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EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN: TRENDS IN WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN MANUFACTURING AGRO-BASED PRODUCTS

Introduction

The World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women took place at a critical time for developing countries. In 1975, at the beginning of the United Nations Decade for Women, it was hoped that economic expansion and growth, supported by growing international trade, financial flows and technological developments would promote the increased participation of women in the economic and social development of developing countries. However, during the second half of the Decade the continuing, and in many cases worsening, economic crisis in most developing countries constituted a serious obstacle to the full achievement of the goals of the Decade: equality, development and peace, as well as limiting the progress that could be made in the areas of the three subthemes of the decade, employment, health and education (1).

In relation to the sub-theme of the Decade, employment, it can be observed that in 1985 the generation of sufficient employment and income-producing activity presents a growing problem in most developing countries faced with a rapidly growing population and labour force. While much of this expanding labour force will continue to be absorbed in traditional agriculture, an increasing number of people will seek employment in non-farm occupations; according to a World Bank estimate, these will account for two of every three job seekers during the last quarter of the twentieth century (2). Productive employment opportunities are needed in the urban areas in developing countries to help absorb the urban migrant who have been driven to the cities by increasing landlessness and diminishing employment prospects in the rural areas, and they are even more desperately needed in the rural areas themselves to help reduce the flow of rural-urban migration (3).

Concerning employment for women, it is necessary to look forward from the perspective of 1985 and to examine the areas in which women are currently engaged and where they are likely to be heavily involved in the future. This is necessary in order to provide a basis for planning ways of generating employment for women that would link national development strategies with strategies to promote an improved involvement of women in social and economic development.

The following examination of trends in the participation of women in manufacturing agro-based products looks at the varying conditions of their participation in relation to the scale and social organization of production and technology used. This categorization does not correspond to any natural separation of economic roles played by women: the same individual may well be involved in production on various scales, combining home-based production with part- or full-time employment outside the home, but it provides an appropriate framework for analysing the different kinds of measures that are necessary for promoting increased employment opportunities. As this article is intended to be policy-oriented, the examination of trends in the different sectors includes proposals for enhancing women's participation in each sector.

Women and agro-industries

The significance of agro-industries in the economies of developing countries in terms of value of production and number of people employed and the importance of agro-industries for women make this industrial subsector a subject of particular interest in relation to the employment of women (4).

The economic importance of agro-industries for developing countries can be seen in the fact that, taken together, they accounted for 36.4 per cent of the total manufacturing value added (MVA) in developing countries in 1981. While this represents a slight reduction in their share of MVA over 1973, when they accounted for 37.8 per cent, and a great reduction in their share of MVA since 1963, when they accounted for 49.3 per cent (5), this reduction in share is due to the fact that, although production in agro-industries has been growing in absolute terms, other industrial branches have been growing faster (6).

Nevertheless, the development of the agro-industrial subsector countries to be of major importance in most developing countries. In Africa, for example, in connection with the Industrial Decade for Africa (IDDA), particular emphasis is placed on projects aimed at increasing the production and processing of food and other agricultural products. Development activities in the various branches of the agro-industrial subsector are directed towards achieving the highest possible utilization of locally available resources; these activities include the leather, textile and forest-based industries (7).

The importance of agro-industries for women derives from women's historical role in most societies of responsibility in providing for the fulfillment of fundamental consumption needs, which are mainly supplied by agricultural and agro-based products, such as food, clothing etc., as well as the strong linkages between agro-industries and the agricultural sector, where a large proportion of the female population in many developing countries is concentrated. The role played by women extends beyond production, preliminary, primary and secondary processing, to the storing, packaging and marketing of agro-based products in many countries.

A major difficulty encountered in efforts to analyse the situation of women in agro-industries in developing countries derives from the fact that the data available on employment and related statistics for many of these countries are poor, and there is almost no statistical data disaggregated by sex. Thus, an assessment of trends in the composition of the labour force, sectoral employment demand, unemployment and underemployment is difficult for the total labour force, and even more difficult for the female labour force (8). A large part of the work done by women is performed within the family and household; therefore, it has usually been invisible. The definition of "economically active" persons as those producing significant amounts of economic (i.e. marketable) goods or visible income often excluded many women and men who work on their own account. Therefore, in order to examine some of the current patterns and trends of women's work in manufacturing in developing countries, particularly in agro-industries, it is necessary to go beyond the usual definitions of work and the usual methods of collecting statistics on the "economically active" population (9). An examination of women's employment in a broader picture makes it possible to trace a number of trends related to women's role in manufacturing.

The element of scale

The element of scale plays a central role in connection with questions relating to the processing and manufacture of agro-based products and the implications for women's employment. Women in developing countries are engaged in the processing and production of agro-products on the smallest scale, working in household production for consumption and sale, as own-account workers and as unpaid or paid family labour in the informal sector; they are also employed in large-scale agro-industry, working in nationally and foreign-owned production units manufacturing agro-based products, mainly for export, but to a lesser degree for domestic consumption. There are some indications, however, that while they are heavily represented both in small- and large-scale industry, they are much less present in the medium-scale, mostly domestically owned, enterprises.

