REPORT OF THE REGIONAL SEMINAR/WORKSHOP

ON

THE ROLE OF YOUNG WOMEN IN SOCIAL PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT, ESPECIALLY IN INDUSTRIES

10 – 20 May 1980

SINGAPORE

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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. ORIGIN AND SPONSORSHIP

The Regional Seminar/Workshop on the Role of Young Women in Social Progress and Development, Especially in Industries was organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in co-operation with the People's Association of Singapore and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Singapore provided host facilities and the Seminar/Workshop was conducted at the National Youth Leadership Training Institute (NAYTI) from 10 to 20 May 1980.

The Seminar/Workshop was held in pursuance of United Nations General Assembly resolution 2770 (XXVI), which stressed the role of youth in promoting higher standards of living and conditions of economic and social progress and development. This Seminar/Workshop also related to the work programme endorsed at the Commission's thirty-fifth session, held in 1979, which included among its aims the integration of women in the development process, enhancement of their potential and elimination of discrimination against them. It was a follow-up to study conducted by ESCAP on the problems and needs of young female industrial workers in Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand. The findings of the four studies indicated the need for greater attention to be given to the development of, and particularly to more effective implementation of, policies and programmes to improve the status and participation of young female industrial workers. The educational, training, social and welfare needs of these women represent areas of priority concern for planners and policy makers.

B. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Seminar/Workshop was to study, review and evaluate the current role and status of young women working in the industrial sector in newly industrializing countries in Asia and the Pacific and also to discuss the roles of planners and policy makers in enhancing the contribution and well-being of these young female workers within the context of national development goals. The Seminar/Workshop was convened to identify key factors affecting the social, economic and work statuses of young female industrial workers and to draw up feasible programmes/strategies which could be undertaken in the respective countries to ensure fuller integration of young women in social development through their participation in industries.

In more specific terms, the objectives of the Seminar/Workshop were the following:

(a) To provide a forum for the exchange of information on the current role and status of women working in industries and their contribution to development, especially in newly industrializing countries;

(b) To discuss issues and problems faced by planners and policy makers in formulating workable policies and effective programmes to improve the social status and economic positions of young women working in industries;

(c) To facilitate the exchange of views and experiences on the social services, welfare provisions and other institutional supports needed to integrate women more fully into the industrial growth process;

(d) To provide a forum to discuss the positive contributions which women working in industries can make to social progress through community participation and social activism;

(e) To share ideas and experiences with a view to identifying cultural, social, political and economic factors influencing the participation of young women in industry and to formulate concrete programmes by which to promote their role in the development process.

C. PARTICIPANTS

The Seminar/Workshop was attended by personnel at policy-making levels and those involved in managing or developing programmes affecting the role, welfare and social advancement of young women working in industries.

The participants in the Seminar/Workshop included 25 governmental and non-governmental officials from 11 countries and areas of the ESCAP region, namely, Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Speakers and resource persons represented the following organizations: the ESCAP secretariat (the Social Development Division and the Joint CTC/ESCAP Unit on Transnational Corporations), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the International Young Christian Workers, governmental departments and non-governmental organizations and enterprises of the host country, the Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Asian Youth Council, the International Council of Social Welfare, the Singapore Council of Women and other non-governmental organizations.

II. THE SEMINAR/WORKSHOP

A. METHODOLOGY

The organizers intended the Seminar/Workshop to be as flexible as possible. Hence, provision was made in the programme for any modifications that the participants collectively agreed upon. Committee were also formed to enable participants to take part in the actual conduct of the Seminar/Workshop.

In planning the programme itself, care was taken to ensure that there was a fair balance between the structured and the unstructured components: the former consisted of formal plenary meetings and workshop discussions and the latter of field visits. To ensure that the fullest use was made of national experience, participants were requested to prepare country papers reflecting their situation and concerns regarding the role of young women in social progress and development, especially in industries.

B. PROGRAMME

The plenaries consisted of a presentation of prepared papers by quest speakers followed by a question-and-answer and discussion session. The plenaries were followed by workshop discussion (in three small groups) on the plenary issues. Each workshop discussion group elected a rotating chairman and rapporteur for each session.

Nine papers were presented at the plenaries. The following topics were covered:

Topic 1: Young women working in industries: their contributions to social development in newly-industrializing countries;

Topic 2: Literacy, education and vocational training opportunities: impact on the status and contribution of young women working in industries: problems and prospects;

Topic 3: The role and implications of legal and statutory provisions on the welfare and contribution of young women working in industries;

Topic 4: Integrating the young female industrial workers' role in social development through community and institutional participation;

Topic 5: Maximizing the contribution and full integration of all aspects of the milieu of the young female worker in industry: implications for social and other institutional requirements.

