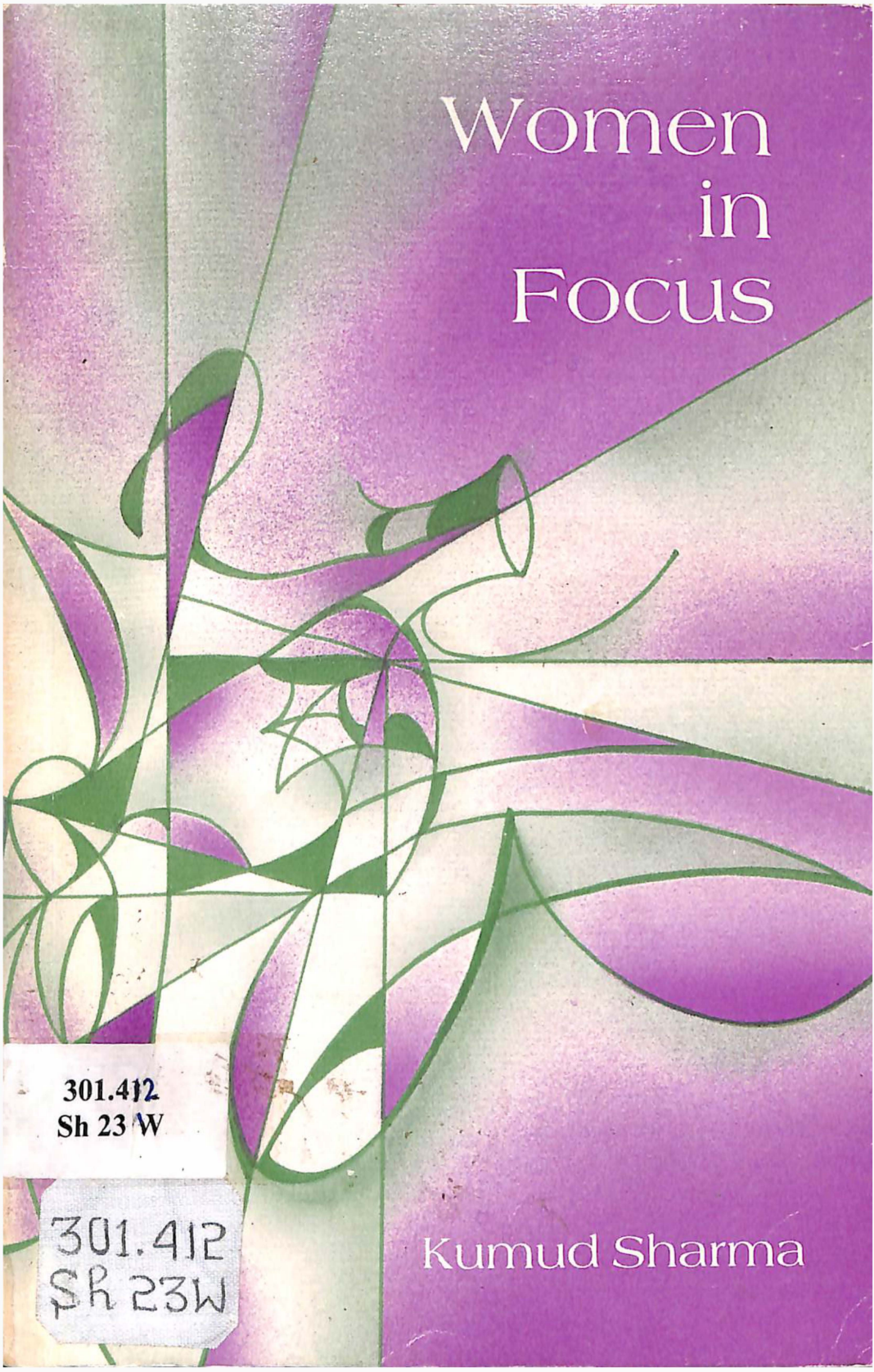
Women in Focus



Kumud Sharma

women in focus

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a community in search of equal roles

Kumud Sharma

with

Sahba Hussain and Archana Saharya

Sangam Books

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Dedicated
to the loving memory
of my late father
who was always
a source of inspiration

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Foreword

Pundits of political and social development across the world considered the framers of the Indian Constitution as mad men undertaking an impossible experiment—a political system based on adult franchise and a representative form of government in a country where 83.58 per cent of the population was illiterate. It is surprising, however, that these critics paid scant attention to the other element in the Constitution—a promise of complete equality of the sexes in a country which had acquired a reputation for the subjugation and oppression of women symbolized in customs like child marriage, burning of widows and female infanticide.

Any attempt to understand the situation of women within the present context of economic, social and political transformation in the Indian subcontinent, must begin from the historic decision of the Indian National Congress adopted in its Fundamental Rights Resolution in 1931, at the high tide of a people's struggle to shake off a colonial regime managed by the most successful imperial power of that time. India's decision to recognize equality of the sexes, thus preceded the UN General Assembly's Declaration on the Elimination of all Discriminations against Women by thirty-six years. This decision was translated into the Constitution of the Indian Republic twenty-five years before the World Conference at Mexico ushered in a decade of struggle for women's equality and development.

Four significant features of the new political system outlined by this Constitution are (*a*) universal adult franchise; (*b*) legal equality of all citizens; (*c*) a definite ban on the State to prevent discrimination on grounds of sex, caste or creed; and (*d*) special protective measures for sections of the population traditionally marginalized in Indian history. These protective measures were designed to assist such sections to break

the barriers of traditional inequalities through a system of reservations and special supports in education, employment, and political representation. There were advocates at the time, who recommended a similar device for women also, equating women's traditional inequality, and their backwardness in education and power as justification for treating them at par with the socially depressed castes and tribes. The leaders of the women's movement, however, rejected the suggestion and demanded recognition of complete equality. The State was, however, empowered through Article 15(3) of the Constitution to introduce special measures for the protection of women and children, irrespective of its obligation not to discriminate on grounds of sex.

The nation undertook the massive task of social engineering not only for the elimination of poverty and other forms of social inequality, but also for the eradication of the oldest inequality in our society. Twenty-five years after the birth of the Indian Republic, however, a government appointed committee on the status of women in India, concluded on the basis of a country-wide investigation, that the *de-jure* equality guaranteed by the Constitution had not been translated into reality and large masses of women in the country have remained unaffected by the rights guaranteed to them. The Committee's report emphasized that 'equality of women is necessary, not merely on the grounds of social justice, but as a basic condition for social, economic and political development of the nation'.

The Committee's report provided substantial evidence indicating that the process of planned development, ushered in after independence, had failed to arrest or change the process of increasing marginalization of women in the economy, society and in the population. The Committee concluded that the anti-discrimination approach and dependence on education, legal reform and political rights as the main instruments for women's development had failed to transform, let alone eliminate the structure of subordination that was deep-rooted in all our social institutions. These conclusions were based on an analysis of macro data, evidence from various fields of social research and inferences drawn from several contradictory trends in society.

The Committee appealed to the community of social scientists to examine the inter-relationships between the constitutional goal of

equality, the processes unleashed by economic transformation, social change, population dynamics and the situation of women at various levels, to provide better and effective strategies for social engineering. The Committee did not share the popular belief that obstacles to women's right to equality lay only in traditional attitudes and customs, and suggested that a greater understanding of the structural aspects, both old and new, was necessary as they provided a protective base for discriminatory and marginalizing attitudes. How else can one explain the persistence of such attitudes in the context of the rapid processes of economic, social and political change which have introduced an element of fluidity in the other aspects in systems of cultural values ? Why have the equality clauses of the Constitution, the expansion of education and employment opportunities benefited only a minority and have failed to benefit the majority ? Why has women's extensive contribution to the household and the national economy remained invisible to those responsible for framing policies for economic development ? Instead of promoting a culture of equality, why has the education sy tem reinforced ideas of women's subordination ? In a country which could accept women so readily in positions of high power and dignity why is it so difficult for the majority of women to exert any influence on decisions that affect their lives ? Why has planned development accelerated the process of women's marginalization in economic activity ?

Of all the States of the Indian Union, Uttar Pradesh presents a very confusing and contradictory picture. By all the accepted indicators of women's development—sex ratio, literacy level, economic and political participation, infant and maternal mortality—Uttar Pradesh occupies the dubious position of being close to the bottom of a ranking order. Yet it has the largest number of educational institutions exclusively for women, a remarkable record of women's participation in the freedom movement, the largest number of women representatives to the state and national legislatures, and a number of outstanding women in political, social, cultural and scientific fields. It has the longest history of experiments in rural development and has implemented an extremely effective programme for rural women's development. On the other hand, it is the first state to arbitrarily call off this programme and to offer resistance to the appointment of women administrators. It claims to have the largest number of women workers in cotton spinning, but it has made no attempt to introduce modern equipment to increase

their productivity and earnings. It is a state where women's wrath saw the beginning of one of the best known popular movements against the exploitation and denudation of forest resources, but where women have no place in the decision making bodies that guide the future of that movement or a forest development policy. A state with a record of bold dynamism and assertion by women in village representative bodies (*Panchayats*), but where officials responsible for enforcing the laws relating to *Panchayats* violate the clauses that guarantee women's participation in *Panchayats* with impunity.

This picture of contrasts makes Uttar Pradesh an extraordinarily interesting area for studying women's development. The two districts selected for the study represent the diversity in population, development, and social situations that characterize this massive state. It was hoped that micro level investigations in such diverse situations would help us to determine whether the patterns of response to attempts at social engineering differ in different community situations. Do all communities perceive women's roles as similar, regardless of the social context ? How do women perceive their own roles ? From what do they derive their sense of identity ? Do obstacles to women's development lie only in the community's cultural resistance or are there other forces operating to defeat policies and development objectives ? Are there mutually supportive alliances within the forces of change and the forces of reaction ? Has the political process helped to promote an understanding and acceptance of the new value of equality or has it only strengthened the structures that derive their meaning from a social order based on the principles of inequality in access to resources and power ?

As practical social scientists, we realize that issues of women's development do not enjoy high priority for a government besieged by problems of slowing growth rate, rising poverty and inflation, and political factionalism. Women are not yet recognized as a development resource or as a critical factor in determining the direction of social change. As individuals committed to the cause of women's equality and right to development, we have to try and identify feasible methods to bridge the gap between the goals of development and what actually takes place in the name of development at the ground level. It is not enough to demand structural change in a society where hierarchic structures have persisted, in defiance of both popular

movements and interventionist policies. We have to propose methods of making these interventions more meaningful and effective.

Creating greater awareness regarding the complex nature of the problem and the need for interlinked strategies at different levels of government and society, are the twin objectives that inspired this study. It was believed that if policies for women's equality and development are to succeed, they must take into account the intricate intermeshing of caste, class and gender inequalities with historical, cultural and political trends. We hope that this study will provide some insight in this direction. It is only a small step—unravelling the mystery that surrounds women's situation in Uttar Pradesh.

The Centre for Women's Development Studies was established in 1980 to continue the debate initiated by the Committee on the status of women and the UN Decade for women and develop new perspectives for research and action. The Centre believes that along with the promotion and dissemination of knowledge on the multi-dimensional problems of women, it has to play the role of a catalyst by assisting women to realize their full potential in all spheres of life. Research thus, becomes a tool for assisting women's struggle against inequality and injustice at all levels of society and is not an end in itself.

Vina Mazumdar

Preface

The idea of this study originated from a slide set shown in the UNICEF on a 'balanced portrayal of women', prepared for orienting teachers on sexist biases in class room teaching. The discussions that followed the screening of the slide set emphasized the need for strong motivational community-based approaches for conscientizing the community about the need to strengthen women's participation in development.

The study began with an exploration of the experiences of being a woman (in two small towns and villages in Uttar Pradesh), and an attempt to understand the broader aspects of sex role differentiation and its structural correlates, women's own perception of the value of sex equality, the meaning they assign to deep-rooted prejudices, sex stereotypes and values, the choices they make, the options they perceive and the priorities they visualize. Social deprivations suffered by marginalized groups of women warp their thinking. What emerged from the study was a reverse learning, that is, the dilemmas of intervention and approaches to women's development which many a time deal with the surface symptoms. The study does not claim to have explored the entire gamut of issues relating to the marginalization of women. The focus was limited to what seems feasible in the current situation in Uttar Pradesh with a hope that this may be a small step towards initiating a process of questioning the perceptions, attitudes and thinking of the bureaucrats, professionals and programme planners and may lead to a reordering of priorities.

I take great pleasure in acknowledging the support the UNICEF has provided for this study, and also their permission for its publication. I am specially thankful to Dr Padmini Ramaswamy and Dr Andrea Singh for initial discussions of this project.

I owe a special debt to Dr Vina Mazumdar, Director, Centre for Women's Development Studies (CWDS), as the project benefited greatly at every stage by her valuable suggestions. Thanks are due to my colleagues for their contributions in clarifying many ideas in the internal discussions we had at the Centre, to Sahba Hussain and Archana Saharya for shouldering the responsibility of collection and compilation of field data. Special mention may be made of Vidya Hydari and Meera Velayudhan for their assistance during my long absence from the office. Anil Chowdhary and Nirlep Malhans also lent support for the field work in Barabanki. Maps and charts were prepared by Anil K Singh.

Thanks are due to the officials of the Uttar Pradesh government for extending help and cooperation during my field trips. My appreciation to Parvathi Narayanan, Usha Wali and Nandanan Pillai for their patience in typing the manuscript. Last, but not least, my gratitude is due to the respondents, who cannot be named but have been a source of ideas and have made this report possible.

Kumud Sharma

Sex Equality : An Utopia

The Concept of Sex Equality : Problems in Operationalization

What is meant by sex equality in a given societal context ? The debate on the structure of inequalities in Indian society includes reflections on the concept of equality itself. Does equality mean identity ? Does sex equality mean only 'equality of opportunities and status' between men and women in similar situations ? How can sex equality be realized within a social system characterized by inequalities of class, caste and sex ? Can cumulative inequalities which are historically embedded in a stratified pluralistic society be rectified merely by the assertion of an abstract principle ?

The complex system of structured inequalities reinforces patterns of marginality for the underprivileged groups who do not have equal access to economic resources, power, authority, decision making processes and returns. The principle of equality comes into direct conflict with a system of rewards, incentives and privileges of various interest groups dominating property and power relations. It is important to understand how property based relations and sex related attitudes are intertwined with role patterns, life options and activities.

The sub-committee on 'Women's Role in Planned Economy' constituted under the National Planning Committee in 1939 pointed out that

> private property is the root cause of many inequalities. In a planned society efforts will, we hope, be taken to levelise inequality

> by placing property in its true perspective so that it is no longer mistaken for privileges and power ... so long, however, as the very foundation of society is based on a system of private property, woman cannot claim equality with man unless she has the same rights as man to hold, acquire, inherit and dispose of property.[1]

The political response to this issue was a policy of correction by breaking down the formal barriers to women's access to legal, political, educational and economic institutions, assuming that this would bring about significant changes in women's participatory roles. Gandhi viewed political and legal equality as only the starting point, 'Women must have votes and an equal legal status. But the problem does not end there. It only commences at the point where women begin to affect the political deliberations of the nation'.[2] The second part of the anticipated change never started. The Gandhian vision faded out of the national scene once theoretical equality was incorporated in the constitutional and legal structure.

The legal reforms in the fifties and the constitutional provision created an illusion of equality of rights, status and opportunities, without modifying the fundamental social and economic structures which posed problems in making the concept operational in a concrete situation. Theoretical equality of opportunity did not bring in the same results for both the sexes although it became one of the indices for measuring sex equality. The contradictions between social goals and social realities were rooted in the failure of the institutional support system to contribute adequately to creating conditions conducive to the realization of broader social goals and bring about the required transformation in the value structure. The limited manner in which women took advantage of the constitutional measures and public policies was perceived as a failure of women to build on the foundations of political equality. The lack of understanding of the varied nature of constraints that women of different classes have to face was highlighted by the debate among women leaders on the issue of complete equality versus special protective measures for women. The reservation issue, which was rejected by many women leaders as a retrograde step after the acceptance of political equality in the early thirties, surfaced periodically and in the seventies the Committee on the Status of Women in India concluded 'Though women do not constitute a minority numerically, they are acquiring

the features of one by the inequality of class, status and political power'.[3] The Committee laid down its own guiding principles and stated that 'if our society is to move in the direction of the goals set by the Constitution, then special temporary measures will be necessary to transform *de jure* into *de facto* equality'.

The ambivalence in understanding the need and implications of sex equality is clear from the discussion on women's rights.[4] Within the framework of the egalitarian ideology there was a realization of the deprived status of certain groups and the need for special protective measures (as in the case of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and Article 15[3] of the Constitution regarding special provision for women). The response to this widening gap between 'symbolism and reality' led to the emergence of the concept of social justice which added another dimension to the debate on equality as it not only meant a recognition of the deprived status of certain groups who were victims of planned development and social change, but also recognized the pressing need for a policy of intervention favouring the socially and economically deprived groups to make the idea of equality of opportunity more operational. At this point the principle of 'equality of opportunity' lost its universality, the response of the system was too slow to meet the requirements of the new social order. In fact powerful trends within the society run contrary to the political commitment to equality. The entire development debate on growing poverty and 'inequalities within and between nations' forced a reappraisal of models and strategies of development. The sex dimension underlying all inequalities was highlighted in the seventies which, in turn, focussed on the problems of distributional inequities and growing sex imbalances, accentuated by the process of development itself.

The issue of sex equality must be viewed within the wider social context and diversity of women's life situations and life options in different social segments. Analytical problems stem from the use of aggregative data as indices of inequality (sex-ratio, literacy, life expectancy, mortality and employment) between the sexes, though they actually reflect the stratified and unequal nature of society itself. The structure of education, wealth, power and authority creates social inequalities and proposes differing ideas of equality—both inter-group and intra-group. What then does sex equality mean ? Can women be treated as a separate category or are there categories within categories ?

Does it mean equality between men and women in comparable situations in the same socioeconomic category ? Do men and women view the world from a different perspective or is it a function of an ideology of the family and 'women's place' in it ?

The disadvantages of being a female are obvious—lower life expectancy, minimum education, poorly paid jobs, lower status expectations, and fewer rewards than men in comparable situations. The process of selection and elimination operating through a complex system of institutional network (family, caste, religion, education and political system) results in the narrowing down of options for women. On the broad social spectrum, the biological reality of being female or male in the majority of cases not only means a differential system of rewards and opportunities (systemic discrimination) but a different perspective on life options and choices emerging from a negative self-image (sex role socialization). The images of sex roles and the area of choices are dominated by conventional attitudes buttressed by a dominant or entrenched value system, segregated network of roles and division of labour. The relationship between women's socially defined identities (opportunity structure) and self-defined identities (socialization and development of selfhood) is central to the understanding of patterns of sex roles and underlying assumptions of sex role differentiation. Sex roles provide a basic reference point for studying changes in women's status. Sex role differentiation and ideological assumptions about 'women's place' is linked to the unequal distribution of resources, rewards, rights and authority between men and women which, in turn, influence patterns of family and work life. The historic imbalance of power between the sexes has become a major obstacle in the pursuit of equality.

Background

In 1976 the NCERT supported a study sponsored by the All India Women's Conference to determine the nature and degree of sexist bias in the English language textbooks in schools.[5] The report recommended that

> since textbook revision will necessarily take an extended period of time to accomplish, immediate action should be taken to expose both teachers and students to the existence of sexism in the textbooks they are using daily in schools.

Following this report, the UNICEF supported a pilot project[6] sponsored by the Indian Federation of University Women's Association, to develop among teachers an awareness of the existence and influence of sexism in society and more specifically in school situations. The findings of the study highlighted the varying degree of bias among teachers regarding sex roles in society. This was followed by an orientation programme for primary school teachers in the NDMC schools in Delhi. A group of primary school teachers were selected for a short experimental orientation programme using audio-visual material, questionnaires and group discussions. The objective of this project was to orient teachers with regard to the concept of sexism, to change their attitudes for the promotion of spontaneous changes in the methods of classroom instructions and to provide a model for incorporation in future teacher training and refresher courses. The NCERT Women's Education Unit made a beginning in this direction by reviewing the physical and social sciences, mathematics and language courses being taught at the school level so as to make sure that no reference was made to women that denigrated their status, but attempted to highlight the positive contributions of women and identified the values commensurate with the status of women[7] which should be expressed through the teaching of languages, social and biological sciences and other instructional material in the Ten Year School Curriculum.[8] The NCERT also developed a *Teachers' Handbook on Status of Women through Curriculum* as the importance of human intervention cannot be overemphasized. This handbook is is designed to help the teacher exercise her ingenuity in helping children interpret social facts in a more scientific manner and to provide guidelines to the teacher for proper attitude formation in children during the early stages of their life.

Another project sponsored by the UNICEF was undertaken by the SNDT Women's University, Bombay to develop a suitable orientation course of a specific duration for orienting urban and rural primary teachers and to construct and validate objective tools of assessment with respect to attitudes towards sex roles among rural primary teachers.[9] The slide set developed by the UNICEF entitled *Balanced Portrayal of Women* was used in the teachers' orientation on sexism, in order to obtain comments and suggestions for improving the slide set and making it into a film which could be used for teacher training, this was to be followed by a companion project aimed to orient the public on sexist bias. The idea of orienting the community emerged from the feedback

received from the SNDT project. The teachers' groups in Bombay and Delhi felt that teachers alone could not bring about a change in the attitudes of the children as the hold of *biradari* was very strong in the villages. The teachers in the rural areas felt that a conflicting situation would arise if their attitudes radically differed from those of the members of the community which continues to be highly traditional.

The present study was undertaken with a view to understanding the differences in responses of different classes or castes to women's problems and needs, women's own perception of their roles and responsibilities, their priorities, the choices they made, their response to life situations and their sense of identity and their feelings of power or powerlessness. The study attempted to explore feasible approaches for enlisting parental and community support for efforts made at the school level by national agencies and identify points of intervention at the community level. Change, it must be remembered, occurs in a context and the process requires both structural and attitudinal transformations to deal with social and economic inequalities. The issue of sex equality cannot be dissociated from the context of family, caste, class and religion, and the extent to which the school communicates is determined by the supportive environment.

Objectives and Approach

The purpose of the study was to explore the key problem areas for changing the condition of women, identify the constraints imposed on them by the immediate environment and outline the feasible approaches which deal with their life situation and are more meaningful in their own immediate context. Based on the hypothesis that the process of planned development and social change have affected men and women differently in different social classes and groups which is often disadvantageous to women, the study aimed at (*a*) identifying the points of resistance within the community to realizing the social goal of equal opportunities for women; (*b*) identifying the positive values in the community which facilitate growth of positive attitudes in this direction; (*c*) suggesting alternative and feasible approaches to overcome resistance and harness a positive attitude through research, experimentation and communication; and (*d*) identifying the communication channels within the community's reach which could be used for this purpose (for example media, non-formal educational programmes,

local organizations, development agencies and women functionaries implementing various programmes).

The study was not designed to test some well defined hypotheses but was basically diagnostic in nature. It was exploratory and suffered from several limitations. The narrow base of the sample prevented wide sweeping generalizations but provided some understanding into the broader aspects of sex role differentiation and its socioeconomic correlates. The period of study was short, keeping in view the objectives of the study and the nature, quantum and depth of data needed for such analysis. The tentative conclusions in this study may suffer from pre-selection of the area for study.

The study was contextual and descriptive. Some facts were highlighted keeping in view the objectives of the study. An attempt was made to understand the social context from which role expectations emerge, the choices women make, the values and meaning women assign to their day to day life and the extent to which placement of a group in a social hierarchy defines the parameters for women's achievement and aspirations.

Two districts of Etawah and Barabanki were chosen purposively for the following reasons : Etawah district has been selected by the Uttar Pradesh government for initiating the Integrated Area Development Programme, in collaboration with the UNICEF. It has the longest history of development planning at the grassroot level. The Pilot Development Project was initiated in Etawah in 1948, primarily for the development of a suitable organizational structure, extension methodology and programme content for the development of rural areas. This was the precursor of the Community Development Project which was introduced in 1952 as an extension of the Pilot Development Project to provide an integrated approach to various aspects of rural development through the combined efforts of the government, the community and voluntary agencies. In 1954 the Planning Research and Action Institute (PRAI) was created which took over Etawah district's two blocks (Mahewa and Bhagyanagar) as its field laboratory to try out new ideas and methods and the entire district of Etawah was brought under the direct control of the Director of PRAI. It was expected that some of the successful schemes would be replicated later. The Institute's Pilot Project Wing had a unit on women's programme which aimed at evolving and developing a programme content for rural women, effective

methods and techniques of extension, training programmes for extension workers and extending improved home living techniques through school-going girls in selected areas.[10] The programme unit never developed a perspective. In 1976 this unit was transferred to the Directorate of Social Welfare.

