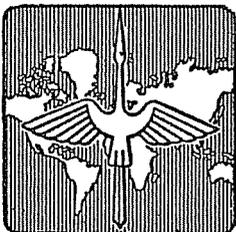


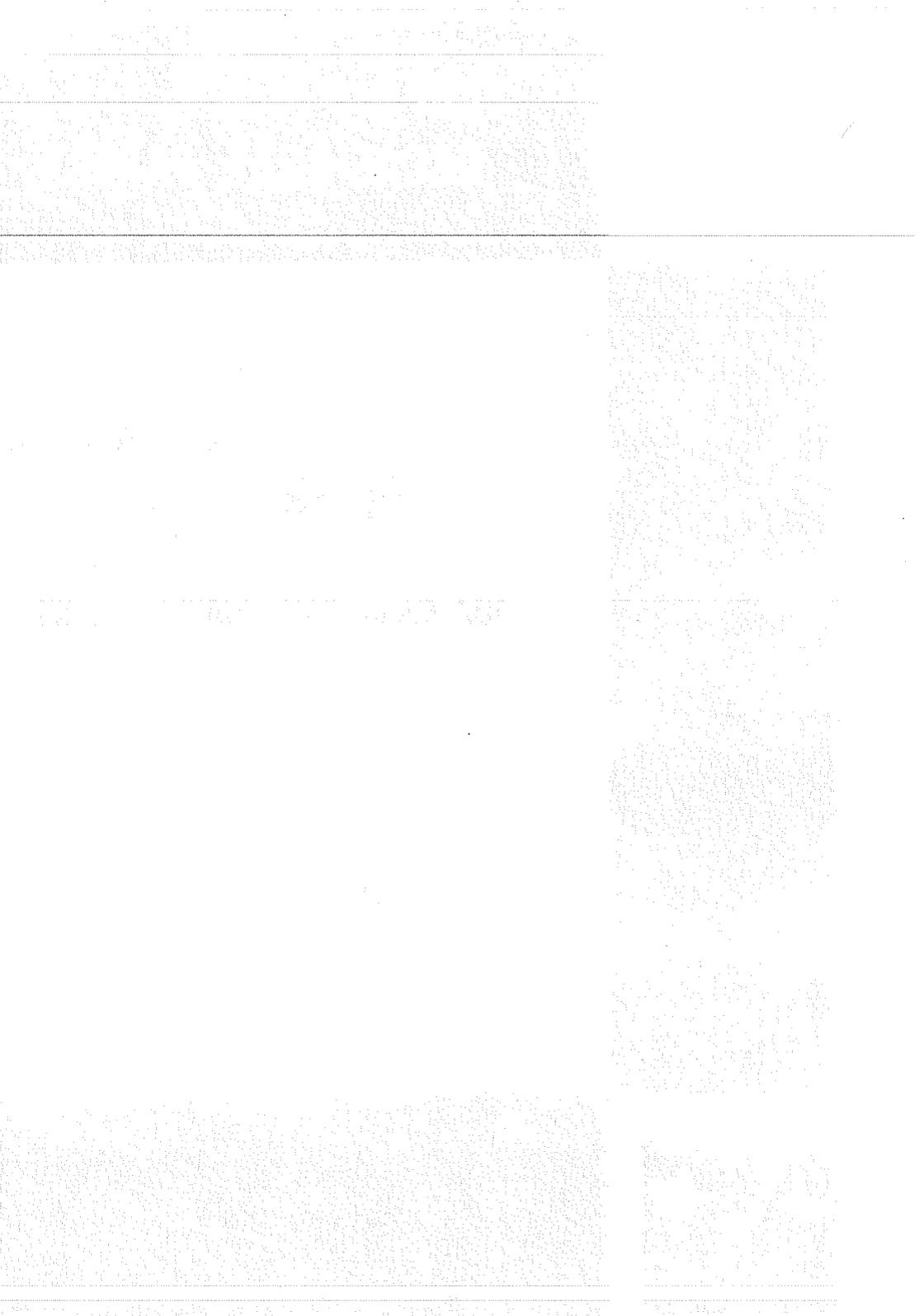
**ISS
OCCASIONAL PAPERS**

**Females in the
Agricultural Labour Force
and Non-Formal Education
for Rural Development in Ghana**

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Ghana is an agricultural country where most of the people live in rural areas, the proportion of women being greater than men. Life in the rural areas is difficult, but despite the much talked about drift of people to the urban areas, it is almost certain that for many decades, a large number of people will continue to live in rural areas. Ghanaian women have for long been recognised as playing an active role in providing for the material needs of themselves and their children. Since agriculture is the main occupation and therefore the main source of income for the majority of persons, this has frequently been the most important area in which women have worked to fulfill their responsibilities. The importance of the role played by women leads Boserup to consider, in her comprehensive study (1970), the agricultural system of Southern Ghana a female farming system. It follows, therefore, that if we wish to improve the standard of living of the majority of our women, then rural development has to be given adequate attention. One of the ways by which this can be brought about is through education, both formal and non-formal, which is necessary not only for development and the acquisition of new skills but also for the liberation of human beings.

Part I of this paper will discuss females in the labour force of Ghana. In Part II the role of women in agriculture will be highlighted. Part III will focus attention on the education of female school leavers, while the final part examines the role of women in rural development.

I

FEMALES IN THE LABOUR FORCE

According to the 1960 census of population, Ghana's population was 6.7m. By the 1970 census, this had increased to 8.5m showing a yearly rate of growth of 2.7%; the 1980 census is expected to show that the population is now some 11m. Similarly, the labour force rose from 2.7m in 1960 to 3.3m in 1970 indicating an annual growth of 2.2%.

Table 1. Labour Force

Year	Females	Males	B/Sexes	No. of men 100 females
1960	1,045,968	1,677,058	2,723,026	160
1970	1,472,223	1,859,395	3,331,618	127
1980	2,271,284	2,722,553	4,992,837	120