Field visits were included to provide participants with an opportunity to gain an insight into the activities of governmental and non-governmental organiza-

tions in Singapore dealing with and/or providing facilities to assist young female workers in industries. Field visits were made to the Jurong Town Corporation, the YWCA Hostel, the Jurong Town Community Centre, the Geyland West Day Care Centre, the People's Association, the Ministry of Labour, the Nippon Miniature Bearings Singapore Pte. Ltd. and South Grand Textiles (Pte.) Ltd.

C. ORIENTATION SESSION

An orientation session was conducted to review the Seminar/Workshop objectives as well as to solicit views and suggestions on the proposed structure, content and methodology of the Seminar/Workshop.

The Chief of the Social Development Division, ESCAP, explained the general objectives and methodological approach. Mr. Larry C.Y. Cheah, the officer in charge of youth development in the Social Development Division of ESCAP and Director of the Seminar/Workshop, elaborated on the aims and programme of the meeting. After some discussion, the participants agreed on the objectives of the meeting and the programme as presented. A programme committee and a reports committee of Seminar participants were then convened. The programme committee was responsible for arranging for chairmen for the various plenaries and monitoring the progress of the Seminar/Workshop in relation to its objectives. The reports committee provided rapporteurs for the various sessions.

D. INAUGURATION

The Seminar/Workshop was inaugurated by the Honourable C.V. Devan Nair, President of the Singapore National Trades Union Congress and Member of Parliament.

Mr. Hans Klein, the Acting Director of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, which had sponsored the Seminar/Workshop, was unable to attend the inauguration personally but conveyed his welcome to all participants and best wishes for the success of the Seminar/Workshop.

The Special Assistant to the Executive Secretary of ESCAP delivered an address on behalf of the Executive Secretary.

Mr. Lim Chin Teong, Chief Executive Director of the People's Association of Singapore, warmly welcomed the participants and resource persons. He said that the contributions that young women workers had made to economic growth in the newly industrializing countries in the Asia and Pacific region had been very significant. That had been recognized by decision makers. Legislative provisions for the protection of women in work had been instituted in one form or another in most countries of the region. However, the wider issues related to the enhancement of women's participation in social development, the reorientation of cultural expectations of the role of women in society and in the home, the opening up of

education, training and career advancement opportunities for women on an egalitarian basis and institutional support for enhancing women's participation in community and political affairs were areas that needed to be explored in greater depth. He also shared some of the insights the People's Association had gained through its experience in drawing women into community participation and leadership through its community centres.

In his address, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP reaffirmed the continuing support of ESCAP for programmes to integrate women into the development process. The address highlighted the impact that industrialization in the developing countries had had on young women. He indicated that women still found themselves in the low-wage categories and the unskilled male still received a higher wage than the unskilled female worker. In many instances, women were underrepresented in labour organizations and therefore had little part in decision making on matters affecting their work status and welfare. There were inadequate opportunities for training in skill development and supervisory positions. Few employers considered the provision of or arrangements for required services such as child-care and other facilities which would enable more women to join the labour force. He also stated that the social and cultural impact that women's participation in industrial production had had on the country's socio-demographic structure as well as on the women themselves, especially those who had migrated from the rural areas, would be worth looking into in the deliberations of the Seminar/Workshop.

In his inaugural address, the Honourable Devan Nair urged more Singapore women, including those who were married, to help Singapore to achieve higher labour productivity and lesser dependence on immigrant labour by involving themselves in economic activities. He proposed that the Government, employers and unions work together to investigate the provision of child-care arrangements to enable more married women to work. He hoped that the Seminar/Workshop would discuss whether women should stay at home to look after the family instead of working to contribute to the well-being of the family and the country's economy. He stressed that, while all policies should enable working women to work outside their homes without being discriminated against, they should not affect the right of a woman to choose to stay at home. In closing, Mr. Nair reaffirmed the significant role women had played in the national economies of Asian countries and noted that the reluctance to accept the freedom to work outside the home was considerably less than before.

III. SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS

This section is organized according to the topics covered in the Seminar/Workshop. Under each topic, resource persons presented papers, which were followed by plenary and workshop discussions. The main concerns of the Seminar/Workshop are reported in these discussions. These do not in any way reflect a consensus of the participants or the position of their respective countries.

A. TOPIC 1. YOUNG WOMEN WORKING IN INDUSTRIES: THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NEWLY-INDUSTRIALIZING COUNTRIES

Papers were presented by the Co-ordinator of the Women's, Young Persons', Relations and Information Section of ILO (Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific), Bangkok, and by Ms. Linda Seah, Lecturer, Department of Statistics, Singapore.

Plenary discussion

In the discussion that followed the presentation of these two papers, the questions of female participation rates, the effect of ILO conventions on the status of women and training of women and training of women workers occupied considerable attention. The Seminar/Workshop felt that, although female participation rates in industrial and economic activity had increased dramatically within the last decade, the special problems of women workers as a result of marriage and motherhood needed to be taken into account. Many married women had to withdraw from the labour force and their subsequent reintegration was made difficult as a result of limited opportunities to acquire new skills. The meeting took special note of the unique problems arising out of the triple role of the female as a wife, mother and worker. In that respect, it was suggested that women workers, although they shared many problems with workers in general, should nevertheless be treated as a separate category. The Seminar/Workshop was concerned at the same time that women workers were not adequately represented in the trade unions, with the result that their special problems and needs were not fully reflected.

