
WOMEN AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: Trade and Investment



United Nations International Research
and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
(INSTRAW)

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Study prepared by the North-South Institute
at the request of INSTRAW



**United Nations International Research
and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
(INSTRAW)**

WORLD BANK AND INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION
TRADE AND INVESTMENT



World Bank and International Development
Cooperation for the Advancement of Women

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Introductory Note

The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) aims to promote through research, training and information activities, the full participation of women in the development process. This requires that the Institute monitor closely the current debate on development and international economic relations, and participate in the ongoing search for meaningful ways to address development issues in order to contribute through its work to the fulfillment of the objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade.

Pursuant to the search for solutions to development problems arising from the present world economic situation, it has been found necessary to study the impact of this situation on the role of women in the development process focusing on the interdependence between the international and national levels of the economy, thereby helping in taking into account women's participation and requirements in development processes.

In the course of developing this idea, INSTRAW undertook numerous activities, including a brainstorming session, which was organized at United Nations Headquarters on 25 July 1982 to solicit views of the specialists on the subject from within and outside the United Nations and a review of United Nations resolutions and decisions relevant to the status of women and their role in development, particularly, those adopted by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on the Status of Women, in order to determine the areas which needed further in-depth study.

As a result of surveying the area of women and development, it was found that the aspects to be further developed are: (a) to review and analyze the present model of development and different approaches and concepts so far used in these development strategies; (b) to identify the economic dimension of actual development theories and approaches especially where they merge into the social perception of the work and life of women; (c) to assess the benefits and losses to women that derive from the economic and social changes in present-day society; (d) to examine the linkage between the international and national dimensions, taking into consideration the economic, social and cultural aspects as they relate to women (e) and to examine problems emerging from the world economy and influencing national economic and social policies which affect the role, status and well-being of women.

The Board of Trustees of INSTRAW at its Third Session in January 1983 decided that the Institute should conduct a series of research studies on the role of women in international economic relations, concentrating particularly on the analysis of the interlinkages between the macro and micro economy and their impact on the role and status of women.

In this respect, the United Nations General Assembly requested that the Institute's activities continue to contribute to the full integration of women in the mainstream of development and that due attention be given to the interdependence of the micro and macro levels of the economy and its impact on women's role in the development process.

This programme has, therefore, been carried out by the Institute in two successive phases. The first phase consisted of the preparation of a series of research studies on industry, trade, agriculture, and technology and money and finance, examining the interlinkages between the macro and micro economy and their consequent impact on women in collaboration with a number of internationally renowned academic and research institutions. The second phase consists of a number of meetings including a high-level meeting of eminent personalities to review the studies and to consolidate them into a publication of women in international economic relations.

In preparing these studies, the Institute drafted jointly with the collaborating institutions and individuals the outline of the studies, reviewed the various drafts of the studies and convened a consultative meeting in September '84 of the authors of the studies and experts in international economic relations to review and finalize the studies.

This study entitled "Women and International Development Cooperation: Trade and Investment" is one of the series of research studies prepared under this programme by INSTRAW in collaboration with the North-South Institute in Canada. It discusses the impact on women or certain key trends in investment, production and trade in the developing countries, starting with an overview of selected trade and development trends. A following section analyzes these trends' implications for women's employment in various sectors and industries in developing countries in both the formal and informal sectors. Lastly, two case studies are presented summarizing the situation of women in specific industries in developing countries, namely the electronics industry and the textile and clothing industries.

The views expressed in this study are those of the North-South Institute to whom INSTRAW wishes to express its gratitude for its collaboration in the preparation of this work.

Introduction

In recent decades the world has witnessed major changes in the global economic landscape, not the least of which have been important developments in investment, production and trade in the developed countries. Perhaps the most visible change has been the economic and political ascendancy of the oil-producing developing countries since the oil price hike of 1973. More recently the debt servicing crises of many developing countries in the wake of the 1980-82 global recession have riveted attention on their role in the international financial system. Of as much significance in the long run, however, is the emergence of a growing number of developing countries as important industrial producers and exporters, the technological "revolution" taking place in agricultural production in developing countries, and the growing importance of transnational corporations and intra-firm trade in international economic relations.

These and other changes have had a powerful impact on women and men living in developing and developed countries. While women have obviously been effected in many of the same ways as the rest of their societies, it is becoming apparent that they frequently have not benefited from economic development to the same extent as men. In some cases there is evidence that women's situation is actually becoming worse and that they have experienced a disproportionate share of the dislocation that usually accompanies economic change and development.

In this report the impact on women of certain key trends in investment, production and trade in the developing countries will be discussed. It begins with an overview of selected trade and development trends and is followed by a section analyzing their implications for women's employment in various sectors and industries in developing countries. Two case studies summarizing the situation of women in specific industries in developing countries is then presented.

Part I

Background:

Contemporary Trade and Development Trends

Although the majority of people in developing countries (DCs) continue to depend upon agriculture for their livelihood, agriculture accounts for a diminishing share of gross domestic product (GDP) in the developing countries and a declining share of female and male employment as well. As with the advanced developed countries (ADCs) and the global economy more generally, the industrial and service sectors have taken on increased relative economic importance in developing economies. In particular, there has been a dramatic increase in manufacturing production in many developing countries.

As a result of these trends, the developing countries can also no longer be accurately typified as mainly primary commodity exporters. Some developing countries have become predominantly manufactured exporters and many others export a significant proportion of industrial goods. The developing countries' role in the world economy is therefore changing and international economic relations are taking on a new varied significance for women and men in these countries.

Many women in developing countries have been profoundly affected by these trends. It is therefore important to review the scope, nature and origins of these trends before assessing the specific impact that they have had on women. This section will briefly review some of the most important agricultural and industrial developments in the developing world as background for subsequent sections on trends in women's work.

A. Trends in Agriculture and Industry

The economic development process is one of structural transformation, an essential component of which is increased agricultural productivity so that resources can be directed toward higher productivity economic activities in the industrial and service sectors. As the economy grows, a declining percentage of the population and GDP are accounted for by the agricultural sector (e.g. the developed countries have on average six percent for the low income developing countries). Agricultural and industrial development are therefore complementary, not competitive.

A major achievement of the past quarter century has been the expansion of food production in the developing world in line with population growth. This trend has occurred in all developing countries except Sub-Saharan Africa. However, despite this growth in food production, the number of people without adequate food has risen to an estimated 750 million, most of whom are in low-income developing countries where the majority of the population works on the land. The central problem therefore remains to augment *production*, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, and to improve food *distribution* within developing countries. The problem can be linked to three main factors: inadequate attention to and investment in food crops (in some cases, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, due to colonial legacy); low, administered food prices; and skewed land tenure patterns. Countries which have paid attention to these problems—e.g. Taiwan and South Korea—have experienced rapid food output growth and improved income distribution.

The significant increase in food production in the developing countries has come about as governments have paid more attention to the agricultural sector and major new technological innovations have been introduced—the “Green Revolution”—resulting in vastly improved yields of major grain crops. The expansion of food production resulting from improved production

methods, fertilizer and irrigation has led to an increased demand for agricultural labour (due to double cropping, seeding, harvesting, transport, etc.), and has tended to increase paid employment for agricultural labourers as a group. The extent to which everyone within the agricultural workforce has benefitted equally from these advances will be discussed in the next section.

Another important feature of many developing economies is the important role of agricultural exports as a key source of foreign exchange. In the past 30 years, developing countries have been major world suppliers of certain primary agricultural commodities such as coffee, tea, sugar, cotton and cocoa, although rubber, bananas and certain tropical fruits have also been significant trade items.

The developing countries have held a number of longstanding concerns about their agricultural commodity exports*. These are concerns about price levels, price and revenue stability, the trade restrictions imposed by some developed countries on agricultural commodities such as sugar and cotton, and the desirability of increased local processing of agricultural products prior to exports. In the last 30 years there has been an overall trend towards a fall in price in real terms for agricultural products. This has resulted in a significant decline in the purchasing power per unit of many developing countries' exports. Many agricultural commodities such as sugar, coffee and cocoa are also subject to serious supply and price fluctuations. This often results in instability in export earnings with concomitant difficulties for domestic development planning.

Most developing countries are also concerned about improving their foreign exchange earning and expanding employment by increasing the degree of processing which their primary agricultural exports undergo. While some progress has been made in this area there are a number of constraints on the developing countries' ability to expand their processing activities. They include "escalating" tariff structures in developed country markets since tariff rates generally rise as the degree of processing increases.

Because some developing countries' continue to depend on the export of agricultural commodities to earn foreign exchange, these problems have a strong impact on their potential for development. The fact that these products can rely heavily upon female labour (notably rubber and tea) means that women can be directly affected by changes in this sector. With some commodities, such as rubber, the number of women employed by plantations has been increasing due to the migration of male labourers to the urban areas. In other commodities, price fluctuation and technological innovations have led to a decrease in female employment.

For both low and middle income developing countries alike, however, the share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accounted for by agriculture has decrease considerably over the past two decades and the industrial sector's share of GDP has grown rapidly; between 1966 and 1976 the share of industry in GDP grew from 17 to 24 percent in low income developing countries and from 32 to 37 percent in middle income developing countries (World Bank, 1979, p. 59). In this process of structural transformation, a slightly smaller shift toward service industries has also been taking place as activities such as transport, finance and communications have grown in tandem with industrial and agricultural development. The growth of education and health services has also contributed to this trend, as has the increase of petty trading and domestic service*.

Manufacturing has been the keystone of structural change and economic growth for many developing countries. Manufactured output has grown almost three times as fast as agriculture

*) Similar problems exist for the many developing countries which are highly dependent upon non-agricultural (mineral) commodities. Here again relatively little detailed analysis has been carried out on the distributional impacts of this economic activity, particularly by gender. The most general picture suggests that women are less directly involved as employees or traders in these non-agricultural commodities than in agriculture. They are, of course, no comes with downturns in these sectors.

*) In addition, because many service activities take place in the informal sector, the relative importance of the service sector in national accounts is often underestimated.

output in developing countries (World Bank, 1979, p. 148) and has far surpassed the growth of manufacturing production in the developed countries (bearing in mind that growth in the developing countries started from a much smaller base) (UNCTAD, 1982, p. 71). This aggregate picture masks the fact that much of this growth has been concentrated in a small handful of developing countries. However a number of other developing countries have also been able to expand their industrial capacity significantly. Between 1960 and 1978, the number of countries for which manufacturing accounted for over 20 percent of GDP increased from eight to 17.

Within the group of newly industrializing countries (NICs) in the developing world, manufactured *exports* have also shown an impressive amount of growth, with average annual growth rates that have greatly outpaced both non-fuel primary commodity exports in terms of value and volume, and fuel exports in volume terms (UNCTAD, 1982, Table A. 13). When compared to global trends it can be seen that the manufactured exports of developing countries have expanded very rapidly. In the 1970s, for example, when world trade in manufactures grew at an overall rate of 8.5 percent annually, those of the developing countries' grew 12 percent a year (in constant 1978 prices). Consequently, the developing countries' share of world manufactures exports has gone from 6 percent in 1960 to 10 percent at the end of the 1970s, and could potentially rise to 14 percent by 1990 (Hughes and Waelbroeck, p. 132). Moreover, manufactures have come to equal non-fuel primary commodities in the export baskets of the oil-importing developing countries, whereas in the early 1960s they were only one-fifth as important (GATT, 1981, pp. 17-18).

Developing countries have also been diversifying their output and exports of manufactures as their level of overall development has advanced. While the production of consumer goods still dominates in even the most industrially advanced developing countries, a substantial share of manufacturing production is taken up by intermediate and even capital goods (see Table 1.1). While industrial exports of Developing Countries continue to be heavily concentrated in traditional, labour-intensive manufactures, they have grown to include electronic components and consumer goods, as well as more capital-intensive goods such as synthetic fibres, machines and tools and appliances. The more industrially advanced countries of East and Southeast Asia have for example:

...continued to specialize in labor-intensive exports, now producing types of clothing, textiles, and electronics that require more design and other skills, and supplying a greater variety of consumer goods and light engineering components. They have also expanded into heavy engineering products such as ships, oil rigs, and hydroelectric generators that require considerable drafting and other skilled labor inputs (World Bank, 1982, p. 11).

A relatively small group of the Newly Industrialized Countries have been responsible for much of this expansion and diversification of manufactured exports. Eight Newly Industrialized Countries have been responsible for much of this expansion and diversification of manufactured exports. Eight Newly Industrialized Countries account for 80 percent of the total and three of these countries—Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea—are responsible for half of the Developing Countries' manufactures exports.

The dynamism of the Newly Industrialized Countries exports has not precluded, however, a rapid expansion of manufactured exports by other. At least 16 "newly exporting" developing countries achieved growth rates equal to or better than that of the Newly Industrialized Countries during the 1970s. Although some of these countries started from a very small base and still do not export a significant volume of manufactured exports, others such as Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines must be viewed increasingly as significant exporters of manufactured goods. Countries such as Tunisia and Colombia appear to be following close behind and still others have developed noticeable export capabilities in certain product areas.

Table 1.1

Structure of manufacturing production in selected developing countries in relation to degree of industrialization, in or around 1978

Country	Percentage share of total manufacturing output ^a			Manufacturing output per head (\$)
	Consumer goods ^b	Intermediate products ^b	Capital goods ^b	
More industrialized countries and territories				
Singapore	51.3	24.6 ^d	24.1	680
Hong Kong	80.5	11.6	7.9	665
Venezuela	51.7	40.8 ^d	7.5	450
México ^c	59.8	28.6	11.6	300
Rep. of Korea	64.3	21.4	14.3	210
Chile	54.7	34.1	11.2	190
Mean ^f	60.4	26.8	12.8	415
Less industrialized countries				
Colombia ^g	68.3	23.2	8.4	120
Philippines ^g	74.5	16.1	9.4	95
Tunisia	72.5	20.0	7.5	70
Egypt ^c	65.1	22.0	12.9	50
Nigeria ^c	64.2	29.6 ^d	6.2	35
Kenya	75.9	12.6	11.5	35
Indonesia	75.8	14.9 ^h	9.3	25
India	48.7	29.0	22.3	20
Bangladesh	72.3	23.4	4.3	10
Mean ^f	68.6	21.2	10.2	50
(Mean excluding India) ^f	(71.1)	(20.2)	(8.7)	(55)

- a) Percentage relates to 1978, unless otherwise specified.
 b) "Intermediate products" industries include basic metals, petroleum refining, petroleum and coal products, chemicals and plastics; "capital goods" industries include electrical machinery (except radio, TV, etc.), nonelectrical machinery, and transport equipment; "consumer goods" industries include all other manufacturing.
 c) Value added in 1977 at 1975 prices and exchange rates per head of total population.
 d) Of which petroleum refining and petroleum and coal products accounted for: Singapore - 15.1 per cent; Venezuela - 23.2 per cent; Nigeria - 12.9 per cent.
 e) Output structure in 1976.
 f) Unweighted.
 g) Output structure in 1977.
 h) Excluding petroleum refining and petroleum and coal products.

