DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 350 227 SO 022 459

TITLE	Islam, Perestroika, and the Education of Women: Principles and Possibilities. International Seminar on Literacy and Lifelong Education for Women (Frunze, Kirghizstan, November 26-December 1, 1990).
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France).
REPORT NO	Unesco-ED/91/WS/22
PUB DATE	91
NOTE	64p.; Conference organized by UNESCO and the Kirghiz Teacher-Training Institute for Women. Color photographs will not reproduce well.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; Females; Foreign Countries; Foreign Culture; *Illiteracy; *International Education; *Islamic Culture; Literacy Education; Religious Cultural Groups; *Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS	Bahrain; Bangladesh; Egypt; Jordan; Syria; Turkey; USSR (Kirgizia); USSR (Uzbekistan)

ABSTRACT

Female illiteracy and the overall educational status of women in Islamic societies are the two main themes of this collection of conference papers. The papers include: THe Eradication of Female Illiteracy in Kirghizia: the Historical Situation (1920-1930) (I. S. Boldzhurova); Women's Education in Kirghiszstan (R. Achylova); Literacy and Education Issues in Kirghizia (I. G. Kitaev); The Development of Women's Literacy in Uzbekistan (D. [illegible] Kuldashiev); Women's Teacher-Training Colleges and Women's Edu [illegible] in the USSR (S. M. Isaev); Vocational Training of Women in the [illegible] as Part of Continuing Education (V. A. Sudarikov); Literacy for Women in the Context of Islamic Culture: The Case of the Arab States (A. W. Youssif); Looking at Literacy Efforts in General and in Islamic Countries in Particular (S. Maknoon); Education of Women and Girls: A Pressing Imperative (N. Aksornkool); Campaigning against Illiteracy among Women in China (L. Chiun-Xiang); Girls' Education in Bahrain (H. Khamiri); Literacy for Women in Bangladesh (M. Ikfat); Women's Literacy in Egypt (S. Sharaka); Women and Non-Formal Education in Jordan (A. Alawneh); Girls' and Womens' Literacy in the Syrian Arab Republic (G. A. Jabi); and Literacy Activities in Turkey (S. Kapusuzoglu). Four annexes also are included: (1) Recommendations of the International Seminar on Literacy and Lifelong Education for Women (Frunze); (2) List of Foreign Participants; (3) List of Participants from the USSR; and (4) Programme. (DB)

International seminar on Literacy and Lifelong Education for Women

Frunze, Kirghizstan, 26 November–1 December 1990

Final report

Islam, perestroika and the education of women

Principles and possibilities

UNESCO/Kirghiz Teacher-Training Institute for Women

ED/91/WS/22

Limitations of space did not permit the inclusion of all contributions. Some were included in a shortened form and others omitted entirely. In selecting materials, the principal consideration was the relevance of the contribution to the central theme of the seminar.

The Editor

The photographs falling between pages 32 and 33 were taken by Krystyna Chlebowska and Florence Begouen Demeaux. They show, from left to right and top to bottom: symbol of the seminar; the Kirghiz yurt; opening the seminar; Kirghiz peasant; the market place; national costumes and handicrafts; Kirghiz wedding; Muslim funderal; Orthodox wedding; Frunze city centre; Kirg' 'z landscape; Issyk Kul Lake.

Cover design by Jeanette Wahl
Cover photograph by Leif Löfgren

Published in 1991 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7 place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris
Typeset and printed by UNESCO

Printed in France

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Introduction

For five days Frunze, capital of Kirghizstan, one of the Soviet Union's Central Asian Republics, was home to eighty people from fourteen countries and seven Soviet Republics who had gathered to participate in an international seminar on Literacy and Lifelong Education for Women organized by the Kirghiz Teacher-Training Institute for Women and UNESCO. The choice of Kirghizstan for such a meeting was logical but at the same time contrary to this logic. According to official pre-Perestroïka statistics, illiteracy in the Soviet Union had been entirely eliminated. There are some who would be surprised that a seminar on a subject of no direct concern was organized in a country like the Soviet Union. To some extent, the reason for this apparent ambiguity lies in the language. In Russian 'literate' means not only being able to read and write but also being educated, possessing an acceptable level of education. Therefore, the word 'literacy' has a double meaning. Firstly literacy, as in most other languages, means the ability to read, write and count. Its second meaning signifies the attainment of a certain level and a certain quality of education. This is why the struggle against illiteracy presupposes not only the necessity to learn to read, write and calculate, but also the consolidation and the qualitative and quantitive development of the knowledge acquired. In Russian, a literate person is someone who possesses knowledge and who is capable of using it. This is why the Russians speak of literacy not only in terms of writing, reading, mathematics, but also in terms of music, computer sciences, techniques.

This linguistic particularity enlarged the concept of the seminar and broadened and enriched the debates to encompass continuing education. This is why the discussions at the seminar covered a relatively large range of problems linked to women's education in general. However, literacy and post-literacy work formed the principal themes.

Soviet Central Asia

A brief presentation of Kirghizstan, and the other Central Asian Republics of the USSR, will help to delimit the problems which characterize these regions as regards the status of women in general and their education in particular.

The Central Asian states of the USSR, relatively unknown until now, have in common some of the highest mountains, the most inaccessible plateaux, and deserts vaster than the Sahara. The middle of Asia forms a strip of land running from the Caspian Sea to the Sino-Soviet frontier. From time immemorial people have sought refuge there to escape from the tyranny of invaders or have erupted to become, in their turn, the invaders.

Central Asia is first and foremost a region of contrasts. From the icy summits to the insupportable heat of the land, to the coolness of the oases, the contrasts are there in the extremes of climate and in the cohabitation of peoples of varied cultures, sedentary or nomadic, in the ethnic or religious diversities, too often sources of conflict. To these contrasts has been added the impact of the Russian civilization. However, this variety of contrasts conceals a certain coherence which is evident in the language and the religion.

The social phenomenon is, initially, a not insignificant factor for bringing together the minority groups of Central Asia who preserve the cohesion and originality of their populations. The demographic increase of the autochthonous population is considerable. For example, since 1959 the Uzbek population has more than doubled in twenty years. The vast majority of the peoples of Central Asia belong to the Turkic language group. Islam is an important factor for cultural identity, as in the presence of former animistic practices such as the cult of spirits, springs, the existence of witch doctors, magicians, shamans. The influence of Islam reaches out to about 30 million Soviets, almost all of the Sunnite observance.

'Where I light my fire my home will be, where I tether my horse my pastures will be.' This Khazak saying resumes the style of life of peoples with an essentially nomadic tradition, the only one suited to the poor and arid areas of the steppes, deserts, forests. Although brigades and teams of shepherds from the collective farms have replaced the former communities who followed their flocks of sheep, herds of horses or camels, the mentality and customs of nomadic life have left a deep imprint on the people of this region.

The conquest of the Eastern Muslim by Muscovite Russia dates from the beginning of the fifteenth century after the fall of Byzantium in 1453 to the Ottoman Turks. The reign of Ivan IV — the Terrible — marked the beginning of the Russian conquest under the Tsars. In less than four centuries a good half of Asia had come under their control.

Kirghizstan

In 1917 the Council of the People's Commissioners of the new Soviet State promulgated the 'Declaration of the Rights of Peoples of Russia' which affirmed:

The equality and sovereignty of peoples
Their right to self-determination
Abolition of all privileges
Unrestricted development of national minorities and ethnic groups

By virtue of this declaration, adopted at a time when the Soviets needed the effective support of the peoples, Kirghizstan was granted its own autonomous government in 1920. In the same year the Kirghiz language, which belongs to the Turkic dialects of the north west, became the official written language. It used Arabic signs, then Latin letters and finally adopted Cyrillic characters. The change to the Cyrillic alphabet and the creation of written languages in Soviet Central Asia greatly influenced the vocabulary, the grammar, even the pronunciation of words in the local languages. Kirghiz, for example, today comprises a large percentage of Russian words, some very commonplace, which supplant local terms. The Kirghiz are incapable of pronouncing correctly the word Frunze, the name of their capital, since the letter 'f' does not exist in their spoken language. In 1979, 29.5 per cent of Kirghiz declared they could speak fluent Russian as a second language (from primary school Russian is the obligatory second language).

The Socialist Soviet Republic of Kirghiz is a sovereign state in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The highest body of authority in the Republic is the Supreme Soviet of Kirghizstan, which has just appointed a new President of the Republic, Mr. A. Akaev, a member of the Academy of Sciences. In his opening address to the seminar, he particularly stressed that whilst ideology had had a great influence on education in the Soviet Union, little attention had been given to spiritual, cultural and humanitarian values in the education of children, including history and national languages. 'In order to improve the education of women, it is necessary to pass from uniformity to a variety of models', he declared.

Located in the north east of Soviet Central Asia, the Republic of Kirghiz is traditionally nomadic and Muslim. Half of its territory lies at an altitude of 1,000 to 3,000 metres. The mountain chains, with peaks higher than 7,000 m, form a natural boundary with Kazakstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikstan and China. Of the 4,300,000 inhabitants of the Republic, a little more than 50 per cent are of Kirghiz origin. The remainder of the population is composed of Russians, Ukrainians, Uzbeks and Tartars. The capital Frunze (formerly Pishpek, founded in 1878) was renamed in 1926 in honour of Mikhail Frunze, military commander and key figure in the Soviet Union.

The Kirghiz adopted Sunnite Islam in the tenth century. However, in comparison with other peoples of Central Asia, the influence of Islam on the Kirghiz has been relatively slight.

As in all Central Asia, Kirghizstan is a country of contrasts. From the glaciers of Tian Shan to the high mountain country where vegetation is rare and the climate extremely harsh, giving way to the mountain pasture land and the conifer forests, home of the famous Tian Shan juniper tree. Thanks to irrigation, the valleys are fertile and crops such as cotton, vines, rice, fruit and tobacco are grown. Kirghizstan has numerous lakes of a rare natural beauty. The largest, Lake Issyk-Kul ('Warm Lake') is located at an altitude of 1,609 m, has a depth of 702 m and covers an area of 6,200 m² and never freezes over in spite of the low winter temperatures. For two days the seminar work was carried out on the banks of this majestic lake. To the south of the country stretch the thousands of years old forests of hazelnut and fruit trees. The mountains of Tian Shan are rich in mineral deposits — uranium, copper, gold. Coal, petroleum, gas, mercury and tin are extracted for industrial purposes.

The jewel of ancient Kirghiz literature is the 'Manas', an epic poem of a thousand verses (longer than the Iliad and the Odyssey put together). The Manas, a poem handed down orally from generation to generation, relates the history of the Kirghiz, their struggle against the Oirates, the Chinese, the Manchu and other invaders. The epic paints a picture of the life, the habits, the customs of the ancient Kirghiz; the battles fought to reclaim grazing land, to keep and defend their lands from the covetous enemy. The Kirghiz have erected statues to the four bards who were capable of reciting, by heart, this thousand-verse epic.

Contemporary Kirghiz literature boasts the works of such writers as Chingiz Aitmatov, the world's most read author whose books have been translated into eighty languages. His short stories and novels such as 'Djamilya', 'The Little Poplar Tree', 'The First Master', 'The Maternal Field', 'A Day that Longer than an Age does Last', reveal a deep psychological analysis of

characters and the author's strong bond with his cultural roots.

Animal rearing is one of the dominant branches of agriculture in Kirghizstan. The occupation of shepherd or sheep breeder is still the most widespread. However, sheep breeding as practised during the last decades, when the demands of centralized planning ended in over-production, has resulted in the disappearance of grazing land due to too many sheep. As in other Central Asian Republics the pastoral life and nomadic existence of the Kirghiz are declining due to excessive sedentarization. Even so, attachment to culture and traditions is of deep sociological, historical and cultural significance. It has left its mark on habitat, clothing, domestic life, graphic arts, embroidery, tapestry. The yurt, the nomadic home, with its rounded form, its felt roof, its carpets where red, blue and brown predominate, is a real palace in the steppes. The traditional hospitality of the nomad remains the most attractive trait of the Kirghiz.

Literacy

Before the Revolution, the Koranic schools of the mosques were the principal sources of education in the Central Asian countries. After the Revolution, Soviet schools were set up using national languages and, in the beginning, were run parallel with the mosque schools.

In 1919 Lenin promulgated a first decree on the eradication of illiteracy. In the Central Asian countries where illiteracy was almost total (2 per cent literates in Uzbekistan, 5 per cent in Kirghizstan), the decree heralded the beginning of the vigorous campaigns carried on throughout the country. According to Government and Party policy, literacy was an intrinsic part of the process to emancipate women.

The literacy process for the female populations was particularly slow and difficult. In 1928 the percentage of women in the literacy classes (the *likbez*) was 12.2 per cent in Uzbekistan, 4.3 per cent in Turkmenistan and 15.5 per cent to 25.3 per cent in Kirghizstan, according to region. The constraints and the problems encountered in Kirghizstan at the time were similar to those now facing the female literacy process in the Third World: absenteeism, schedules unadapted to agricultural work, the lack of nurseries and play schools, inadequate welfare services, the lack of premises and equipment, etc. Although the national budget of Kirghizstan allocated 5.4 per cent in 1927 for women's education, these funds were not necessarily well used (often and in priority earmarked for non-Kirghiz populations). The literacy campaign was made difficult by the nomadic life style of most of the populations. The centralized planning of literacy, which imposed norms concerning the number of pupils below which the opening of a *likbez* was not authorized, also acted as a brake to the literacy process of the non-sedentary populations which were so difficult to regroup.

Because of the flagrant lack of trained literacy workers, the Soviet authorities first called upon volunteers, then moved to obligation: an educated person must teach an illiterate person to read and to write. As concerns women, literacy in Kirghizstan, as in the rest of the country, ought to have been a powerful lever for their emancipation, particularly for the most disadvantaged. However, for the male-dominated political cadre of the time this was more of a slogan than a reality and a practice.

The year 1930 marked the turning point in the struggle against illiteracy in the republics of Central Asia. The new decree of the Communist Party of 17 May 1929 focused on the eradication of illiteracy, literacy being viewed as an exceptional vehicle for furthering cultural policies in the Asian republics. From this date, the massive publication of literacy manuals started, literacy brigades formed, specialized reviews appeared. However, as from 1920 the Arabic alphabet was forbidden in Kirghizstan in an effort to reduce the influence of the Muslim religion and the role of the Koran on the local populations. Thus those who had become literate using Arabic found themselves in the ranks of the 'illiterate recividists'. As a consequence, and for a certain period, the number of illiterates, instead of diminishing, increased. However, thanks to an intensive 'cultural' mobilization, the creation of literacy centres, women's clubs, 'red Yurts', reading rooms, workers' clubs, 'red corners', by 1934 some 57 per cent of the population in Kirghizstan had become literate. This percentage increased with the process of sedenterization and socialization of work. Primary education became obligatory. Educational institutions for women were created. Kirghiz women could then accede to higher education. In 1939 some 70 per cent of the population in Kirghizstan was literate of whom 63 per cent were women. On 4 January 1958, the Central Committee of the Party and the Council of Ministers of the USSR promulgated a new secret decision concerning the total eradication of illiteracy in the USSR. This decision was adoptedfour weeks later in Kirghizstan . According to statistics, in January 1958, 47,743 people in the age group 8 to 49 years in the rural regions of Kirghizstan were completely literate, representing 7.5 per cent of the total population. In 1962 the number of illiterates declined to 15,000 of which 1,500 were aged 5 to 16. After 1960 the eradication of illiteracy in Kirghizstan disappeared from the agenda of educational decision-makers.

Nevertheless, according to recent statistics, in 1989 the illiteracy rate in Kirghizstan was 0.3 per cent for the section of the population aged 9 to 49 years, 3 per cent for 15 years and over (of whom 3.8 per cent are in the rural areas, 4.5 per cent are women and 5.7 per cent are women in rural areas) which, after Moldavia, represents the highest illiteracy rate in the Soviet Union.

Today the number of illiterates in the Soviet Union amounts to 4,300,000 people, representing 2 per cent of the population of 15 years and over.

Women at work, women at home?

In the USSR women represent 53 per cent of the population 51 per cent of the country's workers. In some professions 90 to 95 per cent are women. At present, 3.8 million Soviet women work at night. Their salary is generally lower than that of men doing the same job: one-third of Soviet women earn less than 100 roubles, whereas this only applies to 2 per cent of men. Women who work have, on average, two hours 24 minutes free time per day (one person working on a *kolkhoze* or collective farm, one hour 57 minutes). Approximately 16 minutes are devoted to the education of the children.

Statistics concerning the education of women in the Central Asian Republics clearly indicate that after the Russian Revolution, considerable progress was made in this area. Young girls and women are omnipresent at all levels of education. However, the transparency of information today allows lacunae and problems to be pinpointed and facilitates the research for appropriate solutions. One of the problems most commonly raised by the Soviet participants at the seminar in Frunze centred around the quality of education in general and in the rural areas in particular. The lack of primary and school institutions, badly equipped schools, school drop outs, the diversity of languages used for teaching and functional illiteracy are some of the difficulties which confront Soviet education. As regards women in particular, the most preoccupying problem seems to be that of education in relation to work and the home. The President of the Kirghiz Republic himself stressed that women are overworked, on the one hand because of their professional occupations where, for an insufficient salary, they carry out physical work often too hard for them, and on the other hand, in the house where they are responsible for the home, often spending hours in queues to obtain the necessary provisions for the family. The insufficiency of welfare services, nurseries, play schools, the shortage of housing, adequate medical assistance, the necessity to take on a second paid occupation to help out with expenses, make conditions for Soviet women particularly difficult. The flagrant lack of time for women submerged by work has a direct repercussion on the children. With little time set aside for them, more and more children stay alone in the house, at school, in the street. Today in the Soviet Union particular attention is being given to the access of women to the technical and vocational studies which would guarantee them a place in the work market and respond to their professional aspirations and family obligations. Whilst emphasizing the necessity to recognize the role of the mother in the education of children, the Soviet participants at the seminar clearly perceived the danger that unemployment represents for women, of which they would be the first victims and which would send them back to the home.

The Soviet Union's transition to a free market economy will place women in a particularly difficult competitive position with men on the employment market, a competition which they are not sure to win, since qualified male labour is considered to be twice as important as that of female labour and since welfare assistance granted to working women by the government is more expensive than that for men.

If future entrepreneurs do not employ women, the situation would be as follows: 70 per cent of women workers have children who have not reached their majority. Unemployment for the two million women bringing up their children alone would be a catastrophe. In addition, 80 per cent of families could no longer rely on the salary of wives or mothers to make ends meet, not to mention the fact that, according to sociological studies, 80 per cent of women want to continue their professional activities.

In order to avoid the undesirable situation of women reverting to the simple state of mothers, wives and housewives, which is not in the interests of women nor in the interests of the socio-economic and demographic development of the country, the authorities are endeavouring to elaborate flexible training and retraining systems which would make it possible for women to adapt to the new demands of the employment market. Likewise, employment systems and structures would be adapted to the specificity of female labour and women's family needs.

Islam and the education of women

As was the case for women and *Perestroika*, the discussions relating to women and Islam revealed the existence of a real problem as far as the condition of women in general and their education in particular is concerned.

It was clear that the socio-economic constraints confronting women in Islamic societies differ little from those faced by women in most of Third World countries. The difference resides in the degree of discrimination encountered due to cultural and religious traditions where Islamic values are wrongly interpreted and Islamic or other practices are detrimental to sexual equality. Religiously identical, men and women are not so in society and its praxis. This is why it was recommended that literacy and post-literacy programmes should reflect a non-discriminatory approach with regard to women, and at the same time provide them with the ability to inform themselves of their rights and to take a critical look at the world around them.

Various opinions were expressed on the role of religion in the process of learning to read and write. The following are some of the questions raised concerning Islam and the Koran:

What is the place of women in Islam?
Are the revealed verses of the Koran and the Hadith (the words of the Prophet recorded in writing to enlighten the way of Islam) egalitarian as regards women's education?
Is the attitude of men towards women in Islamic religious practices detrimental to the status of women?
Should women's education in an Islamic country be founded on the principles of the law and Islamic religious traditions?
Are western methods of study and research on the equality of the sexes applicable to Islamic countries?

Nevertheless, the essential question concerning Islam and women, currently the subject of heated debates, centred on the place that Islam, in its definition of citizenship, makes for women. This question challenges the acquisition of privileges through procedures which disparage women. The premise of the debate lies in the issue of the joint participation of men and women in the creation of a society inspired by Islam, which would express their common religious destiny, and the legal recognition by the Koran of their collective contribution to the vocation of this society.

Because of the nature of the question the replies sometimes diverged. The discussions were frank and open, the participants clearly expressing their points of view, thus enriching the debate on this particularly sensitive subject.

In any case, the positive role that religion plays in the cultural identity of a country was emphasised.

The major interest of the Frunze seminar resided in the fact that the difficult and sometimes taboo subject of women in relation to Islam was broached. As such, it provided an exceptional occasion for the exchange of ideas and experiences as well as the pursuit of a better understanding and interpretation of questions of current interest.

Even if the various viewpoints did not always concord, opinions converged on the need to join and intensify efforts for the struggle against women's illiteracy by all available means, including religious.

A general consensus was reached on the urgent necessity for governments and international organizations to devote more attention, effort and means to improving the status of women in Islamic societies through education.

For Islamic women, education has a specific role to play, and represents hope for the future.

As is the case for Judaism and Christianity, Islam is based on patriarchal reasoning: man, head of family, pre-eminent with each sex having its individual rights and duties. Women, however, remain the losers... When they are illiterate and, moreover, poor, they are at a double disadvantage faced with masculine arbitrariness.

If however women reach a level of education which allows them to become familiar with and understand Islamic texts, it is more difficult to impose on them the masculine and subjective perception of Islam. They are better able to discuss and even to contest this perception. Even if to contest is not easy, even if a woman bows to the respective roles of the sexes as already defined, she will, certainly, be conscious of her duties, but also of her rights which she will be more able to defend.

This is why the participants at the seminar recommended that educational programmes for women take account of non-discriminatory knowledge of the Koran. To return to the origins of Islam conjures up a picture of a progressive and just society that can only come about by restoring to women their dignity and their rightful place as recognised by religion.

For women, a return to the origins of Islam implies, *nolens volens*, the progressive and necessary rebuilding of their identity through the conquest of their own social, economic and political arena, through their participation in decision making and, at the same time, through their right to free speech and education.

Did not the Prophet say that the acquisition of knowledge is a duty for each Muslim, man or woman?

Krystyna Chlebowska

The eradication of female illiteracy in Kirghizia: the historical situation (1920–1930)

I. S. Boldzhurova

The reconsideration of problems which at one time appeared to have been very thoroughly investigated has only one aim, that of establishing the historical truth.

The methodological basis of research which sees history as a problem-free progression from one victory to another blinded us to various contradictions and complications. This has cost us—and also historians—dear.

Now we are going back to our sources, the true sources this time.

Among the many different aspects of the historical development of the Republic of Kirghizia and of the USSR as a whole, the problem of the eradication of illiteracy, and in particular that of the female population, stands in particular need of reconsideration. Our study of this issue raised a mass of unanswered questions, despite the fact that it seemed to have been thoroughly examined both by historians of public education and by specialists in the history of women's emancipation.

The many uncertainties included the time scale of the literacy campaign, the methods and approaches used, problems encountered, and the role played by the Party and by Soviet and voluntary organizations.

To follow up problems that are regarded as having already been investigated is a thankless task. I had to sift through a vast quantity of archive material in order to get the feel of the subject and the period; facts had to be checked again and again; elements that had frequently been excluded from the field of vision of earlier and quite thorough works of research had to be brought in again.