The question of ILO conventions and recommendations came up for particular discussion. The distinction between conventions and recommendations was clarified. The problems associated with the enforcement of the conventions and recommendations as well as the labour code and legislation were noted.

The Seminar/Workshop recognized that, although ILO conventions had in general a very positive effect, especially in regard to their standard-setting role, in some cases, such as night-work by females, they might inadvertently act to the detriment of the employment of female workers. The line between discrimination against women workers and their protection was in some cases a thin one; quite often, a law designed to protect a woman worker might in its application prove discriminatory against women workers.

After considerable discussion on the subject of night-work by female workers, the Seminar concluded that it was a very complicated question which required further study, in the absence of which there could be no uniform and definite position applicable to the situation of all countries in the region. In any case, the Seminar/Workshop felt that legislation by itself was not enough; in many cases, there was an ideal labour code but it was not adequately applied, particularly

owing to the shortage of labour inspectors, especially in countries where they were most needed.

Finally, the Seminar/Workshop strongly emphasized the need for equal training opportunities for women workers and availability of fuller information in that connexion.

Workshop discussions

The Workshop discussions concentrated on identifying certain basic issues related to young female workers in industries. Among the issues identified were: discriminatory practices relating to female workers; the need for more educational and training opportunities, including vocational and in-service training; the need for legislation, including securing better implementation of existing legislation; the need for increased participation for women in trade unions and other organizations within industries; the problem of social attitudes; the need for facilities for married women workers, including child-care and maternity benefits; the need for more research and statistical data relating to conditions of work for women; the need to establish women's bureaux in labour departments; the need for training women leaders; better placement and counselling services so that potential female workers were fully informed of the available opportunities; the need to develop a proper enforcement and monitoring machinery for the existing legislation; the need for the improvement of fringe benefits, including insurance provisions for female workers; better living conditions, including environmental health, safety and recreational facilities; the development of part-time employment opportunities; rehabilitation of displaced workers through re-training for new jobs and placement for reemployment. It was agreed that those issues would be further considered in subsequent sessions.

B. TOPIC 2. LITERACY, EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES: IMPACT ON THE STATUS AND CONTRIBUTION OF YOUNG WOMEN WORKING IN INDUSTRIES: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Papers were presented by Mr. Victor Seah, Division Director, Planning and Development, Vocational and Industrial Training Board, Singapore, and by Mr. Eric Ng Jwee Phuan, Division Manager, Personnel and Administration, Nippon Miniature Bearings Singapore (Pte.) Ltd.

Plenary discussion

The Seminar/Workshop noted that, while the proportion of women in the labour force was increasing markedly, many of the women workers were in the labour force only on a temporary and transitory basis. That was especially the case for married women. The typical pattern was for a woman to work until she was married and thereupon to withdraw from the labour force during the childbearing

and childrearing years, often for reasons beyond her control, such as attitudes of husband and other social factors. Moreover, it was noted that, even upon their subsequent re-entry into the labour force, it appeared that women did not become fully committed workers, thereby not inspiring complete confidence in their employers and at the same time not realizing their own potential. They did not, for example, make full use of the available training opportunities to upgrade and update their skills. The view was also expressed that; in the existing circumstances, married women did not have the necessary support services, such as child-care facilities, preprimary schools and kindergartens, to enable them to pursue their further training. In that connexion, the Seminar/Workshop felt that one of the problems was inadequate information regarding the available support services. It was further elaborated that what was required above all was an enlightened view on the part of employers towards married workers so that they could be encouraged to return to work. At the same time, the Seminar/Workshop appreciated that the problems that employers faced in hiring married women, particularly those who had been out of the labour force for a substantial period, could not be overlooked.

Apart from the problems of married women workers, which was a central concern in the discussion, all women workers required the development of adequate education and training opportunities. That included not only formal education but also adult and social education, part-time education, vocational training opportunities and crash courses in basic skills. In the case of married women workers, the Seminar/Workshop recommended that the educational and training system should be adapted to take into account their "split career" pattern. That could be done through a flexible approach to education, stressing special courses to upgrade skills and other part-time courses. In that context, the Seminar/Workshop felt that women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations also had a vital role to play.