Source: UNCTAD, *Trade and Development 1982*, Table A.32, p. 152.

The amount of employment generated by manufacturing in developing countries has also increased in both absolute and relative terms. It grew 6.2 percent a year from 1970 to 1976 compared to 3.8 percent a year in the 1960s, (Renshaw, 1981, p. 70) which compares to a growth rate of 1.8 and 2.2 percent for overall employment in the 1960s and 1970s respectively. The extent to which women have benefitted from these trends, for example in a few specific export industries, will be discussed in the latter two sections.

Questions have been raised, however, as to whether it will be possible for this rapid expansion and diversification of industrial production and exports in the developing world to continue in the recessionary economic climate of the 1980s. Growth in world trade faltered in the early 1980s as a consequence of prolonged global recession and the developing countries have shared fully in this slump. Reduced demand combined with deteriorating terms of trade following the 1979-80 oil price rise and high interest rates have resulted in a sharp deterioration in the pay-

ments position of developing countries. The problem is not confined to the well known debt-servicing and rescheduling problems of a few middle income developing countries vis-a-vis the private commercial banks but also includes the protracted, debilitating financial crisis affecting many of the least developed countries (Loxley, 1983).

Already the developing countries as a whole have seen their aggregate growth rate cut by more than half. Many of them have experienced negative growth and when the high inflation and continued rapid population growth found in many of these countries is taken in account, it becomes clear that the well-being of many women and men living in the developing world has significantly deteriorated in recent years. The domestic adjustments which developing countries are having to undertake, often as a condition of IMF financing, will be felt for many years to come. Moreover the burden of these adjustments is frequently not distributed equally (Johnson and Salop, 1980) and often it is the disadvantaged and the dispossessed, many of whom are women, who are least able to protect themselves. Meanwhile the upsurge in protectionism in the advanced developed countries has seriously aggravated the economic situation of many developing countries, particularly in key labour intensive industries employing large numbers of women. This issue is discussed further below.

B. The Role of Developing Countries' Policies

The developing countries' desire to expand and diversify their economic base away from their traditional reliance on the production and export of a few primary commodities, has been at the heart of much of their development planning in the last three decades. This focus has been largely responsible for their growing industrial presence in the world economy. By stressing manufactured exports, developing countries are hoping to be able to generate employment, increase the dynamism of their economies, stabilize and diversify foreign exchange earnings, build up their technological base and improve the skill level of their labour force. Many of the industries which have formed the basis for this export thrust have a high proportion of female employees.

During the 1950s, the industrial strategy which many developing countries followed was "inward-oriented" and favoured import substitution. Their experience during the turbulent interwar period and the problems they had encountered with their primary commodity exports convinced them that they would be better off if they reduced their dependence on the markets of the developed countries.

By the 1960s, however, import substitution policies had shown themselves to be quite inefficient and inflexible. A handful of countries began at that time to redress the imbalance between import substitution and export expansion. This trend has since spread to a much larger group of countries. Even countries, such as India, which have basically retained inward-oriented economies, have adopted many outward-oriented measures. In most cases, it has meant dismantling policies that discouraged exports as much as introducing new measures that positively promoted exports. Indeed, while it was not uncommon for import substitution strategies to have had an overall anti-export bias, outward-oriented strategies rarely have a pro-export bias and frequently promote more efficient import substitution as well (Díaz Alejandro and Helleiner, p. 11; Balassa, p. 215).

A visible, but not entirely representative example of outward-oriented policies are export processing zones (EPZs). With the objective of creating jobs and foreign exchanges, these zones provide investors with a wide range of production incentives, particularly duty free importing, and all output is exported. However, while job creation, particularly for women, had been quite dramatic in the zones, questions have been raised about the quality and durability of jobs in the zones and the conditions of work. The overall economic and social benefits of the Export Processing Zones have also been questioned because they often have limited linkages with the local economy and produce negligible gains in terms of skill and technological development.

Event though Export Processing Zones have been the subject of considerable debate, they

have in fact played only a minor role in most developing countries' development approaches. In a few countries a large share of manufacturing employment is in the Export Processing Zones —for example, between 33 and 55 percent in Mauritius, Singapore and Haiti. But for other countries this percentage is much lower —between 10 and 20 percent in Malaysia and the Dominican Republic, less than 10 percent in South Korea, Tunisia and Sri Lanka, and insignificant proportions in the Philippines, Egypt, Brazil and India (ICFTU, 1983, p. 15; Currie, 1979, p. 6; ILO, 1981, p. 90). In addition, the major portion of manufacturing production and employment in the developing world, even in the Newly Industrialized Countries, is still concerned with producing for the local market.

C. The Role of Transnational Corporations

The growth of direct foreign investment and of its main conduit, the transnational corporation (TNC) in the post-war economic era has played an important role in the development experiences of many developing countries. About one-quarter of all foreign direct investment has been in developing countries with a large portion traditionally being in the extraction of raw materials and in agricultural export crops. In the manufacturing sector, foreign investment has frequently aimed at getting behind tariff walls to produce for domestic markets and consumption. However, in recent years a new and important phenomenon has been the use of developing countries by transnational corporations as bases for the production and export of goods or components back to their home markets. This practice has been most prevalent in the electronics and electrical products industries where the production of components or the assembly of final products is subcontracted to a developing country for shipment to the home country or to third markets. Many of the export processing zones in developing countries were established to attract precisely this kind of investment.

There is little doubt that without such investment by transnational corporations the expansion of developing country manufactured exports in recent years would have been substantially slower (Renshaw, 1981, p. 69). At the same time, the role of transnational corporations should not be exaggerated. As Table 1.2 illustrates, by far the majority share of manufacturing production and exports in the developing countries has been the result of indigenous investment and expertise (Turner, 1981; Keesing, 1983). In fact, recent data indicates that developing country manufactured exports are less likely to originate with transnational enterprises on an aggregate basis than similar exports from the industrial economies. In the industries of traditional export interest to the developing countries (i.e. clothing, footwear and textiles), transnational corporations have been responsible for less than 10 percent of total developing country exports. In contrast approximately 50 percent of the electrical products exported by developing countries have been via transnationals (Helleiner and Lavergne, 1979). In the case of electrical and electronic products, therefore, it is possible to establish a direct link between transnational corporations' investment in developing countries and a increase in women's employment, particularly in export processing zones.

Table 1.2
Shares of transnational corporations in the production and export of
manufactures: selected developing countries, early or mid-1970s

Country or territory	Production		Exports	
	Value added in 1975 (\$ billion)	Share of TNCs (Percentage)	Value in 1975a (\$ billion)	Share of TNCs (Percentage)
Hong Kong	2.0	—	6.48	10
India	12.6	13	1.84	under 10
Pakistan	1.9	—	0.65	under 10
Rep. of Korea	5.5	11	3.90	28
Singapore	1.3	30	2.84	nearly 70
Argentina	18.4	31	0.70	30
Brazil	33.7	49	2.10	over 40
Colombia	2.9	—	0.30	30
Mexico	18.0	28	0.88	30

Source: UNCTAD, *Trade and Development Report 1982*, p. 77.

D. The Role of Advanced Developed Countries' Policies

Although trade amongst the developing countries has been growing rapidly in recent years, almost 70 percent of the developing countries' trade still involves the advanced developed countries. With such a high degree of dependence on the advanced developed countries' markets, the trade policies of the developed countries remain of critical importance for the developing countries' and their export strategies. Similarly the general economic conditions in the developed countries, and the national policies they follow, can also affect the way in which capital, investment and technology flow to the developing countries. Thus, the economic and policy environment of the developed countries not only determines how imports from developing countries are treated but it also influences a broad range of other economic relations and transactions with the developing countries.

Since the trade liberalization thrust of the post-war era was engineered by the developed countries, it has operated more or less in their best interests. The series of multilateral trade negotiations, held under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), has been based on the principle of reciprocity. The overwhelming importance of mutual trade amongst the developed countries has dictated that they primarily bargain among themselves for improved market access.

Since developing countries have up to the present had little to offer in terms of reciprocity, their participation in the negotiation process has been limited and trade in the products that were of greatest export interest to them was liberalized the least. As a result, the current structure of tariff protection in the developed countries is characterized by two key features that adversely affect the developing countries' efforts to increase their export of processed and manufactured products. The first is a system of "escalating" tariff rates whereby the tariff rate of a product increases as the level of processing increases. Essentially, this system encourages the processing of resources in the importing country as opposed to the exporting country. The second feature is that tariffs on labour intensive manufactured products (which represent the developing countries' main manufactured exports) are consistently higher than those on other products.

Frustrated with these barriers to their development, developing countries lobbied for a new trading order that would be more responsible to their specific needs. This goal was a central feature of their drive for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the early 1970s, a drive that dated back to the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) conference in the early 1960s. In 1974 they succeeded in getting the advanced developed countries' acceptance of the concept of preferential treatment for developing countries in the form of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) under UNCTAD auspices.

However, the GSP was flawed from the beginning. The developed countries viewed it as a concession and hence, GSP rates were not treated as a binding contractual agreement as were the tariff cuts negotiated within the GATT. Moreover the developed countries excluded most of the products of real export interest to the developing countries such as primary textiles and apparel.

The developed countries have also had some difficulty adjusting to developing countries' import competition in labour intensive manufactures and, considering the weak economic position of developing countries vis-a-vis the developed countries, it has been relatively easy to discriminate against them without any fear of retaliation. Particularly telling in this regard is the fact that under the international accord governing world trade in textiles (the Multi-Fibre Arrangement - MFA), textile and clothing trade amongst the developed countries is not subject to the same restrictions which affect developing countries exports from to advanced developed countries' markets.

The MFA is a prime example of the "new protectionism" in the industrialized countries that has grown out of the two recent world recessions and rising unemployment in the industrially advanced countries. The "new protectionism" is characterized by new ways of curbing imports

and its coverage has expanded to a much broader range of products. Although the developing countries have not always been directly affected, the uncertainty it has created in the world trading system has had particularly adverse effects on them. Not only are governments and firms in developing countries ill-equipped to deal with the new non-tariff barriers being erected in the advanced developed countries but it means that they are desperately lacking the certainty and security they need to plan for, and invest in, the overall development of their economies. For example:

The MFA, in particular, by almost freezing quota allocations, has all but denied countries such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mauritius and Indonesia, the chance of seriously developing further export-oriented manufacturing in the textile and clothing industries. At the same time, it has taken away from the more industrially advanced developing countries, such as the Philippines, Pakistan and Colombia, the incentive to make the necessary policy adjustments to their textile and clothing industries (Commonwealth Secretariat, p. 74).

To date, most developing countries have still been able to expand their manufactured exports. However, it is clear that the level and growth of developing countries' exports would have been much higher had it not been for the continued deterioration in their access to the developed countries' markets. In the particularly important case of textiles and clothing, voluntary export restraint (VERs) negotiated under the MFA have curtailed growth in exports and production and, thus, in employment. In other words, it would appear that the new protectionism has considerably diminished both the growth prospects of the developing countries and the creation of new job opportunities that usually accompanies such growth. These job opportunities, in the past, have frequently gone to women workers.

Finally, it is important to note one new development in the trade policies of the advanced developed countries which has had considerable employment implications for the developing countries generally and for women in particular; that is, the offshore assembly provisions (OAPs) in the customs tariffs of the United States and certain European countries. The current version of the Multi-Fibre Agreement contains a similar provision. Under these special regulations, domestic components may be sent out of the country for processing and/or assembly and then imported back into the country with the tariff liability only being assessed on the amount of foreign value-added. These measures have most definitely contributed to the general trend toward the internationalization of industrial production and processes (Finger, 1975 and 1977). For the labour-intensive parts of the production process, firms have been able to employ relatively less expensive labour in developing countries and then bring the imports or assembled final products back into the country with little penalty. Offshore assembly provisions have therefore played an instrumental role in the creation and growth of offshore production sites in industries such as electronics. As the following sections will indicate, this trend has had profound implications for women in developing countries since the labour force in the export processing zones, where much of this offshore assembly is located, is predominantly female.

Part II

Women in Developing Countries' Economies: Current Trends

Since the focus in this study is on what women contribute to development, actually and potentially, and on how development affects them, it is useful to examine, some of the current trends in the work of women in developing countries. In order to do this, one must go beyond the narrow confines of traditional work definitions and statistics, and capture some of the realities that are at the core of developing countries' societies. Through looking at trends in women's "employment" in this broad sense, it is also possible to trace a number of related trends, and needs, in the areas of health and education.

A. The Uncounted Contribution

"The concealment or disguise of women's work serves an important function: since what is not counted is not usually noticed, planners are able to assume that, in a literal sense, women do not count" (Galbraith, cited in Rogers, 1980, p. 74).

In the comment cited above, John Kenneth Galbraith identifies the first problem in getting a global perspective on women's work. Since much of the work women do is performed within the confines of the home and domestic sphere, it has usually been "invisible" from the dominant male perspective and not officially counted as work. For statistical purposes, "economically active" persons often are defined by the countries collecting data as "any person producing significant amounts of economic (i.e. marketable) goods or visible income", thus effectively excluding many women and men who work on their own account. The contribution which women make to the economy has been defined as "social" and is either not counted or is viewed as secondary to other economic activities. The ramifications of this approach in terms of economic planning and programming is that women are often automatically exclude.

As a further statistical distortion, women of working age are often arbitrarily placed in the miscellaneous category of "dependents", along with children, the elderly, the sick and the handicapped. This categorization ignores the fact that many women are responsible for supporting those who are genuinely dependent.