The choice of scale and the choice of technology are closely related to each other, but in a different manner than is generally thought. It is often assumed, for example, that to be profitable, modern capital-intensive technologies can only be applied in large-scale production. This reflects the fact that modern technologies have for the most part been developed in and for conditions of production prevailing in industrialized countries. More recently, however, successful attempts have already been made in many industries to adapt modern production techniques for efficient use on a smaller scale (10).

In making decisions concerning the choice of technologies in connection with starting and expanding industries, adequate consideration should be given to the possibilities of adapting existing technologies or developing new ones for small-scale production. Production in facilities built on a comprehensible scale and employing technologies that are comprehensible to the workers can be more readily adapted to changing market and resource conditions. At the same time employment in such facilities can be an effective means of raising the level of vocational skills among the members of the work force. The options available for the social organization of a particular enterprise as well as opportunities for greater involvement of women are also strongly influenced by the scale and technology chosen. For example, smaller or medium-scale enterprises provide more opportunity for joint ownership and participation by workers in management and decision-making, thus

spreading knowledge of entrepreneurial and management skills among the population and increasing the country's potential for industrial expansion.

Production in the household

In most developing countries women have traditionally been responsible for production in the household of a large proportion of the goods for family consumption, often selling surplus production. In this way women generally make a significant contribution to household income (11).

In the "Review and Appraisal of Progress Achieved and Obstacles Encountered at the National Level in the Realization of the Goals and Objectives of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace" (12) prepared for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women, the economic importance of unpaid family labour and household work is emphasized. In many developing countries the proportion of women working who are classified as unpaid family labour lies between 30 and 50 per cent. A large part of those who are working in manufacturing as unpaid family labour are engaged in processing and producing agro-based products.

Household production combines various aspects - the production aspect, the income aspect, the social integration aspect, the human investment aspect and the time-use aspect. A closer examination of the role of women in the household must take into account the multiple functions of a household, as a unit of production, reproduction, etc., as well as the wide variations in types of household, depending on factors such as property ownership, etc.

In most developing countries, some of the traditional processing, manufacturing, service or repair operations necessary to sustain the broadly self-sufficient village economy are still in operation. Many of these subsistence crafts are involved in the production of agro-based products such as grain processing, oil making, basket weaving, making ropes, brooms, leaf plates, fishing nets etc. The operations are not particularly artistic or skilled. Their distinction lies in the fact that each locality has devised ways of fulfilling basic wants by utilising locally available materials and energy sources. The production processes usually involve little capital:

the tools as well as skills are passed down from generation to generation within the family. Women continue to play the major role in these often unremunerated productive activities (13).

As indicated above, there is generally no clear distinction between production for the household and informal sector production for sale. Often a relatively simple technological innovation can enable women to increase output sufficiently to produce a surplus for sale. On the other hand, as has often been seen, the introduction of more modern processing and production technology in the agro-based sector can have the effect of depriving large numbers of women of a livelihood (14). The observed vulnerability of household production to any changes leads to the conclusion that measures designed to support women working in the household must be very carefully examined to try to determine all possible consequences of their implementation before they are put into effect.

Informal sector employment

The informal sector may generally be defined as self-employment or paid employment in a small business activity which usually functions outside the framework of official regulations at the periphery, both social and geographic, of the modern urban economy. An examination of the list of criteria suggested to define informal sector enterprises shows that a large part of the agro-industrial manufacturing carried out by women falls within this category (15).

Productive units in the informal sector are, at least at the outset, small in scale and limited by simple technologies, little capital and lack of links with the formal sector. The informal sector seems to be characterized by ease of entry and reliance on indigenous resources; it utilizes skills acquired outside the formal school or training systems, and faces unregulated and competitive markets.

In many developing countries the informal sector is growing faster than the formal sector and a large proportion, often the majority, of the working population must find work there as the formal or modern sector cannot provide sufficient employment. The rapid growth of the informal sector in

developing countries at the present time is the result of several inter-linked processes. Some of these processes include the changing organization of agricultural production in rural areas, resulting in the displacement of paid agricultural labour, landlessness, increased rural poverty, rural-urban migration etc. and the changing organization of industrial production which leads to the displacement of cottage and handicraft industries that cannot compete with large-scale production. The high capital cost of employment creation in times when capital is scarce in developing countries means that the formal sector is unable to absorb much of the existing urban labour force, which is being rapidly expanded by rural-urban migration. Furthermore, the employment policies of many formal sector enterprises do not provide secure long-term jobs, particularly for women.

The size of the informal sector varies between countries, often employing more than 50 per cent of the labour force (16), and in most developing countries the percentage of the female labour force engaged in the informal sector is significantly higher than that of men. For example, in India, 41 to 49 per cent of the female labour force is in the informal sector, compared to 15 to 17 per cent of the male labour force; and in Peru 82 per cent of employed women work in the informal sector. In Latin America in general, 46 to 70 per cent of the informal sector is made up of women (17).

