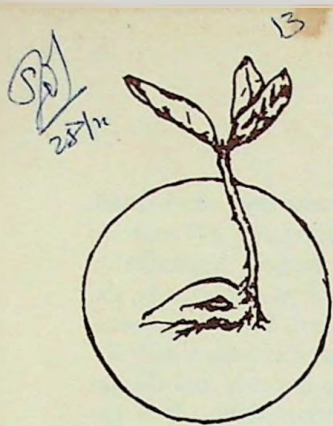




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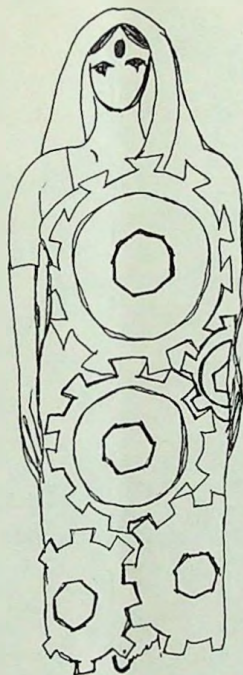
FEDINA NEWSLETTER

4/1991 (October)

Rural Woman - A Work Machine

Seminars, workshops, and conventions are held here and there, especially in urban areas, in the cool of the air conditioned halls of five star-hotels to discuss and reflect upon the status and situation of the rural woman. People of importance gather round in the typical five star culture to understand about a woman who is far away in the rural area, in the distant field, under the burning sun, toiling for her livelihood, half starving, undernourished as is bent down to lick the dust of this earth, which supports her life and existence. Though the notion is progressing and moving towards the 21st century, the rural woman is still way behind. Though changes of modernization and industrialization have reached the villages, it has not done anything to uplift the life-situation of rural woman.

All the time we are made to believe, that the future of India depends on her villages. In the name of green revolution, tractors, chemical fertilizers and pesticides are dumped in the villages, but no proper facilities are given for basic education, good primary health care, just and equitable public distribution system etc. On the other hand liquor shops and video parlours have made in-roads in every village. Youth who have studied a bit cannot relate to the land on which they were brought up, and plan to migrate to cities. If you consider all these, can we say that our villages have changed? Has anything happened to our rural women?



May be the rural woman too has changed a bit. Cosmetic articles are found in every village. Here and there bore-wells are sunk. Construction of roads, canals and small dams etc. have opened up alternative labour possibilities. One can see change at the superficial level, but deep down there isn't any change.

Birth - a crime?

In the rural areas, the birth of a girl child is still an unwelcome happening. For majority of people, it is a curse. the female child is unwanted. On the contrary, there is a craving for a male child due to the religious beliefs and cultural attitudes of our people. There

is a strong feeling that only through a male child the lineage is continued, it is only through a male child, one can attain Moksha. This is reflected in the upbringing of the children. The male child is better cared for, looked after and well fed. Whereas the girl child gets less attention, partial treatment and care, and less opportunities. Many a time, the women in the house itself act as enemies of a girl child, as she is considered to be unwanted. Even the parents who gave her birth care less and show less consideration and love. This has caused greater infant mortality among girls than boys.

One can notice that women to men ratio has come down considerably. There were 933 women per 1000 in 1981 and now in 1991 census shows that there are only 929 women to 1000 men. This clearly manifests the attitudes of this society that girl child is not easily acceptable.

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Struggle:

The girl child has to struggle for existence right from her birth. She has no recognition either at home or in the society. She is considered to be an outsider, to be given away in marriage, and dispatched to another house. So why to invest on one who is to flower in another house? Why care for one who is to become a part of another family. These are cultural attitudes that we have inherited. The female child is a liability where as a son is an asset to be cared for and looked after. Thus from the beginning hardships are in store for girls. It is a great struggle for the girl to get an opportunity to go to a school. Surveys have shown that 80% of the rural boys are admitted to standard 1, whereas only 54% of rural girls get this chance. Of the girls who are admitted to school, only 24% survive till standard VI and just 15% reach pre-university studies.

It is not just the rural poverty which is the cause of rural girls not getting the opportunity of schooling but the attitude of people that it is girls who have to learn the household work as they are to be prepared to be members of another family. On the contrary, it is the boys who have to learn, achieve something in life and become the bread-winner of the family. Hence, the childhood of most of the rural girls is spent in household chores, taking care of the younger siblings and take care of the home while mother is away toiling in the field etc. Secondly, our education system itself in no way considers all these aspects, and is irrelevant

to rural girls. The system itself keeps away girls from the basic education.

Child marriage:

As for the rural folk, there is only one objective in a girl's life, i.e., she has



to be given in marriage, and attain motherhood. Getting the girl married seems to be the biggest responsibility of parents. At the first opportunity, the marriage is arranged. There is no question of finding out girl's likes and dislikes; whether she is ready and mature to accept this responsibility. It is the parents or elders who decide everything on behalf of the girl. The parents heave a sigh of relief when they finally settle their daughter in marriage. They are not really concerned about her feelings, or what happens to her after the marriage. Whatever happens to her, they believe, is her fate and they cannot do anything about it or couldn't have done better.

According to the survey conducted, 66% of the rural women had married when they were between 10 -14 years. Though according to 1981 census, the marriage age is 18.3 years, but more than half of the women married before they completed 18 years. Many of the rural women, by that time, have mothered more than one or two children, and suffer physically and psychologically.

It is the general belief that girls are meant for work. Right from the time, the girl is able to walk and can have a moderate grip in her hands, she is made to work, like sweeping, cleaning and carrying. Later on cooking and taking care of the house becomes her responsibility. In agricultural areas, besides the household work, she has to also join the field work. According to one survey, a girl in rural area works

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1400 KM WALK

Ecological degradation and deforestation has made the life of the rural woman increasingly difficult in meeting her requirements of firewood, water and fodder. She has to walk and walk! According to a survey conducted in a village called Pura in Tumkur district of Karnataka, a woman in a family has to walk about 1400 kms a year in order to collect 1.74 tonnes of firewood. Watch out - this is more than the distance between Bombay and Delhi !

WOMAN, THY NAME IS EXPLOITATION !

A lot of water has flown down the bridge since the world has woken up to the issues faced by women. From then on a hue and cry has been raised practically from every corner of the globe, to understand and improve the plight of women.

There seems to be a sudden awakening; the dormant, male-dominated and insensitive society has begun to realise that there exists another being, like himself, who craves for recognition and acceptance as a human being.