Even with these initial caveats in mind, the available international statistics on women's work point to massive, and rapidly changing, contributions. The total of *officially* economically active women rose from 344 million to 576 million between 1950 and 1975. This figure suggests that 35 percent of the world's women are in the official global labour force, but the International Labour Office (ILO) cautions that these figures should be taken as a conservative estimate because of the restrictive definition of "economic activity" which is commonly used (Newland, 1980, p. 11). Recent household surveys carried out in several Latin American cities, for example, reported that there were between 14 to 30 percent more women working than the corresponding rates reported in respective national censuses (Recchini de Lattes and Weinerman, 1979).

A detailed breakdown of regional labour force participation rates in different regions of the world and a comparison of male and female rates can be found in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

Table 2.1

Force Population, Labour Force and Labour Force
Participation Rates, By Region: 1975

Major Area or Region	Population (millions)	Labour Force (millions)	Participation Rate (per cent)
WORLD	1,980.1	556.1	28.1
More Developed Regions	584.4	198.5	34.0
USSR	136.6	65.6	48.0
Northern America	121.0	34.3	28.3
Western Europe	78.2	23.1	29.5
Eastern Europe	54.7	23.1	42.3
Japan	56.5	21.8	38.6
Southern Europe	67.8	13.5	20.0
Northern Europe	41.8	12.1	29.1
Temperate South America	19.4	3.0	15.5
Australia and New Zealand	8.3	2.0	23.8
Less Developed Regions	1,395.6	357.6	25.6
China	410.4	147.7	36.0
Middle South Asia	404.9	85.0	21.0
Eastern South Asia	162.6	46.0	28.3
Western Africa	57.9	18.7	32.3
Eastern Africa	57.7	16.6	28.8
Tropical South America	89.8	10.2	11.3
Western South Asia	43.5	7.9	18.1
Middle Africa	23.1	7.0	30.1
Other East Asia	27.9	7.0	25.3
Middle America	39.1	3.6	9.1
Southern Africa	14.0	2.6	19.0
Caribbean	13.6	2.6	19.5
Northern Africa	49.0	1.9	3.9
Melanesia	1.5	0.6	41.7
Micronesia and Polynesia	0.7	0.1	10.8

Sources: Population: United Nations, Population Division
Labour Force: ILO, Bureau of Statistics

The labor force participation rate reported for women varies considerably in Africa and Asia with rates for Latin American countries being generally low. To some extent the low reported rates for Latin America (as well as some other countries) are due to census and survey practices which exclude most women engaged in agricultural activities from being counted among the economically active population. In all countries shown, the activity rates for women are considerably lower than for men, although the relative participation of women in the labor force varies considerably among these developing countries.

Table 2.2

Labour Force Participation Rate of Women and Men
10 Years Old and Over and Female/Male Ratio of Participation Rate

Region & Country	Year	Labour Force Participation Rate (Percent)		Female/Male Ratio (Male Rate Equals 1.00)
		Women	Men	
AFRICA				
Ghana ²	1970	63.6	83.7	.76
Kenya	1970	27.1	53.1	.51
Morocco ²	1971	12.6	78.8	.16
Senegal ²	1970-71	29.8	82.8	.36
Tanzania ²	1967	71.1	85.7	.83
ASIA				
Bangladesh	1974	4.0	80.0	.05
China, Taiwan ²	1975	42.1	84.2	.50
India	1971	16.9	73.5	.23
Indonesia	1971	33.6	71.5	.47
Korea, Republic of ³	1975	45.7	73.7	.62
Malasia	1970	32.2	65.7	.49
Nepal	1971	35.1	83.6	.42
Pakistan	1973	9.1	75.8	.12
Sri Lanka	1971	26.0	68.4	.38
Thailand ⁴	1975	51.8	71.0	.73
Turkey ⁵	1975	44.0	75.9	.58
LATIN AMERICA				
Brazil	1970	18.5	71.2	.26
Chile ⁵	1970	19.7	73.0	.27
Colombia	1973	22.2	69.4	.32
Costa Rica ⁵	1973	18.6	77.5	.24
Guatemala	1973	12.4	77.5	.16
Honduras	1974	13.4	74.4	.18
Jamaica ³	1975	60.4	82.7	.73
Mexico ⁵	1969	16.4	71.3	.23
Panama	1970	25.8	73.7	.35
Peru ²	1972	20.0	80.0	.35

- 1) Number in labor force as percent of total population 10 years old and over.
 2) 15 years and over.
 3) 14 years and over.
 4) 11 years and over.
 5) 12 years and over.

Source: George Thomas Kurian, *Encyclopedia of the Third World: Revised Edition Vol. III, Appendix X, Special Focus III.*

The number of women working has almost doubled in North America, Latin America and Oceania between 1950 and 1975. In South Asia and Africa it grew by well over half, and China saw an increase of 134 percent (ILO, 1975, p. 35). According to population projections of the United Nations (UN), by the year 2000 developing countries will account for 70 percent of the world's female labour force, with current figures listing their share of the female labour force at 64 percent (ILO, 1975, p. 36). In the developing countries as a whole, by the end of the century, the female labour force is projected to increase by 230 million or over 9 million annually (ILO, 1975, p. 38).

As with labour force trends in general, and consistent with the structural adjustments which accompany economic changes and development, female employment in the developing world has been shifting somewhat from the agricultural sector to formal sector activities in industry and services. However, as Tables 2.3 and 2.4 also point out, two-thirds (247 million) of female workers in developing countries were still employed in the agricultural sector as of 1980, while the remaining third was divided almost equally between industry and services (66 and 70 million respectively). A much smaller percentage of women than men are employed in industry and services in the developing countries.

In terms of the kinds of occupations and positions held by women in the developing world, one-half of all female workers are unpaid family workers, one-third conduct their own businesses or firms and one-fifth are wage earners or salaried employees (only 4 percent of which are in professional and administrative positions). This distribution presents a marked contrast to the developed countries where 80 percent of all female workers are wage earners or salaried employees, although they too hold predominantly low wage, clerical, sales and service positions.

Table 2.3
Change in the Percentage of Women Employed in Major Economic Sectors¹
Developing Countries — 1960 to 1980

Country	Year	Agriculture Forestry, Hunting and Fishing	Manufacturing	Commercial Services (incl. trade, banking, social insurance, restaurants, hotels, real estate and business services)	Community, Social and Personal Services
Colombia	1964	11.2	17.4	10.5	53.5
	1970	8.9	21.1	21.6	45.7
		- 2.3	+ 3.7	+ 11.1	- 7.8
El Salvador	1961	10.1	2.4	17.5	46.8
	1980	20.9	18.7	33.0	23.3
		+ 10.8	+ 16.3	+ 15.5	- 23.5
Guyana	1960	23.7	12.6	14.4	39.8
	1965	13.7	12.2	17.7	41.2
	1977	13.8	14.2	21.0	46.8
		- 9.9	+ 1.6	+ 6.9	+ 7.0
Haiti	1950 ²	79.7	5.6	6.3	5.2
	1980	46.7	6.8	27.0	7.1
		- 33.0	+ 1.2	+ 20.7	+ 1.9
Iran	1966	20.3	50.9	0.9	16.9
	1980	41.5	32.5	1.1	14.5
		+ 21.2	- 18.4	+ 0.2	- 2.4
Indonesia	1961	64.2	7.3	7.1	11.0
	1971	59.2	10.7	13.6	8.1
	1978	56.7	10.0	20.9	10.3
		- 7.5	+ 2.7	+ 13.8	- 0.7

Jamaica	1960	15.4	17.3	13.6	38.0
	1973	12.9	8.4	18.7	45.6
	1980	22.9	7.7	20.6	45.1
		- 7.5	- 9.6	+ 7.0	+ 7.1
Korea	1966	58.2	12.0	9.9	13.7
	1970	58.9	14.3	14.0	9.7
	1981	38.5	20.4	27.0	9.5
		-19.7	+ 8.4	+17.1	- 4.2
Mexico	1960	32.6	12.2	14.2	37.7
	1970	10.8	18.1	13.5	45.6
	1975	12.0	20.0	15.0	50.5
		-20.6	+ 7.8	+ 0.8	+12.8
Panama	1960	6.8	8.9	13.4	57.1
	1970	7.1	9.6	18.5	49.9
	1979	0.4	10.3	21.6	51.8
		- 6.4	+ 1.4	+10.8	- 5.3
Peru	1961	31.7	17.1	11.6	34.5
	1972	14.8	16.6	17.5	37.5
		-16.9	- 5.5	+ 5.9	+ 3.0
Philippines	1960	35.0	20.6	11.1	21.3
	1970	31.3	19.4	12.0	27.5
	1975	22.0	15.0	13.3	30.5
		-13.0	- 5.6	+ 2.2	+ 9.2
Singapore	1957	16.0	14.2	14.0	49.3
	1970	2.5	25.7	18.3	31.4
	1975	0.8	39.0	28.9	20.9
		-17.4	+ 3.1	+ 3.2	- 4.4
Thailand	1960	86.0	2.6	6.2	2.9
	1970	82.7	3.7	5.9	5.4
	1980	73.5	7.0	9.6	8.0
		-12.5	+ 4.4	+ 3.4	+ 5.1
Trinidad and Tobago	1960	23.9	12.9	15.4	45.2
	1973	11.7	13.7	25.0	33.9
	1980	7.6	13.9	31.8	30.9
		-16.3	+ 1.0	+16.4	-14.3
Tunisia	1966	12.0	36.4	3.1	33.0
	1980	31.1	40.2	2.4	15.7
		+19.1	+ 3.8	- 0.7	-17.3
Venezuela	1961	6.3	17.6	8.8	59.3
	1971	2.7	11.8	9.8	55.5
	1981	1.9	15.3	27.8	49.0
		- 4.4	- 2.3	+19.0	-10.3

- 1) Countries were selected according to the data available for this time period. Consequently there is little analysis of the changes that have taken place in Africa.
2) 1960 data not available.

Sources: ILO, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics*, 1970, 1975, 1980, Geneva.

Table 2.4

Change in the Percentage of Female and Male Employed in Major Economic Sectors
by Region – 1970 to 1980

Region	Year	Sector Agriculture		Industry		Services	
		Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Latin America and Caribbean (middle income)	1970	12.7	45.9	17.4	23.7	70.0	30.4
	1980	11.4	37.8	17.3	28.3	71.2	33.9
		- 1.3	- 8.1	- .1	+ 4.6	+ 1.2	+ 3.5
Latin America and Caribbean (low income)	1970	34.6	63.5	14.8	16.8	50.5	19.7
	1980	28.6	56.1	16.5	20.9	54.8	23.0
		- 6.0	- 7.4	+ 1.7	+ 4.1	+ 4.3	+ 3.3
Asia (middle income)	1970	63.5	57.5	13.0	17.8	23.4	24.6
	1980	55.7	50.4	16.1	21.4	28.3	28.1
		- 7.8	- 7.1	+ 3.1	+ 3.6	+ 4.9	+ 3.5
Asia (other low income)	1970	72.3	71.2	9.4	9.4	18.3	19.4
	1980	66.2	65.2	11.8	11.8	22.0	22.9
		- 6.1	- 6.0	+ 2.4	+ 2.4	+ 3.7	+ 3.5
Asia (China)	1970	78.1	61.4	15.4	23.4	6.4	15.2
	1980	70.5	53.8	21.0	28.7	8.4	17.4
		- 7.6	- 7.6	+ 5.6	+ 5.3	+ 2.0	+ 2.2
Asia (India)	1970	80.7	63.8	10.8	14.8	8.5	21.4
	1980	74.0	56.7	14.7	18.4	11.3	24.9
		- 6.7	- 7.1	+ 3.9	+ 3.6	+ 2.8	+ 3.5
Africa & Middle East (Capital- surplus oil)	1970	58.5	60.6	10.8	16.7	30.7	22.6
	1980	49.3	53.0	13.4	20.7	37.2	26.3
		- 9.2	- 7.6	+ 2.6	+ 4.0	+ 6.5	+ 3.7
Africa and Middle East (midle income)	1970	72.9	59.9	9.2	17.3	17.9	22.8
	1980	66.3	52.2	11.4	21.4	22.3	26.3
		- 6.6	- 7.7	+ 2.2	+ 4.0	+ 4.4	+ 3.5
Africa and Middle East (low income)	1970	89.2	80.5	3.8	8.4	6.9	11.0
	1980	86.6	76.4	5.1	10.5	8.3	13.0
		- 2.6	- 4.1	+ 1.3	+ 2.1	+ 1.4	+ 2.0
Developing country Average	1970	73.6	62.8	12.4	17.7	13.9	19.5
	1980	66.3	55.7	16.2	21.6	17.4	22.7
Total		- 7.3	- 7.1	+ 3.8	+ 3.9	+ 3.5	+ 3.2

Source: Derived from ILO, Bureau of Statistics, cit. from Michael Hopkins "Trends in employment in developing countries, 1960-80", in *International Labour Review*, Geneva, June 1983.

Of even greater importance is the fact that job opportunities for women have not kept pace with the number of women seeking employment in developing countries. As a result,

unemployment rates for women have increased dramatically over the past two decades, with "open" unemployment affecting women two to three times more than men. Girls and older women are the most affected by unemployment. However, the seasonal nature of the jobs taken by many women, as well as women's propensity to fall back on subsistence farming or their families for support, have contributed to female unemployment going unregistered.

In the discussion which follows on women's work in the agricultural, formal and informal sectors, we will try to trace the various ways in which women have been affected by economic change, modernization and industrialization. Where information permits, the trends in female employment—both the losses and the gains—in these sectors are outlined, as are the major factors behind the shifts in female employment within and between these economic sectors.

B. Employment Trends in Agriculture

The majority of the world's farmers are women, and possibly they always have been the majority. The numbers of women working in agriculture in various countries have already been cited, and their contribution to world food production is obviously a critical one.