Women working in the informal sector may be self-employed or working for others. The kinds of work they perform are often extensions of their traditional tasks. Their work in manufacturing is generally in small-scale handicrafts production, food processing, weaving, garment making, the production of household commodities such as paper, soap and candles and other activities. These are tasks which women can carry out within the home, fitting the hours worked to their family's needs, thus making it possible for them to combine child care and other household duties with paid work. Also for women who are restricted in their possibilities to leave the home because of religious or cultural traditions, employment in the informal sector often provides their only opportunity to earn an income. Sometimes the goods produced, which are often sold with the assistance of young children, can generate a significant proportion of household income (18). Nevertheless, there are also serious negative aspects to work in the informal sector: the hours worked are often very long and are combined with a full load of household work, which can negatively affect women's

health (19).

Women working in the informal sector usually find it more difficult than men to move into the formal sector or even to move to the more secure and better paid informal sector jobs (20). Women's position in the informal sector is generally in the less productive areas of production or in auxiliary productive activities. With regard to the management of enterprises, it can be observed that although in the small, family-based concerns that account for the majority of all small-scale enterprises women are often responsible for bookkeeping, ordering, control of supplies and other important management functions, the nature of these activities in the informal sector and continuing discriminatory hiring patterns in the formal sector in most countries effectively prevent women from transferring acquired skills to similar activities in the formal sector (21).

The importance to women of the informal sector production of agro-based products has been underlined as follows:

"Although this sector's contribution to national output may appear small, its significance to women can be crucial as it may be the only, or main source of income - e.g. cash income, directly under their control. Its elimination by larger-scale mechanized processes in other locations can constitute a dramatic change in women's lives and status in the family." (22)

The significance of informal sector production and distribution is not limited to women, however, as it plays an essential role in providing for the needs of large segments of the population.

The situation of women working in agro-industrial manufacturing in the informal sector, both in rural and urban areas, has generated a great deal of concern during the last ten years. Women engaged in the production of agro-based products such as prepared foods, ground spices, soap, etc. need means of upgrading these activities so as to raise output and income and help them compete with formal sector enterprises producing similar products (23).

A major difficulty associated with such efforts is the fact that often the demand for products traditionally produced by women in the informal sector

declines as incomes rise. The foods and drinks prepared by them, homespun cloth and earthenware goods have a low income elasticity of demand and face competition from "modern" factory-produced products. This difficulty might be dealt with by adapting existing skills of women to the small scale manufacture of "modern" products demanded by consumers. Through the introduction of appropriate technology, training and other support services women could produce many of the products which are currently imported from abroad or produced in urban-based factories (24).

Considering the importance of informal sector production for women and men as producers and consumers, means should be sought by which the vagaries and insecurity faced by those working in this sector could be lessened. It would be important to develop means of linking the informal with the formal sector, upgrading the technologies used, improving quality and quality control and establishing an adequate infrastructure (25).

Two types of measures for supporting women working in the informal sector that have been suggested are (26):

(a) Government policy measures to promote the geographical dispersion and diversification of industrial activities, including the development of appropriate technologies. These measures should be carefully balanced between urban and rural areas.

(b) Grass roots measures to organize employment projects and schemes in various types of production of agro-industrial products for local markets, including support measures to ensure access to secure sources of supply of inputs and necessary infrastructure for storage, transport and marketing of output.

While these two types of measures could be equally applied to creating employment opportunities for women or men, the following three strategies were derived from an analysis of a large number of projects specifically aimed at increasing employment for women (27):

(a) Increasing the productivity of existing work through the introduction of improved technologies and the provision of support services in order to enable women to increase output or improve the quality of traditional

products and thus become or remain competitive in relation to similar products produced in factories;

(b) Increasing access to income-generating activities that were previously inaccessible by establishing co-operatives, providing credit, and, where necessary, introducing new technologies to alter the nature of work that had been taboo for women because of socio-cultural reasons, so as to make it acceptable for them and the community;

(c) Using existing skills to produce new products or modified traditional products for which there is a demand in cases when the products traditionally produced by women are no longer wanted by consumers who prefer more modern imported or factory-produced products.

Forms of employment between the informal and the formal sector

Subcontracted work - the "putting out" system

Another form of agro-industrial work usually performed by women that can be observed in both the formal and informal sectors is the "putting out system" or homeworking, which is a feature of both export-oriented manufacturing and production for the domestic market (28).

Under this system, which is most common in the garment industry and other light industries such as handicrafts, toys, artificial flowers, hats, etc., women are employed either in their own houses or small local workshops. They are provided with inputs and tools either by the owner of the enterprise or by middle-men or sub-contractors. They perform their tasks within or near their home, at irregular working hours, thus overcoming one obstacle to paid work: child care and the provision of goods and services to their families.

Despite the insecurity faced by those working under this system, for many women it represents the only way of obtaining necessary income. They are paid piece-rate wages, which means that minimum wage laws cannot be enforced. All labour laws affecting the home workers are difficult to enforce because the work which is done at home is often unrecorded and even

illegal. Because of their isolation the home workers are also seldom organized in trade unions, and lack any form of negotiating power. In rural areas the contractor is often also a powerful land-owner. Under such conditions of economic and social dependence, workers are unable to find alternative arrangements for the marketing of products (29).