National and International bodies re-oriented themselves to face this urgent issue, and began declaring days, years and decades dedicating them to the cause of women. Programmes, large and small, are being conceived and implemented for the upliftment of the "Weaker Sex"

Where are we in India? It is said that women enjoyed considerable or equal freedom in the Vedic age. Even during the Brahmanas, though considerable changes were noticed, women were free to move about, had a right to select their spouse, and even divorce them. Widow re-marriage was accepted. Towards the end of the Brahmanas, and especially during the Epic period, saw a deterioration in the status and freedom of women. She was confined to the house. Early marriages were introduced. The main goal of a woman was to remain 'pativrata' and the special blessing was "Sada-Suhagan". Ban on widow remarriages came into existence. The dictum that a wife ought to accept her husband as a God even if he is a drunkard, useless, or even unable to function, was accepted without questioning. Practice of Sati was also introduced. The theory of perpetual tutelage of women was clearly formulated by Manu, the law giver. This role of woman became permanent and was accepted in its totality.

To add to this, dowry, wife-beating, bride-burning, and demand for the birth of a male child further condemned the life of women to a degraded and exploited situation. Factors like socio-cultural and religious sanctions fettered the woman all the more to a sub-standard level of existence. For media and advertising agencies, she is a symbol of sex to be used to attract more and more consumers.

In India, which has progressed so much and has taken such big strides in development, as far as the woman is concerned is still in the Epic age. We still hear of "Banus" here and "Ameenass" there. Dowry deaths are common and the ugly practice of Sati is raising its head again. Widows are still regarded as inauspicious and have no place in society. Sexual molestation and rape is on the increase. Are women in our society considered as human beings of dignity and respect ?

Voluntary organisations, professing different values, are themselves not far away from these. There is a large gap between theory and practice. Though crude forms of exploitations are not visible, subtle ways are quite rampant. Woman, because she is a woman, has been and will be treated so and not considered as a human being. Male chauvinists will not allow women working along with them to grow up as healthy human beings. Can we expect a change ? A new direction and a new vision ?

more than 9 hours at home daily, and about 300 days a year. If minimum wages are paid, then she would have earned Rs.4500 - 5000/- per annum, or by the time she reaches, i.e. she would have earned around Rs.55,000 to 60,000/-. Yet the girl is useless, a liability. More than 42% of India's population; below 15 years, and nearly half of it are girls, of these about three fourth are rural women. How much unpaid labour they have contributed to the society.

Unpaid labour

The rural women's contribution to the society is their unpaid labour. It is the foundation on which rural women operate. She labours in the house of her birth, then once married, continues the same or more in the husband's house. From early dawn to late night, she is a working machine. It is also noted that 85% of the rural women work as agricultural labourers. She is the backbone of the Indian agriculture.

Most of these women work in three shifts; from early morning till such time she goes to work; then in the field during the day; and from the time she returns home till she finally retires for rest. She has to care not only for the house, but also for animals if any. It is the same case with girls/women belonging to rural artisan's family, as they involve themselves in the family trade. Yet all these are termed as "Unproductive Labour", even though she puts up 14 to 16 hours of work is unrecognized, not valued, and the woman's work is considered secondary. If only this society could value the labour of the rural woman, this could amount to more than half of the national income.

In spite of her intense participation in labour and production, in building up the nation's economy, she suffers most

from various natural or created scarcities. Droughts, ecological degradation, price rise has the direct effect on women. Mechanization in agriculture has lessened her job opportunities. During droughts even migrate in search of labour, leaving women to care for the household.

Water - fetchers; firewood collectors:

Fetching water seems to be the work of women in rural areas. Water for cooking, bathing, cleaning and for animals has to be procured by women. It is noted that rural women nearly spend 4 hours a day to fetch water. When mothers are away at work, it is the duty of the grown up girls who



have to fetch water. It could be considered as our national symbol - the girl carrying a large pot of water!

Another area that is set aside for women is the collection of firewood for cooking food. Rural families cannot afford to buy their requirements of fuel. Hence, they have to collect the firewood needed. It is the women who have to walk miles together to collect firewood.

It is very rarely that rural men give a helping hand to women in their household work. Generally men begin their work in the field and also end it there, whereas women, like a working machine, start their work at home, continue it in the fields and then again end it at home. No amount of modernization has lessened the burden of the rural women. It is in the hands that toil continuously and the feet that

move are the ones that provide for the family. They are the instruments of labour in rural areas.

In spite of being part of production, the rural women are deprived of a square meal a day. It is said that, nearly if not more of the world's food has been produced by women. Yet the rural women suffer from scarcity. They eat after everyone in the family has eaten, and often they are underfed. On the one hand hard work, on the other hand malnutrition has worsened the situation of women. It is only twice they are really cared for, once at the time of child birth. Even here, due to the rural poverty they don't get the needed care.

Alienation

Rural woman is alienated from all that we call development. She is alienated from good medical care, nutritious food, educational opportunities etc. She is prone to ill health, malnutrition. Early marriage and motherhood has

deteriorated her health. As in every developing or under-developing countries, there is a high percentage of mortality at child birth. According to a survey, the mortality rate of women at child birth is quite high in India. For every hundred thousand women, the death rate is 92 in Mexico, 15 in France, 7 in Denmark, whereas it is 450 in India.

Though government machinery propagates constantly the health care of women, even though she is the subject of family planning etc., she gets no health care at her village. Very often women are remembered only in family planning programmes. For good or bad, they are the targets of this programme. But for their other health needs, there is no one to care for.

She has to face many other problems. She has to inhale poisonous smoke while cooking, work in polluted water, and survive all the hardships, rural poverty, cultural attitudes and other traditional practices imposed on them. She gets neither compassion nor hospital care. She gets worried about everyone's health, but no one to worry about her, and neither she is worried about it.

If she has no time to worry and think about herself, how on earth she can find time to reflect on her status in the society. In the vicious circle of Labour and family care, she is caught up like a machine and goes on this way till she breathes her last. There is no reward for her sacrifice, as it is her duty.



On the other hand, even though she produces more than half she owns nothing, there is no property in her name. She has no right to decide, It is always the man who owns and decides. In rural areas, men spend most of their wages on themselves, whereas the women spend the entire wages on the family. Women are considered to be the second class citizens, they have to put up with everything, with the whims and fancies of men, drunkenness, beating, oppression etc. This is the fate of the rural women irrespective of caste or class.

Legal assistance

Rural women have no access to any legal assistance. Child- marriage, right to property, minimum and equal wages, exploitation and oppression etc., in all these, she does not know what legal

assistance she has, or what right she could claim for. She accepts everything as her fate. When health facilities have not reached the villages, how on earth, the legal education and assistance could reach the villages. All the development programmes are planned in urban areas, and they hardly touch or relate to rural women. It has further sharpened the irregularity between men and women. Rural women suffer from the twofold oppression, one being poor and the other being woman. Religion, culture and traditional practices has further exploited the fragile situation of women.