Until recently it was maintained, for the purposes of propaganda, that all the Moslem population of Imperial Russia was illiterate (and Kirghizia was a colony of Russia). Just before the World War broke out the Fourth State Duma adopted the Law on Universal Public Education. Like all laws it applied to the whole territory, although the First World War impeded its implementation. In Kirghizia itself, there were 136 educational institutions, including two girls' *progymnasia* (State secondary schools with an academic curriculum), and pupils included both boys and girls, as a rule from fairly well-to-do families. In the Talas Valley and the districts forming the Syr-Darya *oblast*, as early as in 1913 there were twenty primary schools, attended by 984 boys and 509 girls. In 1914 in Osh province there were nine schools, attended by 374 boys and 189 girls.

In fifty Kirghiz *volosts* in the Pishpek and Przewalski province over 5 per cent of the population was literate.

Incidentally, the Chief Inspector of Public Education of the Turkestan Region was Fedor Kerensky, the father of Alexander Fedorovich Kerensky, who led the Provisional Government.

The books of B. Soltonoev *Istorija Shabdanija* [History of Shabdany] and *Istorija Kirgizii* [History of Kirghizia] were published before the Revolution, as were the poems of the folk poets (*akyns*) Togolok Moldo, Moldo Kylych, Isak Shaibekov and others.

Naturally, most of those who could read and write belonged to the propertied classes.

UNESCO's slogan 'Education for All' was, I am pleased and proud to say, first implemented in the Soviet Union.

It has to be admitted, however, that in most cases the position of women before 1917 was that of women in some countries of the Third World today. It should also be stressed that the influence of Islam on the Kirghiz people was weak partly because of their nomadic way of life, and partly because of their psychological make-up and attitudes which had developed over the centuries.

A Kirghiz woman enjoyed certain rights. It is no accident that the celebrated Queen of Alai, Kurmanjandedke, a skilful states woman, was Kirghizian, incidentally from a poor family.

Kirghizia was to encounter many problems in its efforts to eradicate illiteracy among women. The most substantial of these were shortage of resources and of teachers, and problems of continuity and in persuading women of the need for education and men of the need to support to assist this effort.

I shall say immediately that the process of women's education was closely linked to and dependent on the development of the Soviet State and of its economy, social structure and the general level of public education. As the economic strength of the State grew it became easier to settle questions of education.

The 1920s in Kirghizia were years of determining the right forms of training, of demonstrating the advantages of education, of agitation to raise the consciousness of the masses; the beginning of the 1930s was a time of action.

Ten years after the October Revolution, evaluating the work of the All-Union Congress of Women Workers and Peasants in 1927, the head of the Department of Women Workers and Peasants of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Artyukhina, wrote, enthusiastically that this Congress '... had reviewed the work of the Party among working women over the last 10 years. The Congress was itself one of the best proofs of improvements in the activity, cultural level and political consciousness of the working women of the Soviet Union and their wide involvement in the building of Socialism.'[1] But these are only words. What was the true situation in our area of women's 'activity and cultural level', not to speak of their political awareness and participation in the building of Socialism? Rather than make unsubstantiated statements, we shall turn to the sources, the facts. Here are the theses and proposals set out in the paper *On women's education in the Republics of Central Asia*, ratified by the Executive Commission of the Bureau for Central Asia of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of 28 June 1928, Protocol 110, para. 2.

'The situation of women's education in the republics of Central Asia, despite the considerable general growth of public education during the period of national demarcation, is one of extreme backwardness. Women's education does not have any definite place or direction in the work of the People's Commissars for Public Education of the republics, and is carried out with no thought for the need for its formation and bringing up to the general pace of the development of public education.'[2]

Efforts to eradicate illiteracy among the female population were sporadic and half-hearted. Thus in Uzbekistan only 12.2 per cent and in Turkmenia only 4.3 per cent of women attended literacy classes. In Kirghizia, thanks to more systematic work, the percentage was higher—15.5 per cent in Naryn and 25.3 per cent in Karakol. In fact starting in 1928 the People's Commissar for Public Education of the Kirghiz ASSR had made an attempt to provide literacy classes for no less than 25 per cent of women, in the first place groups of women activists.[3] (Incidentally, eleven literate, nine semi-literate and nineteen illiterate women attended the First Congress of Women Workers and Peasants of the Kirghiz ASSR—and this was in 1928).[4] In all the republics there were considerable fluctuations in attendance, as classes were held at inconvenient times for agricultural workers and craftswomen, and there were no kindergartens, crèches or children's rooms and no amenities. It should be stressed that the slow rate of development of women's education was in large measure due to the state of school premises and equipment. Unfortunately, there was little to be complacent about in this respect.

The eradication of illiteracy in Kirghizia, as indeed in other republics, was extremely complicated. The main problem was yet again shortage of funds to pay salaries and buy equipment, books and teaching materials. Let us look at some figures. In 1928–29 some 4 roubles 50 kopecks were spent on the education of each settled (non-nomadic) inhabitant of the Republic.[5] Model schools for teacher training were organized to back up literary classes, and under this system it cost 11 roubles 92 kopecks to teach each illiterate to read. In order to reduce costs, steps were taken to introduce the individual-group teaching system, which brought the cost of teaching one illiterate person down to 6 roubles 62 kopecks,[6] but even this sum was a strain on the budget of the People's Commissar for Education. According to the 1920 census there were 399,397 illiterates between the ages of 16 and 39, of whom 333,603 had no knowledge of the alphabet.[7]

In the academic year 1927/28, the public education budget consisted of 3,099 thousand roubles.[8] Not only adults between 16 and 39 years of age, but children also needed to be taught. Although allocations for public education increased every year, the whole sum was far from sufficient to provide education even of poor quality. It should be noted that in the various decrees and instructions the age of those subject to literacy teaching was defined in different ways. In some it was from 16 to 39, in others from 14 to 40 and in others again from 8 to 40. The accuracy of record-keeping depended largely on the conscientiousness and on the very existence of trained local government officials, who had their own problems. Record-keeping was further complicated by the fact that a considerable proportion of the population was nomadic. Data on the

number of illiterates should be considered as indicative, rather than exact. Literacy classes were also, as a rule, established in the first place for the 'organized', i.e. settled, population, subject to record-keeping and supervision, for our 'planning' disease of literacy teaching, as of everything else. Standard numbers of pupils were set for literacy schools, and unless they were reached schools were not opened. In the resolution of the First Congress of Educational Workers on the report of the People's Commissar for Education, in April 1927, special emphasis was, interestingly, laid on Item 24: 'In view of the fact that the indigenous population is scattered and settlements few and far between, the Congress supports a reduction in the standard numbers for literacy schools where the indigenous population is taught to 20–25 persons per school and the organization of courses to train teachers for literacy schools, who should be provided with their keep all year round'.[9]

Literacy schools which had been established in the first flush of enthusiasm fell apart, although the work begun continued.

In view of the acute shortage of teachers, anyone who could read fluently, write and knew the four rules of arithmetic was recruited for literacy teaching and placed at the disposal of the commissions for the eradication of illiteracy. Anyone who refused to participate voluntarily in literacy teaching was called up as conscripted labour. Each literate person had to teach ten illiterates. A letter from the Kirghiz Oblast Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the Oblast Committee of the VLKSM (Komsomol), the People's Commissar for Public Education and the Chief Political Officer for Education, written on 16 October 1928, called for the eradication of illiteracy to be considered an 'urgent' task for the Republic, and went on: 'In view of the limited means available and the almost complete lack of resources of the political and educational authorities, they obviously cannot carry out this work without the most active assistance and help of all voluntary organizations and the broad masses of the population'.[10]

The campaign to eradicate illiteracy relied on the people's enthusiasm. Teachers, the intelligentsia, Komsomol members, school children, Pioneers and even children in junior classes became instructors and frequently worked unpaid, on a voluntary basis. For example, in 1928 in Frunze, 362 out of 893 instructors taught for pay and the rest taught free.[11]

However, the pace of work remained slow. The Meeting of Agitators and Propagandists of the Kirghiz Oblast Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on the eradication of illiteracy, held in December 1928, analysed the reasons for the literacy campaign being many years behind schedule, which can be identified as follows:

a) insufficient resources and failure to make rational use of funds available due to the lack of a firm, sufficiently well worked-out operational plan for the eradication of illiteracy and poor implementation of the plan;

b) insufficient numbers of literacy instructors and the low level of qualification of those available;

c) inadequate organization of social involvement in the eradication of illiteracy (poor work of Anti-Illiteracy Societies, which in many areas did not even exist, failure to involve the illiterate population itself in the organization of literacy teaching, which meant that the movement was one-sided);

d) poor participation of mass voluntary organizations (trade unions, the 'Koshchu Union', Komsomol, co-operatives etc.) and failure to co-ordinate their cultural education work plans with the plans of chief political officers for education and the departments of public education;

e) failure to apply lessons of experience in the organization of literacy work;

f) insufficient interest on the part of the People's Commissar for Education and his local authorities and absence of trained staff to monitor literacy work and provide methodological assistance;

g) the very variable levels of attendance in literacy schools, the disorganized way in which they were developed, and the low qualifications of literacy teachers and school managers, resulting in low cost-effectiveness;

h) failure to consolidate literacy work, resulting in relapses into illiteracy (the introduction of new timetables on three separate occasions also had a bad effect);

i) little attention to literacy training for nomad women and working women.

Unfortunately, certain circles formed the opinion that the eradication of illiteracy among women was, to paraphrase *Ilf and Petrov*, a matter for the women themselves, and the onus was laid on the ill-prepared women's departments of the *volosts*. The idea was that literacy schools should be a weapon in the struggle for women's emancipation.

That outstanding figure in the life of Kirghizia, Yu. Abdrakhmanov, who was blessed with an analytical mind and a great understanding of life and the people's psychology, wrote in his report on women's emancipation and the struggle against domestic crime: 'We have every reason to seek allies in the struggle for women's emancipation among the broad masses of the working population and in the first place among agricultural labourers and peasants.

However, the success of the struggle to implement Soviet legislation on the women's question depends to a considerable degree on the practical position of local activists on this question. Very little has been achieved, and the reason for this is that the activists have not tried to lead the struggle for women's emancipation but have been guided by the mood of the masses'.[12] The activists themselves needed re-educating to be able to build a new life based not on words but on deeds.

Study of the archives relating to this period fre-

quently brings to light activists' passive, indeed neglectful attitude to questions of women's emancipation in practice. There were very many fine and lofty speeches about the need to solve the women's question, but it went no further than words. Let us again return to the documents, to the original sources. This extract from the notes of A. Bobrova, one of the few militant heads of women's departments, may be lengthy, but it conveys the spirit and attitude of the time. She notes bitterly, when describing her work for women: 'All around there is arbitrariness, at the top and in the village too, and one has to work in these conditions. At grass roots the district and *oblast* pay no attention to us at all and provided no guidelines from October 1925 to April 1926, apart from some provisions about the organization of a travelling 'Red Yurt', but these provisions could not be implemented. There were no funds.

The Raikom (District Committee) took absolutely no interest in our work among women and instead of mobilizing the forces of the Party for work among women, they abandoned me, the only worker for women in eight *volosts*, and told me to do other Party work. In November I went to Uchekin Volostin in connection with the registration of Party cells and acceptance as a member after serving the required time as a candidate, and wasted 15 days on this. In December I went to Chorin Volost for the Council elections. In June I went to check sources of income and spent one month and ten days travelling. All this distracted me from my work with women. It is true that I tried to combine all these official journeys with my work for women, but I did not always succeed. Having read my reports, the Executive Bureau decided: 'To take them into consideration and to find the work satisfactory'. No practical goals were set. Only later, when some more energetic comrades joined the District Council, did I receive assistance and appropriate guidance, but all the blame for the mistakes of the past was put on me. Money was even sent to the District Committee for two organizers (for work with women), but it was handed over to the social security department to pay off its debts, and I still remained the only worker in eight *volosts*, an area with a radius of 500 *versts*.[13] In such conditions one cannot expect results. The head of the women's department of the Central Asian Bureau of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Lyubimova, on a visit to Kirghizia, concluded that in the tenth year of Soviet power, 'work with Kirghiz women and with the lowest stratum of the indigenous population was simply not being done'.[14]

The mass illiteracy of women became particularly apparent when selecting students for midwifery courses, as there were not enough literate Kirghiz women to take up places on the courses, and vocational and technical schools were full of completely illiterate people. There was a lack of women teachers for literacy schools. Not a single Kirghiz woman graduated from Teacher Training College or Agricultural College. The situation became serious. A number of general resolutions and orders on public education were passed, in which a special paragraph was devoted to women's education. Measures were taken to encourage girls to attend schools. On 16 August 1927 the People's Commissar for Public Education of the Kirghiz ASSR sent canton and town departments of education a circular on the intensification of efforts to enrol girls belonging to the indigenous population in school education, referring with great concern to the very low percentage of girls attending school and the inadequacy of work organized for them. 'At the same time,' the circular notes, 'it is essential to draw the attention of all the comrades in the governing bodies of the public education departments to the high percentage of illiteracy of the female population of the Republic, as a result of which it is very difficult, and sometimes impossible for the Soviet authorities and the Communist Party to carry out the tasks we have been set regarding the emancipation of women and their involvement in building up the economy and the State.'[15]

It should be said that one of the weaknesses of the system of management and education was the lack of co-ordination between the two. Education went its own way, while management often did not co-ordinate these different activities, but rather split them up, as it does still. As early as the 1920s, the lack of coordination of plans for vocational education with the goals set for the development of the economy of the Republic as a whole was remarked on as a great weakness, in particular in the matter of training special female cadres for branches of the national economy in which women form the bulk of the workforce. But the People's Commissar for Public Education wondered whether the general development of industry in Kirghizia would justify the continuing existence of the vocational schools already established. Even the obvious urgent need to train women specialists from local ethnic groups in teacher-training colleges and to establish special educational institutions for women had no place in the plans of the People's Commissar for Public Education.[16] Only on 5 August 1952 was the teacher-training college reorganized as the V. V. Mayakovsky Women's Teacher-Training College.

There were also objective reasons why efforts to eradicate illiteracy were behind schedule. These included the lack of literate workers among the indigenous peoples and of Europeans with a good knowledge of Kirghiz or Uzbek. As these groups increased in size the number of literate people increased. There was also an acute shortage of resources. In 1925 to 1927 Soviet Russia gave up hope of a world revolution, which theoretically was supposed to liberate the advanced industrial countries from the bourgeoisie and organize the world system so that Russia would provide raw materials and the industrially developed countries manufactured goods. Hopes of a world revolution had been disappointed, the country had to be developed and new factories and plants built, even if only to process local raw materials. A start had to be made on the

industrialization of the country. However, enormous resources and funds were needed. There began a no-holds-barred transfer of resources from agriculture and co-operative societies to industry, together with austerity measures and various forms of collections, loans, taxes and levies. There were redundancies among management staff. (Unlike today, at that time reduction in the management staff of the People's Commissar for Public Education and the staff of women's departments in the volosts had a serious effect on the progess of work among the population.) In these conditions the funds allocated for education were insufficient for large-scale educational work. What was basically relied on was the people's enthusiasm.

An important impetus was given to efforts to speed up the literacy campaign by the decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of 17 May 1929 'On efforts to eradicate illiteracy', which proposed that in the Eastern republics the eradication of illiteracy should be the main feature of cultural work. The sixteenth party Congress in 1930 set the goal of universal compulsory primary education and the eradication of illiteracy. The year 1930 was to be a watershed in the eradication of illiteracy. Literacy text books were published in mass editions (70 000, including 40 000 in the Kirghiz language). In the republics, headquarters were established for the cultural campaign against illiteracy and for literacy work, taking the new form of Anti-Illiteracy Societies. On 15 June 1930 a special newspaper *Be Literate* came out in the Kirghiz language. It should also be noted that on 29 November 1929 the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Kirghiz ASSR considered the adoption of a new alphabet for the Kirghiz written language, which from 1 January 1930 made it illegal to draft records or written communications in the old Arabic alphabet. For all written work the new Latin alphabet had to be used.[17]

Unfortunately a disrespectful attitude to the traditional script (apparently on instructions from above) was adopted at workers' meetings. The old alphabet was ridiculed and its replacement by the Latin alphabet described as 'a powerful blow against religious delusions and obscurantism and against the Koran, the instrument of the spiritual oppression of the labouring masses of the East'.[18] It was also a 'blow' for those people who had learnt to read in the old Arabic script, who for one reason or another were held to have relapsed into illiteracy. Consequently the number of illiterates increased and in addition to literacy schools, courses for the partly literate and more reading material for people with limited literacy skills were needed.

The sixth Party Conference of the Kirghiz Oblast Committee of the Communist Part (Bolsheviks) (June 1930) rightly called for the mobilization of all society to tackle the problem of illiteracy and the extensive application of the positive experience available in the republic, without which it would be impossible to eradicate illiteracy.

In the summer of 1930 a mass cultural campaign began, enlisting the whole of society in the struggle against illiteracy, with literacy schools, literacy points, women's clubs, 'red yurts', cottage reading-rooms, workers' clubs, 'red corners' and 'red tea houses'.

Things began to move. In the first half of 1930, some 80,000 people attended literacy classes (as compared with 20,000 in 1929) out of an illiterate population of 369,880,[19] and courses were completed two to three times per year. On the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the Kirghiz State in 1934, at the Sixth Congress of Soviets of Kirghizia, a level of 57 per cent literacy was noted.[20]

During these years there was a qualitative change in the system of teaching in schools. This involved a change from integrated themes, the method used from 1923 to 1931, which brought material from different subjects together for study, to firm assimilation of the body of knowledge laid down in the curriculum for each subject. In 1931 schools adopted the system of teaching by subjects.

The means of women's education depended to a large extent on the organization of activities in nomadic areas. After lengthy preparatory work, the first Congress of Delegates of Nomad Women was held at Su-Samyr in June 1929. The congress represented a psychological turning point in the life of nomad women, who saw with their own eyes the advantages of education. In June 1930, forty-two literacy points for women were already in operation in nomad camps and there was a 'red yurt' where they could become acquainted with literacy, questions of hygiene, etc.

The number of literate Kirghiz women increased as nomads were gradually settled and involved in collective work on the collective farms then being established, in arable farming, stock-raising, cotton and tobacco cultivation and industry etc. Women began to emerge as front-rank workers and farm organizers.

Universal primary education was achieved. There was, however, an acute shortage of Kirghiz women teachers to work with girls. Women's educational institutions were established, which made it somewhat easier to attract Kirghiz women and girls to study and to counter patriarchal/feudal attitudes to women.

During the second half of the 1930s the first group of qualified women specialists graduated from the republic's institutions of higher education and the level of literacy of the whole population improved.

According to the 1939 census literacy among the population over 9 years of age had reached 70 per cent, including 63 per cent of women,[21] and two people for every thousand of the population had attended courses of higher and thirty-two courses of secondary education.[22] The situation was not, of course, such as to justify talk of the building of socialism in Kirghizia, but something had, clearly, been achieved.

The Great Patriotic War (Second World War) and the period of reconstruction in the history of our country demonstrated the heroism of our people both in battle

and at work and their faith in the distant future, for the sake of which they were prepared to suffer the greatest hardships and even to give their lives.

As economic and social stability were established and the scientific and technical revolution got under way, the question of the general literacy of the population arose again. Here things proved to have been neglected. The masses who had undergone evacuation and forced resettlement, and even those who had attended literacy classes, included a substantial number of illiterates. The schools section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party prepared material for a confidential resolution.

On 4 January 1958 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the USSR published a resolution on the complete elimination of illiteracy in the country, in accordance with which, on 28 January 1958, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kirghizia and the Council of Ministers of the Kirghiz SSR[23] published a detailed resolution for the republic. It should be noted that these documents were stamped 'Top Secret' and were as a rule adopted at closed meetings of the Bureau or Secretariat of the Central Committee. Performance of the tasks set in these resolutions to have been completed by the beginning of the all-union census of the population in 1959.

The situation was indeed far from easy. Literacy work had been pushed into the background by the large-scale projects initiated under the Five Year Plans—restoration, reconstruction, etc., the change-over to a compulsory seven-year course for children of school age and ambitious experiments in agriculture. All this left little energy for tackling illiteracy among the adult population.

According to the data of the Statistics Department of the Republic of Kirghizia, on 1 January 1958 in rural areas there were 47,743 persons aged between 8 and 49 who were totally illiterate, making up 7.5 per cent of the total population. There were particularly large numbers of illiterates among the rural population of the Dzhalal-Abad (11.9 per cent) and Osh (11.1 per cent) *oblasts*,[24] and a considerable proportion of them were women.

It should be noted that in the budget for public education there was a secret column showing funds allocated for literacy work. However in most cases these were under-used, in our opinion because certain public education departments were unaware of their existence. In 1955 only 55 per cent of these allocations were used, and in 1956 only 69 per cent.[25]

Payment for literacy teachers was also set at 100 roubles for each person taught in a class or individually, after monitoring of teaching quality.

It should be noted that 50 per cent of illiterates were young people. The reason for this was that keeping records of children of school age and enrolling them in schools was wholly and entirely the responsibility of teachers. Village Councils took no part at all in this work. In fact, in the majority of resettled families children did not go to school at all. These were the Chechens, Karachai, Crimean Tartars and other peoples of the Caucasus who were resettled in Kirghizia. In this case it was the parents who proposed to let the children attend school.

Enterprises and collective and state farms made premises available and provided heating, lighting and equipment for literacy classes. The premises of schools, technical colleges and trade schools were also used for literacy work outside normal lesson times, as were the premises of cultural institutions outside their normal opening times. In some cases literacy points were established. Provision was made for incentives to attend literacy classes. Even so, when the All-Union Census began in 1959 the eradication of illiteracy had still not been achieved. At a closed meeting of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 31 June 1962 a resolution 'On the full and complete eradication of illiteracy' was passed. The leadership of the Republic of Kirghizia now had some new members. At a meeting of the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kirghizia on 31 August 1962 a decision was taken to implement the resolution of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR. 'As a result,' it was noted at the meeting of the Bureau, 'of the irresponsible attitude of certain Party and Soviet authorities, the resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kirghizia and the Council of Ministers of the Kirghiz SSR of 28 January 1958 'on the eradication of illiteracy in the Kirghiz SSR' was not only not implemented in time for the beginning of the All-Union Census of the Population in 1959, as provided for in the above-mentioned resolution, but has still not been implemented now'.[26]

In actual fact, the census of population in the Kirghiz Republic revealed the existence of over 15,000 illiterates, including 1,500 children between 8 and 16 years. The situation was particularly unsatisfactory in the Osh *oblast*, where there were 11,000 illiterates—in the Kirov district there were 1,057, in the Kalinin district 960 and in the Soluluk district 734[27] (in the latter two, mainly in mountainous areas).

A timetable and plans were drawn up for the complete eradication of illiteracy and provisions made to consolidate the skills of those who had become literate by expanding the network of third and fourth classes in evening (shift). More schools for repeaters were also set up. Sections of the Central Committee were responsible for monitoring the course of literacy campaigns. According to the above-mentioned resolution the eradication of illiteracy in the 16 to 49 age-group was to be completed by 1 July 1965. However, according to people who were then working in public education, this question was taken off the agenda once and for all at the end of the 1960s.

One last point. It is now feared that the population of Kirghizia and in particular women, as its socially

weakest group, may, in the transition to a market economy, be facing a different danger, the danger of technical and entrepreneurial, i.e. functional illiteracy, which may force them into unskilled physical work or to swell the ranks of the unemployed.

