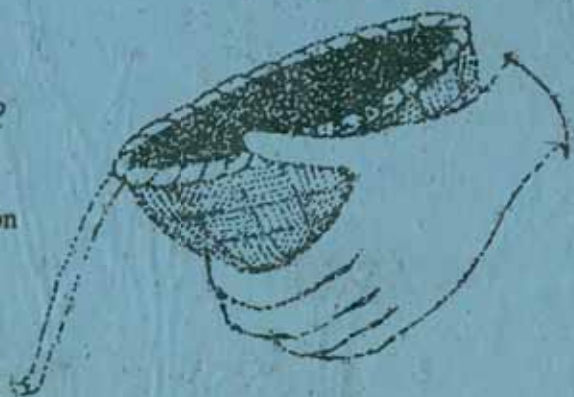


Alexis Salinas
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Too Little, Too Late

An Alternative Philippine Report on
Government Initiatives for Women

PHILIPPINE
WOMEN'S
RESEARCH
COLLECTIVE



The Authors

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INTRODUCTION

They hailed from various fields and disciplines, these women who heeded the call of PILIPINA, a national women's organization, to discuss an issue that has been haunting them for sometime: what exactly is the woman's question and how did it affect, or was affected by, the UN Decade for Women?

The two-day workshop held at a suburban university in late 1984 bristled with insights and analysis as the participants groped and waded through their own experiences and perspectives on the issue. Thus, while the main task was to prepare the Alternative Country Reports for the Non-Governmental Organizations' Forum in Nairobi, the workshop likewise resulted in the growth of perception and clearing of doubts among the women present.

Among the points the women agreed upon early on was that (1) the report would document the experience of women from the grassroots as they comprise the majority and most disadvantaged, and would ultimately be the measure of the Decade's gains; (2) it would have a feminist framework; and (3) it would consider as fundamental and integral the three dimensions of women's oppression:

a) national oppression since women comprise half of the Filipino people still victimized by imperialist powers in the economic, political and cultural spheres;

b) class oppression, because women bear the brunt of an exploitative system dominated by foreign corporations and the local elite, as industrial and agricultural workers, as peasants, landless poor and other marginalized sectors; and

c) gender oppression, because cutting across class lines is inequality between the sexes which intensifies the sufferings of grassroots Filipino women.

A Collective Report

With the time constraint, the women decided to share available materials and to work within their sphere of specialization to be able to validate their findings more easily. This sharing and swapping of ideas informally gave birth to the Philippine Women's Research Collective (PWRC). The collective is composed of women coming from research and development, law, journalism, health, film-making, banking, community development, anthropology, and sociology. Each member tackled areas within her persuasion, with the whole group discussing and criticizing each sectoral report as it came in. Thus, the Alternative Country Report is probably the only collective report on women ever done in the country.

While collective analysis did not present a problem, the initial gathering of data did. The group was stumped by the dearth of women-specific research materials and had to do some primary research on women, where time and budget constraints allowed. This was true with the reports on rural women and feminist consciousness; the other sectors mainly used blanket percentages and statistics that included men and children.

The economic upheavels of the past decade (which will be discussed in detail by each sector in relation to the individual reports) has trapped the Philippines in a development model dependent on foreign capital and oriented for foreign markets. This model has reduced the country to a producer of raw materials, components and labor-intensive manufactured goods needed by development market economies. It has also pushed the country deeper into foreign debt, amounting to \$26-billion as of 1984. Coupled with this tight financial squeeze is the growing repression and militarization unleashed by the Martial Law regime of President Ferdinand Marcos since September 1972.

How the continuing ferment of the previous decade has affected Filipino women in the rural areas, in the factories

and industrial sector, and how it has pushed women to seek employment abroad as migrant workers or as prostitutes drafted into the trade by aggressive tourism policies, are probed in this Alternative Report. The influence of media's stereotypes of women, the inadequacy of government initiatives especially in the area of health services, and the lack of feminist consciousness even among organized women are other factors that mark the Decade as particularly harrowing for the Filipino women.

This report hopes that by tracing and exposing the roots of the Filipina's particular oppression and exploitation in the past ten years, solutions and strategies can be effectively shaped and mapped out.

For purposes of fuller treatment and accessibility, the entire report is being serialized into a pamphlet series that would tackle each section separately. The consolidated or complete version is also available at the PILIPINA office at No. 12 Pasaje de la Paz, Project 4, Quezon City.

Research into government initiative took as its starting point the recognition that government operates its women-focused programs from a particular framework. Its indicators of success and perception and constraints would therefore depend on this value orientation in relation to women's issues.

The analytical framework of this paper in reviewing government initiative takes, as its terms of reference, feminist concerns, in order to determine whether these concerns are evident in government policies and programs.

A brief review of the major elements of "Women in Development" (WID) and the alternative feminist frameworks provided us with the necessary "signposts" in undertaking this analysis.*

The official WID framework is based on the 1975 World Conference of the World Plan of Action for the implementation of the objectives of the IWY. The purpose of the plan was to stimulate national and international action to solve the problems of underdeveloped and the socio-economic structures which place women in an inferior position.

The Plan also called for the achievement of equality between the sexes within the context of changed relations between the North and South. It is significant to state that this emphasis was however subsequently dropped. There was also a shift from an equity focus to a poverty approach with concern for integrating the "poorest of the poor".

The goal of the WID effort of UN development organizations and major donor agencies is to integrate women into the development process more productively. This involved primarily increasing women's economic contribution to national development and increasing their income through education and training. The emphasis of the WID framework, in other words, is on the economic aspect.

In their evaluation of WID efforts several years after the Mexico Conference, development organizations and major donor agencies admit "insufficient progress" in raising the status of women. Their evaluations attribute this to a number of constraints including: a lack of quantitative and qualitative information on women, lack of female staff within development agencies, and lack of financial resource commitment to carry out programs designed for women.

*Based on Patricia McGuire's, "WID: An Alternative Analysis".

food basket".

The latest Plan is even more emphatic about the health and nutrition status of mothers. Among the social gains advanced in the last five years, the Plan cites "the introduction of Primary Health Care (with) the emphasis on the nutritional needs of pregnant women and lactating mothers". Among the major strategies to achieve Total Human Development, nutrition services "will focus on the children in the 0-6 age group and on pregnant women and lactating mothers".