Table 1 Sex Ratios in Population/Literacy/Employment
(Females/1000 Males)

	Population	*Literacy*	*Total Workers**
1961			
India	941	354	696
Uttar Pradesh	909	233	283
Etawah	847	250	51.9
Barabanki	894	165	300
1971			
India	930	440	210
Uttar Pradesh	879	294	112
Etawah	826	352	23.5
Barabanki	851	217.6	90.4
1981			
India	935	497	366
Uttar Pradesh	886	328	164
Etawah	831	410	29
Barabanki	860	239	197

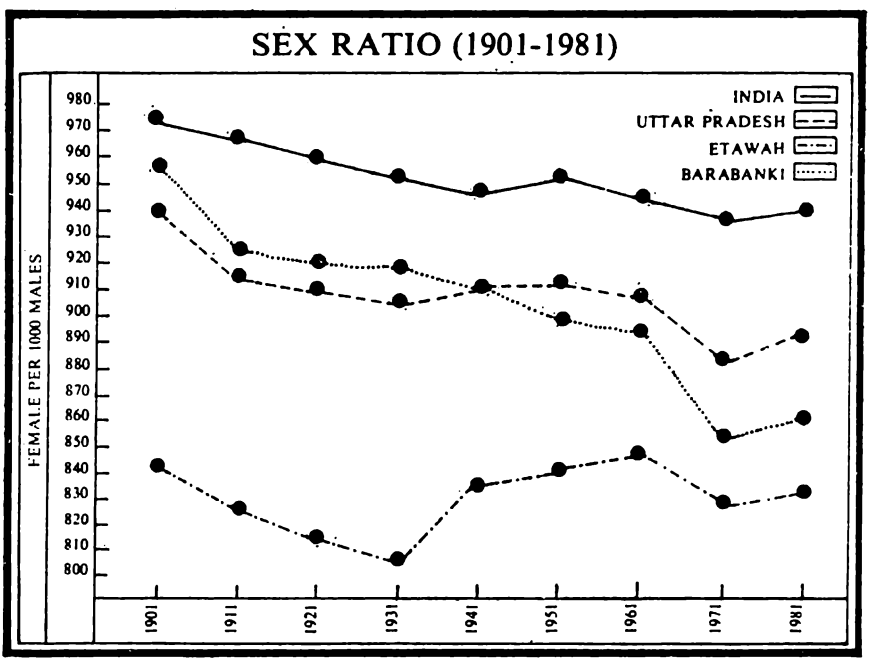
* 1981 Census data for total workers includes marginal workers. Marginal workers have been defined as those who have worked for some time during the preceding year but not for the major part (that is for less than the 183 days prescribed for main workers).

Source : Census of India.

Mitra et. al., *The Status of Women : Shifts in Occupational Participation 1961-1971.*

The district of Barabanki provides a sharp contrast to Etawah. The former has a higher sex ratio (860 as compared to 831), higher work participation rate among females (7.49 per cent as compared to

1.25 per cent) and a very low female literacy rate (8.18 per cent as compared to 24.02 per cent). In 1971 the district registered only 5.5 per cent literacy rate among females. Despite its proximity to the state capital Lucknow, (28 kilometres) and well developed means of communication, it is one of the most backward districts of Uttar Pradesh. Within the district, the rural area constitutes more than 99 per cent with a population of 94 per cent. 75 per cent of the total work force is engaged in agriculture. Household industry forms the second major share of the activity. The Government of Uttar Pradesh decided to develop the town under the Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns Scheme so that it could act as a growth centre and strike an economic equilibrium between the rural areas and the metropolitan cities.[11] Barabanki has a sizeable Muslim population (48.5 per cent of the total urban population and 18.3 per cent of the total population of the district) and it was selected because it was fairly representative of the large Muslim population of Uttar Pradesh.



The two districts present an interesting situation for exploring the relationship between development activities and socio-economic changes and women's access to newly created opportunities

for employment, training, credit, education and information. Men and women have differential access to information and resources which affects their decision making powers and control over resources within the household, at the community level and in the wider society. To regulate or alter the effects of policy interventions and planned programmes, a systematic evaluation, monitoring and sensitizing role within the policy making bodies is important, but it is more important to develop people's own ability to improve their condition by increasing their consciousness. This study is largely concerned with the latter.

The study adopted two modules (1) (*a*) group discussions with relatively homogenous groups of women on issues relating to their understanding of various dimensions of sex inequality, their perception of women's roles, problems, needs and priorities in the context of the immediate environment, the choices they make, the normative pressures dominated by conventional attitudes about sex roles, intra-household sharing of roles and resources; (*b*) discussions with the district level officials in charge of implementing programmes of education, health, rural development, agriculture and welfare regarding the problems they encounter in reaching women as target groups and the problems faced by women functionaries, particularly in the rural areas. (2) (*a*) in-depth interviews of selected respondents—both women and men from different socioeconomic groups on issues related to early socialization of boys and girls, role expectations and segregated network of roles ; problems of girls' education, health and nutrition, employment and training, access to credit; intra-household authority, structure, ownership pattern, control over household resources and rights of women; social obligations, taboos and rituals, local traditions and constraints imposed by the ideas of purity and pollution and the areas of discrimination; (*b*) an effort was also made to ascertain people's reaction to women and other government functionaries and to the programmes being implemented by them in that area.

The respondents included government functionaries from the development department and from education, health and welfare departments, teachers, doctors, nurses, teacher trainees and students, trainees under TRYSEM and other income generating programmes, weavers, spinners, potters, landless agricultural labourers, small and marginal landholders, unpaid family workers in large farm households

and housewives. The age range of the respondents varied from 20 to 70 years and above, and the educational level ranged from illiterate to post-graduate. A total of 105 persons were interviewed of which the majority were women. Although sample selection was random, care was taken to include different class and caste groups, but the majority of the respondents interviewed individually belonged to the lower and middle class groups. In the towns it was difficult to select a representative sample from a cross-section of society and talk to homogenous groups. The settlement patterns in the towns enabled one to identify groups in different economic categories. In both the towns similar occupational groups like weavers were concentrated in a few localities. In the towns the sample was based on occupational groups while in the villages it was based on caste groups. This does not imply that the caste and occupational groups always tend to overlap in the villages. The villages which have been drawn into the national network of power, patronage and organization of production, do not follow the old traditional caste patterns. In the villages respondents of different economic strata from the same caste groups were selected. In the towns women were seen at their place of work and from among them a few were interviewed. Parents were contacted through the teachers in the schools and colleges and through selected students from different socioeconomic groups. Unpaid family workers (weavers, spinners, workers in cottage industries) were met in their homes through teachers and some local officials.

In Etawah village the process of establishing rapport with the village women was facilitated as the field level staff of the Family and Child Welfare project (*mukhya sevika* in charge of the project and *bal sevika* running the *balwadi* in the same village) introduced the investigators to the village people. Being an all women team facilitated meeting women in their homes and spending time with them. Much of the information disclosed by women could not otherwise be elicited. The warmth and hospitality shown by most of the respondents in the towns and the villages was a positive factor and it helped greatly in the work. In spite of these positive factors there were some difficulties during the field work in the villages, which somewhat affected the study in terms of the team's movements and enquiries. An all women team was a rare event for the villagers and the time of its arrival in Etawah village was also inopportune, because a day before a woman dacoit of Uttar Pradesh (Phoolan Devi) had massacred people in a village in the

nearby district (Kanpur). This, along with recent dacoities in the district had given rise to some tension, suspicion and apprehension among the villagers which was aggravated by the presence of the investigators and reinforced by the fact that they were women. Within two days of arrival in Etawah a rumour resounded in the village that the research team was part of a dacoit gang and had come with the same ulterior motive or at least to carry relevant information back. This was further confirmed by the team's eagerness to stay on late one evening for *kirtan*—this convinced the villagers of their 'suspect' intentions. Later however, one of the accompanying block officials explained the reasons for the team's visit to the people which facilitated the field work.

The initial visit to Barael village in Barabanki in the jeep of the block official caused some problem and initial resistance. The cause of this hostility in certain sections was traced back to the fact that the jeep was used by the block staff during the 1975-76 family planning drive to forcibly take people away for sterilization. The suspicion that the team was from the family planning department was strengthened by the fact that the village *pradhan* (head of the village council) prefixed one of the team member's name with Doctor. The village *pradhan*, a *kurmi* (backward caste) by caste, accompanied the research team to the village to introduce the team to the villagers and this caused some resentment among the middle and upper castes. On the other hand scheduled castes, who had many grievances regarding distribution of land and house sites and distribution of subsidy from the government for house repair, associated the team with the government and were initially reluctant to cooperate. However, once all the doubts were cleared about the purpose of the visit, the people, especially poor Muslim weavers, showed great hospitality and warmth. Some of the village women even extended an invitation to visit their homes. Sometimes during group discussions many persons spoke simultaneously and the points were often lost in the noise. Sometimes interviews were made difficult because of the frequent interruptions by the respondent's family. In one case the over-cautious mother-in-law, suspicious that wrong ideas would be put into the daughter-in law's head, constantly interrupted the conversation.

Land and land relations was another issue on which information was usually difficult to get. The rural social structure is tied with patterns of land ownership and production relations. Women's work

roles and life situation is inextricably linked with the rural agrarian structure. For the group at the bottom of the ladder—the landless agricultural labourers, subsistence farmers, artisans and service castes, it is a constant battle against poverty, insecurity, underemployment and indebtedness. These are a few pointers for any programme of intervention without the support of a local institution or organization—as there exists a fundamental clash between the demands of the deprived groups and the power elites. It would be naive to think that any attempt to get the cooperation of the community at the local level would be free of ideological struggle.

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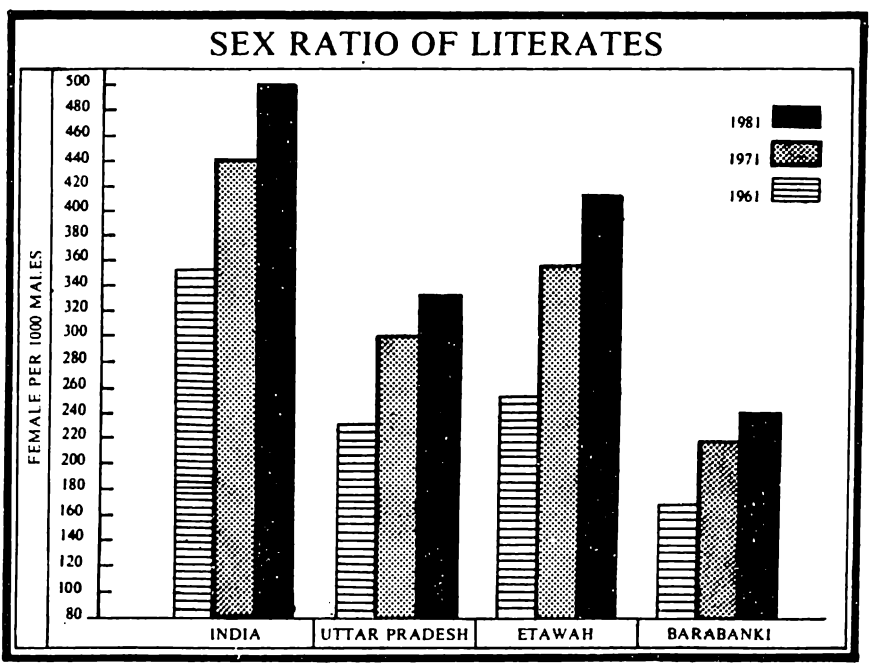
The Context

The Study Area

Uttar Pradesh situated in the centre of the northern part of the country, has an area of 2,94,364 square kilometres and occupies 9.2 per cent of the country's area. The state has 56 administrative units, two new districts were added during 1971-81. It has 659 towns and the rural areas comprise of over one lakh villages.

The total population of the state in 1981 was 110,885,974 of which 52,092,801 were females. During 1971-81 the population increased by 25.52 per cent as against 19.7 per cent in 1961-71. The decadal population growth rate in the last decade was higher than for the country as a whole (24.75). The decade 1971-81 touched the peak growth rate. Uttar Pradesh stands fourteenth in urbanization among all the states. The overall density of population in the state was 377 as against 300 in 1971. The sex ratio in Uttar Pradesh has shown a consistent declining trend over the period 1901-71 (with the exception of 1951 when there was a slight improvement). From 937 in 1901, the sex ratio declined to 879 in 1971 and showed little improvement in 1981 when it rose to 886 as against 935 for the country. Sex ratio in this state has always been lower than the All India average. The state has the same sex ratio as seen in the Punjab in 1981. The districts where females outnumbered males were Garhwal, Tehri Garhwal, Almora, Pithoragarh and Chamoli in the Himalayan hills and Azamgarh, Pratapgarh and Jaunpur in eastern Uttar Pradesh. From these districts males migrate in large numbers to other areas for employment.

The state is one of the most backward in terms of female literacy. The total literate population is 30,383,715. The crude literacy rate (includes children in the age group 0-4 years) rose from 21.7 per cent in 1971 to 27.4 per cent in 1981 that is, an increase of 26.18 per cent. Uttar Pradesh ranks 25th amongst all the States and Union Territories in literacy and is way behind the All India average of 36.17 per cent. The female literacy rate is 14.42 as against 38.9 for males, the percentage increase of female literacy over the period 1971-81 was 36.68 per cent.[1] The imbalance between male and female population and the low literacy level of women seemed to influence the extent



and nature of women's economic participation. The female work participation rate further declined from 6.71 in 1971 to 6.02 per cent in 1981. Nearly 49.61 per cent of the male population and 6.02 per cent of the female population engaged in full-time economic activity. The main workers comprised a little less than one-third—29.13 per cent of the total population. There was a marked disparity in the female participation rate in the various districts. The districts in the Himalayan hills (Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Tehri Garhwal, Pithoragarh) revealed a high percentage (32.03 to 48.74) of female work participation. More than 95 per cent of the

female workers in these districts were cultivators. Both among the males and the females the proportion of agricultural labourers has decreased during the last decade. The proportion of main workers in the household industry has gone up for both the sexes since 1971. The 1981 Census introduced the concept of marginal workers for those who worked for less than six months during the preceding year. The percentage of marginal workers to total population was higher in the case of women (3.55) as compared to men (1.90) which implies that underemployment is higher among women.

The state presents a strange paradox. In a state where women participated in large numbers in the national freedom movement, showed considerable organizing abilities and where few women have attained the position of power and authority at the state, national and international level, the majority of women have not been able to take advantage of their rights to move ahead. Casting a vote, is not in itself, a necessary indication of political consciousness and articulation in women. Women are largely mobilized through their husbands, fathers, brothers or sons and seldom exercise their right to vote independently.[2] A case study on women's role in politics in Uttar Pradesh points out

> A persual of facts shows that four crores of women of Uttar Pradesh are victims of masculine totalitarianism. Certainly the predominantly male constituent Assembly guaranteed all kinds of theoretical rights to women ... But the conditions prevalent for the growth of the personality is controlled, regulated and maintained by male members of society.[3]

Small Towns—A Missing Link in Development Planning

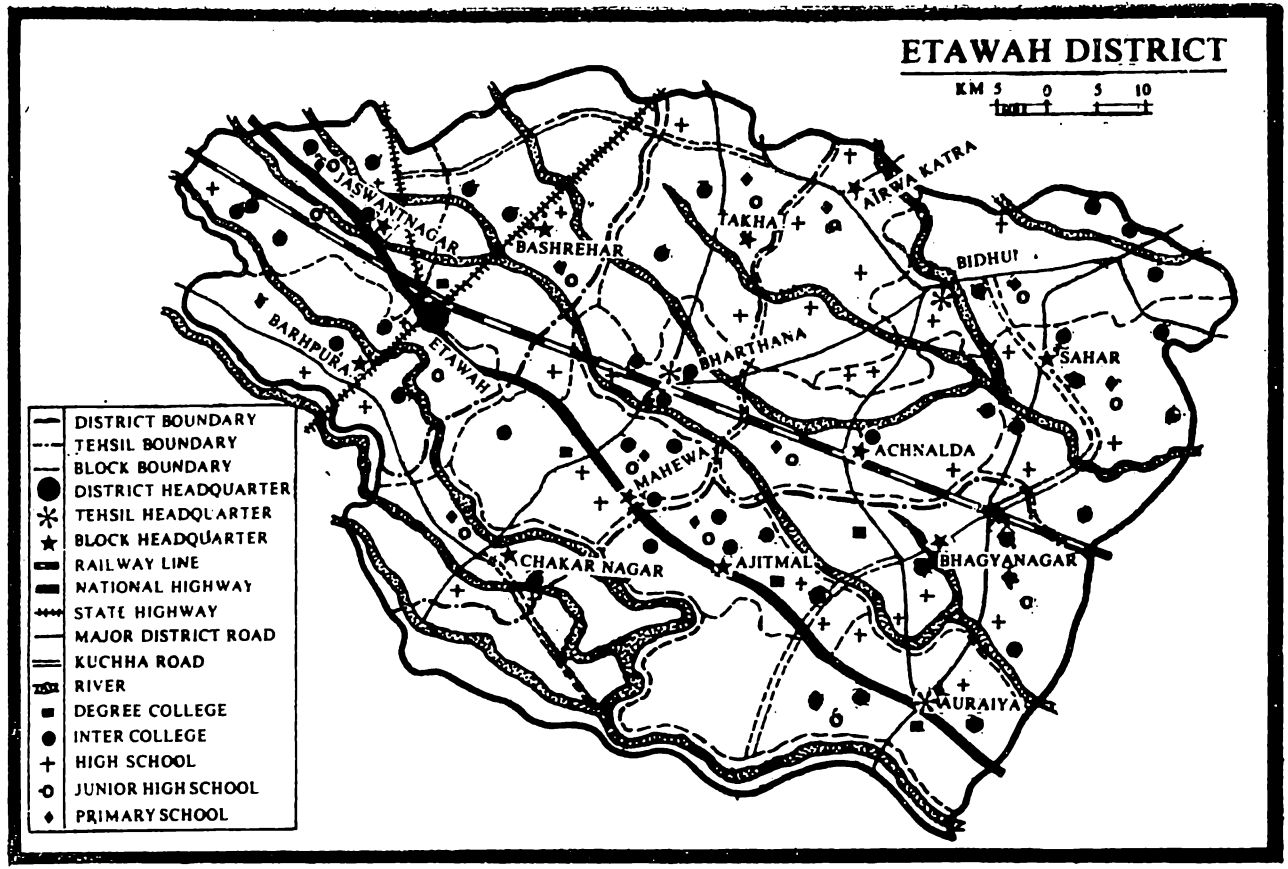
The small and medium towns have been largely neglected in development planning. The slow growth of a large number of small towns is due to the limited investment available for urban development and particularly for infrastructural facilities. Small towns developed only as feeder towns to bigger cities and metropolises and failed to check the rate of migration to these cities. The entire district administration is geared to maintain a supply line for the channelization of funds to implement development programmes in the rural areas.

In 1979-80 a centrally aided scheme was started to provide integrated development in small and medium towns having a population of one

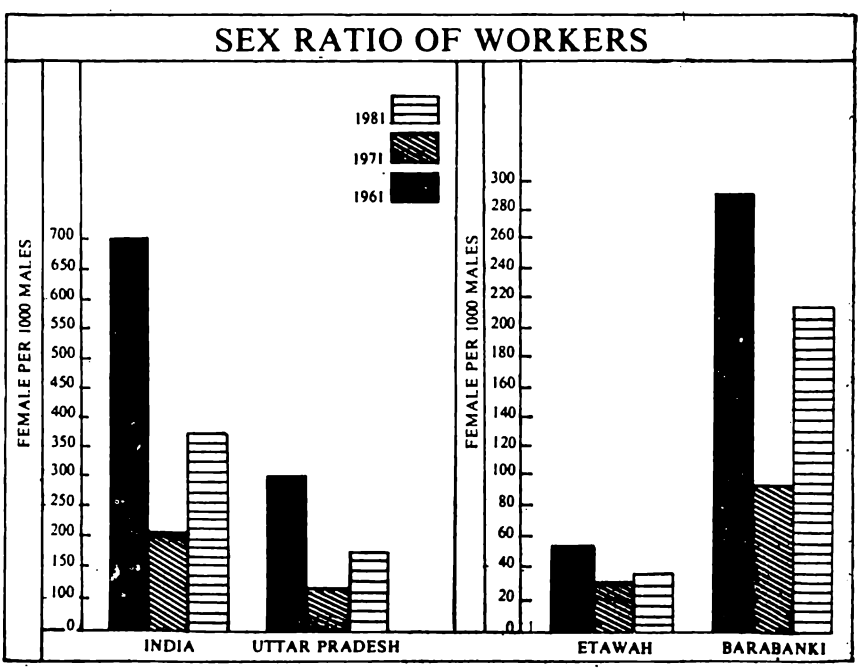
lakh and below according to the 1971 Census. The Central Government provides loan facilities on an equal basis to encourage the growth of these towns and to equip them to serve as growth and service centres and improve the environmental conditions. In spite of the slow growth of the small towns they face the same problems as the urban areas—poor environmental conditions, slums, inadequate housing and water supply and other public utility services due to low per capita income and slow industrial development. The UNICEF offered technical and financial help for augmenting the social services in 13 districts of the state, especially those which would benefit women and children. Etawah is one of the districts selected for the Integrated Area Development Programme.

Etawah The first phase of the field work was undertaken in Etawah town and one village in the Ajitmal block of the district. The district is situated in Western Uttar Pradesh and falls under the Allahabad division. The area covered by the district is 4384.95 square kilometres. The district has a total population of 1,748,737 of which 7,93,844 were females. In terms of area it comprises 1.5 per cent of the total area of the state.

The sex ratio for the district in 1981 was 831 as compared to 886 for the state and 935 for the country. The sex ratio in the district of Etawah indicated a gradual improvement till 1961 (806 in 1931 to 847 in 1961) then dropped to 826 in 1971 and showed a slight improvement in 1981[4] (See Figure on Page 9). Female literacy in the district was higher—24.02 per cent as compared to the state average of 14.42 per cent in 1981. The district, on an average, has a higher literacy rate (37.49 per cent) as compared to the state average of 27.4 per cent (See Figure on Page 15). In the district, while the literacy rate for females was higher, the work participation rate was very low (1.25 per cent) as compared to the state average of 6.02 per cent. Contrary to the general trend, the female work participation rate in the urban areas was higher (3.31 per cent) than in the rural areas (0.89 per cent). In the 1981 Census Etawah was listed as one of the first five districts in the state having the highest percentage of female workers in the household industry (18.87). More than three-fourths of these workers were urban based which explains the higher work participation of women in urban areas. In the marginal workers' category the number of females in rural areas was 3179.as against 3916 males.


ETAWAH DISTRICT
KM 5 0 5 10
TOJASWANTNAGAR
BASHREHAR
TAKHA
AIRWA KATRA
BIDHUI
BARHPURA
ETAWAH
BHARTHANA
SAHAR
ACHNALDA
MAHEWA
CHAKAR NAGAR
AJITMAL
BHAGYANAGAR
AURAIYA
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
TEHSIL BOUNDARY
BLOCK BOUNDARY
DISTRICT HEADQUARTER
TEHSIL HEADQUARTER
BLOCK HEADQUARTER
RAILWAY LINE
NATIONAL HIGHWAY
STATE HIGHWAY
MAJOR DISTRICT ROAD
KUCHHA ROAD
RIVER
DEGREE COLLEGE
INTER COLLEGE
HIGH SCHOOL
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
PRIMARY SCHOOL

The district had 1206 junior basic schools, 306 senior basic schools (including 59 for girls), 118 higher secondary (including ten for girls) and five colleges.[5] In the junior basic schools the number of boys and girls was 1,19,490 and 66,547 respectively while in the senior basic schools the enrolment was 23,259 for boys and 10,039 for girls, and at the secondary level the figures were 61,892 for boys and 12,840 for girls. There has been a constant demand to introduce courses in law, commerce and B.Ed. in the post graduate college in Etawah. There were two Institutes for Industrial Training in Etawah and Manikpur respectively but there were no women trainees in these institutions. An Industrial Training Centre at Bakewar has remained closed since 1979-80. It was proposed to establish a government polytechnic at the district headquarter which would offer diploma courses in dairying, mechanical, electrical and civil engineering. There was no provision for any professional or vocational training for girls apart from the two years' BTC course for teaching which was likely to be discontinued as the batch trained in 1974 had not been able to secure jobs till 1981. The district plan for 1979-80 had recommended the introduction of courses in shorthand and typing, spinning and weaving in



the two Industrial Training Institutes to solve the problem of unemployment.