At this new turning point in history, we encounter the same problems—the most acute shortage of funds, inadequate material resources, insufficient technical equipment for education and a shortage of specialists qualified in management and computer technology.

Today the idea of lifelong (continuing) education is particularly important, as any break in the chain of education leads to illiteracy, although at a different level now.

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Women's education in Kirghizstan

Rakhat Achylova

Introduction

The current international seminar at the Kirghiz Teacher Training Institute for Women focuses on the present problem of achieving female literacy and seeking ways of further strengthening and developing it. Without the eradication of illiteracy and without a better standard of education for women, it is hard indeed to imagine their equality with men in society and in the family. Literacy and education enable women to enhance their social and personal status. Such women do better than the illiterate and uneducated in terms of stable pay, besides having a heightened sense of their own worth and of their moral responsibility towards their families and society. The actual tackling of the problem of the eradication of illiteracy among women, in any particular region, and the further strengthening of their literacy call for the settlement of a number of theoretical issues that are understood so differently in the various parts of the world. In our opinion, the concept of 'literacy' denotes a number of different things: the ability to read, write and count; occupational competence; and erudition in many branches of knowledge. In the last sense, but not exclusively in that regard, it is consonant with the fact of being well-educated.

Literacy instruction may be primary, as such being widely referred to as '*alphabétization*', or secondary, when by force of circumstance an acquired skill is forgotten and lapses as a result of not being 'claimed'. The term 'secondary' is also used in connection with functional illiteracy, together with the situation where

a person is illiterate when it comes to performing new functions in life involving legal matters, the environment, computers, and so forth.

In short, the concept of literacy covers a broad spectrum of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of people's education. Literacy denotes a certain quality standard of education determined by the special historical, socio-cultural and national features of people's lives. Combating illiteracy presupposes therefore not only the surmounting of gross illiteracy but also the building up of literacy and a further raising of the standard of education. The eradication of illiteracy is merely the first, primordial step in literacy, but a decisive one in its subsequent strengthening.

Literacy determines the content of education, for the aim of education is first of all to teach literacy (primary literacy) and subsequently to extend and develop it. In such a context, education represents the formalization of literacy to be calculated quantitatively (level of education) and characterized qualitatively (degree of education). This probably explains the popular currency of the expressions 'to study literacy' and 'to receive or impart education'. And literacy may be easy or difficult to impart. Literacy is the source and the basis of education. The literate person is one who knows how to use knowledge, i.e. a knowing person. Literacy may be of various kinds: ability to write, read or count, musical literacy, technical literacy, and so forth. In other words, literacy and education correspond to each other like content and form, where the former is the content of action and the latter its form.

Education implies a systematic approach to acquiring and amassing knowledge. In this sense, literacy is also the degree of acquisition of education in the various fields of knowledge. Therefore education as a process of acquiring and transmitting knowledge makes a person intelligent. Intelligence and the fact of being educated are nevertheless not one and the same concept.

Education is not uniform in system and structure in the different countries and cultures. In the USSR it divides into the pre-school, primary, eight-year (seven-year), secondary, secondary special, higher, post-graduate and doctorate levels. Education may be direct and daytime, evening and correspondence, civil and religious, and so on.

Literacy and education are essential ingredients of culture without which it is hard to conceive of its progress. Both primary and functional literacy and education spiritually enrich culture, assisting its realization in material phenomena and processes.

The problem of women's literacy and education stands very much to the fore in many parts of the world, particularly in countries of Muslim culture, which belong mainly to the developing world and where economic, social, cultural, national and religious features have so far been responsible for perpetuating illiteracy among women.

In the USSR, and particularly in Kirghizia, illiteracy among women able to work can safely be said to have been eradicated. But we must put far from us the idea that we are absolutely free of any problem of illiteracy, particularly functional illiteracy, among Soviet women. Indeed, it is all the more acute in the case of women in the republics of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, including Kirghizstan.

The history of the literacy instruction of Kirghiz women, the current position and the outlook for their education have been investigated and will now be recounted in some detail.

Present status of women's literacy: statistical analysis of trends and prospects

The eradication of illiteracy and the achievement of the present standard of education among women is something of great historical significance.

The first decree, signed by Lenin in 1919, made it compulsory for the entire population of the RSFSR aged 8 to 50 to learn to read and write in the mother tongue and in Russian. Ten years later, in 1929, an enactment was adopted by the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on 17 May 1929 on 'Work to eradicate illiteracy'; and in 1930 that body and the USSR Council of Ministers passed an enactment introducing universal compulsory primary education.

As a result of these first political actions by the Soviet State in Kirghizia, the number of primary schools rose from 103 in the 1914–15 academic year to 1,491 in 1932–33, while in the same period the number of seven-year schools increased from 3 to 65 and the number of secondary schools from 1 to 4. By 1939 male literacy in the 9 to 49 age bracket had reached 84.9 per cent, as against the corresponding female rate of 74.4 per cent. The picture was much the same in the countryside.

In 1949 the USSR went over to universal compulsory seven-year education, and 1958 saw the inception of universal eight-year schooling.

By the end of the 1950s, illiteracy among the children of the adult able-bodied population had been virtually eradicated, and the proportion of literate men and women aged 9 to 49 stood at 90 per cent. In 1960–61 Kirghizia boasted 658 primary schools, 724 seven-year schools, 376 secondary schools, and 6 schools for physically and mentally handicapped children.

In 1961 the need was proclaimed to go over to universal secondary education, and in 1972 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the USSR Council of Ministers adopted a resolution formally recognizing that the switch to universal secondary education in the country had been achieved. The literacy rate for both men and women has since then stood at a stable 99.8 per cent. The number of primary schools has dipped markedly in

recent decades from 368 in the 1970–71 academic year to 111 in 1988–89. A similar fall—from 562 to 289—is to be observed in the number of incomplete secondary (7-8 years) schools. On the other hand, the number of secondary schools rose in the same period from 723 to 1,278, and the number of schools for physically and mentally handicapped children from 15 to 29.

The achievement of full literacy and general secondary education thus came about with a decrease in the number of people with primary and incomplete secondary schooling and an increase in the numbers of men and women with secondary education.

Universal literacy and the general raising of the educational standards of the population quite rule out any difference in this respect between men and women or between town and country. Yet in 1887 the overall literacy rate for the entire population of Russia aged 9 to 49 years was 3.1 per cent, the rate being 5.0 per cent for men and 0.8 per cent in the case of women; and in 1926 the corresponding figures were 16.5, 23.9 and 8.4 per cent.

The same can be said for literacy levels among the various nationalities of the USSR and Kirghizstan, though this does not preclude a certain difference between them in terms of the degree of literacy and standards of education.

While a general upward trend exists in the educational standards of the population as a whole, higher rates of improvement are observed for women than for men.

More women than men possess secondary special and higher education. Kirghiz women lag somewhat behind women of European nationalities in this respect. While out of 1,000 women aged 15 and above, 86 Kirghiz have higher education, the corresponding figure for Russian women is 135. The respective numbers of Kirghiz and Russian women with secondary special education are 128 and 234, but the former outnumber the latter 419 to 241 when it comes to the secondary general level of education. Furthermore, the proportion of women with incomplete secondary and primary education is lower among Kirghiz than among Russian women living in Kirghizia.

In the 1989–90 academic year, daytime courses in the eight higher educational institutions of the capital of Kirghizia were attended by a total of 12,162 Kirghiz girls, including 25.1 per cent in the Kirghizia State University, some 24 per cent in the Kirghiz Teacher-Training Institute for Women, 19.2 per cent in the Kirghiz State Medical Institute, and 13.6 per cent in the Frunze Polytechnical Institute. A similar proportion of Kirghiz girls were enrolled in the Russian Language and Literature Teacher-Training Institute. Smaller numbers—424 or 3.5 per cent of all female students in the capital's higher educational institutions—were attending the Agricultural Institute, 176 the Arts Institute, and 59 the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport.

The proportion of female students on technical and agricultural courses of higher educational institutions is tending to diminish. Between the 1970–71 and 1989–90 academic years, the proportion they represented of students on degree courses in specialist industrial and transportation subjects dropped by 3 per cent, with a corresponding decline of 4 per cent in the case of specialist agricultural subjects. On the other hand, the proportion of female students is tending to rise among those taking degree courses for professions in medicine, teaching, art and music. In that period, the proportions of female pupils in secondary special education were more stable.

At the same time, the proportion of Kirghiz women and women of other nationalities in the republic with high standards of education is increasing.

A definite role in the education of the technically literate sector of the working class was played by the factory and plant establishments (FZUs), later to develop into the schools of the vocational education system. They at present provide instruction for boys and girls with eight-year education and operate in conjunction with secondary special institutions. There are now 119 such schools in Kirghizia with a total enrolment of 63,100. Kirghiz girls on such courses go in for light industry and commerce in greater numbers, being very scantly represented in computer science and communications.

All available data point to definite trends in the development of literacy and education for women in Kirghizstan, from which a number of prospects may be discerned.

1. An intensive process is under way of reducing the numbers of primary and seven-year schools, together with a constant decrease in the number of people with just primary and incomplete secondary education, as a result of the provision of more secondary schools and secondary special and higher institutions, and a corresponding increase in the number of graduates. This testifies to the sound current status and outlook of both secondary and higher education.

2. The lack of a sharp difference in the literacy situation between men and women, and between town and country, nevertheless does not rule out certain differences in the educational standards of women of different nationalities in Kirghizstan. While women of all nationalities in the republic are outstripping men in terms of their share among people with higher and secondary special education, Kirghiz women have fallen behind Russian women in this respect. The fact that the former surpass the latter in terms of general secondary educational standards, and that there are fewer Kirghiz than Russian women with incomplete secondary and primary education, holds out the prospect that these discrepancies will fade away.

3. While the proportion of women in the republic, particularly Kirghiz women, with higher technical and agricultural education is declining, they are taking an increasing share in education, health care and services to the public.

The key to success in achieving universal female literacy in Kirghizstan lies in the pursuit of a state policy of compulsory free instruction of children and adults from the start of the Soviet period to the present day. Between 1970 and 1989, for instance, the republic's expenditure on education rose from 1,870 to 5,801 million roubles. Yet such a sum, when shared out among the various schools, technical establishments and institutes is insufficient to secure optimum quality and falls well below spending levels under these heads in the developed industrial countries.

Another factor, as we see it, in eradicating illiteracy was the implementation of women's right to work and to education. Besides recognition of the equal rights of men and women to education, the Council of People's Commissars for Education introduced a bill for compulsory co-education on 31 May 1918, thereby doing away with separate schools for the sexes. The USSR Council of People's Commissars, however, adopted a bill on 16 June 1943 reintroducing separate education for boys and girls, which in turn was annulled in 1954. These and other government and Party enactments stressed the special importance of eradicating illiteracy and raising the standard of women's education.

In the republics of the Soviet East, with their almost totally illiterate Muslim populations, it was particularly urgent to provide instruction for girls and women apart from men. A teacher-training establishment was opened in the 1940s, which in 1952 became our Kirghiz Teacher Training Institute for Women. These institutions played a big part in eradicating illiteracy among women and raising their standard of education.

As a result of the policy of giving women equal rights with men in the area of education too, women became more financially independent of their husbands and more socially active. Thus, on 1989 data, Kirghiz women account for 51.3 per cent of all the republic's workers, 44 per cent of its civil servants and 64.6 per cent of its collective farmers.

A vast force of women teachers and educators has come into being. The republic now boasts 64,800 teachers in daytime schools providing general education, 73.5 per cent of whom have higher, 4.2 per cent incomplete higher and 17.5 per cent secondary teacher-training. Some 68 per cent of these are women, who also account for 30.1 per cent of school principals and 41.1 per cent of deputy principals.

The Soviet period has also seen very much greater public awareness of the need for girls and women to study. Better educational standards for women are also due to a host of other factors, including extension of the networks of nursery schools (1,676), part-boarding schools (1,225), out-of-school establishments for children, various children's clubs (444), children's music and art schools (84), pioneer camps (996), and so on. All these schools and establishments have not only enabled girls to receive education but have also created the right conditions for their mothers to go on improving their literacy standards. All these gains in terms of eradicating illiteracy and consolidating and developing women's education do not, however, mean that female literacy and education is free of difficulties. On the contrary, this present period of *glasnost* and democracy has revealed a great many unsolved and urgent problems as regards raising the quality of literacy and education.

The main problem in this respect is the discrepancy between quantitative indicators of the high standard of literacy and education attained and their actual quality. In other words, the teaching of schoolchildren and the training of specialists for the national economy fall short of the mark. This is particularly so in regard to the functional illiteracy of women as expressed in occupational incompetence and secondary illiteracy, which are interrelated.

What do we see as the causes of these adverse phenomena affecting the literacy of Soviet, including Kirghiz, women and ways of overcoming them?

Popular wisdom has it that human inadequacies arise from human merit. In this vein, we shall attempt to pinpoint these causes in the light of the above facts of our positive analysis. Despite substantial expenditure on improving the material facilities (buildings, furniture, literature, etc.) of schools and other educational institutions, their resources in terms of auditoriums, printed material and, in particular, the technical means of instruction (computers, model classes, etc.) still do not meet the modest requirements of the day. Such a state of affairs hardly makes for higher quality in education.

The suggested course of action is to focus attention and resources on extending the educational and technical equipping of pre-school establishments, schools and other educational institutions by building new facilities and accommodation and transferring to them real estate relinquished by Party and Soviet organs.

The scramble for quantitative indicators, as in other spheres of social life, became a norm of the period of stagnation. Hence the training of specialists in secondary special and higher educational institutions did not take any precise account of the actual demand for such personnel in the various sectors of the economy. Now that the republic is switching over to market forces, this problem is all the more acute.

The answer is precise statistical accounting and sociological research into personnel requirements and local availability, as the basis for scientifically sound conclusions and recommendations.

A significant cause of functional illiteracy and of the low quality of women's education is the fact that their over-involvement in the sphere of social production was detrimental to their roles as wives and mothers. Hence the increased rates for divorce, juvenile delinquency and other ills. The best way round this contradiction is to enable women to readjust their working and family functions through the introduction of shorter working hours for the same pay or an equivalent increase in the pay of husbands.

These ideas were endorsed by women in a sample survey on working and living conditions in 1989 taken in connection with the population census. In Kirghizstan, women in part-time jobs thought along much the same lines since all women questioned expressed the desire to work on these terms, especially those with children. Native Kirghiz women were rather less keen on this globally since many of them are in part-time employment.

The totalitarianism of the present model of socialism gave rise to an overcentralized system of public education, which in turn prompted cosmopolitanism and extranationality, and at best the exact application of a general curriculum and the accompanying methods in fact issued from, and hence dictated by Moscow. The fact of disregarding the distinctive national and regional features of each people, together with its historical traditions of instruction and education, hindered innovation, creativity and an individual approach to the process of bringing up the younger generation. As we see it, all this gave rise to a paradoxical situation in Kirghizstan where the levels of knowledge of Kirghiz pupils, both boys and girls and whether in town or country, was markedly higher in schools with Russian as the medium of instruction than in schools using the Kirghiz language.

The quest for ways out of this situation impresses upon us the need to reorganize the entire methodology of teaching in all sectors of the education system, striking a happy medium between popular and Soviet pedagogy and also drawing on educational experience the world over.

The medium of instruction of children of native and non-native populations presents the national republics with a thorny problem indeed. The fact that pupils in each region of the USSR are drawn from many nationalities has made Russian the language of international communication for all Soviet peoples. This has naturally led to the establishment of a good many schools in Kirghizstan using Russian as the medium of instruction. For the 1989-90 academic year there were forty-nine such schools, with three using the Kirghiz language and 19 both together. This disproportion between the two types of school has been particularly marked in towns and urban-type settlements, where there are hardly any schools left offering general education in Kirghiz and other non-Russian languages of instruction.

In the early 1980s Frunze possessed a total of sixty-nine secondary schools. One of them used the Kirghiz language exclusively and a few combined Russian and Kirghiz, the remaining sixty or so adopting Russian as the sole medium of instruction. The same situation was to be found in pre-school institutions. In 1989 there were three pre-school establishments in Frunze with Kirghiz as the medium of instruction and upbringing, and twenty with a mix of languages.

Lenin's principles on language policy are being violated in matters regarding instruction for all pupils in the language of the compact local majority, which was the subject of the bill of the Council of People's Commissars for Education dated 31 October 1988. This has led to the virtual exclusion of the Kirghiz language in our republic from some spheres of social life.

Moves are now afoot to remedy these mistakes and establish equality of status for Russian and non-Russian languages in teaching and upbringing.

Many of these difficulties are akin to the problems of female illiteracy encountered by countries represented at this seminar. We consequently trust that a wide-ranging exchange of views and experience will enable all of us to step up our common bid to overcome female illiteracy in the broad sense of the term on the basis of co-operation and mutual support.

Literacy and education issues in Kirghizia

I. G. Kitaev

Comprehensive changes taking place in the USSR spread unevenly along the vast territories of the country. Being a unique conglomerate of different nations, the USSR, categorized a developed state, also embraces remote and underdeveloped regions and republics.

The region of the Middle Asia Soviet republics is in evident contrast with the industrialized centres of the European part of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, even within the constellation of five Middle Asia republics, Kirghizia remains as one of the least developed, and therefore deserves particular analysis. Kirghizia might be easily compared with some Asian or Middle-East developing countries with similar typical features such as agriculture and commodity oriented economy, low efficiency and labour productivity, poor human resources and infrastructure development, high population growth, enormous role of religion and traditions, etc.

With a territory of about 200 thousand sq. km., the

population of Kirghizia increased from 3.5 million in 1979 to 4.4 million in 1990; 38 per cent of the population between 1979 and 1990 lived in cities (66 per cent of the population in Soviet Union is urban). The breakdown of the population by sex is fairly balanced, with a male/female ratio of 49/51. Youth (16 to 29 years old) constitutes a quarter of the Kirghizian population, whereas in 1970 its share amounted only to 18.3 per cent. Since national and ethnic issues are now of extreme sensitive nature in the USSR, it is essential to note that Kirghizes by origin represent slightly more than a half of the republic's population. The remaining half is composed of Russians, neighbouring republics' representatives and national minorities.

In general, the population is not mobile, is attached to traditional values and is reluctant in the face of novelties. Respect to elder persons and community opinion dominates, influencing to a large extent ways of life and public motivations.

Literacy: achievement or illusion

For a long time, compulsory literacy of the overwhelming majority of the USSR population was assumed. Official Soviet statistics did not even collect data on illiterates. The phenomenon of mass illiteracy as such was considered non-existant in the USSR, mainly because of the successful campaigns against illiteracy of the 1920s and 1930s and the continuous increase of education level of population in post-war period. It was presumed, as a social benefit, that apart from a minor number of elder persons, each citizen of the USSR was able to read and write, and understand texts needed in everyday life, as well as count, i.e. he/she was literate.

However, education subsidized and controlled by the state failed to be ideal. The path of *perestroika* and rays of *glastnost* have drastically changed this bright picture. The population census of 1989 in the USSR was an unprecedented attempt to identify more or less the real number of illiterates in the country. For the first time in postwar period, the number of illiterates was calculated not only at the range from 9 to 49 years, but from 15 years and above as well. Although answers to enquiries were voluntary and not verified, the census has shown that at the range of 9 to 49 years, statistics on illiteracy at present are no better than in 1979 when the previous All-Union census was conducted. As for age 15 and above, the total number of illiterates in the USSR was found at a substantial level of 4.3 million (2 per cent). For a country, where authorities usually denied the necessity to consider illiteracy a problem and claimed that the population is totally literate, these figures came as a major breakthrough.

Needless to say, the average of the All-Union illiteracy figures hide the worse situation obtaining in periphery areas such as Kirghizia. The illiteracy rate in this republic at the range 9 to 49 years old is of 0.3 per cent (0.3 per cent in rural areas and 0.4 per cent for female population in rural areas); at age 15 years and above 3 per cent (3.8 per cent in rural areas, 4.5 per cent for women and 5.7 per cent for women in rural areas).

According to these official figures, which, as a matter of fact, do not adequately reflect the deep-rooted, serious nature of illiteracy issues in Kirghizia, the republic is concluding the Union's illiteracy record with Moldavia coming after.

Public opinion in the USSR is now at the threshold of understanding and re-examining the true parameters of illiteracy issues in the country, including functional illiteracy. As for Kirghizia, the census outcome in illiteracy is not more than a sign of the crisis of formal education, a price paid for ignoring for a long time the republic's specific characteristics, for following blindly quantative approaches dominating in the USSR, for insufficient attention to non-formal, lifelong and adult education, in particular education of women, as well as to sound educational planning.

Education in Kirghizia: problem areas

Official statistics, usually showing difficulties of only minor importance in the education system in Kirghizia, do not allow problem areas to be brought out. The long-term race for the best figures had a negative impact on the actual situation of the quality of education; it impeded early identification and warning about problem areas.

According to statistics, the number of students who successfully graduated from secondary schools and colleges in Kirghizia, and who became doctors of sciences, professors and academicians, increased constantly until 1985. The quantity of students in Kirghizia who finished secondary education was six times higher in 1985 (85,000) than in 1960 (14,000). The number of scientists in Kirghizia increased from 2,315 in 1960 to 10,117 in 1988, of academicians and professors from 64 to 214, and of senior research fellows five-fold to 1,454 in 1988.

Although qualitative evaluations and cost-analysis data on Kirghizian education are not available, indirect evidence proves that its efficiency is not as impressive as figures indicate.

In 1986/87, only 1.4 per cent of Kirghizian secondary schools were equipped with computers; this rose to 6.7 per cent in 1988/89 (the averages in the USSR as a whole are 9.9 and 11.5 per cent.

The rural population of Kirghizia has limited access to educational facilities. Permanent pre-school institutions cover only 52 per cent of rural settlements and temporary seasonal ones over another 29.4 per cent. These shocking figures were collected through a special survey in 1988 and apply to settlements of 500 or more inhabitants. In those villages, secondary schools are available only to 83.7 per cent of children. In other words, about 20 per cent of the population of populous

Kirghizian villages, to say nothing about the numerous small villages, go without secondary education schools.

Drop-out figures are not available for the USSR and Kirghizia. Nevertheless mass media provide enough facts about pupils visiting marketplaces, helping parents at home or working somewhere instead of attending schools. Even if drop-out is not a permanent or a long-term phenomenon, there are massive seasonal temporary drop-outs in Kirghizia during crop harvesting in autumn. Drop-out among girls and women is particularly high and pushes the rate of illiteracy up.

Owing to the lack of school buildings, teaching in the USSR is usually organized in two or three shifts (same buildings, different teachers). In Kirghizia, in 1988/89 for example, in 1988/89 some 83 per cent of secondary schools courses were arranged in two or three shifts attended by 39 per cent of pupils.

Another major bottleneck of education in Kirghizia is the problem of language. In 1988/89 in 52.4 per cent of secondary schools teaching was conducted in Kirghizian, in 35.7 per cent of schools in Russian, in 11.7 per cent in Uzbek and in 0.2 per cent in Tajeck. This peculiar mixture of languages creates considerable difficulties in teaching, learning and understanding, as well as in communicating. Russian is compulsory and as a consequence foreign languages are studied in only slightly more than a half of Kirghizian secondary schools.

Sample surveys indicate that a substantial number of young Kirghizians and other Asian nationalities show poor knowledge of Russian, the main language of communication and information in the USSR. This is particularly true for rural Kirghizians, isolated as they are in separate communities, and it represents a serious obstacle to their active integration in public life elsewhere.