Even the Section on Agrarian Reform makes mention for the first time of women, but not as active agents: rather they are to be beneficiaries in that "production of nutritious food crops will be encouraged to benefit undernourished children, pregnant women and lactating mothers and other nutritionally disadvantaged groups". Women are again mentioned in the section on Health and Nutrition Policies which include "the improvement in the levels of food consumption and nutrient intake especially among pre-schoolers, pregnant women, lactating mothers and other nutritionally at-risk groups".

The traditional natural role of women as child-bearers must not of course, be ignored. Official concern with women's health and nutrition needs has however centered on development goals in increasing the productivity of the labor force. Women as special target groups of health, nutrition and population programs are viewed as vital human resources to contribute to the productivity of the future labor force.

Assuming that women's health and nutrition needs are satisfied, it is nonetheless imperative to ask: Who will benefit from the increased productivity of labor? A 1983 study of the U.P. School of Economics found that while productivity has indeed been growing in all sectors of the economy, the labor sector on the average was not only unable to share in the productivity increases but even suffered cuts in their of output.

Real earnings of workers have been eroded over the decade by inflation. For example, the real wage rate index for skilled laborers declined from 100.0 in 1972 to 63.7 in 1980. It was worse for unskilled laborers: Their real wage rate index dropped from 100.0 in 1972 to 53.4 in 1980. The trend continued into the 1980's as consumer prices rose nationwide by 302.5 per cent bet-

ween 1972 to 1983.

Official concern with reducing fertility and infant mortality is best seen in the context of supporting a major priority of USAID which calls for reducing the growth of the labor force to bring about more productive employment and alleviate poverty.

For while official concern is directed towards pregnant women and lactating mothers, official support systems for this group have yet to be institutionalized.

For example, for working women, the legislated period for maternity leaves remained between 1975-1985 at two months: two weeks before childbirth and six weeks after. In the early '70's at least, maternity leave periods stood at four months.

The reported drop in the incidence of breastfeeding should also be noted. This has been due partly to the decrease in the maternity leave period, and mostly to the aggressive promotion of bottlefeeding of TNC infant formula. The campaign to promote and support breastfeeding has yet to involve government on a wider scale. Public initiatives have been limited to isolated sectors, such as the Baguio General Hospital, although the NCRFW has taken steps along this direction.

Along with recognizing the role of women as mothers, the official policy also mentions women as among "the most disadvantaged groups". Priority targets for 1978-1982 to "improve the welfare and participation of women in development" involve primarily the establishment of more day-care centers. The MSSD was charged with the responsibility of implementing this program strategy in the Plan.

It might be argued that the official policy and Plans are not all that "traditional" in its view of women. For example, the earlier Plan takes note of what it perceived to be the changing situation of women:

"Whereas previously, the traditional role as wife and mother was expected and amply rewarded, now women are among those pressured to succeed in a modern and competitive society. More time is available for the mother to engage in professional activities as the community takes over some of her original functions in the care of the children".

It should be mentioned however that this official observation is stated in the context of a "concern with the way modernization has resulted in a breakdown of family life". The implication is that the "modern woman" represents a threat to the traditional stability of the Filipino family.

It should also be noted that day-care centers are not the only support systems for working mothers. Extended households as well as domestic helpers -- usually from the lower-income class -- have allowed women to participate in outside work or community involvements. For grassroots women, including those from the middle class, the pressure to work is not simply a result of "having more time available" but rather a result of economic survival needs of the family.

Women as Social Welfare Beneficiaries

It is significant that while official policy notes the opportunities open to women to grow professionally, the 1983-1987 plan's section on Education, Manpower and labor states: "A review of policies and procedures for the employment of special types of workers like the disabled, women and minors will be undertaken".

An underlying tendency of official policy is to regard women as social welfare beneficiaries. This is evident as well in the Economic and Social Impact Analysis (ESIA) of NEDA which mentions women in the same category as "the mentally and physically handicapped, the elderly, out-of-school youth, abandoned children, drug dependents, released prisoners, and victims of disaster and social disorganization".

This indicates a paternalistic attitude towards women, and ignores the reality of women increasingly becoming major breadwinners. NCSO data on wage and salaried workers over the past years indicate a trend in the rising number of women as household-heads. In 1976, female household heads comprised 157,000 per cent of the total households; in 1981, their numbers had grown to 178,000 or 6.3 per cent of the total. Among major occupation groups, sales workers registered the highest per cent change, from 8.9 in 1976 to 14.2 in 1981. All other occupation groups registered a slight increase from 0.2 to 0.4 per cent. The only group that showed a decrease was service workers, from 12.6 per cent in 1976

to 8.2 per cent in 1981.

To regard women as social welfare beneficiaries is also to view their role in the family and society as basically dependent. Women's income and employment, as shown in researches undertaken by NCRFW and BWM, is still viewed as secondary and supplementary so that returns from their work are maintained at levels lower than men's. Low wages mean that women cannot be economically self-reliant, as individuals nor can these meet family needs. Having to depend on husbands' earnings reinforces subservience of women to men. While women are special targets of health, nutrition, population goals, the fact that they share a big part if not the full burden of supporting families is largely ignored by the official policy.

The institution of Letter of Instruction (LOI) #974 which mandates all government agencies to take positive steps in implementing constitutional laws and other measures against the discrimination of women in employment and decision-making is therefore noteworthy. Two years after it was instituted in 1980, the NCRFW undertook a monitoring scheme on the implementation of this specific policy in government agencies and private businesses. Their findings, according to the Research Officer, revealed that implementation has been lagging and that no significant gains were evident.

The paternalistic and patriarchal dominance evident in policy statements such as the Plans assumes significance when one considers that government decision-making positions are controlled by men at all levels. There are only two (2) women Ministers out of a total of 18; 10 women members in the Batasan out of 176 Assembly persons; 4 women governors; 2 city mayors out of 59; 78 municipal mayors who are women out of 1,501; and 2,500 women barangay captains out of 39,443. The percentage of women decision-makers at these various levels ranges from 3 per cent to 11 per cent. This is certainly a very dismal figure considering that women make up a full per cent of the country's population.