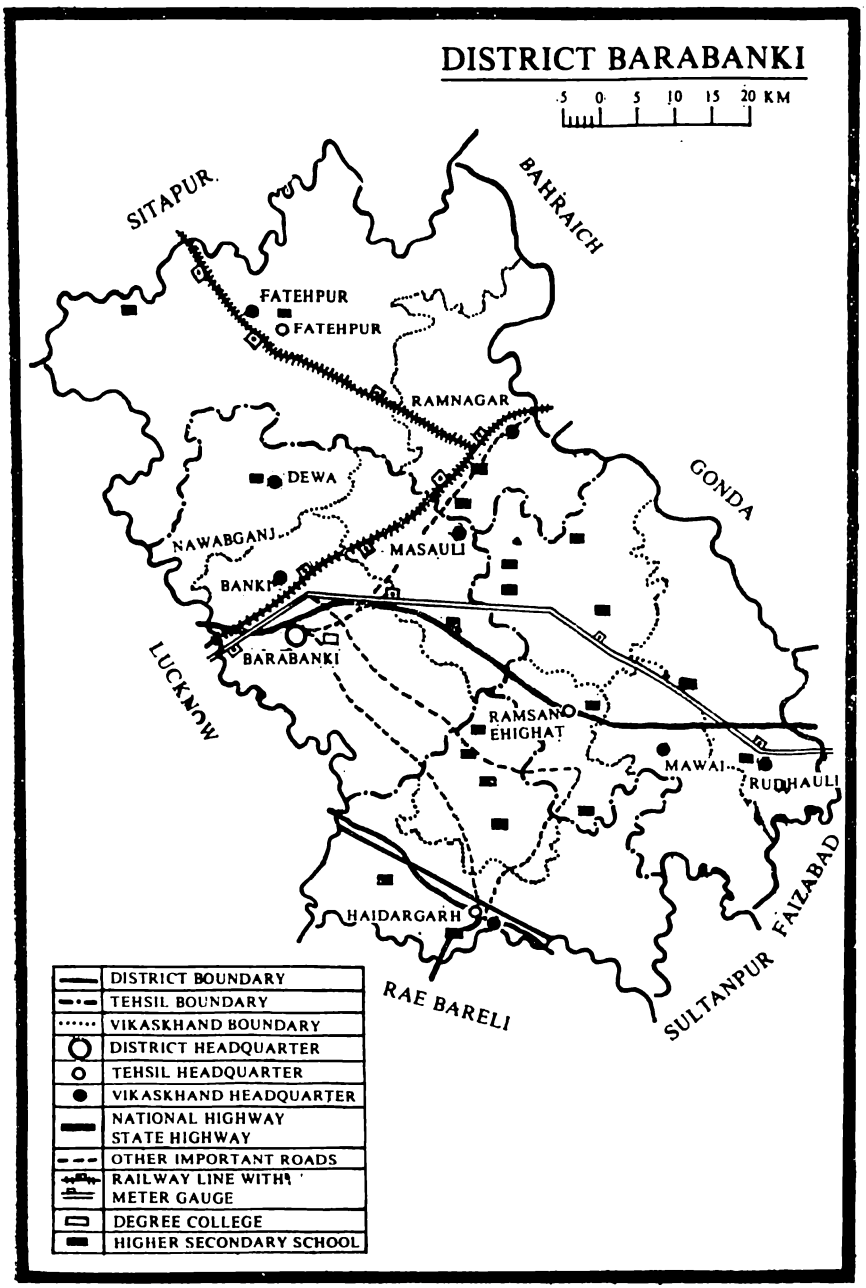
The number of registered industries in the district totalled 54 and most of these were located in the urban areas of Etawah, Auraiya, Bharthana and Jaswantnagar. There was a cotton spinning mill in the district. Handloom weaving was the main household industry with 8900 looms in the cooperative sector. The Uttar Pradesh Small Scale Industrial Corporation offers no scheme in this district. Industrially, it is a backward area, 72 per cent people were dependent on agriculture and the problem of underemployment was acute due to a decline in productivity. Of the total area of 4,36,495 hectares, 2,95,186 hectares was under cultivation and 66.43 per cent of the net sown area was irrigated. During the years 1974-75 to 1978-79 the area under wheat, rice and sugarcane cultivation increased, while that under pulses, peas, maize, millet, and oil seeds continuously decreased.

In 1978-79 there were 13 allopathic hospitals in the urban areas and seven in the rural areas run by the state government while one urban and eight rural hospitals were run by the Zila Parishad. 15 dispensaries established along the lines of the indigenous system were run by the state government and 18 by the Zila Parishad in the rural areas. The allopathic hospitals had a provision of 255 beds in urban and 114 beds in the rural areas. The district had 15 Primary Health Centres, two TB Clinics and one Leprosy Clinic, and 58 Maternity and Child Welfare Centres. Some of the schemes which were implemented by the different departments in the district included the Adult Education programme in Bharthana and Mahewa block, Applied Nutrition programme in Basreher block, Family and Child Welfare Project in the Ajitmal block. An Extension Training Centre in Bakewar provided training for village and block level extension staff and for organizers of 'Charcha Mandals' (Radio Rural Forums) and other village level functionaries for specific schemes. The Planning Research and Action Division of the State Planning Institute which undertakes diagnostic studies on socioeconomic problems in rural areas, functions through its field laboratories in which different schemes were operated on an experimental basis under close supervision. Etawah with the Pilot Development Project (PDP) was one of the field laboratories for action research on integrated rural development. The PDP covers three blocks—Ajitmal, Mahewa and Bhagyanagar in the

Etawah district. During 1979-80 the PDP area became the centre for work on bio-gas technology and community bio-gas plant. The Gobar Gas Research Station in Ajitmal carries out research and development activities in order to simplify and standardize bio-gas plant of various capacities based on different field material.[6]

The town of Etawah has a population of 1,12,426 (1981 Census) of which 52,401 were women. The sex ratio in the town is 873 as against 831 in the district. It is a bi-functional town comprising of 38.47 per cent service and 26.37 per cent industrial class. The chief industry employing a large section of the population was the handloom industry. Majority of the weavers in the town were Muslims. Weaving is a household occupation in which women and children actively participated. The handloom sector has been affected by the structural changes but the expansion of the industry has barely had an impact on the artisans whose families continue to struggle for survival. Etawah is not a cotton growing area therefore, the artisans have to depend on the middleman for the supply of raw materials and for marketing of the products. In 1978-79 a weavers' cooperative was formed which has been facing many problems. In 1978-79 the total production of handloom cloth was 111.02 lakh metres. In the same year 8004 kilograms of silk cocoons were grown in the district although there were no facilities for spinning and weaving of silk yarn in the district. Though some of the weavers have acquired powerlooms yet the work process continues to involve the entire family. In the town a Beedi Industrial Production cooperative was set up where out of 27 workers 17 were women. The cooperative produced about 20,000 *beedis* a day, and the wages were Rs 4.50 per 100 *beedis*. The town has 13 Nagar Palika junior basic schools, six senior basic schools and three inter-colleges for girls. Apart from teaching and medicine no other profession had any women employees.

Barabanki This district is in the Faizabad division and is 24 kilometres from the state capital, Lucknow. The district accounts for 1.1 per cent of the total area of the state and has four tehsil and 16 development blocks. It is neither industrially developed nor urbanized as the rural area constitutes more than 99 per cent of the district. The urban population of the district increased from 5.76 in 1971 to 8.75 per cent in 1981. The total population of the district numbers 2,012,576 and the decennial growth rate of the population for the district was


DISTRICT BARABANKI
5 0 5 10 15 20 KM
SITAPUR
BAHRAICH
FATEHPUR
FATEHPUR
RAMNAGAR
DEWA
GONDA
NAWABGANJ
MASAULI
BANKI
BARABANKI
LUCKNOW
RAMSANEHIGHAT
MAWAI
RUDHAULI
HAIDARGARH
FAIZABAD
SULTANPUR
RAE BARELI
DISTRICT BOUNDARY
TEHSIL BOUNDARY
VIKASKHAND BOUNDARY
DISTRICT HEADQUARTER
TEHSIL HEADQUARTER
VIKASKHAND HEADQUARTER
NATIONAL HIGHWAY
STATE HIGHWAY
OTHER IMPORTANT ROADS
RAILWAY LINE WITH
METER GAUGE
DEGREE COLLEGE
HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL

23.05 per cent as compared to 25.52 per cent for the state and 20.79 per cent for Etawah. The density of population was 45.7 per square mile as compared to 377 for the state. According to the 1971 Census, scheduled castes constituted 28.9 per cent of the total population, and 98.2 per cent of them were in the rural areas. Muslim population constituted 48.5 per cent of the urban and 17.2 per cent of the rural population.

The literacy rate for females was 8.18 as compared to 20.32 for males. Not only was the literacy gap between men and women wide, the difference in rural-urban female literacy rate (6.24 per cent rural and 28.25 per cent urban) was also striking. In the decade 1971-81 the female literacy rate increased from 5.5 to 8.18. The district was educationally backward, 68.1 per cent of the total literate population were literate without any educational level. In 1980 the district had 1473 junior basic schools, 236 senior basic schools (including 63 for girls) and 42 secondary schools (including four for girls) with an enrolment of 50,099 girls at junior basic level (1,09,532 boys), 3183 at senior basic level (10,570 boys) and 3181 at secondary level (23,361 boys). The number of women teachers at the three stages was 862, 221 and 69 respectively as compared to 3828, 848 and 675 male teachers. In Barabanki the female literacy level in the age group 15-35 years was 7.8 per cent as compared to 31.8 per cent among males.[7]

In the district the percentage of main workers to the total population was 33.08, and female participation was 7.49 per cent (above state average) as opposed to male participation of 55.07 per cent. Female participation in the rural areas was 7.77 as compared to 4.62 in the urban areas. Work participation of females was much higher for both main and marginal worker categories as compared to the Etawah district. In the marginal worker category females outnumbered males both in absolute numbers (56,603 females and 41,944 males) and in the rural areas (55,043 females and 39,631 males), this indicates the extent of underemployment among women. The number of women agricultural labourers was slightly more than one-third of the males—21,433 females against 59,329 males.

It is mainly an agricultural district. According to the Agricultural Census 1970-71, 95 per cent of the holdings were below three hectares and covered 73 per cent of the total area under cultivation. Of these 72 per cent holdings were upto one hectare and 23 per cent were between one to three hectares. The average operational holding was 0.98 for the

district. The net cultivated area was 69 per cent of the total cultivable land, 36 per cent was under the double cropping pattern. The main crops being gram, wheat, sugarcane and paddy. The district had one or two medium industries. Private industries held a major share in manufacturing and processing and the cooperative sector was almost non-existent. The handloom industry was the most important in the district. According to a survey, there were 13,975 looms of which 3100 were in the cooperative sector. In 1979-80, weavers' cooperative societies were established to develop silk weaving, and mulberry trees were planted covering about 10,000 hectares land in the district. In 1978-79 a sum of rupees 7.31 lakhs was sanctioned for the development of the handloom industry of which only 0.73 lakh was spent. In 1979-80 out of rupees 24.23 lakhs allocated for the handloom industry, only 9.62 lakhs were spent. This highlights the lack of proper planning for the development of this industry. The Industry department had opened a training centre at Barabanki which imparted training in three trades. There was no provision for any other vocational or technical training in the district. Under the Integrated Rural Development Programme, 89.72 per cent was spent on agriculture and irrigation while only 1.25 per cent was spent on industry.

The district is extremely backward in terms of health care facilities, environmental sanitation and supply of drinking water. In 1976-77, for every one lakh persons, only 2.7 allopathic hospitals and dispensaries and 20.47 beds were available. In 1979-80 the number of allopathic hospitals rose to 29, 21 dispensaries followed the indigenous system of medicine and the total number of beds available increased to 404 of which 173 (43 per cent) were for the rural areas which constitute 95 per cent of the total population of the district. There were 17 Primary Health Centres and 48 Maternity and Child Welfare Centres in the district. In 1976-77 for every thousand villages, tap water was available for 3.42 villages. Till the end of 1979 no scheme had been proposed for the provision of drinking water in the village. The Department of Community Development proposed to dig 431 wells for harijans and by 1978-79 a target of 130 had been achieved. According to official sources, in 1979-80 434 wells were dug.

Other schemes implemented by the different departments were Applied Nutrition programme (started in Deva block in 1975, in Ramnagar block it was supported by the UNICEF), mid-day meal

programme for children in 0-6 years age group and Adult Education programme in Deva and Banki block by the Education department and Integrated Child Development Services in Siddhaur block by the Department of Social Welfare.

Barabanki town is located 29 kilometres from Lucknow and the urban agglomeration includes Banki town area limits and Nawanbganj Municipal Board limits. The total urban population of Barabanki was 1,76,079 of which Barabanki urban agglomeration had a population of 61,553 (33,462 males and 28,091 females). The sex ratio was 840 females per thousand males (1981 Census). The town area had only one degree college. Of the four higher secondary schools for girls, three were located in the town itself. The economic base of Barabanki is commerce and industry and the big industries include a sugar factory, a spinning mill and a chemicals factory on the outskirts of the town. A large number of people were employed in the household industry. In 1971, 29 per cent of the total population constituted the work force, of which 65 per cent were engaged in the tertiary sector, 25.7 per cent in the secondary sector and 8.7 per cent in the primary sector. Acute housing shortage and growth of urban population due to development activities led to the mushrooming of slums housing the low income groups including harijans, weavers and other economically weaker sections, lacking almost all the public services and facilities. Many of the drains were open and passed through the densely populated areas posing grave hygienic problems.

Barabanki urban agglomeration had 24 primary schools, five junior basic schools, three high schools and four higher secondary schools or inter-colleges. There was a Maternity and Child Welfare Centre besides the two district hospitals (one general and the other for females) in the town. Drinking water was supplied by three pumps which were not adequate to meet the present requirements as many areas of the district did not have a water supply. In other words, the provision of public utility services did not even ensure minimum living conditions for the majority of the population. Its proximity to Lucknow and the well developed means of communication had little effect on the development of this town. The Government of Uttar Pradesh decided to develop the town under the Integrated Development of Small and Medium Towns Scheme (See Appendix Tables A1—A6).

The Village Structure and Dimensions of Structured Inequalities

The village may not be a conceptual isolate as it is organically linked to the larger system but it represents a system of social relations, patterns of interaction and exchange between various caste groups, processes of community decision making, leadership patterns, patterns of accommodation, conflict mobilization and village factional alignments which influence the day to day life. The dynamics of village life embrace the sociological, political, economic and administrative facets which affect the allocative, distributive and participative processes in the community. Democratic decentralization, economic modernization and social mobility not only create new power relations but also new values and aspirations cutting across the traditional cleavages based on caste. Village society is caught between conflicting forces of tradition and modernization. The introduction of democratic decentralization, policies of land reform, investment policies in agriculture and rural industries, administrative infrastructure for rural development, health, education and welfare measures and target group oriented policies have on the one hand weakened the hold of the traditional caste stratification and dependency relations, while on the other hand they have sharpened the factional politics in the villages defeating the goals of sustained social and economic development of the underprivileged and oppressed groups.

Viewing the Indian village as a dynamic system, social scientists have developed various theories of community behaviour, inter-group relationships and changing role of caste in the village hierarchy. The two villages covered in this study were multi-caste and these processes could be observed at a micro-level. Caste and kinship groups not only define social relations and group loyalties but may become the reason for segmentation and antagonism. Land disputes was the major reason for caste rivalries and split in caste and kin groups. The placement of the person or household in the village hierarchy gave rise to reaction and ranked participation. Feelings of solidarity with other groups on issues of common interest which is a prerequisite for effective community action, is not likely to be generated under such conditions.

Village Mohari.(Etawah) Mohari, a multi-caste village, is situated about 27 kilometres from Etawah town and five kilometres from the Ajitmal block where the Pilot Development Project (PDP) of

Planning, Research and Action Division of the State Planning Institute is located. The village is on the national highway and is well connected by bus routes to Etawah town and the block headquarters.

In the Ajitmal block women's training programme in stitching and tailoring was implemented in different villages. In 1972-73 before the Women's Programme Evaluation Unit was transferred to the Directorate of Social Welfare, a women's industrial cooperative society was organized and financial assistance was given to it. 25 units were benefited by this cooperative. The village consists of 330 to 350 families of different castes. Considerable disparity was found between the estimates of population and households given by the village *pradhan* and the official sources. The major caste groups were *brahmans*, *thakurs*, *gadariyas*, scheduled castes, *kumhars* (potters), *telis* (oil crushers) and *nais* (barbers). There were a few Muslim households (six according to official estimates).

Agriculture and allied activities formed the main occupation in the village. Excluding the three upper caste households having the maximum land, the village community comprised of marginal and small farmers and landless labourers. The village had four tractors and six threshers which were owned by the three upper caste households. There were four pump sets in the village. The advent of mechanized farming had somewhat reduced the employment opportunities of women in post harvest operations. The main crops grown were wheat, rice, maize and millet; the cultivation of sugarcane, pulses, mustard seeds and seasonal vegetables depended on the size of the landholding. There was no household industry in the village. With the decline in the cultivation of oil seeds many families who had been involved in the traditio nal process of oil crushing switched over to wage labour. In the village women from the dominant upper caste agricultural households did not engage in any agricultural operation outside the home. As noted earlier, Etawah has a very low female participation rate, while in the Barabanki village (Barael) women from the middle peasant castes (*yadavs*) had no inhibitions working in the field. In the potters' households, women were almost equal partners in the work process except that they did not make pots. Due to lack of alternative employment in the village, there was greater dependence of the landless labourers on the landowning families for both employment and credit.

The village had two primary schools—one for boys and one for girls and a *balwadi* for pre-school children run by the State Welfare

Advisory Board's Family and Child Welfare Project (FCWP). Under this project, schemes for both mother and child development were adopted.[8] In the Ajitmal block 19 *balwadis* were functioning under the Demonstration Scheme of Welfare Board which included nutrition and health care programmes. These two projects were supervised by the *mukhya sevika* at the block headquarters. The *balwadis* were managed by the *bal-sevika* who was assisted by a *sahayika* (helper). Other schemes for women in this village included the 'dairying programme' for women from the weaker sections sponsored by the Central Social Welfare Board. Under this scheme two scheduled caste women (including the *sahayika* of the *balwadi* in the village) and the village *pradhan's* wife received a loan of Rs 2000 each for buying a buffalo. One of the scheduled caste women complained that it was not possible for her to maintain the buffalo so she sold it and repaid the loan while the other buffalo went dry. Only the *pradhan's* wife was able to maintain it as she had land and had no problem obtaining fodder. This scheme was meant for the rehabilitation of war widows, destitute and needy women. In the village two camps were held under the scheme for the training of rural women through public cooperation. The objective of these 15 days camps was to identify the needs of women in the rural areas through surveys and to orient them so that they could involve themselves in the development programmes. Ten such camps were held every year involving 30 women. These women were given information on improved home living, child care and nutrition, health, hygiene and family planning, storage of foodgrains, kitchen gardening, definition of joint and nuclear family, stitching, tailoring and civic rights.

There was no scheme of rural development or PDP operative for women in this village. The village *panchayat* included a *pradhan* from an intermediate caste (*gadariya*) and an *up-pradhan* (Vice-Chairman) from the *thakur* caste. Elections to the *panchayat* had not been held for the last ten years. There were no women members on the *panchayat*. The village had a health sub-centre under the family welfare worker.

Village Barael (Barabanki) Barael village is located three kilometres from Barabanki town. Barael Gram Sabha comprises seven villages. The total population of Barael Gram Sabha is 3902 comprising 755 households. Barael village is the biggest in the entire conglomeration and has 310 households. Barael is a multi-religious and multi-caste

village. The major caste groups being the *yadavs*, *ansaris* (Muslim weavers), *guptas*, *kumhars*, *kayasthas*, *brahmans* and the scheduled castes. The largest groups are the Muslim weavers, scheduled castes and *yadavs* or cultivators. There are 100 Muslim households and their major occupation is weaving. There are approximately 80 *yadav* families and the majority of these are small and marginal landholders. A large proportion of the scheduled castes are agricultural labourers and a small percentage of them received one to two *bighas* of land from the government as part of a scheme.

There were four Muslim families who were 'ex-zamindars', the men in these families were highly educated and were in professional services. The women were educated and the children were sent to public schools in the nearby town. One of the men in these households was the most influential man in the village and had political connections at the district and state level. He controlled and looked after the interests of a few lower caste households and thus exercised his influence over them. Although officially the *begari* (forced labour) system is not prevalent today, refusal to do work for him could lead to trouble. There were a few instances of harassment reported in the village. Apart from the 'ex-zamindars' there were a few *yadav* families, two or three *kayastha* families and one *brahman* family who were relatively well off. A few weaver families were in a better economic position as compared to the others, most of whom were almost at the subsistence level. Women in most of the weavers' households shouldered a large part of the responsibilities of the production process at home (with the exception of marketing and purchase of raw material and preparation of the yarn which are outdoor activities).

The village has a primary school for girls and another co-educational school on the main road, at a distance of one kilometre. Although the girls' primary school had a *pucca* building, it was in a dilapidated condition and the attendance was highly irregular.

The health sub-centre was situated in the adjoining village about one and one half kilometres away. The sub-centre had been closed for the past several months as the Auxiliary-Nurse Midwife (ANM) incharge of the centre had not been living in the village as she had become increasingly unpopular in the village. Most of the villagers consulted the local registered medical practitioner on the main road

and in case of an emergency they visited the district hospital in Barabanki. Two *dais* had been trained by the government and had received a kit each which was generally not used. Under the Community Health Volunteer Scheme two persons had received training and one of them reported that nearly 100 patients visited him every month. There was no other specific scheme for women in the village. In the past few years rural women have been identified as the critical target groups for resource allocation and effective action under the rural development programmes but not much headway has been made in this direction. The belief that secluded rural women (Muslim and upper caste women from landed families) do not work is not supported by the findings of this study. Muslim women in the weavers' households did almost 70 per cent of the work—weaving, filling bobbins, putting starch on the yarn in addition to their household responsibilities. Similarly, women from agricultural households who did not work for a wage made substantial contribution by processing, storing and milling the food grains and tending the milch cattle. However, the nature of the household work inhibits any community based activity or organization because of atomization and seclusion.

In the poor rural households women occupy a central position and are *de facto* heads of household, solely responsible for the survival of the family when men migrate to the city. The pressures generated by a pre-existing sex based division of labour and the imperative survival of the family often accentuate the subordination of women. The target group focussed policies of poverty alleviation have barely changed the patriarchal ideology of recognizing the male head of household for the distribution of land, house sites and credit. In the recent years, the attempt made by the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction to focus on the needs of rural women through positive interventions under Integrated Rural Development Programmes and Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment have had little impact at the district and village level in terms of planning and appropriate action programmes for rural women's development. Rural and urban women's grassroot organizations have been recognized as important instruments for mobilizing women for community participation and for demanding a share in the assets, resources and decision making processes and development inputs. The question arises can such agencies be promoted through government efforts? The need of the hour is appropriate channels of communication and support from committed organizations and agencies to act as catalysts of change.

Notes and References

1. Census of India 1981, Series 22, Supplement Provisional Population Totals, Paper 1 of 1981, Uttar Pradesh.

2. S.D. Muni, 'Women in the Electoral Process', in Mazumdar (ed.), *Symbols of Power : Studies in the Political Status of Women in India*, 1979.

3. I.N. Tewari, 'Profiles of Women in Uttar Pradesh', in Mazumdar (ed.), *Symbols of Power : Studies in the Political Status of Women in India*, 1979.

4. A recent study indicates that female infanticide was fairly prevalent in some parts of the district. See Kelkar, 'The Impact of Green Revolution on Women's Work Participation and Sex Roles', ILO, 1981.

5. 'Shiksha ki Pragati' Government of Uttar Pradesh, Education Department, September 1980.

6. Draft Annual Plan 1982-83, Vol. 1, Planning Department, Uttar Pradesh.

7. 'Shiksha ki Pragati', *op. cit.*

8. There are 11 Family and Child Welfare Projects in the state. Since 1974 the State Government has taken over the responsibility of running these projects by providing the funds from state resources. The State Welfare Board has the administrative responsibility for these projects. During the course of the study it was observed that delay in the release from funds for these projects led to tremendous problems for the field level staff as they were not paid their salaries regularly. This also had an impact on the implementation of these schemes as it became increasingly difficult for the field staff to continue their nutrition programme. See *Annual Progress Report of State Social Welfare Advisory Board 1978-79*, Uttar Pradesh.

Limits to Intervention

There are various dimensions of sex inequality in a stratified society which can be broadly categorized as structural and ideological. Both are interlinked and reinforce each other. Sex role differences are linked with unequal distribution of resources, rewards, rights and responsibilities and these influence social expectations, work patterns, self perception and identity formation, as differentiation often means priority and social hierarchy for men. The entire institutional fabric, family structures, child care and socialization patterns, school, community living patterns and communication, supports and reinforces the sex role stereotypes and value system which is tilted against women's equal status. The development of role ideology is a complex process wherein socialization supports and validates sex role stereotypes and also prepares the individual for socially acceptable roles and responsibilities. Some of the critical areas which are influenced by this process are women's self image, life options and priorities, decision making and perception of their own responsibilities.

The basic premises and implicit assumptions underlying this investigation were (*a*) education of women brings about attitudinal changes and changes in the socialization of boys and girls, as equal educational opportunities can promote positive values of sex equality; (*b*) changes in women's self-perception can have a role transforming effect. Self-transformation through a conscious effort to understand the nature of oppression and discrimination can begin the process of attitudinal change and raise women's self image; (*c*) woman's status and role in the decision making process is related to her economic independence, yet employment is not necessarily a priority for girls except in the economically weaker sections; (*d*) employment *per se*, does not improve women's perceptions of self-worth without ideological mobilization; (*e*) all traditional social and cultural values are not obscurantist and can be utilized to promote goals of development but the problem is to identify these values and institutions; (*f*) participation of women in the development process through their own organization has been found

more effective in case of poorer groups but majority of the women have very little information about policies and programmes for their development as the development communication system has largely by-passed the poor women; (*g*) it is possible to bring about changes in values through intervention if one can capture the relevant entry points and translate these into practical programmes and acceptable goals; and (*h*) research and advocacy can help in dealing with the traditional underpinnings of sex role ideology. Participatory research can be one of the instruments to understand the basis of sex role ideology and motivate women for change.