Nation's real work force is woman. Yet they don't have the purchasing power. It may be the reason why advertising agencies rarely focus on rural workers in their sale of consumer goods, knowing well that it produces no results. On the contrary they target at urban middle class women. The rural women only labour and rarely they enjoy the fruits of their labour.

For the rural woman, labour is her breath, insecurity is her name. Though to a certain extent, life has changed, it has made her life more difficult, as she has to even get out of the village to earn her and her families livelihood. This has brought in on her untold misery and hardship. It is unfortunate that, in our society, the situation of

rural women has reached such a sad state. It is important that our plans and development programmes give serious and urgent thought on reviewing the rural development programme. Even the people's organisations that have emerged recently failed to consider this issue seriously. It is to be noted that the situation of the urban poor woman is not different from that of rural poor women.

United effort is needed from every quarter to understand the sad plight of rural women. Uninterrupted attention and serious planning and honest implementation of such programmes is the need of the day. Let the rural women be the subject of their own development and not just the targets.

{translated and adapted by Mahesh H Lobo from the article in Kannada by R Poomima, published in "SUDHA", 5th March, 1989.}

"WHEN YOU EDUCATE A MAN YOU EDUCATE AN INDIVIDUAL; WHEN YOU EDUCATE A WOMAN YOU EDUCATE A WHOLE FAMILY"

200 CIGARETTES A DAY

Firewood and dung cakes are the common fuel for cooking in rural areas. The smoke these emanate is not conducive for health. According to a research survey, a woman who spends three hours cooking inhales as much of a poisonous gas called Carcinogenic Benzopyrine as would have been inhaled by smoking 20 packs of cigarettes. This is 40 times higher than the limits set by WHO.

"A KINDER, GENTLER WORLD"

The rise of a Super power is inevitably linked to an overemphasis of aggression in its national ethos. This can be military or economic most often a combination of both each complementary to the other. There is an internal imbalance in the relations within the country, family and even individuals. The resultant tension has to be worked out on "others". To lend a moral halo and to sooth the little that remains of their conscience, the violence inflicted on people outside their country ie the colonized, the colonizers build up the myth of civilizing the natives.

The homogenization of the conquered is often the task of the second generation of colonialists who are the middle-class bureaucrats. The middle-class values of the colonizing culture is sought to be imposed on the indigenous populations. The first wave is often satisfied with the tribute it gets and is content to let the social structure and mores remain untouched as long as their supremacy is acknowledged. It is in the civilization process that the decay and the moralization sets in.

The colonizer's mission starts with an interaction to "civilize" and then a gradual realization that the colonized are not "uncivilized" but actually has something to offer in its richer world view and dynamic cultural conceptions, that much of the so-called backwardness is actually a site-specific vibrant culture with strong support system of sustainable development and alternate values that far surpass anything outside modes of development have to offer that the still ignorant but well-meaning development activists with a consumerist concept of well-being fed on the begging bowl imagery of cultures other than their own find hard to comprehend.

In order to civilize the native the zealous cultural-missionary must however unknowingly come into direct contact with the indigenous culture and is often astounded by its vibrant dynamism and richness in areas that

are often missing in the so-called superior culture. In a couple of generations, the equality and then the superiority of the indigenous culture is grudgingly recognized.

Once their moral superiority is convincingly disproved by their own analysts, the colonists beat retreat. The social institutions that supported the colonization also join in the cry for a speedy withdrawal of colonial forces for fear that a longer exposure to an alternate culture will expose the bankruptcy of their own, and make the institutions redundant. Witness the defection of the liberals to the cause of the struggling peoples in the present century.

Of course, there are also simultaneous pressures being applied on the colonial edifice by other means; the refusal of the suppressed to play by their rulers rules and instead delving into their own culture for an effective counter-system where they — the oppressed — are more powerful. The non-cooperation movement is but one such example.

The evolution of an alternative rooted in our culture is imperative so as to alter the balance of power. If we respond to the oppressors parameters we are essentially responding to an alien culture from a position of weakness. Moreover, for our protest to be 'acceptable' in that alien cultural ethos, we have to make our protest less dynamic to conform to the imposed culture. Then our form of protest will no longer be revolutionary but reformatory leaving the core of the unjust structures untouched for every culture has 'acceptable' forms of protest — the shocks of which it can absorb. But to demolish the unjust edifice we must use our own forms of protest sanctioned by our own culture, which can cause impacts the alien culture cannot withstand.

The evolution of the alternate system based on the local culture is a long drawn out process and comes only after failure of resistance to the colonizer

according to the imposed parameters is evident. Then the renewal of the local culture throws up an alternative framework which effectively marginalises the center. This change of the center and the periphery is the liberation of the oppressed.

The indigenous culture is often the end result of millennia of trial and error in obtaining the best possible from the available resources and is geared to keeping the world safe for the future. While the cultural renaissance of the oppressed takes place, making their once-dead colonize-able lethargic culture vibrant, the culture of the colonizer goes into decline on the defensive from the repeated battering of the re-emergent culture. They suffer a lack of confidence and loose their vantage.

Ideally a sustainable cultural ethos ought to be a perfect blend of the masculine and the feminine, the more the diffusion the more the richness of the culture and the harmony and the lessening of militarism. The polarization of the present national cultures is not so evident, but it is present nevertheless. The break up of the Russian empire can be attributed to this. The American culture is less polarized and hence it will take longer for the American empire to fall. But fall it will. In each of these declines, it is the shifting of the centre that takes place. This trend has to be strengthened and hastened.

TRUTH

JUDGE : "What's your age?"

CONVICT: "Twenty-two, Sir."

JUDGE : "That is what you have been telling us for the last ten years."

CONVICT: "That is right, Sir, I'm not the type that says one thing today and another tomorrow."

TO BE HUMAN IS TO BE LESS SEX TYPED

- EMEHEL



Society is divided into two gender groups, female and male. Being either female or male is one of the most important characteristic of one's self-identity and worth. From the time a child is born, it is brought up, cared for and accepted as a "girl" or a "boy" and not as a "human child". For example a boy gets a vigorous handling, whereas a girl, a soft touch and protection. For toys, boys get guns and other such things which show assertiveness and aggression, whereas girls are given toys that evoke and reimpose characteristics of caring, nurturing and mothering. There is a stereotype of activities in which society engages these boys and girls. It assigns a set of personality characteristics and behaviours which society thinks appropriate for women and men.

In our society, boys have greater license to behave appropriately, i.e., to express of aggressive emotions like anger but not to manifest those emotions that express sadness or weakness like tears. They have greater freedom of movement, handling of money, and other such privileges which are denied to girls. Girls, on the other hand, are more controlled and are forbidden to be away from home at late hours of the evening or night, to show aggressive feelings of anger or strength. But it is fine for them to feel shy, weak or even to shed tears publicly. They can and must express so called "weaker" feelings in public, and it is quite "womanly" to behave so. But it is considered "unmanly" for boys to express similar feelings.