%Growth 1960- 1970	40.8	10.9	22.3	-
%Growth 1970- 1980	54.3	45.9	49.9	

Source: Computed from Census Records by Manpower Division of the Ministry of Economic Planning

In 1960 1,045,968 females were in the labour force which totalled 2,723,026, as indicated in Table I. The female labour force thus represented about 38.1% of the total in that year. A decade later, the overall labour force had increased to 3,331,618, of which 1,472,223 or about 44.2% were females. This means that 426,225 were added to the female work-force within the 1960-70 period; it also indicates a 40.8% increase in the female labour force during this period.

A detailed analysis of these 426,225 new female entrants to the labour force, and especially of those who remain unemployed

will help in understanding the employment problems of women in Ghana. The analysis indicates, however, that women are being absorbed into the labour force at a faster rate than men. As shown in Table 2, 1,003,217 or 94.8% of the females in the labour force in 1960 were employed as against 1,596,447 or 93.5% of the 1,677,058 males. Female employment increased by 41.1% to 1,415,119 in 1970. Those employed in 1970 constituted 96.1% of the female labour force. Males increased by 7.6% to 1,717,928 in the same period. The situation was that while employment decreased slightly in the case of males, it leapt slightly forward in the case of females. The annual growth rate of women in total employment between the two censuses of 1960 and 1970 was 3.36%, comparing favourably with the national growth of employment of 2.3% per annum. It is of interest that 54,550 females were unemployed in 1960 and 57,104 in 1970; the corresponding figures for males were 109,093 and 141,467. The unemployment rate for women declined from 5.2% to 3.9% between 1960 and 1970.

The Ghana Manpower Board estimates the labour force in 1980 at 4,992,837, of which 2,271,284 or 45.5% would be females. Thus, the pattern of growth indicates that while the overall labour force is on the increase, the female labour force is increasing more rapidly than that of the males. Indeed, between the two censuses of 1960 and 1970 the male labour force increased by only 10.9% as against 40.8% for the females. The expected 45.9% increase of male labour force between 1970 and 1980 is still lower than the 54.3% for the females.

