

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
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Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World
Beirut University College

Al-Raida



TALK IN

**Regional Conference
ARAB WOMEN
AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Al-Raida

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International Women's Day, 1994.

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TALK IN International Women's Day

***We want equal rights and then we can decide
whether we want to be liberated or not!***

her form of expression: Cover poster by Greta Nawfal

more of what the women said on pages 2-3

Arab Women? Present!

A number of events recently helped advance the cause of Arab women and their achievements. Many of these developments are taking place in the mainstreams of society, through women's and men's input.

In Lebanon, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), BUC, active in promoting women's concerns and rights, improving their conditions and highlighting their assets, held its regional conference on **Arab Women and the Environment**. The conference featured presentations on the environmental conditions of a number of Arab countries linking them to women's lives, needs and abilities to protect a viable environment. Women and men participated in the conference.

In Lebanon again, and on the occasion of International Women's Day, IWSAW mobilized students, staff, faculty and friends of Beirut University College to speak up. During the activity, called a **Talk In**, young women and men raised, discussed and argued issues of concern to women in Lebanon and the Arab world. May Shoulhod and May Smith expressed their agony and victory in dances. Woman artist, Gretta Nawfal, prepared the poster for the event which appears on the cover of this issue of *Al-Raida*. This activity successfully served its purpose of raising initial consciousness among young people.

Still in Lebanon, two women, Tina Nakkash and Nazek Yared, are attempting to create a **concern group that will address the sufferings of women from domestic violence**. (for more informations contact Dr. Nazek Yared, BUC, Humanities Division, Box 13-5053, Beirut, Lebanon)

Long-time activist and militant, Lawyer Laure Moghaizel recently published a booklet in simple language to inform all socio-economic classes about the rights of working women. This book was publicly supported by the lawyers and judges, men and women, of the Lebanese judicial system. **Legislative amendments** so far include the repudiation of the civil law that equates the testimony of two women with that of one man and therefore, does not acknowledge hers independently in court. Now, the testimony of one woman is legally equal to that of a man. The law regarding nationality whereby Lebanese women who are married to foreigners are not allowed to give their children Lebanese citizenship, and other civil laws which discriminate against women are being studied by legislative committees for further amendments. Personal Status Laws and the possibility of creating an alternative civil code have not been addressed, yet. These, they say, would require more elaborate cross-analysis with the social, political and regional parameters of Arab society. (for more information contact: Lebanese Association for Human Rights. SNA Bldg. Box 16-6742, Beirut, Lebanon).

In Egypt, a group of five Arab women from various countries and professional fields established a publishing house for women, **Nour**. (see page 7 for more information).

In Berne, January 1994, reputed author and supporter of the women's plight, **Emily Nasrallah**, was invited by the organization of the Berne Declaration to read excerpts from her books *The Birds of September* and *Flight Against Time* which have been translated into German. The Berne Declaration is the tenant of a non-governmental Swiss organization

whose goals are to change the role of Switzerland in the global system notably with respect to cultural issues. Emily Nasrallah's prominence in international literature is yet another achievement and victory for Arab women. (Emily Nasrallah, Imm. Othman Bashir Othman, facing central Laboratory, UNESCO are, Beirut, Lebanon).

In Jordan, the **Business and Professional Women Club** is expanding its documentation and networking efforts. (Business and Professional Women Club, Box 910415, Amman, Jordan).

In Algeria, women demonstrated taking off their veil (in the same way that bras were removed in the sixties) in protest against fundamentalist pressures to officially enforce the veil as a national dress code for women.

Across the continents, in Washington D.C., a breakthrough was made on the art scene with the opening of the traveling exhibit entitled **Forces of Change: Artists of the Arab World** in February 1994. Organized by the International Council for Women in the Arts, it will travel around the United States to exhibit the high standard of feminine art in the Arab world to that part of the world which continues to be plagued with negative stereotypes of Arab women. (see pages 4-6).

Of course, this list is not exhaustive and women's problems are far from being resolved. The work that still needs to be done is tremendous and these women can use all the support they get. **STILL ARAB WOMEN ARE PRESENT!**

Randa Abul-Husn

TALK IN

IWSAW, BUC, March 1994

On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College organized a women's TALK IN, instead of the usual lectures and/or panels. On March 9, 1994, BUC community which included students, faculty, staff and friends of the IWSAW gathered to express themselves on various women and gender issues. Approximately 600 persons, men and women, urgently raised their hands for their turn with the microphones. The atmosphere was filled with mixed and firm feelings on various issues. There was anger against oppression, enthusiasm for human rights, and some backlash against women and their movement. Here is a selection of some of the statements made.

There would be no need for an internationally declared women's day if there were no problems for the women of the world. There is a revolution going on and women, are demanding that they take charge of their own lives, to become subjects not objects. Here in the Arab world, women are speaking up, everywhere. Let me draw your attention to the events on the front pages of today's newspapers, the women's march that took place yesterday in Algeria (i.e. March 8, 1994). Yet some of us have come to feel that we have a special problem here in the Arab world: a great deal has been written about Arab women, and yet very little of it has been written by Arab women themselves. Here, in Lebanon, everyday we read articles about women. There have been books, articles and debates, sometimes theological debates. There have been conferences and meetings. Many words have been bandied about, including patch phrases like women's liberation and equality between men and women. Yet some of us feel that we have lost touch with what some real women have to say about these questions, about their real lives. We have lost touch with what real women really want. We do know some things for sure: in Lebanon we have at least one problem and that is the law. One basic right, for instance, the right for citizenship is not endowed on women as it is on men. A Lebanese man who marries a foreign woman automatically endows her and his children with Lebanese citizenship. A Lebanese woman, however, who marries a

foreign man, does not achieve the same rights.

There are many other problems lurking perhaps. Some of them no doubt are universal, others are specific to our culture. There are other things than problems, there is happiness and joy for women that we would like to share today. Today, here at BUC, we are giving democracy a chance to catch up with itself by providing a forum in which women are going to speak up, to express themselves, to say what they have to say. This is our chance to say what we want to say in this open, thoroughly unstructured, and democratic forum. We ask that every woman here, whether she be a student, a member or the faculty of staff, an employee or visitor to speak up. Say what you have to say on the condition of being a woman. Say it in Arabic, in English, in words, in music, say it in pictures, if you want, BUT SAY IT!

Allow me to address a word to the men in the audience. There seems to be a common view among you, at least among the students, that the women's movement is somehow directed against you. It is not. Today, we expect you to listen, to listen to our form of expression, which might be different from your form of expression. We sometimes express ourselves differently from the way you do. If we cannot expect justice and a fair hearing from men in a university setting, then from whom can we expect it. (Excerpts from the opening word of Jean Makdisi, moderator).

I wish to comment on the question of language and especially words relevant to this university audience. There is Bachelor of Art, but have we heard of Spinster of Arts? There is Master of Arts, we have never heard of Mistress of Art or Science. Again these are some of the words that subsume women.

Why should women always ask a man to come to them and ask them for marriage, why shouldn't a woman express her interest in marrying a certain man?

I am very concerned with the issue of violence against women. If we see two men fighting in the street, it is considered a public offense. If a man beats his wife, it is considered a family affair. Is there a law that can protect a woman inside her home from being battered by her husband?

There is no law that protects women from being battered by their husbands. I find it amusing that our deputies talk, on television, about giving women the civil right to open a shop without needing the husband's permission. I don't know how many of us here are capitalists and have the money to open the shop, not me in any case. I wish they would bring up the question of the woman, who if she leaves her husband or whose husband leaves her, has no right to her kids.

Who are we addressing all of these issues to? men?

International Women's Day

On issues related to socialization, we are questioning whether women are born women or whether they learn to be women. Well, women are the ones who do the bulk of raising and educating children. Therefore, it is largely their responsibility to socialize boys and girls to be non-sexist.

Women's maternal role is very important. Before women go out into society to work and become deputies, they must play their role as mothers for what it contributes to society.

I would like to object to what someone said about the Arabic usage of the word woman versus the English usage of the word. In the Bible, women were created out of men's rib. So even in English, the word woman is used in a certain pejorative way, I would say.

I would like to talk about psychological violence most men have against women and most women have against each other. In my opinion, many women are out of professional fields because in one way or another, it affects their self esteem and make them think less of themselves.

In my opinion no one can achieve equality, freedom and liberty if he/she does not make it. Men are not going to give it to us if we do not ask for it and earn it. On another level, if we want to be really honest with ourselves, and identify what is really restricting us then we have to admit that it is our religions, not civil laws. We have to stop pretending! Who, here, can deny that men cannot have four wives?

I want to question what women's liberation really means. If women's liberation means we must become men, then I refuse to be liberated. I am not prepared to have two men in my house, me and my husband. We

must speak of human rights and human development, be it women or men.

Religious laws in the country are restrictive. But to do anything about women's liberation we must begin with civil laws.

There isn't one gender that is more important than the other. Both men and women are equally important, and therefore it is a matter of respect. Women must accept themselves and liberate themselves first. When women achieve that, men will automatically treat them accordingly. It is not a question of challenging our culture, but ourselves. Women have to become serious to be taken seriously.

Religion does not force women to do the dishes and the cooking. It does not deny them work and development.

We want equal rights first, and then we can decide what we want to do with our lives, i.e. whether we want to be liberated or not.

We must separate religion from politics. We ask that Lebanon ratify the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

When we ask for our rights, we should also be aware of our duties and obligations. Many Lebanese women are not aware of neither their duties nor their rights, either because of excessive wealth or excessive poverty.

Young women say they want to do a lot of things and achieve a lot of goals but in reality they spend their lives waiting for a husband.

Men are proud of their sexual experiences and women are ashamed. This is not fair. Lebanon is in the reconstruction

process, and it is a very big chance that young women should take advantage of, to assert themselves and prove themselves. It is not too late. In our country it has just begun for us.

There is a difference between religious theories and actual practices. Someone said that in Islamic religion, a woman is not forced to serve the man a cup of tea if she does not want to. Well I don't think that in practice the man will just respect her decision if she doesn't serve him.

Men ruled the world for five thousands years, it is the turn of women to rule it for the five maybe ten thousand years.

It is a shame that in a university like BUC, there are very few men who support and defend the women's cause.

Why do we care about religion when we are all born equal? It might have been said in religion that women are made out of the rib of a man. But I was born from the womb of a woman. My sister is a woman, my mother is a woman and my daughter will be a woman. If I am going to have respect for myself, I should respect these women to whom I belong. There are a lot of strong women here who speak of themselves as being inferior. Why do you maintain this inferior position? You should be strong as a person, because there isn't a man and a woman, we are all humans.

Boys can go out and have more freedom and rights than girls. Our society is as such, this is what our society says.