Workshop discussions

It was felt that, underlying the whole issue of female participation in the labour force, was the question of traditional social values and attitudes. While social values needed to be taken into account and in many instances had a positive effect, some attitudes required changing, for example, attitudes concerning sharing of domestic family responsibilities by males and females and the traditional stereotyped roles of men and women. The workshop discussion emphasized the role of the formal education system, on the one hand, and the mass media of communication, on the other, as instruments of social and attitudinal change. For example, mass publicity campaigns through brochures could help to bring about changes in attitudes. It was noted that, as far as the formal education system was concerned, in spite of recent gains, girls continued to lag behind boys to a substantial extent. The only real answer was the full and faithful application of a system of compulsory primary education. Moreover, it was stressed that literacy programmes, including those for adult women, should not be confined to literacy only but

should also include education on their rights and responsibilities. The Seminar/Workshop recognized, however, that attitudinal and social changes by their nature necessarily took a long time and too much could not be expected in the short term in that respect from the formal education system and the mass media.

Vocational training and guidance were also mentioned as an important instrument of action and needed to be integrated into the formal education system. As an exmaple, the group indicated that it would be more effective if counselling services were introduced immediately after the elementary school stage. Furthermore, such counselling needed to include the parents also. In that connexion, the Seminar/Workshop emphasized the importance of parental education. If the concept of "equal pay for equal work" was fully applied and girls received the same wages as boys parental resistance to providing equal educational opportunities for their daughters could be more easily surmounted.

The Seminar/Workshop raised two other problems for special consideration: the problem of implementation and the problem of facilities for married women workers. In connexion with the implementation of existing provisions, the Seminar/Workshop felt that the main issue was how to overcome the obstacles. The importance of changing the attitudes of men was stressed. With regard to married women workers, the Seminar/Workshop felt that opportunity should be provide for part-time work as it was important for married women to combine their work outside the home with family responsibilities. It was also important to provide opportunities in those careers, such as teaching, where it was comparatively easy to combine the two roles of women.

The Seminar/Workshop noted that many current educational programmes did not fully take into account the needs of women as they were not specifically for them. It was also stressed that non-governmental agencies had an important role to play in literacy, education and vocational training. The most effective approach to programme planning and implementation would be to develop a better dialogue between government, employers, trade unions and non-governmental organizations.

C. TOPIC 3. THE ROLE AND IMPLICATIONS OF LEGAL AND STATUTORY PROVISIONS ON THE WELFARE AND CONTRIBUTION OF YOUNG WOMEN WORKING IN INDUSTRIES

A paper was presented by Miss Halimah Yacob, Legal Officer, Singapore National Trades Union Congress.

Plenary discussion

The Seminar/Workshop took note to three basic characteristics concerning the female working population. First, female participation rates had increased dramatically during the last decade. Secondly, an increasing proportion of married

women had entered the labour force. Thirdly, most young females were employed in the private manufacturing sector.

Many countries of the region had established a wide range of legal provisions to protect the health and safety of female workers such as provisions regarding night-work by women and the carrying of excessive loads. The Seminar/Workshop felt that legislation to facilitate work by married women was of particular importance, e.g., maternity benefits (which was sometimes also used as a family planning incentive by reducing such benefits after one or two children were born), time off for nursing mothers with creches near working locations and child-care leave for mothers (as, for example, in Japan). The Seminar/Workshop noted that measures designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of women workers could sometimes be used against their interest. Moreover, the Seminar/Workshop observed that there could be a conflict between measures which promoted the welfare of women workers and those which promoted the national interest. For example, if welfare benefits to women workers proved too expensive, foreign investment might be discouraged. The Seminar/Workshop raised the question of the relative importance that should be given to national interest as against the welfare of women workers in those cases where the two were in conflict.

The Seminar/Workshop recognized that a basic problem was the inadequate enforcement of measures that already existed. In that connexion, the Seminar/Workshop recommended strengthening enforcement agencies, a better system of non-compliance grievance procedures, the strengthening of arbitration courts and tribunals, an increase in the number and level of labour inspectors and better representation of women in trade unions, particularly in leadership roles, so that their interests could be more effectively served in cases of industrial disputes between employers and unions.

The Seminar/Workshop felt that priority should be given to industrial health and safety for female workers. Special mention was made of the need for safe working premises and health protection measures.

Workshop discussions

While the Seminar/Workshop agreed that the legal provisions in most countries were quite comprehensive, it was felt that some new legislation was also required to deal effectively with the needs of young women in industries. The new legislation was particularly important to cover the requirements of married women workers. The establishment of insurance funds for working mothers was an example cited. The Seminar/Workshop felt that, although laws in general should be sex-neutral, i.e., applicable to both sexes, it was nevertheless necessary in some cases to deal separately and specifically with the needs of female workers since the childbearing and child-nursing functions were unique to women.

In establishing new laws or revising existing ones, the Seminar/Workshop urged the promotion of more and better research and the fuller utilization of existing research findings on occupational hazards and conditions of work of young women. Such research should be conducted not only by the government but also by non-governmental organizations and industrial enterprises. In that connexion, the Seminar/Workshop cautioned against unquestioningly using the results of research undertaken by transnational corporations (TNCs) as they might have vested interests. It was noted that many TNCs were quite active in undertaking research on the possible effects on the health of young women working in, for example, electronics factories. The results of such research should be evaluated independently by the government and other concerned groups, as well as United Nations agencies. Moreover, the Semianr/Workshop suggested that research should not be limited to the urban manufacturing sector alone but should also cover agro-industries in rural areas.