Official statistics derived from the recent census show the gravity of girls' and women's illiteracy and education issues in Kirghizia. The percentage of female illiteracy in the republic is one of the highest in the USSR, especially in rural areas (5.7 per cent). Medieval traditions limiting the freedom of women, housekeeping duties, repeated pregnancies, numerous children, etc., prevent in many cases Kirghiz women from receiving quality education. The Kirghiz Pedagogical Institute for Women in Frunze is doing its best, but its best is not enough to improve the overall situation. Pretending for too long that problems do not exist has been the main obstacle to Asian countries' efforts to acquire positive results and apply new approaches in resolving common problems. An in-depth study of theoretical and methodological aspects of women's education issues in Kirghizia is a necessary pre-condition to improving the situation in the sector of education.

Functional illiteracy is a term which is only beginning to appear in Soviet pedagogy. For a republic such as Kirghizia, its present impact is underestimated, compared with such crucial problems as illiteracy in general, drop-outs, female illiteracy, the low level of women's education, etc. A clear definition of functional illiteracy in the USSR is not yet available. It is understood either as the inability to adapt to new technologies, information boom, new know-hows, etc. or as the loss of acquired knowledge. Data on functional illiterates are not available in the USSR, that aspect was therefore not included in the USSR population census mentioned above. A non-representative survey conducted last year by the Leningrad Institute of Adult Education produced evidence that, in rural Russia, 30 to 40 per cent of the total population may be functionally illiterate. Thus the potential danger of functional illiteracy in a republic such as Kirghizia with its large rural and mountain population is a critical issue to be attentively explored.

Conclusions

The overcentralized education system in the USSR, which did not change much during dozens of years, by nature limits grass-root initiative, innovations and experiments, leaving no space for alternative solutions different from the state-controlled and financed education system. The impressive success of literacy campaigns in the early 1920s and 1930s encouraged the authorities to continue to rely upon old-fashioned approaches and schemes in education process. Difficulties accumulated in education sector in the European part of the USSR were exported to Middle Asian republics and added to their own national ethnic, religious, multilingual, rural, population community and other specific problems. Experience in education of other countries, especially Asian, was shared extremely reluctantly because of the official dogma by which Soviet achievements in education prevailed over foreign achievements. Adult lifelong and non-formal education were institutionalized, formalized and operate with low efficiency. Since education in the USSR was always an obedient servant of the political and economic system, the crisis of the latter has a complex and multiplicating effect on education curricula.

Modern Kirghizia, like the USSR as a whole, needs a literate environment. To complete secondary education or even higher education is no longer a priority for young people who are attracted by growing opportunities to earn money fast in the 'gray' or 'black' market. (In 1987 registered youth unemployment among graduates from Kirghiz secondary schools was 1,500.)

To cope with mounting problems of education in Kirghizia necessitates not only their recognition, but also a search for an optimum solution. In this regard, the human resources development concepts and strategies of some South and South-East Asian countries might be of interest to Kirghizia. The quality of education is a key concern and a priority in educational policy in the Republic and thus, educational management and planning based on international experience have a vital role to play.

The development of women's literacy in Uzbekistan

Dilbar Bakievna Kuldashiev

In the political and socialist life of the country's society, a mighty renewal has taken place, which has been reflected in the renewal and development of the political and economic life of the Uzbek people.

There is a popular saying: 'Education is the mirror of the nation's well-being. It was, is and always will be at the sources of the national, socio-economic and spiritual development of the State.' Our nation's great thinkers, al-Farabi and al-Biruni, Ulugh Beg and Navoi, Zanki and Furkat, Hamza and Avaz, saw in education the path to the prosperity of mankind. The great Ulugh Beg inscribed on the entrance to his famous school the words, 'To be educated is the duty of every Moslem man and woman'.

Study and careful analysis of the book 'V. I. Lenin on Central Asia and Kazakhstan' shows that no question of any importance in the life of the peoples of Turkestan was neglected. Turkestan, Lenin wrote, is a colony of the purest sort. The Tsar's government had turned Turkestan into an appendage for raw materials and held back the development of the culture, education and all the political life of the area. During its 50-year rule, Tsarism did not establish a single institution of higher education in Turkestan. Education for women was not even mentioned. On the contrary, Tsarism squandered the cultural treasures and abased the national dignity of the peoples of Turkestan.

Literacy was in a deplorable state in Turkestan. A paltry sum was allocated by Russian Tsarism to the needs of education in Turkestan. It is sufficient to mention that in 1915, for example, 2.3 per cent of the area's total budget was spent on education and 86.1 per cent on the police and the military.[1]

The main schools in pre-revolutionary Turkestan were the *mektebs,* in which *mullahs* worked as teachers. There were about 5,000 such schools. Naturally, all these *mektebs* were fee-paying schools. The basic text-books used in them were the *Haftiyak, Chorkitab,* etc.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, schools using new methods, called *Usuli-Jadid,* organized by the Jadids, appeared in Turkestan. By 1911 there were 63 of them, with 4,106 pupils. Unlike the *mektebs,* the new schools allotted time to the study of arithmetic, geography and other general educational subjects. In comparison with the old *mektebs,* the new schools brought about a considerable rise in the area's educational standards.

In addition to the *mektebs* and new schools, there were 167 schools for Russians and the local population in Turkestan, with 7,328 pupils, 1 per cent of whom were girls.[2]

In historical literature published at different times, various figures are given concerning the literacy of the population of Turkestan, including the Uzbek people. Famous scholars such as Academician T. N. Kary-Niyazov, Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences I. K. Kadyrov, and others, mention in their publications a figure of only 2 per cent for the literacy of the population. The newspaper *Uzbekiston madaniyati va san'yati* published an article on this subject by the historian P. G. Kim, in which the author comes to the conclusion that literacy among the population of Turkestan before the Revolution had reached the level of 20-25 per cent. It should be stressed that during the pre-revolutionary period, population censuses in Turkestan were not conducted with sufficient care. The results of the 1899 census were not studied in detail and a part of them went astray in various government offices.

After the victory of the October Revolution in the country, including Turkestan, new Soviet schools appeared. At the same time, the *mektebs,* the schools using new methods, etc. continued to operate. The head of one of the new schools in Kokanda was the remarkable teacher, Tashmukhammed Niyazovich Kary-Niyazov.

After the October Revolution, special attention was devoted to the problems of literacy and formal education in the national republics. Lenin said that it was necessary to strive for the unity of the different peoples in formal education so that school laid the foundations for what would be implemented in life.[3]

In his note to G. I. Safarov (7 August 1921), Lenin wrote that in addition to economic tasks there was a need for 'systematic and maximum concern for the Moslem poor, for their organization and education... It must be a model for the *whole* East.'[4]

On 7 September 1920, Lenin signed the historic decree of Peoples' Deputies 'On the establishment of the Turkestan State University'. The opening of the University in Tashkent has played a decisive role in the development of higher education, the education of local specialists and the development of scientific research in all the republics of Central Asia.

The Soviet authorities have steadfastly put into practice the principles of 'The mother-tongue school' and 'Attracting more girls to become literate'. These

principles embodied the ideas of national policy in the field of education.

Remarkable people have worked and are working to put Lenin's ideas into practice in the education of women, e.g. Khamza Khakim Zade Niyazi, Tashmukhammed Alievich Kary-Niyazi, Chulpon, Abdulla Kodiry, Faizulla Khodzhaev, Fitrat, Akmal Ikramov, Emindzhan Kadyrov, Siddyk Radzhabov, Nasretdin Rakhmanov, Antonina Khlebushkina, Said Shermukhamedov, Shapulat Abdullaev, Mazluma Askarova, Askar Zunnunov, Mannon Dzhabbarov, Dilbar Kuldasheva, Payaz Musaev, I. N. Styrkas and many others.

In the years immediately after the October Revolution, the main task of the Soviet school consisted in eradicating illiteracy among the female population. Special commissions were established for this purpose. Many short courses were organized for the training of teachers. Teachers' Training Colleges, Technical Institutes and Colleges were opened, with priority for the enrolment of Uzbek women

In his article 'On the question of national policy' (1914) and elsewhere, Lenin defended the right of ethnic minorities to study in their native language. 'A democratic State is bound to grant *complete freedom* for the various languages..., freedom for the native language and democratic and *secular* education.'[5]

This was a great historic victory for Lenin's national policy. The development of Uzbekistan's national education is a bright page in the country's history, with the education of women allowing millions of people to make the giant leap from darkness to knowledge.

Modern Uzbekistan has an extensive network of schools providing general education and other educational institutions, in which 59 per cent of pupils and students are girls.

At present, 326,875 teachers are employed in the education system, 78.5 per cent of whom have higher education and 53 per cent of whom are women.

Thanks to the determination of the Ministry of Education of Uzbekistan, measures are being taken to improve the social conditions of life, work, health care and amenities for teachers.

As of January 1990, an increment (15 per cent) was introduced for teachers of the Uzbek language (in Russian schools).

The schools of Uzbekistan were the first in the country to introduce free lunches for children in junior classes, and the Tashkent City Executive Committee has allocated 642 flats to teachers with priority needs.

Today, when what is essentially a second revolution is taking place in our country, we need intelligent and educated people to renew our society, to free people from the dogmas of the past and from idleness.

Society and the school need teachers who are competent and give their hearts to the children, have a profound knowledge of their subject, have a variety of methodological resources at their disposal and have a thorough training in psychology and the science of education.

We, as scholars and scientists, need a deep knowledge of life in order to prepare the young generation for it. We should always remember Lenin's words that we need to develop and improve the memory of each pupil with knowledge of the principles of modern science and culture.

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Women's teacher-training colleges and women's education in the USSR

S. M. Isaev

Our century is being marked by radical changes in the status of women, brought about by an increasingly full and genuine recognition of the principle of their equality with men. Women are playing an increasing role in social affairs, and their intellectual and spiritual potential and personal involvement in everything which takes place in the modern world are steadily increasing. The Great October Revolution for the first time gave women the possibility and a real guarantee of being in charge of their own fate and full participants in socio-economic changes, and gave them wide access to education, science, culture and the running of the State.

Changes in the life of women in the Soviet East have been particularly marked. However, the legislative activities of the Soviet authorities in Central Asia and Kazakhstan on questions of marriage, the family and women's rights were conducted in the very difficult context of a way of life which had taken deep root in the consciousness of society and in ordinary everyday existence and of regulation of the private and social life of the indigenous population by the religious standards of the Adat and Sharia.

Today, the importance of the social and professional role of women in our society is indeed great. Of the female population (53 per cent) of our country, over 65 million women work in various branches of the economy; more than half a million are in charge of businesses, organizations and institutions and about a million are at the head of various structural subdivisions.

Over 60 per cent of graduate specialists are women, a large proportion being employed in education. However, an even greater number of women are employed in physically demanding work: in Kazakhstan the percentage of women so employed is higher than for the Soviet Union as a whole. Despite the constant efforts of the sttate to improve women's working conditions and provide them with social assistance, a favourable solution to the question of women in our society as a whole requires the solution of extremely difficult and damaging problems such as the insufficient social protection of women, their generally low level of earnings, the shortcomings of medical care, the housing shortage, lack of time for the upbringing and care of children, etc. All these adverse factors directly or indirectly affect all the problems connected with the status of women in our state Kazakhstan, including questions to do with the education of women.

Against the background of ever-increasing difficulties in the real conditions in which working women live, there is a growing labour shortage in women's professions. For example, almost 1.7 million children now need to be found places in kindergartens and crêches, e.g. in this field alone approximately 100,000 infant and nursery teachers are needed.

More than 10 million children go to schools with an extended school day, and on the whole children are left to their own devices for 2 to 3 hours. The question of increasing hours of attendance at schools with an extended school day is being raised.

Today, 55 per cent of students in higher education and specialized secondary schools are women. The percentage of women students in institutions of higher education in Kazakhstan is more or less the same. Despite the fact that education, medicine and librarianship remain the profession dominated by women, the inflow of women into industrial branches of the economy is intensifying.

On the subject of the Government's social policy in regard to the education of women, it can be said with confidence that in our country there is no discrimination against women in any field connected with education. There exists a free choice of profession, equal conditions of entrance to higher education and equal rights in assignment to work. Nevertheless, women as wives and mothers have to face tougher conditions in the social struggle as, traditionally, more of the work of maintaining the local life-style and bringing up children falls on them. Physically, also, women are subject to more trials. Concern for maintaining the health of women requires great efforts from the state. Altogether, expenditure from the state budget on the payment of maternity allowances and the teaching and care of children adds up to over 13 million roubles per annum (according to 1987 statistics). The law on benefits and allowances applies equally to women students.

In the Soviet Union there are women's teacher-training colleges whose students are fully provided for by the state. At present, two of these unique institutions of higher education remain—the Kazakh and the Kirghiz State Women's Teacher-Training Colleges. They occupy a special place in solving the problem of women's education in connection with the growing movement for the preservation, development and strengthening of a distinctive national culture.

The Kazakh Women's Teacher-Training College, founded in 1944 in accordance with the decree of the

Council of People's Commissars, aims to bring the education of women of the indigenous Kazakh nation up to an appropriate standard. The establishment of this college was of great significance for the training of women teachers and the subsequent broad development of women's education in Kazakhstan.

Today the college is one of the major institutions of higher education in Kazakhstan. There are 4,582 students studying in six faculties, 3,145 on full-time day courses, 1,437 on external correspondence courses and 100 on the preparatory course. The annual intake is 800 students. Eleven subjects are taught: Kazakh language and literature, Russian language and literature in the national Kazakh school, Kazakh language and literature in the Russian school, mathematics, physics, geography and biology, chemistry and biology, history and Soviet law, librarianship and bibliography, methods of teaching and psychology of the pre-school child, music and choreography.

An important characteristic of the college is the fact that most of the students come from village schools and many of them have come to study from the most remote regions of the Republic—Mangyshlak, Arkalyk, Dzhezkazgan and other regions where people have a poor command of Russian. When accepting students, preference is given to orphans and the children of shepherds, collective farm workers and industrial workers. The most important feature of the college is that the main medium of instruction is the Kazakh language.

Bearing all this in mind, I should like to stress the importance of the Women's Teache- Training College, in that its graduates, unlike those of other colleges, come from deep in the vast country of Kazakhstan and return there, bringing knowledge and culture to remote regions. To a certain degree, the college is the means by which the government carries out its tasks of promoting the political, economic, social and spiritual development of women in the Republic.

The existence of institutions of higher education like the training college is justified, and their time has not passed. Nowadays, with the growth of ethnic awareness and the need for integration, there is a need for progressive-minded, well-trained specialists, capable of influencing people's feelings and cultural ambitions for the benefit of the nation and of reviving and enriching national traditions in a humanist spirit shared by all people. From this point of view, it is hard to overestimate the role of the Kazakh Women's Teacher-Training College.

The paper reflected only the regional aspects of the education of girls in the Kazakh SSR, and took as a basis one single Women's Teacher-Training College, unique in the country. At the same time, it is possible to find solutions to problems of a more universal nature from the single example of the Women's Teacher-Training College. In recent years, the existence of such institutions of higher education has aroused keen discussion in the republic. It seems to us that the question of raising the standard of women's education still remains topical today, despite the 73 years of achievements of the October Revolution in the Middle East. Today, special attention is being paid not simply to women, but to professionally trained women, active both in their families and in society. For this reason, the work which is being done in this direction is fruitful and successful and the question must be given even more attention in the future. This calls for integrated standard conceptual models. There is no doubt that to solve this problem it is important to examine the regional aspects of education as well as national and international characteristics, which would help in the development of possible uniform approaches in the education of women and help to build bridges of international co-operation. The opening of colleges like the Women's Teacher-Training College is thus a topical matter. In the system of continuing education it is important to pay greater attention to training women as educators and mothers. From this point of view it is important to raise the standard of 'literacy' to the necessary level. After all, it is the standard of women's education which largely determines the preservation and development of the solidity of the nation's cultural uniqueness. Today, the standard of functional literacy among women is fairly high, but their level of preparedness for life ('illiteracy' as women) in questions of nutrition, health and the upbringing of children is quite low. In the pursuit of professional skills these questions have been left behind and forgotten, and with society becoming increasingly complex, they arise in distorted forms in the personal life of every woman. Thus 'this sort of education' in a specifically feminine institution of higher education should be conducted in a competent and proficient way. It is just as important as the professional steps in the development of a future teacher, future worker and future mother.

On the whole, both for Kazakhstan and for the USSR, the statistics on the social position of women are deplorable. It would appear that, 73 years after being given equality with men and receiving an opportunity to study, women are completely immersed in their social and domestic duties. In the course of *perestroika*, a whole series of new questions connected with the social position of women are arising.

Some 53 per cent of the population of the USSR consists of women and 51 per cent of the country's workers are women. In some fields and professions women account for as much as 90 to 95 per cent of the work force. More than twice as many women as men are employed in manual jobs in industry, and in Kazakhstan they number 390,000, or 30 per cent. Today, 3.8 million women in the USSR work on night shifts, and in Kazakhstan 20 per cent of women work on the 3-4 shift system. The proportion of women in science is going down, even though the standard of women's education is very high and they account for as much as 60 per cent of the total number of specialists with higher or specialized secondary education in the

USSR. Women's wages are also low, with one third of women earning less than 100 rubles per month, whereas only 2 per cent of men do. Nine-tenths of the total number of low paid workers are women.

In our country, a working woman has 2 hours 24 minutes of free time per day on average (and a woman agricultural worker 1 hour 57 minutes) and only 16 minutes are spent on the upbringing of children.

There are approximately 72 million families in our country. Every year about 950 thousand couples divorce. As a result of divorce every year, over 700 thousand children below the age of 18 are left without one of their parents, and two-thirds of marriages break up on the woman's initiative. Hard working conditions, poor health care, lack of amenities, poor nutrition and ecological problems are the main reasons why over 50 per cent of the women of child-bearing age in Kazakhstan suffer from extragenital diseases, resulting in the births of sick and premature babies and in still-births. Between 10 to 15 per cent of pregnant women in all areas of the republic suffer from anaemia. Every year in the country 2,500 women die in childbirth or from abortions. Our country is in 50th place in the world table of infant mortality. For example, analysis of the reasons for infant mortality in the first year of life in Kazakhstan shows that 60 per cent of the mothers concerned worked in manufacturing industry, 20 per cent in work involving heavy manual labour and 30 per cent in unhealthy trades. The demands of work and evening shifts lead to unwillingness to have children.

These are our deplorable statistics, on the level of those of the least developed countries. At the same time, we should understand that all these phenomena are not symptoms of *perestroika* but the result of agonizingly long stagnation—both in the economy and in social policy.

Now a wide range of social problems are being touched on by the activities of the Women's Council. In all the republics of the USSR, there are 240,000 Women's Councils operating on a purely voluntary basis, under the aegis of the Committee of Soviet Women. At the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR, out of 2,249 elected People's Deputies 352 are women, of whom 75 are representatives of Women's Councils. They express and defend the interests of women as Today, the social and political activity of the world's women has already outgrown the framework of the Women's Movement. They take part in parliamentary activities, science, medicine, culture and economic associations. They play a great role in the spread of grassroots diplomacy and the friendship movement, which has indeed become a significant symbol of our times. Nevertheless, the position of women in our country is still a question of importance for the state.

Vocational training of women in the USSR as part of continuing education

Vladimir Arkanovich Sudarikov

Over 59 million women work in the economy of the USSR, making up more than half of all its workforce. There is no branch of the economy in which women do not work. Over 35 million women work in the manufacturing industry alone. They make a substantial contribution to the socio-economic development of our State.

Our country is among the leaders in the world table of women's employment. However, the more one examines and evaluates the realities of women's work and daily life, the clearer it becomes that there are many questions to which answers must be sought in order to achieve the best combination of work and motherhood, job and family, woman and society.

These questions require special attention in connection with the transition of the economy to market relations, self-financing and a self-supporting basis, with their competitiveness and recruitment on the basis of competition.

Even at this initial stage, women have already proved uncompetitive on the labour market, which is probably quite natural.

Today, the number of unskilled women workers in the country's industry is more than twice that of unskilled men. The percentage of women involved in ancillary work is high, 59 per cent in industry and 29 per cent in the building trade.

In market conditions there is naturally a concern to recruit a highly skilled worker who is profitable for the firm. Furthermore, female labour requires many social benefits laid down by the state. The managers of businesses and organizations thus dismiss women workers first.

It is right to ask what the consequences of this are

and on what scale this is likely to happen. Some 70 per cent of working women have children below the age of majority, so it could have desperate consequences for those women workers who have to bring up their children on their own. There are about two million such women in the country and is they who are the most anxious about what will happen to them in the future. It should also be borne in mind that 80 per cent of families would be below subsistence level without the earnings of the mother or wife. It should further be noted that even in a favourable economic situation, 80 per cent of the women questioned by sociologists are unwilling to give up their jobs as they see them as a path to development and independence and to keeping up social links.

This is why frequently, sacrificing their personal interests, out of fear of losing the possibility of working and earning their 'daily bread', women agree to work in low-status, unskilled and as a rule low-paid work, for many years acquiring no new skills (from statistical evidence, two-thirds of women workers do not undertake any further training after they have children).

More often than not, the basic reasons why an increase in marketable skills is slower for women than for men are family circumstances connected with the birth of children, the shortcomings of the pre-school education system and the difficulties of daily life. Undoubtedly these circumstances very largely determine the fact that in practically all branches of industry, the average grade of women workers on the pay scale is 1 to 2 points and often 3 points below that of men.

However no less, and probably even a greater negative influence on the enhancement of women's vocational skills and their career advancement are the considerable shortcomings in the organization of vocational training and the system of further training. The figures on this speak for themselves. In 1988 and 1989, throughout the economy as a whole, only 30 per cent of the total number of those receiving vocational training were women, and only 37 per cent of those undergoing further training were women. The picture is even gloomier in individual branches of the economy. It is not surprising that in agriculture, for example, 80 to 90 per cent of women are engaged in manual labour when, of the general total of people with training and further training, women account for only 14 and 29 per cent respectively.

Women have the same level of education as men, and sometimes even a higher one, and begin therefore their working lives from the same point as do men. However, child-bearing, motherhood, the fact that they take on the lion's share of family duties and the lack of attention paid by labour organizations, managers and voluntary bodies to giving further training a structure and forms that take specifically female functions into account play a negative role. As a result, from the time they begin to work, women find themselves in the most unfavourable position as concerns opportunities for further training and career advancement.

Research has shown that in all enterprises studied, women have lower skill grades. At the Kama motor works, for example, where more than half the workers are women, there are four times as many women in the lowest grades as there are men and ten times more men than women are in the highest grades (grades 5 and 6). Men have an average grade of 4.38 and women of 2.43.

It is far from being the case that all women who undergo further training are upgraded, although among male workers it is unusual not to be upgraded.

Research into the position of women in Uzbekistan has shown that among young specialists with higher education, quite a few women are employed in clerical or manual posts which do not require their qualifications.

At the same time, the vast majority of managers at all levels do not have the right attitude to solving the main problem, which calls for a radical improvement in the system of training, retraining and further training for women; this would help them to integrate faster and more successfully into the changing conditions of the industrial environment. This is again illustrated by the Kama motor works. In 1989, almost seven times more men received training there than women. On average every year only 3.6 per cent per of the women workers at the factory attend further training courses, as compared with 27.1 per cent of men.