It is clear that Ghana must adopt a manpower policy which will enable her to deal effectively with her employment problem, especially when it is realised that a large army of unemployed school-leavers enter the labour market each year, whereas the volume of job opportunities open to them has not kept pace with their rate of entry. The principal factors accounting for the rapidly increasing female participation in the labour force include the following.

Table 2. Employment: Labour Force and Unemployment 1960 and 1970

	1960			1970			% Change in Female Only
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
Labour Force	2,723,026	1,677,058	1,045,968	3,331,618	1,859,395	1,472,223	40.8
Sex Ratio	—	160	100	—	127	100	
Total Employed	2,599,664	1,596,447	1,003,217	3,133,047	1,717,928	1,415,119	41.1
Sex Ratio	—	159	100	—	125	100	
Employed as a % age of labour force	94.0	93.5	94.8	94.0	92.4	96.1	1.3
Unemployed Number	163,643	109,093	54,550	198,571	141,467	57,104	4.7
% age	6.0	6.5	5.2	6.0	7.6	3.9	-1.3

Source: Population Censuses 1960 and 1970, Vol. II

- (i) the fact that more men and women live beyond 15 years because of better medical health and improved sanitation - more people are surviving longer.
- (ii) more women are entering the labour market as a result of economic pressures which necessitate their seeking employment, in many cases, however, as traders.
- (iii) late marriages and fewer marriages over time result in increased importance of women in the female population; this would tend to increase the female participation rate in wage employment since single women have higher participation rates in this area of employment.
- (iv) in some cases, unpaid family workers who were formerly classified as homemakers have now been absorbed into the labour force. Women's role in agricultural production as unpaid family labour is often not taken into account in agricultural censuses and consequently the number of women participating in agricultural work is underestimated. Table 3 indicates that female homemakers decreased from 676,858 in 1960 to 603,918 in 1970, representing an absolute loss of 72,940 as homemakers, or a 10.7% decline.
- (v) education and training also mean that more women have greater opportunities for wage employment, i.e. the world of work has been opened to more women. Occupations such as typing which were not available in general to women a few decades ago, are gradually becoming their exclusive preserve.
- (vi) more job opportunities and regulations relating to maternity leave and employment of women mean that on the whole they have a greater chance to get out to work. The principle of equal wages for men and women has also increased the incentives for women to seek market activity.

Table 3. Home-Makers - 1960 and 1970

	1960	1970	Change	
			Number	%
Males	11,246	21,512	10,266	91.3
Females	676,858	603,918	-72,940	-10.7
Total	688,104	772,715	84,611	12.4

(i) Sex Ratio 1.6 males to 100 females 1960

Sex Ratio 3.5 males to 100 females 1970

Source: Population Census 1960 and 1970, Vol. II.

II

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Agriculture is indisputably the most important sector in terms of employment for both the male and female population in Ghana. In 1960, some 579,000 women were employed in agriculture; by 1970 this figure had increased to over 771,600, although the share of agriculture in female employment declined from 58.4% to 54.5% over the same period. Addo (1971) notes that female labour is a stabilising factor in farm employment in many rural areas in Ghana. Rourke (1971, 1974) emphasises that women in Ghana have become important in the agricultural sector over time, while Okali & Mabey in their survey of a cocoa-growing area in Ashanti (1975) compare the role of men and women in the agricultural sector and conclude that since the young males are more likely to be in school for an extended period of time, the entry of men into the agricultural sector is staggered and also takes place at a later age than that of women. In theory, women have the same economic opportunities as men, but the traditional sexual division of labour generally means that the responsibilities of motherhood handicap the economic achievements of women. The 1970 census indicates that men tend to concentrate on cash crops whereas women either work on farms of their males or in the cultivation of foodcrops, so that they can feed their families and sell the unconsumed produce. Even when women own their farms they still tend to go into food production. Women start food farms at an earlier age than men, while both men and women enter cocoa production at a later age than other agricultural activities. Women enter at a relatively older age, cocoa farming needing greater inputs, e.g. the need to buy insecticide and to engage seasonal labour. As farm owners, women control smaller acreage than men, and in the cocoa sector they usually receive the land as gifts from parents or husbands. Thus, 385,499 females were engaged in the growing of foodstuffs in 1960 and constituted 66.8% of the female agricultural labour force, yet women have had less access than men to the means of increasing productivity of