The fact that homeworking often remains undeclared in order to evade taxes and labour regulations means that information on this type of work is often difficult to collect. Its exact magnitude is difficult to judge, but it is known to be a widespread phenomenon. For employers, aside from the financial incentive, subcontracting to home workers provides wider flexibility for meeting periods of heavy demand and for manufacturing small series (30).

This type of work is likely to remain a significant feature of female employment in agro-industries in developing countries as long as it provides the only opportunity for paid employment to women who have no alternative. The vulnerability of those engaged in putting-out work tends to increase with more rapid urbanization, exacerbated by the lack of income-earning possibilities in rural areas (31). Therefore, two kinds of measures are necessary: in the short term, measures to alleviate the working conditions of homeworkers; and in the longer term, alternative forms of work organization, such as co-operatives, providing women in rural and urban areas with access to the capital, inputs, equipment needed to produce semi-finished or finished products as well as secure long-term arrangements for the sale of these products, thus allowing women to work independently of the sub-contracting middle-men (32).

Seasonal employment

Some types of work processing agricultural products, such as fruit and vegetable canning, are highly seasonal in nature, and many other agro-industries generally employing a high proportion of female workers, such as processing fish and seafood, canning and preserving meat, and even garment making, are also subject to seasonal fluctuations. Some of the features characteristic of this kind of work are the long hours during production peaks, when perishable raw materials must be quickly processed, alternating with long periods of unemployment, and the arduous,

repetitive nature of the jobs (33).

Seasonal fluctuations in some branches of the food processing industry have been decreasing. This is mostly due to technological innovations: refrigeration techniques and the availability and control of chemical additives allow a longer conservation of raw materials. However, seasonal fluctuations remain high in two particular branches that are important in developing countries: in the sugar industry and in fruit and vegetable processing. As fruit and vegetable processing everywhere is a branch that employs a high proportion of women, it is more particularly female labour that is affected. Therefore, strategies designed to improve the role of women in agro-industries should include ways to compensate those employed in these industries for the seasonal nature of the work.

Employment in the formal sector

In most developing countries, the formal sector is presently able to absorb only a small proportion of the available labour force and an even smaller share of the total female labour force. Only one third of the women recorded as working in developing countries are reported as being employed in the formal sector (34). In fact, the percentage of women working in the formal sector is certainly less because the statistics on women officially registered as economically active usually understate the true number of women working in the informal sector.

Formal sector employment opportunities for women in developing countries are limited by the fact that they generally tend to be unskilled or semi-skilled, and lack formal schooling. Those seeking work are usually young, unmarried, often rural migrants and hardly ever members of a trade union (35). While the overall figures for developing countries show employed women equally distributed between industry and services, this is not the case for many individual developing countries. An analysis of the activities of employed women shows that within the service sector, a large proportion of women are employed in commercial, clerical and auxiliary activities, and in the industrial sector, an overwhelming majority of women work in agro-industries, such as textiles and clothing, footwear and food processing, all of which are seen as extensions of women's traditional work

in the home.

There has been considerable discussion about whether women's formal sector employment opportunities in industry are increasing or decreasing at the global level. The findings of the study on the role of women in industry prepared for the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women indicate that they are increasing in industry overall and in most developing countries (36). An earlier study had shown that in many developing countries women's industrial employment was on the decline, giving Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala and India as examples, where between 1950 and 1970 women's share of manufacturing employment decreased while men's increased (37), but the most recent ILO statistics indicate that this is no longer the trend and that women's employment in manufacturing in these as well as in many other developing countries is actually increasing.

The difference in findings of these studies may be explained by the different time periods covered, as there are marked differences in women's participation in manufacturing between the initial, intermediate and later phases of industrialization. One pattern that has often been observed is that in the initial phases of industrialization large numbers of women are employed in the light manufacturing industries such as textiles, garments, shoes, food-processing, tobacco, etc. In the following phases, with the shift to increasingly complex production technologies, larger-sized enterprises and increased capital investment, as well as the heavier, metal and chemical industries, women tend to be excluded in favour of men. It is interesting to note that in Africa, however, the above pattern was not followed. There, women's participation in industrial manufacturing has been low from the outset, which can be partially explained by the fact that in some African countries women were barred from participation in industrial activities by colonial laws (38).

During later phases of industrialization, employment opportunities for women may again increase in response to an increased demand for low-cost un- or semi-skilled labour. This trend can be observed in many Asian countries, particularly the newly industrialized countries. In the Republic of Korea, for example, the percentage of working women employed in manufacturing increased from 10.0 per cent in 1966 to 20.4 per cent in 1981. In Singapore

there was a very large increase, with the percentage of women employed by manufacturing rising from 14.2 per cent in 1957 to 39.0 per cent in 1980.