It is not only the quantity of women leaders -- or the dearth thereof in government decision-making levels -- that concerns us. The question of the type of women in these

positions - their awareness and assertiveness in confronting woman's issues and translating these into resource commitments also warrants attention. Limited time constraints, however inhibited us from conducting a study on this aspect more thoroughly.

Still and all, it is evident that while the official plan recognizes the contribution of woman to development, their integration into nation-building is subsumed and set along the lines determined by existing development priorities and strategies.

PART II. GOVERNMENT AGENCIES WORKING ON WOMEN'S CONCERNS

Overview of Objectives

The Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD) has traditionally been the government agency responsible for implementing official strategies addressing woman, particularly in the health, nutrition, population and social services sectors.

The agency however does not view woman as a special target clientele. Rather, its efforts are directed towards the whole family. MSSD looks to the family "as one whole unit to be developed, strengthened, and supported to be self-propelling".

The Bureau of Women and Minors (BWM) was set up in 1960 to protect the general welfare of working women and youth. After a series of reorganizations through the years, the BWM is today the primary agency of the MOLE concerned with the administration of policies, plans, programs and laws affecting working women and youth.

Over the decade, BWM's functions have been expanded to include piloting special projects, including population and family planning program for workers.

The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), on the other hand, was established in 1975 by virtue of P.D. No. 633, primarily for the IWY. Initially, it operated under the Office of the President. In 1981, it was placed under the Ministry of Human Settlements (MHS) and draws its budget from the Ministry as one of the livelihood Programs.

The NCRFW was created to be the national government machinery on woman's affairs. Its Board of Commissioners has the First Lady, Mrs. Imelda Marcos as the Chairperson. Commissioners include women from different sectors in arts, diplomatic corps, judiciary, etc. The MSSD, and MOLE ministers are also represented in the NCRFW Board of Commissioners.

A review of NCRFW's objectives confirms the government's objective vis-a-vis women, i.e., "to ensure the full integration of women for economic, social and cultural development at national and international levels" as well as "to ensure that women become full and equal partners of men in the total development effort".

Specifically, NCRFW acts as a policy and advisory body to the President, the Prime Minister, other Ministries and BP members in formulating measures, plans and programs. It also monitors implementation of plans related to international commitments, local policies and legislation. The Commission likewise helps to initiate new organizations, to link and coordinate women's organizations, including NGOs. It serves as well as a data bank/clearinghouse for all information on women.

NCRFW is also mandated to conceptualize, initiate or implement projects as well as to provide financial assistance to local projects from its own budget or by generating external funding, both nationally and internationally.

While there are other government agencies that integrate women's concern in their programs, for the purposes of this paper discussion is centered on these three agencies as they encompass official approaches to address women's issues.

Programs: Highlights and Assessment

All three agencies embody components of livelihood, non-formal education and training, and population concerns involving women.

MSSD. As has been noted earlier, MSSD programs are generally directed towards the whole family. Over the past ten years, these program have included: Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) program which provides small capital loans of not more

than ₱500.00 without interest or collateral; non-formal vocational training on practical skills, e.g., bamboocraft, basket-making, cosmetology, tailoring.

Assistance is directed to needy families who belong to the bottom 30 per cent of the population. Eligibility for MSSD's welfare services can only be availed of if the family income was between ₱350.00 to ₱450.00 a month, as of 1982. Poverty thresholds determined by various researches on the other hand indicate that a family with income between ₱2,000 to ₱3,000 was already on the poverty line.

The cut-off level of indigency income determined by MSSD means that a large portion of the population are ineligible for MSSD coverage. This may be gleaned from the NCRFW's 1983 report on the appraisal of achievements in the decade which shows that in 1982 for example, only 299,836 individuals were reached by various MSSD social services.

Data does not indicate how many of MSSD's beneficiaries are women. It is apparently assumed that women will automatically be benefitted or that benefits would trickle down to women. There is little recognition given the fact that an increasing number of women are taking over as solo parents or as primary breadwinners due to several reasons, e.g., unemployed husbands, incompatibilities, polygamous relationship of husband, etc.

The MSSD program that deals specifically with women is the day care service centers. Such centers are basically a child welfare service arrangement where "substitute mothering" is supposed to provide temporarily for pre-school children during the part of the day when mothers cannot attend to the child because they are working or are chronically ill.

As of 1981, MSSD operated 4,708 day care centers all over the country, with 213 of these in Metro Manila alone.

These MSSD day care centers, however, are mainly supplementary feeding centers for children of low income communities. The ratio of day care workers to children is generally 1:40. Some socialization health habits sessions, reading exercises and free play may be provided along with

feeding (snacks). Many if not most centers are not equipped with stimulating play or learning materials, apart from the usual tables, chairs and blackboards.

It should be noted also that day care services actually involve only two hours, e.g., from 8 to 10 a.m. for ages 3-4 years old, and 10 to 12 noon for those 5-6 years old. This is certainly too limited a time for working mothers' needs.

For those women whose children are admitted to day care programs, their involvement in the center usually consists of: membership in a mothers' club or association, assisting in preparing the snacks, doing volunteer services such as maintaining the cleanliness of the center, daily or monthly donations (E.G. ₱.20/day) to supplement the food supply.

MSSD day care center teachers are salaried, either by the municipal government or through donations of private individuals.

A common problem that plagues MSSD day care centers is the lack of food supply. Other problems include the irregular salaries of teachers and the dilapidated physical conditions of the center.

Considering that there are 40,207 barangays (villages) nationwide, the coverage of MSSD day care center indicates a wide gap between actual need and government response. The nature and quality of its services, if these are available, are also largely inadequate in addressing the reality of a growing number of working mothers employed eight hours or more a day. Not enough attention is likewise given to the need for educational, creativity and stimulation needs of young children.

BWM. This agency, together with NCRFW, has generated data on issues of women workers. Among its significant research findings, the following needs to be highlighted:

- * Majority of complaints filed by women workers were wage-related, including the violation of laws on payment of emergency allowance, 13th month pay.
- * Attitudes of employers and women themselves on the latter's

employment as secondary had a significant effect on their recruitment, training opportunities, promotions and lay-offs.