The Seminar/Workshop emphasized the importance of enforcement of existing legislation. Effective legal safeguards were needed for young female workers, especially as they did not usually have even a knowledge of existing laws and their rights under the legal system. The main factors involved in the lack of adequate implementation were the complicated legal system, high rates of female illiteracy and lack of inspectors. The Seminar/Workshop felt that effective enforcement was also impeded by the absence of adequate co-ordination among the different agencies concerned.

One of the most important areas of action, in the view of the Seminar/Workshop, was the development of awareness among women and leadership training for them. It was also suggested that more effective implementation could be secured by the establishment of independent labour tribunals dealing specifically with women. The needs of women could also be most effectively met if trade unions were made stronger and women were encouraged to participate more actively in tem. The Seminar/Workshop further recommended that industries should also make a financial contribution in order to take care of the special requirements of female workers such as training facilities and social services.

D. TOPIC 4. INTEGRATING THE YOUNG FEMALE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS' ROLE IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY AND INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION

Papers were presented by Mrs. Yu-Foo Yee Shoon, Secretary, Women's Programme Committee, Singapore National Trades Union Congress, and by the Chief of the Joint CTC/ESCAP Unit on Transnational Corporations.

Plenary discussion

The Seminar/Workshop noted that several factors facilitated the participation of young women in the labour force: the increasing recognition of their

constitutional and property rights, including the right to work; the need to supplement family income; changing cultural values and patterns; increasing literacy and education rates; and the relative success of the family planning programmes. In spite of these factors, however, female participation rates continued to be lower than those of males and very few women were at the higher managerial levels. The typical pattern for women was to work at low levels in low-paying jobs. With increasing age, women tended to withdraw from the labour force owing no doubt to marriage and their subsequent inability or lack of desire to return to the labour force.

The Seminar/Workshop gave particular attention to the question of participation of young females in trade unions. It was noted that female workers were not well represented in trade unions, especially at the higher level, owing to a number of factors such as fear of victimization, lack of enthusiasm for or knowledge about trade unions. The Seminar/Workshop felt that the problem therefore was how to motivate women to participate more actively in trade unions. That could be done through a variety of measures such as changing educational patterns so that the traditional prejudices were not reinforced as women had in the past been conditioned to expect lower pay in low-level jobs and to perform domestic responsibilities. Other actions would consist in eradicating social prejudices concerning women workers and leaders and making trade union movement widely accepted by society not only for collective bargaining but also as an instrument for social development.

Although social factors were important to consider, the Seminar/Workshop recognized that to deal with the problem under discussion, it was also necessary to look at certain external factors such as the role of transnational corporations, which were also called "multinationals". There had been a spectacular growth in TNCs, particularly in south-east and east Asia, where there had been a tremendous increase in their investments in the last decade. In south Asia, and recently in China, their role had been different with indirect investment, such as through technology collaboration and production sharing. The Seminar/Workshop drew attention to the recent revolution in computer technology and communication systems which had permitted such expansion and facilitated central control from headquarters in the developed country of day-to-day decision making and operations in factories scattered throughout the developing countries. A great deal of increase in the world trade of developing countries consisted merely in transactions between subsidaries of the same TNC.

The Seminar/Workshop noted that the main attraction for TNCs in developing countries was the availability of cheap labour, particularly cheap female labour. The labour involved participated in the production of a part of one process and thus could not bargain for higher wages on the basis of the value of the product, which remained unknown to them. Much of that labour consisted of young female workers.

The Seminar/Workshop observed that in some countries TNCs had both a positive and a negative role. The fact that the developing countries of the region were competing with each other to attract such investment indicated certain benefits to the countries involved such as high employment, narrowing of the international boundaries and barriers, increase in foreign exchange and the growth of "glamour" industries.

On the negative side, in some countries, TNCs might use a variety of mechanisms to maintain a situation of low wages and benefits. The meeting emphasized that, in the process, trade unionism was also discouraged. It was further noted that the health of female workers particularly might be jeopardized in many electronic industries (e.g., the effect on eyesight as a result of using a microscope for long periods). While appreciating that national governments might gain control of the physical facilities, decision making remained a headquarter concern so that the plight of the female workers in a situation of exploitative low wages continued.

Workshop discussions

The Seminar/Workshop concentrated on two issues: participation of women in trade unions and the role of TNCs. In some countries, it was generally agreed that one of the main obstacles to adequate welfare provisions for women working in industries was the lack of active participation by them in trade unions. Female membership in trade unions was low and women seldom achieved positions of leadership in them. Among the reasons cited for the low participation were the politicization of trade unions, which were often associated with strikes, the multiplicity of trade unions, the absence of legal recognition of unions in many cases, the household responsibilities of women, social and cultural attitudes which inhibited women from participation in the unions and the limited influence of the trade unions in securing what the women were most concerned with.