It must also be said that the what the executive bodies of Councils of People's Deputies, managers and social organizations are doing about staff training in the conditions of economic reform is not being done with an eye to the future. It is being organized without taking into account the prospects of redeploying the women made redundant from industry to work in services and commerce, and is not backed up by analytical calculations or effective programmes and plans. For example, the Ryazan District Executive Committee calculates its requirements for the training of skilled staff without taking sex and age and the idiosyncrasies of industries with a predominantly female workforce into account. Of the total number of workers retrained for new professions in vocational and technical colleges between 1986 and 1989, only 27 per cent were women. The results of a survey held there show that 55 per cent of women workers feel that they need further training but one in three considers there are no opportunities for this. At none of the firms inspected are vocational training courses organized for women returning after maternity leave. The favourable conditions for further training provided for by law for women workers with children up to 8 years old are not available in practice, yet when maternity leave can be extended for up to three years, this measure makes particular sense for maintaining their working skills at the necessary level.

One cannot fail to note as well that in pursuit of profits, some businesses have cut back sharply on the financing of vocational training.

There is also a need to increase the numbers of those

concerned with staff training in businesses.

There is another question, too. At present, practically all matters to do with training, retraining and further training of women workers and their employment are decided, at all levels of management (the business, region, branch of industry and State), within the general context of the provision of labour for the national economy. It is bad that there are virtually no state figures on these questions, and this has an unsatisfactory effect on the organization of analytical work and the level of the measures proposed to achieve a general improvement in the position of women and ensure a high degree of social protection for women workers.

Although, on the whole, many people are employed in departments dealing with labour and social questions, planning departments and public education bodies, there is no systems approach to solving the problems of vocational training for women.

We must all understand that the political, scientific, technical and economic renewal of society is impossible without qualitative changes in the position of women, who make up half not only of the workforce but of society as a whole.

Attempts to find a way out of the economic and social crisis with the plausible pretext of 'returning to her functions as housewife, wife and mother' only create the outward appearance that the problems can be solved this way. Looking to the future, such a policy will not do in the long term. It cannot fail to lead to women, as a significant social and demographic group, being pushed to the sidelines of economic and political life which, whether we wish it or not, would turn the clock back both for them as individuals and for society.

Today, not only the fate of women workers but also the fate of scientific and technical progress and of the country depend on a new look at the training and retraining of the female workforce as the most important means of achieving the social protection of women.

The recently drawn up state policy guidelines on improving the position of women and the family and the protection of mothers and children provide for a series of measures for the establishment of a sufficiently flexible system for the employment and vocational training of women, allowing them to choose socially and economically valid variations of their degree of participation as workers in the national economy.

In particular, they make provision, with a view to correcting the situation, for a study of existing arrangements for the training, retraining and further training of women workers, and of engineering and technical staff. The structure and forms of this work are to be suitably adapted to the particular nature of the female workforce by creating flexible forms of training, including correspondence and teach-yourself courses, making provision for the compulsory retraining of unskilled women workers with their subsequent transfer to more satisfying jobs and more active integration into fields of key importance for technical progress, creating real conditions for the vocational training of women who have not worked for a long time and have been on maternity leave, ensuring access for women workers to professions with high social status, equal access with men to highly skilled and well paid work, and the training of women for non-traditional professions. It would be considered right to hold, at institutes specializing in further training for particular branches of industry, special courses for the heads of the technical training departments of major industrial firms and to stimulate investment by firms in the vocational training and retraining of the female workforce, seeing it as the most important guarantee of scientific and technical progress.

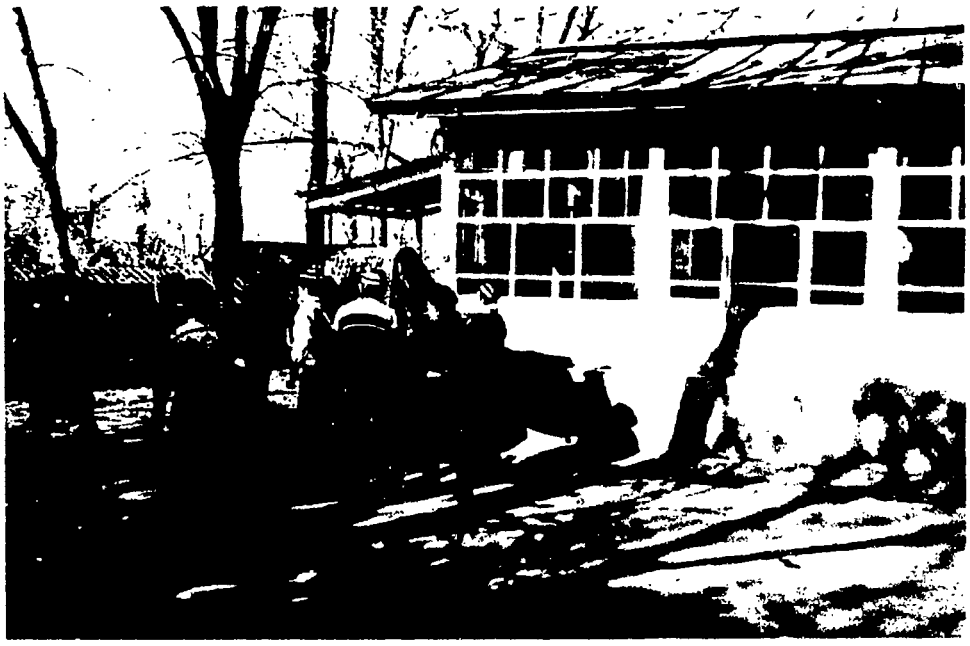
Literacy for women in the context of Islamic culture: the case of the Arab States

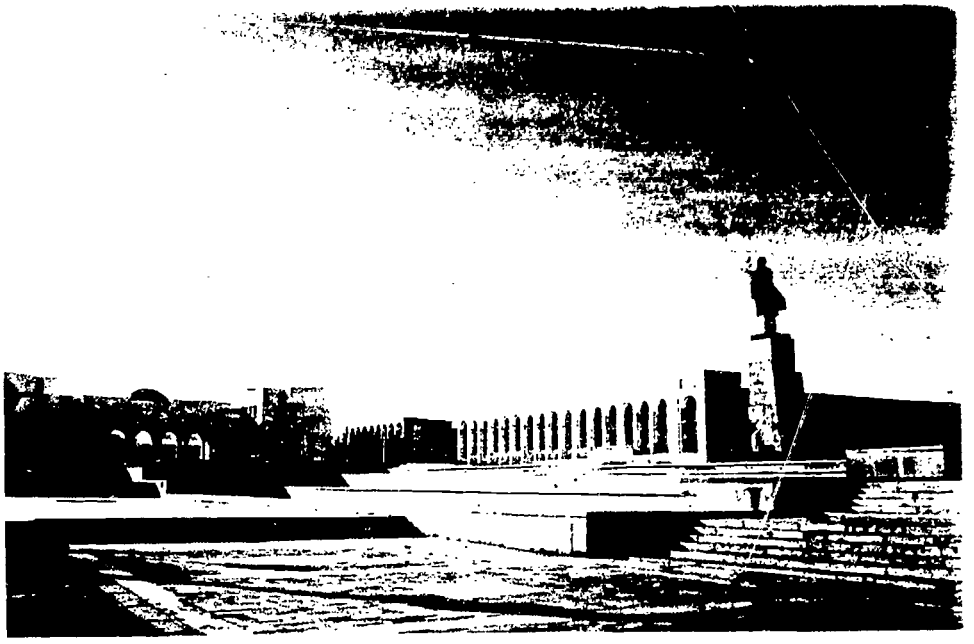
Abdel-Wahed Youssif

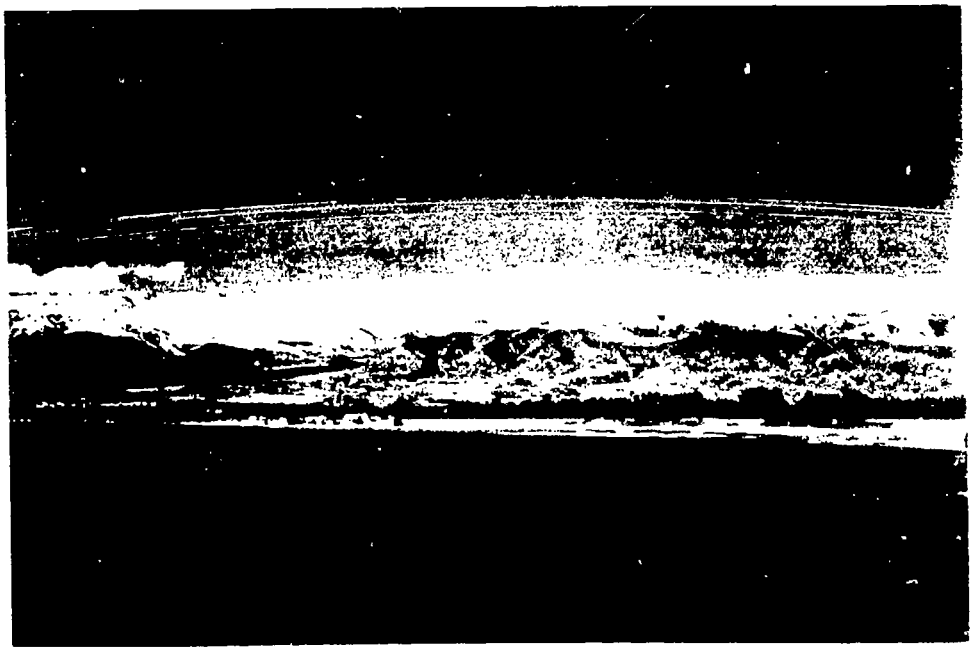
The Islamic cultural context

The twenty-one Arab states which are all Islamic states are divided between the continents of Africa and Asia. They share a common language, a common history and a common rich civilization which is predominantly Islamic. They collectively have abundant human and material sources. However, four of them are among the least developed countries in the world.

Although 'modernization' in the material sense of the word has brought about many changes in attitudes and outlook in the Arab States, Arab society is basically a 'conservative' society with its social and cultural practices deeply rooted in the Arabic-Islamic traditions







which advocate a philosophy basically different from, and sometimes opposed to, the philosophy advocated by the 'West'. It will therefore be wrong to apply western 'models' and western methodology of investigation to Islamic countries when we discuss some complex issues such as equality of the sexes and equality of opportunities.

Some fundamental characteristics of Islamic societies can be briefly outlined here:

(a) Islamic civilization constitutes a holistic system of thought and behaviour. Equal emphasis is put on both the spiritual and the physical aspects of life, and their integration.

(b) The belief in equity and justice implies more in Islam than the creation of an egalitarian society. Muslims are equal before God and equal among themselves. Among the believers, one's position is determined only by priority in the faith or by a stricter observance of its precepts. Between ALLAH and the believer there is no mediator; Islam has no church, no priests, and no sacraments. The function of the State is the organization of the religious life.

(c) The Koran is sacred and comprehensive. It is devoutly respected by all Muslims. Through consensus there is room for adaptability to changing conditions and changing needs. Throughout the history of Islam adaptability was often accompanied by a highly self-conscious discussion. This explains the quick and phenomenal growth of Muslim cultural consciousness in the earlier decades of Islam from the life of the desert nomads to that of the urban merchants, and from a narrowly defined kin, racial and territorial basis to a universal religious and cultural basis. The contribution of Islam to science and technology speaks for itself.

(d) To the Muslim, learning is a necessity and a religious duty. The concept of learning occupies a central position in Muslim thought. The first chapter of the Koran revealed to the Prophet Mohamed stresses the importance of learning: 'Read in the name of the Lord... Read, for thy Lord is the most glorious, who taught by the pen; who teacheth man what he knoweth not'.

Two of the widely quoted sayings of the Prophet are: 'Searching for knowledge is a duty of every believer, male and female'; 'God eases the way to paradise for him who seeks learning';

It is important to note here that statements in the Qur'an and the Hadith are directed to both men and women without any shade of discrimination.

Although no claim can be made for complete equality between men and women in access to learning opportunities throughout the period of Islamic rule (until approximately the end of twelfth century), there is ample evidence that women participated effectively in the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. Many women were prominent scholars, transmitters of Hadith, poetesses and teachers.

Islam, as an organized religion, seeks to raise the moral quality of life for both men and women. To achieve such a goal, a certain kind of discipline in social behaviour had to be imposed; but that did not mean in any way the exclusion of women from public life. One of the misinformed assumptions about Islamic society is the widely circulated assumption that women and men in Islamic countries live in two separate and strictly differentiated worlds: men live in the public world with all the power and freedom, while women are confined to the home with nothing but menial tasks and boredom. This is far from reality. Those who advance this kind of misinformed assumptions seem to ignore the fact that women in Muslim countries are relatively more advanced than their counterparts in some countries that claim to be 'modern'. They also seem to ignore the role of socio-economic and socio-political factors that have in some Islamic societies overshadowed the real spirit and practices of Islam. After so many centuries of foreign domination, ignorance and cultural alienation, the Islamic countries have been influenced by some practices which are definitely extra-Islamic. Some of these practices—as it is the case in many other societies—adversely affect the status of women and their role in society.

When we examine present-day Muslim countries, we should try to understand the complexity and intricacy of the socio-cultural and socio-political situation which has, over centuries of delusions with the so-called 'Western' civilization, contributed to the emergence of a strong wave of Islamic consciousness (referred to in the 'western' media as fundamentalism), which is, in essence an expression of men's and women's rejection of Western values and a call for a return to Islamic values. Those values of Islam never preached discrimination in any form against women . Women throughout the Arab region are strong and active contributors to their society. They are engaged in considerable work inside and outside the home. They are teachers, university professors, doctors, engineers, lawyers, judges, members of parliament, ambassadors and cabinet ministers. In rural areas they share the work with men. They are farmers, shepherds and producers and sellers of food and crafts. The portrait of the Muslim/Arab women of being either slaves to carry out the burden on behalf of men or being sexual objects to be hidden behind veils and curtains is no longer valid. It is a hangover from colonial days and from present-day anti-Arab and anti-Islamic quarters which spare no effort to debase Arabs and Muslims.

Education is one of the domains where Arab States Region has succeeded in sharing a common strategy for the eradication of illiteracy (1976), and a common strategy for the development of education (1978). Both of these strategies sought to democratize education. The degree of success in implementing any of these strategies varies from country to country. However, the region as a whole shows an appreciable steady growth in educational opportunities for both sexes.

A recent statistical paper on education in the Arab

states brings out some important developments in the region as follows:

1. Total enrolment for all levels of regular education practically doubled between 1975 and 1988 from 24 million to 47 million and an appreciable increase in female enrolment was registered, from 37 per cent of total enrolment in 1975 to 42 per cent in 1988.

2. Estimates and projections of the number of illiterate persons aged 15 and over in the countries of the Region imply increases from 61 million illiterates in 1990 to 66 million at the end of this century and 72 million in 2025, but a decline in the proportion from 40 per cent of the population in 1990 to 38 per cent in the year 2000 and to 21 per cent in 2025. Females invariably constitute the majority of the illiterate population and this will continue.

Within the framework of the declared policy of universalization of primary education and the eradication of illiteracy, Arab states have given increasing attention to the eradication of illiteracy among women. Guided by the Arab strategies and UNESCO's plans, all Arab states have over the last fifteen years, launched selective and/or mass literacy campaigns which were directed to both sexes. Good examples are Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic, Sudan, Morocco, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait and Oman. All these campaigns sought to involve women as individuals and women's organizations in all operations. The results are in some cases very satisfactory, in others modest. The region is currently witnessing a renewal of the special campaigns against illiteracy in all states as a result of new awareness created by International Literacy Year 1990 and the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, March 1990).

Obstacles impeding progress are in many ways an integral part of the general obstacles impeding progress in the domain of literacy in the region as a whole, whether for men or for women. However, certain obstacles are particularly relevant to women in the context of overall development. The problem of inequality of educational opportunities starts at the primary level of education mainly for socio-economic reasons. The gap becomes wider in rural areas and poorer communities. This is serious because rural women are a majority in all countries of the region, and poor women are a majority among rural women. It is the rural and poor women who need more support, and it is they who are more difficult to reach. Projections based on statistical data indicate that the situation will only slightly improve by 2025. An obvious remedy will be to intensify efforts and seek more effective strategies.

Reasons for the present state of affairs are varied. However the following eight are among the most significant.

In spite of commendable progress achieved in women's status and society's attitude regarding women, society in the Arab region still largely reflects the male world, its vested interest, man's discriminatory power and dominance. The value system (which is not necessarily all Islamic) still favours man's position in society.

The education system itself plays a decisive role in the perpetuation of traditional values for the subordinate and dependent role of women. Women themselves are partly responsible for this state of affairs because of their passivity towards the situation.

Non-formal education, of which literacy is an important component, is considered a second rate activity for second rate learners and, consequently, it receives little support and enjoys low status within the education set-up.

Low motivation for learning, especially among poorer women who may not see the need for literacy or may not have the time to go to literacy classes. The curricula, in most cases, have little relevance to the knowledge and skills women need to break the vicious circle in which they find themselves and to be able to acquire 'useful' skills and develop new attitudes and values.

The low level of education among men, particularly in rural areas where the rate of illiteracy is high, is a direct cause of the low participation of women in education in general and in literacy classes in particular because of the difficulties over time and places of meeting that often conflict with other priorities or common customs.

Literacy programmes in general are limited in horizon and short in duration. They very rarely provide opportunities for sustained studies or skill development. They even, sometimes, reinforce and stereotype the traditional roles of women. They also tend to be sporadic and fragmentary; many programmes are narrowly focused and lack co-ordination with other programmes.

A major constraint in many countries of the region is the lack of an infrastructure of communication and services; poor roads and poor or lacking public transport make it difficult for teachers to get to villages and prevent rural women from getting to where programmes take place.

Logistical and economic constraints in the middle income and poorer countries of the region are serious barriers to networking: expensive reading materials, lack of paper and copying facilities, and in some countries pens, pencils, chalk and blackboards.

These constraints are not characteristics of Islamic countries alone. The picture is more or less the same all over the Third World. This confirms the view expressed earlier in this paper that the main issue is not the influence of Islam; the issue is basically that of development. The socio-economic and socio-political factors interact to determine the degree of growth and development in all societies. Islam has proved to be a very accommodating religion that has remained relevant to all circumstances at all times. It will therefore be necessary to look for other more crucial factors, within the socio-economic context, that impede progress.

The time has come for the Arab states to undertake a thorough and critical analysis of the present pro-

grammes for women, with the view to introducing a strategy for education of women in the region with the full participation of women. Education can only be effective if it deals with learners' needs within a social context that has to be changed. Women need basic literacy and basic skills to move from a state of illiteracy to literacy, but at the same time they need the power of critical thinking, the power to analyse their situation and the intellectual skill to visualize the kind of world that can guarantee their full and effective participation in society.

To achieve the new vision is not the responsibility of the government alone. Voluntary organizations, universities, research institutions and politicians have to accept their share of the responsibility.

The starting point is the universalization of primary education for girls, particularly in the rural areas and in the poor communities. Any attempts to remedy the situation there should deal with the problem of poverty and the social practices that work to keep girls away from school. Two of these practices are child labour and early marriages.

Governments must formulate more precise, consistent and integrative policies in support of the development of women, and provide the resources, training and monitoring that will ensure that policies are carried out.

Women's programmes should not be confined to the traditional narrow approach of imparting—mechanically— some literacy and numeracy skills, but should include elements aiming at giving women an opportunity to acquire an overall perspective about themselves and their society. Many programmes lack the capacity for continuity and the development of follow-up activities that could reinforce learning and take women further in terms of relevant knowledge and action.

There is a need for co-ordination among the various ministries and organizations working in women's education. The same is true of international organizations working in the same country. More co-ordination will help ease the critical situation resulting from shortage of financial resources and equipment, shortage of human resources (trained women in particular) and marginality.

Non-formal education should gain status as an indispensable alternative for imparting knowledge and skills to many girls and women because it is more flexible, more open-ended and more adaptable to the needs of women.

The Arab states are fortunate to share a common language, a common history and a common civilization, all of which will help in the setting up of a common strategy for the education of women. All the essential elements for such a strategy are there, including essential human and financial resources (taking the region as a whole). What needs to be renewed and revitalized is the will to work together.

Looking at literacy efforts in general and in Islamic countries in particular

Sorayya Maknoon

We may look at the topic of this seminar, that is, the educational and literacy efforts devoted to women throughout the world, or better the cultural bottlenecks of the third world, from three different angles: a statistical approach, a literacy-based qualitative approach and a social-impact qualitative approach.

A statistical approach to the literacy situation among people of the developing countries, and especially among their women, involves an analysis of disinterest on the part of people in local, national and international literacy plans. Three assumptions are made. All nations and peoples share similar cultural and political traits (in terms of economic growth incentives). Popular participation, and especially that of women, in economic activities is indispensable for achieving an increase in gross national product (GNP): it is self-evident that education in general, ranging from learning to write and read up to acquiring top specializations and skill in the use of technology upgrades individuals' efficiency and their impact on this goal. In the third world countries, local and national traditions and culture reinforce backwardness and, therefore, international plans introduce literacy methods and approaches that seek modify the traditions and customs of the people living in such countries.

Accordingly, in the first approach, and as a function of the three assumptions, we come across formal and quantitative problems when dealing with the difficulties of literacy campaigns. For the purpose of this study, we have to present a series of statistical figures

on the illiteracy rates in individual countries, the number of literate men, women and children and their particulars as well as the efforts made to overcome these difficulties.

In many countries, this approach has not been successful in total and final deracination of illiteracy and elimination of its associated problems.

The second approach is more complicated than the first, calling for a qualitative approach to the literacy situation, the reason for people's disinterest in different countries and the disutility of received education among adults, particularly women in rural areas. In this approach, material improvement is considered as the main incentive for seeking education. The methodology applied here is experimental.

The third approach involves different definitions for education, such as the promotion of the ability for mutual understanding in order to enhance rights and upgrade human conscience. In the model presented here, efforts shall be made to show the concrete impact of faith, particularly that of Islam, on education. In this model, even though quantitative results may be short-lived and not very considerable, qualitative achievements are definitely long-term and highly efficient.

A cursory look at the educational and literacy situation in various countries and the endeavours made by international organizations, including UNESCO, produces a number of comments.

Literacy and educational efforts so far made have been incompatible with national culture and traditions, and people's faith; this religious and cultural contradiction has caused popular resistance. Such countries are called 'backward' in international organizations' jargon. Good examples of such programmes may be noticed in the preliminary education given to African countries by Christian missionaries.

Lack of material incentive in third world countries has been caused by keeping them weak and plundering their national wealth, e.g. pillage of mines and oil by domineering countries, humiliation of national cultures and social traditions which keep people deprived destitute and oppressed in such a way that they ignore forever their own innate capabilities and aptitudes. Examples of such countries can be seen in Latin America.

In the so-called third world countries' capital cities, human resources are limited because of the policies advocated by statesmen slavishly fascinated by the western culture. In such countries learning about science and technology cannot go beyond a certain limit, and even that is only attainable by going to the west and absorbing oppressive culture of the west.

In such countries' industries, the need for foreign experts is indispensable and the so-called third world countries always lag far behind developed countries and are deprived of the most advanced specializations and tools. What is more, they suffer from corruption, indecent behaviour, etc. introduced into their societies by the alien culture.

They remain permanent buyers of foreign goods, agricultural products and foodstuffs, which in turn keeps them dependent on developed countries, causing them to forget about the idea of independence and self-sufficiency. It is under such circumstances that men and women who, in their villages, take their final weak steps towards material independence with considerable difficulty and hardship, are branded ignorant, accultured and good-for-nothing. And on the contrary, those who have ascended the ladder of acquiring arrogant cultures are called experts and specialists, who are included in those countries' GNP calculations with above-average incomes, as persons who do serve their home countries. While on the contrary, the impact of the valuable contribution of the illiterate villagers' hard work to GNP calculations is very insignificant.