The most common perception of women in developing countries' agriculture is one of subsistence producers, operating on a very small scale to produce primarily for family consumption, with limited surpluses going into local trade through farmers' markets, etc. The aggregate volumes of such produce traded in this way are very large, but the picture of women as subsistence producers is still a fairly accurate one. It should not obscure the fact, though, that even before the advent of the large-scale commercialization of agriculture and the current importance of cash crop production, a large percentage of women in developing countries worked at least part of the year as paid agricultural labourers (see Table 2.5). Their work was often seasonal in nature and frequently limited to specific tasks which were considered "women's work". Thus, although it was temporary in nature, women were guaranteed paid work at least part of the year.

For a number of reasons, the heavy dependence of women in developing countries on agricultural employment now make them extremely vulnerable to disruptive change and sometimes to the loss of the small measure of economic power they had built up through this work. In 1976, Margaret Mead painted the picture, and the future prospect, in sombre terms:

Over the years, decisions about the allocation of food and marketing, and about the allotment of fertilizers and pesticides for growing subsistence or cash crops was transferred first from the village to the provincial city, then to the capital city, and finally to the international marketplace. These decisions therefore increasingly became removed from the daily input of women. Aspects of the process of food production... which were traditionally the province of women have progressively become components of global agricultural transactions (and) food today is treated as a commodity in large-scale production or as a weapon in economic negotiations... Its use at the local level as the main means of freeing (people) from hunger is being neglected (Mead, 1976, p. 10).

It is important to try to understand some of the underlying dynamics in these situations. First, developing countries are generally experiencing the same historical trend as that undergone earlier in the developed world, in which the overall share of employment in the agricultural sector steadily decreases. (Table 2.4 showed an average decrease of over 7 percent for developing countries as a group during the 1970s).

In combination with this long-term inter-sectoral shift of labour, which is generally linked to the increase of productivity in agriculture, there are two factors which tend to mean that the costs for women will be disproportionately high and the benefits low, in relation to men. The first is the "commercialization" of the agricultural and related industries and the second is the way in which technological innovation has tended to affect women in this sector.

Developing countries' agriculture is being "commercialized" in various ways. The total markets, whether they be for agricultural exports or the consumption requirements of growing local populations, are being reorganized, and invested in, by large-scale agribusiness. Such large concerns are thus increasingly in competition (for everything from the land itself to the end-markets) with small-scale subsistence producers, processors and marketers, especially women, who must also contend with the giants' power to shape tastes and create demand through modern marketing techniques. The predictable results, in many countries, is a fairly steady displacement of the small operator.

The trend toward increasing individual male ownership of land is also restricting women's agricultural opportunities. In many developing countries land was traditionally a communal possession and farmers (male or female) generally had user's rights (i.e., those who were farming the land had the right to use it, but did not "own" it). In some areas, plots were rotated to ensure that everyone had fair access to good land. Often beginning with colonial rule, pressure has grown on communities to divide up the communal land and adopt the principle of individual ownership.

Women frequently lose their traditional access to land in this process. One reason is that development and other government officials fail to register women's traditional assets or usufruct rights and so vest ownership in men. Another is that women generally lack access to cash or credit which would enable them to buy the land when it is divided up. In some societies more than land is affected. Livestock such as cattle or pigs, were generally controlled and inherited by whichever sex traditionally worked with them. The development of a cash economy also changed this system and ownership increasingly was placed in the hands of individuals, usually men, regardless of whether they themselves worked with the stock involved (Rogers, 1980, p. 38).

Women have also experienced a progressive loss of control over land with the introduction of new legislation and land tenure systems that supplant matrilineal or bilateral patterns of inheritance and replace them with patrilineal systems. (Rogers, 1980, p. 38). In Malawi, for example, a project sponsored by the World Bank in the late 1970s was instrumental in transforming land-holding patterns from matrilineal to patrilineal. (*ECA*, 1979; 1979; see also Garrett, 1982, pp. 17-27 for the Chilean example).

The loss of control over the land they work has meant that women have had little incentive or opportunity to improve their crops. Tinker cites this as one reason for the low productivity of African farms (although there is still much controversy about the relative productivity of subsistence farming versus cash crop production) (Tinker, 1976, 26). These low productivity rates also have been used to justify the concentration on cash (and consequently on men's) crops. A question can be raised here as to whether the problem lies in the neglect of subsistence agriculture or the neglect of women. However, the impact remains essentially the same when women are the ones doing the subsistence work.

Furthermore, since women tend to be concentrated in the subsistence sector it is extremely difficult for them to obtain enough cash or credit to be able to buy new equipment. When they work on cash crops, their labour is often unpaid, and women generally do not formally hold land which they could offer as collateral. Thus, their lack of access to requisite capital effectively prevents them from being able to take advantage of the new technologies available.

Paradoxically, while some traditional opportunities for a measure of economic independence for women through agricultural work are being lost, the work load on women is often increasing, because of such factors as male migration to the cities, and the pressure for much more intensive cultivation, with a consequent increase in "female" tasks, such as weeding and transplanting. Meanwhile the new cash income from such crops is often likely to be captured by the men (Rogers cited in Hosken, p. 4 and Boserup and Liljencrantz, 1975, p. 13).

Women may also experience adverse effects when new technologies and changes in the production and marketing processes are introduced. This has occurred in most Asian countries,

where the attempt to rationalize production, and the use of new seed and fertilizer technologies have led to a reduction in the number of women employed in agriculture. The Green Revolution played a significant role in this process, as farmers looked for ways to minimize their labour cost at harvest times so as to offset the higher costs of seeds and fertilizers. (Tinker, 1976, p. 27).

One study of Central Java shows how, prior to this point, women and farmers had worked out a mutually agreeable arrangement for payment during planting and harvesting seasons. Women accepted low wages for their planting work, but were compensated with payment in rice for their labour during the harvest. However, the advent of higher costs associated with the adoption of new technologies prompted farmers to replace female harvesters and their hand knives with teams of men who achieved greater productivity by using scythes. At the same time, farmers failed to offer women higher wages for planting (Stoler, cited in Tinker, 1976, p. 27). Another source reports that a total of 1.2 million Javanese women were displaced from their jobs following the introduction of rice mills (Cain, cited in ICRW, 1980, pp. 41-42). Clearly, some of the changes wrought by the Green Revolution have incurred substantial losses in employment, income and security for female agricultural workers*.

Meanwhile, on the *benefit* side of the technological ledger, women in agriculture fairly consistently come up short. While many men gain access to the knowledge, skills, and technical innovations of the new agrarian technology, women become entrenched in the non-wage subsistence sector, where agricultural techniques remain primitive relative to changes in the rest of the economy.

Because of the policy and investment focus on cash crops in most developing countries, the technologies introduced (as well as credit schemes) are often most applicable to the men's area of responsibility. If a tractor is brought in to improve ploughing techniques, men as opposed to women receive instruction in their operation since they, traditionally, have been responsible for the ploughing in most countries. Jobs such as planting and weeding, traditionally women's work, frequently remain untouched by mechanization.

Interestingly, when women's tasks are mechanized and especially when such mechanization increases the income to be earned from that task, women are often pushed out of their job by male labourers. Thus, when machines such as rice mills are introduced, even though it may be the female labourers who traditionally husk rice, one will generally find the male labourers operating the new mills. As a result, there is a greater net displacement of female agricultural workers than there is of male workers.

This effect, of course, is a result of the basic power discrepancy and arbitrary role enforcement confronting women. It is compounded both by the all-too-frequent assumption on the part of those introducing new technologies that women are basically less interested and/or less capable than men in adopting technologies, and by the fact that women generally have lower levels of literacy. Thus, if the operation of a machine requires being able to read an instruction manual, a large percentage of women are automatically excluded from learning how to use it, and there is of course, little likelihood that special efforts will be made to offset the problem (Tinker, 1976, p. 27).

Because of experiences and effects such as these, rural women may resist or be wary of supporting agricultural schemes which attempt to introduce new technology. It may not be because they are "backward" or "resistant to change" as is commonly thought, but because they have accurately gauged that it is not to their advantage to support programmes which benefit only the men in their communities or which increase their own workload and/or reduce their opportunities to earn an income themselves. When new technology is introduced in such a way

*) (see: *Promoting Third World Agriculture: Lessons of Recent Experience* by Christopher Gerrard (Ottawa: North-South Institute, 1983) for a discussion of how Green Revolution technologies can be implemented in such a way that they are scale neutral and labour intensive).

that women are included, or they are offered reasonable incentives to participate in agricultural development projects, their initial resistance usually disappears quite rapidly.

There are some areas of the "modernized" and large scale agricultural sectors in developing countries where women have been able to maintain, or sometimes even increase, the numbers of job opportunities available to them, but a common characteristic of these jobs is that they tend to be at the bottom of the scale in terms of pay, stability and working conditions.

Managers of farms producing for export often choose to hire young, single, migrant women to avoid paying a more substantial wage to older men or women with families. If the fact that women agricultural workers almost always earn less than their male counterparts is questioned at all, it is justified by the still prevalent though entirely unproven assumption that their productivity is lower.

In some areas women's agricultural employment has increased, notably in agribusinesses of the type found in Latin America, such as the flower industry in Colombia and strawberry and tomato farms in Mexico. There, on the large-scale, export-oriented farm enterprises, the workers hired are mainly young women. They generally work on short-term contracts and are paid below the minimum wage. Among their working conditions are reportedly high levels of sexual abuse from male supervisors (Ahmad and Loutfi, 1982, p. 19).

The other area in the agribusiness sector where there is a concentration of female agricultural labourers in some Asian countries is on plantations producing agricultural products for export. In Sri Lanka, women comprise over half the workforce on plantations producing tea, rubber and coconuts—crops representing 70 percent of exports in this country (Ahmad and Loutfi, 1982, p. 10). Although 80 percent of plantation labourers here are unionized, women work excessively long hours, receive less pay than men doing the same jobs, and suffer from malnutrition because they cannot make ends meet. Most of the Sinhalese women workers head families and, therefore, control their own income, but the wages of Tamil women (whose families live on the plantations) are paid to their husbands or fathers (Kurian, cited in Ahmad and Loutfi, 1982, p. 11).

In Brazil, female plantation workers do not even have this protection as they are hired only on a temporary basis. As temporary workers they are not covered by collective or other work agreements and regulations (Ahmad and Loutfi, 1982, p. 6). Plantation workers are also exposed to various kinds of occupational hazards, particularly illness arising from exposure to pesticides which can be especially dangerous for pregnant women.

On some plantations, women's agricultural employment opportunities are on the increase. In Malaysia, for example, structural adjustments in the rest of the economy in combination with technological changes on plantations have encouraged movement by the male labour force into other commercial activities, thus leading to a shortage of permanent labourers. To overcome this problem, women's wages have been increased to equal men's, and creche facilities supplied to encourage women to shift into full-time estate work. However, it has been observed that because of their household responsibilities, women can only afford to become full-time plantation employees if they have access to child labour to assist them at home and on the work sites (Ahmad and Loutfi, 1982, p. 10).

Summary

Women's very strong role as agricultural producers in many developing countries, while arduous in its demands, has traditionally provided some measure of independent access to economic power. One major aspect of "development" as it is commonly understood, that needs to be carefully assessed because of its mixed and sometimes damaging impact on women, is the erosion of their base in agricultural employment, compounded by biased impacts from the way

technological innovations are often introduced, and the creation of some new low-wage ghettos in agribusiness in the developing countries.

C. Employment Trends in the Formal Sector

The formal sector of most developing countries is at present only able to absorb a small proportion of the available labour force and an even smaller share of the total female labour force. Even in terms of the understated numbers of women officially registered as economically active only 33 percent of women workers in developing countries are employed in this sector (Boesveld, 1979, p. 2). According to an ILO study, these women present a common profile; most are "unskilled or semi-skilled with a modest educational background, in (their) early twenties, unmarried, often... migrant(s) from the rural areas and not... member(s) of a union" (ILO, 1977, p. 14). Although on average for all developing countries, women in the formal sector tend to be equally distributed between industry and services, this is not necessarily the case for all of the regions of the developing world, as Tables 2.3 and 2.4 illustrated. Within the service sector, a large proportion of women are employed in commercial and tertiary activities and within industry, an overwhelming majority of women work in "traditional" industries such as textiles and clothing, footwear and food processing, all of which are extensions of women's traditional work in the home.

There is some controversy about whether women's employment opportunities in industry are increasing or decreasing at a global level. If one looks specifically at manufacturing, a very mixed picture is presented. The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), a private, non-profit organization, in a study commissioned by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) concluded that in many developing countries women's industrial employment is on the decline. The study cited the examples of India, Colombia, Guatemala and Brazil, where between 1950 and 1970 women's share of manufacturing employment decreased while men's increased (ICRW, 1980, p. 43). More recent ILO statistics from 1970 to 1980 indicate that this is no longer the trend and that women's employment in manufacturing in these and many other developing countries is actually increasing. (Refer to Tables 2.3 and 2.4).

The reason for this apparent difference in findings may lie in the different time frames used. It has been observed that during the early periods of industrialization, women's employment opportunities in manufacturing tend to decline with the shift from production in the home (i.e. cottage industries) to production in the factory (ICRW, 1980, pp. 43-44). Factories established in the cities to produce household and other goods formerly made by women in their homes or in the village generally do not employ women workers because of their limited educational backgrounds, biases regarding women and technology, and the belief that women are only secondary earners and not stable or committed workers. Many women have no option but to turn to the service sector within the informal labour market, where they occupy low-level jobs with unpredictable earnings.

As a country becomes more industrialized, employment opportunities may expand again as there is a higher demand for cheap —or semi-skilled labour. This has certainly been the trend in Asia where the economic performance of newly industrialized countries (NICs) has attracted much attention. In South Korea, for example, 12.0 percent of working women were employed in manufacturing in 1966. By 1981 this figure had jumped to 20.4 percent. Singapore also experienced a dramatic increase, with the percentage of women employed in manufacturing going from 14.2 percent in 1957 to 39.0 percent in 1980. In the Philippines, however, despite its export manufacturing push, there was a decline in the percentage of women employed in manufacturing, dropping from 20.6 percent in 1960 to 15.0 percent in 1975 (refer to Table 2.3). The average, increase for the region in the percentage of women employed in manufacturing during the decade of the 1970s was 3.7 percent (refer to Table 2.4). While the experience of the Asian newly industrialized countries cannot necessarily be taken as an indication of future employment patterns for Asian women in general, they serve as an illustration of the changes that may accompany the development paths which the NICs have followed.