Conditioning of roles

What we see and observe in society is a process of conditioning. The child is brought up and allowed to grow in

a particular way, under the vigilant and scrutinizing eyes of society as a boy/man or a girl/woman and not as a human person or an individual. Their behavior is controlled and directed, and the difference between man and woman is exaggerated. It is taken for granted that women are weak, shy, sensitive, emotional, gentle, nurturing, powerless, considerate, and so on. Society is very hesitant to accept any girl/woman who goes against or beyond this pattern. On the other hand boys/men are strong, aggressive, powerful, authoritarian, ambitious, assertive, logical etc. and are not expected to behave in any other way.

It is taken for granted that women are weak, shy, sensitive, emotional, gentle, nurturing, powerless, considerate, and so on.

Society has determined these roles. Religion has sanctified and reimposed these either by sanction or by practice, and men and women have accepted these patterns as their own. This tradition has been carried through uncritically and "comfortably".

Today there is an increasing awareness among people and a critical questioning in this area has brought in some changes. In the spheres of religion and culture, these roles, which were and may be still sacrosanct, begun to crumble. The male domain has been invaded, and women have shown that they are in no way inferior to men. Further, it has all the more brought to the fore that the traditional and conditioned form of upbringing has created negative consequences which has throttled the holistic and creative growth of human persons, female or male.

Health hazards of sex-stereotyping.

Adhering strictly to the forms of sex-stereotyping, and growing up in this "conditioned atmosphere" has even caused health and psychological problems. For example, society does not permit men to express publicly the feelings of weakness, sorrow and fear. One ought not shed tears in public. The physical and psychological consequences of such a way of acting or hiding ones strong feelings, may lead to hyper-tension, ulcers or even heart disease. Girls on the other hand, are always protected and expected to be gentle and dependent. They have to learn these qualities which go along

with mothering. As they grow up, they begin to lack self-confidence and hence feel inferior and unable to take risks and responsibilities. They end up, finally, being resigned to their fate. In the role of a passive house wife, questioning nothing critically, but accepting everything as part of one's life, as part of being born

as a woman.

Exploitation based on sex

Due to the above mentioned factors, we may regard society as inherently sexist. It denies certain basic rights and freedom on the basis of gender. This sort of oppression and exploitation exists in every society, everywhere. No doubt changes, even drastic ones have taken place, specially in the northern and in certain parts of the southern hemisphere. But even in the so-called highly-developed countries, exploitation on the basis of sex still exists in some subtle form or the other, whereas it is blatant and crude in the developing and underdeveloped world, specially in India. Patriarchy seems to be the norm of the day - governing all aspects of society. Though changes have been effected through legislations and amend-

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ments to the Constitution, to bring about equal opportunity and status to women the changes have been superficial and cosmetic.

Unwelcome Girl-Child

In this direction of maintaining equal status to either sex [not legally, but socially and culturally], India has a long way to go. The metropolitan cities have seen some changes in this direction. Our society is still faced with the stark reality of non-acceptance of the female child. Scientific investigations have helped this male-dominated society to decipher the sex of the child in the womb and abort the unwanted female foetus. Cultural, social, and religious practices have made the birth of the female child unwelcome. The girl is controlled and unequal treatment, unscrupulous ways of bring, limiting of opportunities to grow etc., have crippled the holistic, healthy growth of a girl as a human being. Society has determined that marriage, children and motherhood are the only roles that a girl/woman can assume and they are considered to be their ultimate goals. This has been sanctioned further by religion. Anyone stepping out of these roles is not easily accepted, but criticized and frowned upon.

Are Men and Women Different?



Society has propagated a vast amount of differences between women and men. Are they really so different from each other? Is one sex superior or inferior to another?

Over the ages, social scientists and psychologists have conducted series of researches on this problem. They have found that when opportunities are provided, women have shown that there are no real differences between them and men in the performance of tasks, in taking up responsibility or even in physical or mental qualities. Recent histories in the scientific and literary fields, political leader-

ship, and the whole area of sports and games, have all the more proved that given the right opportunity, human beings have proved to be equal in achievement irrespective of gender. The only difference therefore, is biological. In order to continue the species through procreation, nature has designed the body into female and male forms. In this process, the male can assume the role of a father only and only he can impregnate. It is only a woman who can assume the role of a mother, i.e., give birth, and breast-feed the child. Except for these biological differences, which are real and natural, all the other differences are generated by society, or which are "man made".

Instrumental Vs. Communion

Research in this area has been conducted across the continents with different cultural groups all over the world. The study has been able to identify and isolate traits that are associated with the male or female gender. Boys/men tend to describe themselves more in terms of agency, and girls/women in terms of communion. A study that was conducted showed that traits identified by boys can be classified as instrumental. The qualities that were associated with them were related to the following : to be assertive, shrewd, rational, independent, critical, dominating, adventurous, aggressive, practical, logical, hierarchical, reactive, strong, powerful, etc. Whereas the adjectives girls associated themselves generally were mostly that of being community oriented: loving, gentle, non-competitive, emotional, sensitive, nurturing, artistic, negotiating, considerate, responsive, helpful, generous, life-giving, people-centered, sympathetic, etc.

The general tendency has been to understand and label male qualities onto boys/men and female ones to girls/women. There is a wide difference of behavior inherent in these traits. They are reportedly water-tight compartments, and boys and girls are ex-

pected to move only in their respective arenas.

The study further showed that these traits were inter-changed in many individuals or in groups. Aggressive behavior goes well with boys/men as per the list we have just gone through, but cross-cultural studies have shown that in certain cultures, women have shown greater aggressive characteristics than men. Also, though caring goes well with women, many men show higher levels of caring than women. There are clear indications scientifically proved, that the differences between men and women is learned rather than genetic.

Over the years, we have observed that, if opportunities have been provided, possibilities created, and the right type of environment sustained, people of both sexes have competed and proved to be equal. The results of such implementation has shown that one is not superior to the other, or vice versa. Earlier, certain jobs, certain sports, and certain educational fields of specialization, were set aside or considered to be the domain of one sex. There was a sex-bias in all the areas of life and activity. Once such water-tight compartments were broken, women and men have gone on proving that being female or male is not a hindrance to undertake any form of activity. Thus, the differences are not genetic; they are also absorbed from generation to generation. The potentialities hidden in human beings are crushed on the basis of gender, and other factors cultural, religious, and social have imposed over and over again the sexual bias.