I am a man, and I have been listening to you. Please explain to me what are the rights that you do not have? •

Forces of Change: Artists of the Arab World

The International Council for Women in the Arts (ICWA)
The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA)

Washington, D.C. -- December 1993
The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) and the International Council for Women in the Arts (ICWA) are pleased to present the exhibition **Forces of Change: Artists of the Arab World**, which brings together works by seventy accomplished modern painters and sculptors from fifteen Arab countries. Arabs today are citizens of twenty-one states in the Near East and North Africa. While Arabs share a history, culture and language, the Arab world is vast, with a population of over 250 million people, and exceedingly diverse. It encompasses a wide range of ethnic groups, religious sects and political interests. Consequently, Arab artists today draw from a variety of sources and influences, Islamic art being only one of them. Among the other influences are prehistoric art and arts from the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Byzantium, and Africa.

Recognizing the region's rich history, major art exhibitions in the West have portrayed modern Arab women as keepers of the traditional forms embodied in textiles and embroidery. By contrast, **Forces of Change** highlights the contributions of Arab women to a flourishing, vibrant and modern civilization that exists in the region. These contributions serve as an antidote to the standard portrayal of Arab women as the passive victims of unchanging traditions and as inhabiting harems as Western imagination portrayed them a century ago. For the first time, this ground-breaking

exhibition presents Arab women as eloquent interpreters of the contemporary experience. The art on display amply demonstrates their growing self-awareness rooted in admiration, revulsion and resistance -- signifying a recognition of the complexities of their history and of the wider world they inhabit. Arab women artists are seizing the moment to make an imprint upon the forces of change in their lives. Their art, in celebration of life and in mourning of the destruction which surrounds them, confronts and alters the cultural constructs that stimulate the senses.

At the dawn of the 21st century we have yet to unveil our minds to explore and appreciate the art of the "other" for what it is, and not what we conceive it to be, in spite of the advances in mass communication. The artists in this exhibition empower the audience to appreciate and explore, to break the barriers and open the door to intercultural dialogue. the art is there to be admired, to evoke outrage or amusement, to elicit emotion and response. Most of all, it is here to communicate.

The Exhibition

Forces of Change clearly demonstrates the diversity of the Arab world. The exhibition includes 160 works by 70 artists from fifteen countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza, Saudi Arabia, Syria,

Sudan, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. It also includes work by artists of Arab origin living in the United States and Europe. It is organized around four principle themes:

Rhythms of the Past presents artists who explore traditional or regional forms of expression. Their creation often revitalizes these ancient modes and include the use of local materials. Among the artists included here is Mounirah Mosly (Saudi Arabia), whose vividly colored and highly textured art focuses on symbols common to the region extending from the mountains of Asir to the villages of Nubia. The work of Thuraya al-Baqsam (Kuwait) is inspired by early Islamic miniatures and manuscripts. The art of Baya Mahieddine (Algeria) is grounded in the Arab-Berberi-Andalusian culture of her native Algeria. Her imagery refers to mysticism, paganism and Islamic ornamentation. Baya was only sixteen when her talent was recognized in 1947 by André Breton and Pablo Picasso.

Image and the Word offers contemporary interpretations of Arabic script and artworks in which language is a primary visual element. Etel Adnan (Lebanon) is an excellent example of an artist who uses poetry handwritten in Arabic, instead of calligraphy, to produce painted works that demonstrate her individualism. Wijdan Ali (Jordan) and Madiha Umar (Iraq) also free the Arabic letter from classical Arabic calligraphy, creating abstract shapes that give the word a new artistic identity.

Present Reflection includes works that demonstrate how artists in the Arab world have integrated the language of modern art into their own visual cultures. Gazbia Sirry's (Egypt) spontaneous, original use of color, for example, is drawn from the blue and greens of the Red Sea. Suad al-Attar (Iraq) creates a visual excitement using the Mesopotamian symbols of medieval Baghdad, and Layla Muraywid (Syria) combines handmade paper with natural dyes, fabric and earth to produce mystical images of icons that evoke a sense of both the ancient and the ecological.

Forces of Change presents art that deals with the geopolitical and social problems of daily life in the Middle East, from issues of armed confrontation and human rights violations to concern for the environment. Among the artists represented are Rabia Sukkarieh (Lebanon), who exposes the complexities of personal consciousness in a multi-dimensional, open-ended narrative installation, *Sheherezade 101*. Houria Niati's (Algeria) paintings of women question the exotic stereotype created by Delacroix's *Women of Algiers* and perpetuated by modern Western art. Liliane Karnouk (Egypt) expresses her rage at the environmental violence of the Gulf War through mixed media pieces incorporating bark and papyrus, canvas, paint and photographs. Leila al-Shawa (Palestine) records current events by reproducing graffiti from the walls of Gaza in large-scale photosilkscreen prints.

After its debut at NMWA, where it will be the Seventh Annual Gala Exhibition, *Forces of Change: Artists of the Arab World* will travel to venues in Boston, Atlanta and Miami.



The Image of the Word. By Bacho, Gianne Makki. Lebanon. 1985

Education Programs

They included a symposium "Forces of Change: "Arab Women Reshape Their Reality," On Saturday, February 12, 1994 with distinguished speakers from the Middle East and North Africa. Leading figures in literature, art, medicine, environment, government, and public policy assessed the leadership role women have played in these areas.

A teacher workshop, **Women of the Arab World: Curriculum Strategies and Resources**, was also scheduled in February. The all-day program, offered strategies and resources for teaching about the Arab world and the roles that women in it.

February to April - Film Series
Several feature and documentary films by Arab women will be presented including: *Permissible Dreams* (1983) by Egyptian film maker Atteyat El Abnoudi; *Wild Flowers: Women of South Lebanon* (1986) by Palestinian film maker Mai Masri; and *The Razor's Edge* (1985) by Lebanese film maker Jocelyn Saab.

On Saturday, April 16, 1994, **Exploring the Arab World: A Family**

Day will offer demonstrations of weaving and calligraphy, film and other events for the entire family. For additional information, or to make reservations for programs, please contact the education department at (202) 783-7370.

Exhibition Catalogue

The Forces of Change exhibition catalogue will serve as a valuable resource for those seeking current information about contemporary art by women in the Arab world. This sumptuously illustrated, 148-page volume includes essays by distinguished experts, including Laura Nader, Todd B. Potterfield and Wijdan Ali. It introduces the reader to the development of art in the Arab world and the vital role women have played, and continue to play, in the cultural life of the area.

About ICWA: The International Council for Women in the Arts (ICWA) was established to encourage, initiate and implement projects that help promote the art of women from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The organization, which was founded in 1990, develops and maintains information on women artists as a



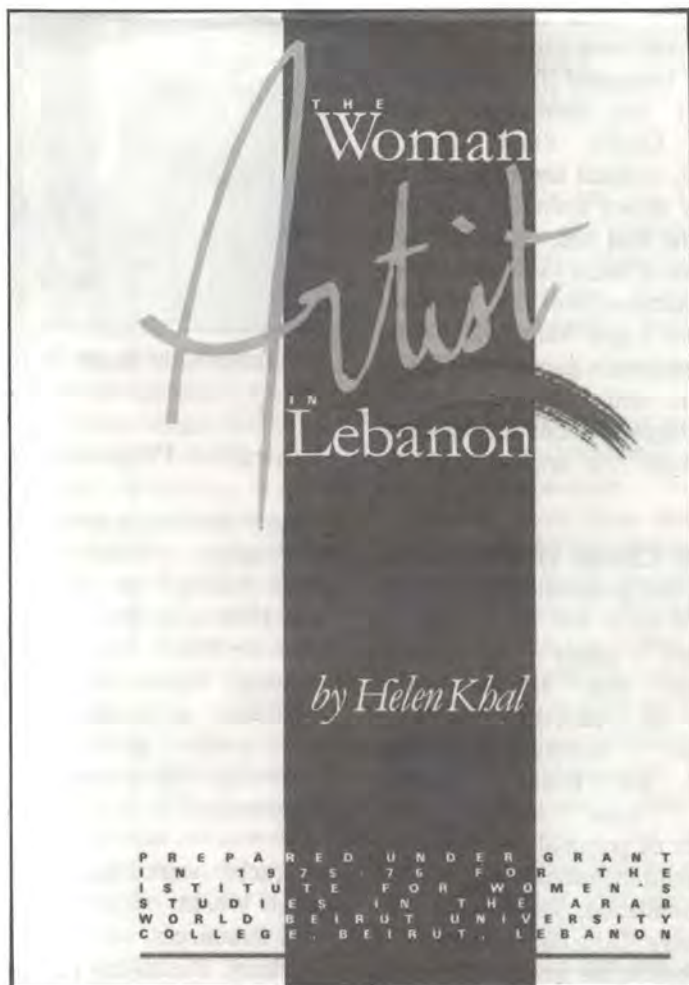
Foule. Huguette Cland.

resource for art institutions and universities in the United States. Working as a liaison between artists and institutions, ICWA seeks to open new channels for educational and cultural exchange between American audiences and the Arab world.

About the Museum: The National Museum of Women in the Arts (NMWA) is a private, non-profit museum established in 1981 to recognize the outstanding achievements of women in the visual and performing arts. Through exhibitions, educational programs and publications, NMWA enhances awareness of women's artistic endeavors. The museum's permanent collection consists of over 1,500 pieces by approximately 500 women artists from 28 countries. The works date from the Renaissance to the present and encompass a broad range of styles, media and perspectives. The National Museum of Women in the Arts is committed to celebrating the contributions of women the world over. This exhibition is the latest in an ongoing program of yearly international exhibitions which have highlighted the art of Greece, Great Britain, Japan, Korea, Belgium and Brazil since 1987 •

For more information about Forces of change: Artists of the Arab World, contact ICWA, Arab Women Artists Exhibit, P.O.Box 226, Lafayette, CA. 94549, USA or call (510) 256-0808, Fax (510) 944-9479.

Women Artists in Lebanon



Women Artists in Lebanon opens with an introduction of 20 pages analyzing the status of the Lebanese woman as woman and artist, followed by interviews with a selected group of 12 pioneers in the plastic arts which include painting, sculpture and ceramics. The book contains ten pages of biographical data on the artists. Sponsored by the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW), Khal's book is a well studied treatise that describes in some depth the work of 12 Arab women artists residing in Lebanon.

More importantly, through the study of these articles, Khal draws some interesting conclusions about the role of the female artists in the development of modern art in the Arab world and of the society in which that art developed •

Women Artists in Lebanon can be order from the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College, P.O.Box 13-5053, Beirut, Lebanon. Fax: (01) 867 098. Or BUC, 475 Riverside Drive, Rm. 1847, New York, NY 10115. Fax: (212) 870-2762.