A statistical study by Michael Hopkins on "Trends in Employment in Developing Countries" indicates that between 1970 and 1980 there was no change in the percentage of women employed in manufacturing in the low income countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and a increase of 1.7 percent in the middle income countries between 1970 and 1980. Manufacturing, therefore, has not been a major source of new employment opportunities for Latin America and Caribbean women over the past ten years.

Comparable detailed data is not available for Africa, although tabulations based on the Hopkins' study shows that there has been an average increase of 2.0 percent in the proportion of African women employed in manufacturing, starting from a very low base. It should be noted that when there is an increase in manufacturing, there is a corresponding and generally higher growth of the service sectors as a result of the spin-off effects of industrial growth.

Where there are increases in the number of skilled and educated women in a particular economic sector, it is generally the result of a shift in occupational structure. In Africa, for example, simple clerical jobs initially were filled by men. In many instances women now hold these positions at lower rates of pay. The men who used to have these jobs have moved up the occupational ladder to better-paid jobs such as assistant bookkeeping, which offers improved opportunities for advancement (Boesveld, 1979, pp. 3-4). However, because of discrimination, educated women generally experience higher levels of unemployment than men with equivalent qualifications.

Nevertheless, there has been steady growth in women's employment in commercial services over the past 20 years. (Refer to Tables 2.3 and 2.4). This means that growing numbers of women are finding jobs as bank tellers, in insurance companies and as clerical and accounting staff. However, female employment in community, social and personal services has declined slightly over the same period.

Another significant source of the increase in employment for women in formal enterprises has been in those industries which are dependent upon a foreign market for their survival. Expansion within the international tourism industry, for example, has been rapid and many developing countries see its promotion as an effective means of generating both employment and foreign exchange. Those who question the wisdom of this policy cite the social costs of international tourism, particularly in terms of the disruption of traditional values and the promotion of consumerism. (English, North-South Institute, forthcoming). It is, however, an industry in which there are growing number of jobs for women, albeit at the lower end of the economic scale and often of a temporary nature.

For example, women in the Cayman Islands comprised 67 percent of guest house and hotel workers in 1970, although the proclivity for women to be laid off first in the off-season meant that this percentage declined by 17 during the slow months. In the British Virgin Islands, the corresponding peak-season share of female employment has been lower (about 45 percent), but is still higher than women's labour participation rate for the economy as a whole (Bryden, 1973, p. 127).

In Tunisia, the share of female employees (16 percent) appears low, but it must be looked at in the context of Northern Africa's overall female participation rate which stands at 4 percent (de Kadt, 1979, p. 43). In Malta women held 38 percent of tourism jobs in 1970. However, the passage of a bill in 1974 designed to reduce rising male unemployment by making it mandatory to give men priority over women in hiring for tourism jobs has contributed to a reduction in female employment in tourism. From 1970 to 1975 there was a drop of 38 to 32 percent (de Kadt, 1979, p. 43). In Bali, where tourism has led to a rapid growth in employment, in 1974 women held 16 to 17 percent of the hotel jobs (Noronha, 1979, p. 184).

Although women's employment in this sector appears to be higher than it is in many other economic sectors and is a new source of employment for women, the nature of the jobs available

to women follows a typical pattern. Most are in unskilled categories such as waitressing, kitchen and room maintenance and domestic service, and many are subject to seasonal fluctuations in demand for labour (Bryden, 1973, pp. 127-128). Female tourism employees also tend to be more vulnerable to layoffs and recession. For example, sluggishness in the Maltese tourist industry in 1972 resulted in lay-offs for 25 percent of female hotel workers. By contrast, only 15 percent of men lost their jobs (Boissevain and Inglott, 1979, p. 272). Given these problems, as well as the fact that only a small number of countries are developing tourism to a significant degree, this industry is unlikely to be a major source of female employment in the near future.

Female employment has also increased in certain export-oriented industries, many of which are located in the special export processing zones established by developing country governments to attract foreign investment. In the countries examined in an ILO-ARTEP study, it was determined that between 70 and 90 percent of the low-skill assembly jobs in these zones are held by women (from and ILO-ARTEP study cited in ICFTU, 1983, p. 16). While women's employment in the export processing zones is highly visible and there has been a dramatic growth in their numbers, it is important to keep these numbers in perspective. In terms of overall employment, export manufacturing both outside and within the export processing zones accounts for roughly 1.5 percent of total employment in developing countries (Renshaw, 1981, p. 70), although again it must be noted that growth in this sector has led to spin-off growth in services.

Workings Conditions, Laws, and Unions

As a general rule, the working conditions of women in formal enterprises in developing countries are poor, by any standard. Their work is frequently of a repetitive nature, requires low skill levels and offers little job satisfaction. It is also often done in small enterprises which do not make adequate provisions for safety, health or hygiene. Women's wages are also generally quite low.

The substantial savings made possible when industries hire women are shown by figures which suggest that, on a global basis, the average wages for men and women show a difference of 27 percent and in some countries and branches of industry the difference is perhaps most apparent by the fact that even within the same industry, men continue to enjoy greater financial rewards than do their female counterparts. Two studies cited by The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) confirm the existence of this unfair practice. In both the textile and footwear industries and in personal and domestic services in Columbia, women make only 57 percent and 26 percent respectively of men's wages (Mohan, cited in ICRW, 1980, p. 67). A similar rift between male and female earnings prevails in Singapore, where, in the late 1970s, women were being paid 83 percent of what men were in agriculture, 54 percent in commerce, and 45 percent in manufacturing (U Wen Lim, cited in ICRW, 1980, p. 67). During the same time period, women earned 30 percent less than men for equivalent work in textile production in Hong Kong (ILO-ARTEP, 1982, p. 6).

In theory, women who work in the formal enterprises usually have the same legal protection as male workers. However, they are "often easily prey to tactics through which employers 'informalize' work and evade legislative attempts to provide workers with protective regulations" (ILO-ARTEP, 1982, p. 2). The "putting out system" is one means of doing this and is particularly favoured by export-oriented industries. Under this system the factory owner or contractor provides women workers with all the necessary materials and tools to work in their homes. The women are paid on a piece-rate basis enabling employers to avoid paying minimum wages. The labour laws affecting them are difficult to enforce because the work is done in the women's homes and so is not as "visible". Because of their isolation the home workers are also seldom organized (ILO-ARTEP, 1982, p. 2).

Another method which has been used to circumvent labour legislation involves breaking the workplace into numerous, "functionally separate" sub-units. Although these units may share a common location, each one is considered sufficiently small on its own not to warrant the

regulations imposed on large enterprises (ILO-ARTEP, 1982, p. 2). Consequently, the working conditions and pay in these units are frequently far worse than in the larger factories.

Despite the obvious need for legislation which guarantees certain rights to workers in general and to female workers in specific, some types of legislation may have the ironic effect of discouraging employers from hiring women. Notably, laws designed to protect women's health, reproductive function or sometimes even their morality have had mixed results for women. The adoption by over 40 developing countries of several ILO conventions prohibiting women in industry from performing night and holiday shifts, as well as underground work, has served to limit the kinds of jobs women can get, the number of hours they work, and the wages they make (ICRW, 1980, pp. 49-50). As one analyst succinctly put it:

At the time of the drafting of these instruments, women were considered to be in need of protection because they were weak and incapable of looking out for themselves. The fallaciousness of such assumptions are now well recognized. Women are neither weak nor disabled and thus do not need to be protected from the realities of everyday life... (and) the law should provide for any employed or employable persons to be protected from conditions which may be detrimental to their health, security or advancement... (Rioux, 1974, p. 9).

Protective legislation frequently poses a dilemma both for women workers and policy makers. While there is an urgent need to improve women's working conditions, it appears that some labour laws are used to disguise the fact that women are being kept out of particular economic sectors. In many cases men are exposed to similar conditions—whether underground work or exposure to radiation—and yet are not prohibited from working in these circumstances to the same degree as women. In other cases, the cost to the employer of implementing the protective measures increases the cost of female labour and leads to hiring preferences being given to men. Protective legislation may also act to reinforce the sexual division of labour within the workforce, as women are refused entry to jobs considered inappropriate for females. Generally, such jobs offer higher wages than those attached to "female" tasks (ICRW, 1980, p. 49). In many cases, protective measures are being used to preserve a system in which better-paying positions are held for men, while women continue to form a reserve or secondary labour force.

Other problems related to protective legislation arise when attempts are made to accommodate women's child bearing and child care roles. Because of the costs involved in these programmes, industrial employers tend to give preference to hiring single or childless women. In Brazil, one study indicated that many firms deal with an employee's new marriage or pregnancy by firing her (ICRW, 1980, p. 52). Other employers may continue to hire female employees with families, but find ways to circumvent the legislation. For example, laws in some countries state that enterprises above a certain size or with more than a certain number of female employees must also provide crèche facilities for their workers. Some employers affected by this measure simply ensure that they hire less than the prescribed number of female employees. This was a common practice in parts of pre-revolutionary Nicaragua, where workplaces employing more than 30 women were required to provide certain services (Gillespie cited in ICRW, 1980, p. 53). However, above and beyond the problem of the extra costs which may be incurred by hiring women remains another serious obstacle to the attainment of sexual equality in the work force. So long as women continue to be defined primarily through marriage and motherhood, and men continue to exercise power over women in these realms, women's role in paid labour will be considered secondary and of less value than men's work. Thus, even single women without children may suffer the adverse effects of protective legislation based on socially constituted assumptions about what is 'natural' for their gender.

Another example of the way protective legislation may be used to maintain unequal gender roles can be seen in the prohibition of female employment in areas which pose a threat to "feminine morality". Such a law exists in Paraguay, although it fails to define what types of jobs 'corrupt' women (Silva et al; PREALC, cited in ICRW, 1980, p. 51). Similar concern for female

morality in Nigeria meant that, until very recently, maternity benefits did not apply to unmarried mothers (Debo Akande, cited in ICRW, 1980, p. 51).

It is interesting to note that there is a tendency for special protective legislation for women to be waived when there is a need for female labour in specific sectors. In Brazil, for example, in 1976 industrialists were successful in having government restrictions on women's employment after 10 p.m. removed as they needed to fill a labour shortage in the textile industry (ICRW, 1980, p. 50). Females employed in professions like nursing, where shift work is required, are also exempt from restrictions on night work.

Given the nature of the market economy, policy makers must be careful to ensure that their protective legislation does not hurt women's interests. At the same time, they need to develop effective enforcement measures combined with incentives to balance the extra costs of providing safe working conditions for women workers. When protective legislation is enacted, the question of who is paying for it must be considered. Is it an employer or government responsibility? Are maternity benefits, for example, to be paid out of general revenues or by the firm? Are there other ways of handling restrictions on night work for women such as increasing police patrols in factory and residential areas, increasing and enforcing legal sanctions regarding sexual assault or mounting educational campaigns against it? In other words, the responsibility for the problem needs to be traced back to its source rather than depriving its victims of their livelihood by restricting their access to paid work. If these questions are asked and appropriate actions taken certain types of protective legislation can lead to positive changes for working women.

Although women comprise a significant component of the labour force in a few industries, they rarely have much representation or influence in labour associations. For example, in Latin America, one finds few labour associations in the industrial branches with a predominantly female labour force. Where the work force is mixed, women tend to be dramatically under-represented in unions. Some women have dealt with this situation by creating cross-occupational labour organizations to which women only may gain entry. This type of organization is generally more effective at being heard than attempts made by individual union members in male-dominated organizations, although it does not seem to have exerted much influence in the formulation of national development plans (Orrego de Figueroa, 1976, p. 48).

In parts of Asia women are much more active in terms of their union representation. In Malaysia about half of trade union members are female (ILO, 1981, p. 43). The Ceylon Worker's Congress of Sri Lanka also has a membership which is higher than is typical of many unions with 52 percent of its members being female (ILO, 1981, p. 46). Union membership in itself, however, is not sufficient to guarantee improved working conditions for women. They also need to participate actively in the union structure and to have their needs taken seriously by male members.

In the past, male union members have put pressure on union leadership in order to convince management to define certain skilled jobs as "men's" work, and to assign the female workers the lower paying jobs. Male union members still tend to safeguard the more attractive work for themselves by actively resisting women's participation in trade unions and other labour organizations (Boesveld, 1979, p. 6). These practices have resulted in a further reduction of the jobs available to women (Heyzer, 1981, p. 4). The belief that women's wages are supplementary and the consequent seeking of a "living wage"* for male union members by the union leadership was and still is a factor contributing to this trend.

In some instances, collaboration between male union members and union leaders has

*) The wage given to men for their work in the labour market, is often known as a "living wage" and is supposed to be enough to cover the costs of supporting his family and the work that his wife does. In reality, it is only within the middle and upper classes of most societies that men generally command a sufficient wage that they can afford the luxury of having their spouses work only in the household. In Canada, for example, only approximately one in every seven families follow this demographic pattern. The institution of the living wage principle also leads to a situation whereby the economic equity in the family is owned by the husband and is one over which women have no control. The size of the wage the man receives is therefore immaterial in terms of offering women independent access to economic power.

widened to include management or owners, and even the State. An example of how large numbers of women have been pushed out of industrial employment can be seen in Puerto Rico, where the government awarded grants to companies meeting at least two-thirds of its labour requirements with men (Rogers, 1980, p. 39).

The fact that so few women join unions has as much to do with the socio-economic conditions which force them into the lower end of the labour market as with the discrimination they encounter within such strongly male-dominated structures. Most fear losing their jobs if they join a union and they have few alternatives for finding new employment. Furthermore, women in many countries have been taught to accept rather than challenge poor work situations. Thus, it is evident that "an improvement in women's lives will in the long run require women's increasing consciousness of their situation as well as their active participation in organization" (ILO, 1981, p. 37).

D. Employment Trends in the Informal Sector

The "informal" sector defined as self-employment on small business activity which tends to function outside official regulation and at the margin of the modern urban economy is growing faster than the formal sector and has come to rival or surpass formal enterprises as a source of jobs, particularly for women. The rapid growth currently characteristic of the informal sector is attributable to several factors, most of which are linked to modernization and industrialization. They include:

1. changes in the rural areas leading to the displacement of paid agricultural labour, the deepening of rural poverty and rural-urban migration;
2. changes in the nature of industrial production leading to the displacement of cottage and handicraft industries; and
3. the limited capacity of formal enterprises to absorb rural migrants and new entrants in the labour force.

