

A STUDY OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF WOMEN TRAINERS OF THE INDUSTRIAL HOMES

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Female labour force in Pakistan has not so far been fully utilized mainly because of unorganized supply, inadequate economic incentives and other socio-cultural constraints and inhibitions. A number of women organizations have addressed to the training of women in different domestic and commercial skills. A study of some selected industrial homes with a view to evaluating the working environment of these centres has suggested a number of weaknesses and constraints. The training programmes of these centers both in the urban and rural areas were found to be unsatisfactory, especially in terms of training materials, trainers, space and accommodation. The paper suggests that strengthening of these industrial homes on scientific lines can go a long way in making our women folk economically highly productive.

INTRODUCTION

Rapid socio-economic progress in a developing country like Pakistan can be achieved through fuller and better utilization of its resources, both physical and human. The latter, being the prime mover could become a great asset if it is properly trained and productively employed. But if it is unskilled and underutilized it could prove to be a serious economic burden for the economy. Females constitute a sizeable section of Pakistan's population and deserve full attention as a means to foster economic growth and progress. According to the latest population estimates, in Pakistan about 40 million females constituted over 48 % of the population and around 19 million of them fell in productive age bracket of 15-54 years.

If such a large section of population is kept untrained, unskilled and underutilized, all efforts for rapid economic development will be negated by the sheer weight of the number of consumers who do not effectively participate in and contribute to economic

activity. The role of women cannot, therefore, be ignored in the matter of technical education and productive skills as without that our total effort at development will eventually be cut down to almost half of total muscle power.

In Pakistan, female labour force has not so far been fully utilized, mainly because of unorganized supply, want of job opportunities, lack of training, inadequate economic incentives, insecure social environments and pressure of customs, traditions and taboos.

Historically, women played a memorable role in the creation of Pakistan. The Freedom Movement which culminated in the establishment of Pakistan, owes much to women participation. The first organization of women that came into being after partition was All Pakistan Women Association (APWA) in 1949. Since then many other women organizations have come up. These women organizations over the years have addressed to the provision and development of social services to the community and training of women in different domestic and

commercial skills. Accordingly, a number of industrial homes and vocational centers both in the public and private sector have been established in the urban and rural areas. The main theme behind the establishment of these vocational centers has been that with rapidly changing economic environment and human needs, it is now imperative that women should be trained in such handicrafts which are commercially profitable. This would enable them to supplement their family incomes and would thus lessen the burden of the male members on whom a host of idle members depend.

A study of the existing level of skills and types of training imparted by the industrial homes, socio-economic characteristics of young women under training in these centers, main constraints faced by the trainees and potential for improvement in existing training skills of the women should enable planners and policy makers to assess existing working conditions of these centers and make provision for deficient aspects in the future to keep pace with technological changes. In view of the above stated parameters, a study of some selected industrial homes was undertaken. The major objective of this study was to evaluate the working environment of the industrial homes/APWA Centers with special reference to the girl trainees of these institutions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study needed a universe with special features of urban and rural women participating in industrial work on a formal and private basis in differently organized industrial homes. The city of Faisalabad possessed such features as it is a vast market for finished products and raw materials of these industrial homes. In view of these factors, Faisalabad appeared to be a suitable universe for this study. For purposes of sam-

pling, industrial homes with long standing in the field were considered and five of these, representing various types of control and management, were randomly selected. Two of these were operating under the control of Social Welfare Department, Government of the Punjab, and three institutions were privately managed. Similarly, two privately run industrial homes in the rural areas of Faisalabad were selected. In all, sample for this study comprised seven industrial homes.

The respondents comprised trainees and the heads of these institutions. On the basis of a preliminary survey, roughly 50% respondent-trainees in the urban centers (129) were selected. Since the number of workers in the two selected centers of the rural area was small, all the 19 trainees were included in the sample. The needed information on various aspects of the study was collected with the help of a well prepared interviewing schedule through personal interviews with the heads of institutions and the respondent-trainees. The data thus collected were subsequently processed and analyzed using appropriate analytical techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented under two main sections, namely (1) profile of industrial homes and (2) Socio-economic characteristics of trainee group of women.

Profile of industrial homes: The sampled industrial homes patronized almost all the skills like sewing, embroidery, painting, flower making, etc. However, each one of them had specialized in one or two trades, while the remaining skills were meant for training programmes. These institutions mostly imparted training in skills of domestic utility. The trainees usually came to these institutions for selective training. These institutions had almost uniform objectives with

major emphasis on the uplift of the needy and deprived women by improving their earning capacity. "Learn and earn" is the motto of all these industrial homes. The private institutions were locally controlled while institutions controlled by APWA/Social Welfare Department were structured and institutionally linked at the national and provincial level.