A Specialist Publishing House for Women in the Arab World



NOUR

We just received note that Nour, a specialist publishing house for women has been established in Cairo, Egypt by five leading Arab women scholars. They feel a publishing house for women is long overdue and crucial because the opportunities for women to publish serious writing have not clearly kept up with their potential to do so, since women make up half of the Arab university graduates, and nearly a third of Arab countries have achieved parity between boys and girls in secondary education. Nor has the general book publishing business in the Arab world kept pace with the region's growing literate population: 37 books are published for every million Arabs, in contrast to Europe, where 553 books are published per million people. In fact although the Arab region represents 4 percent of the world's population, it publishes only 0.9 percent

of its books. NOUR was founded to provide greater opportunities for women's voices to be heard, and to provide a forum for a range of perspectives on the lives and roles of Arab women today.

During the first two years NOUR plans to publish six titles as part of three series: social science, literature and general culture. In the social sciences series, its first publication will be Arab Women in the Field, in which six Arab women scholars from Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan write about their experience in conducting field research in the Arab region, with a focus on conceptual and gender issues. The literature series features Beautiful Voices, a compilation of short stories from fifteen well-established Arab women writers, including Emily Nasrallah, Hanan

El-Cheikh, Latifa El-Zayyat to name only a few. The culture series will include two titles: Arab women Pioneers which presents the contributions of eminent Arab writers to literature, and Women and Nutrition which explores women's role in the family and community nutrition.

NOUR is a promising new enterprise by women and for women. Its success depends not only on the five women who created it but on a global and regional dedication to promoting Arab women publications •

For more information contact: NOUR, 9 Mudiriyet El Tahir Street, Garden City, Cairo, Egypt. Telephone and Fax: (202) 355 3825.

Marguerite Duras or the Weight of a Feather by Frederique Lebelley

Two of the most interesting books to come out in the new year have been written by two Francophone writers. The first one is Marguerite Duras ou Le Poids d'une Plume - Marguerite Duras or the Weight of a Feather and is written by French journalist Frederique Lebelley and published by Grasset. It is published by Maren Sell-Calman Levy. The second one is La Femme de Job - Job's Wife by Andrée Chédid.

A new biography of Marguerite Duras has just been written by French journalist Frederique Lebelley. It has been hailed by French magazine *Le Nouvel Observateur* (3-9 February, 1994) as a success, not only for its good investigative skills, but for its good observation and understanding of this most controversial writer and film maker.

Who is Marguerite Donnadiou Antelme Duras? She is the author of more than fifty books and theater plays and nineteen films. Born in Indochina on the 14th of April 1914, daughter of a mathematician and a primary school teacher, her childhood in Asia marked her irrevocably and prompted her to write such masterpieces as Un Barrage Contre Le Pacifique - A Dam Against the Pacific, (1950: Gallimard) - and Hiroshima Mon Amour - Hiroshima My Love, (1960: Gallimard) and of the much acclaimed L'Amant - The Lover (1984: Editions de Minuit) and Christine V. (1985).

Duras was never a feminist but she always had a strong inclination for dissent, for questioning the status quo and for protecting victims. She was briefly a communist in the fifties and before that worked in the French resistance in 1943 together with the President of France, François

Mitterand. In these days, Mitterand, code name Morland, headed the National Movement of Prisoners of War. At the same time, Duras worked as secretary for the commission of the control of paper. It decided which authors would be published and how much paper they were allowed to use. Ironically, the commission refused her permission to publish her first book Les Complices - The Accomplices. She did not give up and threatened to commit suicide if her book was not printed. Her husband then, Robert Antelme begged publishing houses to print her manuscript which was entitled Des Impudents (1943: Plon and 1992: Gallimard). Years later she wanted to ban the publication of this book because she considered it an imperfect work.

In 1944, she published a second book La Vie Tranquille - The Peaceful Life (Gallimard). Despite a better reception of this book, she remained insecure about her talents and refused to write anything till 1950, until the effect of the war on her life has diminished. She said "*I found myself facing a phenomenal disorder of thoughts and feelings . . . literature in that context made me feel ashamed.*" She joined the communist party instead.

In 1942, she met a man who was to

change her life, Dionys Mascolo, a reader at Gallimard with whom she set up a "manage a trois" along with Antelme. Even when she divorced Antelme and had a son by Mascolo they remained good friends, they still remained good friends. In fact, in her last book Ecrire - To Write (1993: Gallimard) Duras says *men do not tolerate women who write. It is cruel for the man. It is difficult for everybody, except for Antelme.*

She is a great writer. Her style is sober and unique. She does not write in a traditional way but with a bareness of style. she does not waste time and gets right to the point... She does not need to fill pages ... There is always something unexpected in her writing and something that gives color and movement to it ... what attracts one's attention is an attitude of life ... says Mitterand.

Indeed after the publication of two major books The Story of Lol V. Stein and The Vice Consul (1964 and 1965), Duras became the founder of a new religion among intellectuals. She became the most studied contemporary writer in France and hundreds of theses have been written about her work. The reasons for her importance are her revolutionary and feminine style, that feminists acclaimed.

Job's Wife

by Andrée Chedid

About these two books, Duras says *I often think about The Vice Consul, I never dropped him, whereas I do not think of Lol v. Stein anymore. The Vice Consul is the one I believe in, his cry is the "only politics". It was filmed in my house and all the people of the film were crying ... They were free cries, real cries like those cried by nations in misery.*

The "Duras phenomenon," if it can be called this, has even spread to the US where eighty nine theses have been written about her. Why such an interest? According to French journalist J. L. Del Bono *Its feminism essentially gave her popularity. As early as the seventies, she was taught in women's studies programs on many campuses. within her book L'Amant, winner of the Concourt French Literary Prize, she became even more popular in the United states. Everybody read that slim book talking about her passionate love affair with a China man from the Mekong river. It was also made into a movie, translated in many languages and a new phenomenon was born, that of "Durasmania".*

Of course, not everybody is a fan of Duras. Recently, the New York Times compared her books to 'railway station novels' and since 1985 there is a certain tiredness among intellectuals to study Duras further. As Del Bono would say *we are now in the "post-Durasian style."*

French Critic, Philippe Sollers, attributes the Duras myth to Europe's fascination with three main cultures in the world: Indochina, North Africa and Islam, and Duras spoke of Indochina in a way no one ever did before. For Sollers, Duras, at the end of the twentieth century hold the continued on last column...

Andrée Chedid is one of the most interesting voices in Francophone literature. Born in Cairo, having lived briefly in Lebanon, then for a long time in Paris, her books on plays are inspired by Middle Eastern culture and women's predicament in it, e.g. Le 6eme Jour - The 6th Day set in the time of Cholera in Egypt - Nephertiti ou Le Réve d'Akhnaton - Nephertiti or Akhnaton's Dream set in Pharonic times - and La Maison sans Racine - The House without Roots set in the beginning of the civil war in Lebanon.

Her latest book, *Job's Wife* is a result of her personal experience and reflection on life. It is the work of a mature woman concerned with men/women relations with each other and with their creator, love, what unites them and what erodes their ties, especially the effect of old age.

Although the Old Testament mentions Job's wife only once in the "Book of Job," Andrée Chedid imagines and creates a woman with a distinct personality, sometime soft and sometimes harsh. Moreover, although history has totally ignored this woman and only focused on her husband, Chedid reckons that this wife must have surely been influenced if not affected by her husband's total devotion and belief in God. Job says to his wife *you are as terrible as Battalion (regiment)*" as well as *"my heart loves you.*

Most importantly, Chedid's book is about old age for men and women alike. It is about the "letting go of

transitory forms and the resistance of the core," the core meaning the soul, or as Chedid puts it *"an impalpable substance that transcends time and that is found in people's gaze."*

Thus, with the passing of time, Job's wife becomes more understanding of her husband and more tender to him. She says *old age is not only ruins, illness and degradation.* Old age can be a time to summon up new forces. And although she admires her husband's resilience to all the calamities that befall him, she does not always support his unconditional acceptance of God's will. In fact, at one time, she encourages him to rebel and deny God. When Job refuses to forsake his beliefs, his wife is left there questioning the meaning of life and waiting for an answer •

Marguerite Duras Continued...

position that Victor Hugo had in France at the end of the nineteenth century, i.e. that of a great writer and spokesperson of a nation.

As for Duras, she says that *writing was the only thing that filled my life and enchanted it. I've done it. Writing has never left me ... I can say what I want, I will never find out why we write and how we don't write.* •

Bringing Up an Eco-Child

Little Things Mothers - and Fathers - Can Do to Develop Environmental Awareness in Children

Irma K. Ghosn

Conserving water and energy, recycling the newspaper and soda cans, using mass transportation - we have all heard about these things and thought about them.

Our children, however, will not have the luxury of only **thinking** about these habits; they will have to have mastered them, because they will face - and hopefully solve - the issues we only read and talk about. (1) The damage to the ozone layer, global warming, water pollution and acid rain are realities that our children will have to deal with.

We need to give our children the chance for saving their planet, and we can do that by showing them what they can do, by encouraging them - and, most importantly, giving them the sense that they **can** make a difference. Once children realize that they have a role to play - when they feel empowered - they will not only respond, but they will be eager to do their share in protecting the Earth. We should not let our children grow up feeling that the problems of the environment are too big, too difficult and too hopeless to deal with.

Raising environmental awareness in children can, of course, to a great extent, be done by teachers who are trained in ways to incorporate the environment in different areas of the curriculum. Children, the future decision-makers, need adequate scientific knowledge to prevent our planet from deteriorating further. (2)

**"Only
when the last fish is caught
the last river polluted
the last tree felled
will man realize
money is not edible"**

(freely translated by this author from a Greenpeace poster in Helsinki)

However, training for environmental awareness can and should begin much earlier than grade school. For young children to develop real understanding of nature, it is essential that they develop **empathy** towards all living things, plants and animals alike. Only then will the scientific knowledge gained later in school be meaningful to them. And children do seem to possess an immense capacity for empathy (3), it only needs to be cultivated and reinforced.

Cultivation of that empathy needs to begin at home and in kindergarten. Children are born with a natural curiosity about the world around them, a sense of wonder that we adults must keep alive. Rachel Carson, the author of the now-classic Silent Spring (a chilling account of the devastating consequences of wanton use of pesticides and chemicals), has aptly said that for a child to keep his sense of wonder, "he/she needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him/her the joy of the world we live in" (4). Many of us adults have perhaps lost that sense of wonder, but together with our children we can re-discover it.