The research team found attitudinal constraints to women's equal status so closely linked to structural constraints as to necessitate rethinking of these basic premises. The structural forces act as an effective mechanism to limit women's activities both in physical and symbolic terms.

An attempt has been made to identify the constraints to realizing the social goal of equal opportunities for women. Comprehending many facets of the process of planned development and social change at a micro level which compel people to constantly adjust, re-evaluate and define their individual and collective identities is a difficult task. However, in the seventies the view that has crystallized is that positive intervention is needed in favour of women, particularly in the economically weaker sections, who have consciously or unconsciously been adversely affected by the process of planned development and social change. This conspicuous search for alternative strategies has resulted in the identification of three critical areas of intervention for women's development—education, health and employment.[1] Women and work has emerged as the key issue. It is claimed that 'the Indian perspective on women's equality and development leans heavily on planning measures to expand and deepen women's roles an effective step towards realisation of their equality in society'.[2]

The actual identification of education, employment and health as the three critical areas for women's development, followed the publication of the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India which was reiterated by the Indian Council of Social Science Research publication of *Critical Issues on the Status of Women* in 1976. The suggestion to emphasize these three areas for intervention came from the national forum (Conference on 'Women and Development' 1979)

preceded by state level seminars. On the recommendation of the Government of India, the Indian delegation made a suggestion to the preparatory conference to make it a sub-theme for the UN Mid Decade Conference at Copenhagen.[3] An attempt was made in this study to specifically solicit views on the efficacy of programmes in these areas and identify constraints to women's access and meaningful participation.

Areas of Intervention

Education Family and school are the twin basic institutions on which hope is pinned for facilitating the development of new patterns of sex role socialization which are based on more equitable sharing of roles and responsibilities. It has been admitted that the educational system has, by and large, failed to integrate the message of sex equality effectively in the curricula and the teaching system.[4] The capacity of the educational system to function as an effective instrument in creating social consciousness is debatable beause it has itself become a powerful instrument in perpetuating class and sex inequality. Education is a double-edged instrument which can eliminate the effects of socioeconomic inequalities or can introduce a new kind of inequality between those who have it and those who do not. It is never neutral. This is clearly evident from its failure to broaden its base by drawing girls from socially and economically disadvantaged sections and its projection of sex role images of the dominant upper and middle classes in its course content.

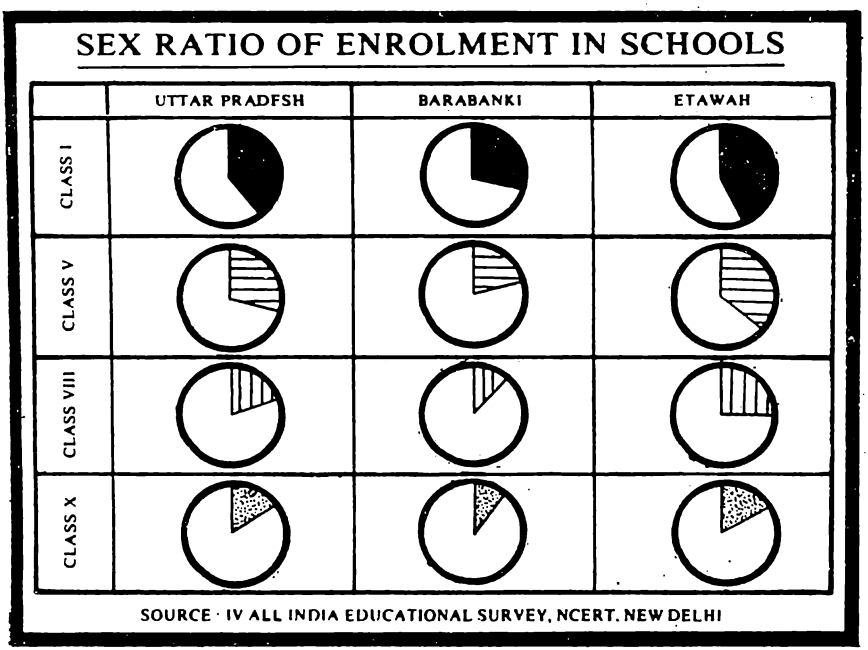
The significance of women's education cannot be overemphasized. It is now accepted that women's educational disadvantage and their social oppression reinforce each other.[5] This is evident from the higher illiteracy level, lower enrolment and higher drop-out rate among girls. In fact illiteracy has itself become a major issue for the majority of girls. The slow progress of female literacy is evident from the disparity between the females and males. In 1981 for every literate female, there were 201 literate males. Nearly three-fourths of all females in the country are still illiterate.[6] Apart from the increase in the number of illiterate women and the disparity in educational development between the rural and urban areas there are severe imbalances in educational development between social classes and between regions. Imbalances in women's education and literacy also reflect, to a certain extent, differences in regional attitudes to women. Even within the state there are sharp variations between districts.

The critical areas which need to be addressed are (*a*) the pressures on the educational system exercised by the elites and the resistance of the system to any fundamental change, although qualitative improvement in curricula and linking education to environment are emphasized in all official reports; (*b*) inadequate understanding by the teachers of the goals of educational policies and inefficacy of content and methods of teachers' training; and (*c*) ambivalence about the purpose of girls' education and its content. The acceptance of education as a tool for development has not changed its elitist character which restricts the outreach of the formal system of education and hence adds another dimension to sex inequality. As an integral part of the larger system it not only reflects but also strengthens other disparities. Majority of the non-entrants and drop-outs from school are from socially and economically backward sections. Non-formal mass education is advocated as a substitute for the failure of the formal system to widen its operational base. The educational system as it functions today, particularly in small towns and villages, in terms of its content, impact, outreach and effectiveness is hardly conducive to become an effective instrument of social change for the majority who remain outside the purview of the formal system and the minority who manage to finish their schooling.

The studies conducted by the State Institute of Education, Uttar Pradesh in the field of primary education reveal that out of every 100 children only 20 have been able to reach class V. The enrolment ratio at the primary stage in Uttar Pradesh is between 50 to 60 per cent. The ratio between boys and girls in the sphere of secondary education is 5:1. In 1979-80, of the estimated population of 68.83 lakhs of girls in the age group 6-11 years, only 29.45 lakhs were enrolled in primary classes.[7] To correct this situation the state has decided not to fail any students in classes I and II.[8]

The second barrier to equality is the teacher's lack of understanding of education as an instrument of change, and the inefficacy of teacher training and reorientation courses in equipping them to meet the challenges of development. While changes in curricula and methods of teaching and improvement of school environment is stressed in each official report, not much has been done in this regard. A study by Chhaya Dey in several faculties of teacher training institutes in Bombay and Pune showed the lack of awareness of the National Policy on

Education. This supports the findings cited here as none of the teachers were aware of the contents of the National Policy Resolution on Education Policy (some had not even heard of the same).



The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) is making an attempt at both curriculum development and teacher orientation for removing sexist biases in the classroom situation with the cooperation of state agencies. The problem of reorienting teachers is both academic and administrative. The state government spends one per cent of its total educational budget on teachers' training In the study area, the preoccupation of primary and junior school teachers with the lack of even minimum infrastructural facilities raises the question as to whether the school environment, as it stands today in Etawah and Barabanki, provides any prospect for change oriented programmes.[9]

In both the towns, many schools were in shambles and were in need of extensive repair, some schools accommodated as many as 200 children in two or three rooms and during the monsoons or in summer, two or three classes were held in the same room. Few schools had only one

room and a covered verandah to acommodate all the students of primary classes. With acute shortage of space, classes had to be discontinued during the rains and during spells of extreme heat. Staff members were promoted without examination. Often the conditions in the schools were unhygienic. Many of the schools did not have even the basic teaching equipment. Some schools collected money for audio-visual equipment (amounting to rupees one to three per month), science laboratory and other extra curricular activities. But this sum was not utilized, because the fund collected for a particular activity could not be used to buy other necessities (like mats, chalks, slates and furniture), also the equipment bought by some schools was not used, due to lack of trained teachers and enough working space.[10] Some of the teachers mentioned that they had bought a few essential things by making a personal contribution. In almost all the schools, children were expected to bring their own material for craft classes. Those who lacked resources either did not take part in the activity or were kept away from school by the parents. The general problem of school maintenance was accentuated by the fact that the schools (junior and senior basic schools) were under the dual administration of the Municipal Board and the Basic Education Officer, and neither was willing to undertake the responsibility. The state government had established an educational technology cell to explore the potentiality of the use of mass media at different levels of education, though not much progress had been made in this direction.[11]

Considering these factors, the general feeling of inadequacy and frustration among the teachers is hardly surprising. This is also reflected in the children's lack of interest in the classroom teaching. Many teachers showed their willingness to cooperate and participate in new programmes if backed by adequate resources and support from the community. Some of these women could be drawn into relevant programmes of action.[12]

The debate between 'equal opportunity' and 'relevance' of girls' education remains unresolved. The question of a separate curriculum for girls has always been a controversial issue. The debate on 'relevance' of content and structure of educational courses for girls, is dominated by certain ideological biases. The ideological bias is also seen in the minimal emphasis on vocational training programmes and fewer employment opportunities for women as women are seen as 'supplementary earners'. Despite the rejection of separate curricula for boys

and girls at the national policy level,[13] the Uttar Pradesh government continues to discriminate between the sexes, by making home science compulsory for girls and mathematics for boys at the high school level. With such discriminatory provisions prevailing at the operational level—it would be utterly futile to seek changes in society and in the educational system.

In Etawah, the male principal of an Intermediate College for boys talked about the various extra curricular activities (debating, quiz programmes and news reporting) that were available for the students. In the girls' branch of the same college no such activities existed. Rather succinctly, the principal gave the reason for this, 'Only girls study there', thereby justifying the absence of any extra curricular activities in the college. This was surprising as such activities were pursued during school hours and girls were not required to be detained after school. In a girls' Intermediate College in Barabanki, where such activities were available, the project was confined to food preservation, flower arrangement, creative use of old and useless articles and improving language skills.

Ambivalent attitudes toward girls' education were evident from data obtained both in the towns and villages. There were indications that girls' education is increasingly seen as an insurance against some future crisis or withdrawal of traditional supports (such as inability to find a husband, death of husband or father, deserted by husband) and therefore leading to employment. On the other hand boys' education is perceived as more important and crucial for the future security of the family. There is the notion that boys remain in the parental home and are the support of parents in old age while girls marry and leave. The general reluctance to invest in girls' education stems from the feeling that there will be no return to the natal family on the expenditure incurred. A further contradiction is that though girls' education is perceived as improving her marriage prospects, it increases the dowry demand made by an equally educated bridegroom.

Irrespective of caste status it was found that the class factor was stronger in determining impediments to girls' education. Instances were found of children from poor upper caste families not attending school, and children from middle class scheduled caste families attending higher school. Where economic constraints and contextual relevance

took precedence over other considerations, education was neglected for both boys and girls. Among the weavers, for instance, the entire family, including children were engaged in the production process. But in families where outside labour was hired, children (both boys and girls) attended school. When boys dropped out of school it was solely for economic reasons, but girls were withdrawn for other reasons, such as marriage, to minimise the risk of high dowry demand, and to help out in the house or to take care of younger siblings.

In many instances higher education and a white-collar job were perceived as a necessity for improved living but it had little impact on their level of consciousness. In many cases there was total compartmentalization of her role outside the home and her role as a housewife and mother. One very articulate and assertive woman functionary at the district level stressed that 'a woman's primary role is that of a home maker and she is responsible for domestic harmony, and if the husband objects she should leave her job'. Such views surfaced during the discussions with a group of young articulate educated women teachers. 'A', a highly qualified *brahman* teacher in a local women's college in Etawah is the sole support of her widowed mother. She spoke forcefully about the need for girls' education and economic independence. But equally strongly she said that she had consciously restricted her social life to commuting between home and the work place, otherwise it would earn her a bad 'reputation' and jeopardize her chances of marriage. Intelli gent enough to see the ambivalence in her attitude she remarked, 'You see many contradictions in me, don't you ? My own example shows how education does not necessarily lead to positive changes in attitudes'. Is it a conscious and rational decision to 'conform' or is it an acceptance of a 'social norm' as non-conformity implies a risk of non-acceptance and insecurity.

During the interview, many urban parents also stressed the importance of girls learning home science. They felt this was necessary because it equipped them for what was their 'destined role in life' (marriage and the consequent responsibilities). Some respondents felt that higher education and employment and exposure to new values would somehow reduce their 'efficiency at housework' and may have an adverse effect on their respectability. The importance parents attach to the value of 'respectability' for girls is because they are seen as a 'burden' (a liability) and 'responsibility' to be handed

over to the husband's family as early as possible. Sometimes a girl's education, even at the graduate level, is discontinued because a 'suitable' match has been found and the girl now becomes the husband's 'problem'. Neither the parents nor the teachers see women as capable of earning and supporting themselves or their families except in an emergency. Ironically, many of the teachers were, in reality, partly or fully supporting their families.

Women who were illiterate related their difficulties and lack of alternatives to their illiteracy and were emphatic that their daughters should be educated. In their view, the need for education was much more acute in the life of a girl as she, unlike a boy, faced many risks and had fewer opportunities, leading to an insecure and uncertain life. 'M' who lives with her husband in a well-to-do joint family (owning eight power-looms), links her total dependence and consequent feeling of helplessness, insecurity and low self-image to her lack of education. She strongly feels that her daughters should be educated so that they become self-sufficient. Her eldest daughter was studying in Class VIII. In the rural areas religious traditions have persisted which confine women of the weavers' families within the home. The daughters are seldom educated though the boys in these families were at least taught Urdu by a *Maulvi* (Muslim religious teacher). Some of the respondents in the Muslim weavers' families were of the opinion that social prejudice against girls' education does not constitute a barrier, but economic constraints coupled with the requirement of family labour in household industries, inhibited girls' education. In extremely poor households, parents did not send their children to school because they did not have a clean set of clothes. A stray example is that of a scheduled caste landless labourer, herself in rags, who had somehow saved enough money to buy clothes and books for her son who attended school. She hoped that one day he would find employment and support her.

The expectations from sons that they would support their parents and provide old age security was the main motivating force for giving priority to a son's education over that of a daughter's. 'S', an illiterate *brahman* widow, in spite of severe economic constraints educated her daughter till Class VIII, but had to withdraw her from school to perform household chores as she herself was working.

Interestingly, though she herself had broken certain traditional norms, she held some of the stereotypes and priorities regarding a girl's role.[14] Her son continued to attend school while her daughter looked after him and managed the house. She said, 'My daughter will eventually marry and leave, but my son will work and support me'. In all these instances the operation of both attitudinal and structural constraints to women's access to education is clearly evident.

From the above discussion what emerged very strongly was the fact that the arguments concerning the relevance of girls' education were closely linked to class status and to some extent to caste, religion and other factors. Almost without exception, middle class families viewed girls' education both as ensuring better marriage prospects and as a safeguard against any future calamity. The poorer classes could not afford the luxury of sending their daughters to school though they strongly believed that it could improve their daughters' mobility and provide an escape from the drudgery and misery in which they were trapped. But all groups gave priority to boys' education. The common belief that girls and boys have different aptitudes and interests stems from social expectations and is reflected in and reinforced by the course content in schools. Children themselves have internalized many of these values. A group of women students who were interviewed were keen to pursue their studies but could not visualize education as an instrument for changing the sex role stereotypes. Their education could be discontinued in favour of marriage. The extent to which they have imbibed these values, not only of their parents and teachers, but of the entire social milieu, is reflected in the typical and identical views they expressed :

> 'Education will bring knowedge and facilitate better understanding of all issues'.
>
> 'In case of a calamity, education will help us get a job'.
>
> 'The jobs that are suitable and respectable for women are teaching, medicine, typing and stitching'.
>
> 'I will pursue a career only if my guardian (father/husband) allows it'.

Among the younger generation a spark of a more positive outlook was observed. Many of the girls wanted to pursue their studies and most of them also felt that women should not give up their jobs even

if the husband was earning well. It is disturbing, to note, however, that these views are vitiated by the reality they see around them, and by the dominant social norms and values. In the villages, structural constraints were more acute as many parents felt that it was not safe to send them to school in the neighbouring village. Their fears were justified as there had been some cases of sexual harrassment. The junior basic school was some distance away and this added to the feeling of insecurity. In most of the villages there were no facilities for education beyond the primary level.

If the purpose of education is to be achieved, a definite intervention is necessary. As mentioned earlier, the most feasible areas of intervention are (*a*) a crash programme to improve the condition of primary schools and ensure minimum teaching facilities, and maintenance of the existing ones; (*b*) an organized systematic orientation programme for teachers; and (*c*) removal of the discriminatory dimensions of the curricula. This should be followed by organized debates both in teacher training institutions and in the schools and colleges.[15]

Employment 'Women and Work' is another area where inequalities between men and women have been highlighted. While raising the issue of work and 'non-work' of women, particularly in the subsistence sector, one tends to by-pass several crucial issues regarding the nature of the production process and the way labour is organized and linked with the capital. Therein lies the answer as to why women's work is less rewarding and how a pre-existing division of labour develops into the relationship of dominance and subordination between the sexes. In the subsistence economy, household and non-household production is not only linked but is a part of the production process. In recent years researchers have focussed on the role of reproduction and patriarchal relations within the home as the root cause of women's oppression in the economic and social relations outside the house.

The parameters of work used in official data reflect the existing notion of what constitutes women's work.[16] In the agrarian and subsistence sector the line of demarcation between women's 'productive' and 'non-productive' work is very fine. Sometimes the work women do, though productive (in household industries and processing of agricultural products), is unpaid and therefore unrecognized.[17] This non-recognition of women's work further limits their access to education, training, information, resources and inputs resulting in their concentration

in low skilled, low paid and low status jobs. Government schemes and programmes which view women primarily as members of a family intensify these problems because they fail to take note of women's crucial economic contribution.

Women in the subsistence sector have no choice but to work, yet their job options are severely restricted, as they are either non-entrants or drop-outs from school. They create a demand for their own labour and sell their labour power under the most exploitative conditions. They are often the primary breadwinners of the family, but the ideological bias that views men as the bread earners and women as supplementary or marginal earners, further limits women's employment opportunities. The studies in the area of sex division of labour, labour market segmentation and wage discrimination have emphasized the institutional and ideological factors that result in differences in the rewards and economic participation of men and women.

> In reality, however, there are extraordinarily few areas or circumstances where women's economic contribution could be dismissed as merely supplementary, or optional, or dispensable. But this myth has been successfully practised increasingly over the ages in protean forms to keep women under subjection politically, economically, and socially. This myth has been suitably buttressed by the glorifications of the status of the housewife ... ceasing to do economically productive work outside home is a test or sign of upward mobility in social scale.[18]

The spread of education among upper and middle class women has opened up new avenues of employment, but in many of these families, education is another 'consumer item' and employment is not necessarily a priority for them. On the one hand education does not necessarily lead to employment, on the other hand, illiteracy among the majority of women in the lower socio economic group constitutes a major barrier to increasing and diversifying employment and training opportunities. In a labour surplus economy, market mechanisms effectively operate to restrict the demand for female labour to certain sectors or jobs considered 'suitable' for them. The ideological mechanisms behind such assumptions that certain jobs are 'prestigious' or 'non-prestigious' for women, have a whole series of implications for the recognition of women's economic contribution and job options. Women internalize these

ideologies to a greater or lesser extent, depending on their class position, and in labelling certain jobs such as teaching and medicine 'prestigious'.

What emerged from the discussions with the respondents on issues relating to women's employment reflected not only the structural constraints but their own internalization of a subordinate role. The underestimation of their economic contribution and the emphasis on their 'domestic role' perpetuates their secondary status in the world of work and vice-versa. It is significant to note that the views expressed by men seemed to strengthen these attitudes. For instance, a middle school teacher reported that her husband was ashamed of her low paid and low status job and was pressurizing her to give up the job, although she had initially supported the family. The 'prestige' attached to a particular job is also determined by the job of the husband. Often women's own understanding of these ideological myths is channelized through the world of men.

Women's wage labour, domestic labour and class position are interrelated. Employment outside the home had different implications for women of different classes and in different circumstances, though there were certain common underlying factors. For women engaged in manual and 'low status' jobs the nature of work, low wages and their position in the occupational hierarchy, did little to improve their position within the family or the community. 'U', a landless labourer from a backward caste (*gadariya*) regards her work as extremely degrading. She believes that

> women's income does not necessarily increase her authority at home as it is the nature of work which is more important. In the context of village life where opportunities for alternative employment are extremely limited, a woman's status is determined by the number of sons she could possibly have.

In their view, only 'prestigious' and well-paid occupations like teaching and medicine, helped to improve women's status within the family and community. Teachers, nurses and government functionaries (including a few male respondents) irrespective of caste or class, expressed the same view that women's employment did not really enhance their status as they all perceived women's role within the family and outside as subordinate. On the other hand weaver women, who participated substantially in the production process within the home as unpaid workers, expressed positive views

on the issue of women's employment outside the home. In their view, outside employment and the consequent economic independence were essential prerequisites for independence in other spheres. In contrast, rural upper caste women of middle class background, who also participated actively in agricultural work within the home, upheld the notion that women must not work for wages outside the home. Similar, views were expressed by the men in this group. They felt that women's 'non-working' condition reflected their higher status. Though overworked and aware of their dependency and consequent insecurity these women often remarked that 'men are meant to earn and provide for the family'. The men expressed the same view when they said that 'what is the need for women to step out of the house to earn'. Non-involvement of women in manual or low paid or low status jobs outside the home is considered an important index of higher status, particularly in the villages. Though the notion of certain jobs being respectable for women in the middle and elite classes is not constant over time, it has a more binding effect on women. The ability of some women to withdraw from field labour has implications for women in the working class who seek employment outside the home and are affected by the hierarchical structure of production which makes use of gender hierarchies as well.

Some of the suggestions made by rural women from different caste and class, regarding employment opportunities and increasing income-generating activities for women are noteworthy in this context. Women from extremely poor scheduled caste families suggested that a factory or a small industry may be set up in the village where women could seek employment. Women from the upper caste or middle class backgrounds were more keen that sewing machines be made available to them so that they could work within the house for economic returns. The willingness of upper caste women to work and earn is expressed in their suggestion, but their reluctance to work outside the house is also evident. Their limited understanding of the kind of work that they could do and which is 'suitable' for them points to not only a structural barrier (lack of alternative employment) but also reflects their entire attitude to women's work. This illustrates the interrelationship between structural and attitudinal constraints to women's improved status. The expectations of many women that withdrawal from outside employment offered prospects of a more comfortable life could just be a fantasy or a myth, of a lesser degree of overwork. The unpaid family

workers believed that this provided an emotional outlet and an opportunity to be outside the 'four walls' of the home, which could be valued more.

Many weaver women compared their overworked lives to the loom itself which rarely remained idle. Interspersed with domestic chores, they worked on the looms, filled bobbins, dyed, starched and dried the staple yarn. The only activities which were exclusively done by men were operating the *arpin* (for the preparation of yarn), repair of the loom and marketing. Women said that men were more knowledgeable about these things and it was also practical not to increase their work load by taking on some of these responsibilities. The practice of *purdah* was cited as the main reason for not participating in these out-of-house activities. Despite the extent of their contribution, the men in the family rarely recognized or appreciated their work.[19] In fact women were always chided for any delay or lapse. One woman remarked, 'I am always working against time'.

Domesticity did not always bring higher status within the family just as work outside the home did not not bring recognition and status. One propertied scheduled caste teacher who had egalitarian views on girls' education and employment did not effect the same in his actual behaviour and every time his wife tried to speak on specific issues he retorted, 'What do you know, you are mostly in the house'. For the poorer classes the struggle for survival was so overwhelming, that they could not conceive of a situation where women would do only 'domestic work'. Lack of alternatives, back breaking work and drudgery did not enthuse any positive attitude towards their work. They felt that women could not compete with men for employment and should work only when there were economic exigencies. These attitudes were reflected in remarks like 'Given a choice, all women would rather stay at home than go out to work'.

The positive or negative attitude to women's work held by the individual or the community was often the result of a combination of personal and situational factors. 'R', a high school educated *brahman* woman worked as a *samyojika* (organizer of Charcha Mandal in the village. She was one of the seven selected from a group of 30 women who were trained to organize Charcha Mandals (discussion groups) for farm women. Her work included travelling occasionally to other states

and to the block headquarters for learning improved methods of agriculture. She received an honorarium of Rs. 30. Although her work did not lead to any economic gain or independence, it gave her a sense of importance and prestige both in the family and the community as seen from the fact that women came to her for advice and encourgement. In her opinion this kind of exposure was important as it had broadened her understanding and had led to greater self confidence. She believed that she had an advantage of getting family support unlike other women in the village who were not able to step out because of family pressures and social customs. She stood in direct contrast to 'S' who worked because of sheer economic necessity and was not particularly concerned about the kind of work she did. Her priority was to support herself and her children. 'K', a scheduled caste woman, had inherited two acres of land from her parents. She considered herself to be the only earning member of the family. Her husband was old and partially blind and could not work, and her married son, a gambler, did not work either. She considered them 'liabilities' as they neither worked nor contributed to the family income in any way. Her other children were too small. She and her daughter-in-law did the field work and took turns to do the housework. She was very resourceful and articulate and very proud of the fact that she even travelled long distances alone for purchase of cattle. She was conscious and proud of her ability to manage and take decisions and perceived, in this context, the difference between herself and other women in the area who did not have either the means or the opportunity to control resources. What highlighted the differenee sharply was her observation 'I do not expect any support from my husband because of his age, illness and lack of "worldly wisdom", I am more capable as I have more experience than he has. Women in the neighbourhood community looked upon 'K' for advice in various matters including voting choice.