In the Philippines, by contrast, despite its efforts to expand export manufacturing, there was a decline in the percentage of women employed in manufacturing, from 20.6 per cent in 1960 to 15.0 per cent in 1975. It thus appears that a development strategy primarily oriented towards manufacturing for export cannot be relied upon to provide a secure basis for expanding employment opportunities for women.

As for Latin America and the Caribbean, one study showed that between 1970 and 1980 there was no change in the share of women employed in manufacturing in the low-income countries of this region and an increase of 1.7 per cent in the middle-income countries. Although no comparable data is available for Africa, tabulations based on the same study indicate that the proportion of African women employed in manufacturing, which, as has been noted, is much lower than in other regions, increased by approximately 2.0 per cent between 1970 and 1980 (39).

Although there is a lack of sufficient labour statistics disaggregated by sex that would permit exact comparisons between different developing countries and regions, it appears that while in many developing countries there is a growing trend towards employing women in export-oriented industries, in most of these countries women form a much smaller part of the industrial workforce than men in the medium- and large-scale enterprises producing manufactured goods for domestic consumption. This is true despite the fact already mentioned that in many countries women worked as wage earners in manufacturing in the beginning years of industrialization. One striking exception is Thailand, where women form almost half of the workforce in industrial manufacturing (40).

Where women are employed in domestic industrial production they tend to be highly concentrated in a few branches of agro-industries; however, the branches in which they work within the agro-industrial subsector vary between countries. This apparently reflects differences in the model of industrialization followed. For example, in a country that followed a more domestically-oriented import-substitution strategy, such as India, a very high proportion of the women employed in manufacturing work in the three

branches food-processing, tobacco and textiles. In contrast to this, women employed in manufacturing in Mauritius, a country following a policy of export-oriented industrialization, are concentrated to a great extent in the manufacture of wearing apparel (see Table 1).

Although the specific branches of agro-industrial manufacturing in which women are employed vary between countries, the nature of the work they perform generally exhibits several common characteristics. Women tend to be employed in production and auxiliary activities with lower productivity, lower job security and lower pay, ones which are physically arduous and do not provide them with transferable skills. Until now, labour legislation designed to provide protection to women has often been used as a pretext to exclude them from employment (41).

Two new trends in employment opportunities for women can be observed in some developing countries. Many employers are beginning to show a preference for hiring women, particularly in those agro-industries where the strict observance of health regulations in the production process is essential and where importance is attached to regular work attendance (42). In these cases, women's greater willingness to maintain high standards of hygiene, more regular attendance and greater dependability have been seen to outweigh the disincentives to hiring women posed by protective labour legislation, particularly maternity benefits. This trend correlates with the rising levels of literacy and increasing average number of years of schooling of women in many developing countries.

The second trend that can be seen is that, in contrast to earlier observations that factory employment made use of existing skills acquired by women working in the informal sector, employers tend to prefer to hire unemployed women without experience working independently and train them on the job. This trend correlates with the increasing divergence that has been observed between the formal and the informal sectors, which has the result that the experience gained by women working in the informal sector is seen by employers as irrelevant or even detrimental to training them for formal sector employment, and that their experience working in the formal sector, where a very stringent division of labour prevails, reduces their capacity for independent work in the formal sector (43).

Table 1: Female employment in branches of agro-industry as share of total female employment in manufacturing (in per cent)

Africa

	Food (311 - 312)	Bevera- ges (313)	Tobacco (314)	Textiles (321)	Apparel (322)	Leather (323)	Footwear (331)	Wood Prod. (331)	Furniture (332)	Total
Botswana										
1978	14.8	10.2	-	51.0	-	4.8	-	0.5	-	81.3
1982	15.9	6.6	-	46.4	-	3.3	-	-	-	72.2
Egypt										
1974	14.3	-	2.0	42.9	4.1	-	2.0	-	-	65.3
1978	15.4	-	1.5	41.5	4.6	-	-	-	-	63.0
Kenya										
1979	45.7	3.4 a)		10.3	6.0	0.9	-	5.2	0.9	72.4
1982	30.8	3.1 a)		16.9	12.3	0.8	-	5.4	-	69.3
Malawi										
1979	8.4	1.1	54.6	4.8	6.4	-	0.3	1.6	0.7	68.3
1981	21.3	1.2	34.6	6.1	6.2	-	0.5	0.9	1.0	71.8
Mauritius										
1974	5.4	5.1 a)		3.0	56.7	1.5 b)	1.3	1.0 c)		73.0
1978	3.5	2.8 a)		5.5	68.0	1.9 b)	1.0	0.6 c)		83.3
1982	3.2	1.6 a)		5.2	78.7	0.9 b)	0.6	0.6 c)		90.8

a) ISIC 313 and 314 combined

b) includes ISIC 355 (rubber products)

c) ISIC 331 and 322 combined

Source: ILO, Yearbook of Labour Statistics 1983, 1984, as well as other ILO labour statistics available as printouts.