As regards admission to these institutions, there was no age limit. Except for two industrial homes, which prescribed Middle as the basic qualification; none of the other had any basic conditions for admission to the diploma course. Further, a reference to the qualifications of the instructional staff showed that only 9% staff in the urban centers had obtained college level education, while in rural institutions none of the staff members was educated beyond Matriculation level. As for the technical training, 90% of the instructors had obtained single diploma. The level of basic as well as technical education/training, on the whole, was found to be unsatisfactory. It pointed to the need for imparting further training and education to the instructional staff so that standard of skill development among the trainees could be raised in line with the present day requirements.

Performance of an institution, among others, can also be judged from the facilities available in it. If the number of trainees per facility is large, each one of the trainees would eventually have lesser time for practical training. As a result, either the standard of training will remain poor or longer period will be required to complete the training. Judged on this criterion, it was found that ratio of trainees per facility in almost all the industrial homes was very high. For instance it was 5:1 in sewing and embroidery, 14:1 in knitting, 33:1 in designing and cutting, etc. The trainee instructor ratio came to be 35:1, which showed a clear deficiency of instruc-

tional staff in the industrial homes. The rural industrial centers were found still poorer in these facilities.

Government grants for institutions controlled by the Social Welfare Department/APWA and donations for privately run institutions were the main sources of funding. These grants and donations were meeting about 60 and 29% of the financial needs of these institutions respectively. Other sources of income in these institutions included trainees fees, commission on order work, membership fees, etc. Over 68% of the available financial resources went to pay and wages of the staff, leaving thereby very little for other contingent expenditure on repairs, spares and maintenance of machines, construction of buildings, etc. Consequently, purchase of new machines and equipment and design books for these centers did not receive much attention.

Interviews with the heads of these institutions suggested that provision of more funds, space, equipment/machines, better qualified instructional staff and upto date design books and magazines could greatly enhance the efficiency, prestige and quality of training in these institutions.

Socio-economic characteristics of trainees:

Over 95% of trainees in the urban centers and around 75% in the rural centers fell in the age group of 15-20 years. Further, over 96% trainees in the urban and around 84% in the rural centers were unmarried. As regards basic qualification of the trainees, it was found that 90% of the trainees in the urban industrial centers were educated upto Matriculation level. In contrast around 60% trainees of the rural industrial homes were illiterates. It will be concluded from the above that a large proportion of young, unmarried and less educated girl trainees in these industrial homes was an indication of their desire for learning such techniques and skills which, besides enabling them to dis-

charge domestic work proficiently, could also provide an income earning opportunity to them. Command over these skills by young girls was also a qualification for better selection of life partners.

Classification of trainees by caste showed that caste was no longer a barrier in training the young girls in different skills. Almost an even distribution of trainees among the major caste groups showed that most of the families were desirous of giving training to their young girls irrespective of their caste and traditional norms. Further, when classified by type of family, majority (93%) of the trainees was found belonging to the nuclear family system. Rapidly breaking joint family system may be attributed to the increased desire of married couples to live independently and to the process of immigration taking place within the country.

Classification of respondent trainees by economic status revealed that over 70% of them in the urban industrial homes belonged to low income families earning upto Rs. 2000/- per month. Similarly, over 80% of the trainees in the rural centers belonged to landless families. Further over 70% of girl trainees in the urban and around 66% in the rural centers had large families averaging 10 family members in the urban and about 8 family members in the rural area. As to the motive of joining the industrial home, over 79% of the trainees in the urban centers and about 62% in the rural centers said that they wanted to learn these domestic and commercial skills to engage themselves subsequently in some productive economic activity and supplement family's income. Another 15 and 25% of the trainees of urban and rural centers respectively replied that they will not be able to make any economically productive use of the skills learnt there because of various socio-cultural constraints and inhibitions.

As regards the adequacy of facilities available at the industrial homes, 61% of the respondent-trainees of the urban centers and 93% in the rural centers replied in the negative. The level of dissatisfaction was the highest in terms of inadequacy of machines and equipment in the rural and in terms of insufficiency of trainers and accommodation in the urban centers. These inadequacies became still more pronounced when judged on the basis of skills learnt and time devoted to each skill by a trainee. It was found that a trainee in these centers could take up a maximum of two skills and would get no more than 1 to 1.5 hours a day for practising a skill. This showed the inadequacy of time for which a trainee could practically work for learning a skill. As a result, the standard of skills imparted was generally poor.

Suggestions: Although the standard of training in the sampled industrial homes both in the urban and rural areas was not upto the mark, yet for wider and effective participation of women in productive economic activities more and more industrial centers need to be established in selective poor people's localities. This should help fortify the traditional informal sources of acquiring skills. Provision of additional funds, space, staff, equipment and upto date design books and magazines, etc., would possibly attract more young, poor and needy females to these centers.

Apart from imparting modern commercial skills to the women trainees, basic knowledge of food and nutrition regarding its nutritive effects on health and knowledge about food preservation should essentially be given to the trainees. This would help save a large amount of food which is destroyed mainly due to ignorance of its importance.

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