This leads to another related issue which accentuates women's dependent status, that is their lack of control over their income or family resources which accentuates their dependent status. Among the poorest classes, the question was hypothetical as they never earned enough to even satisfy the family's basic necessities. Similarly, unpaid family workers like weavers and potters, did not link the issue of control over income to women's status. Many salary or wage earning women reported that they handed over their income to the men or elder women in the family and they only looked after the domestic

consumption needs. This precluded their participation in major decisions regarding any investment although some of them said that they were consulted by the men. Some of them were conscious of this and resented the fact that they had benefited very little from their earnings except in terms of an improved standard of living. There were different dimensions to the whole issue of women's status within the family and their control over the income. To understand the linkages was not as simple as the issue of women's status itself. Many women were not able to clearly perceive the links between women's earnings and the improved status within the family when there were so many pressing needs demanding a combined effort.

For certain groups, poor working conditions added to the problems of their overburdened life. Among the weavers it was found that the houses had, at an average, two small rooms for a family of six to seven members and at least one loom and a *charkha*. (The number of looms varied with the number of families in each house.) The families worked and lived in this space, and in most of the houses there was no kitchen either. For a part of the day the smoke from the *chulha* filled the rooms. Only a few houses in the town had running water and in other cases, women normally fetched water from a well in the area. Very few houses had electricity and in the evenings the women worked by the light of small kerosene lamps. Many of them complained of weak eyesight. As the rooms were very small and badly ventilated, some innovative women had attached a small hand made fan to the loom which moved with the 'shuttle' and offered some respite from the heat. Many houses, both in the towns and the villages, were *kuccha*. During the rainy season, living and working conditions were worse than usual. In families where the men were employed in government service, the conditions were relatively better.

A group of spinners in the town worked under extremely deplorable conditions and were exposed to severe occupational hazards. 25 women were crammed into two narrow passages near open drains. There were no provisions for either electricity or ventilation. Though drinking water was provided, the tap was inside a stinking toilet. The wash basin outside the toilet could not be used at all as it was covered with grime and swarming flies. The adjoining room, used by the supervisor, was well ventilated, neatly arranged and carpeted. One of the 'informal' rules laid down by the management, required the women to sweep the premises by

turns. Initially, when the women protested, the manager joked and said that he would do the work himself. While this embarrassed some of the women, the others were angry at the 'tricks' he played to get the work done. They did not protest again for fear of losing their jobs. Women were given piece rate wages every week. They earned 35 paise per bobbin and could fill between ten to 13 bobbins in a day. Three paise were deducted from the 35 paise by the management towards 'maintenance of the work place'. Any loss in the recorded weight of yarn was compensated by deducting at least two paise from the wages. When the women tried to explain that this loss was due to the cotton dust raised during the work process, they were not only ignored, but were also charged with 'theft'. Both for the weavers and the spinners the work was a serious health hazard. Many of them complained of constant pain in the chest and suffered from coughing bouts. Some of the women had other respiratory ailments and a few were victims of tuberculosis.

In the villages, certain agricultural activities like processing and storage of grain were performed in the house. Here also, the living and working space was combined. Families who owned cattle, shared their living space with the animals, especially in winter.

In the towns, the working conditions of teachers were slightly better. Owing to shortage of space very few schools had a staff room and lacked proper sanitation. The office of the educational functionaries comprised one small room (about nine feet by six feet in area) which housed two tables, eight chairs, one cupboard and the eight officials. In private schools, teachers faced the additional problem of job insecurity and low salaries. For many years teachers continued as temporary staff and did not enjoy any of the benefits. The manager of one school preferred to employ unmarried women. In fact, one woman teacher informed that subsequent to marriage, a teacher could be replaced because it was felt that she would neglect her work. Women are caught in a vicious circle where their secondary status restricts their options and access to resources and forces them to accept low paid jobs which, in turn, reinforce their secondary status. It is interesting to note that the stereotypes regarding 'respectability' and 'autonomy' linked with certain jobs could not be upheld when closely examined.

Sex division of labour further reinforces the stereotypes by keeping women out of such jobs that could lead to better opportunities and

alternatives and to a more positive outlook to their economic contribution. What constitutes women's work is attributable as much to the market forces as to the ideology of sex roles which buttress and support the process of selection and labelling.[20] Sex division of labour was seen in the distinct activities pursued by both men and women within and outside the home. But this varied with other factors—rural urban differences, caste and class status etc. At the village level, women's agricultural work was confined to activities like weeding, harvesting and transplanting while men engaged in ploughing and threshing. Both men and women agricultural laboures received less than the prescribed minimum wages—rupees five for men and rupees three for women for the actual hours of work. Many women were aware of the legal minimum wages but reasoned that even men did not get it, and unless they did, women would not.

Within the home women were involved in many essential agricultural activities like processing grain for conservation, preparing earthen jars for grain storage, milling grain by hand and grinding spices for daily consumption. Some women also pounded paddy and de-husked rice. In households owning milch cattle, milking and processing of milk products was also performed by women. Other household functions included fetching water from the well, cleaning the house, cooking, washing clothes, looking after children and cattle, and preparing cowdung cakes for fuel. Households that did not own cattle, the cowdung had to be collected and this too was done by women.

This depicts a common pattern of rural women's household activities irrespective of caste but it varied with the economic position of the family. Sometimes women earned a little money by milling wheat for others, particularly during the lean season. Housework was shared by all the women in the household, but men did not participate in the work, nor were they expected to do so. One young woman, harassed and tired after a day's work, laughed at the suggestion that men could do housework, 'If I ask my husband to share the housework, I will go to hell. Men are only meant for outside work'. One *brahman* man did the cooking when his wife menstruated. But this was not done due to any consideration about sharing the work, but because of certain notions about ritual purity and pollution. However, for the woman concerned, this was a welcome relief. A common experience among

different working women was the fact that employment outside the home did not reduce their responsibilities at home. In fact, barring a few exceptions who could hire domestic help, they were overburdened with work at home.

The government's efforts at the village level, to provide training facilities and employment opportunities for women, have not yielded adequate results because of the limited understanding of the nature of women's work, and familial and environmental constraints. Methods of identification and designing of training programmes should be based on a realistic understanding of the needs, opportunities and potential for employment and income-generating activities. Programmes of training and employment generation continue to view women as supplementary earners. The existing programme of skill development and income generation in both the districts, cater mostly to men (IRD, TRYSEM and other departmental schemes) and the few programmes available for women seem to heavily concentrate on areas like stitching, tailoring and domestic crafts. The reasons for the failure of short-term training programmes were (*a*) inability of most of the participants to buy a sewing machine and use their skills on a commercial basis; (*b*) non-marketability of such products in the rural areas, and the problem of getting institutional credit; (*c*) inability of poorer women to participate in such programmes because of wage loss and lack of supportive services; and (*d*) absence of correlation between women's training programmes and potential for wage or self-employment in the district.

Schemes of dairying sponsored under the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) programme were not viable for landless women, as one of them explained that the average daily expenditure on a buffalo was between rupees six to eight while the daily wages did not exceed more than rupees four. The landless labourers were not able to either grow or buy fodder. The target-group oriented policies of income generation and distribution of assets were addressed to the male heads of households. 'B', a scheduled caste landless woman acquired two *bighas* of land under the Land for Landless Scheme.[21] This small plot of land allotted to her was acquired from the locally dominant caste groups who had land adjoining the field. She paid money to get the land ploughed but the landowners did not allow her to cultivate it. Such schemes were not

effective in improving their lot as they did not take into consideration structural inequalities and the power structure in the village. In both the towns there was no institutionalized training programme for women except the teachers' training programme in Etawah. During the discussions, many respondents talked of the economic dependency of women and emphasized the need to be self-sufficient but the overwhelming pressures of social stereotypes and community's perception of women's work or role made it structurally difficult for women to lead less dependent and restricted lives.

Health According to the 1981 Census estimates, the child population in 0-14 years age group was highest in Uttar Pradesh (41 million). The population of Uttar Pradesh in the decade 1971-81 had increased by 25.49 per cent as against 19.78 per cent during 1961-71. For the first time in the past eight decades it had overshot the All India average. The number of live births was 40 per thousand and the death rate was highest in the country that is, 20.2 per thousand. The infant mortality rate (1976) was highest (above 174) in Uttar Pradesh and the sex differences in child mortality (194 for females against 161 for males) was also highest in the state. Birth, death and infant mortality rates for India, Uttar Pradesh and the two districts covered by the study are given on Page 53. Etawah had a higher birth rate (23.9 for urban and 11.8 for rural) as compared to Barabanki (8.2 for urban and 11.8 for rural). The death rate was also higher in Etawah (7.1) as compared to Barabanki (2.6).[22]

This indicates the magnitude of the problem and the extent of work required to provide basic health care and the need for creating supportive efforts to improve the environmental conditions, nutritional level, health and population education. The studies show that a sectoral approach to health problems is ineffective and an integrated approach to the problems of health care and nutrition has to be evolved. It has been admitted that the nutritional status of women has shown no improvement.

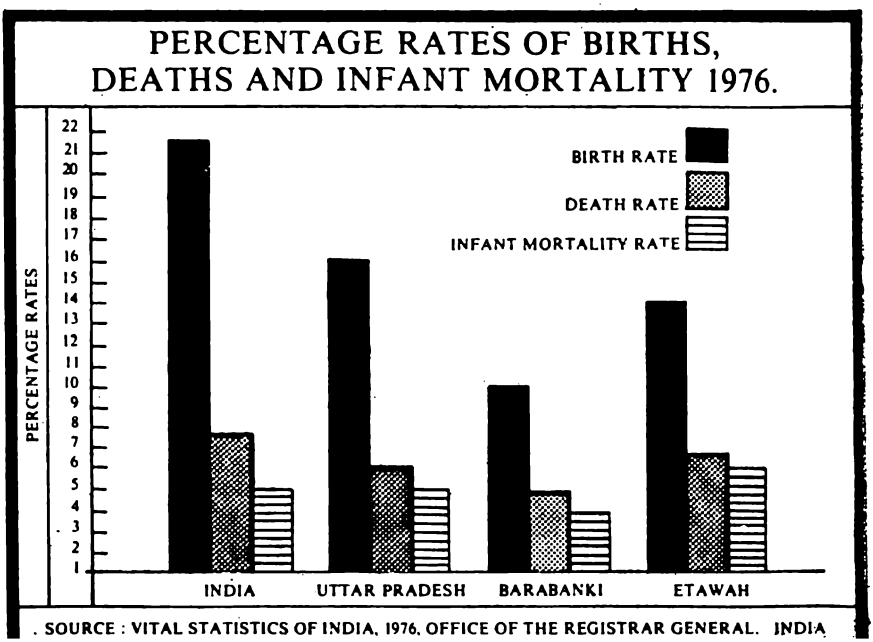
> Health services for women and children can be improved only in association with a substantial change in their social status. This implies first and foremost, a change in the present attitude of looking upon women as expendable ... This physical inability of women to

participate as equals in society perpetuates the preconditions for their oppression and low social status.[23]

The success of any health programme should take into consideration the questions of poverty and inequality. It should be linked to general educational programmes. Moreover, it is necessary to change the existing 'top-heavy-consumerist' model of health care to a community based alternative model of health care. The experience of voluntary health projects in utilizing the skills of local women needs to be incorporated in the health infrastructure.

Ironically, in spite of the rapid expansion of the heavily subsidized medical education in India, it has failed to meet the needs of the masses in the country. The Srivastav Committee constituted in 1974 to suggest reforms in the existing pattern of health services and medical education pointed out that

> A universal and egalitarian programme of efficient and effective health services cannot be developed against the background of a socioeconomic structure in which the largest mass of people still live below the poverty line ... There is, therefore, no alternative to



making a direct, sustained and vigorous attack on the problem of mass poverty ...

The question of women and health is inextricably linked with the wider issue of the community's perception of their role and status. Women's differential access to education, health and family resources is reflected in the inadequate utilization of the services and infrastructure available in the towns. The problem of providing health care to rural women is all the more acute because even the rudimentary services are not available to them. In the area of women and health, information on the following points was obtained (*a*) health infrastructure and delivery of health services; (*b*) women as recipients of health care services; (*c*) interaction between health functionaries and recipients; and (*d*) women as 'providers' of health care within the family.

In one of the two villages covered by the study, the sub-centre was located within the village itself and in the other at a short distance. The former (Mohari village) was looked after by a Family Welfare Worker (FWW). The sub-centre remained closed for days together and even for as long as a month when the FWW took leave or visited the neighbouring villages to motivate women to undergo Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) or tubectomy. She was expected to accompany these women to the district hospital and stay with them for the required period of time. She was also required to follow up these cases after they were discharged from the hospital so as to prevent any complications. The FWW reported that because of the pressure of meeting the targets fixed for her, she even fed some of these women as they were so malnourished that the operation became risky and in case of any eventualities it became difficult for her to function in these villages. Each Auxillary Nurse and Midwife (ANM) was expected to cover a population of 10,000, but in practice they were able to cover between 3000 to 4000 only. The in-built disincentives (withholding of increment) if she failed to motivate the desired number of cases to adopt family planning, virtually made her a family planning worker rather than a health functionary. In fact her nomenclature was also indicative of the emphasis in the health programme for women. In the second village (Barael) the sub-centre had remained closed for a month as the ANM had become very unpopular among the villagers and had taken refuge in the town. In both the villages, a communication gap was observed between the health functionary and the women. The women had more faith in the local

dai than in the ANM, whose method of delivery was alien to them. The emphasis on her role as a family planning worker also created problems as the women did not want to call her during the delivery for the family feared that she may do some mischief and make the women infertile. She was suspected as being a part of the government's family planning programme. The desire for sons and the fear of infertility are interlinked problems as they thwart attempts at population control.

The ineffectiveness of the women village health workers should be viewed within the context of the rural social structure with its inherent class, caste and sex disparities. In addition to the problem of physical infrastructure for the delivery of health care services, the culture gap between the provision of services and the recipients is one of the factors responsible for under utilization of the existing services. Only at the time of crisis women turned to health care institutions. Not much attention is paid to the cultural and social dimensions—life style, value system, local customs, beliefs and practices relating to pregnancy and child birth—in the delivery of Maternity and Child Health (MCH) services to women. The ANM, a crucial link in the health system at the village level, has to face considerable problems (hostility and insecurity) in her work situation which affect her outreach and performance. In the town, women in the lower economic strata listed corruption and inefficiency as the major reasons for keeping away from the hospital and relying on indigenous methods of treatment for minor ailments. In the villages, irrespective of caste or class, women were weary of the government health workers. Added to this, lack of time and resources to undergo treatment, compelled them to adopt home remedies. If these did not work they visited spiritual healers or local practitioners of indigenous medicine. A few women professed to be able to cure illness through *kali puja* and one woman claimed that she could predict the sex of the unborn child. Some healers gave the patients talismans and charms to tie around their wrists or arms.

Very often women were exposed to occupational health hazards. For example, the spinners in Barabanki worked in a cloud of cotton dust which settled like a film on their faces, hair, clothes and this they continually inhaled. As a consequence, many of them suffered from respiratory problems ranging from coughing bouts and chest pain to tuberculosis. They were not covered by any medical benefit scheme as they were self-employed. They worked in extremely claustrophobic

and unhygienic surroundings. Weaver women also faced health hazards as they worked on the looms in small, ill-lit rooms. The light from the small kerosene lanterns was hardly sufficient and many of them complained of eye strain. In a well-to-do family of weavers, an old woman had her eyes tested and got a pair of spectacles only after she had nearly lost her eyesight.

The onus of bearing children rests with the woman, but in most cases she has no choice in the matter. The Family Planning Programme seems to be undermining its own efficacy by the emphasis it places on the targets rather than on the family itself. The Family Planning Programme suffered a serious set-back due to the induction of the method of incentives and disincentives, and as a result it never became a people's movement. On the contrary, the urban and rural population below the subsistence level failed to be convinced of the links between small family size and improved living standards, in spite of the mounting efforts for expansion of the services, infrastructure and motivational campaigns for increasing the number of acceptors. The economic rationale of the individual household (both poor and rich) came into direct conflict with the policy objective of the small family norm. Empirical evidence shows that family decisions at the micro level may be very different from macro policy perspectives.

The question of birth control evoked different responses but most of the women reported to have no control over their reproduction. A high proportion were not even aware of any other method except the terminal method, though they were weary of repeated pregnancies and child birth. Few of them spoke of Copper T and all of them expressed their helplessness and fear of the operation. Some women used indigenous methods of contraception, while others reported that these matters were decided by the husband or the mother-in-law. One woman, whose mother-in-law was against her son having himself sterilized, expressed her willingness to undergo the operation if her husband permitted. It appears that even on the question of family planning women do not, by and large, feel they have an independent decision to make and take their cues more from men or elder women. One young woman had already borne four children and was pregnant with the fifth. Her husband was a gambler and did no work, she and her mother-in-law worked in the field and in the house. On being questioned, though her husband admitted that they did not have the means to support so

many children he laughed and said, 'How can we stop having children ? This is God's gift'. Any attempt to talk directly to the wife was forestalled by the mother-in-law who said, 'What is the use of his getting operated? She can still bear children by other men'. Most of the women in poorer households were able to get between four to six days postnatal rest while the upper caste or class women rested for about two weeks and had an improved diet. 23 years old 'P' had evolved a very unique and effective method of birth control. She was a devotee of *kali* and claimed that if her husband touched her he would be struck down by the wrath of the goddess. A small boy from the neighbourhood narrated to the team how her husband had actually collapsed when he approached her. He was later reported to have said, 'I felt as though I was struck hard by an invisible hand'. The way 'P' had, consciously or unconsciously, used religion and superstition, and manipulated it in her favour, is remarkable.

In a situation where even basic health care is often a luxury, girls and women are the last to benefit from it. It is significant that women who are often the most neglected group in terms of nutrition and health care, are seen as 'providers' of health care within the family itself. Right from birth, a girl's value is perceived less as compared to a boy's, the *dai* customarily receives half the quantity of grain and cash from the family when a girl is born as that given on the birth of a boy. This trend continues to this day. A fairly common practice is that girls and women are the last to eat, and therefore, get poorer food in terms of quality and quantity. They justify this by saying that 'Men need to remain strong and healthy as they work hard' and 'Boys need more strength than girls do'. By saying this, they ignore the fact of their own overworked lives and the constant strain on their health, as housework is considered to be lighter. Even in households with relatively better nutritional level their health is neglected. Ironically, in the village, cattle are better cared for and looked after (by women themselves) than women. This again reflects the relative value that the family and the community places on cattle. Though the daily cost of maintaining a buffalo is estimated at rupees six, the returns from the sale of milk are direct and visible. This is well illustrated by the case of a woman with a septic foot, swathed in turmeric, washing and tending the family buffalo.

In the poorer households, health care and nutrition were merely empty words as the daily consumption in these households was one

meal a day of *bajra roti* and salt, and may be *chatni*. With better economic position, the nutritional level also improved. In households owing milch cattle, men and children (boys took priority over girls) consumed some milk and milk products. Irrespective of caste or class, women's food intake and nutritional level was lower than that of the rest of the family. Due to low nutritional level, and nonavailability of adequate medical care, recovery from illness was extremely slow in the poorer households. In such households health care became a secondary issue as there was no money to spend on treatment or medicines. One emaciated woman from a poor household remarked, 'If we had money for treatment, we would rather use it for food'. It is usually argued that people need to be educated about food and nutrition to improve their nutritional level; and this is the basic premise underlying programmes like applied nutrition, supplementary feeding for pre-school children, supplementary nutrition for children, and pregnant and nursing mothers. While health and nutrition education has its value, these programmes have made a very marginal contribution to the enormous problem of malnutrition. Those with inadequate purchasing capacity do not benefit from programmes of nutrition education. In a state where according to official estimates, 50 per cent people are below the poverty line, a frontal attack on poverty and increasing the earning capacity of the poor households alone can initiate the process of dealing with issues like malnutrition, ill health, maternal and child mortality. Added to this is the problem of poor environmental conditions, ineffective programmes of preventive health care and the cultural practices of child rearing.

Nutrition forms an important part of the Minimum Needs Programme, and the departments of Education, Rural Development and Social Welfare have implemented this through schools, *balwadis* and *mahila mandals*. The programme of kitchen gardening is aimed at extending assistance for the production of nutritious food. A process of inquiring into the neglected dimensions of the problem can increase awareness, but the solution demands more than a verbal commitment 'to the satisfaction of basic needs of the deprived and the poor', by linking health care and population education to overall development efforts. A clear understanding of women's two major roles—as producers and reproducers of family subsistence—demands that 'the development should begin with women'. The combined pressures of

illiteracy, underemployment, low income, malnutrition and high birth rate perpetuate the conditions for their oppression and low social status.

Issues for bringing about a positive change in women's situation cannot be compartmentalized into employment, health and education, as they are integrally related to each other, and each one of these problem areas offers a major challenge to development planning for women. The slow march towards equalization of opportunities for women is attributable to the preoccupation of the planners with issues of economic growth without giving adequate attention to the socio-cultural dimensions in the planning exercise. It is essential that women participate fully and equally in the development process, but this cannot be achieved by promoting peripheral activities among some target groups of women or advocating piece meal changes, but only through a broad based integrated approach to the problem. A clear understanding of the direction of social change provides a basis for a more meaningful intervention to set in motion a process of altering severe imbalances in women's access to resources, knowledge, skills and opportunities. As each layer of social organization and experience—family, school, community, labour market, media is woven into a pattern, any attempt to initiate change will have to be at a multi-dimensional level.

Women in the Family—The Ideal and the Individual Experience

There is not much information on the relative status of women by types of society and family structures. Family plays a crucial role in defining, restricting or facilitating women's life options. The question is that does the answer to women's low status lie in their equal access to education, health and employment opportunities or is it that a more equitable share in the power and resource structure within the family and the community alone will bring about a long-term improvement in their status? How do sex roles acquire hierarchical relations and valuations within the society? How do family systems in different regions and strata define and structure the roles and relationships between males and females? How does the dominant ideology of 'family' and 'woman's place' in it influence attitudes, behaviour patterns and value systems and have a direct bearing on the process of socialization of boys and girls? How far do cultural myths and

images of women in religious tradition, reflect the realities of women's lives placed differently in the social ladder of society ? These are some of the major difficulties in perceiving the important dimensions of sex role distribution both within and outside the home.

Family in a stratified society serves the interest of the elites and perpetuates inequalities through control of property and women's sexuality. Patriarchal ideology, the chief instrument of women's oppression within the family, is all pervasive and to a large extent, women internalize their own inferiority through a process of socialization, division of labour, customs, religion and rituals, although its expression and methods of social control assume diverse manifestations at different levels and in different classes. Women within the family themselves become the chief instrument in transmitting the patriarchal ideology which they internalize to form part of their own consciousness. Rape and wife beating are the more violent forms of manifestations of this pattern of male dominance in the male female relationship.

In this study an attempt was made to understand the intra-household dimensions of sex inequality and women's own perception of the unequal relations, the choices they could make and the options they visualized for themselves. The image of women in different classes, emerging from the discussions, brought to the fore low self-perception of themselves with only a few exceptions. Is ideological subordination the common fate of all women ? What are the roots of this subordination ? Why does this commonality not unite women of all classes ? Are women's problems linked to the unequal class structure and economic relations rather than to sex specific issues ? Is it possible that women in poorer households feel more autonomous because of their entry into wage labour as a necessary condition for the survival of the family ? Does poverty affect men and women in a sex specific way ? To many of these questions there are no categorical answers but merely illustrative ones. It is true that at the lowest rung of the class or caste hierarchy, both men and women are oppressed. For many women at this level, the issue of intra-household inequality is a hypothetical question. They link their problems to poverty and unequal class relations. A scheduled caste woman agricultural labourer who felt terribly insecure in the village due to harassment from the locally powerful landlord and lack of support from her own *biradari* (kin

group), had only this explanation to offer 'I am poor and they are rich, I am a woman and they are men'. This feeling of insecurity is one of the several reasons for the early marriage of girls in the rural areas and for the discontinuation of girls' education after primary education if the educational facilities are not available locally. Such fears are often translated into negative social attitudes and practices like early marriages, withdrawal of girls from schools after puberty and withdrawal of women from wage work with upward social mobility. Family becomes the repository of these traditional values and responds to the broader shifts in society and economy. It is important to understand the links between 'work' and 'non-work' of women and the role of family in a stratified society.