Table 1 (Continued): Female employment in branches of agro-industry as share of total female employment in manufacturing (in per cent)

Asia and the Pacific

	Food (311 - 312)	Bevera- ges (313)	Tobacco (314)	Textiles (321)	Apparel (322)	Leather (323)	Footwear (331)	Wood Prod. (331)	Furniture (332)	Total
Cyprus										
1981	11.7	2.8	1.4	8.4	44.0	3.9	9.9	1.1	1.1	84.3
Hong Kong										
1974	1.0	0.1	0.1	19.5	39.0	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.2	61.0
1978	0.9	0.1	0.1	14.3	42.0	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.1	58.4
1982	1.0	0.1	0.1	12.8	42.0	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	57.3
India										
1974	22.4	2.2	24.1	24.1	0.6	0.2	-	1.1	-	74.7
1978	28.8	0.2	22.7	24.8	1.4	0.2	-	0.9	-	79.0
1981	28.7	0.3	20.7	22.4	1.5	0.2	0.2	0.8	-	74.8
Philippines										
1974	15.3	1.4	11.8	29.3	15.9	0.5	1.8	2.1	0.8	78.1
1977	14.4	1.3	4.8	20.9	25.8	0.5	1.5	2.2	1.2	72.6
Rep. of Korea										
1976	5.7	0.5	0.8	31.0	18.2	1.6	1.1	1.8	0.2	60.9
1978	5.7	0.6	0.6	30.8	16.0	1.4	1.5	1.9	0.5	59.0
1982	5.7	0.6	0.5	28.4	18.3	1.1	2.2	1.1	0.5	58.4
Sri Lanka										
1978	14.3	0.3	0.8	55.8	10.0	0.5	1.1	0.4	0.1	83.3
Tonga										
1975	76.6 a)			- b)				1.5 c)		78.1
1978	59.4 a)			12.3 b)				0.9 c)		72.6
1980	46.1 a)			29.0 b)				0.8 c)		75.9

a) ISIC 31 includes ISICs 311 - 312, 313 and 314.

b) ISIC 32 includes ISICs 321, 322, 323 and 324

c) ISIC 33 includes ISICs 331 and 332

As has already been noted, in many developing countries female employment has increased in certain export-oriented industries, a large proportion of which are agro-industries and many of which are located in the special export processing zones (EPZs) established by developing country Governments to attract domestic and foreign investment. It has been estimated that between 80 and 90 per cent of the low-skilled assembly work in the zones is performed by women (44). While women's employment in the EPZs has been the subject of much discussion and the number of women employed there has increased dramatically, it is important to keep these numbers in perspective. The total employment of women in EPZs in Asia, for example, was approximately 500,000 at the beginning of the 1980s, which represents approximately 1 per cent of the total female industrial labour force in Asia (45).

The very large savings in wage costs which industries can achieve by employing women rather than men can be seen by comparing the average wages for men and women, which show that, world-wide, women are paid much less than men in all sectors, including manufacturing. In some countries the difference is more than 50 per cent. In the Republic of Korea, female earnings in manufacturing are 45.3 per cent of male levels. Even within the same industry, women are generally paid less than men. In Hong Kong in the textile industry, women's wages were reported as being 30 per cent less than those paid to men in the late 1970s for performing comparable work. In Colombia, as well, women working in the textile industries earn considerably lower wages than men do (46).

Women as members of the labour force have thus become the crucial factor of production which permits the further lowering of production costs. Their employment both in export-oriented industries and in services and commerce under depressed working conditions has allowed employers to reduce costs and continue producing and competing in export markets and simultaneously increasing their profit margins (as in situations of devaluation) (47).

While it appears that developing countries will try to continue to promote export-oriented processing in the agro-industries as well as in other branches of manufacturing, as has already been pointed out, the increasing automation in industrialized countries may well seriously reduce the incentives for foreign firms to locate manufacturing industries producing for

developed countries' markets in developing countries. Furthermore, the overall benefits of export-oriented industrialization strategies for the economies of the developing countries have been the subject of serious debate. It has been observed that the export promotion policy of many developing countries stimulates export industries which are dissociated from domestic market expansion. With regard to the exploitation of female labour in the agro-industries, it has been suggested that "the cheap labour export promotion in fact only enhances the depression of the domestic market, the technological immobility, the traditional management (or mismanagement) and therefore prevents any structural change in LDCs" (48).

It has further been concluded in this connection that:

"The policy of international trade promotion based on low salaries ... in the medium and long run will be reflected in the impoverishment of the domestic market. Resources will be shifted to abroad at the expense of LDC's labour forces."

"For entrepreneurs (industrialists) producing export goods, wages and salaries are a cost that has to be compressed as much as possible since their enterprises will not expect any benefit from the purchasing power of these wages and salaries. When production is geared to the domestic market, wages and salaries are both a cost and a guaranty of the purchasing power of the country necessary to increase enterprises' sales and industrialists' profits." (49)

It can be thus seen that in planning measures to increase the contribution of women to the formal sector of agro-industry and to increase the contribution of agro-industry to national development, solutions should not be sought in merely replacing male labour with female labour or in maximizing production for export, but in expanding the agro-industrial sub-sector in an integrated manner with the agricultural sector so as to contribute to the satisfaction of the consumption needs of the population and in involving women in this process from the outset, at all levels and in both rural and urban areas.