- * Stereo-typing of male-female jobs influences employment policies and practices which not even high educational attainment has succeeded in overcoming.
- * Women occupy lower employment ranks and women in the same occupational groups as men receive on the average lower compensation.

The BWM-MOLE has sought to apply the provisions of the Labor Code on the discrimination of women, but violations are rampant. Ironically, labor standards to ensure protection of working women's rights have often resulted in reluctance of employers to hire women. Despite LOI #974, no official sanctions have been undertaken or pushed by either BWM or NCRFW, both of which remain recommendatory bodies.

One instance when the BWM did go into an action campaign on women's welfare was related to its 1976 study of the effects conditions of women in the "hospitality industry". In 1978, BWM waged a vigorous campaign to acquaint nightclub hostesses, bar-girls, a-go-go dancers, etc., with their rights and obligations, benefits and privileges, before they could be issued work permits. The resultant effect of the campaign was that it subtly legitimized prostitution and protected customers, as hospitality girls were required to undergo VD check-ups in social hygiene clinics before they could be issued work or renewed permits.

The Bureau also piloted several developmental training and livelihood projects in several areas. A major part of its projects however had to do with population and family planning education programs. It is significant to note that one-third of BWM's annual budgets went to population/family planning related programs and activities.

Like the MSSD and NCRFW, the BWM's program on population education is directed towards men and women. However, the role of family planning is still largely viewed as primarily a women's affair. Participants in these programs have been

mostly women.

The focus on women in family planning campaigns evidently recognizes the primary role of the women in child-bearing. It is noteworthy that government agencies have been trying to promote family planning methods as a joint responsibility of the couple. It should be noted however that while the official population program has been promoting different methods of contraception, its health centers and educational campaigns seldom discuss the adverse long-term effects of such technology as the pills and IUD on women's health and bodies. In other words, the costs of contraception still fall largely on women.

NCRFW. Since its inception, the Commission has initiated and commissioned studies to generate a greater awareness of issues affecting women's participation in development. These have included: Studies on discriminatory employment policies; attitudes towards women lawyers; values of rural women in different cultural settings with its implications for education, social policies and development programs; quantification of monetary value of housework; survey on the participation of women in decision-making levels and other occupational levels.

The use of such data in the campaign to raise women's consciousness of their social, economic and political and cultural status has been nil. They have been gathered as a way of finding out how women can be mobilized to support government programs.

As an advisory body to the national leadership, NCRFW has participated in preparations of policies and suggested draft revisions in the latest Five-Year Development Plan. None of these however actually found their way into the Plan.

Likewise, in cooperation with the U.P. Law Center, NCRFW has proposed several reforms to ensure equality of men and women under the law, e.g., in marriage, in the rearing of children, the support of the family, in inheritance, acquisition and disposition of property and in the dissolution of the marriage bond. The task of passing these legal reforms is in the hands of the Batasan with its predominantly male constituency.

NCRFW's initiatives in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Culture to develop instructional modules on

abolishing sex-stereotyping careers should also be noted. The incorporation into the elementary and secondary curricula of these modules and the effects on students is still being evaluated.

NCRFW's training concerns have centered on both traditionally women's field such as health, home industries, nutrition, community beautification, sanitation, as well as on livelihood and economics activities. It should be noted however that majority of its training beneficiaries in the latter field have come from the relatively well-off sectors.

The most important strategy of the NCRFW has been in the involvement of Women in KKK Livelihood Programs. In support of government programs, to promote non-traditional exports such as products of cottage industries, NCRFW has been organizing women into productive groups under the KKK Programs and providing them with training, technical financial and other institutional supports for production and marketing.

Its major program along this socio-economic aspect has been the Balikatan sa Kaunlaran (BSK) which is further discussed in a separate section. The assessment of these livelihood and income-generating projects involving women is also found in this section.

Suffice it here to say that like MSSD and BWM, the NCRFW has been concerned over the decade with increasing the economic productivity of grassroots women through a provision of opportunities for livelihood training. These have however centered generally on traditional women's fields such as handicraft, sewing, cosmetology. Skills in management, entrepreneurial and collective ownership for this group have been largely ignored which means that grassroots women seldom go beyond being laborers in these endeavors. NCRFW-initiated workshops on managerial skills have centered largely on women from the elite.

In 1981, NCRFW initiated projects on the issue of the trafficking of women. In 1983, together with other NGO's such as the Third World Movement Against the Exploitation of Women, the Morning Glory Program of Caritas, Civic Assembly of Women of the Philippines, the Ecumenical Women Against Exploitation, and the Philippine Women's University, the

Commission joined and headed a Task Force against the Exploitation of Women and Children.

The Task Force launched Project STOP, an acronym for "Stop Trafficking of Filipinas". It was a campaign directed primarily against the pimps, protectors, agents, recruiters, managers and brothel owners. The urgency which marked the campaign reflected growing concern over the rising incidence of prostitution over the decade.

The official approach to the problem has however been in the nature of short-term solutions. BWM-MOLE through a bill in the Batasan Pambansa has been seeking to regulate employment and working conditions, e.g., P.D. 442 was issued which seeks to establish women in "night work" as employees and therefore subject to protection and privileges/rights under the Labor Law.

To take a long-term approach to the problem would inevitably entail not only moral but also and more importantly the political will to come to grips with structures that breed poverty and prostitution. This involves not only reducing inequities in income and wealth but also re-assessing government policies and programs such as tourism and the presence of U.S. bases which several studies have shown have reinforced if not legitimized prostitution in the name of the "hospitality industry" or the "rest and recreation industry".

Despite evidence however on the relationship between prostitution and these government programs, the official approach is to accept these policies as a given. In the words of a key personnel in NCRFW, "Tourism does not cause nor promote prostitution. The Ministry of Tourism is also behind the campaign against prostitution". The problem is thus deflected and centers instead on mitigating and lessening the incidence of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Project STOP's efforts to promote rehabilitative and preventive measures have been in the form of: educational campaigns in the rural areas to dissuade prospective migrants from going to the cities; campaigns against club owners "who encourage sexual abuse"; offering scholarships and alternative economic opportunities to hospitality girls and prostitutes. Its efforts to tap all sectors of society are ongoing. The campaign also intends to work to promulgate and enforce laws to indict offen-

ders and protectors of prostitution. It has already noted that existing laws subtly aim to make prostitution safe and clean for customers, e.g., setting up of social hygiene clinics and imposing VD check-ups on hospitality girls.