their work. Most of the female tasks, including weeding, transplanting, harvesting, fetching of water and firewood, and house-keeping, are time-consuming, arduous, unmonetised and unmechanised in Ghana. It should be ensured, however, that any future modernisation or mechanisation processes which lighten women's workload will not lead to their removal from the production process. By 1970, the number of women in food-cropping had increased to 542,231, or 70.3% of the female agricultural labour force; they thus exceeded the men in the same occupation by 5.4%. Although there were more men in cocoa farming, statistics indicate that most of them were cocoa farm managers, while most women were cocoa farmworkers engaged on the more menial tasks. There were, therefore, more female cocoa farmworkers than male cocoa farmworkers in 1970. This was probably because of the Aliens Compliance Order which led to a mass exodus of male cocoa farmworkers to their countries of origin, mainly Upper Volta, Togoland and Nigeria. According to Rourke, in the absence of the Order, 'the male labour force might have been in excess of one million in 1970'. As has been stated, in Ghana the men tend to concentrate on cash crops and control the monetary gains; thus, an increase in the productivity or price of cocoa will not necessarily lead to a higher standard of living for women and their households. The money can be used by men on alcohol or on the acquisition of more wives since polygamy is still practiced by some people.

Table 4 shows a significant difference in the activities of women between the Northern and Southern areas of Ghana. According to the 1960 census, only 18.6% of all women over 15 years of age in the North were employed, as compared to 65% for the whole of the Southern Region. (Brong Ahafo, a transitional zone, ecologically and agriculturally, had 48.4% of its adult women employed.)

Table 4. Female Employment by Region, 1960, 1970

<u>Region</u>	<u>Total Women 15 Years and Over</u>		<u>% of Women Employed</u>		<u>% of Women Employed In Agriculture</u>	
	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1970</u>
Western*	(377,050)	199,933	(66.7)	69.0	(60.7)	60.5
Central		250,596		76.3		62.7
Eastern	294,120	337,222	65.3	69.1	54.4	54.7
Volta	221,640	267,203	66.1	72.1	50.0	54.8
Ashanti	282,600	376,091	65.2	68.4	68.5	64.2
Brong Ahafo	143,690	188,477	48.4	71.4	82.7	77.8
Northern		197,554		29.9		41.4
Upper	(391,900)	272,105	(18.6)	29.7	(70.4)	42.4

Source: Census Data 1960/70

* In 1960 Western and Central Regions were both included in Western Region, and Northern and Upper Regions were included in Upper Region.

Accra District has been omitted since this region is predominantly urban.

Some people have attributed this difference to the fact that the North is predominantly Moslem and thus the women are kept secluded. Another reason sometimes given as to why the numbers of females in the Northern and Upper Regions are underestimated is that both the 1960 and 1970 censuses were taken at a time when few women were engaged in agricultural activities. Hence, in contrast to the situation for Southern Ghana, where most women in rural areas were classified as primarily engaged in agriculture and a few primarily engaged as home-makers, most women in Northern Ghana were classified as home-makers. To correct this underestimate, Rourke adjusts the census figures of home-makers in the agricultural labour force. He argues that more research is necessary to determine whether he has made the proper adjustment. The valid point from his study, is that special seasonal factors can lead to an under-estimation of the size of female agricultural labour force. This practice appears to be declining somewhat, however, as by 1970 over 29% of Northern women were employed and 71% of women in Brong Ahafo. In 1960 at least 50% of all women employed were employed in agriculture in all regions, with the Western and Ashanti Regions accounting for the highest numbers.