The amount of employment generated by the informal sector is evident from the fact that in many African cities it employs between 50 and 60 percent of the labour force (Newland, 1980, p. 14). A disproportionate number of informal sector workers throughout the world are women. In India, for example, 41 to 49 percent of the female labour force is in the informal sector compared to 15 to 17 percent of the male labour force. Peru has an informal sector which is 46 percent female while its formal enterprises only employ 18 percent of Peruvian women (ICRW, 1980, p. 48). In Latin America generally 46 to 70 percent of the informal sector is made up of women (ICRW, 1980, p. 68).

Women's work in the informal sector are often extensions of their traditional tasks. Their work is generally in small scale handicraft production, food processing and vending, petty trading, prostitution and various other kinds of personal services which either have flexible hours or can be conducted from or close to the home. This allows the women to maintain their child care and other household duties at the same time as earning an income. Some analysts also include domestic work as informal sector employment because it is so marginalized in terms of wages and since the work is frequently not covered by government labour regulations.

Women's lack of access to credit is another factor restricting them to informal sector employment. Having limited cash reserves they are pushed into businesses which require little capital investment. Women also turn to self-employment in the informal sector "in response to the very low incomes of men as well as to inflationary pressures on urban earnings, which tend to react only slowly to overall changes in the cost of living" (Papanek, 1976, p. 60).

For women whose movements are restricted, such as those in *purdah* in Islamic societies,

informal sector employment may provide their only access to income. Within their compound walls many women are engaged in productive activities both in terms of private commercial production and in agricultural processing. The fruits of their labour earn some women a good income, especially when young children are available to help with sales. (Ahmad and Loutfi, 1982, p. 5).

Men who make their living through the informal sector tend to occupy the more attractive jobs and are more likely than women to find modern sector employment eventually (ICRW, 1980, p. 68). As in other economic sectors, women's position in the informal sector is at the lower end of the scale and it is precisely because of the women's weak economic position elsewhere that they have been forced to seek this kind of work in such great numbers.

In general, women's informal sector employment is in areas with less potential for growth (Heyzer, 1981, p. 5). Thus, they find it difficult to build up the capital required to expand their businesses. This is one of the reasons women experience greater difficulties moving out of the informal sector.

Local Trading

The largest source of informal enterprise employment for women is in trade. Men may also be traders, but tend to monopolize larger-scale trade, leaving the small-scale, hand-to-mouth trading activities to women. Among the reasons for female concentration in the latter are lack of access to credit, markets, trading contacts and transportation, all of which limit opportunities for expansion. Another key factor is that women's reproductive tasks (child care and domestic chores) frequently inhibit the mobility needed by large-scale traders (Church, cited in Heyzer, 1981, p. 6).

Many female traders are also small-scale farmers who are seeking to supplement poor incomes. A tiny minority have achieved considerable influence and stature in their countries through the successful expansion of their businesses (Foster, 1983, p. 2). This pattern is most notable in West Africa where some female traders have been able to establish commodity cartels in products such as cocoa and kola nuts. However, even the West African trading women are now finding that they are being superceded by better educated men (Foster, 1983, p. 18).

In general, where women are involved in trade, it is not in the leading sectors of the economy (Boserup cited in Papanek, 1976, p. 59), and the women involved have few, if any, alternative means of earning an income. The role they play, however is a crucial one. While governments tend to favour large-scale, export-oriented enterprises run by men, female traders deal with the small scale marketing problems involved in the collection of small amounts of produce coming from thousands of small farms before their delivery to urban consumers who require equally small quantities (Foster, 1983, p. 3). Female traders thus serve as part of an efficient distribution system, transporting small quantities of goods which would be ignored in other forms of commercial production. They also do so at a low profit margin which helps maintain low prices for consumers (the majority of whom are also poor). It does not, however, in most cases, provide the women involved with much more than a marginal income.

Modernization is also proving to be a mixed blessing for women traders. For example, in Nigeria in the past, 60 percent of the itinerant traders were women who acted as go-betweens for brokers and large-scale traders. With the development of improved roads, they are now being by-passed by the farmers who find that they save up to 15 percent in commission fees by transporting their crops directly to markets (Foster, 1983, p. 40). Latin American women are also discovering that while the improved roads initially help to expand their trade, they also have the long-term effect of weakening the local marketplace in favour of the larger towns (Foster, 1983, p. 43). Again this does not have to be the case and government and other programmes could readily take women's needs and interests into account in modernization schemes.

Domestic Service

Another major form of employment for urban women in developing countries is that of domestic service. Most domestic servants are migrants from rural areas who have taken up the only type of work they can find (save prostitution), and the vast majority are women. In Latin America, about 40 percent of all employed women work as domestics (Youssef, 1976, p. 70); between 55 and 65 and up to 80 percent of these have come from the countryside. Similar figures have been reported for some Asian countries — India and the Philippines, for example (ICRW, 1980, p. 58). Only in parts of the Muslim Middle East do females in domestic service appear to be outnumbered by males. In Syria, for instance, statistics depict women as constituting only 17 percent of domestic workers and, in Turkey and Libya, estimates stand at 10 percent (Youssef, cited in ICRW, 1980, p. 46). Whether or not figures for the Middle East are accurate is open to debate (ICRW, 1980, pp. 46; 61).

Domestic workers' marginalized position is closely tied to the low status of domestic work, the fact that there is both a large supply of unskilled female workers, and extremely limited job opportunities for unskilled workers in formal enterprises. Many rural women see it, however, as an opportunity to enter the paid labour force and eventually to upgrade their skills. In Latin America it has been observed that the feminization of domestic service has increased proportionately with economic growth, reflecting in part the fact that male workers in the service sector have been able to move up the economic scale leaving these jobs open for female workers.

For numerous reasons, including the long hours they work, domestics have little opportunity for self-improvement. Their isolation in private homes also limits their ability to contact other women in similar situations and to organize for collective action and gain the protection offered by unionizing (ICRW, 1980, p. 62). Since female domestics work longer hours than their male counterparts in other blue collar and informal enterprise jobs (PREALC cited in ICRW, 1980, p. 62) and earn about 60 percent of what other informal sector employees earn, (Chaney cited in ICRW, 1980, p. 62), their need for some kind of effective legal protection and an improved bargaining position is a matter of some urgency.

In recent years, parts of the informal service sector in developing countries have also become internationalized. Large numbers of female domestic servants are being "imported" from places such as the Philippines and the Caribbean to work in the advanced developed countries where there is a shortage of cheap domestic labour. Both the receiving and sending countries have been supporting this trend through legal and other incentives. Although most of the workers concerned are enthusiastic about the opportunity to immigrate which these jobs afford, the working situation of these migrant workers is often not much better in the advanced developed countries than that of their counterparts in the developing countries.

They continue to earn very low wages, work long hours, are isolated in the home, have limited legal protection and, in addition, are cut off from the family and village networks which they could call upon for support at home. The prospect of improving their situations, however, still continues to attract many domestic workers from the developing to developed countries.

Personal Services

Women also find employment in the informal sector by providing various kinds of personal services. These range from hairdressing to cooking food and selling it by the roadside. These services are generally small-scale activities with a limited local market.

Frequently they are spin-offs of the more formal enterprises. For example, tourism has created some informal sector employment. In a case study on Sri Lanka it has been observed that women's opportunities for self-employment in some of the coastal villages of Sri Lanka had increased concomitant with the growth in the tourist industry. Jobs were created by room rental to tourists (ranging from bed and breakfast places to shacks on the beach for lower-budget

tourists), small restaurants and food vending, and the production and sale of handicrafts. In some cases, the women involved were able to turn their small "informal" businesses into successful formal sector enterprises. For many, however, the jobs they created remained marginal in terms of the income they generated and the food and handicraft vendors in particular were restricted by local authorities from selling their goods on the beaches where most of their customers were to be found (Samarasuriya, 1982). Overall, the study concluded that while tourism caused a certain degree of social disruption, it did bring increased economic opportunities for women in spite of their lack of skills, education and capital and the pressure of childcare responsibilities.

Prostitution

A major ILO study suggest that most women in developing countries who work as prostitutes do so because "the normal productive value of (their)... labour is so low that they have no alternative..." (ILO, 1981, p. 29). Other occupations do not even being to offer a comparable income and the pressures on women to find some kind of work which brings more than a subsistence income are growing more intense.

Because prostitution is illegal in most countries, accurate statistics on the numbers of women (and men) who work as prostitutes are not readily available. However, one indication of the extent of employment it offers is evident from the fact that at least 12 percent of all women in Mexico City (where prostitution is legal) between the ages of 15 and 30 were registered as prostitutes in recent years (Foster, 1983, p. 109). In bangkok alone, the number of women working as prostitutes is estimated to be 200,000 (ILO, 1982, p. 7). Estimates in the Philippines indicate that there are as many as 100,000 women employed in the "hospitality" industry in Manila (Neumann, 1979, p. 18). These estimates may be quite low as applied to prostitution per se, since government statistics only account for those women employed in licensed establishments who must obtain health permits and periodic medical check-ups.

Attitudes towards prostitution differ from country to country. In some it is considered an acceptable profession for women, particularly if the women involved are supporting their families with their earnings. In some parts of Rajasthan, India, for example, a lack of alternatives has prompted women to take up prostitution for the purpose of procuring a dowry before marriage. In these cases, the woman's community accepts the responsibility of caring for any children resulting from her work (ILO, 1981, p. 27).

However, in many countries women cannot work openly as prostitutes and so double as waitresses, bar hostesses, masseuses, dancers and sauna bath attendant. A recent ILO study in Thailand discovered that many women working as masseuse/prostitutes were rural migrants between the ages of 18 and 23 with very low levels of education (40 percent of these interviewed had none). The kind of work available to them in Bangkok other than in the massage parlors paid below the minimum wage and since it was economic need which pushed them to migrate from the rural areas in the first place, the higher wages of the massage parlors were attractive (ILO, 1982, pp. vii, 14, 15).

Most of the women surveyed reported sending between one third to one half of their earnings back home, something they could not have done in another line of employment. While 94 percent of those interviewed expressed dissatisfaction with the nature of their work and wanted to quit their jobs, the majority could not afford to (ILO, 1981, p. 26). While the living conditions of the women's families were reported to have improved after they worked as masseuses, in most cases:

remittances financed everyday expenses, (and did not improve) the productive capacity. Thus a sustained escape from poverty did not result. Rather, dependence on the remittances was established and the families accumulated a vested interest in having a participant in the masseuse trade (ILO, 1981, p. 26).

Prostitution in developing countries also has an increasingly important international, North-South, connection because of the growth of the "sex tourism" industry. Sex tourism per se refers to the practice of including the services of prostitutes in a travel package deal, and travel agents advertise these services openly. The countries most noted for this practice are in Southeast and South Asia. It exists to a limited degree in the Caribbean as well, although there the relationship is not so formalized and it is men rather than women who work as prostitutes.

In recent years, there has been a growing protest against sex tourism because of the scale and blatantly exploitative character of this "North-South" relationship. However, the vast amounts of money generated by sex tourism means that many government officials and businesses have a vested interest in seeing it continue (Johnson, 1984, p. 10; ILO, 1981, p. 29). Any efforts by church and other groups to eradicate sex tourism therefore will be resisted quite strongly. The people who are most affected by this struggle (i.e. the women who work as prostitutes) often have the least say in the matter and are thus, in many ways, victims of circumstance of the actions of both sides.

For example, while the women involved admit that they do not like the work they do, they also state that they have no other viable employment options. The question must be raised, therefore, in any programme organized to counter sex tourism, whether steps will also be taken to provide the women with alternative forms of employment. Otherwise, they will be forced into other illicit activities or will flood the informal sector and become even more marginalized. It also must be kept in mind that the loss of employment these women face affects not only them, but their families as well since many send home a substantial portion of their income. Campaigns of this nature thus need to consider economic questions as well as moral grounds.

In general, while prostitution pays better wages than most informal sector jobs, it does not necessarily mean that the women involved are able to retain much money. The illicit nature of their profession means that a high proportion of their wages must be spent on protection money, bribes to police and tips to hotel workers. Because of the stigma attached to it, prostitution is an occupation which is also frequently a dead-end job and is one which usually women only enter when forced to by strong economic pressures.

Part III

Women in Developing Countries' Industries

Some very general trends in the employment pattern of women have already been outlined. Specifically, it has been noted that the role of the manufacturing sector as a source of employment remains small in most developing countries. However, in some regions—particularly Asia—employment in manufacturing has been expanding and the impact of this expansion on women has been significant. For example, between 1971-1980 the number of women employed in this sector more than doubled in the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong—and half of these were in the electronics and textiles and clothing industries (Lee, 1983, pp. 8-9). The importance of these two industries as generators of employment for women, therefore, necessitates a more detailed discussion.

A. Women and the Electronics Industry

The electronics industry is noted—in both developing and developed countries—for both its success in generating employment for women and for the relatively poor working conditions encountered by its labour force. In the developing world, electronics firms are found predominantly in Asia, Central America and the Caribbean. Unfortunately, the lack of comparable and consistent data as well as the cyclical nature of the industry makes it very difficult to estimate the total number of women it employs in these regions. One estimate suggests that 300,000 women are employed in this industry in South East Asia alone (ICFTU, 1983, p. 16).

What is clear, however, is that the vast majority—75 to 90 percent—of the assembly workers in the electronics industry around the world are women—and most of them are young, single and childless. They usually have some high school education and the majority are new entrants to the labour force. In the maquiladoras (the assembly plants of Mexico's border zones) 70 percent of the employees have never worked before (American Friends Service Committee, 1980, p. 10) and eighty-five percent of the female employees are between the ages of 17 and 23. In the Mazan zone in South Korea, 80 percent are between the ages of 14 and 24. Few of these employees are still employed by electronics companies by the time they are 30.