In a stratified society domestic seclusion and idleness of women becomes a status symbol for upwardly mobile groups. Household work is not seen as facilitating men's work or contributing to the family's resources. The dominant ideology of male as the breadwinner, devalues women's paid or unpaid labour as supplementary or marginal. Women themselves internalize these values, and one woman even remarked, 'Men provide the food, women the salt'. The whole cultural ethos promotes women's dependency through seclusion or immurement, and devalues women's economic contribution if her labour outside the home is not needed for the family's survival. This non-recognition and underevaluation of women's work has implications for women at the periphery of the economy. For them non-work is a non-issue. Yet, the structural and ideological forces effectively limit their opportunities through a segregated network of sex roles, labour market segmentation and their unequal access to skills, resources and knowledge. Marginalized women in the subsistence sector with their limited skills, abject poverty, pressures of sex division of labour and market forces, believe that their wage earning status does not place them in a position of authority within the household. 'C', the sole earner in the family (her husband is an invalid) pointed out that the position of women in such cases does not change, as their primary concern is to meet subsistence needs. She pointed out that excessive poverty did not leave much decision to be taken by anybody. 'S' thought that a generation ago survival was not so much of a problem and did not demand such a hard struggle as experienced today. Only a few women in the weavers' households felt that the struggle the entire family underwent brought them closer to each other.

Many women who led constricted and secluded lives could not perceive choices. They experienced a strange sense of drift where they had no control over the events in their life. The ideology of seclusion which confines Muslim women to their homes presents only part of the picture of the nature of women's oppression. Daughters-in-law were expected to know the requisite skills, or else they were initiated into learning them. The particular circumstances of women's work in these isolated homes prevented any common experience of unequal responsibilities. Many women expressed a feeling of insecurity and the possibility of being deserted by their husbands. Under Islam, easy divorce and polygyny led to a sense of insecurity among women and there were many instances of desertion.

It was observed that in times of 'crisis' when the traditional family support system broke down, women in the upper castes as well had the strength to step out of their homes to support the family by undertaking whatever work was available. Their determination that their children should survive made them sacrifice their pride in order to feed and clothe them. Is marginalization and the ability to take risks of social disapproval interrelated ? What is usually interpreted as power, is it only a survival strength ? [24] In such cases where women were not traditionally the earners, shouldering the major responsibility of earning a livelihood did not give them any advantage but men in such families sometimes lost their decision making power because they did not perform the crucial role of the breadwinner—the basis for traditional male power.

During the course of the discussions, it was observed that many women were aware of the unequal system of rewards and incentives within the family but thought that boys and girls were destined for different roles and responsibilities and required different socialization for different work spheres. From the moment of birth, boys were given a preference over girls. The majority of women believed that a woman derived her status from her husband or from the number of sons she had. 'M', a mother of five daughters lamented, 'What is the use of having so many daughters. Even if I have fifty daughters it is not the same as having one son'. Children, irrespective of class or caste, learnt very early to take on different responsibilities. Girls learnt early to take on various household responsibilities while boys enjoyed their

leisure and some of the luxuries (education, medical care and food) that the family could afford. In poorer households, where severe economic constraints made it practically impossible for either sons or daughters to receive education, boys were given a preference over girls in matters relating to food, medical care etc. This stems from the notion that sons are assets while daughters are liabilities and investment in a daughter is a waste as she would ultimately marry and go away. In the relatively well-to-do families, both girls and boys received education, but marriage and motherhood remained the ultimate goal for girls. One aspect of female life experience which has changed very little, is the preference for sons and higher expectations from them. Some of the women who had only daughters experienced a sense of guilt of having failed, a fear of losing their status and alienating the patriarch or losing the traditional support of the family in case of desertion. Many fasts were observed by women for their husbands and sons even among the urban educated women. One urban woman teacher remarked, 'Men are protectors and women need to be protected'. 'A', commenting on the dependent status of women in the family said, 'Women never have an independent existence and even the families' or communities' expectations from girls revolve round their familial roles which is one of the major reason for women's subordination and backwardness'.

Several unexamined assumptions exit about the nature of family support and the protection it provides to women. One such assumption is that the family provides a safety net in terms of financial and social security. Class position determines the forms of family support and the security it provides. The feeling of insecurity that many women talked about particularly among the poorer classes and among the weavers, indicates the fragility of family protection. Similarly, the assumptions about women and their work within the household are based on ideological myths and the understanding of these assumptions is filtered through an unequal system. However, these assumptions do structure women's aspirations, choices and achievement motivations. Another assumption is that sons provide security in old age. This is responsible for the preferential treatment of sons and higher investment in them. These ideologies are in direct conflict with the stated national objectives—the fertility policy in India. Policies of population control which devalue a woman's reproductive role are in direct conflict with the 'glorified image of motherhood'. Sons are desired not

only for future security, but the birth of a son improves a woman's status within the family. Many women acquire power through motherhood or through control over their daughters-in-law at a later stage in life.[25] In most of the rural households, as a new bride a woman had little control over her own reproductive behaviour. In the poorer households, the perceived utility of children affects the fertility behaviour. The relationship between the economic position of women, their status within the family and the fertility pattern needs to be explored further.

To a significant degree concepts like educated motherhood, planned parenthood have introduced new ideals of child rearing and women's responsibility, particularly for non-working mothers in the middle and upper classes. The ideals of motherhood projected through the media and literature as self-sacrificing, suffering and emotionally charged women, represent aberrations. The term motherhood has a very different connotation in the poorer households where women neither have the time nor the resources for prolonged child care. Children in such families neither experience childhood nor expansive socialization. The traditional family structure provides well defined roles, responsibilities and authority patterns within the household. With increasing social and economic disparities the stresses within the family have also increased.

It was observed that among the educated women in the town, the concept of low self-perception was disguised under a thin layer of modern ideas and values of women's equal status. While education widened a woman's perception of new opportunities, the idea persisted that her activities should be confined to a sphere suitable for women. Education not only offered better employment opportunities but it led to better marriage prospects and acted as a buffer against possible future calamity. In the lower middle classes it kindled a hope for a minimum standard of living. Education by itself has not altered the social definitions of women's primary role, and marriage and motherhood remain the ultimate goals of life. Even education is perceived ambivalently by some women. 'NS', a gazetted officer at the district level, accepted that once a girl receives higher education she could not remain at home, but at the same time experienced a sense of guilt for neglecting her duties at home. She made an extra effort to maintain a good image of herself in the family. 'KP' struggled a great deal after

she left her husband to evolve an independent life for herself and began a school which remains the focal point of her life, but this has not made any impact on her thinking. This ambivalence between the desire to take up new roles and the wish to conform (non-conformity invites malicious gossip), results in compartmentalization of life. This points to the dilemma that women face in a changing society. In the villages ideas of sex segregation and social control are more rigidly defined than in the towns. Sometimes repression within the family resulted in an outburst of hysterical behaviour which could be attributed to their inability to cope with the pressures. When women did not rigidly conform to the usual norms of behaviour they were labelled mad.

This confusion between power and powerlessness that most women experienced, was due to the contradictions between the dominant ideology and the realities of their own lives which pushed them into a variety of roles. While examining female autonomy within the household, scholars have maintained that women enjoy considerable informal power.[26] It was observed that women achieved power through men (father, husband or son) or through religion or kinship networks which helped them to adjust to the oppression of the system. Women talked of generational changes in the family in terms of less family control and minimum social taboos on the younger generation. Older women felt that the mother-in-law did not enjoy the same degree of authority over the daughters-in-law as their own mothers-in-law had. On the other hand younger women felt that their lives were still controlled by their mothers-in-law and husbands. In one of the households in the village, a discussion with the daughter-in-law was frequently interrupted by her mother-in-law, who was suspicious of the corrupting influence over her and warned the investigators that they 'should not put any wrong idea into her head'. Some mothers-in-law made the decisions regarding the reproductive behaviour of their daughters-in-law. The lower status of daughters-in-law in the village was clearly evident from certain behaviour patterns like sitting on the floor in the presence of the mother-in-law, husband and other family members. There were several instances of wife beating in the village.

Attempts at social change through legislation have encountered immense problems in combating sex inequalities. Wide gaps exist between the law and its implementation and women's own understanding of them. In the villages, most of the women were not aware of social

legislation and their legal rights. Wage earning women were not aware of Equal Remuneration Act. In the town many women were aware of the legal rights of women including inheritance rights, but they believed that women should not demand their share in the family property so as to maintain good relations with their fathers or brothers. In stray cases, women inherited land from their parents when there was no male heir.[27] In such cases the daughter and her family stayed in the natal village. Some of the women argued that the dowry given at the time of marriage was a share in the family property, though they had no control over the dowry which became the property of the husband and his family. Higher education for girls was not encouraged because of the excessive demand of dowry in cases where an equally educated bridegroom was needed. If a girl had brothers then dowry-givers became dowry-seekers. Dowry demands continue to increase and parents are under constant pressure to meet them. Stray cases of dowry deaths were reported. It was not uncommon to incur debts for a daughter's marriage in households with meagre resources. The practice has spread among the lower castes as well as among the Muslim weavers where this practice was not prevalent earlier. The prime importance of marriage for women and viewing them as dependent, and their income as supplemental, result in such degrading practices which reinforce women's low self-image. Many women in Etawah village were highly apppreciative of the practice of *sati*, as they believed that only 'virtuous women having spiritual power can become Sati'. A *sati mela* is held every year in this area. These beliefs based on religion, superstition and even misinterpretation, continue to affect women's perceptions and self development. Divorce and remarriage though observed among the lower castes were not common among the upper castes, though a few cases of desertion were reported.

Women in the village had little knowledge of the world beyond their village. All of them had heard about Indira Gandhi but not about other women leaders. A local political leader in Barabanki was quite popular among them. They voted in large numbers during the elections, but in most cases their husbands or other male head of the household or local caste leaders decided on the choice of the candidate.

There were rare cases of women who took initiative in organizing community activities. 'A', an unmarried, educated *brahman* girl had

organized an anti-dowry rally but said that she was deliberately restricting her activities as her involvement could brand her as 'unacceptable' to a prospective bridegroom. She said that she would like to be involved in such activities after her marriage only if her husband did not have any objections. Paradoxically, the idea to fight injustice or oppression did not change her own perspective. Lack of any ideological support on an organized basis makes it difficult for such individual isolated attempts to take roots in an otherwise unresponsive or hostile system. 'P', a teacher in the girls' Inter College in Etawah, was an active member of the Secondary Teachers Association and participated in demonstrations. While discussing the issue of non-participation of women in professional organizations, she said that there was an aversion among many women teachers against going out in the street for demonstrations. Her own perspective on intra-household responsibilities and decision making was loaded with stereotyped notions. This social schizophrenia shows that such mobilizing mechanisms (membership of professional associations, local organizations for community work) do not necessarily result in the development of social consciousness and a strong sense of identity. 'YD' was another example of a semi-literate woman who took initiative in organizing community activities. She had organized two cooperative societies, *Mahila Shilp Karhai Silai Udyogik Utpadan Sahkari Samiti* (a stitching and tailoring centre for women which comes under the Industry department) and *Nagar Mahila Upbhokta Sahkari Samiti* (a consumer cooperative society). The former was started in 1971 and the latter in 1975. She had also started a junior school with an initial investment of Rs 4000 and the school was run on a purely self-help basis. The income from the school fees was managed by the teachers, and expenditure on their salaries was met from the school fees. In 1971 she started a *Seva Sadan* with the encouragement and assistance of the local politician and social worker. Her latent leadership qualities came to the fore and she has continued to expand her activities within the community. She is a highly respected and well-known person in the town and in the peripheral rural areas.

The women's question evoked either strong reactions from men or was brushed aside lightly. In a boys' Inter College in the town, the teachers thought that it was a joke that an all women group of researchers had come to talk to them. Finally, when the Principal

persuaded them to meet the team, only 11 out of a total of 50 teachers came. During the discussions a teacher remarked,

> we give women concessions, they should be thankful for that. If women ask for their rights, there is bound to be conflict in the family and women are responsible for domestic peace and harmony.

The symbols of class inequality are deeply rooted in the norms governing sex roles. The contradictions between the ideology of a democratic polity and the inequalities legitimized by the hierarchical social structure and the institution of family, is a major challenge to any attempt at bringing about social transformation and equality between the sexes. Equality between the sexes is different from equality before law or equality of opportunities in education and politics, as large segments of women remain untouched by the concept of equality. A society based on inequalities of caste, class and sex is unprepared to pay the cost of adjusting and altering its structures. The solutions cannot be found within the existing framework unless a deliberate attempt is made at reordering of relations and redefinition of sex roles.

Notes and References

1. 'Women and Development' envisages a three-fold strategy for women's development—education, employment and health, as these are interdependent and dependent on the total development process in the Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85, Government of India, Planning Commission.

2. 'Indian Women in the Eighties : The Development Imperatives', Memorandum presented to Government of India by eight national women's organizations, All India Women's Conference, Delhi, 1980.

3. 'Women and Development', National Conference, Delhi, 1979; 'Equality, Development and Peace', UN Mid Decade Conference on Women, Copenhagen, 1980; National Conference on Women's Studies, Bombay, 1981.

4. Committee on the Status of Women in India, *op.cit.*

5. *Report of the Committee on Adult Education Programme for Women*, Government of India, Ministry of Education, 1978.

6. According to the latest Planning Commission estimates, 13.7 million girls in 6-11 years age group and 17.1 million in 11-14 years age group are non-participants in school. In 1981 the number of illiterates increased from 225 to 445 million.

7. In Uttar Pradesh in 1979-80, girls' enrolment in 6-11 years age group was 45.1 per cent, while that of boys was 91.0 per cent. The percentage in the age group 11-14 years was 18.7 for girls as compared to 53.3 for boys according to the Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85.

8. Draft Five Year Plan 1980 - 85 and Annual Plan 1981-82, Directorate of Education, Uttar Pradesh.

9. The State Government admits that even today there are 15,418 primary and 3448 middle schools functioning without buildings. It may be stated that 48,126 *pucca* buildings (enumerated in the Fourth Educational Survey) do not present an accurate picture of their condition and capacity as a number of them are very old and dilapidated. Most of the schools lack proper furniture and educational equipment, Annual Plan 1981-82, Directorate of Education, Uttar Pradesh.

10. The President of the Uttar Pradesh Primary School Teachers Association told the press that most of the 71,000 primary schools lacked the basic teaching facilities. In some schools as may as five classes were held in one room. Sunday, December 8, 1981.

11. The Education Expansion Department has two units—Social Education and Audio-visual Education for media support to classroom education. The latter has a film production centre and the state film library for educational purposes. In addition to this, the unit has provision for the training of teachers in the production of audio-visual material and the utilization of this material as a teaching aid. In the Sixth Five Year Plan a greater collaboration has been proposed between this department and the Educational Technology Cell. 'Shiksha Ki Pragati', *op. cit.*; Annual Plan 1981-82 (Education), Draft Sixth Five Year Plan 1980-85, *op. cit.*

12. An experiment involving school girls in rural areas for social service extension programme was initiated in four selected districts by Planning, Research and Action Division, Lucknow, to create (*i*) a channel for establishing bonds between educational institutions and the village community; (*ii*) media for rural development; (*iii*) an expansion in the mental outlook of girls; and (*iv*) heighten the awareness level of the village community through the school. See 'Yuvati Agrani Dal', *op. cit.*

13. *Report of the Committee on Differentiation of Curricula for Boys and Girls*, Government of India, Ministry of Education, 1964. This was reiterated by the Indian Education Commission in 1966 and by the National Policy Resolution on Education Policy in Parliament in 1966.

14. After the death of 'S's husband, her in-laws started harassing her and taunted her that she lived off others. As it became increasingly impossible for her to stay with them, she moved out to stay with her aunt in the village. Once she moved out, whatever financial support she had so far received from her in-laws was withdrawn. Forced to break away from the traditional social norm wherein upper caste women did not go out to work, 'S' went from door to door in search of work whereby she could earn enough money to feed her children and send them to school. She initially worked on odd jobs like sifting, husking and pounding of grain, washing clothes and utensils. After sometime she got the job of a spinner in the Gandhi Ashram in Barabanki town through an old acquaintance.

15. In Uttar Pradesh, the State Council for Education, Research and Training (SCERT) was set up in 1981 along the pattern of the NCERT. It is hoped that the Council would take some positive steps in this direction.

16. This has been termed as 'Statistical Discrimination' against women in *Women and Work*, International Labour Organization, 1978.

17. The most difficult problem in the measurement of female work force is the identification and classification of 'unpaid-family workers'.

18. A. Mitra, L.P. Pathak, and S. Mukherji, *The Status of Women : Shifts in Occupational Participation 1961-71*, Delhi, 1980.

19. Handloom weavers are a large section in Uttar Pradesh and the 1931 Census Returns listed them as the largest Muslim occupational caste in Uttar Pradesh. The production is largely done in household units. During the early thirties they organized themselves into the All India Momin Conference for their social upliftment and political expression. Both in Etawah and Barabanki, weaving is one of the most important household industry although in Etawah the concentration is largely in the town areas. See G. Ansari, *Muslim Caste in Uttar Pradesh (A Study of Culture Contact)*, 1960.

20. 'Towards Equality', 'In this context we would like to mention that during the tenure of Shri Charan Singh as Chief Minister and under his instruction, the Government of Uttar Pradesh attempted a direct violation of this constitutional provision. In reply to a question asked in the Uttar Pradesh Vidhan Sabha on 16 July 1971, the State Government admitted that "In June 1970, the State Government sent a letter to the Government of India stating that women officers should not be admitted to the Indian Administrative Service. If that was not possible, then at least they should not be sent to this State." '

21. The land reform policies also suffer from patriarchal ideology as the distribution of land and house sites is usually to the male head of household. The Sixth Five Year Plan states that 'government would endeavour to give joint titles to husband and wife in all development activities involving transfer of assets' in 'Women and Development'.

22. See Table A 15.

23. 'Health for All : An Alternative Strategy', Joint Report of a Study Group set up by the ICSSR and ICMR, August 1980.

24. This question came up during the seminar on 'Women's Life Cycle and Identity' organized jointly by the Centre for Women's Development Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the ICSSR and Ford Foundation in 1981.

25. M.N. Srinivas and E.A. Ramaswamy, *Culture and Human Fertility in India*, Delhi, 1977.

26. M.N. Srinivas, *Changing Position of Women in India*, Delhi, 1980.

27. Uttar Pradesh is one of the few states where a *sirdar* (landlord) does not have a right to bequeath his rights by will. The Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950 is discriminating in the treatment of female heirs as the Hindu Succession Act is not applicable to agricultural land.

Breaking the Barriers : Towards a Participatory Approach

Communication and Participatory Development

Social change is a dynamic and complex process. Patterns of social behaviour reflect an institutional framework and its interaction with the forces of change. The latter is influenced greatly by the intensity of the impulses for change, institutionalized or organized infrastructure that channelize, divert or eliminate these impulses and the growth of ideologies that welcome, resist or assist the direction of such changes from the perspective of broader social goals. Action research of this kind is problematic as the possibilities of micro action are limited by structural constraints and by the macro development impulses generating contradictions within the local situations. Unless policies and programmes adopt a suitable structure that generates a momentum of its own and creates an effective demand sector for women's share in community's resources, services and decision making, it will not be possible to effectively deal with the disabilities of women that affect their participation. Attempts to regulate and alter these patterns of social behaviour through public policies and interventions represent a process of confusion, ambivalence and apathy. During the pre-independence period, efforts to change social behaviour emanated more from popular leaders and depended heavily on their charisma and mass mobilization techniques to achieve the desired change. Typical examples of this were the social reform movements and the Gandhian Satyagraha movements, directed not only against the political order, but also against social evils like untouchability, alcoholism, dowry and

the exclusion of women from the freedom struggle because of *purdah* and other entrenched attitudes against women entering the public domain.

The efforts of the colonial government to bring about social change depended mainly on legislation, education and other long-term processes like development of communication and urbanization. A few legislative attempts to eliminate social practices carried punitive provisions which could be enforced by the repressive power of the state, for instance, the abolition of *sati* and female infanticide. But the general policy of the colonial government was to avoid direct intervention to change social institutions, practices or attitudes—as this was considered politically inadvisable for an unpopular and an alien regime. The humanitarian interventions of the earlier period gave way to a policy of social and economic conservatism as the Raj faced the threat of mass based political opposition.

In the post-independence era the government began with a greater commitment to social and economic change, as incorporated in the Directive Principles of State Policy. Its primary instruments were legislation, education and bureaucracy. Plans to build supplementary institutions for a representative and participatory government at the grassroot level were rather half-hearted, because these institutions could not be seen as a suitable substitute for bureaucracy. While development administration, resources and accountability remained a prerogative of the bureaucracy, with *panchayats* and other local bodies as junior partners, the pursuit of social objectives and the responsibility for bringing about changes in social attitudes and institutions, particularly those whose roots were deeply embedded in social inequalities, were relegated to voluntary agencies, with the government playing a supportive role.[1] With the exception of education and health care, which were the responsibility of the public administration system, all other social development functions were clubbed together under the category of social welfare and were viewed as the responsibility of voluntary agencies. This was especially true of policies aimed to change women's status.[2] Though Panchayati Raj Acts and Acts governing municipalities reserved some seats for women in the allocation of responsibilities, resources and accountability, women's issues remained peripheral and low priority, from the point of view of both bureaucracy and the structure of representative institutions. They were not viewed as

issues related to major development sectors or institution building strategies adopted by the state for the purpose of government.

With increasing realization that the process of economic modernization and competition for resources was sharpening the social inequalities and tensions between the affluent and the poor, the dominant and the weaker sections, urban and rural areas, came target group focussed programmes, aiming at the eradication of poverty based inequalities. In the last few decades, participatory development through grassroot organizations has been emphasized in national development strategies, as group approaches have been found more effective for poor groups—to strengthen their articulation and to ensure their access to critical development inputs. Since the fifties, national development strategies have promoted women's grassroot organizations (*mahila mandals*) as a matter of policy, for delivery of services to women or for organizing income-generating activities. As peripheral and marginal groups, without supportive linkages to decision making or resource structures, these organizations have failed to either improve women's access to critical resources or to raise women's consciousness and make them aware of the various dimensions of their reality, and their ability to relate their problems to the broader social structures. The issues of women's mobilization and participation should be understood within the broader socioeconomic and political framework as the entire gamut of these issues are tied up with women's unequal status and structural inequalities. The contextual dimension of these organizations, the nature of their interaction with the local power structure and the issues around which women are organized need to be explored further.

In the last few years, studies on women's role and participation in development have stressed the need of integrating women's issues within the mainstream of development thinking and communication. The communication networks emanating from mass media, development administration and political channels have done precious little in questioning the biases in knowledge and assumptions about women's role and have, in fact, perpetuated and strengthened the female stereotypes, with the result that women have remained peripheral to development approaches. Intervention programmes have had some degree of success where there was greater concreteness and women's participation.

Communication Approach to Women's Development : Suggested Strategies

National development policies have purposefully used communication through the extension approach but the tendency in the past has been to separate economic development from other dimensions of social change. The greatest opposition to change in the social structure emanated from those interest groups which were seen as the most responsive and powerful allies of policies aimed at rapid economic growth. Visualizing social objectives as long-term goals or responsibility of voluntary action, represented an ideological rationalization for maintaining the status quo.

The deepening crisis of increasing inequalities, poverty and underdevelopment have, to a great extent, reintroduced the social dimension in the development debate. The issues of marginalization and nonparticipation of the social classes who have traditionally been the victims of social oppression and discrimination, have resurfaced with renewed vigour, as they are seen as sources of acute social tension and constraints to further economic progress. The problem becomes more acute in the case of women who have not only been the victims of social oppression and discrimination, but the knowledge gap is much wider between them and the dominant groups. Though the articulation of women's issues has yet to acquire a political dimension and generate the necessary political will, research has outlined the constraints imposed by the low status and participation of women on the success of policies for the eradication of poverty, and the achievement of health, educational development and population objectives. Understanding of these linkages is very weak within the development system—the network of institutions, functionaries, programmes and their ethos. The role of development communication is to mediate effectively in the process of change and to bridge knowledge gaps, and to demonstrate the relations between different policy sectors. Much of the work on policy-oriented communication has focussed on the issue of changing attitudes and practices and the role of bureaucratic structures in raising the information level of people and orienting those who have already been motivated. The common interest and utility of working towards economic development goals are more easily demonstrated than social development goals. Changing fundamental values is a complex process and one must delve

deeper into the psychological dimensions of social change. When mobilization efforts are way ahead of women's level of consciousness, they do not contribute to the development of local initiative and capabilities for participation.

Communication efforts to deal with manifest structural problems and subtle questions of attitudinal and value changes should be undertaken at several levels—development support communication, programme support communication and audio-visual material for communication.

Development Support Communication In Uttar Pradesh, the women's programme suffered a major set-back in 1967 when the women's component in the Community Development Programme was scrapped. The first step in the direction of changing the present climate of official apathy and unfavourable social opinion in the state, should be to increase the visibility of women's issues through development communication. It is imperative to develop concern and a suitable structure within the state's development system so as to articulate women's needs within the existing development promotional activities, rather than as a separate programme which remains peripheral to major development efforts. What should be the strategies for intervention and techniques for mobilization of the forces of change? Ad hoc programmes for women or tinkering at the micro level through the reorientation of local level functionaries or community leaders or organizers will not make any appreciable difference in the present situation. More than the local level functionaries, the district and state level bureaucrats need to be sensitized and oriented for treating women as a development resource.