As a result of the gap that separates the educated and illiterate, those with traditional, low-level education lose interest in education and their teachers' endeavours prove to be in vain.

Education in Islamic countries

The dynamic and rich Islamic culture and the precepts and injunctions of Islam that advocate the rule of the oppressed and social justice, ensuring relative material welfare, independence, freedom and a sense of conscience, invite all the followers of this religion to education.

'Seek knowledge from the cradle to the tomb'.

'To acquire knowledge is a duty for all Muslims'

'And prepare against them with what horses tied at the frontier, to frighten thereby the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know but Allah knows them.'

(The Holy Koran, 8:60)

Current educational and literacy programmes of the world are based on experimental research and material philosophies. In this system, everything, even the incentives for acquiring knowledge, is defined materially. This kind of education cannot influence an individual human who has religious inclinations and hesitates in yielding to technology offered by the material world.

If, on the other hand, learning is defined as a means for the realization of the social behaviour that leads to mutual understanding in the form of reading, writing and exchange of information, then we shall see the essence of education to be nothing but faith, crystalized through words compatible with various social and individual stands. This form of social incentives is the same force that not only ensures learning and its growth in the society, but also leads to the domination over the world's natural laws and its co-ordination with the

'expansion of the impact' of such incentives. In other words, the penetration of human determination in different strata produces tools suitable to human goals, of which reading, writing and applied education constitute only one aspect.

Therefore, in educational planning of Islamic countries, a special place should be reserved for people's (and specially women's) religious and spiritual incentives and interests in their culture and traditions. In terms of political, cultural and economic capabilities, Islam is the strongest incentive of our world today. In order to uproot illiteracy in Islamic countries, learning should therefore be seen as a basis for inducing eagerness to read and write, a technique for stimulating religion and a tool to expand the power of Islam and submission to the rule of Allah. In this case, then, education with faith as its essence becomes premordial and other sorts of education become its branches.

If Islamic countries re-orient their audio-visual programmes towards religion and support it with sufficient encouragement, the general level of learning and culture shall be quickly upgraded especially given the great readiness that exists among these people to learn. In this way, the applicability of learning in relationship with faith and human services becomes apparent in all aspects of social life. It is on this path that the development of religion can be oriented; otherwise the growth of religious faith in such countries will continue to surface in the form of widespread wrath against all institutions that impede religious expansion.

Today, we stand witness to Muslim's struggles against oppression in many places, struggles which have received inspiration from the Islamic Republic of Iran's Islamic revolution which reflects the predominance of human technology over material technology.

Muslim women, many of whom were illiterate but fully aware and deeply religious, succeeded in rearing valiant and free human beings who, with assistance from the unlimited power of God and encouraged by the spirit of martyrdom, called into question the global administration and actually presented human technology to the world.

If we assume that the current governments of the world are unable to understand and test various human qualities, then we know that they will not succeed in making due recommendations to Islamic societies. It is for this reason that we should resolve our society's difficulties in accordance with our own beliefs and religious inclinations. I, therefore, make a few recommendations for the improvement of education and literacy in Islamic countries:

1. Understanding the problem of illiteracy in Islamic societies should accompany an understanding of special incentives of Muslims and should be based on their monotheistic world view, so that as the efficiency of their incentive may be tested in the elimination of the social problem of illiteracy and learn about the impact of this incentive on the development of the culture of human kind.

2. Considering the powerful effect and the importance of religious incentive among Muslims, learning the Koran substitutes the commonly used method of beginning with alphabet which, as an international technique, does not include Muslims' characteristics. Beginning with the Holy Koran may comprise three stages: introduction to the Holy Koran, memorization of shorter chapters and group recitation, teaching the alphabet through the Koran.

In Islamic countries, the Holy Koran is known to be the book of life: Muslims' backwardness, weakness and even poverty are attributed to their abandonment of the Koran.

Education of women and girls: a pressing imperative

Namtip Aksornkool

The inferior position assigned to women jeopardizes not only their future status in society, but also the future of society itself.

Women, who represent half of the world's population, do two-thirds of the work, but receive only one-tenth of the total income.

Rural women, who contribute to at least 50 per cent of food production, receive little or no agricultural training of any kind.

Their working day is always longer than that of men: from 15 to 19 hours a day. In addition to looking after the children, they do the housework, fetch firewood, carry water, prepare meals and perform the long and tiring tasks of hoeing, planting and bringing in the harvest.

In most regions of the world, maternal mortality rates are still high. Women suffer from chronic malnutrition and two-thirds of them are anaemic. Without

any kind of sex education, their health is undermined by frequent unspaced pregnancies.

In Asia and part of the Pacific, the female sex has always been considered inferior, peripheral and not worthy of any real value. The social attitude which strongly underlies the preference for baby boys is prevalent. Parents, as well as the society at large, have negative attitudes towards girls, considering them 'transient' members of the family to be married off and leave to serve another family. This is in contrast to the belief that boys are the family's heirs to carry the family name through time.

Due to continued exposure to societal negative attitudes against their sex, women and girls often fall victim of their own socialization. They adopt an attitude of low self-esteem and aspiration as well as self-denial. While their male counterparts identify themselves in terms of what they do, women tend to do so in terms of their relationship with others.

Although statistics show that 50 per cent of the food in the world is grown by women, the share of women's contribution in agricultural work far surpasses 50 per cent in many countries in Asia and the Pacific. Despite women's active participation in production or informal economy, policy makers and national socio-economic planners tend to confine their role to that of housewives and mothers or unpaid family labour and, therefore, dispensable in the national socio-economic planning process. Experience in several countries in the region has pointed to the fact that industrialization and technological development have not only not benefited women, they have had adverse effects on them.

Women's suffering from development are due to various reasons notable among which is that women have come to accept their plight as normal. Moreover, their overburdened two-fold responsibility makes it impossible for them to contemplate bringing about any change for the better. But no change is likely to occur if women remain in the present stage of relative ignorance, not realizing their potential nor appreciating their own value, oblivious to alternatives or opportunities open to them.

Women remain, by and large, passive onlookers at development—ill prepared to cope in the world which is changingfaster than ever before.

Women's education

The situation of poor enrolment and retention of young school-age girls is closely linked to that of female adult literacy. If a girl is taken out of school before she reaches any significant level of learning, she will grow up to be uneducated untrained adult woman, unprepared to realize any of her potential to the full.

Illiteracy among women remains one of the most significant problems in the region. The 1985 UNESCO statistics indicated 418 million female illiterates in Asia and the Pacific as compared to 233 million male illiterates. The picture is gloomier if one considers that during the period 1970–1985 there was a 14 million reduction in the number of male illiterates and an increase of 28 million illiterate women.

Analyses of basic education programmes for women in the region show that they are generally designed on the basic assumption that women's roles and functions are limited to the reproductive domain, i.e. those of mothers and wives. Accordingly, education programmes provide reading and writing skills while giving emphasis on imparting knowledge and information on such areas traditionally reserved for women, as family planning, child care, nutrition, among others.

Several literacy programmes have included income generating skills, presumably because they help attract women to the literacy class.

Examination of the income generating skills reveals that, for the most part only so called 'feminine' skills such as sewing and tailoring, embroidery and handicrafts are taught. This results in 'oversupply' of skills in these areas. Furthermore, women are directed away from non-traditional and more stimulating and remunerative occupations in the manufacturing sector and are likely to be marginalized with industrial restructuring.

Experience from all regions in the world points to the fact that these skills do not actually generate income, due in part to inadequate levels of skills imparted, lack of marketing and management skills, and women's lack of real appreciation of skills imparted. More significant, the skills imparted do not reflect the reality of women's role as agricultural producers.

Clearly, the over-emphasis on skills related to the reproductive role of women at the expense of the improvement of their role as economic producers renders many of the skills-based literacy programmes irrelevant.

Most basic education programmes have taken women for granted as passive consumers and beneficiaries within the existing structure conditioned by the inequitable male/female division of labour within the household and the economy. Planners must learn to appreciate women's role as economic producers and as individuals with abilities and potentials.

Analysis of UNESCO supported educational programmes for women in China, India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand indicates that there is a trend towards including components other than literacy and income generation to raise social and civic awareness, bring about a scientific attitude, and build character and confidence.

Measures promoting women's education

Women's education is a structural as well as a technical issue. The measures taken to ensure success must, therefore, consider the structural as well as the technical aspects.

Experience of successful programmes in the region has indicated the need for serious policy commitment reflected in adequate resource and institutional support at central and local level. To secure such commitment and support, policy makers and administrators must have an opportunity to change their attitudes about women's and girls' education attitudes, which are often influenced by their evaluation in terms of domesticity.

Providing basic education for women on a national scale is a monumental task. It requires support from all sectors of society. In order to mobilize this support, awareness of the need for women's education, particularly education for improving the status of women, must be raised.

Campaigns to raise awareness and support for women's education should aim at policy makers at all levels, media executives, technocrats, educational planners, implementers, the potential learners themselves and the public at large. Effective awareness raising campaigns could be done through the mass and folk media. The campaign should feed accurate information to the media and, through the media, to the public. Since the campaign will have to be conducted continuously, an infrastructure is necessary to spread the campaign messages systematically. This may involve enlisting the existing media network in each country to devote time and/or space to cover the issue.

Government channels such as the government radio and television stations and in certain countries, newspapers and newsletters, will also have to be involved so that they will be committed to the cause.

A strategy needs to be developed which takes into account a realistic view of women's roles in society, that is to say, women's multiple responsibilities in terms of socio-economic development and the social welfare of the family must be given serious consideration. Furthermore, the strategy may need to be based on education for empowerment rather than 'education for enablement.' This calls for a new direction in programming. Rather than to 'teach' women some skills, education must help women to develop critical and analytical skills. They should be encouraged to ask questions, reflect, act and raise new questions about their own conditions in the home, the workplace and society.

The content and methods of basic education programmes must reflect the present-day reality facing the target women. They should not perpetuate sex-stereotyped roles of women and girls. New materials are needed projecting a positive image of and role models for women and girls which will ultimately contribute to the development of self-confidence and self-esteem. Improving the situation requires that all those concerned in conceptualizing, writing, illustrating, editing and interpreting textbooks believe that sex stereotypes bear negative effects on all members of society. The new content of the curriculum and materials also implies the change in presentation and methodology, for example, for the materials to help empower women learners, there must be built-in mechanism to facilitate their raising questions about their condition.

Awareness issues can be dealt with through materials that initiate discussions and are thought provoking. Confronting the readers so that the issues become psychologically uncomfortable for them can be used as a springboard to bring about a change in attitudes. Authors and designers of materials may need to shock the readers to bring about changes. Confrontation, however, has to be carefully handled. The facilitator needs to be experienced and should be aware of the ways in which the materials can influence different issues, and how confrontation may be damaging to some readers.

If the content, methods and materials are to be adjusted to reflect the reality of women's conditions, then teachers/facilitators need to be retrained/oriented to be able to handle the new materials through appropriate methods. Because the teachers/facilitators must be convinced of the worth of providing education which empowers women, the content of these orientation programmes must be designed to achieve that end.

They should be designed to reflect mutual respect between learners and facilitators as well as among learners, representing a supportive environment which offers opportunity for the facilitators to try out their skills in the context of their new attitudes towards women's education. Further, the approaches and the methods used in the orientation programmes must provide models for conducting educational programmes aimed at the target women group.

Another point which is often raised regarding training for people to conduct basic educational programmes for women is the need to build up the ability of women to manage projects and to have any inputs in the projects other than their labour.

There has been a growing concern that women have no time to participate in education programmes due to heavy work burden both in the home and outside. It has been suggested, time and again, that appropriate technology be brought in to lighten the workload of women thereby leaving them enough time and energy and even inspiration and motivation to learn. Unless this is taken seriously, potential women learners will always be faced with their third burden which will eventually lead to dropping out and generate disillusionment with learning.

Besides appropriate technology, sharing of women's responsibilities by husbands and other family members as well as the community is highly desirable. The oft-heard complaint among mothers of young children is that they can't concentrate with their children running around. They need to know that their children are safely being looked after by those they trust. Setting up crêches or day-care centres has often been suggested. Experience has shown that when this is taken up seriously, participation of mothers of young children rises considerably.

Providing education for women should not be a one-shot affair. Opportunities for continuing education need to be provided. Women's emerging needs must be responded to. This includes opportunities in further and specialized training as well as entry into the formal system of education.

The World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) made it clear that Education for All will not be possible without effective provision for women's and girls' education. Never before had the world community come out in unanimous support of women's and girls' education. Never before had there been a clear-cut recognition that we failed in providing Education for All largely because we have failed to provide meaningful education to one half of the world.

But, exactly what kind of education do we mean?

There is a popular saying in China: Women hold up half the sky. Are we going to provide education which adds to the weight on their already overburdened shoulders, so that one day, they may collapse, and with them, half of the sky? Or are we going to make possible the education which will empower them to stand firm and proudly hold up their share of the sky, effectively and happily?

Campaigning against illiteracy among women in China

Li Chun-Xiang

Eradication of illiteracy is an important mark of progress of human civilization. It is one of the important issues to be solved urgently in the present world. Since the founding of New China, the Chinese government has paid much attention to eradicating illiteracy and as a result of forty years' persistent efforts, China's illiteracy rate has dropped from over 80 to 15.88 per cent. While its total population grew to be 2.2 times what it had been, the absolute number of illiterates dropped from 400 million to 1990s 180 million. In 1987, Hunan province won the Honorary Prize of Noma Literacy for its excellent work in wiping out illiteracy among women.

Calculated on the basis of the 1987 sample survey, there are still 220 million illiterates among the country's population aged 12 and over, of whom 156 million are women, some 70 per cent of the total illiterate population.

The distribution and composition of China's illiterate women are marked by three following characteristics. First, in number and proportion, illiterate women markedly exceed illiterate men. In absolute terms, there are 2.5 times as many illiterate women a there are illiterate men. Some 38.1 per cent of all women are illiterate, 22.3 per cent more than the rate for men. Second, in age structure, the rate of female illiteracy grows in direct proportion to age, that is, the older the women are, the higher the rate of illiteracy (65 or older, 78.7 per cent; 40 to 64, 47.6 per cent; and 15 to 39, 14 per cent). Third, in distribution, there are many more illiterate women in rural areas than in the cities: 41.5 per cent of the country's total illiterate women live in the countryside, 18.1 per cent higher than the proportion of illiterate women in the cities. This determines the rural emphasis in the anti-illiteracy campaign among women.

Eradication of illiteracy among women is an urgent task, and one of great significance. Literacy is an indispensable condition for women's liberation. Women enjoy equal rights with men politically, economically and domestically, but the high social starting point of women's liberation is in sharp contrast to their low level of education, which restricts the scope of their liberation. Until illiteracy among women is eliminated, women's liberation is an empty phrase.

Furthermore, the eradication of women's illiteracy is vital for the demand of the development of a socialist-oriented economy. The economic reform in the countryside based on a household contract system has brought to working women golden opportunities for development. Many educated women have become heads of key households or households in a specific field and their position at home and in social production has greatly changed. But illiteracy is a major obstacle to running a unit. Because of their low educational level, most of the working women are still kept in traditional agriculture and the processing industry of agricultural products or by-products where labour is highly concentrated. Eradication of illiteracy and improvement of women's training are therefore vital for opening up intellectual resources in rural areas and promoting agriculture through the application of science and technology.

Finally, the eradication of women's illiteracy plays a special role in enhancing socialist construction of a spiritual civilization. As a consequence of thousands of

years of feudal rule in China, feudal ideas still affect people's thinking and behaviour, especially women's. The belief that women's virtue lies in a lack of ability makes women satisfied with their present position and not try for any improvement. In views concerning division of labour, the traditional practice that the men attend affairs relating to outside world and the women manage domestic affairs renders women short-sighted and narrow-minded. In love and marriage, the women, subjecting themselves to their parents' will, depend on matchmakers' words and follow the old feudal idea 'marrying the cock, fly with the cock; marrying the dog, go with the dog' and tend to depend on their husbands, lacking their own independent personality. In views concerning childbearing, such feudal ideas as 'early marriage and early bearing', 'the more the children the more happiness' and 'men being superior to women' reduce women to instruments used to keep the family line going from generation to generation. Excessive births add heavily to women's economic and housework burden, lessening their chances for self-development and restricting their children's right to receive an education. Since girls tend to be kept at home as helpers by their parents, new illiterates usually emerge from among them.

In China, it is the right and duty of illiterate and semi-literate citizens between the ages of 15 and 40 to receive education. The government stipulates that the local governments at various levels are administratively responsible for literacy campaign. At the grassroots level, contracts for eliminating illiteracy are signed between village committees and schools, school heads and literacy teachers, literacy teachers and pupils to make clear the responsibility and duty concerning the eradication of illiteracy. Combining institutional means with the contract method is the chief measure in pushing anti-illiteracy campaigns forward in China at present.

It is very important to improve the social environment in which women study and to arouse their sense of self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-improvement. On the occasion of International Literacy Year 1990, various forms of publicity such as radio and television talks, reports, newspapers and magazines, street-corner propaganda teams, propaganda trucks and streamers and posters with slogans were employed to broaden public awareness of the significance of the anti-illiteracy campaign. Since winter 1989-1990, over 500,000 women in Hunan province have attended literacy classes, many more than the planned number.

Education should be offered which is appropriate in terms of human physiology and psychology. Since young girls between 13 and 18 tend to be shy and concerned about face-saving, literacy classes intended for girls only are set up in many places. Literacy classes specially for old and young married women are highly appreciated by those who share the same experience of love, marriage and child-bearing. In many places, literacy education is administered in ways which conform to women's working characteristics, combined with teaching of skills in sewing, weaving and embroidery, and poultry and animal husbandry. In sparsely populated places with few illiterates, study groups of three to five households are formed and teachers come into the home. Since women value family life more than men, integrating literacy teaching with family affections, for instance, husbands teaching wives and children teaching mothers, is an excellent way to overcome women's psychological blocks and encourage them to do a good job in their study.

Scientific analysis shows that women at the age of 40 or so have their second peak of intellectual development. At this stage, most of them have fulfilled their childbearing mission and are not too heavily burdened by nursing. As long as their sense of self-consciousness is aroused, an illiteracy campaign and the eradication of illiteracy is possible. Xiping county of Hunan province, winner of Krupskaya Literacy Prize in 1990, with a comparatively low illiterate racy, helped hundreds of illiterate women 40 and over to become literate by broadening the age range of target population.

In eliminating illiteracy among women, special efforts are made to bring the role of educated women into full play. A Literacy Award for Excellent Women Teachers was set up in 1990 by the Chinese National Women's Federation to encourage and reward teachers who have an excellent record in the eradication of women's illiteracy.

At present literacy education for women still remains an important issue to be thoroughly studied and explored. Hunan province plans to further improve its work and strengthen the anti-illiteracy campaign in six ways.

Priority will be given to eliminating women's illiteracy and a high standard five-year plan and ten-year programme for eradicating illiteracy will be worked out.

Compulsory education will be enforced, preventing girls from dropping out of school and thus avoiding new illiterates.

Public awareness of the significance of elimination of women illiteracy will be increased and favourable domestic and social conditions for women to attend literacy classes created.

Various forms of post-literacy education will be developed offering more opportunities to women who have already become literate and thus consolidating the accomplishment of the anti-illiteracy campaign.

A literacy study institute will be established and research work on elimination of women's illiteracy strengthened. More and better textbooks and readers suitable for women's literacy education and post-literacy study will be compiled.

International exchanges and co-operation on women's education will be strengthened.

Girls' education in Bahrain

Hessa Al Khamiri

Since the early period of Islam, the stress on the importance of learning has been frank and insistent. The first Sura (Chapter of Koran) says: 'Read: In the name of thy Lord who created. (He) Created Man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous, Who taught by the pen, Taught Man that which he knew not...'. This Sura is a divine order from God to learn reading of the Koran and to consider its verses and texts. Thus religious awareness has been correlated with the importance of reading the Koran and understanding the sources of the religion of Islam. The mosque, in this sense, is considered the first teaching institution in the Islamic world. So, the mosque (known as a public Islamic Centre) and *Kuttab* (known as a private house employed for teaching Koran and related studies), both played an important part in teaching. It should be noted that girls were allowed to go to the *Kuttab* although it was mixed (boys and girls) up to the age of 10. This kind of teaching continued even after the opening of the formal schools, though the need for it decreased.

Girls' formal education began in 1928, nine years after that of boys. Due to custom and tradition, girls' education faced many hardships which hindered its development and improvement. A main hardship was the limitation of thestate income during that period when the economy was dependent on agriculture, trade and pearl fishing. Boys' education was considered more important due to men's predominant role in the economy.

Since the 1930s, the decade of oil discovery in Bahrain, the country improved economically. Income increased and helped education grow and improve by increasing educational services. The discovery of oil changed the infrastructure, the social situation and all opportunities that could provide perspectives in education which is considered a social and human necessity and a natural right for all the citizens.

As for formal girls' teaching, it saw considerable changes and improvements in terms of policies, goals and number of new formal schools.

The education system consists of four stages: primary, intermediate, secondary and higher.

The *primary stage* forms the first step in the education scale. Its significance lies in building up the full and integrated character of the child physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. During this important stage, the child learns traditions, customs and manners.

Since the first girls' primary school was opened in 1928, the primary schools have undergone a great increase in number and covered all the country. In 1990, there were forty-four such schools.

The *intermediate stage* is the last stage of the basic education programme which should be attained by all citizens. It covers three academic years and it is considered the link between the primary stage and the secondary stage.

The *secondary stage*, with all its disciplines and branches, complements basic education. The secondary education of girls started in 1954 (for boys, in 1940). Girls' secondary education has passed through different stages and witnessed many changes and reforms in order to raise the efficiency of this level of education.

In 1971, the Girls Commercial Section was established in order to supply both the market needs and the requirements of the national development plans for 1971, the year of independence. It was noticeable that during that period women's consciousness was increased and the need for her participation in the labour market in both sectors, public and private, was noticeable and urgent.

In the 1980s, the decade saw a new qualitative leap in girls' secondary education in the field of applied education infor example hotel training and textiles and sewing.

Education up to the secondary stage is free of charge and all educational curricula are offered for both boys and girls except in technical education and in religious instruction, which are confined to male students only.

Higher education (Bahrain University) began in 1968 when the Gulf Industrial College was established.

Non-formal education is concerned primarily with the eradication of literacy and adult education. Although formal teaching of girls began in 1928, the illiteracy rate among women is still considered high, 41.4 per cent as opposed to 21.2 per cent for males. Out of the total population, the illiteracy rate is 31.3 per cent according to 1981 statistics. This rate was reflected in women in the labour force where their participation rate was 15 per cent, again according to 1981 statistics.

Illiteracy eradication activities began in the 1940s through the efforts of private individuals, with the participation of national clubs and women's societies. Their activities experienced ups and downs until 1973 when the Ministry of Education took over these activities. 1983 marks the new start for the activities of illiteracy eradication when a national committee, headed by the Minister of Education, was formed of the Ministries of Information, Labour and Social Affairs, Justice and Islamic Affairs, with other organizations represented as well such as the Supreme Council for

Youth and Sports and the General Committee for Bahrain Labour. National clubs and social societies also participated.

The Committee's mission wasmthreefold: to formulate the main plan for the eradication of illiteracy and procedures to execute it; to define the role of each participant in the Committee and their share in the execution of the plan; and to present periodical evaluation of the procedure of the plan.