Conclusion

On the basis of the foregoing study it can be seen that a great deal of further research is necessary on the subject of women in agro-industries in order to be able to formulate meaningful policies and appropriate industrial development strategies aimed at promoting the participation of women in agro-industries in ways that would benefit the overall development of developing countries and enhance women's role in this development.

It is already apparent, however, that in order to be effective and, most importantly, to have a lasting effect, any measures designed to improve the participation of women in agro-industries must form an integral part of a longer-term overall development strategy. This has already been pointed out in the analysis of trends in women's participation in the manufacturing of agro-based products and recommendations arising directly from the analysis of these trends have been indicated at the end of each part above.

Women in many developing countries are presently caught between the breakdown of rural economies on the one hand and the stagnation of the modern sector on the other. Problems of landlessness and lack of employment in rural areas lead to increasing urban migration, but formal sector employment in urban and peri-urban areas is not available for most urban migrants, which forces many of them into marginal forms of employment in the informal sector. Of those women who do find employment, many are engaged in putting-out work and others are in redeployed industries, often in export processing zones, two groups of workers that are particularly subject to recurrent layoffs and unemployment.

Possible solutions must be sought in the context of more self-reliant development strategies directed toward the creation of coherent national productive systems and efforts to increase regional and sub-regional integration and expand trade among developing countries. It is essential that the growth and development of both the agricultural and industrial sectors be promoted so as to be mutually reinforcing, that the needs and contributions of both rural and urban populations be taken into consideration, that measures to promote economic growth and more equitable distribution go hand in hand rather than expecting the latter to follow necessarily from the former, that industrial development strategies balance

small-scale informal sector development with the expansion of medium- and large-scale industry while strengthening the linkages within the industrial sector, and that the choice of products to be produced, while taking into consideration the present situation of the country in the world economic system, be oriented towards fulfilling the consumption needs of the population.

Notes

1. Cf. Report of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi, Kenya, 15 to 26 July 1985 (A/CONF. 116/28) 15 September 1985, "The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women", paras. 7 and 15.
2. World Bank, *Employment and Development of Small Enterprises* (Washington, 1978), p. 11.
3. Cf. *Technology for Development: Manufacturing, Mining and Recycling*, p. 287.
4. The agro-industries considered in the article include food products (ISIC 311/12), beverages (313), textiles (321), wearing apparel (322), leather and fur products (323), footwear (324), wood and cork products (331), and furniture and fixtures excluding metal (332). The three-digit codes refer to the division of industrial branches according to the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities, Statistical Papers Series M, No. 4, Rev. 2 (United Nations Publications, Sales No. E.68.XVII.8).
5. A Statistical Review of the World Industrial Situation 1984 (UNIDO/IS.506), 3 January 1985, Table 7, p. 12.
6. *Ibid.*, Table 6, p. 11.
7. See: *Industrial Development Decade for Africa, Third Progress Report*, UNIDO (ID/B/331), 23 February 1984, p. 7.
8. Cf. R. Anker, "Female labour force participation in developing countries: a critique of current definitions and data collection methods", in: *International Labour Review*, November-December 1983.
9. For discussions of some of the issues and problems involved see: *Improving Concepts and Methods for Statistics and Indicators of the Situation of Women* (New York, United Nations, 1984, Sales No. E.84.XVII.3), pp. 26 - 33, and *Compiling Social Indicators on the Situation of Women* (New York, United Nations, 1984, Sales No. E.84.XVII.2), pp. 42 - 45.
10. See, for example, *Optimum Scale Production in Developing Countries: A Preliminary Review of Prospects and Potentialities in Industrial Development* (Vienna, UNIDO, 1984).
11. Cf. M. F. Loutfi, *Rural Women, Unequal Partners in Development* (Geneva, ILO, 1980).
12. A/Conf.116/5/Add.2, op. cit., p. 6.
13. N. Banerjee, "Women and Industrialization in Developing Countries" (Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, International Center for Public Enterprises in Developing Countries, 1985, mimeo), p. 18.
14. I. Tinker, "New technologies for food-related activities", in: M. L. Cain and R. Dauber, eds., *Women and Technological Change in Developing Countries* (Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, Praeger,

1981).