The sexual division of labour continues to exist and some areas in agriculture are almost exclusively for men, e.g. hunting, animal husbandry, horticultural farming and cash cropping. Women's contribution to agriculture is recognised in Ghana; they perform a variety of tasks and devote a great deal of time to sowing such crops as tomatoes, pepper, okra, garden eggs (aubergines), and other vegetables which are usually grown on the family farm or on their own small plots of land. But even though women undertake food-cropping, their productivity has been low because of lack of cooperation by the men. Commercialisation of some areas of agriculture has meant that male farmers now concentrate their attention on profitable crops, while the productivity of women is further depressed by special problems such as their inability to fell trees and clear the land themselves. Husbands control the means of produc-

tion as well as the product of labour, while organising the labour process and depending on the labour of wives and children to produce the cocoa. Ghanaian women are entitled to sell their surplus produce and to keep the monetary gains, but there are sometimes difficulties concerning the labour demands from husbands to work on cocoa production, and women's responsibilities for production and preparation of food and their other household duties. Displacement of labour from the family-based unit has limited the possibility of women to produce and to control family income for themselves and their children. Extension officers also usually go to the large-scale male farmers. In summing up the results of colonial agricultural policies and biases, Boserup therefore declares:

As a result of the attitudes of the extension service the gap between the labour productivity of men and women continues to widen. Men are taught to apply modern methods in the cultivation of a given crop, while women continue to use the traditional methods in the cultivation of the same crop, thus getting much less out of their efforts than men. The inevitable result is that women are discouraged from participating in agriculture and are glad to abandon cultivation whenever the increase in their husbands' incomes makes it possible.

Land tenure systems, co-operatives and other agricultural schemes have tended to neglect women's interests, roles and positions. Thus, during the development process, the tendency has been for technology in the rural areas to be directed towards the men, giving them access to increased capital inputs and finance and ignoring the position of women, which has been further oppressed.

III

EDUCATION OF FEMALES

The 1970 Population Census Report gave the female population of Ghana as 50.5% of the total population. If this percentage is considered against the fact that females have had and still do receive less education than males, then it has to be realised that formal education for girls should be given adequate attention. In addition, the promotion of out-of-school or non-formal education for adult women is important if they are to learn new agricultural techniques. Non-formal education, which lies outside the formal system of education and which is a supplement and complement to the formal system, helps to satisfy the basic needs of the recipients. Its contents and emphasis assist the learner to identify and to solve his or her own problems, which should bring greater fulfilment. Ghana can ill-afford to ignore the talent and potential of more than half its human resources. Besides, education has for long been regarded as the chief means of overcoming difficulties and of creating conditions which would make it possible to rationalise the disparities between rural and urban areas within the framework of overall economic and social development.

In Ghana, however, the rural areas are both quantitatively and qualitatively under-privileged in the field of education, a position which affects the rural females more adversely than the males because most rural families in Ghana have had little or no formal education. The illiteracy rate among rural women is much higher than in the urban areas. In 1960 the total population aged 6 years and above who had never been to school was 73%, 63.3% of males and 83.3% of the females had never been to school. By 1970 these percentages had dropped to 56.8%, 47.3% and 66.2% respectively. The relevant percentages in the compulsory age group of 6-14 years are indicated in Table 5. That for the rural areas is much higher than for the urban areas, with the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana having the highest percentages for illiteracy, especially female illiteracy.

Table 5. Persons 6-14 Without Formal Schooling in 1960 and 1970

	1960	1970
Both Sexes	56.3	37.5
Male	46.7	33.5
Female	66.7	41.6

Source: 1960 and 1970 Census of Population

It is therefore to be questioned whether the female population manages to benefit from the opportunities offered by the school system or out-of-school education in the rural context to the same extent as the males; hence the recommendation that women be educated in modern agricultural practices and that agricultural extension services be supplied to them as a means to overcome their low productivity. Women's contributions to rural development and their right to education seem to be widely recognised, but there is a gap between word and deed which must be filled.