The Ministry of Education has made intensive efforts to eradicate illiteracy in Bahrain, particularly after the completion of the five-year plan which was launched by the Ministry between 1983–1988. This plan was to cover the age group 10 to 44. It was noticeable that more than males joined these adult teaching centres. Evaluation reports showed that the achieved results were below the set targets. The Ministry of Education drew up a new plan for 1988–1993 and implemented solutions to some of the obstacles female learners had previously faced: kindergartens in the adult centres for the use of children while mothers were learning; transportation for the female learners; and morning classes in the clubs and social centres for women.

In addition, the Ministry has undertaken the following: improving the curriculum by creating a comprehensive unit for the first two stages in order to better suit the skills and needs of adults and to overcome the mental age differences among the learners; providing official recognition of certificates through informal education; and eradicating the illiteracy of labourers working in the public sector and in the private sector during working hours and bestowing motivation awards for those who became literate.

The educational programmes in the centres are composed of three stages: eradication of illiteracy, follow-up and consolidation.

The illiteracy eradication stage consists of two academic years and is considered the foundation stage for those who cannot read and write. The follow-up stage consists of two academic years for those who have passed the illiteracy eradication stage.

The consolidation stage also consists of two academic years. At the end of this stage learners are awarded the equivalent of the intermediate stage certificate which qualifies them for admission to secondary school, either through home studies or by joining morning regular classes, age permitting.

The Directorate of Adult Education, Continuous Education Section, has other programmes for adults and women, such as family education programmes. The on-going family education programme, started in 1990 in co-operation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), aims at increasing the skills of women in: taking care of the family and the home; teaching how to administer home affairs; creating a sense of domestic economy; and encouraging and improving women's hobbies, according to their personal ambitions, such as music, drawing, and ceramics.

The Directorate of Adult Education continues to implement a number of ambitious programmes which serve a large sector of adult learners (mixed, males and females). These programmes include: computer program studies, Arabic and English typing, Islamic studies, English, English secretarial studies, office practice and Arabic for non-natives. Study takes place in the form of courses of three or four months each, over three days a week. The first course begins in early October, the second in early February and the third in early June.

Literacy for women in Bangladesh

Mushfeka Ikfat

Bangladesh is a small country with an area of 144 thousand square kilometres and a large population of 110 million. It is predominantly an agricultural country with high population growth (2.3 per cent) and low adult literacy rates (29.2 per cent). Expenditure on education is about 2 per cent of GNP.

About 35 per cent of the people live in rural areas. The country is marked by linguistic and cultural homogeneity and is technologically underdeveloped.

An overwhelming majority of the women are illiterate, malnourished, poor and deprived. By tradition and cultural norms, women have a much lower status than men. Discrimination starts at birth and continues through socio-economic inequality and distribution of authority and assets between sexes as determined by the family organization and stratification of society. Even within the same socio-economic class, women are worse off than men in terms of nutrition, health, education and social status, and the gap is widening over time.

Women have a shorter life expectancy than men, their nutritional intake has decreased and as a consequence incidence of chronic, long-term malnutrition is higher for women. Compared to 30 per cent literacy

rate among men, women's rate is a mere 16 per cent. Though the Bangladesh Constitution embodies the fundamental rights of women and forbids any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, women's legal position has remained weaker compared to men. The situation is exacerbated by women's lack of access to legal assistance, despite recent amendments to several laws to provide them with further protection and improved legal status.

Moreover, as in other developing countries, women's contribution to the economy has largely remained unrecognized and unaccounted for. Consequently their access to essentials necessary to overcome constraints resulting from sex discrimination to both remunerative employment and a better quality of life has been denied. Since an overwhelming large proportion of women live below poverty line, they are deprived of health and educational opportunities and their potential remains unutilized for national development purposes.

As in other developing countries, a literate society is seen as an important condition for achieving the country's development objectives for nation building. Illiteracy is a nationwide mass problem. When Bangladesh became independent in 1971, nearly 80 per cent of the population was illiterate. Despite efforts to attain rapid growth in primary and secondary education, the 1981 census revealed that 77.9 per cent of the population over 5 were still illiterate.

A marked disparity is found as between men and women, with female literacy lagging well behind, particularly in rural areas where vast majority of country's population lives and works.

The most disturbing aspect of the situation is the fact that while the percentage of illiterates showed a trend of slow decline, owing to demographic factors and an interplay of other factors, the absolute number increased over recent years from 40 to 60 million.

During early 1960s and more so after independence, illiteracy was recognized as one of the deadly enemies to national development. To remedy the situation, as part of a general fight against ignorance, poverty and disease, certain public and private initiatives to eradicate illiteracy were made during the First Five-Year Plan and the intervening years following independence. Socio-economic reconstruction naturally was the first concern in planning and in the realm of education priority was accorded to the extension of primary education to children. Despite limited resources during the First Five-Year Plan female education was given special attention, particularly the objective to turn out teachers for the primary schools. But it had a negligible impact on the literacy situation.

In the process of planning for development, particularly in the midst of accelerating socio-political and economic change, it was realized that social and economic development was inconceivable if the country's out-of-school youth and adult population lacked basic minimal literacy skills.

In the national policy envisaged in the Second Five-Year Plan (1980–1985), the eradication of illiteracy was given high priority. Illiteracy was seen as a 'serious barrier to socio-economic development' and the Second Five-Year Plan observed 'illiteracy has become the most formidable bottleneck in the modernization process. Viewed from this context, the government has decided to launch a mass literacy movement to eradicate illiteracy from the soil of Bangladesh'. The movement involved a crash programme of mass education covering about 40 million illiterates aged 10 to 45 and securing participation by every able-bodied citizen of the country. It envisaged and elaborated institutional arrangements for MEP outside the formal education. The Second Five-Year Plan looked upon mass education as complementary to broad-based primary education and stated 'Universal primary education is basic to human resources development and is to be made compulsory'. At the same time a major thrust was given to accelerating the expansion of facilities for women's education to reduce the educational gap between the sexes.

An evaluation study instituted after two years of operation revealed that the over-enthusiastically launched programme, though well-intentioned, suffered from many weaknesses in its concept, design of operation and management structure. While the movement as conceived by the government was discontinued, efforts by some non-governmental organizations continued in a rather scattered and sporadic manner throughout the country.

In Bangladesh, despite good intentions and commitment, education does not seem to be geared to the needs of the society at large. The curriculum has not appropriately addressed the issues of socio-economic survival and development of the people. The contribution of the organized education sector to the growth and development of the economy has not been significant: it has remained unable to develop skills for working men and women. Education has not been able to raise the level of productivity and has not appeared to the masses in its essential form as a technology for survival, a key to all-round development in a distressed and economically backward society.

Conventional strategies and traditional methods by themselves have been tried and found wanting. New and practicable policies, plans and strategies constitute the crying need of the hour.

In view of the exceptionally high rate of illiteracy, a major constraint to country's development, in 1987 the government as a part of its educational strategy decided to renew action for mass education programme while emphasizing the need for accelerating the extension of primary schools to all children under 10.

In the Third Five-Year Plan, the enrolment of girls in primary education was encouraged. In each *upazila* (an administrative unit) sixty learning centres were created, ten of which were reserved for women; to encourage girls, women teachers have been recruited.

The Bangladesh government declared free compul-

sory primary education from 1 September 1991, as well as free education for girls up to grade 8 in rural areas.

Recruitment of women teachers has been intensified in recent years with a target of 50 per cent of the vacancies in primary school.

In fact, in the education policy changes made by the government of Bangladesh for Education for All, a two-pronged approach has been envisaged: extension of primary education, making it compulsory for children aged 6 to 10 and a national mass education programme comprising a non-formal education stream for non-schooled and school drop-out adolescents, generally below the age of 14 years; a functional literacy programme for illiterate youth and adults in the younger age group of 15–34; and post-literacy continuing learning for both adults and children coming out of primary education as well non-formal education and functional literacy programmes.

These programmes are strategic to national endeavours to combat illiteracy and to ensure basic minimum education for all as a basis for human resource development, poverty alleviation and achievement of the nation-building goals outlined in the Fourth Five-Year Plan.

These programmes should mutually supplement, complement and reinforce compulsory primary education introduced to stem illiteracy at source (and in some cases should even serve as alternative to full-time primary education for those children for whom school is not accessible).

Side by side with the Government, many non-governmental organizations in Bangladesh have been working in the literacy field for women for considerable time. They include the Village Education Resource Centre (VERC), Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM), Under-privileged Children Education Programme (UCEP) and the Bangladesh Literacy Society (BLS).

Village Education Resource Centre (VERC). VERC started a mass education programme 1 January 1989 at Savar Upazila with the assistance of Education Ministry and UNICEF. The objective of the programme is to eradicate illiteracy from the pre-cooperative women's group members. Some 1,500 women were enrolled in 60 literacy centres. Sixty teachers, six supervisors and the VERC staff are working on this programme. Besides literacy programmes, there are also other plans to eradicate illiteracy among the women of six unions in Savar Upazila under the second phase of the programme.

The Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) has been working for a long time at improving the lot of women through undertaking and organizing different activities and projects (such as educational, vocational and skill training and self-managed income-generating activities). With the objectives of improving the condition of women through bringing them into the main stream of development, DAM set up project Creation of Women's Employment through Education, Training and Credit Support, which involved organizing 327 women's groups, each having 25 to 30 members, in rural villages.

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) initiated a primary education programme with experimental schools in twenty-two villages for both boys and girls. The objectives of the programme were to develop a replicable primary education model which could provide, in a three-year period, basic literacy and numeracy to the poorest rural children who had as yet been untouched by the formal school system. The target group of the BRAC schools are the unreachable, those children who research has shown as having been deprived of access to education because of poverty and sex-discrimination; they are the children of the poorest of the landless and BRAC's goal is to enrol 70 per cent of the girls.

Bangladesh Literacy Society is a non-governmental organization which aims at social development through promoting social awareness, providing functional literacy education and skill development training to the illiterate population aged 11 to 45, focusing attention on women.

Bangladesh Association for Community Education (BACE) made significant contribution in furthering the causes of community education, family planning and income generation particularly for the rural women. Universal Primary Education, a trail-blazing project of BACE initiated in 1976, provides an alternative approach to accelerate the spread of primary education through community participation. To date, 18,000 boys and girls have been enrolled and admitted in primary schools through the aegis of BACE. Under women's programme, some 504 women were given useful training for undertaking income-generating project on a self-employment basis in the rural areas working as house-maids, sales girls and office secretaries in urban areas.

Jagorini Chakra started its adult education programme in September 1976. It aims at educating the rural men and women who are landless labourers, marginal farmers or simply destitute so that they can achieve self-consciousness and self-reliance, understand responsibilities and undertake socio-economic development activities in order to get the taste of their own strength and achievements. With a view to extending co-operation, Jagorini Chakra has carried a number of activities including functional literacy classes both for male and female. Apart from literacy, learners were taught primary health care, legal rights, social awareness, etc.

There are numerous constraints of girls' access to education, including: poverty of parents/guardians; conservative social attitudes; low literacy rate among parent and family members; lack of financial means to buy school dress and supplies; excessive pressure of household work; inability of the girls to know and understand the school subjects; lack of awareness about the value of education among parents; poor nutrition of

the girls; early betrothal and marriage of girls; and lack of sufficient female teachers and lack of proper physical facilities for education.

Remedial measures

To increase the access of girls to education in conservative societies and in remote areas, the following measures can be taken:

1. Develop consciousness among parents about the value of education, preferably by adopting mass and adult literacy programmes, and sensitizing the community through mass media.
2. Strengthen government and non-government programmes for attitudinal change; underscoring the value of women's education.
3. In the cultural and religious context, increasing the supply of women teachers has been prescribedas an important strategy in increasing the access of girls to education in remote areas.
4. Arrange better transport facilities for school-going children and establish feeder schools in remote areas.
5. Distribute school dress to poor and meritorious students as well as school supplies free of cost.
6. Provide financial assistance to poor and meritorious students, introduce scholarship for them and provide snacks and free lunch for the children.
7. Adopt legislative measures against early betrothal and the dowry system, and vigorously enforce them.
8. Provide health care facilities to the children at school on a regular basis.
9. Recruit more female teachers for the primary schools and literacy learning centres.
10. Publicize the importance of female education through the mass media.
11. Provide the primary school teachers for motivation programme.
12. Adopt school-based income-generating programmes for the children.
13. Introduce realistic and employment-based curriculum.

In conclusion, it needs to be noted that the magnitude and complexity of the problem relating to the education of girls calls for multi-pronged strategies and concerted efforts. Thus, in order to enhance effectively the participation of girls in education, efforts should be directed towards identifying more effective strategies, initiating innovative programmes, promoting more co-ordination among the related agencies and continually consolidating efforts in that direction.

Women's literacy in Egypt

Salah Sharaka

Present situation

Compulsory education and literacy laws are based on non-discriminatory measures and equality between man and woman. However, illiteracy figures and percentages in different censuses show that women are still behind from the point of view of education and literacy. In general the percentage of female illiterates is considerably higher than that of males. In the latest census, 1986, overall illiteracy is 49 per cent; among males, this drops to 37.8 per cent, while among females it increases to 61.8 per cent.

The percentage of illiterate women decreased from 93.9 per cent in 1927 to 61.8 per cent in 1986, but over the same period the absolute number of female illiterates almost doubled, owing to the high annual rate of population increase (2.7 per cent

In urban areas female illiteracy is about 44 per cent while it rises in rural areas to about 76 per cent. Illiteracy is more crucial among unemployed women, mostly housewives, who account for 97.5 per cent of the female illiterates.

It is also noted that females abstain attending or registering in literacy classes; only 24,000 sat the literacy exam in 1986 are about 24,000 less than 0.5 per cent of total illiterate females.

Problems and constraints

This situation is a result of problems and constraints which are summarized below here.

Socio-cultural problems which encompass the various inherited views and attitudes towards women in general and educating women in particular. The most important of these problems is the misinterpretation and/or misunderstanding of the teachings of Islam, which puts women in an unprivileged position compared with men. The dominant position of men in the family resulted in depriving women of leading an

ordinary life and consequently depriving them of education.

Socio-economic problems connected with poverty and long periods of feudalism and imperialism which prevented the development of education in general and the education of women in particular.

Organizational problems embodied in the inefficiency of educational efforts, particularly in the field of literacy. Literacy efforts suffer from lack of funds, lack of full-time, qualified and experienced staff, and lack of interest due to poor resources and incentives, and reluctance to enforce the laws.

Literacy efforts in Egypt have not stopped since the second decade of this century. Several phases preceded the Law of Literacy and Adult Education in 1970 which stipulates that literacy is compulsory for all and an obligation binding all concerned governmental and non-governmental entities.

The Supreme Council for Adult Education and Literacy to work out the planning and follow-up processes at the central level. Similar councils were formed on different levels, ranging from the *governorates* to the villages and local units, to work out the planning and implementation of literacy programmes and adapt them to the needs of the areas and beneficiaries.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for providing literacy centres with learner's texts, teachers and supervisors. Nevertheless, the problems continued to make literacy a difficult task to achieve.

On the occasion of International Literacy Year 1990, President Mobarak declared the last ten years of the twentieth century a literacy decade. This declaration launched the national literacy campaign to eradicate illiteracy in Egypt by the end of 1999. The Supreme Council for Adult Education and Literacy established the campaign's plan:

1. Eradicating illiteracy among the 8 to 15 age group, thereby blocking the sources of future adult illiteracy.
2. Defining the primary target group of illiterates, aged 15 to 35, and older groups as well.
3. Dividing the campaign into three phases:
   a) The preparatory phase (1990): to count illiterates, form committees to develop curricula, compile learning texts, train staff and allocate roles to concerned entities.
   b) The execution phase (1991–1998) to carry out the literacy programme.
   c) The phase of accomplishment to eliminate still existing pockets of illiteracy.

The National Literacy Campaign is very much concerned with literacy for women, who form 67 per cent of the target group.

The plan of the National Literacy Campaign has included many solutions to the problems, and attempts to avoid the discrepancies of the past programmes by means of:

a) setting a suitable strategy given the present situation;
b) designing and issuing practical plans, liable to be implemented and flexible enough to face any difficulties that arise during the implementation;
c) expenses over ten years will amount to 1,200 million Egyptian pounds, to be funded from governmental budgets, international contributions and donations;
d) providing an organizational and managerial system that match with the complexity of the process;
e) providing suitable and eligible means and materials to suit the needs of the beneficiaries, and the available facilities;
f) supporting the efforts with efficient co-ordination and supervision system;
g) giving special attention to staff training; and
h) last but not least, mobilizing all mass media and other publicity means and efforts to enhance the campaign.

Continuous education for women is provided by various ministries and organizations. Post-literacy programmes are offered either in units or branches of these ministries and organizations, or through mass media, especially radio and television.

The connection between literacy and formal education is stipulated by law in order to provide opportunities for literate adults to continue formal education as externals. Such opportunities are at the disposal of both men and women.

As female literacy is the most problematic in the whole issue of literacy, special interest should be dedicated to this unprivileged sector of the society. Particular and specific means should be innovated and created to suit the literacy programmes for females. All possible means should be adapted to the situation of woman in Arab and Islamic states, including Egypt, to achieve the smooth running of the programmes.

Educated women in Islamic and Arab countries must be actively involved in literacy activities in order to combat the socio-cultural constraints that hinder women's literacy in these countries.

Developing the programmes and amending them, literally and creatively, is a must, if the greatest part of the goal is to be accomplished during the years of the campaign.

Women and non-formal education: Jordan

Ahmad Alawneh

Men and women in Jordan have the same learning opportunities of learning; men and women have the same rights; basic education is compulsory and free for all. Yet women's participation in adult education programmes is greater than that of men. Two types of non-formal education programmes are discussed below, literacy programmes and evening classes. Illiteracy was reduced from 67.6 per cent in 1961 to 28 per cent in 1985 (among women: from 86 per cent in 1961 to 53 per cent in 1971 to 40 per cent in 1985) as a result of literacy classes, evening classes, and compulsory education enforced for girls as well as for boys.

Literacy programmes aim at teaching all boys and girls who could not go to school. They are designed to enable them to read and write and later on to continue their further learning.

Contents of the Beginners programme (1st to 4th elementary classes) have three books for reading and writing and one book for arithmetic.

The 5th and 6th elementary classes have two books for Arabic language, one book for arithmetic and two books for general culture. These books are to be covered in eight months.

Topics especially designed for women include: women's education; taking care of a pregnant woman; child care; cleaning the house; cleaning and washing clothes; preparing and cooking a healthy meal; family economy; comportment; and how to dress well while spending little.

In 1979, according to the statistics department there were 357,400 illiterates in Jordan, amounting to 34.6 per cent of the over 15 age group. Of these, men accounted for 103,730 or 19.9 per cent and women 253,670 or 49.9 per cent. In rural areas, this proportion rose to 48.64 per cent; 29.9 per cent men and 67.6 per cent women. This proportion decreases by 1 per cent per year.

Hindrances facing women joining literacy programmes are many: they have no time to spare for learning since they have too many responsibilities at home; fear of failure and feeling shy when going to school; social, economic and age differences in class; desks are too small; different levels in one section; considerable distances between school and home; teaching adults is not an easy job for most of teachers; constantly changing teachers; lack of motivation.

Evening studies are provided by the Ministry of Education for those who could not continue their education otherwise. Learners take eighteen lessons a week, of three or four lessons daily. This programme began in 1978/79.

Jordan provides women and men with the same facilities for learning and training through formal and non-formal learning. Progress and achievement wholly depend on the type of training provided. Women's participation in all fields of development, especially social development, is more important than is that of men. The greater the number of educated mothers, the greater the chances for healthy children who go to school.

The woman's role in the rural areas is now confined to taking care of husband and children, whereas in the past it covered all areas of production. The illiterate in a society are the least able to defend themselves and the last to achieve equality. Non-formal education programmes in Jordan have helped a large number of women and girls to compensate for what they missed in terms of education and training. Most participants in these programmes are women, evidence of the fact that they did not have the same opportunities for learning as did men. The proportion of women who have joined literacy programmes rose from 53.9 per cent in 1975/76 to 85.6 per cent in 1983/84.

Women and literacy: Syrian Arab Republic

Ghada Al Jabi

In spite of the considerable efforts to date, illiteracy remains a problem; the Literacy Law of 1972 and Compulsory Elementary Education of 1981 led to a decrease of illiteracy, but more must be done.

The Ministry of Education is engaged in literacy action, together with organizations such as the General Federation of Women, the General Federation of Workers' Syndicates, the General Federation of Peas-

ants, the Federation of Revolution's Youth, the General Federation of Professionals, the National Federation of Syrian Students and the Teachers' Syndicate. Since its establishment in 1967, the General Federation of Women has been continuously involved in literacy activities. In 1990 the Federation won the Nadajda Krupskaya International Literacy Prize for its activities linked to vocational training of literacy, in the countryside in particular.

The General Federation of Women organizes classes for illiterate women in the group age 13 to 45 within the framework of a literacy action plan in each governorate. Seminars are organized to increase awareness and encourage illiterate women to join literacy classes at all levels.

Women are visited at home or in countryside centres to encourage them to join classes organized in co-ordination with the quarters committees in regions and cities.

Co-operation is encouraged with the Mothers' Councils of kindergartens and nurseries as well as in schools.

Lists of women desirous to join literacy classes are drawn up.

Follow-up is provided to newly literate women to assure their attendance to classes and help them with difficulties leading to their absence.

Qualified members of the Federation are selected to teach in literacy classes and to attend training sessions provided by the Ministry of Culture and the literacy offices in the Governorates and the Federation.

Literacy workers are retrained at all levels through periodical meetings and training sessions organized by the Ministry of Culture.

Post-literacy activities are organized enabling women to follow vocational training courses.

Since 1980, the Federation prepared fifty-three studies dealing with the different subjects connected with literacy and adult education. They were printed and distributed among workers in this field. In September 1988 an Arab Seminar of Women Leaders Responsible for Literacy and Adult Education was convened within the framework of the Pan-Arab Federation of Women (the Syrian Organization is heading the Training Committee in the Pan-Arab Federation).

In co-operation with UNICEF, the Federation also convened a number of local seminars and workshops. The Federation has participated actively in meetings organised by the Ministry of Culture in co-operation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The Federation held 82 training sessions which included 3,465 participants, organized at the level of governorates centres and provinces and participated in training sessions organized in governorates for literacy instructors.

Each year, on International Literacy Day, 8 September, outstanding teachers and those who have acquired literacy under remarkable circumstances are honoured, as well as the best branches and units of the Federation involved in literacy. Exhibitions of educational aids are held on the occasion. The Arab Day for Literacy, 8 January, is also celebrated. On this occasion, awareness campaigns are intensified, using mass media.

The Federation also contributes to promoting compulsory education. There are seminars aiming at inciting families to respect compulsory education, and visits to homes. Meetings are convened periodically at all levels to promote compulsory education. There is incentive action for young illiterates (girls aged from 9 to 12) to join compulsory education classes.

Registers with names of children within the age of compulsory education are compared with names of children registered in schools; the parents of children who are not registered in schools are contacted to convince them to send their children to school.

Between 1980 and 1989, some 7,661 classes were opened, 5,967 literacy classes and 1,694 post-literacy classes; 141,845 women attended the classes, of whom 101,655 graduated, 77,987 from literacy courses and 23,668 from post-literacy classes. During the same period, 10,775 awareness raising seminars were held. Most of the women attending the literacy classes are housewives, members of the Federation, peasant women and workers.

Literacy activities in Turkey

Saduman Kapusuzoglu

Historical background

With the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the role of education in support of social and economic change continued to be recognized and educational activities were declared to be one of the most important duties of the State.