Towards Androgyny

Therefore, we cannot categorize the male qualities/adjectives with men and the female values with women alone. Whether the traits are instrumental or communitarian, they belong to both, women and men. So far, society labelled them as belonging to either men or women, and did not allow the intermingling or interchanging of these

traits. We realize today that both of these traits are essential and are needed to produce healthy human beings and to bring about a balanced growth in an individual.

Besides having male and female traits or values, we also have the so-called neuter values such as co-operation, humour, friendship, jealousy, kindness, communicativeness, punishment, encouragement, anger, openness, etc. etc. All these three categories, male, female and neuter values need to be integrated in one's life.

Increased awareness in society, in scientific, social and psychological areas has enabled us to integrate these elements. It has helped to merge those values which are salient in need and helpful to one to make a meaningful living being without in any way judging one being superior or inferior to the other. It is absorbing these traits from the three categories, mixing them well in oneself that one grows up as an integrated personality leading one towards an androgynous being. It is in the blending of these traits harmoniously that one builds up oneself as a person and a human being. The male has to build up and strengthen the female in oneself, and vice versa. This will help to break down sex biases based on areas defined as male or female domain, and to accept everything as part of human life and growth, making no distinction based on gender except those that go along with biological differences.

Contrary to this, in India and elsewhere, we perceive a strict and rigid sex- role. Men and women are trapped in these roles by society. We are faced with sex typed feminine women and masculine men. These have assumed a specific sex roles within the framework of sex bias. Human beings are so fettered that they are unable to come out of these bondages, nor can they even imagine accepting or assuming any sex role ascribed for the

other sex than one's own. These are stereotyped women and men, sex-behavior determined, functioning without spontaneity and unable to attend even to daily-life incidents sensitively. There are men who have fathered but cannot handle small babies, and women who cannot show any assertive behavior. Androgynous orientation looks for a more integrated sex-role identity. Further, it asserts certain human achievements and values, and establishes that each individual be able to become whatever sexual identity is pertinent and appropriate for her/him. To say the least, androgyny in clear terms asks us what kind of people and human beings, not merely men or women, we want to be. Therefore, to be human is to be less sex-stereotyped.

... androgyny in clear terms asks us what kind of people and human beings, not merely men or women, we want to be . . . In every woman there is the masculine[animus] . . . in every man there is the feminine [anima]. Because of cultural and social factors, women and men deny these aspects

In every woman there is the masculine[animus] projected within the ideal of masculinity. It is part of her own creation which has not been integrated due a deep rooted fear of non-acceptance by society. Vice versa, in every man there is the feminine [anima] projected into the ideal of femininity. Because of cultural and social factors, women and men deny these aspects which are so deep rooted within oneself in the fear of being "unwomanly" or "unmanly". Socio-cultural factors have built up in women and men strong feelings and attitudes to life and all aspects of social living. This has built up strong reactions and resistances against the in-built mechanism of achieving/integrating what it considers belongs to the other sex. Society has further inscribed

in us the ideals of feminine or masculine, and we remain strongly attached to it, not wanting to break the pattern of behavior, or thought or belief that would demean our male or female ego.

Becoming Healthy Human Beings



We are now however witnessing tremendous changes in this domain. Sex-typed behavior has to give way to a more androgynous one, to produce a fully human and integrated personality. It is right and appropriate that men integrate qualities of self-assertion with these of mutuality, self-interest with inter-dependence and self-extension with joint welfare. So also women, can become more self-assertive etc. This well-mixed and integrated set of characteristics representing communal and instrumental side will make a man or woman a true human being. "Thus the goals of the human relations movement are" -

- a) a spirit of enquiry - experimenting with one's role in the world,
- b) an expanded interpersonal consciousness,
- c) increased authenticity, feeling freer to be oneself
- d) acting in an interdependent way with peers, superiors and subordinates, and
- e) resolving conflict through problem solving rather than through coercion or power manipulation.

When more and more women and men reflect seriously on this, and begin to function in this way, we could be moving towards a more well-balanced and less sexually stereotyped society, where human persons relate to each other not as men or women, but as individuals and individual human beings.

(* Jean Campbell. the 1977 Annual Handbook for Group facilitators)

WHO IS A HEALTHY WOMAN ?

Smitha

A healthy woman would be both tough and tender; nurturing, responsive and sensitive. She would have a ready access to a wide range of feelings, including anger, fear, joy, love, pain, etc. Even though she can identify with others at times, she would remain distinct. She would work towards maximizing her own effectiveness, know what support is needed and reach for the appropriate resources when it seems desirable. She would accept herself as she is and work towards changing those aspects which she feels uncomfortable. She would see herself as unique yet universal.

Access to herself

A healthy woman has maximum access to her feelings at all levels - physical, mental, intellectual and emotional. She tries to take care of her needs according to her preferences and knows how to give herself pleasure in a variety of ways. She is conscious of providing her own sustenance, takes care of herself at all levels and turns to others when it is desirable. Finally, she has a high degree of self-acceptance and a positive identity {a good sense of who she is and who she is not}. There will be moments of regression, self-doubt, and confusion. However, a healthy woman will recognize these regressions for what they are and takes initiatives in eliminating them.. She also values her own health. When she sees that her health threatened by her own self destructive tendencies or threats from outside herself she moves quickly in favour of her own health. She also recognizes signals that all may not be well, tries to understand and deal with them. These may include insomnia, headaches, stomach ache, tension, etc. Thus, the relationship between physical and mental health is clear to a woman actively involved in maintaining access to herself and acting on her own behalf.

Relation to her own work

A healthy woman will see herself as special and important and will there-

fore regard what she does as important. She will value her own aspirations, try to do something which she finds meaningful and which contributes to her feelings of worth. Her own work and her identity is important to her as anyone else's. She will pursue ways for getting the emotional and technical support which enables her to carry out the work. Ideally, the way in which she earns a living will have some meaning for her and will be part of her own self.

Her dreams and reaching out to them in one way or the other is something which a healthy woman allows herself to. She may be comfortable working independently or collectively. However, she feels confident enough to work competitively. This does not mean that she allows herself to be victimized. She values first and foremost herself and sees her achievements as part of that self and as part of some broader set of goals outside herself.

Relating with others

A healthy woman gives meaning to her own existence and looks to others for added meaning and support but not for basic survival. Her relationship with others will be direct expressions of her own relationship to her self. If her access to herself is maximal, her relations with others will probably be deeply mutual and meaningful. No matter how intimately she relates to another she will always serve a sense of where she ends and another person begins.

She will be able to entrust some of her deepest feelings to those whom she cares about most with some of her deepest feelings. In her friendships, she will also be open and responsive to the emotions of others. A healthy woman will also be able to experience both similarities and differences among people she chooses to be close to - similarities will be acknowledged, differences respected. She will never choose for another, she will only change when she chooses to, when she ex-

periences some pain or dissatisfaction with an aspect of herself.