Some of the most simple things we parents can do is to enjoy with our child the crisp and clear autumn air or the gentle sound of the spring raindrops tapping on the window. The sight of the first wild spring cyclamen or anemones during a drive to the mountains is a wonder that merits a stop and a closer inspection of these messengers of spring. There will be no need to pick them; they are best left where they are. That is where the passers-by will also be able to experience their beauty. In the city, we can take a walk in the park and examine the budding of the trees there, or stroll on the sea-side boulevard and enjoy the sharp freshness of the salty sea-spray. In many cities, there are also nurseries where house plants, trees herbs and other greenery can be admired by visitors. Children will be delighted to observe the many luxurious and exotic plants, and will be thrilled if given an opportunity to select a small plant, perhaps a culinary herb or a desert cactus, to take home and nurture.

Even in the city apartment, we can plant something in order for our children to observe the miracle of growth and life. Easily sprouting seeds - lentils, beans, tomato seeds - can be planted in paper cups or old flowerpots. Together with the child, we can speculate what will happen, and how long will it take before anything will show. When about 2-3 cm long, lentil and bean sprouts can be

chopped and added to sandwiches. If space is available, growing of tomatoes, parsley and mint in small tubs on the balcony, or even on the windowsill, will let the children experience, first-hand, the significance of nature for our daily needs.

Pets can play a significant role in the emotional and cognitive development of a child⁽⁵⁾. Taking care of a pet will also foster caring and compassion for all living things and increase the child's awareness of the needs of an animal. When selecting a pet, available space, time and financial resources of the family set some limits. a dog needs plenty of space, a healthy diet and frequent grooming, and, of course, walks. A turtle, on the other hand, will require much less space, will eat little and will make no noise. Having a pet at home is, however, not the only way to foster love for animals. We can visit a farm and let our children become familiar with the animals there. Observing new-born calves or kids is a memorable experience! Together with our children we can learn amazing facts about wildlife through the nature films that many TV-stations broadcast. There is, of course, the wildlife all around us that should not be neglected. Little things like the intricate patterns on the wings of the harlequin bug, the fascinating camouflage colors of the praying mantis, locusts and moths, and the chirping of the cicadas in the oleander bushes are nature at its best.

There are numerous little things we parents can do to foster the sense of conservation in our children. How often do we leave enough electricity to burn almost 180 Kg of coal.⁽⁶⁾ With our child, we can make an effort to turn off lights where they are not needed. We can authorize our child to

be the "energy patrol" whose task will be to check that all unnecessary lights are turned off. How much paper do we throw away! We can tell our child that to make paper trees must be cut down, and that it takes years for a tree to grow tall enough to be used for paper. We can all preserve trees by recycling our paper. If we collect all the paper (including cereal boxes and other packaging) we use in the home for one week, weigh it, and multiply the figure by 52, then by the number of population, we have an idea of how much paper is consumed in the country every year, and this only in the home. Americans use approximately 260Kg of paper per person every year! It takes a billion trees to make all that paper!⁽⁷⁾ Even if there is no organized recycling in the area, there are little things that will help. Simply making use of both sides of the paper saves some trees. Children will be perfectly happy using the back side of letters, memos, etc. for drawing and scribbling. We can discuss the idea of recycling with our children, and, to demonstrate how paper can be re-used, we can make recycled paper (see directions at the end). We can also get together with our friends and neighbors and try to organize community recycling projects,

When shopping, we should take our children along. When choosing detergents, we can discuss the problem the chemicals in the household cleaners cause for the environment. Together with the child we can read the label and select the items that are environment-friendly. When purchasing deodorants and other sprays, we should explain that some of the packaging of these products damages the ozone-layer which protects us. Today, many cosmetic products are available that have not been tested on laboratory animals. Children may have very

strong opinions about the issue if they are made aware of it.

How often do we think about the packaging of the products that we bring home weekly? Many items come in large, inviting packages that really are not necessary. Just look at the way many small toys are packaged: in large, colorful, shrink-wrapped boxes. Food stuffs such as cereals are also often packed in cartons nearly double the size needed. Looking at the products in the local supermarket, we can select those that use minimal packaging, and we can buy as much as possible in bulk. Also, many dry goods now come in boxes made of recycled paper. Thus we can do our small share of conservation by giving some time and thought to consider packaging. Children will quickly learn to spot recycled packaging, to look for bulk alternatives and to accept toys in simple packaging. Our children can also monitor the purchasing of foodstuff and other items that are plastic-wrapped. Plastic is a petroleum by-product and is not biodegradable. Although some progress has been made in creating bio-degradable plastics, most plastics will stay in the landfills for decades or pollute our air with their fumes if burnt. All these may seem little things, but collectively they amount to tons of either unnecessary waste that has to be gotten rid of, or ideally, to the saving of at least a few trees and a smaller bag of waste to be disposed of.

Of course we cannot yet rely on only using recycled materials or recycling everything we use, but we can make a difference. And more importantly, we can raise in our children an awareness of environment and that can make a difference. **Environmental awareness begins at home, with us, the parents.**

Recipe To Recycle Paper

Ingredients:

- 2-3 pages of a newspaper
- 1 whole newspaper
- a blender (you can do the task manually, but it is harder)
- about 1 liter of water
- a plastic dishpan about 10 cm deep
- a piece of wiremesh (the one used for fly screens works well) that fits in the pan
- a measuring cup
- a flat piece of board (wood/plywood) the size of the newspaper page.

Method:

- Tear the 2-3 pages of the

newspaper into tiny pieces and put them in the blender.

- Add a liter of water and cover the blender. Run the blender until the paper is turned into pulp.
- Pour about 2 cm of water into the dishpan and put the screen into the pan.
- Pour the blended paper pulp (about 1/4 of a liter) onto the screen and spread it evenly.
- Lift the screen and let the water drain.
- Open the newspaper and place the screen with the pulp on one half of the newspaper.
- Close the newspaper. Then

carefully flip it over, so that the screen is on top of the pulp.

- Place the board on top of the newspaper and press to squeeze out excess water.
- Open the newspaper and take out the screen carefully, trying not to disturb the pulp.
- Leave the newspaper open and let the pulp dry for at least 24 hours. When the pulp is dry, peel it off the newspaper, and it is ready for use.
- For extra touch, you can mix food coloring with the pulp in the blender, or add a pinch of dried mint leaves for scented paper.

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Arab Women and the Environment

BUC: November 25-27, 1993

Realizing the importance of safeguarding the environment and its impact on Arab women, the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) and Beirut University College (BUC) intensified efforts to raise awareness by organizing a regional conference. **Arab Women and the Environment** was the first regional conference to be held in Lebanon to create gender awareness towards the environment following a national conference, **Women and the Environment**, which took place in October 1992 (see Al-Raida #58, 59).

Arab Women and the Environment incarnates the responsibility and awareness needed to take action towards a viable environment. The aim of the conference was to highlight the impact of the environment on human life and namely women, whose domestic tasks are directly related to environmental parameters. Not only are they primarily affected by them but they are environmental managers as

well. Therefore, they must participate in planning, implementation and evaluation processes, projects and policies.

Initial public reaction to the conference questioned the significance of the emphasis on women in the

environmental crisis when, in reality, it affects all of humanity, equally. The link between women and the environment was not clear to many. Furthermore, many felt this conference would be another intellectual exercise for scholars and that it will not produce concrete action. The criticisms that preceded the event were many, but the event itself turned out to be a bigger success than expected. Those who participated, enthusiastically, were not restricted to the persons called on by the organizing committee but represented various sectors of society. They included politicians, environmentalists, social scientists, academicians, media specialists, social workers, members of UN agencies as well as women's groups from all over the country not to mention students of BUC and other institutions of higher learning, both women and men. Therefore, the significance of these conferences was in evoking relevant





in a workshop

questions, producing the research data, i.e. speaker's papers, needed for action projects and formulating resolutions.

In the conference, the link between women and the environment was interpreted corresponding to domestic management, which has the greatest bearing in the Arab region as in most world societies. Furthermore, resolutions brought forth for women in the conference workshops demanded legal action, technical training, awareness campaigns, media and educational projects for improving their status on the domestic level. They also expanded on women's involvement with the environment crisis by demanding and encouraging their participation in relevant decision and policy making.

The conference was officially supported by the Presidency of the country and the First Lady of Lebanon, Ms. Mona Hrawi gave the opening statement. Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, Director of PWSAW and Dr. Riyad Nassar, President of BUC stressed the importance of the event and the issue for women and society and the Keynote address was presented by Dr. Georges Tohmeh, President of the National Council for Scientific Research.

Every panel was presided by a Member of Parliament or a Minister from the Lebanese Cabinet. Parliamentary Deputies included Ms. Nayla Mouawad and Ms. Bahia Hariri, the two prominent women who were recently elected (see Al-Raida, #59, 1992). Cabinet members were the Ministers of Environment, of Agriculture, of Health, of Information, and of Interior. Panelists consisted of environmentalists with various

specialization, social scientists, and educators.

The most constructive aspect of the Regional Conference was the participation of environmentalists and scientists, notably women, from the Arab world. They included Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Sudan, Syria, and Tunisia.

Panels comprised different aspects and points of view: Sustainable Development; The Effects of Pollution on Health; Protection of the Environment and Pollution Control; The Environment and Education; The Environment and the Media; Urban Environmental Policies and Rural Environmental Policies. Workshops that followed examined the problems, their magnitude, as well as methods, techniques of dealing with them. Workshop participants brought forth a number of resolutions. A follow-up committee was organized for pursuing policy makers for the implementation



Resolutions

1. Motivate all organizations and groups concerned with women's issues to cooperate and conduct research on women and the environment in order to identify needs.
2. Demand decision-makers to include women in planning, implementing and evaluating development projects.
3. Demand the presence of women in the administrative posts geared towards regulating natural resources and devising environmental policies.
4. Direct awareness campaigns and technical guidance in environmental management to rural women that are relevant to the resources and facilities available to them.
5. Eliminate women's illiteracy and create awareness about their role as educators in protecting the environment.
6. Demand the Ministry of Education to add environmental education in school curricula and university programs.
7. Pressure government officials to devise policies for introducing environmental issues in the education and training of media personnel.
8. Concentrate on directing audio-visual media that address women's issues towards incorporating health and family planning issues.
9. Devise continuous and persistence awareness campaigns to protect the environment and its natural parameters in society .
10. Urge tree planting and discourage de-forestation.
11. Demand the Government to create specific rules and regulations for protecting nature and preserving its biological diversities.
12. Demand the establishment of farms that preserve scarce life forms, either animals or plants.
13. Work towards designing techniques that reduce the poisonous chemicals that are discharged from industrial waste.
14. Inspire social associations and local groups to include environmental issues in their agenda.
15. Create pressure groups for the protection of the environment.
16. Work on implementation of laws and sanctions against environmental abuse.
17. Demand all Ministries to incorporate environmental issues in their work.
18. Produce a specialized publication on the environment that includes relevant guidelines and information for increasing awareness.
19. Create a follow-up committee to supervise the implementation of resolutions.