The Seminar/Workshop suggested a number of ways by which women could participate more actively in trade unions. It was felt that the ILO Convention on Freedom of Association should be actively promoted.

The Seminar/Workshop recognized that governmental as well as non-governmental organizations had an important role to play in the whole question of women's participation in trade unions. Women's organizations had available among them experienced leaders who could also be involved in trade unions to represent the interests of female workers. Other organizations such as co-operatives and credit unions could be used to promote the interest and welfare of female industrial workers.

The Seminar/Workshop recommended the development of opinion leaders working with small groups of women. The Seminar/Workshop further suggested that trade unions could attract more participation of women by working in non-traditional union activities of greater relevance to women. Where women did

participate actively in trade unions (such as in China), the Seminar/Workshop was informed, it inevitably led not only to higher productivity but also to better welfare for all workers.

On the question of TNCs, the Seminar/Workshop indicated that female workers could improve their bargaining position vis-a-vis TNCs if they were better informed about their rights and alternative employment possibilities. Non-governmental and workers' organizations could do much in that regard with government assistance.

The Seminar/Workshop further suggested that, in order to deal more effectively with TNCs, a dialogue should be established between the workers of the headquarters of a TNC in a developed country and the workers of a factory of the same company in a developing country. It felt that, when a code of conduct for TNCs in their countries was formulated, women should be included in the process of negotiation and formulation of that code.

E. TOPIC 5. MAXIMIZING THE CONTRIBUTION AND FULL INTEGRATION OF ALL ASPECTS OF THE MILIEU OF THE YOUNG FEMALE WORKER IN INDUSTRY: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL AND OTHER INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Papers were presented by Ms. Evelyn Victorino, Member, Regional Team, International Young Christian Workers, Asia/Pacific region, Bangkok, and by Ms. Myrna Blake, Consultant to the Women's Programme, Social Development Division, ESCAP.

Plenary discussion

The Seminar/Workshop felt that, as a general framework, it would be helpful to consider the role of young women in industries, and particularly the textile and electronics industries, who worked at low-skilled levels and at low wages, without an adequate return for their efforts.

Within that framework, the Seminar/Workshop considered the social aspects of the problem at the micro level using the case studies presented as a basis for the discussion. It was noted that the problem of young female workers had to be viewed in the context of the breakdown of traditional family and community patterns as a result of urbanization and industrialization. The Seminar/Workshop noted that the social and working conditions of those workers were poor in terms of health, safety, recreational and community facilities and security of tenure. Young female workers often felt that they were dismissed without notice. However, the employers had done so within the provisions of the contract which the workers had not fully comprehended. The health facilities provided, were often operated in the interest of the employer rather than that of the worker. The Seminar/Workshop further noted that the situation was exacerbated by the low representation of

women in the trade unions and their correspondingly lower collective bargaining power.

The Seminar/Workshop recognized that the poor social and working conditions of those workers were perpetuated because industrial enterprises were unually started before housing and community facilities had been provided, which was only after a lapse of two or three years. Social patterns and taboos often meant that society disapproved of young women working in certain situations and the association of certain kinds of work considered socially unacceptable behaviour also contributed to some of their problems.

Action to improve the conditions of those workers could be taken at the governmental and non-governmental levels and by employers as well as the workers themselves. Action needed to be taken to improve the health and occupational safety, the security and stability and development of skills of the workers. Training and palcement programmes should be provided to improve the capacity of the young female workers to obtain and retain jobs in higher paying skills. In that connexion, the Seminar/Workshop recommended that the non-technical skills required for living and coping in the urban industrial complex and acquired by the workers in the process of their work should also be built upon. Projects should be developed which were as concrete as possible and conceived from the perspective of workers themselves and not only from the perception about them of those above. Finally, the Seminar/Workshop concluded that the attitudinal changes on th part of workers as well as employers were imperative. The Seminar/Workshop noted that ironically the young female workers themselves contributed to the perpetuation of their exploitation because in their financial and family circumstances they had no choice but to accept the adverse conditions such as working on the night shifts. It was felt, therefore, that in the realities of the developing countries of the region the ideal could not often be attained and emphasis needed to be placed rather on a more pragmatic and feasible approach.

Workshop discussion

In the context of social development, the Seminar/Workshop considered it helpful to view women workers in three groups: married women, single women and workers in general. Social programmes for those three groups could be undertaken by the government, non-governmental organizations, enterprises and workers themselves. Action by workers could be not only within the framework of trade unions but also through other organizations. The Seminar/Workshop felt strongly that a formal and non-formal education system as well as the mass media of communication should be used to create awareness and motivation in changing the negative public image of the female industrial workers. Educational and information programmes including the mass media could be carried out to create the desired changes in social attitudes. Training programmes could supplement such endeavours.