It is not enough for a healthy woman to have access to herself, work meaningfully and have relationships which are special and enduring . A part of one's larger self would still be missing. A healthy woman would see herself as a part of the present situation, involve with the many social, political, and economic injustices which we are all part of . She must look at her own situation and determine for herself the specific ways in which she chooses to connect to the larger total picture.

Even though every individual woman must define for herself, her own course of action is necessary. These notions cannot be relegated to a later date, to someone with more time, to a different issue. These have to be dealt with in one's own way.

Reference : "Female Psychology - The Emerging self" by Sue Cox

LIGHT A CANDLE

Diogenes was standing at a street corner one day laughing like a man out of his mind.

"What are you laughing about?" a passerby asked.

"Do you see the stone in the middle of the street? Since I got here this morning ten people have stumbled on it and cursed it. But not one of them took the trouble to remove it so others wouldn't stumble."

* * *

Participatory Action-Reflection

Promod

9 Perspective

A couple of decades after true voluntarism has died out and the very concept of voluntarism has come under attack both from internal and external sources, it is time to take a fresh look at this vital arena.

It must be acknowledged that the days of the idealist-graduate who lived among the downtrodden fully committed to social justice regardless of personal cost — and I refer to cost in its broadest sense and not merely in its pecuniary meaning — are clearly numbered if not over.

They are being replaced by the career social workers, armed with a postgraduate degree in social work, for whom the non-governmental sector is often the last resort. Their exposure to the underprivileged sections of society is largely bookish and restricted to a few "field trips" often in pursuit of data for their end-term thesis. Another large minority of careerists are those alienated from their own social milieu who have no clarity of vision as to the whys and wherefores of voluntary action. They are plagued by the messianic-martyr syndrome.

The problem as I see it

While admitting that these careerists are initially better theoretically equipped for structural analysis, their bookish understanding of developmental issues has more often than not been a hindrance rather than an asset in practice. The college dropout of yesteryear, besides the endearing quality of humbleness and genuine fellow feeling, had a far greater grasp of reality and local priorities and was motivated by altruism. Since nostalgia has seldom helped in the solution of any present issue, it is best we accept that the careerist is here to stay.

Though careerists would like to be part of the solution, it must be conceded that atleast initially they are a part of

the problem. How best we can re-educate careerists to be genuinely people oriented was a priority task of the FEDINA action-research program. This re-orientation is a vital project in itself and was given equal priority as the on-site developmental activities. The program though focusing on the careerist, was to be undergone by others also.

A Personal Context-specific Insight

A significant part of FEDINA work aims to preserve the 'cultural ethos' of the tribals and such others bypassed by the development process by shielding them from the onslaught of modern western consumerist way of life.

The intellectuals who argue that this is to safe-guard the indigenous way of life are ably assisted by hordes of social workers who decry the ape-west tendency. While the objectives in themselves may be lofty and the intentions impeccable, these very same intellectuals are guilty of playing into the hands of Lord Macaulay's successors.

The west has advanced so much that it now seeks diversions in the form of ever longer holidays and is poised to become a leisure society by the turn of the century if not soon after. In seeking to preserve the tribal culture what the actions of these do-gooders may result in could be a live zoo for the 'developed' nations and national elites.

In seeking to keep the tribals less developed what we are doing in effect is letting the exploiters use up all the resources of the earth — and use it up they will, by plunder and loot if necessary, if recent history is anything to go by — and leave ourselves defenseless to their instruments of terror and domination.

Moreover we are also depriving the tribals of their right to make the choice whether they would like to join in the stream of westernized modernization however much we are convinced of the

detrimental effects of such modernization on the tribal/indigenous culture.

The plunge into the dominant mode of development often leads to a 'loss of innocence' whereby once the fruits are tasted and though found bitter there is no going back. Though we know it for certain that innocence once lost can never be regained, and however much we are hurt by the wrong choices that are made, it is imperative that we remember that all people have the right to make their own mistakes. We seek to keep them from this demeaning experience of lopsided development and from experiencing what is only superfluously glossy. We must persuade and educate as to the pitfalls, for that is our duty, but at no time should we dictate.

Possible corrective methodologies

The tremendous reach of FEDINA, the vital arena of involvement, the delicate local situation, and the tensions that any liberative effort creates makes it imperative that FEDINA does not rely on the individual ability of staff members to paper over these tensions. A suitable mechanism is to be evolved for the imparting of such skills required for the defusing of the hostile attitude by the FEDINA staff, as well as a forum for sharing and building up of confidence.

This task can only be done by the active involvement by our "volunteers" in the peoples programs. The research should be a corollary to the participation in the struggle - both daily and conceptual - of the down trodden. The common life that is lead by both the volunteer and the marginalised helps concretize the research making it grow from the felt needs of the people and consequently highly relevant. It is only by the active physical participation in this life that FEDINA can truly put its ideology of participatory action-research into practice.

SEXISM IN SPEECH

smitha

Differences between men and women are not only evident in their behavior and attitudes, but also prominent in their speech and usage of language.

It may also be noted that the aspect of "pitch" is important in this regard. A woman is always found to be using a higher pitch than that of a man. In human beings "pitch" depends on the frequency of vibration of the vocal chords. It so happens that the vocal chords in a woman vibrate more swiftly than in that of a man. Consequently, the speech is clear and comprehensive. The fact that women are preferred in jobs such as telephone operators, receptionists, radio announcers etc., are largely based on this factor.

Secondly, research has also proved that women are more polite than men.

Recent research by the Department of Linguistics, Oxford, confirms this. It was noted that of all the customers who visited a Departmental store, women were found to 'request' whereas men were more informal and casual.

Usage of the first person "I" is found to be more common in women than in men. This may be because of their craving for identity. By continually referring to themselves they demand

most interruptions were made by men. The Indian woman's plight too may be the same. Mixed conversations are usually male dominated. Most of the time the women are outnumbered.

Feelings of inferiority and diffidence are quite common. As far as the rural woman is concerned, her speech is restricted to the area of domesticity.

In giving importance to politeness, the woman's speech is getting more modified which ensures that they do not interrupt but also do not protest when interrupted by men.

Numerous examples can be cited in which men can assume the right to talk in mixed groups. Not only can they use their power to ensure that they talk more, but they choose the topics as well. It is not possible to

be the center of a conversation and to talk a lot if one is a woman. It is not possible to accommodate, listen, or be supported and encouraged by men speakers if one is a woman.