Special Note: IWSAW thanks the Mac Arthur Foundation, Boeing Commercial Airline Group and Texaco whose generous support made this conference possible. IWSAW is also grateful and indebted to the administration and

staff of Beirut University College for the support and hard work that went into making this conference a success.

Conference proceedings and the complete papers are being published

and may be requested directly from the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, Beirut University College, P. O. Box 13-5053/59, Beirut, Lebanon, Tel. (01) 867 618/9, Fax. (01) 867 098. Please note that the papers are in Arabic.

On The Link Between Women, Water & Sanitation

Interview with Samia G. Saad
Professor of Environmental Health
High Institute of Public Health - Alexandria University

Dr. Samia G. Saad presented a research paper at the Conference Arab Women and the Environment. She is active in the promotion of women and their conditions especially with respect to environmental issues. She was the chairperson of an International Conference on Women and the Environment at Alexandria University (December 1-3, 1992). Al-Raida interviewed her to discuss relevant issues, ideas and projects for improving women's and environmental conditions.

Q. What is your definition of the link between women and the environment?

A. Women form the half of the population on which the well-being of society depends. The woman is the one who feeds the family, who is educates the new generation and who will be the decision maker. She should know how to protect her family from diseases through food and water management, a proper environment at home, and in the area where she lives be it urban or rural.

Q. Are you saying that, basically, women are environmental managers by virtue of their domestic responsibilities?

A. Yes.

Q. How are women involved in environmental issues beyond the scope of the family?

A. The World Bank and other international development organizations funded thousands of projects in the world for water and

sanitation. Many of these projects, however, turned out to be useless because they overlooked cultural variables, and most importantly they excluded women. For example: In a village in Borgina Faso, American donor agencies installed restroom facilities, with short doors that do not reach the floor according to US specifications thus, revealing the lower half of the legs of the user. These restrooms were useless to women in a culture whose values prohibit exposure of their legs. Consequently, the children were not trained to use them and the entire project went to waste. In other sanitation projects involving the digging and installation of natural holes, the designers overlooked size specifications. Hence, the shaft was designed for adults, which eventually caused children to fall in it.

These agencies soon recognized that failing to consult women about their specific needs to give them adequate technical training were the primary cause for these shortcomings.

Q. In other words, women are not only excluded from the end product but all through the whole process!

A. Yes, women must be involved in planning, execution and evaluation of the project. In most cases funding agencies consult the leader of the community, i.e. the elder men, the priest, or the Shaykh, about details like location and design of the



Dr. Samia G. Saad

particular project. Women are not consulted although they are the one who will operate and use the facilities in question. Another common oversight is budgeting for the training of the locals in using and maintaining the donated facilities. Hence, the bulk is spend on planning and execution and gets depleted before the training phase.

For example: In another project, a water pump was installed where the men of the village performed their daily activities rather than near the homes and women who use the pump more frequently and regularly for household chores. The execution was done in accordance with information gathered from the elderly men of the community. Furthermore, the pump was designed to be used by muscular

people, i.e. men. When the pump got rusty -- a natural consequence of metal interacting with water -- women could not operate it efficiently. Eventually, the lever broke under the force and pressure needed to operate it. It became useless!

In other cases, modern equipment became obsolete because locals were not trained to use them. Even in large developing cities, modern facilities and plants for waste disposal and waste management donated and installed by industrialized governments were useless because funds had depleted before the stage of training local technicians. These cities ended up with beautiful, modern, top-of-the-line facilities they could not maintain or operate at full capacity and efficiency.

Q. What is being done about all of this?

A. Development agencies have devised a new strategy for dealing with this problem. They select representatives and community leaders, both men and women. They also call upon the skilled members of the community such as midwives and doctors, the fat women, and members of the extended family to discuss project designs. The opinions and needs of the locals, notably the women, are surveyed at when introducing the project to them. Social workers are crucial in discussing the project with local women in private to establish the validity and reliability of the project.

The role of women in water and sanitation, i.e. that of propagating proper hygiene conditions is very important. There is a big shortage in trained women who can act as leaders and educators for other women in society. This kind of training is unique because it requires technical



knowledge inherent in water and sanitation issues.

Our indigenous experiences are also very important and should not be overlooked when installing modern facilities in rural areas that are not equipped with follow-up measures. For instance, sometimes it is healthier not to install running water facilities, than to do so without providing inhabitants with proper knowledge about disposal. In the past, women collected water from the spring and carried it in buckets and containers. Thus, water use was more economical and efficient as well as hygienic. Nowadays, tap water is secured but disposal techniques are not. Women dispose of used water out in the street or simply on the ground increasing pollution by contaminating of natural springs, attracting of insects and increasing health hazards. And the entire process multiplies with the growth of the population.

Q. Do you have any training programs of this kind or are you planning one?

A. I already planned and solicited funding for one. The original plan was to implement it in all the Arab countries but unfortunately the funding agency only targeted my country, Egypt. My plan for the

other Arab countries was to corroborate with three or four other people to develop a leadership training program in the various countries, which would then be administered and disseminated independently.

Q. How many other women in your area of specialization are taking a leadership role with respect to women's needs?

A. There are very few women who devote their technical knowledge to the role of women. It is very sad.

Q. You organized an International Conference on Women and the Environment at Alexandria University last year that was very successful. Didn't it advocate communicating environmental knowledge and awareness to women?

A. It did, and the leadership training project for Arab women I spoke of earlier was the primary resolution of that conference. Arab women want someone to teach them and train them in upholding healthy environmental systems.

Dr. Samia G. Saad is Professor of Environmental Health at the High Institute of Public Health, Alexandria University, 165 El Horriya Avenue, Alexandria, Egypt.

Rural Women in the Protection of The Agricultural Environment in Jordan

Hala El-Khaimeh El-Hourani - University of Jordan

This paper reviews the role of rural women in the preservation of the agricultural environment in Jordan, and deals with types of pollutants in the Jordanian rural regions. It is based on studies which attribute pollution to unorthodox methods of using fertilizers which contaminate water in the respective regions. contamination occurs as a result of the seepage of degraded fertilizer residues into underground and surface water resources. The paper also focuses on the adverse effects of pesticides and identifies the methods, amounts and types of pesticide residues in different ecosystems.

The paper deals with rural women in general, and focuses on women farm managers, family farm laborers and wage laborers. It also discusses the role of rural women in protecting the agricultural environment from pollution. It calls for women's awareness in matters of handling pesticides and fertilizers and in conforming to requirements for public safety while handling these chemicals.

The following are excerpts from El-Khaimeh's paper that are directly related to women's relationship with the agricultural environment in Jordan.

The Role of Rural Women in Agriculture

Statistics show that one out of every two Jordanian women work in agriculture. Despite the fact that



Dr. Hala El-Khaimeh

women form half of the rural population, the amount of research about their role in agriculture is minimal compared to one investigating roles and needs of urban women.

Jordanian rural women contributions to agricultural production is significant, but they are not considered skilled labor because of the untrained tasks they perform. Field surveys have shown that women can play a more important role in agricultural production if technically trained. However, they continue to be excluded from planning and development projects, and restrictions on their interaction with men hinders their participation in relevant local and public activities. Hence, the status of women in agricultural production is not

visible. They are perceived as assistants to the men in their family and therefore their work is not remunerated. This marginalization of women continues to overshadow the relationship between women and agriculture, whereby society does not perceive any connection between them.

The Effect of Socio-economic Changes

Women are the ones who are mostly affected by changes in educational levels. Familial and social obligations have a direct effect on their role in agriculture, keeping it marginal because women must carry out all the domestic tasks. Women, however, work more than men by an average of 15 hours per week including the variety of chores

Gender Labor Force Participation in Agriculture Jordan 1980

Tasks	% of Women	% of men
Plowing	10.0	90.0
Sowing	30.0	70.0
Weeding	60.0	40.0
Harvesting	70.0	30.0
Transport of harvest	20.0	80.0
Storing	50.0	50.0
Manufacturing nutritional produce	80.0	20.0
Marketing & transporting produce	10.0	90.0
Care of farm animals	70.0	30.0
Milk production	80.0	20.0

required for housekeeping and agricultural tasks.

A study conducted in 1980 on Jordanian women's agricultural activities revealed that women are leading participants in the relevant labor force and the stages of production (see Table 1). Men cannot operate and financially provide for the family without women's participation in the various processes of agricultural work.

Women's Use of Pesticides

Another field study was conducted in Jordan to examine women's knowledge of the various stages and methods in using pesticides starting from what to buy, to planning, storage, mixture of material, and disposal of left-overs. The study showed that women had substantial knowledge about the diseases of plants, their cause, and which pesticide to use for each. Women's work in this sphere can be summarized as follows:

1) The Diagnosis of the Plants' Needs. It is an administrative task in agriculture. This being the case, the women's diagnosis of agricultural diseases and botanical diseases are collected by experts from the Farm Directorate who then report them to the Ministry of Agriculture for further analysis and action.

2) The Purchase of Pesticide. It is

usually done by the Farm Directorate but it is also performed, to a lesser degree, by women in agriculture. In this case, these rural women depend on the brand name and the color of the product rather than on technical constitutions of which they probably have little knowledge.

3) Mixing of Pesticides for use. Women perform this task which requires little technical education and knowledge.

4) Spraying and Use of Pesticides. This process is controlled by men. Nevertheless, a few women perform manual spraying or spraying of specific areas, small in size, during the absence of men. Generally speaking, the role of women in this stage is limited to assistance tasks such as carrying the hoses. We also note that men and women do not wear safety overalls during the spraying from lack of knowledge of the dangers of chemicals.

5) Storage of Chemicals. Usually women do not need to store pesticides because little, if any remains, for they cannot afford to buy excess quantities. When storage is relevant, women place the containers of pesticides in plastic bags and hang them on trees or put them under lock in closets/cupboards.

6) Disposal of Pesticide Bags and Containers. Women perform this task too. Disposal consists of burning them

or burying them in the soil.

Recommendations for Improving Women's role in Agriculture and Protecting the Environment

1) Create agricultural cooperatives which cater to women working in agriculture.

2) Concentrate on disseminating technical knowledge by creating training and service centers.

3) Have the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with Union of Agricultural workers organize training workshops for women in diagnosing and treating diseases.

4) Up-grading legislation related to environmental control.

5) Develop public awareness through the media with emphasis on environmental-friendly attitudes and habits.

6) Supervision and demand quality control of agricultural fertilizers.

7) Encourage further research.

8) Increase opportunities for agricultural education of young girls in secondary schools.