15. "Suggested criteria for identifying informal sector enterprises:
1. Manufacturing. A manufacturing enterprise may be included in the informal sector if it satisfies one or more of the following conditions:
(a) It employs 10 persons or less (including part-time and casual workers) (b) It operates on an illegal basis, contrary to government regulations (c) Members of the household of the head of the enterprise work in it (d) It does not observe fixed hours/days of operation (e) It operates in semi-permanent or temporary premises, or in a shifting location
(f) It does not use any electricity in the manufacturing process
(g) It does not depend on formal financial institutions for its credit needs (h) Its output is normally distributed direct to the final consumer (i) Almost all those working in it have fewer than six years of formal schooling." from: C. O. Moser and J. Marsie-Hazen, A Survey of Empirical Studies in Industries and Manufacturing Activities in the Informal Sector in the Developing Countries, (UNIDO/IS.470), 23 May 1984, p. 203.
16. K. Newland, Women, Men and the Division of Labour, World Watch Paper No. 37, May 1980, p. 14.
17. International Council for Research on Women (ICRW), "Keeping Women Out: A Structural Analysis of Women's Employment in Developing Countries", (Washington, D.C., USAID, April 1980), p. 37.
18. Z. Ahmad and M. F. Loutfi, "Women Workers in Rural Development", ILO Rural Employment Policies Branch (Geneva, May 1982); see also: ILO, Advisory Committee on Rural Development, 10th Session, Geneva, 22 November - 1 December 1983, Promotion of Employment of the Rural Poor, including Rural Women, through Non-farm Activities (Geneva, 1983).
19. I. Ahmed, "Technology and Rural Women in the Third World", International Labour Review, Vol. 122, No. 4 (July-August 1983).
20. International Council for Research on Women (ICRW), "Keeping Women Out: A Structural Analysis of Women's Employment in Developing Countries" (Washington, D.C., USAID, 1980), p. 37.
21. L. Paukert, The Role of Women in Industry (Vienna, UNIDO, 1984), p. 15.
22. I. Palmer and U. von Buchwald, Monitoring Changes in the conditions of Women - a Critical Review of Possible approaches (Geneva, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 1980).
23. M. Carr, Blacksmith, Baker, Roofing-sheetmaker ... Employment for Rural Women in Developing Countries (London, Intermediate Technology Publications, 1984), pp. 9 - 14.
24. Ibid., p. 9; see also I. Ahmed, op. cit.
25. I. Palmer and U. von Buchwald, op. cit.
26. M. Carr, op. cit., p. 10.
27. Ibid., pp. 18 - 24.
28. For an extensive analysis of this phenomenon see Linda Lim, Women in the Redeployment of Manufacturing Industry to Developing Countries (UNIDO/ICIS.165) July 1980; Otto Kreye, "World Market-Oriented Industrialization of Developing Countries: Free Production Zones and World Market Factories", Part III of F. Fröbel, J. Heinrichs, O. Kreye, The New International Division of Labour: Structural Unemployment in Industrialized Countries and Industrialization in Developing Countries (Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1977), (in German); and Chapkis and Enloe (eds.), Women in the Global Textile Industry (London, Pluto Press, 1983).
29. International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, 1985 World Economic

- Review - Employment, Development, a document for the Fourth World Women's Conference of the ICFTU, Madrid, 23 - 26 April 1985 (4/W/CONF/4&5), p. 40.
30. ILO, Contract Labour in the Clothing Industry, Second Tripartite Technical Meeting for the Clothing Industry (Geneva, 1980).
31. N. Banerjee, op. cit., p. 22.
32. For an in-depth study of successful projects establishing such alternative forms of work organization for women working in the coir-processing industry in Sri Lanka, see: C. Risseew et al., op. cit.
33. Cf. UNIDO, Women in the Development of Textile and Food-processing Industries (UNIDO/IS.391), 16 June 1983.
34. M. Boesveld, "Women and Industrial Development", Discussion Paper, University of Leiden, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Cultural and Social Studies, 1979, p. 2.
35. ILO, "The Role of Women in Contributing to Family Income. Proceedings of the Regional Workshop, July 19 - 23, 1976, (Bangkok, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 1976), p. 16.
36. L. Paukert, The Role of Women in Industry, (Vienna, UNIDO, 1984).
37. ICRW, op. cit.
38. N. Banerjee, op. cit., p. 24.
39. M. Hopkins, "Employment trends in developing countries, 1960 - 80 and beyond", International Labour Review, vol. 122, No. 4 (July-August 1983), pp. 461 - 479.
40. S. Malee and T. Oratip, "The Role of Women in Industrialization of Thailand", paper presented at the UNIDO meeting on Women and Industrialization, Vienna, November 1978.
41. See, for example, L. Paukert, op. cit.
42. Interviews conducted by a researcher on women's employment in Colombia in 1984 (M. Kopeinig, Vienna); and information provided by M. Savarain, UNIDO Senior Industrial Development Field Adviser in Central America.
43. Information provided by UNIDO staff members in various branches of the organization.
44. See L. Lim, op. cit.; F. Fröbel et al., op. cit.
45. ILO, Women at Work No. 1, 1979.
46. See G. Rauch, Frauenarbeit in den Städten Kolumbiens (Münster, Verlag Frauenpolitik, 1978), p. 16.
47. M. da Gama Santos, "The Impact of Adjustment Programmes on Women in Developing Countries", Public Enterprise, Vol. 5, No. 3, May 1985, pp. 287 - 298.
48. M. da Gama Santos, Macro Economic Processes and Women's Role in Development (Implications of monetary and fiscal processes and policies for women's sectors and effective participation in societal change and development), (Preliminary draft), November 1981, p. 31.
49. Ibid., p. 32.

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