Among the different social sectors, the health of young female industry workers was considered by the Seminar/Workshop to be a matter of priority. Another sector which received special attention was human settlements, including shelter, sanitation, community and recreational facilities (e.g., libraries) to take due account of the personal and social well-being of the young women. To indue the industrial enterprises to provide the appropriate facilities, the use of tax incentives was also suggested.

The Seminar/Workshop recognized that young female workers of rural origin had difficulties in adapting to an urban industrial environment. In that context, it was proposed that appropriate services and programmes should be developed to meet the special requirements of that group of workers. The Seminar/Workshop suggested that industries could whereever possible be located in rural areas as well.

Other matters considered by the Seminar/Workshop were job security, vertical and horizontal mobility of workers, leadership training, preparation for responsible parenthood, guidance and counselling services and the inclusion of social workers in the staff of industrial enterprises.

IV. COUNTRY PROGRAMME PROPOSALS

At the very outset, the Seminar/Workshop agreed that the exchange of information and experience on the issues involved in the role of young women in industries should be supplemented by, and lead to, ideas for country programme proposals so that the applicability of the general issues discussed to the particular circumstances of each country could be seen clearly.

In order to formulate such proposals, the Seminar/Workshop was given information on the availability of the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade for Women as an additional resource and an explanation of the necessary criteria and procedures involved in it by the Senior Regional Programmer, Social Development Division, ESCAP. The meeting was also informed of project proposal procedures and possibilities under the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations system in general. In that connexion, the representative of UNIDO made a statement. Following the introductory statements and a discussion of general procedures, the meeting adjourned into country groups to formulate country programme proposals.

At the subsequent plenary, all the countries participating in the Seminar/Workshop presented their proposals, in accordance with the general outline and format agreed upon earlier, which included (a) statement of the problem, (b) identification of needs, (c) objectives, (d) target group, (e) programme component, (f) action plan (time scheduling, executing agency and collaborating agency), (g) budgetary and other resource requirements (indicatint possible sources) and (h) monitoring and evaluation procedures.

The proposals presented covered a wide range of subjects depending on the particular situation obtaining in each country. Proposals included educational programmes to raise the technical level of female workers, further research on the needs of young female workers in industry, provision of child care facilities, worker-education/motivational activities, establishment of small-scale industries, activities to strengthen the role of trade unions, particularly in promoting the interests of young women workers. The meeting agreed that the programme proposals presented were in no sense binding and that it was only an exercise for the purposes of the Seminar/Workshop. The next stage would be for the participants to take them up with the appropriate authorities in their respective countries in order that the programme ideas could be translated into concrete project documents for consideration at the national level and for possible submission for supplementary funding from international sources within and outside the United Nations system.

In the discussion following the presentation of the programme proposals, different aspects were clarified and elaborated upon. With regard to objectives, it was felt that it would be useful to distinguish between short-term and long-term objectives. In respect of monitoring and evaluation, it was suggested that those two functions were interrelated and yet separate. The evaluation function should be built into the action programme from its earliest stages and not undertaken as a post facto process.

There was considerable discussion on the concept of the executing agency. As, by its very nature, the subject of young women in industries involved several governmental and non-governmental agencies at the national level, it was necessary to identify the lead agency or agencies which could be entrusted with the executing function. The other agencies could serve as collaborating agencies. Co-ordination was considered to be of paramount importance in that area.

While all the programme proposals presented were at the national level, the importance of regional and subregional projects was recognized. Regional projects were of two kinds: subnational or zonal projects within countries and regional projects involving a group of countries. The subregional projects, meaning projects in a group of countries in a subregion, was especially important in the case of the South Pacific, where each island State had a relatively small population base and area. In that connexion, the ILO regional project in the Pacific on small-scale industries, namely development of handicrafts, was cited as an example.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Women workers, like men, contributed to the economic and social development of their country. To maximize their contribution to social progress and development, the following recommendations would, if effectively implemented, bring about an understanding and further enhance both their economic and social status. The recommendations were addressed to national Governments, non-

governmental agencies, regional and international organizations within and outside the United Nations system which were concerned with enhancing the contribution of young women in social progress and development, especially in industries.

The recommendations were grouped under issues relating to:

1. The legal framework within which the welfare and rights of women workers should be adequately protected;

2. Pre-work preparation for young women;

3. Development of young women workers during employment;

4. Development of young women workers in their related social and community environment;

5. Leadership training;

6. Woman's role as a home-maker/childbearer, in addition to her work role;

7. Change of attitudes towards young women workers as industrial workers;

8. Exchange of information and technical co-operation.

1. Legal framework

(a) Introduction/amendment of laws where existing provisions are inadequate.

(b) Removal of discriminatory practices, e.g., unequal wages for same work, discrimination in promotion, dismissal, night-work.