The NCRFW has mobilized BSK in the campaign. The general perception and approach taken by these organizations however can be gleaned from its Third National Congress Proceedings which locates the problem and solution of women's trafficking in the woman herself. The problem is perceived to be one of "values": The institutions that must address the crisis is the family (with focus on the way women bring up their children), the school and the Church.

Rather than examine more thoroughly the system and the policies and programs of government that promote and maintain sexual exploitation, NCRFW-BSK posits that the problem is not structural but personal. The Conference actually pointed to the existence of "reverse exploitation", i.e., steps must be taken to stop women from exploiting foreigners.

Constraints: Some Views from Within Government Agencies

In interviews with several key personnel and staff of NCRFW and MSSD, a common concern expressed was the difficulties they encountered due to the lack of financial and personnel resources.

The National Capital Region of the MSSD for example works on an annual budget of ₱14 million with 148 field workers in 182 depressed areas servicing the 6 million population of Metro Manila. This is clearly evidence of the lack of resource commitment for the work that is being targeted.

The MSSD also indicated it suffers from a quick turn-over of staff primarily due to low salaries which are not enough compensation for the effort and risks often involved in the work. Their status as professionals is not recognized in terms of the salaries provided by the government. The staff in turn also manifests a lack of motivation to their work.

For the BWM, which is headed and staffed by women, its budget in 1982 was ₱998,000 out of MOLE's total appropriation of ₱102,685,000. This represents about one per cent (1%) of the total MOLE budget. In 1983, BWM's budget was increased to ₱1.8 million, but in the following year went down again to only

₱880,000.00. This latter budget includes the ₱545,000 budget of the Population/Family Planning Office. This is evidence of the low priority given to BWM in its critical role as the protector of women worker's rights.*

Likewise, the NCRFW works on what it considers a limited budget, ranging from ₱3,070,064 in 1981 to ₱3,960,622 in 1983. Personal services take up roughly 25% in 1981 and 35% in 1983. The rest went to maintenance and other operational expense such as equipment.

It is significant to note that NCRFW's 1983 budget allocation of ₱4.6 million represents only 0.2 per cent of the total budget of the Ministry of Human Settlements which in that year totalled ₱2,571,593,000. Considering that the MHS Minister, the First Lady, Mrs. Marcos, is herself the Chairperson of NCRFW, the Commission's work is apparently very low in her priorities.

The NCRFW Program staff consists of only 4 Program Officers and 4 Research Officers for the whole country. The lack of staff to monitor the implementation of policies, laws, measures as well as programs designed to address the concerns of women has thus been a major concern of NCRFW.

Despite this identified constraint, NCRFW feels it has done considerably much in generating an awareness of women's issues. The Commission has worked its way through the limited resources by opting for linkage-building: e.g., it commissions researches to other agencies, or taps resources of other public and private agencies. NCRFW personnel maintain that their task is recommendatory and that its strength is in networking. It should be noted however that based on its assessments, there has been an absence of continuous flow of information from its different linkages to enable it to monitor programs and projects.

*Note: At the time this research was conducted, efforts to interview BWM key personnel and staff were not successful. BWM consistently begged off from giving interviews, citing reasons such as: they were busy, or were out of town. Data here were instead gathered from its annual reports, and NCRFW's Report on the achievements of the UN Decade for Women in the Philippines, 1983.

Thus, in their own words, "In spite of specific targets and strategies aimed at alleviating women's position in society, programs and projects specially in the employment sector have remained ineffective in raising the status of women".

Based on interviews with several officials of NCRFW and MSSD, there seems to be a growing consciousness of the tremendous burdens which women are facing, particularly the "double day burden". It would appear therefore that there is some "feminist" awareness among women government servants in key positions of decision-making as well as in the lower echelons. There was however a tendency for them to see that their work should not "prove threatening to the men" and that there was a need to proceed "slowly" in their work.

In this area therefore while there is a growing realization of women's oppression among our women government servants, there needs to be a strengthening of their understanding of the total women's question which should in turn translate into more relevant actions for women.

Relevance of Specific Programs to Feminist Concerns

While the WID framework speaks of integrating women into development, the feminist framework, as we have noted, takes as its starting point the reality that women are already integrated in development but on inequitable terms.

In this light, it is significant to cite the effort of NCRFW in quantifying the monetary value of housework. The effort underscores the economic contributions of housewives, long ignored by official statistics.

At the same time, if housework is indeed valuable, a promotion of male participation in this vital work has been slack, if at all, on the official levels. The working assumption is that housework -- and child care -- are preeminently female domain.

Day care centers as promoted by MSSD are vital mechanisms by themselves in increasing the visible economic productivity of women. At the same time, day-care services allow the women

to participate in income-generating activities, particularly in the face of the present unemployment of the male workforce.

As has already been mentioned however, women have long been integrated into the workforce, largely through the cultural support systems of the extended households.

Women who work are also freed from domestic work and child-care largely because of the presence of household helpers--generally female from lower-income groups -- who assume housework. Day-care centers thus supplant the services of domestic female workers -- and could in turn free them for other employment opportunities. Given the present unemployment situation however, such work alternatives that carry significant monetary returns remain severely limited.

On the other hand, it should be noted that the cultural emphasis on women as primarily child-bearers and - rearers means that child care is still an area Filipino mothers generally feel responsible for. Day-care centers only temporarily ease the burden. MSSD day-care centers for example offer only two to four hours of "substitute mothering". Its focus on supplemental feeding often also means: only the more/most malnourished children are eligible for admission.

Day care centers while important support systems, cannot fully alleviate women's double burden because after a day's work, it is most often still they (women) who assume the tasks of domestic and childcare responsibilities.

Thus, without the conscious promotion of men's participation into the domain of domestic and childcare responsibilities, efforts to integrate women into the labor force has indeed reinforced the "double burdens" of women. In fact the present emphasis on women's participation in development, whether at the local/community or national levels, places a severe pressure on women to assume multiple tasks without providing the necessary support systems.