What is needed is intervention at different levels of the governmental and non-governmental structures. At the state level, two departments have a women's programme unit, one in the Directorate of Women's Welfare and Nutrition under the Department of Rural Development, and the other unit in the Directorate of Harijan and Social Welfare. In February 1976, the Women's Programme Evaluation Unit of the Planning, Research and Action Division, was transferred to the Directorate of Social Welfare for the planning and extension of women's programmes. The women's programme section began operations in 1957 to reinforce the work of the Planning, Research and Action Institute on the women's side, to assist in the evaluation of women's programmes in operation and

to propose appropriate programmes, methods and techniques for work among the rural women by carrying out action research through pilot projects.[3] In addition to these, the State Social Welfare (Advisory) Board has implemented programmes for women and children through voluntary agencies for which the Board gets grants from the Central Social Welfare Board and the Uttar Pradesh government on an equal basis. It is obvious that the state's programmes for women have a heavy welfare bias. The state government whose resources, machinery and outreach is wider than that of voluntary organizations working in a few areas, should evolve a suitable policy framework of development planning and communication for women, backed by resource allocations and organizational mechanisms. For women in the low income groups this framework would be required to take into account their specific requirements—basic needs such as food, nutrition, education, health, shelter, and productive and remunerative employment. Handicapped by their illiteracy, lack of leadership and organization, these women face additional constraints operating within the rural development administration, attitudes of the functionaries and the general problems of coordination of programmes and resources, both vertical and horizontal. Within the framework of multi-level planning, organizational linkages need to be carefully interwoven to ensure effective and coordinated action. The Mehta Committee Report[4] had recommended that a single authority in each state be in charge of the administration, planning and supervision of women's programmes.

There is no basic infrastructure for women's development in the state within the planning and development departments apart from the Directorate of Women's Welfare and Nutrition in the Rural Development department. As a start, a suitable organizational structure could be developed within the existing development infrastructure. The Planning, Research and Action Division could help in this direction by developing a nucleus within its structure to incorporate several broad objectives in its programmes : (*a*) to develop a set of policy directives and policy guidelines at different levels of the development administration, to see women not only as target groups of beneficiaries but also as participants in the programmes and as agents of change; (*b*) to spell out the social and economic objectives of the programmes at the operational level, to facilitate the understanding of various concepts such as Integrated Rural Development (IRD), Area Development, Basic Services in Rural Development (BSRD) by the grassroot

functionaries; and (*c*) to evolve a system of preparing an annual report on the achievements in terms of physical targets and qualitative assessment of the programme activities, operational problems, resource availability and utilization, training and its content for building the capacities of the functionaries and participants, and an effective monitoring system for recording the changes in the community's perception. The annual report would not only provide an information base but would be instrumental in initiating the process of thinking, reappraisal and redesigning of the development programmes for women.

It is true that women's situation is linked with the general development of the state which, by standard development indicators, is among the backward states in India, and the development programmes by themselves will not reach women unless a deliberate, articulated and concerted effort is made in this direction. The district of Etawah has a long history of grassroot planning and implementation with the Pilot Development Project Agency being located within the district, but it offers training only in tailoring and embroidery to women. A strengthening of development planning and administration at different levels by appropriate administrative, organizational and programme support is urgently needed. (*a*) An interdepartmental committee could be constituted at the state level (the Central Ministry of Social Welfare requested the state governments for the formation of such committees as state links to the National Committee on Women) which should include two women members of the State Assembly, representatives of the state departments of Rural and Community Development, Agriculture, Panchayati Raj, Health Education, Welfare and other development agencies and non-governmental representatives from academic institutions with some degree of interest and commitment, and women's grassroot organizations. It was suggested that the Planning, Research and Action Division, Lucknow could be the convenor of this Committee. This would help in developing the policy perspective, research agenda, programme design, guidelines for the evaluation and monitoring of the programme. Some of the institutions represented on this Committee[5] could be helped in developing their faculty resources and competence thereby enabling them to become agencies for research, evaluation and training of grassroot functionaries; (*b*) the district level administration needs to be strengthened by appropriate administrative, organizational and programme support mechanisms. One woman

official at the district level may be appointed to (*i*) coordinate, supervise and monitor the women's component in each development programme and (*ii*) play a catalytic role in sensitizing the district level bureaucracy and the community to women's problems and needs. An interdepartmental committee at the district level involving the District Magistrate, representatives of women's organizations or institutions and trade unions may be constituted to discuss development potential for women and to ensure effective coordination and better utilization of resources and services.

In the districts under study it was found that within the same district, several departments were implementing programmes for women with common objectives but without any proper coordination (Integrated Child Development Scheme, Family and Child Welfare Project, National Adult Education Programme, Applied Nutrition Programme and income-generating activities under Integrated Rural Development, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment and social welfare). The proposed sub-scheme of the Integrated Rural Development Programme—Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)[6] stresses the importance of fully exploiting the potential of women so as to enable them to make an effective contribution to the socioeconomic development of the family. The scheme which is to be implemented by the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) in the 400 blocks of the country in a phased manner aims at income generation for the poor rural women. The Planning Commission agreed to the creation of the post of a Joint Project Officer (preferably a lady) in each district to function as a member of the DRDA team. Besides planning, implementing and monitoring the economic schemes for women, she would be expected to provide constant guidance to the social education organizers and *gram sevikas* of the block. At the block level, the female social education organizer and at the village level, *gram sevikas* would serve as a direct line of communication between the community and its representatives, that is, the community workers at the village level and the project officer at the district level. The social education organizer could assist in planning services for target groups and help the community workers in the use of communication materials. The scheme aims at the promotion of participatory development process as a key instrument for the development of rural women.

Programme Support Communication One of the objectives of the study was to identify the points of intervention that is, local level organizations, grassroot level agencies or potential community leaders who could be activized to start a meaningful dialogue. In the absence of a voluntary agency in the area, any intervention from outside may not be effective and may even evoke strong reactions unless institutional or programme support is available at the local level on a continuing basis which facilitates the process of involvement of women and helps in building a viable relationship between them and the agents of change.

The whole concept of community involvement in programme planning, assessment of needs and resources, and implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programmes has not been made operational though it is emphasized in each programme. Sporadic and uncoordinated programmes of nutrition, health, training in skills and income-generating activities give only limited participation to women. Local level organizations (*mahila mandals*) formed under short-term programmes like Applied Nutrition Programme become defunct as soon as the programme support is withdrawn. The Applied Nutrition Programme which was implemented in collaboration with UNICEF emphasized a long-term strategy of child development through nutrition education and by increasing the awareness of the mother and the community. However, the programme did not make much impact at the field level as the community was not involved in the programme and the selection of the area was also inappropriate. Micro action has its own operational problems. The issues for women's mobilization and participation have to be understood within a given context.

Heavy emphasis has been laid on the training of grassroot functionaries or community organizers as an essential input alongwith programming to make them more effective within the system. However, training strategies have been predominantly oriented towards imparting information about the programme rather than towards the requisite changes in their own way of thinking and functioning. The training content for the functionaries or community organizers should help them to understand the concepts and objectives of the programme and programme priorities, and enhance their understanding of the society within which they work, the process of community decision making, local leadership patterns and the functioning of the local structures which impede the process of women's participation. In the block where

the study was conducted, the *mukhya sevika*, a crucial functionary at the block level, supervising the Family and Child Welfare Project was considerably neglected by the district level administration in terms of exposure to new development approaches and thinking.

The social objectives and implications of the programmes should be explicitly built into the training programmes if they are not to be reduced to futile exercises. The Central Social Welfare Board has offered a scheme for the training of rural women in public cooperation. The objective is to identify the needs of women in border or rural areas through surveys and to orient them through training camps in a manner in which they could be involved in the process of fulfilling their felt needs. In one of the training camps visited (village Chaurpur), the emphasis was more on cooking and tailoring than on leadership training. The programme content of this 15 days camp included a wide range of topics such as health, nutrition, child care, improved home living, improved methods of agriculture, storage of foodgrains and civic rights. Charts and other illustrative material provided to the instructress to facilitate the process of learning, were rarely used. It was interesting to note that in place of civic rights which formed part of the syllabus, the instructress had concentrated on 'improving relations with the mother-in-law' This clearly reveals that the method of selection and training of community organizers needs to be critically examined in order to understand their problems and to make them more effective within the community. The starting point for a strategy involving local functionaries (teachers, health, welfare and development functionaries) to develop their capacities, concern and understanding of women's problems could be to organize a training camp for self review and analysis and for evolving a perspective and pragmatic approach based on their own experiences. For developing a suitable training and orientation programme, incorporation of women's experiences elsewhere could provide valuable base material.[7] Material from various research projects written in a simplified form could be used as material for discussion. Film strips and other illustrative charts could be used for not only explaining the programmatic aspects of reaching poor women but also for increasing local women's ability to function as a group.

Several functionaries were interviewed both in the towns and the villages. The general impression of the district level officials indicated a total lack of interest towards the implementation of the few women's

programmes. How much of this is due to ignorance and how much due to apathy? Where provision had been made for a certain percentage of women beneficiaries (TRYSEM has a quota of 30 per cent for women), the village level functionaries were not even aware of it. One of the block level officials commented,

> Expenditure on girls training is like giving a dowry ... There is no point in training girls as they get married and go to other places after acquiring the skill and so the investment in them is lost. We perfer to train married women but they do not come forward because of familial and social constraints.

On the other hand the *mukhya sevika* and *bal sevika* in charge of a *balwadi* in the village were open to any suggestions as to how some programmes for women could be developed around this project. The *bal sevika* organized a monthly meeting of the mothers in the village and discussed with them issues relating to nutrition, health, sanitation, kitchen gardening etc. In the absence of any proper guidance as to how to utilize these contacts for a more meaningful participation of women in these programmes, this meeting became a routine matter. The officials explained that the *mahila mandals* which were organized under the Applied Nutrition Project closed down after the six years period was over since no follow-up action was taken. A few of them got a small grant from the Welfare Board to run *balwadis*. Another forum—the *charcha mandals* (Radio Rural Listeners' Forum) for women were organized to give farm women information about improved methods of agriculture. The organizers of *charcha mandals* had received a week's training at the Extension Training Centre and were taken on field trips to help them gain practical knowledge in better farming methods. These women could be mobilized at the village level for articulating women's problems and mobilizing them. Women had no representative in the *panchayat* and the ADO (*panchayat*) was not even aware that the State Panchayati Raj Act made provision for the nomination of one or two women in the *panchayat* if they were not elected. It is clear that more than the local level functionaries, the block and district level functionaries need to be oriented.

Changing societal attitudes towards women which are deeply rooted in social institutions and structures, cannot be achieved through development communication alone without expanding opportunities for women's self expression and participation. An effective and purposive

use of manipulative communication could be made for questioning the sex role stereotypes and behaviour patterns highlighting the problems of both the individual and the society. Often manipulative communication proves to be ineffective, if it does not have a sense of perspective and relevance in a given context. The communication method could be used by a strong local level organization—school, media or women's organization—as a supportive instrument of action at the community level, what it achieves would depend on the functionality of the medium in a given situation. For promoting adequate efforts to initiate changes at the community level, the local level short-term strategies should be supported and strengthened by long-term development goals of promoting equality of opportunity between the sexes. In the last couple of years efforts have been made to evaluate school text-books, develop instructional material and aids for teachers' training and prepare guidelines for 'Teacher Orientation Courses on Sexism' aimed to develop among teachers an awareness of the existing influence of sexism in society. Some of the pilot projects on teacher orientation programmes have highlighted the limitations of these efforts, as teachers alone cannot counteract and modify the powerful influences of the family and the community on the socialization of girls and boys.

An in-built provision of simple research methods and monitoring in the programme contents could help in identifying the problems and areas of interventions. This technique has been used by some voluntary agencies where research itself has become a tool for sensitizing women as well as functionaries who implement the programmes. This could promote better understanding of women's situation and help in identifying the potential supporters of action programmes.

In the two villages covered by the study and in the majority of the schools in the town, the schools were found to be totally inadequate for the diffusion and articulation of ideas of sex equality through teacher orientation courses. The problems—both infrastructural and situational need to be tackled at different levels. The state government spends a negligible amount on teachers' training (one per cent). A State Council for Educational Research and Training was constituted along the pattern of the NCERT. This institution could set up a unit for trying out motivational and communication support material for teachers' training and in-service refresher courses. As an experiment a few institutions could be involved on a long-term basis for such programmes of intervention. This would provide valuable feedback on the efficacy

of such attempts at teacher orientation and help in developing a perspective for the production of communication material. Short-term exposure of teachers through orientation courses would be counterproductive. The feedback that the NCERT Women's Education Unit received from the teachers on the slide set prepared by the UNICEF, reported that contemporary issues depicting the realities of women's lives should be highlighted. Rural-urban differentiation should also be kept in mind. The historical perspective needs to be revised and factual errors like differentiation between boys and girls in breast feeding, should be avoided. In poor families all children are breast-fed, and prolonged breast feeding is often used as one of the methods to avoid pregnancies. Similar views were expressed by a group which was invited by the UNICEF to see the slide set on 'Balanced Portrayal of Women'.

Audio-Visual Material for Communication The use of audio-visual material for development education was part of the community development approach, through programmes of social education. However, the extension approach was patchy and unevenly spread. Since then the whole concept of development communication has been subject to reappraisal and new dimensions have been added to this concept. The total neglect of the traditional channels of communication in rural areas and the failure to deal with the situational factors which have an effect on the adoption of messages and behaviour modification, widened the gap between the rich and poor, and between men and women. A high level of illiteracy, particularly among village women, and their limited access to media is a major barrier to planning effective communication strategies for them. In the seventies, the concept of non-formal education was perceived as a new force through which education became an instrument for socioeconomic change at both the individual and societal level. The objective of 'conscientization' through the Adult Education Programme, remained largely non-operational as the quality and range of information could not be brought within the reach of rural women.

Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) was another experiment in the use of mass media for propagating new agricultural practices among rural viewers. SITE's working hypothesis was 'information leads to development'. The evidence emerging from various evaluation studies does not validate this assumption as several other factors intervene in this link between information and development.

Change occurs in a context which permits the individual to transform new information and apply it within one's own cultural milieu.

Mass media is a powerful tool to influence the process of social change. The powerful entertainment media which is both 'urban-based and urban-biased' has contributed substantially to the degradation of of the female image, largely portraying the male viewpoint of women. Films whose outreach is much wider have projected either traditional stereotypes of women as glorified mothers, suffering housewives or as sex objects and irrational women incapable of taking independent decisions. Advertisements blatantly promote the image of women as consumers and glamorous figures. Many women in the town spoke about the unhealthy influence of films on teenaged boys and girls. All forms of media forum—folk theatres to films, radio and television have projected and perpetuated dominant ideologies and female stereotypes. Women have made very little impact on either the policies or the strategies of communication. It is difficult to outline a blueprint of action programmes as to how to convey the message in audio-visual programmes of communication in different situations and to differentiated groups. Some action groups in Delhi and other cities, have tried experimental theatre or short films highlighting some of the women's issues (dowry, rape, alcoholism, wife beating, wage discrimination etc.) to produce a demonstration effect and provoke reactions from the community. Exhortations to change do not have the desired impact but a strong local level organization could use such communication methods as a supportive instrument of action for initiating a dialogue within the community. In the village based local and personalized system of communication, the formal methods of communication could be more effective if they are supported by local groups and the informal social networks.

An effective communication strategy should take into consideration the communication environment, system of local communication and the role of local opinion leaders in influencing the community decisions. Some of the themes which could be possibly taken up for the production of communication material include (*a*) facts and figures about women's contribution in all fields of development to discourage myths and stereotypes about women's role, expose the sexist bias in books, advertisements and films; (*b*) women's rights under the statutory and customary laws including land rights, inheritance rights, equal wages; (*c*) attempts

by various women's action groups at mobilization and organization may be dramatized through posters, film strips, slide sets to demonstrate the outcome of group action; (*d*) new role models for women and men which are more equitable in sharing the responsibilities at home; and (*e*) highlighting customs and beliefs of the people in the area which are obscurantist.

The mid-seventies emerged as a turning point in the history of the debate on women's equality and a general recognition that existing policies and institutional mechanisms are inadequate to facilitate women's participatory roles. The basic premises of development are being questioned by researchers on women's issues. The limited understanding of the varied nature of oppression and constraints that women from different classes face, is evident from the debates on complete equality versus special measures for women and the reservation issue which keep surfacing periodically. Efforts directed at change are bedevilled by fragmented approaches conceding reforms within a social system where women have little say in the decision making process and the power structure. The shift in emphasis to 'participatory development' has resulted from a growing realization that programmes, services and inputs delivered from above fail to deal with the basic issues of inequality, dependence and lack of options for women which arise from societal structures which are inherently discriminatory against women and restrict, if not altogether deny them, any options or basic freedom of choice.

The importance of grassroot participatory organizations as potential key instruments has been recognized by both government and voluntary action groups. The search for an operational framework for approaches to women's participatory development has led many groups to grapple with the realities of women's lives. Evaluations and discussions during the last decade have however, identified the need for some 'mediating structures' to sustain and nurture these organizations without discouraging participatory initiative.

The micro impulses facing the entire gamut of issues are struggling to find patterns of organizations, content and methodology for action. Two experimental projects of the Centre for Women's Development Studies in Bengal and Punjab to promote 'employment opportunities for rural women through their own organizations' were initiated at the same time as this study and they have provided interesting lessons for

developing and strengthening the participatory base for rural women's development. These projects have shown more sensitivity to local issues and environment but undergo a continuous struggle to resolve the inconsistencies between macro policies and micro action.

It is difficult to specify a correct methodology for community based approaches to women's issues. The process of mobilization and conscientization which attempts to make women aware of the problems, challenges and choices cannot be external as it involves both a subjective understanding of the elements of oppression and an objective decision to transform their realities by building their capacities for participation and self development, short-term campaigns do little to change attitudes but focus attention on specific issues. The process has to be continuous and should provide a common basis or framework for both an understanding and analysis of manifest problems and possible collective action, if the goals are comprehensible to the community and the efforts do not seem far ahead of women's consciousness.

Notes and References

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2. 'Towards Equality', Chapter 8, *op. cit.*

3. 'Women's Programmes', PRAI Publication No. 191, Planning Department, Uttar Pradesh.

4. Report of the Team for Study of Community Projects and National Extension Service, Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Vol. 1, 1950.

5. Centre for Women's Studies, University of Kanpur, Kanpur; Literacy House, Lucknow; Giri Institute of Development Studies.

6. 'Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas', proposed subscheme of the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction, 1982.

7. During 1982-83, the Centre for Women's Development Studies planned to organize four camps in the rural areas of West Bengal, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa, to bring together groups of women from poorer households, government functionaries from development departments at the district and state levels and representatives of some local level organizations or institutions, for a dialogical approach to women's most pressing problems and to identify follow-up action.

8. Self-Employed Women's Association, Ahmedabad.

Profiles

I

45 years old 'M' was a Muslim. She lived in Barabanki with her husband and five unmarried daughters. Other family members included her husband's younger brother and his wife, their two sons and their wives and two small children. They all lived in a fairly spacious house, one of the six rooms was used by her husband as his office. Although the house was shared by the two families, each family had a separate kitchen. 'M' stood behind a partially closed door throughout the discussion and refused to come and join in the conversation with her husband, who owned eight powerlooms which were used on a commercial basis and were housed in the outer premises of the house. He spoke at length about his business, but when questioned about issues other than his business he pointed towards the partially closed door. Inside the room 'M' refused to speak until the purpose of the study was explained to her in detail. She then called out for her elder daughter whom she considered better equipped to converse because she felt that she would not be able to give any information as she had no 'knowledge'. It was only after some amount of persuasion and informal conversation that she relaxed a little and offered a chair. She sat on the floor and declined the offer of a chair mumbling that she was accustomed to sitting on the floor in an attempt to remain at a physically lower level than her husband. She was initially hesitant to talk as she feared that her husband, sitting at close quarters in the adjacent room, would disapprove or would even overhear everything she spoke. When the door was shut, she heaved a sigh of relief and sat back. She asked a lot of questions about the investigator's education, place of birth and marital status. She proudly mentioned that her elder daughter was attending a formal school and was in Class VIII. 'M' had reason to be proud as her daughter was the first girl in all the Muslim families in the area to be attending school. Her

other daughters were in different classes in the primary school. They were all taught basic Arabic at home.

'M' herself had never been to a formal school and was only able to read and recite the *Quran*. She felt positively and strongly about her daughters' education in particular and girls' education in general. In her view, education was more required in a girl's life, because unlike a boy, she faced myriad risks and the opportunities for her to find a solution were too narrow and restricted, leading to insecurity and uncertainty in life. She felt that boys could manage without education. She said that her views on girls' education and her willingness to send her daughters to school, were in response to her own lack of education and exposure to outside life which has meant for her a life of helplessness, insecurity and confinement. The fear that her husband could desert her without any notice made her very conscious of the need for women to be economically independent. She believed that the problem of women's insecurity could be solved by having sons to whom one could turn to in times of need. 'M' began to weep while saying this. She believed that even having fifty daughters was not as good (advantageous) as having one son, she wailed, 'Where will I go if my husband deserts me?' In her view, the number of sons a woman had, more than determining her status in society, determined the degree of security she would have in later life. But not having given birth to a son had led to a feeling of incompetence as her husband often threatened to abandon her. Her husband hardly spent time with her and there was minimal communication between them. During the conversation, he kept calling out and straining his head in a bid to hear what 'M' was talking about, until the door was finally shut on him. She felt very lonely and isolated, more so as there was complete restriction on her mobility. Before her marriage she used to visit her friends and relatives but since her marriage 30 years ago, she had hardly ever stepped out of the house and had not even seen the local market or visited anyone. She did not have any friends and her relatives lived outside the town. She felt suffocated initially, but had got used to staying at home like most women. Earlier, she used to visit her parents in her hometown but since their death, she had lost that one opportunity to travel. She was not against women working outside the house but in her own case, she felt helpless as her religion and the existing social norms took precedence over other issues and permeated all the other aspects of her life. She did not

justify this situation as natural but felt the lack of an alternative. The fact that her husband owned eight powerlooms and hired labour did not mean much to her in terms of her own status which remained one of subordination and dependence. She did not enjoy even partial rights over the property nor had any control or access to it. But, in her view, even if she owned property, it would not necessarily improve her status as her husband would still be in a position of power. The only positive factor in her life was that the women in the household did not have to engage in weaving which would have overburdened them. At present, she along with the other women in the house only• occasionally engaged in spinning. Her daily activities included cooking, cleaning the house, washing clothes and sorting out yarn. In her spare time, she filled the bobbins and stitched clothes for herself and for other family members as clothes were not bought ready made from the market. This often left her with little leisure time.

'M' did not answer any questions regarding her husband's business as she said that she had no knowledge because she never asked him any questions about it, but she was aware of the benefits as evident from the material comforts enjoyed by them as compared to the living conditions of others around. All decisions in the house were taken by her husband in consultation with his brother, women were informed or asked for advice only when the men found it necessary, which was rare. They were only expected to inform the men about the requirements at home. To all the other questions concerning women's social status and self perception, her response was confined to the view that women never have an independent existence and the family's or community's expectations from them revolved around their marriage which she viewed as one of the major reasons for women's subordination and backwardness.

II

49 years old 'K' is illiterate and belongs to the scheduled caste. At the time of marriage she was 13 years old. She lives with her husband, two sons, a daughter-in-law and four grandchildren. She considered herself to be the only earning member in the family as her husband, who is old and partially blind, did no work nor did

her married son. She owns about two acres of land on which she and her daughter-in-law worked daily, and took turns to do the housework as well. She hired a tractor (for Rs 25 per acre) whenever the need arose and when she hired labour, she did not pay any wages but lent them her plough and bullock for their own use. Her daughter-in-law worked both outside and within the home but was regarded by 'K' as a help instead of another earning member in the family. Her husband and son were liabilities for her rather than 'assets' as they did not share the work with her nor did they contribute to the family income in any way.

'K' had inherited the land at the time of her marriage, being the only child of her parents. She also owned the house they lived in, a pair of plough cattle and a fodder machine. Her younger son operated the machine, and only when no male member in the family was available, 'K' or her daughter-in-law operated it. 'K' was very articulate about the problems she faced in terms of her role as the main earning member of the family and her consciousness of being the head of the household.

She had taken a loan from the local rural bank to purchase the cattle and the fodder machine, and only part of this had been repaid (to select and purchase the cattle she walked six kilometres from the village on her own which gave her a great deal of self confidence). Her debts from informal sources were increasing as she often had to borrow money to meet the consumption needs of the family, the land produce was not always sufficient. Her son, who had been gambling for the past 13 years, had resorted to stealing grain from the field and selling it to gamble with the money thus earned. 'K' had to repay many small loans that he took to gamble. This led to strained relations between them, to solve the problem and to get rid of the economic burden imposed by him, she recently demarcated half the land for him. He rarely worked on it and it was left entirely in his wife's care. His wife turned to 'K' whenever there was a shortage of grain but 'K' resented this and preferred to maintain a separate kitchen whenever such a situation arose. She believed that her daughter-in-law did not actually care for her, if her needs were not fulfilled (particularly in times of grain shortage). In this respect, 'K' expressed her belief that a woman's all-time-good-behavior greatly determined her status within the home and emphasized that she expected it of her daughter-in-law also. On another level, she wondered why young women today were not as pampered by their elders as they used to be in her own time.