9) Increase control over pesticides and insecticides manufacturing factories to prevent leakage into air and water •

Dr. Hala El-Khaimeh is Assistant Professor in Environmental Technology. For more information contact Dr. Hala El-Khaimeh, Natural Science Dept. University of Jordan,

The Impact of Environment on Child Health

Ali Zein - UNICEF, Lebanon

"Our planet must be preserved, in order to nurture our children, equally, our children must be better nurtured to preserve our planet"
UNICEF Executive Board, 1992

Before conception, and even before fecundation takes place, "the child" in the form of a gamete is affected by the environmental factors surrounding him, as a result of the close and constant relationship he builds with his environment, during development and throughout life. Although genetic traits play an essential role in determining the physiology and biochemical make-up of an individual, and in shaping his external appearance (height, hair and eyes color) and probably his mental capacity genetic elements (DNA) are not the only factor responsible for the development of the fetus, since the environment plays an essential role.

During pregnancy and despite the protective effect played by the placenta and the uterus, the "child" is affected by external factors and one of the determining criteria for a child's survival, namely, weight at birth, is affected to a great extent by environmental factors. Research has indicated that 60 percent of the

variations in birth weight could be attributed to reasons and factors related to the environment in which the fetus lives (Ebrahim, 1982). The nutritional status of the mother, her activities, irrigation of the placenta are all determinants of the child's development. If a mother is malnourished, or exhausted or in bad health, the child will be negatively affected.

Weight at birth is one of the important determinants in the survival and development of a child. The proportion of low birth weight babies (below 2.5 kg) depends on the health, social and educational status of the mother, as well as the socio-economic profile of the community in which they are born. A study conducted by the American University of Beirut (Zurayk and Armenian, 1985) has revealed a strong relationship between the educational level of the mother and child birth weight, as shown in the following table.

Age at marriage is also an important factor affecting weight at birth, whereby it was found that the proportion of low birth weight babies is 25 percent among mothers aged 15-19 years, while that proportion is only 6.3 percent among mothers aged 30-34 years (UNICEF, 1991). On the other hand, a study conducted by UNICEF in 1990 found significant regional disparities in terms of the rates of low birth weight, whereby the proportion of infants below 2.5 kg in the peripheral

regions of the North, Beqaa, South and suburbs of Beirut is two times higher than that of Beirut and Mount Lebanon (UNICEF and AUB, 1990).

On the other hand, many studies indicate that cancer and many congenital malformations are related to the exposure of the mother to toxic agents during pregnancy. Twenty five percent of congenital malformations among children are caused by genetic factors (divided into four parts: radiation, viruses, drugs, chemical agents) are responsible for around 10 percent of these malformations. The remaining 65 percent are probably caused by an interaction of genetic factors and environmental agents (Kruzel and Centrullo, 1981; Kalter and Darkary, 1983).

If we were to compare wealthy and poor societies, we should find that in wealthy societies, most of the infant deaths during the first year of age are due to congenital malformations, genetic defects, and birth complications while in poor societies most of them are due to factors related to the environment such as malnutrition, infectious diseases e.g. diarrhea, respiratory infections and measles, in addition to lack of awareness among parents, mainly mothers.

After birth, and during the first months of life, the infant stays close to his mother, who, in addition to the family and the home, forms the direct environment with which the child interacts.

Relation Between the Educational Level of the Mother and Weight at Birth

Weight at birth	Illiterate	Some elementary	Completed elementary some secondary vocational	Completed secondary/vocational. some university	Completed secondary and/or higher studies
	%	%	%	%	%
Low	14.7	7.5	9.2	5.4	5.0
Normal	47.1	83.0	79.9	84.9	85.0
Over weight	14.7	9.4	8.7	7.5	7.5
Undetermined	23.5	0.0	2.2	2.1	2.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The situation of mothers, including her social and educational status and her role in economic production is perhaps the most important variable in the infant and child mortality equation, their survival and development. Numerous studies undertaken in Lebanon and elsewhere indicate that factors related to the situation of the mother, i.e. her age at marriage, her level of education, her socio-economic status, her access to ante-, intra- and postnatal care, her breast feeding pattern, her access to family planning, the family size and household work burden she has to bear, as well as her information and practical knowledge about child health, all have a direct and dramatic impact on the level of infant and child mortality and morbidity.

As the child grows, the environment with which he interacts starts expanding into wider circles until it includes the large-scale environment as a whole. In this context, it is worth noting the severe environmental deterioration that has occurred over the last two years in Lebanon, as a result of the war. Destruction affected almost all regions, especially those that gave Lebanon a distinct and famous role; the uncontrolled development in

construction, the improper disposal of waste and the pollution of water, food and air, as well as deforestation have negatively affected the environment.

It is worth noting the deteriorating condition of drinking water, in terms of both its quantity and its quality. The average quantity of water received by the Lebanese decreased 60 percent from its average in 1975. In addition, it was found that around 70 percent of water sources are exposed to bacteriological contamination (AUB and UNICEF, 1992). These high levels of pollution are also revealed in the increase of incidence of epidemics resulting from diseases of water or food origin, which has occurred in all regions of Lebanon, but especially in the under-served regions at the periphery and the suburbs. The annual incidence of diarrhea episodes for every child under five was reported to be four episodes per year, which is 30 percent higher than the average of 3 episodes found in developed countries (MPH and UNICEF, 1990).

The chemical contamination of water is wide and varied. However, it is worth noting one such type, namely Nitrate contamination, which is found

in the surface or ground wells water used for drinking or domestic purposes. This contamination is caused by the use of fertilizers and animal manure. The Nitrate by itself is not harmful. However, the bacteria present in the digestive system transforms the Nitrate into a toxic substance, the nitrite. This disease appears whenever the proportion of Nitrite is 90 mg/liter and the proportion allowed by WHO is 45 mg/liter (WHO, 1977). On the other hand, the Nitrate interacts with the amino acids compounds to form Nitrosamine, which were proven to be a carcinogen among animals.

Scientific studies have confirmed the relationship between air pollution and the incidence of respiratory infections and pulmonary diseases among children e.g. allergy such as Rhinitis, asthma, and respiratory infection such as pneumonia (Goren and Hellman, 1988). It is worth mentioning here the results of a study that was conducted in 1992 about the incidence of acute respiratory infections among children under five, who suffered from six episodes per year (MPH and UNICEF, 1992). The study also found a positive correlation between crowding at home and the incidence of cough. This is

illustrated in the following table.

Number of persons/Room Proportion of Children with Cough

One person = 51.03

2 = 54.60

3 = 58.46

4 = 60.00

Studies indicate that Lebanon suffers from a habitat crisis and crowding at home. The national average of persons per room is 1.73, while more than half of the Lebanese live in homes with more than three persons per room (MPH and UNICEF, 1992).

Smoking affects also directly the pollution, since it exposes the child to CO₂, Cadmium, Cyamidric acid, Nicotine and many aromatic substances that can pass through the placenta.

Studies have proven that children born to smoking mothers have a lower birth weight than those born to mothers who did not smoke. The proportion of

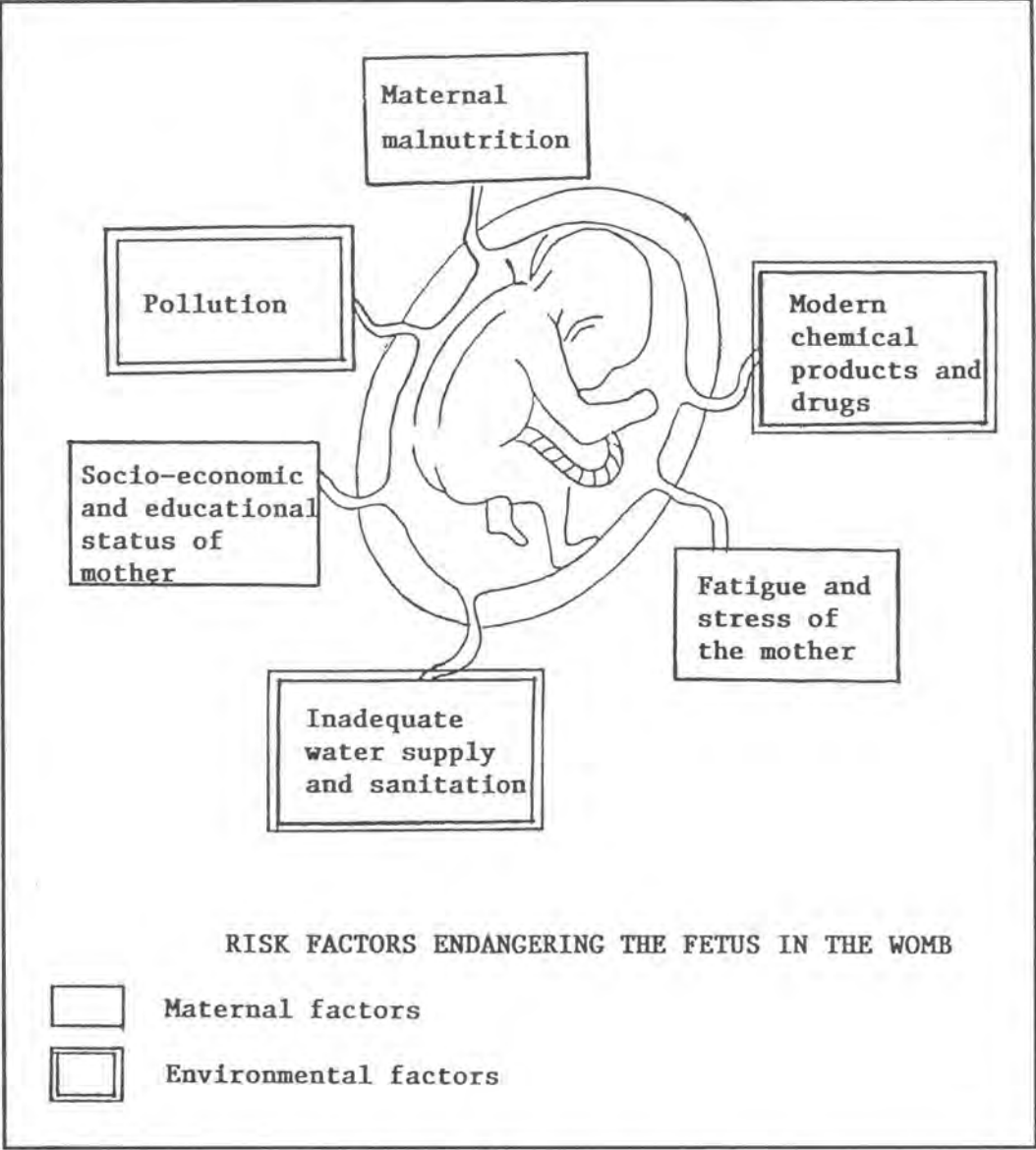
abortions and premature births, as well as prenatal mortality is higher among smoking mothers (Meberg, 1979). Moreover, the higher the number of cigarettes, the worse the effect on the

is two times higher among smoking mothers. In case the mother smokes and drinks alcohol, the results are far worse. On the other hand, studies indicate negative effects on the child's health, when the mother lives with smokers (passive smoking) without smoking herself (Hirayana, 1981; Leaderer et. al., 1984).