Adult women have limited chances for training for their farming roles, most training programmes in rural areas being directed towards the men. It is time that the country realised that the farmer is more likely to be a 'she' rather than a 'he'. The males, especially the youth, leave the rural areas, and the labour shortage resulting from this exodus often causes productivity to decline and hinders the implementation of rural development projects; those who remain, i.e. a majority of women and girls, should be encouraged to improve their education, thus helping them to increase their incomes and employment opportunities. A strong motive for rural girls to leave for the towns is the desire to improve their education: to study, or to become apprentices, thereby improving their chances of advancement. It should be investigated, however, whether education is tackling the special problems of rural areas and to what extent it meets the needs of the people who are tied to the land. The establishment of new programmes for women should not be a precondition for the establishment of new forms of women's subordination within changing relations of production. Non-formal

educational programmes should be structured in such a way that women can utilise the handouts of the developers to bring about genuine and positive changes to their own situations, however minimal.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the increasing pursuit of education and training continues to substantially and progressively deplete the number of young females entering the labour market, a factor which can lead to low activity rates for women between 15 and 19. Table 6 provides statistics of the estimated middle school-leavers who enter the labour market directly. Since 1970, over two-thirds of middle school-leavers have entered the labour market each year, the percentage ranging from 65.8% in 1970 to 75.9% in 1977. This indicates the worsening situation of the middle school-leaver problem and becomes even more alarming when we take into consideration the fact that absolute numbers of middle school-leavers are also increasing. Table 7 gives percentages of girls in total enrollment at the various levels. According to a survey of Ghana Middle Schools in 1967, 24% of both sexes of the middle form IV school-leavers in 1965 continued to be students after leaving primary school. The survey also showed that 'home' or traditional occupations such as farmers, traders, seamstresses, etc. acted as absorbents of the unemployed females, especially since the proportion of female school-leavers employed in the more formal occupations did not change much from 1964 to 1965. It follows that if we wish to have integrated rural development, we have to pay more attention to traditional occupations for female school-leavers. A policy should be developed to give women in rural areas a conscientised education to make them aware of resources which could be developed in their areas for profit making, and to equip them with skills to make them effective producers. Women's programmes should also attempt to facilitate a unity of purpose of women across class lines and oriented towards changing the social forces of the society for the betterment of the position of women.

Table 6. Middle School-Leavers Who Enter The Labour Market Directly

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	% Growth
Total Output - middle school leavers	65,155	84,735	91,576	92,784	93,784	94,450	95,170	95,900	47.1
Total Continuing School - excluding Private, Vocational & Commercial	22,286	21,988	21,684	21,917	23,019	23,040	23,080	23,110	35.6
Total Entering Labour Force	42,869	62,747	69,892	70,867	70,765	71,410	72,090	72,800	69.8
% Entering Labour Force	65.8	74.0	76.3	76.4	76.5	75.6	75.7	75.9	—

Source: Statistics of the Ministry of Education

Table 7. Participation of Girls by Levels

	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74	1974/75
1st Level	42.95	42.09	43.09	42.83	42.83
2nd Level	26.70	26.10	26.94	27.52	27.52
3rd Level	14.25	14.58	14.58	16.87	20.49

1st Level - Primary and Middle School

2nd Level - Teacher Training, Technical, Vocational and General Secondary

3rd Level - University

Source: Statistics of Ministry of Education and of Universities of Ghana

IV

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development is closely linked to the development of education in the areas concerned, because rural development cannot be achieved through economic action alone. Yet, even though generous budgetary allocations - on occasions as high as 30% of the budget - have been made by successive Governments to support education, it is debatable whether these large expenditures have brought about rapid economic and social development. In many cases, the persons being educated are not even functionally educated, neither do the products of the formal system of education appear even to have been educated to work in their environment. An African educationist, Dragoljub Najman (1973), states that education has 'undergone a permanent process of worsening'.

In suggesting solutions for reform, we would highlight the role of non-formal education as a complement to the formal educational system, particularly for youth and adult women. This is vital in a country such as Ghana, where women both in rural and urban areas are particularly active, and have a wide range of activities. Whether literate or illiterate and whether engaged in gainful activity or not, they play an important role in the

development process of our country. Their contributions to the development of their environment take a variety of forms, ranging from direct participation to indirect action.