Courtesy "Femina" Sept. 1991

The recent annual get-together of FEDINA staff members focussed on this issue in one of the discussion sessions. Since ours is a mixed language group comprising Kannada, Malayalam and Tamil, it was decided to have this discussion in language groups. At the plenary session each group was asked to present their findings of how language is used to degrade women. It was an eye-opener for all of us that consciously or unconsciously we have been using language as a means of asserting superiority of men over women. Innumerable examples to substantiate this fact were given by the participants. It is maintained that in all languages there are expressions, sayings, proverbs, swear-words etc. which are biased against women.

others to identify with their existence.

Western women feel that little opportunity is given to them to talk in the presence of men. Interruptions are most likely when they talk. Studies confirmed that in mixed conversations

S ACTION-REFLECTION continued from previous page...

Another area is the training given to the local population. They should be made self-sufficient as soon as possible. The twin qualities of self-confidence and self-motivation should be stressed in the programs of FEDINA so that the withdrawal of FEDINA from a project area does not mean the cessation of all development work and the retrogression of peoples action.

And finally

The effort that is put into this restructuring will definitely yield considerable results. But this is not a task to be undertaken lightly. It involves patience, dedication and most of all an open-mind and willingness to accept that our practices may be out of date. Our current mode of operation and current value perspectives of "action" and "research" will be questioned, challenged and in some cases discarded. To those

willing to make the effort the rewards will be bountiful, keeping at bay stagnation and resulting at the very least in personal and organisational growth.

In any case let us give the people a chance. As we so often say : let the people decide. The final decision is theirs alone. It is their happiness and way of life that is on the line. As also their innocence.

FEDINA NEWS CORNER

Action Reflection:

In collaboration with Pipal Tree, Fedina has initiated a new process known as Action Reflection. This is a new concept in the voluntary sector and it offers much scope for Action and Reflection. All our area co-ordinators and staff from the office shared in this action reflection which was conducted at our Bangalore office from 27th to 30th August, 1991. Gopinath, Rajan Chandy (Pipal Tree) and Sidhartha assisted in this workshop which looked seriously into the present activities and the future plans of Fedina. It was felt that in planning our programmes, much care and consideration should be given to the background of the people, their culture, values and traditions. Such an approach is bound to have a deeper impact and will be more effective and lively. This Action Reflection process will be followed up at our programme areas in the coming months.

Organic Farming Workshop:

It was a workshop with a difference. More than 80 farmers, mostly from Karnataka and other parts of South India, took part in this workshop which was organised mutually by ICRA and Fedina at J. P. Nagar from September 2nd to 6th. These farmers who have been practicing organic farming at their respective places came together to share their experiences concerning this new method of farming which is environmentally sound and viable. They were unanimous in their opinion that organic methods of farming can be practiced by anyone who is convinced of the need for preserving nature.

Being away from the usual surroundings can be helpful in reflecting and planning programmes more effectively. It also provides opportunities to interact with each other without being disturbed by outside forces. Hence it was decided to use September 18th and

19th at ISI for discussion and reflection. The coordinator, and all the staff members, were present for this meeting. This was an open forum where each one was free to air his or her views on the role that one could play both at the office and at our programme areas. Similar meetings are planned for the future as well.

Fedina Get-Together:

The much awaited annual get-together of the Fedina family took place at ODP, Mysore, from 29th September to 1st October. Nearly 60 staff members assembled to have fun and fellowship with their colleagues from different areas. This coming together of all our staff members has helped to deepen the relationship both at the personal and institutional levels. Various group activities, such as discussions and cultural programmes, were organised and appreciated by everyone.

SARJAPURA

Tailoring Centre:

A new centre has been set up at Neriga to impart basic skills in tailoring to the women of this area. There are eleven women who benefit from this scheme. In addition to this the TRYSEM scheme, which is a government sponsored initiative, is also helping some more women to become self-reliant.

Leadership Training:

Twenty three women from seven villages participated in this training programme conducted at IYD from 8th to 12th of July, 1991. Initiating leadership qualities among the women was the main focus of attention during this training. Status of women, education, health, environment etc. were some of the other topics dealt with in this training.

Street-theatre group:

The influence of modern life and the slow fading out of some of our cultural practices like street theatre was felt by the youth of Sarjapura who decided to form a street-theatre group of their own at Katriguppe. Young boys from four villages have come together to make this group alive. A special training for this group was given at IYD from 16th to 23rd of July where they were given an orientation to perform street theatre effectively in their areas.

Exposure Programme

Lack of exposure to other people and places has its limitations. To counter this malady, and to encourage our women of Sarjapura, an exposure trip was arranged in which 15 women were taken to another organization called REDS at Tumkur. This was the first experience of this kind for these women. 3 days were spent at Tumkur, during which they had opportunities to



1981 CENSUS		
	women	men
Total population [in crores]	318	340
Urban areas	73	83
Rural areas	245	257
Ratio [1000 men for women]	933	1000
Urban areas	880	1000
Rural areas	954	1000
Work Force [in crores]	66	181
Literacy - percentage	25	47
Urban areas	48	66
Rural areas	18	41

interact with the staff of REDS and to share their experiences.

Balawadi Teachers Meet

A combined meeting-cum-training for Balawadi teachers of both Sarjapura and H.D.Kote was conducted at our Bangalore office from 4th to 8th of July, 1991. This was an opportunity to refresh their skills and to evaluate their performance. Importance of Balawadi teachers, their responsibilities and duties were given serious consideration during this meeting. Effective use of teaching aids was also demonstrated during this session.

H.D. KOTE

Night Schools:

Thirty night schools were opened at HD Kote in the month of August. Seven hundred and fifteen tribals were motivated to enrol themselves. The teachers were found within the tribal communities themselves. Children and grandchildren taught their parents and

grandparents. Young tribals, who had studied up to eight standard or above were pressed into service as teachers. Shedding their inhibitions, the elders came to night schools to be taught by their youngsters.

Organic Farming:

Our attempt at collective organic farming at Mantihadi has been a real success this year thanks to the good rains and active participation of the people. Ragi, maize, jowar and green-gram have come up to the satisfaction of all involved in this process. 300 bamboos have been planted at the border of this plot of land. Even though it was planned to plant saplings around the bunds and the boarder areas, this could not be materialised as the Forest Department failed to supply the seedlings.

Follow-up Programme:

Further to our Action Reflection process which was held at Bangalore office, the staff at H.D. Kote spent Sep-

tember 19th, 20th and 21st as a follow up of this. This gave an opportunity for all the staff members to understand and reflect on the relevance and importance of this process in the voluntary circle.

WAYANAD

Adivasi Aikya Samithy Training:

To improve leadership qualities among the members of the Aikya Samithy, the second phase of training has already begun in the month of August. Sundays are set aside for this training programme. Only the area committee representatives and taluk committee representatives participate in this training. After the completion of this training, committee members will be given training in their respective areas.