The child living with smoking parents is exposed to pneumonia (one of the main causes of infant and child mortality) two times more. Many studies conducted in the United States have proven that smoking is a contributing factor to sudden death which is the cause of one out of every

400 child deaths in Europe and the United States (Newland, 1981).

Studies done in Lebanon indicate a rise in the proportion of smoking mothers. In a study conducted in 1992, we found that the smoking average among



child's health. The prenatal mortality reaches 22 percent if the mother smokes up to 20 cigarettes per day, while it reaches 44 percent if she smokes more than one pack daily (Norwood, 1980). The proportion of low birth weight (less than 2500 grams)

mothers was 35.5 percent among mothers who have children under five years of age. the proportion of houses in which both fathers and mothers smoke is 28 percent, without taking into consideration the air pollution caused by heating and cooking (MPH and UNICEF, 1992). All these factors lead to air pollution inside the house with CO₂, formaldehyde and carcinogenic agents such as Benzopyrene. this situation is not confined only to urban areas but extends to the poor rural regions of Akkar, Baalabeck, and Hermel.

Accidents, reflecting an aspect of the child's environment, affect directly children's well being and survival. The 1990 national study found that accidents accounted for 4.62 percent of child mortality below five years (MPH and UNICEF, 1990). Almost three percent of deaths below five years of age one year and that 90 percent of poisoning cases occur below five years of age, we conclude that poisoning becomes responsible for quite a high proportion of deaths (Haddad and Hudson, 1975).

While studying the impact of the environment over the child health, we should consider (even if briefly), the effects of the war over children in Lebanon. In this context, it is worth noting that until World War I, the ratio of civil and military deaths was one to ten. Today, and especially in civil wars, the ratio has become between three and ten civilians against one military. This was the situation of Lebanon during the last war, from which children suffered from most. The war killed them, maimed them and shut down their schools. It is estimated that around 40,000 children below the age of fifteen were killed during this war. All this left a detrimental effect on their growth, health and future. For

every dead child, we have many others who stay alive with deep war traumas and disturbances which prevent them from leading a normal and productive life, especially disabled children (estimated at 100,000).

What I have presented here is only a preliminary study of a vital topic that needs more research for in-depth understanding of the relation between children and environment in the specific situation of Lebanon.

If we consider children to be the future of our country, then guaranteeing their development and survival will depend a great deal on our ability to provide them with a proper and "healthy" environment, both at the micro-level, formed by the mother and the family, and at the macro-level, formed by the social milieu in which children live •

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The Effect of Sudanese Women's Activities on The Environment

**Dr. Amira Awad Muhammad Saleh
National Forestation Association - Sudan**

Sudan is one of the biggest countries of Africa with an area of 2.5 million Sq. Kilometers (965,250 Sq. Miles). It borders Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Zaire, Central Africa, Tchad, Libya and Egypt from the North, and the Red Sea from the East. According to the 1993 statistics, the population of Sudan is 26 million, of which 25 percent are urban dwellers and 75 percent live in rural areas, and its population growth is 2.9 percent.

Agriculture is the backbone of the Sudanese economy and comprises 85 percent of the labor force. Agriculture and farming constitute 40 percent of the Gross Domestic Product and 95 percent of export revenues. Exports include cotton, oil grains, and Arab glue.

Forest area covers 18 percent of Sudan but should amount to 25 percent in order to maintain environmental and ecological equilibrium. The importance of forestry in the national economy is evident for it secures 12 percent of the national product and saves 72.7 percent of the energy needed in the form of wood. Sudan is also considered the largest producer of Arab Glue and saves 85 percent of world resources.

Vegetation in Sudan - largely related to rain fall, which ranges from zero in the North to more than 2,500 mm. in the South - consists of different levels of density ranging from desert in the North to tropical rain forests in the South.

Sudan is known to be rich in its resources and their variety but has experienced severe droughts, desertification and famines badly affecting its national product.

Women and the Environment

Women play a major role in the Sudanese economy because they have productive roles. The volume of work they perform within their basic roles as housekeepers, mothers, and teachers of future generations is large compared with that of men, although the opposite is projected by traditional society. Furthermore, they hold crucial responsibilities outside the house and carry out more than 75 percent of agricultural work. They also care for the animals and herds. All these efforts reflect directly or indirectly on the national economy but are not accounted for in economic statistics.

The relationship between women and the environment varies depending on socio-economic, demographic and cultural differences. Therefore, the bond between women and the environment is closer in rural areas, where it developed as a natural consequence of women's interaction with natural resources for daily survival. Thus, rural women's work is largely based on managing natural parameters such as rationing food, water, wood, herds, and manufacturing handmade products from available resources.

An economic and social survey conducted for the National Forestry League and FAO for a development project related to using wood as a source of energy, was the first study focusing on women. It investigated their understanding of forests and fire wood for heating, and surveyed women in eight villages of the Eastern region. The results reveal that despite the high rate of illiteracy, women are highly aware of the value and importance of forestation. Hereby is a review of the results.

Northern Sudan

Agricultural land in Northern Sudan is diminishing dramatically for two main reasons: first, because of desertification caused by low levels of rainfall and repeated droughts, and second because of erosion on the banks of the Nile. Consequently, agricultural land in Northern Sudan is narrow, no more than a few meters wide, because it lies between the Nile and the desert.

These conditions increased men's migration for better work opportunities which meant leaving women in charge of land and family. Hence, women in the North carry out all agricultural work in the available spots, in addition to managing water, energy, fuel which means having to travel long distances to secure these needs for the family. Their tasks also include building a new house every time erosion or quick sands destroy the old one.



Dr. Amira Awad Muhammad Saleh

Eastern Sudan

Eastern Sudanese society is conservative compared to the other regions in the country. Therefore, women's movements are restricted, thus, limiting change in status and living conditions. They also suffer from a very high rate of illiteracy reaching 87 percent. Most of the inhabitants belong to the Hidnouda tribe whose women do not work outside the home, but are confined to household chores, and to raising their children. The environment is dry, arid and covered with desert winds which last most of the year. Women and children suffer from the spread of disease, malnutrition and severe unhygienic conditions.

Western Sudan

Agriculture and farming are the main economic activities of Western Sudan. Women are the primary providers of the family in these sectors and, thus, perform up to 80 percent of agricultural work. They work in family lots or as paid workers in addition to their domestic chores. The migration of men, because of drought and famine have also added to women's workload and responsibilities.

In many cases, the entire tribe or village migrated for supposedly better conditions in the suburbs of the city. However, their new homes exposed them to more severe environmental conditions, such as pollution from urban waste, burning of solid waste which attracted insects and disease, in addition to lack of family planning, healthcare for children, medical care. A study comparing women's lives in their native region with their new homes revealed that in the original habitat their labor included agriculture, farming, handicrafts in addition to family chores. However, in their new homes 60 percent worked as hired help in homes, 20 percent served tea, 10 percent performed miscellaneous jobs, 5 percent sold food products and the remaining 5 percent carried out unspecified tasks. One hundred percent of these women were illiterate.

The Sudanese women of the West bear most of the responsibilities for the family and perform most of the chores under difficult conditions and climate. These strenuous tasks are common cause for miscarriages or poor health causing the death of mothers during delivery.

Participation of Women in Projects for the Protection of the Environment

Most of the projects designed for forestation include women in their agenda and workshops. Many have a special women's committee. Projects in the North and the East of Sudan consisted of digging water-wells and making fenced agricultural lots. Groups composed of local women were trained in managing the lots. Some of their tasks included: 1) distribution of labor among the women; 2) supervising and administering the produce of income generating activities; 3) learning to use wood for heating economically, 4) working as teams which created a greater sense of responsibility among them.

Women's participation in protecting the environment is related to their direct relationship with natural parameters for survival. In most Sudanese districts, women's participation in environmental projects was successful.

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The Role of Women in Development Projects in The Syrian Arab Republic

Mounira Haidar

**Member of the Syrian National Council For Women
and President of Syrian Family Planning Association**

The primary issues that concern the Arab individual today are:

- 1) The right to life.
- 2) Environmental deterioration.
- 3) The shortage of resources and the pollution accumulated from repeated wars and the military activities.
- 4) The brain drain from the Arabs countries.
- 5) Population growth which threatens to eradicate progress already achieved. Population growth rate in Syria between 1985 and 1989 reached 3.5 percent or 35.5 per thousand, which implies that the population will double in 21 years. It is expected to reach 32.3 million by the year 2025. If the present fertility rate continues, population growth would average 42.9 per thousand between 2020 and 2025.



Dr. Munira Haidar

Socio-economic Conditions of the People

Education: Literacy levels were 78 percent for males and 51 percent for females in 1990. Secondary school enrollment between 1983 and 1991 was approximately 63 percent for males and 45 percent for females.

Fertility and Family Planning: Fertility rates, which were medically supervised between 1983 and 1991 were 61 percent, keeping in mind that use of birth control was 20 percent between 1985 and 1991. Research results from the Syrian Family Planning association

show that 85 percent of men do not object to using birth control once the family size reaches 4 persons. Available health and medical care facilities throughout the country reached 75 percent between 1985 and 1988; clean water supply reached 75 percent between 1985 and 1990. **Income Levels:** Per capita food production of the Syrian citizen was 83 percent between 1988 and 1990 and per capita income was equivalent to \$1,000 in 1990.

Population Growth and the Environment

The Syrian Arab Republic, aware of the dangers of population growth and the environment, established a Ministry of Environmental Issues responsible for preserving and integrating the environment in all development projects. Laws and regulations were devised to safeguard environmental parameters notably water, forestry and soil from different forms of pollution. The Syrian Government is also exerting

efforts to create an outfit in the Arab League, which would concentrate on matters related to the environment and sustainable development. In Syria, the government implements a number of projects to deal with desertification, and erosion by conducting national tree planting activities, hence planting millions of trees. Forested area in Syria reached 733,000 hectares in 1991, representing 4 percent of the total country's area.

Protection of Water Resources

The Government has established a Ministry for the Protection of Water Resources in Syria. Syria is considered poor in water, and its most important source is the Furat River. However, water supply has decreased because dams and water management plants in Turkey prevent adequate supply to Syria. Hence, Syria's projects to manage its water resources to avoid waste and misuse included building 133 dams and a storage capacity of 15.6 billion cubic meters of water, in 1992.