(c) More effective enforcement of existing fabour laws and social legislation pertaining to young women in industries.

(d) Member countries of the ILO should ratify the relevant ILO conventions concerning the employment of women. The ILO should re-examine the convention concerning night-work for women to ensure that there are no discriminatory effects.

2. Pre-work preparation

(a) Vocational counselling by government and non-governmental agencies.

(b) Formal and non-formal education to equip women with knowledge/skills to cope with demands of different industries.

(c) Dissemination of information about their rights and duties as workers.

(d) Development of positive attitudes towards work at all levels.

3. Development of young women workers during employment

(a) In-service training to ensure continuous upgrading of skills and increased promotional prospects.

(b) Education on nutrition, responsible parenthood and other health education (indirect benefits to employers).

(c) Availability of guidance counsellors/social workers in industries to advise and assist young women workers.

(d) Conducting of research and studies to identify problems of women workers, particularly on occupational hazards with special emphasis on their effects on physical and mental health.

(e) Continuing information exchanges between women workers in similar industries within the countries.

4. Development of young women workers in their related social and community environment

(a) Organization of women workers into associations for community participation in social, civic and cultural programmes.

5. Leadership Training

(a) Opportunities for active participation in trade unions and other organizations within the industries.

(b) Opportunities for leadership training in both work and non-work environments.

6. Woman's role as a home-maker/childbearer, in addition to her work role

(a) Provision of child-care facilities and other social amenities by Governments, enterprieses, trade unions and voluntary organizations as necessary.

(b) Sharing of family responsibilities, increased utilization of appropriate technology and expansion of the service sectors to lighten the workload of women workers.

(c) Provision of co-operative services such as community kitchens.

7. Change of attitudes towards young women workers as industrial workers

(a) Mobilize public opinion in favour of the young women workers by increasing public awareness of their contribution to the country's socio-economic development.

(b) Campaigns through the mass media to encourage women workers to adopt more positive attitudes towards work and pride in their vocation.

(c) Removal through the educational system of traditional values placed on the role of women and the adoption of attitudes that household work and child care are shared responsibilities between men and women.

8. Exchange of information and technical co-operation

(a) Information exchanges/study tours/fellowships/field attachments for women workers and those concerned with the problems of women workers.

(b) Information collection and dissemination activities to be undertaken by organizations within and outside the United Nations system.

(c) Continuing dissemination of information regarding the pursuance of recommendations approved during the Seminar/Workshop by ESCAP in co-operation with the concerned agencies.

VI. CLOSING SESSION

The Seminar/Workshop was formally closed with the representation of certificates to the participants by the Honourable Ch'ng Jit Koon, Member of Parliament and member of the People's Association, Board of Management, Singapore, on 20 May 1980.

On behalf of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, the Chief, Social Development Division, ESCAP, thanked the Government of Singapore, the People's Association, the National Youth Leadership Training Institute and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung for their support and co-operation. He also thanked the participants for their valuable contributions which had helped to clarify the policy implications of the problems of young women in industries. He than indentified major substantive issues on which the Seminar/Workshop had agreed.

On behalf of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Mr. Rolf Scheller expressed his satisfaction at the result of the Seminar/Workshop and hoped that it would lead to an appropriate follow-up at the national level.

In his closing address, the Honourable Ch'ng Jit Koon noted that the Seminar/Workshop had not been limited to a discussion of issues and making of recommendations, but had also geared its attention to the need to translate the ideas into concrete programmes of action. In that connexion, he expressed his keen interest in following the efforts in implementing the various country programmes which were formulated during the Seminar/Workshop sessions. He also stressed that the integration of women into the development process and enhancement of their contribution, especially in developing countries, required multiple programmes of

action. He was pleased to note that the above was clearly recognized during the Seminar/Workshop discussions. In that regard, he took special note of the important anchoring points which were covered by the Seminar/Workshop for the enhancement of women's participation and contribution to the social development process, which included programmes for the institution and enforcement of legislative safeguards for the basic social, political and economic rights of women; programmes for their education and training on an egalitarian basis; programmes for the mobilization of women into meaningful participation in community and national affairs; programmes to enhance the opportunities for women to play decision-making roles in both public administration and private-sector management and, more generally, a comprehensive scheme of social and welfare services to meet the special needs of women, especially working mothers with young children.

In conclusion, Mr. Ch'ng Jit Koon drew attention to the problems of co-ordination and integration in a multiple approach of making the diverse programmes mutually reinforcing.

On behalf of the participants, a vote of thanks was given by Miss Nathika Wattanavekin, Thailand. She was gratified at the opportunity the Seminar/Workshop had provided for the participants to learn from one another and hoped that they would continue to exchange views beyond the Seminar/Workshop in the future.

SEMINAR/WORKSHOP ON THE ROLE OF YOUNG WOMEN IN SOCIAL PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT, ESPECIALLY IN INDUSTRIES SINGAPORE, 10–20 MAY 1980

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