

Using the Experience of Other Countries in Development Projects Related to Family Planning⁽¹⁾

In an effort to appraise the nature of women's involvement in socio-economic projects, an overview of selected projects in different countries has been made by the Population and Development Project (PDP) in Egypt. Countries covered include: Korea, India, Bangladesh, Srilanka, Columbia, Mauritius, Pakistan, Costa Rica and Israel. A review of the activities of the women's projects in the above countries shows how varied they are in terms of their genesis and dimension. Some of them have grown out of existing and ongoing projects at the national or local levels, while others were formed with specific objectives of involving women in socio-economic projects and/or family planning activities; some are essentially voluntary efforts, while others are sponsored by their government; some grew spontaneously in the process of community activities, while others developed as a result of planned efforts. These projects in different countries can be broadly categorized as follows:

- a) Productive and income generating projects like: sewing, knitting, embroidery and weaving; jam, syrup and chutney making; baking; poultry raising; doll and puppet making; shoe manufacturing; slate, pencil and chalk making; rope making; bamboo, cane and jute products; carpentry; furniture, door or floor making; tile and brick making; metal workshop; construction; kitchen gardening; orchid growing; soap making; toy and educational toy making; grocery, business and credit union management.
- b) Family and child care.
- c) Health and nutrition.
- d) Sanitation and environment.
- e) Community development.
- f) Recreation.

Implications for the Egyptian Context

1. It is necessary to build up a comprehensive profile of contemporary Egyptian women, particularly rural women, in the form of studies

⁽¹⁾ Excerpts from an article by Asfia Duza, on "Women's Involvement in Socio-economic Projects Related to Family Planning", published in **Population Studies**, Op. Cit. p. 3-27.

- which include: society's image of women, women's perception of themselves, and women's response to challenges of social change and the problems they encounter.
2. A systematic inventory of development projects for women must be drawn up.
3. Because women do not form a homogeneous group, it would be necessary to assess the suitability of different groups of women to different types of programmes.
4. Women from better-off sections of the community should be attracted to certain types of income generating projects which readily attract relatively poorer women.
5. Programme designers should not restrict their attention to attracting young and unmarried women. They should also give attention to young mothers and housewives.
6. It would be very important to watch that young children, specially from the poorer sections, are not attracted to income generating activities at the cost of schooling.
7. Efforts should be continued to develop new appropriate projects.
8. Voluntary workers are not always available and most of them do only part time work. Full time paid workers are vital for the effective running of programmes.
9. Success of programmes will be enhanced when collective work, traditional cultural symbols, roles and activities are kept in view; for example, the integration of important customs like Mother's Day in family planning goals and the involvement of men in certain aspects of the programme.
10. Some formal or informal social control is necessary to start any outside work for women.
11. Functional literacy among women should be enhanced as a receiving basis for the projects.
12. The participation of women in various roles outside the home should be encouraged as a stable norm rather than as a temporary fad.