While NCRFW and other agencies speak of the need to lighten women's burden at home, the socio-cultural educational effort towards this concern has been totally absent. The abolition of sex-stereotyping has been limited to career choices. The emphasis is simply to "integrate" women into fields largely and previously dominated by men. There have been no initiatives towards integrating men into fields traditionally dominated

by women. The transformation of relationships - at the domestic level - where it counts most to women has thus been largely ignored.

This is not to say that such transformations are not taking place. NGO's and other sectors have been advocating for alternative lifestyles including the need for share parenting. There is a need however to put these concerns into the "main-stream" of public consciousness, if women should indeed become the focus of development initiatives.

The establishment of support systems towards working women and mothers, which government initiatives purportedly seek, has been also characterized by a general official lack of concern for the work conditions women cope with. The most notable exception has been in the case of "hospitality girls", but these have been marked by a concern less for the women, and more for the customers, i.e., men, tourists and U.S. servicemen.

Attempts to meet the economic needs and livelihood concerns of women and their families have been generally centered on marginal employment, on income-augmenting activities. In consonance with the official tendency to view women as "social welfare beneficiaries", measures to make women economically self-reliant, as individuals, and as heads of households have not been aggressively pushed by any of the three agencies covered in this paper.

The date that these three agencies have generated have not led to the formation of active pressure points within these agencies. Because of their context in the bureaucracy, it would appear that they are in a position to take the cudgels for women's concerns. However, by the very fact that they are part of government, their role has been limited to simply integrating women along the line determined by the "official" perspective. Evidence indicates that in many ways, the framework is to focus on "development" rather than on women and all its accompanying premises.

This is undoubtedly in keeping with the perspective reflected by Mrs. Marcos, MHS Minister and NCRFW Chairperson in her various forewords to NCRFW's Annual Reports: to become partners of men for national progress. In the 1982 Annual Report, her transmittal is addressed to the President, Ferdinand Marcos and ends with: "With your inspiration, we shall continuously strive to earn for our Filipino women a status as equal to that of men in

the task of nation-building".

PART III. AN ASSESSMENT OF A MAJOR GOVERNMENT PROGRAM

BALIKATAN SA KAUNLARAN: Potentials and Limits

In 1977, the NCRFW launched its major program, the "Balikatan sa Kaunlaran" ("Shoulder to Shoulder in Development") which would serve as NCRFW's implementing arm in the regional levels. The BSK Movement aimed, among others, "to mobilize and maximize women power and potentials by undertaking activities geared towards improving the quality of life of their own families and community". BSK also hopes "to develop self-determination and self-reliance of women in meeting the needs of a community through different developmental projects". In 1982, the movement was incorporated as an independent, private organization with its own set of officers; however, as an organization, it exists primarily to support the goals, objectives and programs of the NCRFW.

Membership and Structures

BSK figures estimate membership to be close at 3 million. As a nationwide structure, BSK is organized in 3 levels; in the province/city (where councils are formed, and which in turn organize chapters) at the municipal level (and units) at the barangay level. As of 1983, 74 provincial councils and 60 city councils had been organized. NCRFW's 1983 Annual Report states that 98% of all provinces and cities nationwide had organized BSK Councils; in each province or city an average rate of 78% of all municipalities had established Chapters; organization rate was lowest at the barangay level with 55% of barangays having BSK Units.

Membership in BSK is open to men; however, the organizations are managed by women leaders.

Organizing Strategy

The organizational strategy involves several stages: NCRFW makes representation with the provincial governor or city mayor to explain the concept of BSK. Once the approval of the local chief executive is obtained, an orientation seminar is held

where government workers, women leaders, concerned groups and NGO's are invited. After the orientation, an ad-hoc council for the province or city is formed, which then organizes municipal chapters or barangay units. Once 15% of all barangays in the city are organized, an election proper is conducted for the council officers.

Leadership and Selection Process

All barangay unit members can vote during the election of the unit officers; two from every barangay can vote for officers of the municipal chapters; and one representative from the municipality can vote for the provincial council officers.

The leadership roles in the BSK Council/chapter/units are generally, except in a few cases, assigned to wives of local officials. This is not surprising considering the organizational strategy of BSK. Dr. Leticia de Guzman, NCRFW Executive Director, explains in a personal interview the rationale behind this strategy, "We must be practical - and realistic. We need the support of the local political leadership for our programs. Our BSK name implies that we want women to be seen as partners in development efforts. We have to be careful that we are not misunderstood or viewed as a threat to the men". Dr. de Guzman adds that private citizens are also often, and have been, elected as presidents of their BSK organizations.

A 1984 evaluation study on the BSK commissioned by the NCRFW and conducted by a private academic institution provides a profile on BSK officers-members.

The study noted that at the helm of BSK organizations are women from the local political and economic elite- wives of government officials/businessmen, professionals, educators and esteemed individuals from the affluent sector. The study found that the proportion of college graduates is higher among BSK officers than among members and beneficiaries, and that officers have a higher mean income (P5,000 a month) than members. It was also learned that members are involved mostly in implementation.

Membership Participation

Out of 15 Councils included in the study survey, eight were found to be active and functioning, and seven were inactive.

The study attributed the dynamics of active BSK councils to the fact that they are more participatory; i.e., leaders consult members; there is a regular turn-over of leadership; responsibilities and decisions in planning are delegated to committees; evaluation mechanisms are instituted. Also, linkages are established with other organizations. The study however notes that leadership is often contingent upon selection of the local officials, and that leaders are often always out of the province--all of which constitute real constraints. In inactive BSK organizations, communication and personal interaction between leaders and members is infrequent; there is also a greater dependency of members on leaders.

Resource Mobilization

Funding for BSK projects/activities is generated in various ways: NCRFW links the local organization to resource agencies; also, local fund-raising projects are undertaken. In the latter case, it should be noted that holding beauty contests to generate funds is quite common. To this, Dr. de Guzman remarks that it is really up to the local BSK to decide the kind of fund-raising projects they want to undertake.

That BSK projects are determined and based on identified local needs is also a matter of policy. Four NCRFW Program Development Officers act as resource persons in the BSK.