One of the targets of Kemal Ataturk, while establishing a modern State, was to change attitudes and behaviour by changing the Turkish alphabet into Latin

characters, thereby making it more suitable to the structure of the Turkish language and more appealing to learners, as well as helping it to share the roots and the ongoing developments of contemporary world culture.

'The Turkish people can defeat illiteracy easily by means of characters adopted to their own language; the key for such a literacy is the Turkish alphabet based on latin characters' said Ataturk.

An extensive literacy campaign was launched and between December 1928 and May 1929; in five months, nearly 600,000 people became literate.

The Law on Centres for Adult Training (*Millet Mektepleri*) was enacted in the same year. Adult Training Centres gave training to the people as mobile and stationary units. A three-stage programme was carried out for this purpose: Programme A provided literacy training, Programme B basic citizenship and cultural education to those who had completed Programme A or learned reading and writing by themselves, and Programme C provided a more advanced level of education to the graduates of Programme B, preparing them for the primary school graduation exams. The programmes were implemented in schools within easy reach of the people as well as in village congregation rooms and coffee shops. Between 1928 and 1950 some 1,743,651 people were taught to read and write.

Concurrent with this, the Turkish Armed Forces also carried out a Litercy and General Culture Programme, teaching reading and writing to 532,266 people.

The 1980 census revealed that the problem of illiteracy had not yet completely been solved in Turkey. In order to reach the desired objective, a new literacy campaign was started with the support of all public, private, voluntary organizations on 23 March 1981. Until 1 June 1983, some 136,055 literacy courses were conducted and 3,133,792 people participated in the courses.

In Turkey, literacy activities have been organized and carried out by the General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Adult Education within the Ministry. Adult education includes all vocational training, guidance and practical training activities given to adults who have never had any formal education, or are at a certain point within the formal education system, or have already completed it.

The objective of the literacy programme is to attain 100 per cent literacy, thereby ensuring people's more conscious contribution to the modernization in industry and agriculture as part of the overall strategy of national development, bringing about national integration in accordance with Ataturk's principles and tenets, treating literacy as a means to be used in daily life as in the vocational field, training people to the level of primary school education and preparing them for the higher level of education.

The programme is directed at illiterate citizens and citizens without primary school diplomas, more specifically at women, agricultural workers in undeveloped settlement places, and economically active persons aged 14 to 44.

From the beginning, Turkey has been committed to equality between the sexes and to the improvement of the status of women.

The education of women and girls has always been a top priority and is widely accepted as the key to their full and equal participation in all domains of economic, social and cultural life.

Efforts to increase literacy rates among girls and women have been pursued and intensified. This is the objective of activities foreseen under the headings of literacy and post-literacy work where special emphasis will be laid on rural women and on programmes which have a direct bearing on their access to employment opportunities. Basic education has been proved to have a positive impact on women's productive participation in economic life, on population growth, and on the health and education prospects of future generations.

During the training programme, the method most appropriate for the purpose has been selected from the following and used: literacy teaching through direct literacy courses, literacy teaching through different adult education activities, 'literate teach illiterate' method of teaching, andliteracy teaching through television school (distance education).

Functional literacy programmes appropriate to the priorities were designed in addition to existing programmes, thereby responding to local characteristics and to individual needs and interests.

Work accomplished

Two kinds of programmes have been implemented according to the level of the participants. The Adult Literacy Training and the First Stage Training Programme is related to the solution of daily problems and designed according to the interests and needs of the participants and regional features. It is flexible, and lasts 90 hours (this can be reduced or increased according to the conditions and needs of the participants). The Second Stage Training Programme aims to ensure the continuity of the training given through the literacy courses in Stage 1 and to facilitate the promotion of graduates to higher training levels. This programme lasts six months and graduates who complete the programme receive the Primary School Diploma and can go to study at a higher level.

In the Second Stage Training Programme, written or oral examinations are given depending upon the nature of the subject.

Primary-school teachers, secondary-school teachers who are also qualified to teach in primary school and adult education teachers are employed in the courses. At the same time, retired primary school teachers, faculty teachers and students have voluntarily participated in the literacy activities.

Supervision and guidance have been given by the authorities in the Ministry, high level local administrators (governors and sub-governors), local Directors of National Education, Directors of National Education in the sub-provinces, Section Managers, Chairmen of Adult Education, Directors and Sub-Directors of Adult Education Centres and Supervisors of Primary Education.

Co-ordination and co-operation work

Literacy activities have been carried out in co-operation with public, private and voluntary organizations. Every ministry and institution participated in the literacy activities relevant to the field for which it has responsibility.

Programmes on family planning, public health, child-care, etc. have been prepared by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and implemented in literacy courses in accordance with the needs of the participants.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has participated by collecting written materials and distributing them to public libraries all over Turkey with the intention of creating good reading habits.

The General Directorate of Turkish Radio and Television Corporation has participated in the literacy activities through television spots every night. In addition, radio programmes to stimulate the acquisition of literacy, for instance *Today's Features* and *Our Villages and Villagers* have been broadcast and *Pen Holding Hands* was telecast.

Voluntary organizations such as the Turkish Red Crescent, Adult Education Association, Women's Association, the Turkish Airlines and the Turkish Charity Association have also participated in the literacy activities to a great extent.

The Adult Education Foundation of Voluntary Organizations, consisting of nine member associations, has supported literacy activities by organizing literacy and basic education courses and providing voluntary teachers. In addition to this, through short talks on agriculture, home economics and health, and books entitled *Alphabet for Adults, Adult Education, Science and Nature for Adults* and *Your Village,* it has organized the supportive activities.

In order to train the campaign staff in the methods, techniques and organization of literacy training and to increase productivity, knowledge and experience, and adaptation to the new conditions, local and regional in-service training has been organized at regular intervals. The problems that the teachers from the formal education system might meet are thus solved to a certain extent.

Numerous incentives were introduced to improve the participation ratio. Free medical care in all state-owned hospitals was provided. Free transportation on all municipal public transport services was provided. Free promotional materials including handkerchiefs, school bags, pocket and wall calendars, postcards, posters and other similar items were distributed. Alphabets, notebooks, pencils, erasers and other stationary requirements were distributed. Several million leaflets with slogans encouraging the literacy training were printed and dropped by airplanes all over the country. Religious holiday and new year's greeting cards with printed promotional slogans were mailed to governors and directors of National Education, and to governors, subgovernors, chiefs and deputy chiefs of adult education centres. Successful trainees were given free summer holidays. Shields were given to agencies and organizations contributing to the success of the literacy campaign and Merit of Good and Best Service Certificates were issued to instructors and managers of the literacy campaign as an appreciation of outstanding performance. In order to motivate the participants to learn how to read and write and to take the Primary School Diploma, five incentives were introduced: student identification cards were issued to all trainees during the courses, priority was given to the children of the poor participants in taking credits in the high school, priority was given to the children of the participants for places in nurseries and kindergarten, priority was given to literate applicants in getting jobs, and priority was given to the successful participants in obtaining bank and co-operative loans and fertilizers.

People, whether young or old, are not 'made' literate; they make themselves literate when the economic and social conditions in which they live represent a source of motivation and incentive to do so. This means that, among other things, literacy activities must be supported by post-literacy work and readily-available, easy-to-read materials on subjects of relevance and interest. With this in mind, materials which aim at broadening the general education of the newly literate in fields such as health, nutrition, child rearing, practical aspects of daily life, and work in agriculture and industry, and at encouraging young people to play an active part in the life of their communities have been prepared and distributed free to participants.

Literacy activities have been successful in Turkey and the country is determined to increase the literate rate of its people to the highest possible level in the shortest possible time period.

In 1980, the literacy rate was 76.7 per cent for the age-group 14 to 44. This rate increased by 11.1 per cent in the year and a half year after the campaign which was launched in 1981 (women's rate increased by 8.8 per cent to 70.6 per cent, men's rate increased by 3.2 per cent to 93.7 per cent).

In 1990, literacy rate for the age group 14 to 44 was 90 per cent (83.6 per cent for women, 96.4 for men).

Annex I

Recommendations of the international seminar on Literacy and Lifelong Education for women (Frunze, 1990)

As a follow-up to the World Conference on Eduction for All (Jomtien, March 1990) and as a continuation of activities within the framework of the International Literacy Year, an international seminar on literacy and continuing education for women in Islamic societies and countries with an important Islamic cultural component was held in Frunze, Kirghiz Republic (USSR) from 26 November to 1 December 1990.

After having examined the situation, including the major obstacles and constraints affecting women's participation in literacy and continuing education, the participants discussed the following area of action: (1) literacy for women : achievements and prospects; and (2) ways and means of combating illiteracy of women : a search for solutions. The following recommendations were made.

I. General recommendations

Governments should :

1. Seek to universalize basic primary education for girls and boys and eradicate illiteracy among women and men without any discrimination.
2. Formulate more precise, consistent and integrated policies to enhance the status of women and their participation in development and, for that purpose, provide programmes resources, financial and other, including those necessary for training and monitoring to ensure such policies and programmes are carried out.
3. Undertake scientific analysis of the status of education for women to determine the level of literacy, general achievements and the degree of participation of women in all levels and categories of education, with the objective of formulating effective programmes that can respond to women's needs (research and statistical survey methodology should be used as a tool for achieving this objective).
4. Develop national networks of non-formal education for men and women.
5. Take the necessary action to ensure the efficient cooperation and coordination between different governmental organizations (especially agencies concerned with development) on the one hand, and between those governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations on the other, at all levels, engaged in the education of women. The same principle should be applied to coordinate efforts and activities of international organizations working in the same country.
6. Encourage active participation of women's organizations and non-governmental organizations (e.g. unions, federations, associations, groups) in project planning and execution.
7. Ensure the development and implementation of post-literacy programmes (curriculum and materials) in order to sustain literacy efforts and to allow lifelong education for women and girls. The inclusion of vocational training and income-generating skills and activities, including managerial skills, in women's

literacy, post-literacy and continuing education programmes should be encouraged to help women enter new professions or obtain extra income to improve their living conditions.

8. Encourage appropriate teacher training for literacy and post-literacy and continuing education programmes, and improve the quality of the performance of teachers and adult educators, with specific focus on women teachers and adult educators.
9. Develop special measures to ensure that the content of all educational programmes is not confined solely to preparing women and girls for traditional roles such as wives and motherhood, but to promote the productive role of women in development.
10. Mobilize public opinion in favour of women's participation in literacy and continuing education programmes, with particular emphasis on the mobilization of the male population.
11. Encourage an exchange of information and experience in the domain of education of girls and women at national as well as regional levels.
12. Not only confine women's programmes to the narrow approach of offering simple literacy and numeracy skills, but also include training aimed at giving women opportunities to acquire overall understanding about themselves and their society, such as civic education, population education, etc., in order to improve the quality of education for girls and women.
13. With regard to the education of girls and women in Islamic societies, as well as in countries with an important Islamic cultural component, take into consideration the Islamic values and rich cultural heritage of Islam, which advocates lifelong education as a necessity and a religious duty, to promote education for girls and women, particularly for those who live in poor communities and in rural areas.
14. Where physical and cultural obstacles stand in the way of women's access to, and participation in educational and training activities, take the necessary action to remove such obstacles through, for example, the provision of transportation, accommodation, use of distance learning, and introduce flexible schedules, etc.
15. Together with women's organizations, encourage and prepare women to participate actively in decision-making in education and other sectors.
16. Introduce special measures to promote the status of women in society through development of curriculum, materials in literacy/continuing education programmes, etc., to redress directly problems specific to women, such as violence against women and prostitution, and pay due attention to discourage the misinterpretation, deliberate or otherwise, of religious teaching, especially Islam, which pose obstacles to women's full participation in education.
17. Together with relevant institutions, be encouraged to undertake/continue research into the teaching of the national language and mother-tongue.

II. Recommendations to UNESCO and other United Nations agencies

which are requested to :

1. Give priority, in their research and publication programmes, to books, teaching aids and periodicals with issues related to literacy and continuing education for girls and women in Islamic societies and countries with an important Islamic cultural component. Regional offices, particularly UNEDBAS (UNESCO Education Bureau for the Arab States) and PROAP (UNESCO Principal Regional Office in Asia and the Pacific), the International Bureau of Education, the International Institute for Educational Planning and the UNESCO Institute for Education, should play a particular role in this domain.
2. Take specific action in collaboration with Member States and non-governmental organizations in providing basic education opportunities for Muslim migrant women. An international seminar should be organized by UNESCO on this subject in 1992.
3. Prepare and publish in 1992-1993, a compendium of comparative analysis on literacy for women in Asia.
4. Develop adult education methods taking into consideration a strategy to eradicate drop-outs and decrease the rate of absenteeism of girls in school.
5. Organize workshops for the production of post-literacy materials for women, which enhance the status of women in society.
6. Continue to organize workshops for media specialists and communication experts on the subject of women's literacy to reach decision-makers and the public at large.
7. Encourage the participation of women in UNESCO's educational activities and fellowship programmes.
8. Develop parent education giving information on family planning and health.

9. Continue to give technical support to National Commissions for UNESCO in their effort to implement literacy programmes for girls and women.
10. Publish the proceedings of this seminar in UNESCO working languages. The outcome of the seminar to be published and widely disseminated to governmental organizations working in the field of education, to community leaders, educational workers and volunteers from non-governmental organizations, women's associations, etc.

In order to permit the realization of the above recommendations and in view of improving the efficiency of the preparation and implementation of educational programmes and projects for girls and women, the following specific proposals and suggestions to UNESCO and governments were made and noted by the participants in the seminar.

III. Specific proposals and suggestions

Requests to UNESCO :

1. To send a team of experts to the Central Asian Republics of USSR to assess the educational needs and to establish priorities particularly in the field of education of women.
2. To offer assistance to Central Asian Republics of the USSR in the preparation and introduction of a programme of literacy in Arabic language for women. UNEDBAS should play a leading role in the implementation of this request.
3. To assist in the preparation and implementation of a programme of training for redeployment of women in the Central Asian Republics of the USSR to meet the new demands created by *perestroika,* such as transformation into market economy.
4. To assist in the formulation of a pilot project for a network of human resources development concerning women's education, to serve the Middle East and Asia.
5. To organize an internationl conference on the teaching of mother-tongues in Tatarstan.
6. To organize exchange programmes between Central Asian Republics of the USSR and Muslim countries on several aspects of education, teacher training, literacy and continuing education.
7. To support the teaching of vocational skills, marketing and cooperative management courses in conjunction with literacy courses for women.
8. To organize two workshops with participants from Central Asia and the Arab States to :
   i) set up and design guidelines for comparative research in these regions;
   ii) propose literacy programmes for women in these regions.
9. To conduct research on the theoretical aspects of the concepts of literacy and adult education considering the system of values governing Islamic countries.
10. To establish a research centre to study the contribution of positive role models in Islam.
11. To design an international programme on the eradication of women's illiteracy in 4 stages : (1) setting up the structure of an appropriate educational unit; (2) elaborating training methods; (3) preparing relevant textbooks, and (4) involving experts from interested countries.
12. To organize in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) an activity similar to the international seminar in Frunze, devoted to the education of women.
13. To support fellowships for senior officials in charge of women's education from governmental and non-governmental organizations to visit certain Islamic countries where education of girls and women is relatively advanced, to benefit from their experience.
14. To set up a network for the exchange of experience in educational programmes between the Central Asian Republics of the USSR and the Arab States.
15. To reinforce UNESCO's support to ASFEC in Egypt.
16. To assist in providing the Kirghiz Teacher Training Institute for Women with necessary equipment (copying machines, computers, typing and calculators, etc.) from educational institutions of various countries.
17. Taking into consideration that, in the context of *perestroika,* moral importance is accorded to the Koran in the further and free development of Islam, to assist in publishing the Koran in Turkic languages.

Requests to governments :

18. To draw greater attention to the suffering of girls and women in Palestine and other Arab occupied territories as well as in South Africa.

19. To re-open Palestinian schools which have been closed in the occupied territories.
20. To teach women duties in accordance with Islamic law and tradition in Islamic countries through books, dictionaries, study materials, teacher training, etc.
21. To teach literacy through the Koran in Islamic countries as a method for literacy. This method would include : (1) an introduction to the Holy Koran; (2) memorization of shorter chapters and group recitation; (3) teaching the alphabet through the Koran.

The Government of the USSR should :

22. Pay special attention to the development of technical and industrial education of girls and women in the region of the Central Asian Republics of the USSR and to the preservation of achieved results.
23. Establish faculties for training teachers in family planning and demography at the Kirghiz Teacher Training Institute for Women.
24. Ensure training possibilities for teachers of the Kirghiz Teacher Training Institute for Women in other educational institutions of Asia and the Arab States and organize student exchanges.
25. Elaborate special education programmes and teaching methods for disabled children (blind, deaf, physically and mentally handicapped, etc.) as well as for orphans (with no parents or no close relatives).
26. Set up at the Kirghiz Teacher Training Institute for Women a secondary school for girls.
27. Introduce in all teacher training institutes of the USSR programmes in health education for pre-school and primary school teachers, including basic knowledge of hygiene, health, physiology and psychology.
28. Establish an oriental studies faculty (languages, philology and literatures) at the Kirghiz Teacher Training Institute for Women, ensuring also the possibility of exchanging professors and students between educational institutions of Asian and Arab countries.
29. Establish a scientific methodological centre for the preparation of national programmes of teaching various subjects (mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.) taking into account the specific features of traditional thinking and cultural heritage of the Central Asian region of the USSR.
30. Set up teacher training institutions for national languages in the Central Asian Republic of the USSR.
31. To establish a data-bank on women's education in the USSR at the Teacher Training Institute for Women, Leningrad, or in Moscow.
32. Ensure that the experience of the Leningrad City Teacher Training Institute in philosophy and the arts, as well as in psychology, family education and sex education, be shared by other teacher training institutes of the USSR.
33. Support the publication of school manuals and books in Arabic printing, English-Tatar dictionaries and dictionaries in Turkic languages.

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Mr. FEDOROV, A. B.

Annex IV

Programme

Sunday, 25 November

	Registration

Monday, 26 November

10.00	Registration
11.00	*Opening session*
13.00-14.30	Lunch
15.00-18.00	*Plenary session*
	Election of President and Vice-Presidents
	'International Literacy Year: Its significance for Women' Mrs. Jauregui, M. L., UNESCO
	'The present situation and perspectives of literacy and lifelong education of women in Kirghizia' Mrs. Atchilova, R., Rector Kirghiz Teacher Training Institute for Women
	'Education of women and girls: a pressing imperative' Mrs. Aksornkool N., UNESCO PROAP
	Discussion

Tuesday, 27 November

9.30-13.30	*Plenary session*
	'Literacy for women in the context of Islamic culture: Opportunities and constraints' Mr. Youssif, A.W., UNEDBAS
	'Women and Literacy: the evolution of historical situation' (1920-1930) Mrs. Boldzhurova, I. S.
14.00-15.00	Lunch
15.30	Departure to Issyk-Kul lake

Wednesday, 28 November

9.00-13.00	*Working group sessions* (Groups I and II)
	Subject: 'Literacy for Women: achievements and perspectives'
	Subject: 'Ways and means of combating illiteracy among women: a search for solutions'
13.00-14.30	Lunch
15.00-18.00	*Parallel working groups* (continued)
Evening	Cultural activity

Thursday, 29 November

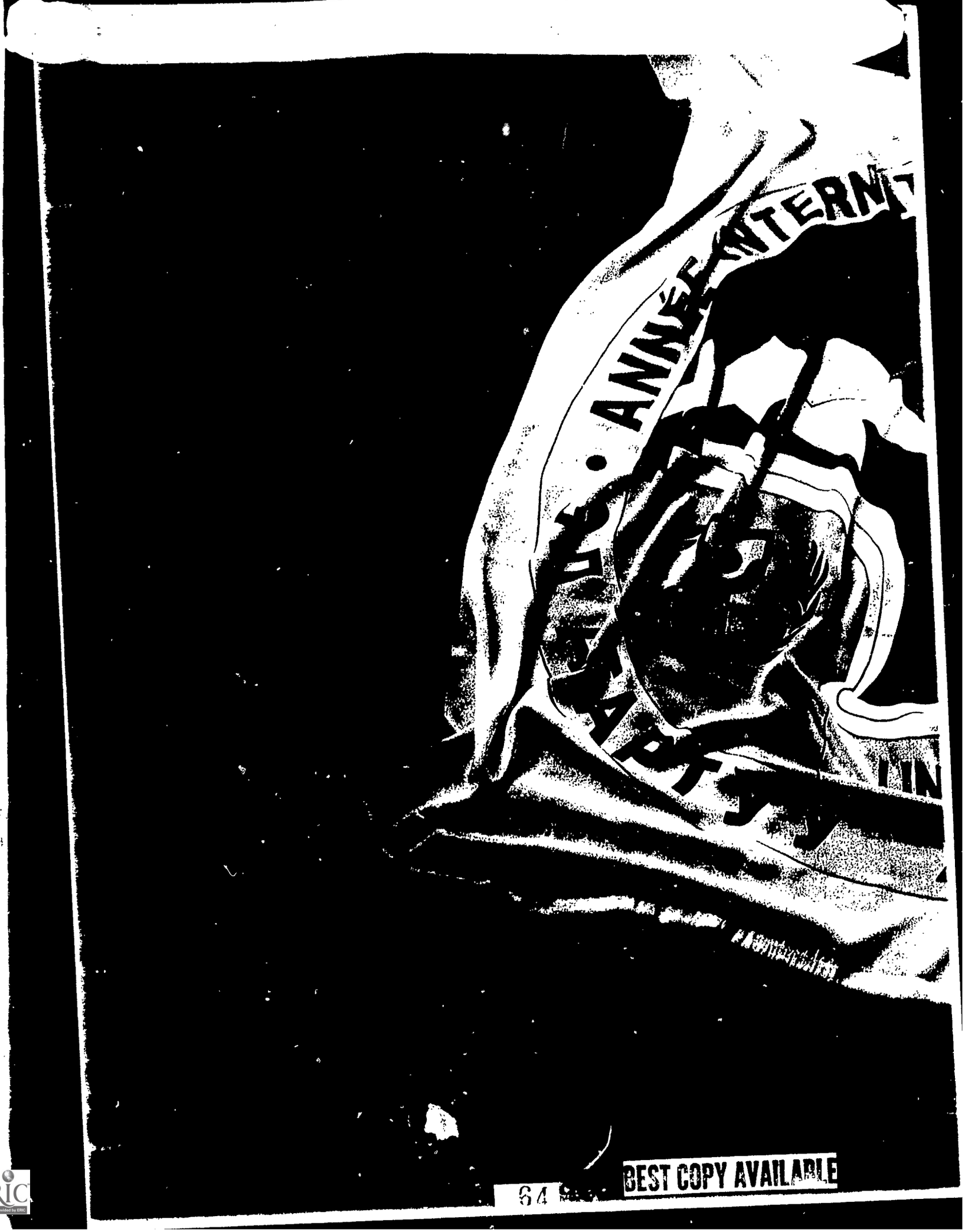
9.00-12.00	*Parallel working groups* (continued)
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.15	Departure for Frunze (on the way visit to horsefarm)
Evening	Cultural activity

Friday, 30 November

9.00-12.30	*Parallel working groups* (continued and end)
12.30-14.00	Lunch
14.15-18.00	Educational visits
19.00	Cultural activity

Saturday, 1 December

10.00-13.00	*Plenary session*
	Reports from working groups
	Recommendations
	Discussion
	Closing session
13.30	Lunch
15.00	Cultural visit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