On the surface, the electronics industry in Asia and elsewhere appears to deviate from the standard employment available for women in manufacturing because it is a high technology field. However, the work the women do (usually assembling electronic components) is, in many ways, simply a variation of the work they traditionally perform. It requires low levels of skill, is labour-intensive, monotonous, poorly paid, offers limited job security, is conducted in what are frequently hazardous working conditions, and has minimal, if any, opportunities for promotion. Thus while it cannot be said to be an extension of women's work in the domestic sphere, the conditions which make female employees attractive to electronics industry employers have led them to define it as "women's work".

A 1978 study of a number of electronics factories in Singapore and Malaysia asked plant managers why they preferred to hire a predominantly young, single and female labour force. A summary of their responses includes the belief that:

- i) in comparison with men, female workers are more industrious, more obedient, and more suitable for delicate work because they are defter and more patient and have small fingers;
- ii) they are less inclined to organize themselves in trade unions;

- iii) they are prepared to take exceptionally low wages;
- iv) their recruitment is facilitated by the fact that other employment opportunities are almost non-existent; and
- v) young and unmarried women are the cheapest employees because they can be employed in factories that operate day and night (Lim in Boesveld, 1979, p. 5).

While female dexterity is a dubious rationale (there is no scientific proof that people with small hands are more dextrous than those with large hands, it is much more a question of training and general flexibility) the preference for female workers is no doubt largely a function of the low cost of this labour. The fact that unions are scarce means that wage increases are given mainly as a result of seniority. As well, starting wages are often low to begin with due to the abundance of a willing labour force. Indeed, electronic firms often justify lower wages for young women on the basis that they do not have families to support, an assumption that also makes it easier to justify laying them off (Grossman, 1978, p. 10). Further, since the majority of the women are single, childless and often living away from home, employers can demand shift work without interfering with the workers' domestic responsibilities, thus keeping the factory open continuously.

Perhaps the most questionable means of keeping wage costs down is through the use of a trainee system. For as much as the first six months of their employment, female workers in the electronics factories are considered trainees and thus paid apprenticeship wages even though personnel officers have stated that "a new operator can learn her job in a week or two at most" (Grossman, 1979, p. 10). The extent of the savings generated in this way is such that in one Asian country in 1974, trainees made up 40 percent of the workers in assembly industries, a figure which by 1977 had only dropped to 30 percent (ICFTU, 1983, p. 18).

Because of the low level of trainee wages, they often have to be supported during this period by their families. Moreover, in some plants, the workers are laid off when the maximum statutory period is over, preventing them from earning full wages at any point in their brief careers. An observation by the ILO perhaps sums up the situation best in its statement that while "strictly speaking this is not an illegal practice, it is hardly a praiseworthy one" (ILO, August 1983, p. 2).

The electronics industry's tendency to tap a very small and specific group of women has generated considerable discussion about the actual benefits of such employment creation. According to one observer, the low-skill nature of this employment "...means that women are absorbed and then rejected at different stages of their life cycle" (Heyzer, 1981, p. 5). Therefore, as in the case of most 'modern sector employment', older women who are married and have children are discriminated against in the labour market and must take what other employment is available in other sectors (Heyzer, 1981, p. 5).

Another concern raised by this type of labour differentiation is that the majority of those employed in these industries are *new entrants* to the labour force and thus it is felt that the level of 'real' unemployment is not being reduced. In other words, the fact that large numbers of 'male' jobs are not being created has led some to question the desirability of promoting this type of development.

However, while these and other criticism surrounding the type of employment created by the electronics industry must be taken into account, it is important to point out that these women would not be willing to take such employment if there was not a strong incentive—economic or otherwise—to do so. For example, having access to a regular job and a cash wage provides young women with some degree of financial independence for the first—and perhaps only—time in their lives. It also gives them the opportunity to escape "the confines of the rigid family set up" (ILO/ARTEP, July 1982).

Of primary importance, however, is the ability of this group to contribute to the total income of their families. Once their training period is over, the workers are able to contribute part of their earnings to the family's income. For example, in the Philippines many workers who had been working for more than two years reported sending home half or more of their monthly salaries, while in Malaysia, the average worker remittances ranged from 25 to 50 percent (Grossman, 1979, p. 11). Malaysian electronics workers also frequently reported having male family members who could not find work (Phongpaichit, 1982, p. 14).

In the urban areas, where the cost of living is generally higher and the young women are often still living at home, the extra income becomes indispensable. As one study has found, daughters are sent out to work to "...meet payments for necessities and for improved living standards which many urban families in developing countries have come to expect from their countries' development" (UNIDO, 1980, p. 20). While the wages for electronics workers are low, they are often higher than those they could earn in the informal sector.

Of course, this new role for women within the family structure brings added, and often unwanted, pressures. For example, one study of workers in Hong Kong and Taiwan indicated that families come to depend on the extra income and they "...resist their daughters' wishes to marry. (Since) After marriage the girls either stop working or use most of their income to set up a new household" (Grossman, 1979, p. 16). The case also arises where the older daughters must discontinue their own education so that they can work to pay for the education of the younger members of the family (UNIDO, 1980, p. 20).

The extremely high turnover rates of the electronics industry labour force has led many observers to question the quality of these jobs, especially with respect to the job security of the women employed and the conditions under which the women work. The average tenure of electronics workers in the export processing zones is three to four years and, as mentioned, few women are employed in this industry once they reach 30 years of age. This alone, however, does not explain turnover rates as high as 200 percent in one factory in Singapore or the *average* turnover rate of 60 percent per year in the export processing zones of the Dominican Republic (ICRW, 1980, p. 76). Rather, a combination of factors must be taken into account.

Many electronics companies deliberately pursue policies which encourage high turnover such as requiring employees to quit if they marry or become pregnant. They are able to do this profitably because the nature of the work is such that it does not require highly experienced workers to maintain high levels of productivity. Indeed, after three or four years on the job they start to lose their cost advantage since seniority requires higher wages and because deteriorating health caused by work conditions often reduces their efficiency. It has been observed that the "older" women are sometimes dismissed en masse and replaced by younger girls at the lower "apprentice" wage (Boesveld, 1979, p. 5). As mentioned earlier, the constant hiring, firing and rehiring of people as trainees allows for a significant reduction in the wage bill for many companies.

The ability to hire and fire workers without repercussions is also attractive to an industry so vulnerable to boom and bust cyclical variations and sensitive to cost competitiveness in a tough international market. For instance, during the mid-seventies' recession, one-half of the 40,000 workers in Mexico's border region were laid off (ICFTU, 1983, p. 18) and, in Singapore, one-third of all electronics workers—or 15,000 people—were put out of work (Lim, 1978, p. 18). Yet, when production commenced again, it was most unlikely that these people got their old jobs back. As discussed, it is much cheaper to hire new workers rather than recall those laid off. It is not uncommon either, for a manufacturer to simply close its facilities and move to another area where labour costs are lower, on the grounds that it could not compete internationally otherwise.

Besides the cost advantages inherent in promoting a high turnover rate and the genuine economic instability of the global electronics industry, another contributing factor is the voluntary withdrawal of women from the labour force. Given that the women employed are relatively

young, educated and single it is quite apparent that, presented with the choice, they will remain employed for the period between leaving school and getting married. (Lim, 1982, p. 5). While employers have little incentive to encourage long term commitment from their young female employees it can be argued that the employment created by electronics firms in export processing zones "fits a particular need not met by any other source of labour demand in developing countries" (Lim, 1982, p. 6).

Although, the women hired by the electronics industry would not accept these jobs if they did not have the incentive to do so, the fact remains that they learn on the job are minimal or not easily transferred to other economic sectors or industries. Worker mobility is also restricted between firms as neighbouring transnational corporations often collude in keeping wages low and frequently refuse to hire workers from other firms (ICRW, 1980, p. 76).

Mobility for female workers within a company is also difficult. After the trainee period, female workers generally remain in the same position until they quit or are fired. Unless they have to be shifted to a new section because deteriorating health is impairing their work performance, these women are destined to remain in the assembly operations of the electronics industry.

There is also a stigma frequently attached to factory work which can affect the women's ability to find other kinds of work. Personnel policies in the plants, particularly in the electronics industry, often deliberately promote and reinforce social values regarding feminine beauty and submissive behaviour among their workers. As part of this, female electronics workers are encouraged to wear make-up and buy Western fashions. This serves the dual purpose of distracting them from poor working conditions and reinforcing local cultural values which stress obedience and "good" behaviour, thus facilitating control over these workers.

However, it also sets them apart from the women in their villages and often gives them the reputation of being immoral. The fact that electronics jobs often require the girls to live on or close to the factory compound and that they are thus free to go out at night and to have boyfriends contributes to this impression. The contrast in lifestyle between the rural villages and that of factory life is such that after three or four years in the electronics industry, the women frequently find it difficult to readjust to village values.

The question of family acceptance also remains a problem and can cause considerable personal conflict for the women. This problem is "particularly severe in Malaysia where the factory culture is more pronounced than in other countries in the region" (Grossman, 1979, p. 13). This conflict plus the lack of alternative employment options for former female factory workers leaves many of them stranded after their employment ends. "Church organizers in South Korea, where the electronics industry is over 10 years old, report that many former electronics workers have no alternative but to become prostitutes to support themselves" (Grossman, 1979, p. 16).

A more important —although not unrelated— issue than the mainly economic characteristics that have been outlined thus far concerns the *working conditions* found in the electronics industry*. Specifically, questions have been raised about health hazards in the production process, the effects of a highly regimented work environment and the living conditions supplied for company employees.

With respect to health hazards two main problems are common. Firstly, because of the extensive use of microscopes in the electronics production process, eye disease and vision disorders are commonplace. After only a year of employment one Asian survey found that 88 percent of the workers had chronic conjunctivitis, 44 percent became near-sighted, 19 percent developed astigmatism, and headaches due to eye strain were common (UNIDO, 1980, p. 25).

*) It is perhaps noteworthy that the electronics assembly industry is listed as a "high health risk" industry under *American* occupational health and safety legislation (UNIDO, 1980, p. 25).

The second most serious hazard involves the chemical solvents used in the production process. Many are known to be carcinogenic and, when coupled with the fumes produced by metal soldering, clearly lead to reproductive problems, liver and kidney damage cancer among the assembly workers. As one observer concludes:

The health risks become acute where there is an absence of adequate protection and workers are not trained or informed of the dangers of working with chemicals (UNIDO, 1980, p. 25).

In addition to those external dangers, electronics factories generally operate within a tense and rigidly disciplined atmosphere providing few breaks during the long working day. Thus, the fast pace and intensity of monotonous and repetitive assembly work often causes and/or aggravates nervous disorders, including stomach ailments. The probability of industrial accidents is also increased by mandatory overtime and step-ups in production leading to fatigue (ICFTU, 1983, p. 21). Rotating shift work can also be "destructive" to one's health since the body must adjust to different schedules every one or two weeks. This is especially difficult for married women working the night shift and tending to their household duties during the day (UNIDO, 1980, p. 25).

Concerns have also been raised about poor living conditions at export processing zones, particularly overcrowding and inadequate sanitary facilities. Because many of the workers are rural migrants, shift work requirements and the length of time it takes to commute from the towns to the industrial parks where the export processing zones are located, the workers often live within industrial compounds.

Trade unions could play an important role in improving conditions for female workers in the electronics industry. However, both the transnational corporations and host governments have frequently blocked attempts of trade unions to organize the electronics and other export processing zones' workers. Other methods used to keep unions out and to maintain high levels of productivity are based on personnel policies which combine authoritarian discipline with human relations techniques. These include the promotion of "company slogans, publications extolling traditional female attributes, and recreational activities such as beauty contests" (ICFTU, 1983, p. 20). Sewing and make-up classes are other popular activities.

A bonus system is also used as an incentive for attendance, punctuality and high productivity. Indeed, it is only with these bonuses and overtime pay that workers are often able to earn an adequate income (Grossman, 1979, p. 11). The other side of this is the quota system that is used to manipulate the workers. This system often takes the form of competitions among the workers who receive a small bonus for producing the highest number of units. Since quotas are continually being raised as the workers become more proficient, this is one means of maintaining worker motivation. The productivity records of workers in other subsidiaries are also sometimes presented to Asian workers to induce them to maintain or surpass quotas.

A certain degree of worker isolation also serves to preclude the electronics workers from unionizing. The division between the various industries in the export processing zones "makes it difficult for workers to cross industry lines to organize themselves or even to understand their common position as workers and as women" (Grossman, 1979, p. 16). Electronics workers are also set apart from other factory workers because of their generally higher levels of education.

Despite the belief that women are more docile workers, organized protest against poor working conditions and pay is starting to develop. In some plants, unions are being organized even in the face of strict government restrictions against unionization. Where this has not proved possible, workers in a number of countries have shut down plants by means of spontaneous protests.

These then are some of the costs of economic development in the electronics industry. The

major benefits have already been mentioned —e.g. women's access to jobs and an independent income. The ILO sums up the situation well in its statement that: "most Asian developing countries appear to be opting for maximum short-term employment and income for the rotating segment of female workers" (ILO, August 1983, p. 2).

B. Women Workers in Textile and Clothing Industries

The textile and clothing industries in developing countries have a great deal in common with the electronics industry: both are relatively labour intensive, low wage and low skill industrial activities; they are major export industries; and they have a predominantly female labour force. Many of the factors outlined above affecting the decision by women to take up such employment also apply to the textile and clothing case.

However there are important differences as well. Whereas electronics is one of the newest modernizing industries in the developing world (some have referred to electronics firms as "space-age sweatshops"), the textile industry is the oldest modernizing industry and has played an important transitional role in the industrialization process for several centuries (Boulding in Dauber and Cain, 1981, p. 11). While the electronics industry has sprung up in developing countries almost exclusively due to offshore investments by transnational corporations and with most of its output destined for export markets, the textile and clothing industries have usually had indigenous entrepreneurial roots and have at least initially centered on serving the domestic market.

In recent years the "traditional" structure of the textile and clothing industries has been changing in many developing countries due to the promotion of manufacturing for export, particularly in the garment industry. In Asia, for example, approximately one-sixth (100,000) of the jobs created in Asian export processing zones have been in textiles and clothing. In some countries such as Sri Lanka, export processing zones' production and employment has been overwhelmingly in these industries (Ramanayake, 1982, p. 25). Even in the zones, these activities are much more likely to be local or at least Asian businesses than is the case with electronics (Castro, 1982, p. 24).