Some 2,316,348 out of 4,453,348, or more than half the economically-active population, are women; some of them work in the education and health sectors, a greater number in handicrafts and trade, and the major part in agriculture. Their role in rural development is not confined to their direct participation in economic activity. As homemakers, they are responsible for improving conditions of family life by introducing the necessary changes in nutritional habits and hygiene, thereby preserving or improving the nation's health. It is the women who are in charge of house-keeping and of balancing the family budgets for the large families for whom they have to cater. They are responsible for bringing up the new generations and for seeing to their education - a task that is most demanding on illiterate mothers, hence the oft-quoted dictum of the Ghanaian educationist Aggrey: 'educate a man and educate an individual, educate a woman and you educate a whole nation'.

It must be stressed, therefore, that the education of women is imperative for rural development; however, the type of education which is provided for them at present bears little relation to the diversity of activities that they pursue. It is thus necessary to adapt the training of rural women to the particular features of their environment, with a view to enabling them to play a broader part in economic and social life as a means of attaining the objectives of rural development without necessarily limiting their main source of employment in rural areas to teaching. It is through the action of men and women, action which will be more effective if the persons involved receive adequate training, that transformation can be effected. We should be careful, however, not to assume that education alone can solve all developmental problems; it is merely one element in a complex system. To be effective, education must be integrated in development and needs to be accompanied by a whole series of measures: fiscal reform and incomes policy,

agrarian reform, the provision of basic equipment for a road system, etc.

Action-oriented research should be carried out as a basis for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes in which rural women can play a greater role and thus participate fully in rural development. This will also help in their conscientisation, organisation and mobilisation. Ghana has for some time adopted functional literary training as a method of integrating women in rural areas in development; facilities sometimes in the form of literacy projects are provided in rural areas to help educate and create new attitudes. Literacy can change the work procedure and psychology of the farmer as regards the use of new techniques, innovations, saving, use of credit, etc. It can also help the woman in her house. The values attached to literacy can be most effective if the other factors which play an important part in development are also available; for example, it is pointless for a farmer to be credit-minded unless there are credit facilities, or to know how to plant new seeds unless those seeds can be bought.

It is important that women should be given an agricultural education and training that bears upon the problems of rural development. A UNESCO Recommendation on Adult Education in 1976 stated that '... With regard to women adult education activities should be integrated with the whole contemporary social movement directed towards achieving self-determination for women and enabling them to contribute to the life of society as collective force ...'

In Ghana, governmental and non-governmental organisations such as the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Institute of Adult Education of the University of Ghana, the Ghana Assembly of Women, and the National Council for Women and Development, have been assisting women in rural areas to overcome the major problems of poverty and illiteracy through non-formal education in various forms.

The rural condition is generally seen by both men and women as inferior; it weighs on their existence and on that of their children. Faced with these disadvantages, the most dynamic among them migrate to the urban areas in search of a solution to their problems. This migratory process deprives the rural areas of their best people, progress is slowed down and, in addition, overcrowding and congestion are caused in the urban areas. Women are the most severely affected because illiteracy is higher among females, and their access to education is aggravated by living and working conditions in the agricultural environment. Education should therefore be improved in the rural areas through the non-formal system in order to adapt it to rural development.

In order to ascertain some of the impediments to rural development, however, it is necessary to have a knowledge of the rural household as well as the skills, specialisations, experiences and practices of the rural people, in particular of the women, and to see how these can be improved while ensuring that the modernisation process does not push women into the marginal areas of agricultural production. What non-formal education can help to achieve is the effective participation of women in the social, economic and political advancement of their rural areas. Female human resources are still being neglected and Ghana is under-utilising their contribution to rural development. A strategy for educational planning which involves general formal education, training in rural techniques, and out-of-school or non-formal education, is a principal solution to the problem of the training of rural women. Action research should help both the researchers and the rural community to become more clearly aware of their problems, conflicts and contradictions: it should also enable women to participate actively in discovering new economic opportunities and assist in introducing new ways by which they can be integrated into development programmes.

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