

85 Training for Rural Women in Development (Published in 1994)

a) Researcher's Identity

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b) Objectives

The overriding objective of the workshop was to provide inputs for developing training and designing action research projects on gender issues, particularly for women's development and women in development. Specifically, the workshop focused on the following aspects;

- i. Conscientisation, mobilization and organization of rural women;
- ii. Development of leadership potentials among women through political and personal empowerment;
- iii. Enhancing bargaining capabilities, developing and strengthening linkages and networking among women's organizations and interest groups;
- iv. Providing knowledge and skills on various development issues which can further be articulated and crystallized through action researches.

c) Executive summary

Based on the central theme, the workshop was further divided into three sub-themes. These were:

Theme - I: General Aspects of Conscientisation. Mobilization and Organization of Rural Women

Theme - II: Development of Leadership Qualities, Bargaining Capabilities and Networking Mechanism

Theme - III: Identification of Areas of Production, Income Generation and Relevant Development Issues for the Rural Women

In all, nine papers were presented centering on the sub-themes, including a key note paper. These papers were written by eminent persons in their relevant fields. The key note paper presented by Dr. Ashrafuddin Ahmed set the theoretical framework of the workshop. The rest of eight papers, on this basic premise, reviewed the existing situation and suggested future options to be considered for adoption.

Dr. Ashrafuddin offered a broad overview of the existing situation pertaining to women's development and women in development, reviewed the policy prescriptions and their actual manifestation and has concluded with a set of policy options.

Due to existing traditional and cultural norms, the women have always been experiencing a discriminated role and status in the family, society and even in the national and economic development processes. In the national policy documents like Census or Five Year Plan documents only a negligible portion of the country's women population and workforce are enumerated as 'economically active'. This is in spite of the fact that besides the household chores and involvement in post harvesting activities, women in recent years are found in chipping, brick breaking for construction, transplanting, sowing, weeding and harvesting to garment making and quite a number of them are holding responsible managerial, administrative and political positions. The appropriate approach to overcome the problem in women's development and women in development should be in line with equity, efficiency and pragmatism.