference would be given to projects which:

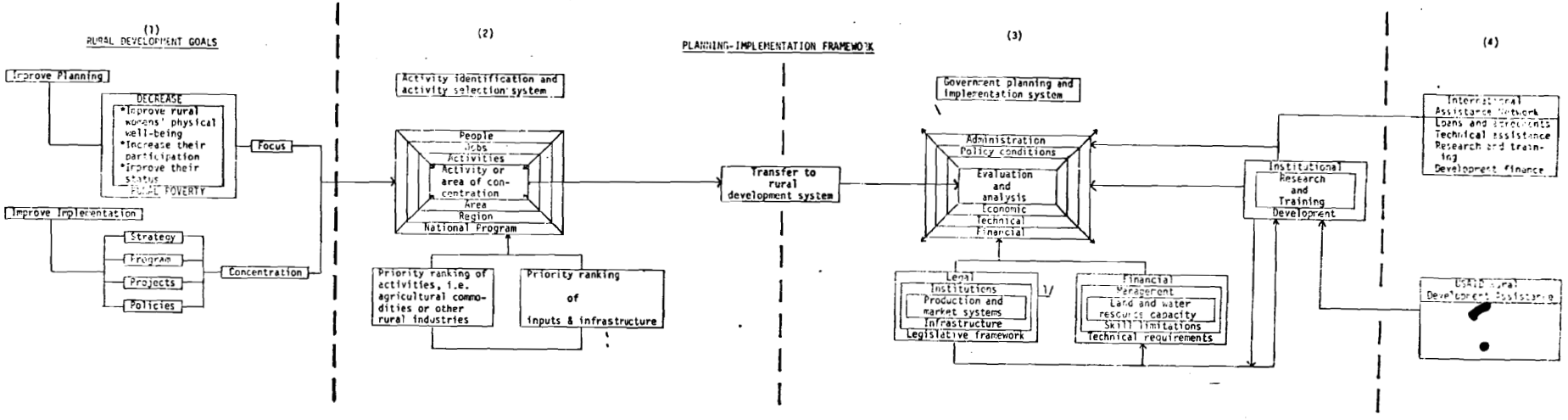
1. Concentrate on activities where significant numbers of rural women are actually employed as producers of goods and services.
2. Include the necessary training, investment, legal, and institutional changes as part of an integrated package designed to increase the productivity of selected groups of rural women.
3. Incorporate women as program planners, managers, and technicians, or make provision for their training.

Missions sponsoring such initiatives would compete for the limited capital and technical assistance resources available for such projects. These projects would be (a) catalytic and experimental in nature, (b) geographically distributed when warranted, and (c) modest in cost. Most would be developed as specific country projects.

These projects can be of two general types: (1) those which focus on a specific activity in which large numbers of women are active and (2) those which focus on the multiple roles of women within a given geographic area. The first type involves a single activity but multi-regions or multi-countries and the second a single region but multi-activities. Marketing, because it is a function handled by women in many countries and because it is less location-specific than agricultural production, is one activity which is suitable for a concentrated country, perhaps even cross-country effort. Training programs which provide rural women in a given geographic area with a variety of skills needed in their multiple roles is another possible approach. Such programs would include health and nutrition education, for example, but give equal emphasis to training in technical agricultural skills or training in skills needed for alternative employment in the marketing sector or rural industries. Both types of projects will have limited impact, however, unless designed as part of an overall planning and implementation framework (see Figure 7).

Help countries design and implement comprehensive rural development programs. Programs/projects to improve the welfare of rural women will achieve little success, however, unless conceived as part of a larger

Figure 7--A Recommended Planning-Implementation Framework



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rural development effort. The poor physical well-being of rural women is a direct consequence of the poverty of the rural community. And programs/projects to enable rural women to participate more fully in the economy will find limited acceptance unless sufficient productive opportunities are provided for all men and women that desire them. The real problem is to integrate all rural people--men and women--into their national economies. And the only rational and enduring means to accomplish this is by providing everyone with the opportunity to participate in the rural economy in whatever activities and level of decision making that their inherent intelligence and skills suit them for.