BSK Undertakings

Official data on BSK projects show that 30% of the projects are livelihood and income-generating projects, an evident reflection of the pressing needs of women and communities, Health and nutrition make up over 25% of projects; education over 10% with the rest being project on environmental protection, socio-civic and spiritual activities, infrastructure development and others.

Impact on Community/Women

When asked which of BSK Objectives have been attained in their communities, respondents in the study survey cited the improvement of community and environmental sanitation,

The presence of women from the affluent sector in the leadership positions of BSK may also have its advantages, in the form of prestige, expertise and resource access provided to BSK. At the time, as the study noted, there was a tendency of fostering/reinforcing a donor-recipient relationship between leaders and members, as the organization often served as a channel for the charitable inclinations of well-to-do officers. The resultant effect of the paternalistic attitude was for leaders/officers to become or be viewed as the decision-makers.

While BSK has positively contributed to women's concerns in many ways, a fact perceived by the respondents of the study, it has a long way to go as a vehicle for participation of women.

As the study points out in its conclusions and recommendations:

"BSK has done much to improve the social economic conditions of communities but or not the people participated in such endeavours is another thing to consider. The leaders have been spearheading most of BSK projects or activities while the members may be either passive or active contributors.

Thus the success of a BSK organizations may not necessarily be a measure of how it has actually contributed to community development but more importantly in terms of the status (who the participants are) and the number of persons who were actually involved in the process of planning and implementation.

There is a need to identify and train and develop second line leaders to ensure continuity and viability in case of turn-over of administration.

BSK's association with national and local governments should be effaced to project the future of BSK. An alternative selection process is needed through formulation by NCRFW of specific guidelines with regard to limitations in appointments and terms of office of wives of highest local officials in assuming leaderships. This is not to pre-

judice the important role this group of women may play in such organizations but only to ensure the viability of BSK as a true vehicle for mobilizing women's power and potential for involving all sectors of society in the nation's pursuit of development goals".

Income-Generating Projects

That these projects have generated earning opportunities for low-income, unemployed and underemployed women is not difficult to see. What needs more careful scrutiny is (1) the percentage of employment earnings/labor costs to total project income/profits; and (2) to whom the venture profits accrue. According to the NCRFW's 1981 Annual Report, for example, "a total of ₱383,667.00 was used to pilot projects in 1981 and to continue ongoing BSK projects. The reported return of ₱31 million in 1980 has been more than doubled at the close of 1981...." In the meantime, data from the study on BSK projects indicate that the individual members' family income ranging from ₱725-₱1,250 a month can hardly meet family needs.

The goods and services generated by women's labor in many of these projects are on the whole not oriented to their family/community consumption. A market-orientation pervades the projects, evident in the establishment of a systematic market system through the BASE. While the projects provide income, marginal to needy members, BSK information does not say where the profits go and how they are used.

The projects of cottage industries for example, have been a traditional employer of women/housewives in both rural/urban areas. But the production of capital input and raw materials as well as the marketing of products are rarely in the hands/control of the women workers. BSK members may earn a few pesos from a whole day's work, but the profits from the sale of their products go to the capitalist/trader/exporter. In the light of the role of cottage industries as a source of foreign exchange and given the present government policy to intensify non-traditional exports, including native craft and garments products of cottage industries, is it coincidental that cottage industries should be a major part of BSK's livelihood projects?

The question is relevant when one considers that leadership of BSK organizations and the choice of livelihood projects, is controlled by women from the political and economic elite. As was noted, members are generally implementors of projects. Given the fact that projects are not organized as endeavours to be collectively owned and managed by members, it is common that members have little say, if at all, in determining the distribution of cost, benefits of such projects.

In the context of the discussion above, one must raise the issue: While employment and livelihood opportunities for women are needed, low-income members of BSK organizations are vulnerable to becoming easy sources of cheap labor for economic ventures initiated, controlled and operated by their better-off counterparts. While this does not apply to all income-generating projects, it is ironic that a women-oriented organization like the BSK could become an instrument for the exploitation of rural and urban poor women.

It is our contention that while the BSK has potentials for harnessing women's potential in development, it has inherent limitations. Participation of low-income/poorer women in BSK projects must mean that they (women) become more than just individual beneficiaries of activities. Brochures of BSK and NCRFW itself recognize that "women's integration in development involves not only recognizing them as beneficiaries and targets of services but also as agents and catalysts of change in all aspects of the development process". While the BSK has indeed mobilized women into participating for community development efforts, leadership opportunities and experience have been monopolized, wittingly or unwittingly, by the better-off women. While BSK hopes to "develop the self-determination and self-reliance of women". It has yet to evolve a strategy where low-income, poor women become truly equal with, and less dependent, on their better-off counterparts in the movement. As it is, the broad program framework takes too general an approach to women's participation and overlooks the reality of exploitative economic relations resulting from socio-economic inequities.

That equity was the least concern of NCRFW or BSK is evident in the choice of KKK as the major livelihood effort of BSK. Reflecting the WID framework's shift from equity to

" the poorest of the poor", the KKK is, in the words of the First Lady Mrs. Marcos, "addressed to the poorest of the poor ... We must seek out the poor because they are the uninformed and most deprived in terms of resources. They should be motivated to strive and work for a better quality of life. They should be assisted in going into livelihood projects where they can derive income, like the KKK."

The strategy used by BSK in focusing on leaders from the elite also reflects Mrs. Marcos' own viewpoint: In the speech she delivered at the 1982 Annual Women's Congress, she emphasized:

"You have to take care of the rich to maximize their talents and potentials, and of the poor to teach them skills, to enable them to move forward in life.

It is really possible to take care of at least the 20 per cent of the people in your community. You just look for the 10 per cent who are the leaders and the 10 per cent who are the poor, and then work out a system where they can help one another."

It is important therefore to ask as the discussion above shows whether the major beneficiaries of the strategy will tend to be the upper 10 per cent rather than the lowest 10 per cent. That some benefits trickled down may not altogether be denied. However, there have been cases where funds or livelihood equipment, such as sewing machines, supposedly to be distributed among BSK members have not actually reached them but stayed with leaders. Report to NCRFW however do not mention such irregularities. This is because the control of information and decision-making is centered on the leaders of BSK councils/chapters.