'K' did not expect any support from her husband because of his old age and illness and she believed that he lacked worldly wisdom (mainly because he stayed at home and unlike her did not have much worldly experience). She had no illusions about her son in whom she was very disappointed. This, along with the fact that she controlled all the household assets and income, had made her a 'central' figure in the household. She took all the decisions in the family and believed that without her will, nothing would happen. Outside the house, she decided who the family should vote for, and during the elections (both local and national) choice of the candidate was made by her. She exercised authority in family relations and took decisions regarding her daughter-in-law's reproductive behaviour—how many children the son should have. She did not want her son to undergo sterilization and advised her daughter-in-law to abstain from sexual intercourse. Although she sympathized with her daughter-in-law for her son's behaviour, 'K' regulated her life around certain expectations that she has of her. Her position in the family and community was also consolidated by the fact that she was solely responsible for productive activities. In the past few years, 'K' had travelled on her own to Badrinath and other places for pilgrimage which gave her tremendous self confidence. Many women from the community came to her for advice on various issues.

III

The life history of the 35 years old 'B' yielded insight into the various processes and forms of exploitation and oppression of the working class. 'B', an agricultural labourer of the *chamar* caste, was the second wife of a 50 years old labourer married now for about 20 years. Her husband worked as an agricultural labourer during the agricultural season, and as a casual labourer on construction sites and brick kilns in and near Barabanki, during the lean season. Born and brought up in poverty and labouring in the fields from the day she remembers, 'B' viewed her 12 years old son as her only hope, being the sole survivor of her four children. He was very neatly dressed in his school uniform and she said that she and her husband had saved up Rs 50 to buy their son his books, bag and clothes. She was educating her son in the hope that after studying upto the primary level, he could be employed either

at a flour mill or as a petty peon somewhere. She could not afford to educate him beyond this level because it meant an expense of rupees ten per month towards fees etc., and it was difficult to sustain the family with a regular non-earning member.

Her own life experience had made her aware of the constraints of her own class and more specifically of the women in that class. She bitterly pointed out that the district or local bureaucracy in connivance with the rural elite wanted to 'suckle the blood of the poor'. She felt that employment opportunities were extremely limited and the village environment was not conducive to effective implementation of policies for the poor. 'B' and her husband had been allotted one *bigha* of land by the government under the Land for Landless Scheme. This land had been acquired by the government from the *ahirs* (middle peasant caste) who owned land adjoining this plot. The preceding year, 'B' had spent Rs 30 to get this plot ploughed, but the *ahirs*, who are the dominant landholders in the village, did not let her cultivate it. She had appealed to other people to intervene but no one came to her aid. It is clear that the allotment of land in their name did not give them the actual right of cultivation. The village power structure makes it difficult for the socially underprivileged group to exercise their rights.

'B' often visited the neighbouring villages in search of employment. During the agriculturally lean season, in the absence of any other gainful employment, she engaged in other work like weaving of cots and processing of grain. Her failing health due to overwork and malnutrition made it difficult for her to cope with her domestic chores. During periods of sickness her husband helped with the housework like fetching water and cooking food for the family. 'B', like the other poor people of this village, was critical of the near absence of medical facilities in the village. She found that getting herself treated at the government hospital proved to be very expensive as she had to go to the town and the doctors were callous and corrupt. She usually consulted a private doctor in a nearby village for treatment.

Though 'B' is conscious of the existing social system where the socioeconomic inequalities place her *biradari* at the bottom of the caste hierarchy, yet a strange kind of fear and distrust was reflected in her talk and demeanour. On talking to her it was found that she had earlier worked in the fields of a local landlord, who is also the most influential and powerful man in the village, with political links at the district, state

and centre levels. She had stopped working in his fields ever since four of his henchmen (*goondas*) came one evening totally drunk and raped her. Though this took place at five o'clock in the evening while her husband was away, not a single member of her caste came to her rescue for the fear of reprisals from the landlord. Rape is a specific from of oppression against the socially and economically disadvantaged group. After this incident, other families of this cluster had stopped interacting with her and her family. She felt totally isolated, lonely and friendless and though she resented this, she explained that the poor had no say in the matter. The *goondas* threatened to 'slit her throat and that of her 12 years old son', if she ever breathed a word of this incident to any living soul. After the incident the *ahirs* and the other *chamars* in the village advised her to 'lie low' as the landlord was all powerful. This had instilled a deep sense of insecurity and fear in her, as evening approaches she hurries back from her work and remains inside her hut. She was aware that this was not much of a protection but it made her feel better. The only explanation she had to offer for all this was that 'the landlord was rich and she poor, that they were men and she a woman'.

'B' believed that the oppressive social structure was doubly disadvantageous to her. First, as a woman, within the household she was overburdened with housework and other responsibilities. Second, she was more vulnerable to exploitation, being a member of a socially disadvantaged class. Added to this, there were other kinds of oppression such as frequent beating. Had it not been for her poor health she declared, 'I would have also beaten him up and it would have checked this practice'. She is aware that the people of her *biradari* must unite to fight against the injustices of the rural elite but explained that this was not possible because of the former's lack of bargaining power and the latter's capacity to split the working class *biradari* on almost all issues.

IV

'S' was a 35 years old *brahman* widow. She has had no education and was married at the age of 16. Her husband died ten years ago. She worked in a spinning unit in Barabanki set up by the Gandhi Ashram. Prior to her husband's death, she lived with him and his family in a village twenty kilometres from Barabanki. She did not engage in any

outside employment and stayed at home looking after their two small children and doing all the household work.

After her husband's death, her in-laws and their close relatives began to find fault with her over trivial things and often taunted her that she lived off others. It became impossible for her to stay with them as the harassment increased and the village community reverberated with rumours regarding her. Her children, a girl and a boy, were four years and three years respectively when she moved out to stay with her maternal aunt in the same village. Once she moved out of her in-laws' house, whatever financial support she had received so far from them was withdrawn. Initially, she found it difficult to find work and did not know how or where to go about it. Forced to break away from the traditional social norms wherein upper caste women did not go out to work, 'S' determinedly went from door to door looking for employment so that she could earn enough money to feed and educate her children. She began by doing odd jobs like sifting, husking and pounding the grain, washing clothes and utensils in a few houses for which she received a meagre amount. Although 'S' was accepted by the people of her caste to perform these tasks, she said that she would not have had any qualms about working anywhere irrespective of caste, as the survival of her children was her primary concern. She continued to do these odd jobs until she met an acquaintance from Barabanki who informed her about the heavy demand and on going recruitment of women in a spinning unit. She went with her to Barabanki and found employment in the unit. She had been working there for a year. She left her children in the village with her aunt because of the acute housing problem in the town and the lack of resources to rent a house. She usually spent the night in the house of an acquaintance or a distant relative. Her son, aged 13 years, studied in Class VIII but her daughter had stopped attending school after she passed the junior high school (Class VIII) to look after her brother and the house. While reflecting on her own life experience, 'S' resented the fact that she had to remove her daughter from school in the face of mounting practical difficulties, whereas ideally, she would have liked her to study as much as possible so as to become self-sufficient and lead a life of relative 'comfort and dignity'. She was hopeful that once her son completed his schooling, he would find employment and share her financial responsibility. Though she tried to visit her children twice a month, she usually visited them only once a month so as to avoid expenditure on transport.

She worked from half past nine in the morning to five o' clock in the evening. Her work involved spinning yarn on a metal *charkha* by constantly rotating a handle and occasionally piecing the broken yarn. Since payments are made on a piece rate basis (34 paise per bobbin), she tried hard to pace up the rate of production to be able to earn a higher wage. She did not eat any lunch, both to save time and money. She only drank tea in the morning and had a small meal at night. Wages were paid every week and she was able to earn between Rs 18 to Rs 24 per week. Once a month, she purchased the necessary items for her children and the major part of her earnings was spent on food for her children. Her son's school fees amounted to rupees nine and one half per month. Hardly any money was spent on medical health care, as she herself, despite poor health, never availed of any local medical services and her children consulted the village doctor in time of need.

Although 'S' was employed and had control over her earnings, she felt negatively both about her employment and the income level. In her view, such lowly paid, menial work did nothing to improve a woman's position (in terms of authority and status) and the strain and hardship involved only overwhelmed her. She strongly felt that women should have the requisite education and training to be able to work in better conditions. She realized that the work she did in the unit was hazardous to her health as the cotton dust raised in the process of spinning, led to pain in the chest and persistent cough. Along with some other women in the unit, 'S' had requested the manager for basic facilities including arrangements for preventive health care. She complained that the management was indifferent to their problems. 'S' said that she did not want to risk her job by being too demanding as this was the only source of income to support herself and her children. 'Even though we feel united on certain issues against the management, we are in no position to actually make demands for fear of losing the job'

She often took small loans (from local acquaintances) to meet her children's basic needs. While talking about the harsh realities of her daily life, 'S' reminisced that a generation ago survival was not a problem and did not demand such hard struggle as she and her daughter experienced today. She felt that severe economic pressure was a major problem in her life, and she had begun worrying about her daughter's marriage because of the increasing dowry demands. The manner in which she perceived the solution to the problem was to find a match for

her in an equally deprived family as giving dowry would be absolutely out of reach for her. Though 'S' was overworked during the day, she felt lonely and isolated in the evenings. She had no one to visit or any where to go. 'Each one is so busy in her family and its routine'. But being in the midst of so many other women the whole day and able to share her problems and experience with them evoked in her a sense of solidarity, and the work placé, in this sense, was a source of strength to her, 'I feel less alone when I am with these women. Here my burdens are understood and shared'.

V

43 years old 'SM' was a government functionary. She was a postgraduate in Economics and had completed the B.Ed. course. She lived in Etawah with her mother and a two years old son. Her husband was a government employee posted in a nearby town. She earned around Rs 800 per month but the aggregate family income was over Rs 2,000 (they owned four houses and six shops in Rampur). She was in charge of 184 schools in the district. She mentioned some of the problems faced by her at work, a few were related to the utter lack of facilities for the Inspection staff. 'SM' said that there was an acute shortage of staff and women workers often refused to go to the villages because of inadequate transport and security. At times, it became impossible to reach the schools during the monsoons when the roads were flooded. She suggested that every woman Assistant Inspectress of Schools should get appropriate facilities.

She was very bitter about the excessive political interference in the working of the bureaucracy. Though she was a gazetted officer, she lacked actual power. Often, even relevant information did not get disseminated from above. Files were moved without consultation. She was critical of the planned government policy to give the same salary to the teachers as is given to the Inspection staff, on the ground that the teachers did not have to face the same degree of hardships in their work as did the Inspection staff. She had fairly good relations with her colleagues. The departmental colleagues recognized and appreciated her organized and systematic work. Even within the community she commanded a great deal of respect due to her social status.

Her normal office hours were from ten in the morning to five o'clock in the evening. However, whenever she went on her weekly tours to some of the schools in the rural areas, she usually left at seven o'clock in the morning and often returned late at night. Since she had to deal with various people at different levels, rumours were often circulated, but undeterred, she had evolved a position for herself in the small town which held her in high esteem. She shared her work experience with her husband who took an interest in it and disregarded any rumours regarding her.

'SM' was very active and articulate with regard to her work situation. She always had a point to make whenever there were group discussions with the teachers in the colleges visited by the research team. Her perception of women's social status was also reflected in the opinions expressed by her. She felt that a woman's status was determined by that of her husband or father and women were destined to do all the household chores. In her view, a woman's primary role is that of a homemaker. It is the woman, she said, who is responsible for domestic harmony, and if the husband objects to her work outside, she should leave her job. On the whole, she felt that girls should be given responsibility and be made to stand on their own. She was against divorce and remarriage. This, she felt, was prevalent only among the lower castes. She was aware of women's inheritance rights, but she felt that women should forego these rights. She mentioned that she had control over the family property most of which was in her mother's name. Her father was not alive and she was the eldest of six sisters and had no brother. After her father's death, she took up a job to support the family and to educate and marry her sisters. Initially, she got a job as a teacher in a government school through a relative's influence. She got her present job on her own merit. She got married at the age of 38 years and regularly observed a fast for her husband's and son's welfare, and followed the usual religio-social norms.

Her work sphere is completely compartmentalized from home. There has been no change in her self-perception despite her education, employment and the particular circumstances that she faced. In fact after she got married, her role outside the home became more clearly demarcated from her role as a housewife and mother.

VI

The life of 45 year old 'YD', a *kayastha* by caste, is an outstanding example of tremendous drive and zeal in organizing community activities. Educated till the primary level in a village school, she learnt stitching from a *brahman* friend who had come to the village from Patna. Later, she began to teach other women, though only at an informal level. She came to Barabanki town in 1950. She lived with her husband, three sons and a daughter-in-law. She has a daughter who is married and stays in Allahabad. She said that she was not responsible for most of the household chores and devoted most of her time to outdoor activities.

She had organized two cooperative societies, a *Seva Sadan* and a junior high school. She underwent a 15 days course in leadership training conducted by the National Cooperative Union in New Delhi. The cooperatives she has organized are *Mahila Shilp Karhai Silai Udyogik Utpadan Sahkari Samiti* (a stitching and tailoring centre for women which is now under the Industry department) and *Nagar Mahila Upbhokta Sahkari Samiti* (a consumer cooperative society). The former was started in 1971 and the latter in 1975. The *Seva Sadan—Kamla Nehru Mahila Udyogik Mahila Seva Sadan* was established in 1971 and is under the Social Welfare department and gets a grant of Rs 500 per annum from the department. Apart from this, she established a junior high school in 1975. She hoped that the school would get recognition soon. The school was started with an initial amount of Rs 4,000. The earnings from the school fees were used for the payment of salaries to the principal, five or six teachers, and other supportive staff.

She decided to set up a stitching centre in 1971 and was encouraged and assisted by a friend who was a social worker and local politician. She went from door to door contacting women in the locality and persuaded them to come and learn sewing in her centre. Initially, two machines were installed in the centre. In 1975, she obtained a loan of Rs 3,500 from the Industry department at an interest of eight per cent per annum to buy six more machines. She also employed one teacher and paid her Rs 40 per month. She charged each trainee a monthly fee of rupees four which was later increased to rupees eight. The minimum learning period was three months. The stitching centre is now under the

Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM) of the Industry department. Under this programme, the trainees are given a monthly stipend of Rs 100 for a period of six months by the Industry department. The centre is supposed to be given Rs 50 per trainee per month, for expenditure on the raw materials. At present, the government had sanctioned funds for only ten trainees although the prescribed number was twenty. She was keen that a few more trainees should be included under TRYSEM and had been working towards the same. After the training, she helped the trainees in the procurement of loans from the banks to buy sewing machines—the guarantee for which was given by the rich landlord of their respective villagees. Some trainees who were either reluctant or unable to take bank loans, bought machines from the local dealers on an instalment basis with her help.

'YD' was the president of this 18 member cooperative society. She was elected through a formal election organized by the District Magistrate. Each member had to pay a membership fee of Rs 16. Any profit from the sale of the stitched clothes was deposited with her, in the capacity of the president of the cooperative. Orders for stitching were obtained from her personal contacts. She had plans to open a shop where the clothes could be sold at reasonable rates. In a big fair at Dewa, a nearby town, she sold some of these through the stalls of the Industry, and Harijan and Social Welfare departments. The consumer cooperative run by her supplied controlled cloth, oil, soap etc. She bought the goods from various sources and sold them at nominal rates. She was a highly respected and well-known person in the town and in the neighbouring rural areas. She was always attempting to expand her social and economic activities with the greatest enterprise. She maintained good relations with government functionaries and this facilitated the implementation of her intended schemes with the requisitive assistance. She was an expectional example of tremendous determination and ardour for organizing community activities despite her merge education and limited financial resources.

Table A1 Caste and Occupation-wise Break up of Respondents : Etawah Town

Caste/Religion	Occupational Category						Number of respondents
	Handloom weavers	Teachers/ Educational functionaries	Medical	Government functionaries	Unpaid family workers	Others+	
Muslim	2	1	—	1*	—	—	4
Christian	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Scheduled caste	—	—	—	1*	1	—	2
Gupta	—	1	—	1*	—	—	2
Kayastha	—	1	—	2	1	1*	5
Brahman	—	4	—	2	1	1	8
Rajput	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Sikh	—	—	1*	—	—	—	1
Total	2	7	2	7	3	3	24

* Indicates men respondents

\+ Others include businessmen, teacher trainees and social workers

Table A2 Caste and Educational Level of Respondents : Etawah Town

Caste/Religion	Educational Level							Number of respondents
	Illiterate	Primary school	Junior high school	high school	Inter	Graduation	Post graduation	
Muslim	2	—	—	—	—	—	2	4
Christian	—	—	—	1*	—	—	—	1
Scheduled caste	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
Gupta	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	2
Kayastha	—	1	1	—	1	1	1	5
Brahman	—	—	—	1	—	—	7+	8
Rajput	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Sikh	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Total	3	2	1	2	1	4	11	24

* Also completed nursing training course

\+ Six of these post-graduates have completed the teacher training course

Table A3 Caste and Age Group of Respondents : Etawah Town

Caste/Religion	Age in years 20-29	30-39	40-49	59-59	Number of respondents
Muslim	1	--	1	2	4
Christian	1	—	—	—	1
Scheduled caste	—	1	1	—	2
Gupta	1	1	—	—	2
Kayastha	--	1	4	—	5
Brahman	1	3	4	—	8
Rajput	—	—	1	—	1
Sikh	—	—	—	1	1
Total	4	6	11	3	24

Table A4 Caste and Occupation-wise Break up of Respondents : Barabanki Town

Caste/Religion	Occupational Category						
	Handloom weavers	Spinners	Educational functionaries	Medical	Unpaid family workers	Others	Number of respondents
Muslim	9	—	1	—	—	—	10
Christian	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
Scheduled caste	—	1	—	—	—	1*	2
Gupta	—	—	2	1	1	—	4
Kayastha	—	—	3	—	1	1+	5
Thakur	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Brahman	—	1	—	—	1	—	2
Goldsmith	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
Total	9	2	6	3	6	2	28

* Trainee under TRYSEM
\+ Social Worker

Table A5 Caste and Educational Level of Respondents : Barabanki Town

Caste/Religion	Educational Level							
	Illiterate	Primary school	Junior high school	High school	Inter	Graduation	Post graduation	Number of respondents
Muslim	9	—	—	—	—	—	1	10
Christian	--	—	—	2*	—	—	--	2
Scheduled caste	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
Gupta	—	—	—	1	—	1	2	4
Kayastha	1	1	—	—	—	1	2	5
Thakur		—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Brahman	1	1	—	—	—	—	--	2
Goldsmith	---	—	2	—	—	—	—	2
Total	13	2	3	3	—	2	5	28

* Also completed training in nursing course

Table A 6 Caste and Age Group of Respondents : Barabanki Town

Caste/Religion	Age in years				Number of respondents
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	
Muslim	2	1	6	1	10
Christian	—	1	—	1	2
Scheduled caste	1	1	—	—	2
Gupta	1	1	2	—	4
Kayastha	1	1	3	—	5
Brahman	—	1	1	—	2
Thakur	1	—	—	—	1
Goldsmith	—	1	1	—	2
Total	6	7	13	2	28

Table A 7 Caste-wise Break up of Families : Mohari Village

Caste	Number of families
Scheduled caste	109
Backward caste	25
Nai	6
Teli	16
Kumhar	12
Vaishya	8
Gadariya	88
Thakur	35
Brahman	25
Muslim	6
Total	330

Table A 8 Caste and Age Group of Respondents : Mohari Village

Caste/Religion	Age in years				Number of respondents
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	
Scheduled caste	—	1	4	1	6
Nai	—	1	1	—	2
Gadariya	4	1	1	—	6
Thakur	1	1	1	—	3
Brahman	—	3	—	—	3
Total	5	7	7	1	20

Table A 9 Household-wise Break up of Caste and Occupation of Respondents : Mohari Village

Caste	Occupational Category: Agricultural workers			Non-agricultural workers		
	Landless labourers	Owner cultivators/ small and marginal farmers (upto five acres)	Peasant proprietors (5-15 acres)	Artisans	Teachers	Dai/Doctor
Scheduled caste	3	2	—	—	—	1*
Nai	—	2	—	—	—	—
Teli	—	1	—	—	—	—
Kumhar	—	—	—	1	—	—
Gadariya	1	4	—	—	1	—
Thakur	—	3	1	—	—	—
Brahman	—	1	—	1	—	1+
Total	4	13	1	2	1	2

* Dai
\+ (quack) doctor

Table A 10 Caste-wise Break up of Educational Level of Respondents : Mohari Village

Caste	Educational Level							
	Illiterate	Upto primary level	Junior high school	high school	Inter	Graduation	Post graduation	Number of respondents
Scheduled caste	5	—	—	—	1	—	—	6
Nai	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	2
Teli	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Kumhar	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Gadariya	2	3	1	—	—	—	—	6
Thakur	2	2	—	—	—	—	—	4
Brahman	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	3
Total	10	8	2	—	2	1	—	23

Table A 11 Caste and Age Group of Respondents : Barael Village

Caste/Religion	Age in years						Number of respondents
	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	
Muslim	1	2	4	3	—	1	11
Scheduled caste	1	3	1	5	—	—	10
Yadav	2	2	1	2	—	—	7
Gupta	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Brahman	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Kayastha	—	1	—	1	—	—	2
Kumhar	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Total	5	10	6	11	—	1	33

Table A 12 Caste and Occupation Group of Respondents : Barael Village

Caste/Religion	Occupational Category						Number of respondents
	Agricultural/ Cultivators/ Labourers	Artisans	Weavers	Traders	Professional/ Service	Dai/Community health volunteer	
Muslim	1	1	7	—	2	—	11
Scheduled caste	9	—	—	—	—	1*	10
Yadav	6	—	—	—	—	1+	7
Gupta	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Brahman	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Kayastha	—	1	—	—	1	—	1
Kumhar	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Total	16	3	7	2	3	2	33

* Dai

\+ Community health volunteer

Table A 13 Caste-wise Break up of Educational Level of Respondents : Barael Village

Caste/Religion	Educational Level							Number of respondents
	Illiterate	Upto primary level	Junior high school	High school	Inter	Graduation	Post graduation	
Muslim	10	—	—	—	1*	—	—	11
Scheduled caste	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	10
Yadav	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	7
Gupta	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Brahman	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Kayastha	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	2
Kumhar	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Total	29	2	1	—	1	—	—	33

* Also completed Basic Teachers' Certificate Course

Table A 14 Sex Ratio of Population

Year	India	Uttar Pradesh	Etawah	Barabanki
1901	972	937	842	953
1911	964	915	824	921
1921	955	909	814	918
1931	950	904	805	917
1941	945	907	833	908
1951	946	910	840	895
1961	941	909	847	894
1971	930	879	826	851
1981	935	886	831	860

Source: Mitra et. al., 'The Status of Women : Shifts in Occupational Participation 1961-1971', Census of India, 1980.

Table A 15 Birth, Death, and Infant Mortality Rates* in Rural/Urban Areas During 1976

		Rural	Urban	Total
India	Birth	19.4	36.9	21.6
	Death	7.7	7.5	7.7
	Infant Mortality	5.0	4.7	4.9
Uttar Pradesh	Birth	15.4	17.9	16.3
	Death	5.7	6.0	5.8
	Infant Mortality	4.9	5.2	5.1
Barabanki	Birth	10.7	8.2	10.3
	Death	5.0	2.6	4.7
	Infant Mortality	4.5	1.6	4.1
Etawah	Birth	11.8	23.8	13.9
	Death	6.4	7.1	6.5
	Infant Mortality	6.4	5.2	6.0

*Birth, death and infant mortality rates per 1000 population
Source: Vital Statistics of India, Office of the Registrar General, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1976.

Table A 16 Sex Ratio of Deaths by Age for Rural and Urban Areas During 1976

		Age in years				
		0-1	1-4	5-14	15-44	45+
India	Rural	111.9	92.4	107.3	103.3	130.1
	Urban	127.0	104.0	122.6	125.0	153.6
	Total	116.8	94.9	110.8	110.2	135.9
Uttar Pradesh	Rural	116.1	98.3	131.5	103.6	170.0
	Urban	121.3	113.1	129.3	123.4	148.9
	Total	118.1	101.6	130.8	109.5	160.9

Source : Vital Statistics of India, Office of the Registrar General, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, New Delhi, 1976.

Table A 17 *Class-wise Enrolment in Schools*

	Class I		Class V		Class VIII		Class X	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Uttar Pradesh	6372000	2945000	806919	298986	589983	153518	488111	84104
Barabanki	29353	11944	12201	3583	6946	1132	4740	452
Etawah	29102	17673	18640	9261	14384	4530	13507	2286

Source : IV Educational Survey, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, 1978.

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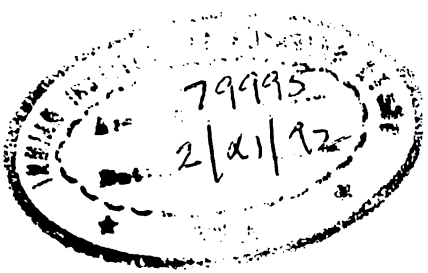

Based on data collected from two small districts in Uttar Pradesh, this book explores the multifarious experiences of being a woman and enhances our understanding of the broader aspects of sex role differentiation and its structural correlates in a complex system characterized by the inequalities of class, caste and sex. The reappraisal attempted here of models and strategies of development focus on the need for a policy of intervention favouring the socially and economically deprived groups. The study, being contextual in nature, does not permit any definite conclusions about the marginalization of women in development planning but it does provide grounds for questioning the perceptions and attitudes of bureaucrats, professionals and others who formulate policies and programmes.

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