Once the emphasis on growth is altered to include people and their productive employment as a goal, AID's typical piecemeal approach is no longer acceptable. Nor was it always appropriate when growth alone was the goal, for it has been demonstrated time and time again that an integrated system of policies and programs is necessary even to increase the production of a single commodity. Yet AID has continued to finance single pronged attacks like credit. When credit is the limiting factor, making it available will have the desired impact. But if all the other pieces are not in place, (see Figure 5, Column 4 for a listing of some of the more common mechanisms--extension, education, price, land improvement, marketing, transportation, taxation, etc.), output increases will not be forthcoming on a sustaining basis.

In other words, the piecemeal approach is suitable from AID's point of view only if the piece selected turns out to be the single limiting factor. But there need not be any one limiting factor; many pieces may be missing or the pieces may be there but poorly organized. In these cases the Agency should be concerned with the system--its design and implementation--and not just one piece. Countries never have the luxury of being able to concentrate on one piece of a program, however. They can orchestrate inputs--getting a credit loan from AID, for example, research assistance from the international research institutes, a fertilizer loan from one of the Banks, and provide the rest of the inputs themselves. But neither they nor lending agencies should confuse a piece of a system (a mechanism) with what is really necessary to achieve a goal--a comprehensive, integrated, well functioning system.

Once the goal is broadened to include a concern with human welfare and integrating the disadvantaged into the development process through productive employment an even more complex system of policies/programs/inputs must be designed and implemented. Governments will have to develop the ability to conceive and implement multi-goal, multi-sector, and multi-discipline approaches to rural development. New systems will have

to be designed to reach significant numbers of the rural disadvantaged. Existing agricultural systems must be restructured and re-oriented. Systems of rural industries will also have to be created to provide jobs in rural areas where there is no agricultural solution.

Planners will need to develop a detailed profile of the rural disadvantaged. This will include a description of who they are (age, sex, etc.), where they are, what they do, what they can do. A separate profile should be made for rural women, of course. Because the emphasis is on jobs now rather than output increases, potential crops, mixes of crops, and other types of productive employment suitable for rural areas (processing facilities, handicrafts, textiles, etc.) should be evaluated. These activities should be ranked first on the basis of their contribution to increasing the employment, productivity, and income of rural people. Final selection, of course, also depends upon their relative investment costs, and the relative ease with which constraints to implementation can be eliminated. Planned implementation may require reorganization of institutions in order to reach significant numbers of the poorest, training and/or retraining of personnel (especially of women if one of the goals is to integrate women into the development process), and policy and legal changes as well as increased investment.

Leadership for such an effort must come from within each country. It is impossible for outsiders to be involved in the process of goal determination except as catalysts or advisors. When the course of action calls for a restructuring of basic policies, programs, and even society, itself, strong local leadership is even more crucial. Incorporating women into the mix as participants in the planning and implementation process as well as beneficiaries adds another sensitive issue. The basic analytical and planning work will have to be done by a core group within each country. The dimensions of their job are outlined in Figures 5 and 7. Responsibility for organizing and implementing the program will be handled differently in each country depending on the existing structure of government and the strengths and weaknesses of individual agencies.

Outside assistance will be needed first and foremost to help plan and organize the overall effort (part 5 in Figure 5). Once this has been accomplished, the mechanisms to be used to implement the program can be tuned up and larger amounts of financial assistance provided. In the beginning technical advisors can serve as catalysts, helping countries initiate a discourse on goals and focus issues. Later they can provide knowledge, advice, and training on (1) how to analyze and plan multi-goal, multi-sector programs and (2) how to organize and manage the type of comprehensive, integrated rural development program which is necessary. AID does not have the staff needed to do this job, however; nor is one in the wings. Consequently, the starting place is to develop a core staff in AID/Washington with appropriate talent, authority, and responsibility to help interested countries plan and organize such rural development programs.

* * * * * * * * * * *

Our purpose in writing this paper was limited. We concentrated on two points: (1) presenting a framework for analyzing the problems of LDC rural women and (2) discussing several broad strategies whereby AID can help countries integrate their rural women into their national economies. A technical paper can be prepared to support our arguments, using Taiwan and Peru as case studies. Our discussion of possible AID strategies can also be expanded, once preliminary approval is given to our recommendations, to include detailed descriptions of (1) several potential high priority, limited impact projects and (2) the type of core staff needed if AID is to help countries plan and implement comprehensive rural development programs--its composition, functions, funding, authority and responsibility, relationships with AID/Washington and country missions, etc.