Hence, water supply was made available to 1.1 million hectares. Women form approximately 47 percent of the labor in the project, concentrating mainly on administrative rather than technical tasks.

Some of the Steps Taken by the Syrian Government Towards Environment and Sustainable Development:

- 1) The creation of a population council in July, 1986.
- 2) The creation of an Association for Population Affairs and Development, a relevant documentation center in the People's Council, the Parliament and the Prime Ministry.
- 3) The creation of Population Study Centers at the Universities in Damascus and Aleppo and the introduction of population studies in formal and non-formal educational curricula.
- 4) Activate the role of the Syrian Family Planning Association.
- 5) The creation of a Ministry of Environmental Affairs.

- 6) Efforts to create special outfits in the Arab League for Environment and Sustainable Development.
- 7) The government's delegation of popular and non-governmental groups to disseminate environmental education throughout the country.
- 8) The establishment of facilities for water purification and measurement of pollution levels.
- 9) The creation of sanitation and waste disposal facilities.
- 10) Enhancing women's role in development through education and training.
- 13) The establishment of pollution control department in the Ministry for Water Management.
- 14) The creation of a Higher Committee for forestation.

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The Role of the Media in Integrating Rural Women in Development

Mohamad Abdel Haq
Ministry of Information - Syria

Development is an inter-disciplinary process that utilizes the skills and resources of economists, health specialists, urban and rural planners, and social workers, to name just a few. The integration of women in the process cannot occur arbitrarily. It requires the intervention of the media and communication, which will motivate them and create incentives for effective and efficient participation.

Developmental media can play a direct role by changing their self-image from a negative one to a positive one.

The following are recommendations about how the media can contribute to integrating rural women in development.

- 1) Persistence in research and collection of ground data thus, identifying needed information and devising valid and reliable education and communication designs.
- 2) Train teachers in communications fields in order to improve their skills in the planning and the integration of women in development.
- 3) Improve communication with rural women.
- 4) Prepare a program for testing,

evaluating and following-up related campaigns for rural women.

- 5) Include a large number of journalists, women, youth, workers in the projects devised by The Family Planning Association and other development agencies.
- 6) Call on the local media to pay more attention to rural women's issues in order to promote awareness.
- 7) Concentrate on educational media.
- 8) Prepare special programs for training young rural women inskills and environment friendly habits.

Protection of the Environment Through the Management and Exploitation of Solid Waste: The Tunisian Experience

Samira Bin Ammar - Tunis

The Tunisian Institute for Scientific and Technical Research

Abbreviated and translated by Nadia El-Cheikh

Urbanization and industrial development are responsible for numerous manifestations of pollution. Tunisia has witnessed in the last two decades, as in other developing countries, rapid urbanization due to demographic development and to the creation of several large industrial projects. This contributed to the pollution of surface water and air, in addition to increase in waste.

The Ways to Eliminate Solid Waste

There are three main ways of disposing of solid waste: the technique of controlled waste dumps, incineration, and the transformation of waste into organic fertilizers.

The Technique of Controlled Waste Dumps: This technique has several disadvantages, in spite of its qualities manifested both in the ease and the low cost of its set up. The disadvantages include significant pollution and danger to the surrounding atmosphere, and the difficulty of locating adequate and large enough spaces.

Incineration: This is a healthy way. However, it also leads to air, water and soil pollution, via the gas escaping from the burning operation and the pollutants intruding into the soil, thus, leading to ground water contamination. In addition, it is an expensive technique, especially in situations where the heating energy is not put to use.

Transformation into Organic Fertilizers: The use of such fertilizers helps in decreasing the costs spent on chemical fertilizers. Its use also contributes to the replenishment of natural elements.

Urban Domestic Waste Management in View of the Tunisian Experience

A well-organized sorting of domestic waste leads to an economization of primary material and decreases the cost of the collection and treatment of domestic waste. It can amount to the recycling of 30-35% of urban waste.

Characteristics of Domestic Waste in Tunisia

Kinds	%	Components
material of animal or plant origin	77.6	organic material quick to ferment
paper and carton	8.2	organic material with low or no fermentation
plastic	3.6	
cloth material	1.1	
glass	1.1	solid material
metals	3.8	
other	1.9	



Dr. Samira Bin Ammar

Characteristics of Domestic Waste in Tunisia: Each Tunisian produces around 500 grams of domestic waste daily. This represents 1.2 million tons yearly, 50% of which is collected in uncontrolled waste dumps, in proximity to the cities.

Biological Transformation of Domestic Waste: Domestic waste in Tunisia is characterized by its high organic content: more than 80%. Since Tunisia suffers from a serious lack of organic fertilizers, an efficient exploitation of domestic waste can be used to replenish the eroding soil. Thus, the technique of biological transformation is the most efficient in treating waste and in fertilizing the soil. However, to adopt this technique in Tunisia successfully, it is necessary to investigate the issue from all angles in order to avoid the pitfalls suffered by other Third World countries:

incompatibility of the transformation operation with the nature of the waste; inefficient marketing operation and high expense of organic fertilizers...

Collection and Recycling of Domestic Waste: The volume of waste resulting from food containers in Tunisia comes to around 200,000 tons per year. Tunisia is currently capable of recycling 50,000 tons yearly. This operation is still in its preliminary phase as far as exploiting primary material: it remains limited to used paper and oils. Among the factors that prevent serious interest in recycling projects and their development is the way of collecting and sorting domestic waste, on the one hand, and the expensive nature of recycling, on the other.

The city of Tunis has undertaken the sorting of carton from garbage centers,

starting January 1991. It was able to obtain a yearly volume of 150 tons that could increase up to 12,000 tons if special equipment is used. The Ministry of the Environment intends to issue a legislation concerning the amount of food containers available in the market, especially plastic containers. The Ministry also projects to develop sorting out techniques and to introduce pilot projects in one of the capital's quarters to be followed by an evaluation and its introduction across the Republic.

However, the success of this experiment depends on the active involvement of the consumers through the organization of media campaigns with the aim of sensitizing public opinion as to the importance of recycling. The media campaign would involve newspapers, television, radio and billboards.

The sensitization of women through media campaigns is of great importance considering their role in household work and their educational impact on the new generation. In this context, women can decrease the volume of domestic waste through: limiting their acquisitions to essentials; avoiding items that can be used only once such as plastic bottles; choosing containers that can be recycled●

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The Effect of Sea Pollution on Humans

Marie Abboud Abi Saab

Abridged and translated by Wafa' Stephan Tarnowski

Sea pollution affects humans on two levels: 1) either through contact, by swimming in polluted water, or 2) through consumption of contaminated sea food and fish. In other words, human health will be affected according to the degree of contamination or pollution of the sea and its inhabitants.

Swimming in polluted water

Research has shown that contact with polluted water will not result in immediate contamination. It depends on the number of times humans go into polluted water and on the type of bacteria found in that water. Some bacteria like the Typhoid and Salmonellae do not live a long time in sea water. They tend to be quickly

neutralized. However, viruses like Poliomyelitis and others are dangerous because they can survive more than a month in sea water and more than five months in the bodies of some animals living in the deep.

Fungi

Fungi responsible for many skin diseases are definitely a result of swimming in polluted water. They are also caused by sweating, high temperatures and sunrays, all of which are found in bathing places. Most skin diseases, according to research, are transmitted through the sand and stones with which infected people have been in contact, rather than through swimming.

Consumption of contaminated seafood

The real danger of sea pollution is the consumption of raw contaminated seafood such as oysters and others. Oysters tend to filter sea water and store bacteria which cause many diseases. Moreover, seafood that contains a high proportion of heavy metals and chemicals are a great danger to health.

Conclusion

Humans can protect themselves from pollution by being aware and well-informed of the relevant dangers. It is the role of governments to inform their citizens of these dangers and to enforce laws which protect the sea from further pollution. Governments should build sewer processing plants that filter sewers before they get to the sea as well as respect international conventions for the protection of the seas.

But most of all, governments must cooperate with each other on a regional level in order to protect the seas because national solutions for this particular problem are never as effective as international ones •



Dr. Marie Abboud Abi Saab

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BOOKSHELF

READINGS ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The following reports examine women's roles in natural resource management at the community level, emphasizing the need to integrate women into conservation and development efforts. They are available by contacting: Publications, ICRW, 1717 Massachusetts Ave. N.W. Suite 302, Washington, D.C. 20036, USA.

Gender in Community Development and Resource Management: An Overview. By Rekha Mehra. 1993. ICRW/World Wildlife Fund Collaborative Research Report. 30 pages.

This report provides an overview to the issues concerning women's participation in conservation projects as well as the socio-economic, institutional, policy, and program constraints on women and brief examples of successful initiatives.

Women's Participation in the Cogtong Bay Mangrove Management Project: A Case Study. By Rekha Mehra, Margaret Alcott, and Nilda S. Baling. 1993. ICRW/world wildlife Fund Collaborative Research Report. 56 pages.

This report takes an in-depth look at the role of gender in

community development and women's involvement in the World Wildlife Fund's Cogtong Bay Project in the Philippines.

Heleen van den Honbergh. 1993. **Gender, Environment and Development: A Guide to the Literature.** The Netherlands: published for the Institute for Development Research Amsterdam by International Books.

The guide is a valuable tool for everyone seeking to gain more knowledge about the links between gender relations, environment and development. Critically approaching the subject from various angles, the author identifies key issues for documentation, and gives recommendations for research and policy.

The Institute of Public Health, Alexandria University. 1992. **International Conference on Women and Environment.** Proceedings of a Regional Conference prepared by Dr. Samia G. Saad, Conference Chairperson and Professor of Environmental Health.

These proceedings include the full papers of conference participants from all over the world, including the Philippines, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Madagascar,

Bangladesh, Canada, Egypt, Nigeria, Poland, Indonesia, Kuwait, Turkey, Sweden, Australia, China, West Indies, Senegal, Central America, Brazil, Libya, Ukraine, Jordan, Russia, India, Sri-Lanka, USA, Algeria, Ivory Coast and Tunis and Oman. It is divided into sections including: Women as Conservationists for the Environment and Natural Resources; Women and Environment Pollution; Women and Tropical Diseases; Health Impact of the Work Place on Women and Their Children; Role of International, Governmental and NGO's in Promoting the Role of Women in Environment; Women and Forests: Fuel, Food and Fodder; Women Role in Water Sanitation and Human Settlements; and Role of Women in Environmental Management.

Proceeding of Arab Women and the Environment, The Regional Conference, and Women and the Environment, National Conference can be ordered from the Institute for women's Studies in The Arab World, Beirut University College, P. O. Box 13-5053, Beirut Lebanon. Please note that they are in Arabic.

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