Onam celebrations:

There were celebrations at Battery, Cheeral, Irulam and Vazhavatta areas to mark this joyous occasion. Cultural programmes and other competitions were well appreciated by everyone. Prizes were awarded to those who put up the best cultural programmes.

Collective farming by women:

Under the guidance of a women's committee for the Cheeral area, ten women have come forward to attempt collective farming in their area. One acre of land has been taken on lease for this purpose. They have already started cultivating paddy in this one-acre land and the results are promising.

Balavedi convention

As a follow up of the recently formed Balavedis and to give guidance and orientation to these youngsters conventions were held at Cheeral, Vazhavatta, Battery and Irulam areas. Leadership training and various cultural problems were the main events during these conventions. K.K.George from Wayanad core team conducted these conventions in all the four areas.

NILGIRIS

Literacy with New Syllabus

To facilitate the work of the teachers and to convey literacy to children in a simple and comprehensive way a new syllabus has been prepared. Much effort has been put to incorporate the background of the tribals in this syllabus. Prepared originally in Malayalam, plans are underway to translate this into Tamil.

Area Committees

During the conventions held separately for men and women area committees were formed. Training's were given to the committee members to make them participate actively and conduct programmes effectively.

Balawadis

Choladi, Kanamvayal, Patavayal and Thenampady were the four areas chosen to initiate this new programme. Preliminary work in this regard has already been completed. Parents have assured to give their full support to implement this programme.

KITTUR

Village jatha

This jatha which started in one of the villages on the 25th of September continued through all the other villages and culminated at Kulavalli where more than 300 villagers participated. Creating awareness regarding their right of land was the main purpose of this event. It was planned to submit a memorandum to the Assistant Commissioner from Bailahongal who was supposed to attend this function. Since, he was not present the people later met him at his office and submitted the memorandum. Village youth enacted street dramas portraying land issues. A street drama group from Dharwad (Samudaya) also performed at this occasion.

Kulavalli Land Issue

Our team at Kittur has been running from pillar to post to fight against the oppression and exploitation to which the people of Kulavalli have been subjected to on account of the so called Inamdari system. Their effort has not been in vain. The honorable Revenue minister of Karnataka has called for a meeting on the 10th of October and take a final decision on this issue.

CHENGAM

Independence Day Celebrations

It was the first time that the national flag of India was hoisted at Jawadi Hills on August 15th, 1991. Tribals of this hilly area were not aware of the existence of such an important event until the team at Chengam launched the educational programmes. However, once they understood the significance of Independence day, they decided to celebrate this event with the full participation of all the people of the area. Police Department of Chengam was invited to hoist the national flag. Forest officer, School Headmaster and other local elders spoke on the occasion. There was active participation by children in the sports and other cultural programmes organised at this occasion.

Staff Training

Since our programme at Chengam are of recent origin, it was decided to invite the Chengam team for a training at Bangalore office. Staff members participated in this training programme from 9th to 14th September. Apart from giving guidance on various aspects of social work, the team was also appraised about Fedina's ideology and style of functioning. Mr. Sam Cheladurai from Indian Social Institute assisted us in conducting this programme.

Health Programme for Women

A training programme for the benefit of pregnant women was conducted on September 23rd and 24th. Basic knowledge about prenatal and postnatal care was imparted to women during the two days programme. Mrs. Jayamma, a health worker, gave leadership for this training which was well appreciated by all who participated. They have also decided to meet once in every month.



SUSTAINABLE FARMING

(A collective experiment at Manti Hadi)

Reported by Vasu

Regular visits and discussion with the people of Manti Hadi motivated all the nineteen families to take up "Collective Farming". Soon, the question of sustenance came up. If all of them started working on their land where would they get their wages from as all of them depend on daily wages for their livelihood.

Involvement of CASA

At this juncture CASA (Church Auxiliary for Social Action), Madras came to their help. "Food for work" was initiated. One hundred and ten bags of wheat were sanctioned. As there was no proper storehouse in Manti Hadi, the wheat was stored in a house in the neighboring Padukote Hadi. Mr. Selvi Joseph from CASA also gave them necessary instructions regarding the maintenance of attendance and stock register. It was also decided that the organization would provide them money for the materials required and later the money would be returned in easy installments.

Group Discussion

Before taking up the experiment a meeting was held mainly to discuss the plan of action. This idea of "Collective Farming" had brought about a lot of excitement among the villagers. Puttaiah, Basamma, Chandra and Devaiah were just comparing their past situation to the present. This year they had their own piece of land, own house and could grow their own food. This was something which they had never dreamed of and were looking forward to it.

Since this area is full of thorny bushes, stones and mole-hills, their first task was to clear up the place. Basamma took the responsibility of supervising the women's group. Bunds had to be

constructed and under the leadership of Devaiah the men took up this task. Working hours were fixed. Four hours in the morning (8 A.M. to 12 A.M.) and three hours in the afternoon (3 P.M. to 6 P.M.) Tuesdays were declared a holiday as it was Shandy (marketing) day. After the day's work each one would get his/her share of 5 kg's of wheat. Distributing of 5 kg's of wheat as wages both to men as well as women brought about certain amount of discontentment among the women. They were of opinion, as their traditional practice is, that either the



men should get more or the women less. For certain, Equality between the men and women was not an issue here. They were pacified with the information that according to the regulations of CASA, whoever worked through the day, man or woman, was eligible to 5 kg's of wheat. There is nothing wrong in getting equal wages.

The work begins

The next day they started clearing up the place. The stones which were cleared by the women were used to construct a boundary. The men went about the task of building Bunds. At the end of the day each one collected his/her share of 5 kg's of wheat.

In the meantime, meetings continued regularly to discuss their work. At one of these meetings a doubt was raised - would it be better to work on one plot and then take up the next. This would also help to keep a clear, detailed record of the whole process that is taking place.

Advice from the Expert

Sri. Narayan Reddy, Advisor to the organization on Organic Farming visited Manti Hadi. He also advised the people of the construction of bunds, the required height and direction of the main bunding and the usefulness of the subsidiary Bunding. He also advised the people to dig up the area of mole hills to make a water storage. Spreading dried neem leaves around the bags of wheat could protect the wheat from any insects, it was stated.

The Tahshildar of H.D. Kote along with the Surveyor visited Manti Hadi. He was happy to see the transformation taking place at this barren land. The surveyor conducted a thorough survey of the land and promised to send a copy of the report. With the help of this report fencing would be done later on.

It was decided to cultivate maize, ragi, tuvar, jola, and lentils. Saplings of jack fruit, mango, neem, gladyssidia, tamarind would be got from the forest department.

(To be continued)

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