PART IV. CONCLUSIONS

Government initiatives over the decade have taken on predominantly WID goals i.e. to ensure integration of women in the present context of government development thrusts and strategies.

While the official WID framework however focuses on increa-

sing economic contributions of women to national growth, the government view of women is tied in with women's traditional role as wives and mothers in the domestic and reproductive sphere.

Population, health and nutrition concerns are by themselves laudable. Women know only too well the human costs of childbearing, poor health and nutrition.

But to focus on these concerns without relating them to the causes of population growth; poor health and nutrition status is to approach the problem in a fragmented way. Obstacles to the solution of these concerns are rooted in low family incomes, poor work conditions, sanitation and water supply, lack of access to health care, not to mention the double day burdens of women.

Support systems for working mothers and wives have been limited to day-care centers -- which themselves have covered little ground over 10 years. Data generated by BWM and NCRFW show that wage and employment policies covering women remained discriminatory. Little attention has also been given to the fact that an increasing number of women have become primary breadwinners.

Official initiatives' stress on the economic productivity of women limits itself to employment/income generating and augmenting schemes without addressing the question of equitable distribution from such schemes. By simply, "integrating" women into more economic activities, the government framework fails to recognize that present economic relations which exploit women's labor are profitable. This is evident in the BSK income-generating projects which while operated by women and having incurred profits, provide marginal income to individual low-income women. Economic "productivity" may be enhanced through opportunities for augmenting income or for marginal employment but these have not led to economic security of either the family or the individual women.

BSK data also indicate that the mobilization of "women's power" has been to support existing development programs, rather than build programs geared to and built on concerns of women. Initiatives have been centered on promoting the participation of elite women, rather than focusing on grass-roots

women as agents and catalysts -- planners, implementors and evaluators of their own programs.

While the focus on the visible economic productivity of women may indicate a concern for promoting favorable attitudes towards working wives and mothers, corollary support systems to alleviate the double day burdens of women have not been evident part of government's concerns.

The focus on women is to accelerate the goals of present development thrusts. Thus, even the effort to abolish sex-stereotyping in career choice is meant to harness women's potentials in areas where they exhibit the capacities equal to men. This is of course a good start. But it is not enough.

No official initiatives have been exerted over the decade to promote the participation of men in the domain of domestic and child care work. The feminist concern with this aspect of shared responsibilities of men and women in the work of family and domestic/reproductive stems from a cultural reality. Studies -- including NCRFW's -- showed that aside from family livelihood and income needs, a major concern of all Filipino women is domestic peace and marital harmony. Family, home and children still occupy a priority in Filipino women's scale of values.

Most often, the presence of domestic peace and marital harmony is tied in with women fulfilling their roles in the home. When work outside home, or involvement in community affairs, infringes on domestic obligations -- such as the care of a sick child -- women suffer pangs of guilt or bear added tasks. The emotional insecurity of husbands and men about working wives has also in many cases constituted a source of tension.

Filipino women generally rely on their own resourcefulness or creativity in coping with their multiple roles and tasks. They are also generally known for their capacity for being "long-suffering". This explains why women will often give up their own interests for the sake of family peace. It also explains the phenomenon of women accepting or choosing work in low-paying but home-based cottage industries. For them it is a compromise: while they earn something, they are within their children's reach.

Thus, the official concern with the integration of women in development puts Filipino women in a double-bind situation: They are pressured to work outside the home by even as they are expected to continue assuming the responsibilities of home and child care.

From the feminist perspective, women's participation through work outside the home or community involvement is important. But given the Filipino women's concern with family, home and children, there must be a parallel effort to establish support systems where care of home and children is shared, not just by the community in general but by men, husbands and fathers in particular.

The Filipino feminist psyche does not abnegate the meaningful role of home and family welfare; on the contrary, home care, nurturing and caring of offspring are such vital human activities in which both men and women are recognized as having their important and unique contributions.

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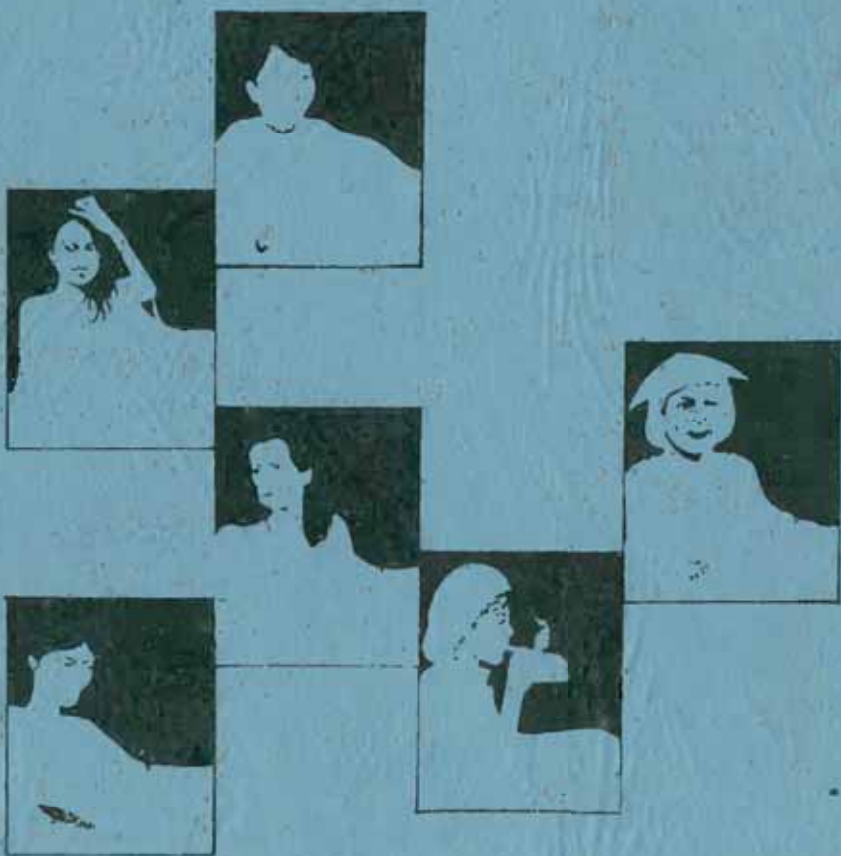
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