In Asia, therefore, there has been a large transition from a primarily domestic industry to one with considerable export value. As one observer has noted:

More than any other industries, textiles and clothing have been responsible for Asia's rapid industrialization and for its burgeoning foreign exchange earnings. In the past three decades textiles have become the continent's most important export industry and largest industrial provider of jobs (Robert, 1983, p. 27).

Textile and clothing industries have traditionally been a rare source of paid employment for women in many countries throughout history and today embody many of the characteristics of female industrial work discussed in the previous section. That is, the work is monotonous, low-skill, poorly paid, labour intensive and subject to a boom and bust production cycles. Well over 80 percent of the workers are women and they are hired for much the same reasons as are women in the electronics industry —they can be paid very low wages and are relatively easy to control. In fact wages are generally not as high in textiles and clothing both because lower educational and skill levels are required and productivity is lower than other industries (Lim and Fong, 1982, p. 176).

The textile and clothing industries are also similar to the electronics industry in that they do not necessarily add to employee skills or enhance opportunities for alternative employment. One ILO study cited by Robert observes that:

For women with no particular training, it is easy to learn. But for those who have some experience and may even be skilled seamstresses the fragmented operations offered in many workshops may result in a loss of skill over a certain period (Robert, 1983, p. 32).

At the same time the textile and clothing industries do not give their employees much credit for the skills they do have. Although sewing is a skill and much of their work requires a manual dexterity which comes from years of practice, because these are skills which are generally learned in the home, and consequently are "invisible", they are frequently not recognized as skills per se. As a result, women's skills are undervalued and the women are not paid salaries commensurate with what many male workers would earn who spent the same amount of time getting formal training.

One reason these industries are able to more or less ignore women's traditional skills in this area is that, as in the electronics industry and the industrial sector generally, women are usually engaged in the least skilled and least technical aspects of production. Often these are the first and last stages of production —preparing, arranging, assembling and packaging although even in these areas new technology might displace women in the future. The middle stages involving production technology have much lower levels of female participation.

The fact that the size of the female labour force is usually inversely related to the degree of automation is well illustrated by the relatively low numbers of women workers employed in synthetic textiles, the most capital and technology intensive part of the textile industry. The case of India is illustrative. In 1946, women workers made up 12 percent of the Indian textile work force but by 1976 their participation had dropped to 4 percent. The jobs reserved for women were generally those in departments which did not use power equipment and, as such, paid less than "male" occupations (Chhachhi, 1983, p. 39).

Job security is also tenuous, for reasons similar to those common in the electronics case. The clothing industry, however, is in some ways unique in that it also experiences periodic fluctuations in its labour force requirements due to seasonal variations and changes in fashion. Employers therefore prefer to be able to readily hire or fire workers and the lack of protective legislation often ensures that they can do so without paying compensation.

In order to maintain a flexible labour force of skilled workers parts of the production process in the clothing industry are being increasingly given to sub-contractors who in turn often employ homeworkers. Since the jobs that are reserved for women are generally the least mechanized, they are also the parts of the production process which were most easily adapted to the contract system. In both the developed and developing countries these homeworkers are paid on a piece-rate basis and thus frequently earn much less than the minimum wage. Since they are usually paid in cash they are not able to claim the tax and social security benefits to which a self-employed person is entitled in some countries. These workers are also much more unlikely to join unions or take part in other organized labour activities.

Although homework allows women to earn an income at the same time as giving them the flexibility to maintain their domestic responsibilities, the homeworkers find that there is no real separation between home and work and that there is a constant pressure to work. In addition, the normal house is not suited to garment production and consequently may create health hazards for the worker and her family (Mitter and Van Luijken, p. 65). The contracted work is, at times, still carried out on factory premises but again, since it is contracted, the women involved receive no benefits. Frequently it is the younger women who work on contract since many factories avoid having to pay maternity benefits by hiring only women over 40 for more permanent positions.

Working conditions in the clothing industry are often very poor and are actually considered to be generally worse than in the electronics industry (UNIDO, 1980, p. 25). Common occupational health problems include backstrain from bending over machines and lifting heavy bundles of materials, eyestrain because of poor lighting and detailed work requiring close concentration, skin problems created by allergies resulting from exposure to the particular materials with which the women work and lung disease resulting from breathing in fibre dust in poorly ventilated factories (Robert, 1983, pp. 31-32). Rotation shift work also causes health problems as the

women find it difficult to readjust their eating and sleeping habits and complain of fatigue and headaches.

These health problems are exacerbated by long hours. Compared to European workers in the same industries, it has been found that textile and clothing employees in developing countries work 20 to 30 percent longer than their European counterparts. For example, in South Korea approximately one-half the workers work more than 8 hours a day and 30 percent have 15 hours workdays (Robert, 1983, p. 32). This does not mean however, that productivity per hour is lower. Indeed, there is evidence that in various parts of the production process it is higher. Moreover, despite the poor working conditions and the strain of rigid discipline, absenteeism and turnover are much lower than in the developed countries. Workers are reluctant to stay away from work when they are sick because, it is possible that they will be replaced by "fresh labour" (Robert, 1983, p. 31).

As in the case of the electronics industry, the conditions under which women must work in the clothing industry could be improved through increased unionization. Unfortunately, organized labour activities in the developing countries are almost non-existent in this industry and, as the following quote indicates, the possibility that employers will initiate wage increases and improvements in working conditions is very small.

This is particularly true in the garments industry where there are numerous firms world-wide and entry into the industry is relatively easy, given the low capital and technology requirements. In some of the Asian countries especially, small, indigenous firms have very narrow profit margins and frequently close down, becoming 'fly-by-night' operations (UNIDO, 1980, p. 35).

In the face of such a system it would appear that the quality of employment offered women by the textile and clothing industries in developing countries may not improve in the short-term. However, like their counterparts in the electronics industry, viable employment alternatives do not exist.

Part IV

Directions for Action

Over the last few decades, major changes in the international political economy have done much to alter the every day lives of women and men in both the developed and developing worlds. In developing countries, the growth of industry and manufacturing, as well as the restructuring of agricultural production, have had a dramatic impact on women's patterns of work. A growing body of literature on this subject has shown that while such changes have generated new possibilities for female employment, they also have been instrumental in many cases in undermining the traditional bases—economic and social—of women's power.

Where women have not been left to concentrate solely on non-waged subsistence production, they tend to have filled the lower rungs of the waged labour force, earning less than men, gaining fewer skills, and coping with poorer working conditions. Many, who because of their gender, have faced impenetrable barriers to modern sector employment, eke out a living through such "informal" activities as petty trading, domestic service or prostitution. Increasingly, however, employers in some sectors of industry and agriculture prefer female labour because it is a relatively low cost, malleable, and vulnerable work force. Thus, the gains associated with new employment opportunities are frequently offset by the poor conditions of women's work.

Although women occupy marginal positions within the economy, the prevailing sexual division of labour in the home has meant that women continue to make a substantial, if largely unrecognized contribution, to national economic welfare through their domestic chores and child care activities. The fact that few income generating activities complement this role has produced an intensification of sexual inequality, as women straddle dual spheres without much support in either.

It is clear that major changes at the national and international levels are needed if the unacceptable situations of most women are to improve. From our discussion here of the impact of key trade and development trends on women, specific areas for change can be identified.

Directions for Action

Given that women are involved in, but not recognized for, a wide range of economic activities and, that there remain many avenues not accessible to them, it is necessary:

- that a data base be developed in each country that reflects and registers the extent of female participation in all areas of the economy and the level of unemployment among women;
- that this data, and other information already collected, be used to assess women's present productive contribution in all areas of economic activity, including domestic labour and child care, thus recognizing their role in economic development;
- that employment for women be promoted in all sectors and at all levels and that their current levels of skill be recognized and/or enhanced to ensure that the full benefits of employment accrue to them.

Vast numbers of women are employed in agricultural production at both the subsistence and commercial levels. For a variety of reasons, this group is particularly vulnerable to alterations in the domestic structure of production and to global market fluctuations. To minimize their

vulnerability, governments must correct for the long term neglect of subsistence agriculture, the creation of job ghettos in agribusiness and the biased impact of new agricultural technologies and farming systems. In particular they should ensure:

- that women's traditional assets and usufruct rights are registered and observed, and that new legal codes and land tenure systems do not give preference to men over women as has been the case in the past;
- that women have adequate access to cash or credit in order to buy land and new equipment;
- that women are given better access to basic education and training, as well as to information about farming methods, technological innovations, and possible work hazards;
- that efforts are made to develop non-agricultural employment for rural women, e.g. small scale industries, professional and administrative services, construction, etc., which will cushion the negative effect of declining opportunities in agriculture;
- that women are included in the introduction of new technologies and that they experience net benefits in terms of income and employment security;
- that employment practices and working conditions in the agribusiness sector are monitored and that acceptable codes of behaviour are adhered to by the corporations involved;

Employment opportunities for women in the formal sector —e.g. manufacturing, commercial services and tourism— are becoming more prominent in some developing countries. Yet, the full and equal participation of women in the labour force remains restricted and job segregation due to sex stereotyping prevails. To ensure that the full benefits of female participation are attained, governments must:

- put into place and enforce basic minimum wage legislation that protects workers from unfair labour cost-cutting practices;
- recognize that violations of basic human rights and absolute standards of a safe working environment cannot be condoned —or justified— by the need to generate employment;
- implement and enforce labour legislation meeting international standards which provides for fair hiring, and dismissal procedures, skills development and training facilities, maternity benefits and leave, and occupational health and safety standards;
- assess the full effects of protective labour legislation, revise outdated protective measures, and ensure that social security provisions do not promote discriminatory hiring practices.
- generally assess the costs and benefits of subsidizing the creation of special zones as a means of creating employment, and move to ensure that the firms operating in these zones respect basic international employment standards.
- join with union and employers in developing countries in ensuring that women's rights to unionization are respected and that they enjoy equal status with men within these male-dominated organizations.

There is a disproportionate number of women employed in the informal sector in develop-

ing countries. The income these women generate to support themselves and their families and the contribution they make to the local economy is significant, yet for the most part goes unrecognized. To enhance the role played by this sector, governments should:

- quantify the number of people employed in this sector and assess both the role it plays in the national economy and the needs it fills in local markets;
- provide workers in this sector with access to literacy programmes and other basic training that will assist them in their informal sector activities and improve their economic viability;
- wherever possible (e.g. in the case of domestic workers) seek to protect workers from poor working conditions and unfair employee practices by extending the coverage of existing labour legislation;
- act immediately to stop the exploitation of women in the sex tourism industry.

The developed market economies continue to absorb the majority share of the developing countries' exports and thus their trade policies can have a profound impact on trade, industrial development and employment in the developing world. As we have seen, women often predominate in the work forces of developing countries' export industries and thus their employment opportunities are directly affected by the import regimes of the developed countries. In this regard, developed countries should ensure that:

- their trade policies do not discriminate *against* the products of greatest natural export interest and opportunity for the developing countries (e.g. labour intensive manufactures) or *in favour* of less viable and beneficial export activities such as offshore assembly manufacturing;
- their trade policies in general are consistent with the principles set out in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and as such do not discriminate specifically against developing countries;
- special trade policy consideration is given to the least developed countries just entering international trade to ensure that they are not particularly hard hit by discriminatory trade practices (e.g., as is the case under the Multifibre Arrangement).

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CORRIGENDUM TO:

WOMEN AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: TRADE AND INVESTMENT

STUDY PREPARED BY THE NORTH-SOUTH INSTITUTE AT THE REQUEST OF INSTRAW

Page 5, Paragraph 7. Last line. "...studies and to consolidate them into a publication on women in international economic relations."

Page 6. Paragraph 2. Line 3. "...collaboration with the North-South Institute in Canada. It discusses the impact on women on..."

Page 9. First footnote. Line 4. "...employees or traders in these non-agricultural commodities than in agriculture. They are, of course, no less exposed, and possibly more so, to the general economic pressure that comes with..."

Page 12. Paragraph 4. Line 4. "...convinced them that they would be better off if they reduced their dependence on the markets of..."

Page 13. Paragraph 3. Line 14. "...tions' investment in developing countries and an increase in women's employment, particularly in..."

Page 14. Paragraph 4. Line 2. "...trading order that would be more responsive to their specific needs. This goal was a central..."

Page 16. Paragraph 3. Line 11. "...excluded..."

Page 17. Table 2.1 First word. "Female"

Page 20. Table 2.3 Between Singapore and Thailand should read:

"Sri Lanka	1963	57.8	8.8	2.8	17.7
	1971	43.3	8.6	2.1	11.5
	1980	40.4	11.9	6.0	13.3
		-17.4	+ 3.1	+3.2	- 4.4 "

Page 24. Footnote. Line 2. "...Institute, 1983) for a discussion of how Green Revolution technologies can be implemented in such a way that they are..."

Page 27. Paragraph 1. Lines 4 and 5. "...an increase of 1.7 percent in the middle income countries between 1970 and 1980. Manufacturing, therefore, has not been a major source of new employment opportunities for Latin American and..."

Page 28. Paragraph 2. Line 5. "...women (from an ILO-ARTEP study cited in ICFTU, 1983, p.16). While women's employment..."

Page 29. Paragraph 2. Line 3. "...discouraging employers from hiring women. Notably, laws designed to protect women's health, ..."

Page 38. Paragraph 3. Line 3. "...that families come to depend on the extra income and they "...resist their daughters' wishes to..."

Page 39. Paragraph 4. Line 2. "...ability to find other kinds of work. Personnel policies in the plants, particularly in the elec-..."

Page 40. Paragraph 1. Line 3. "...metal soldering, clearly lead to reproductive problems, liver and kidney damage and cancer among the..."

Page 41. Paragraph 6. Line 4. "...low-skill, poorly paid, labour intensive and subject to boom and bust production cycles. Well..."

Page 42. Last paragraph. Last line. "...factories (Rober, 1983, pp.31-32). Rotation shift work also causes health problems as the..."

Page 44. Last Paragraph. First line. "Vast numbers of women are employed in agricultural production at both the subsistence..."

Page 45. Paragraph 1. Item 4. Line 1. "...that efforts are made to develop non-agricultural employment for rural women, e.g...."

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Printed in the Dominican Republic

Research Study No. 1 – G
1,000 – English – May 1985