



**WOMEN'S
CONSUMER EDUCATION
PROJECT
THROUGH
COOPERATIVES
IN
SRI LANKA**



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**WOMEN'S CONSUMER EDUCATION PROJECT
THROUGH COOPERATIVES IN SRI LANKA**

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Sri Lanka

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^Ε **FORWARD**

We are indeed fortunate that the International Cooperative Alliance in collaboration with the Swedish Cooperative Centre selected Sri Lanka as the venue for the pilot project on Cooperative women's Consumer Education. To us in Sri Lanka and perhaps for many Cooperative Movements in Asia a concerted effort in this sector with a special focus on women is something quite new. To me, as Project Director, this was novel and at the same time a challenge,

We have worked the project for over 3 years now and there have been many requests for information about our activities. This little booklet seeks to provide some information about the Project and also to record some of its experiences.

We are hopeful that the information provided will be of some use to those who are planning to work in this sector.

Jayantha C. Tennakoon
Project Director.

*Cooperative Women's Consumer Education Project,
No. 15 Kumara Vidiya,
Kandy
Sri Lanka*

THE WOMEN'S CONSUMER EDUCATION PROJECT.

PART I

Background

The United Nations declared the year 1975 as the, International Women's year. This helped to focus world attention on women—their position and problems in society, their hopes and aspirations and the various factors that impeded their playing an active role in the process of development. The various cooperative movements in several countries had also begun to give increasing attention to the role of women in cooperatives. The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) Regional Office in New Delhi, in collaboration with the Swedish Cooperative Centre (SCC) and the Cooperative Union of Malaysia held a Regional Seminar in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, during July 1975 on the theme “The Role of Women in Cooperative Development”. These events continued to create an atmosphere of increasing interest in promoting the enhanced involvement of women in cooperative activity. Many field surveys in regard to the position of women in cooperatives in several Asian countries were conducted by the ICA Regional Office with the assistance of the SCC and the Consumer Guilds in Sweden. Many movements began to set up women's Committee wings in cooperative organisations at village, district and national levels. There was growing enthusiasm among cooperators and more so among women, to find ways and means of motivating women towards greater participation in cooperative and allied activities.

The Consumer Guilds in Sweden, which have for long been pioneers in the cause of improving the status of women, through the participation of some of their members in the field surveys conducted by the ICA became increasingly aware of the situation in Asia and showed a keen interest in promoting a Project for consumer education for women. In 1976 the Consumer Guilds in Sweden decided on this course of action and commenced a fund raising campaign, which funds were to be supplemented by funds from the SCC and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). The SCC and the Consumer Guilds in Sweden in consultation with the ICA / ROEC New Delhi and the National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka (NCC) decided to launch a pilot Project for Consumer Education in Sri Lanka. The Cooperative Movements in Sri Lanka had by this time, set up a national level Women's Committee and several district and village level women's committees. The high level of literacy, the smallness of the country itself and the keenness displayed by the

11. The Project Director (Secretary)

The Project Direction Committee generally meets every three months or so, but more often, if such becomes necessary.

Support for Project Work

The Project works in close collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Development, the School of Cooperation, Pogolla, The NCC and its District Staff and also receives assistance from a large number of Government departments, institutions and also voluntary agencies working at the village level. These are listed below :

1. Department of Agriculture
 - i) Farm Women's Extension Programme
 - ii) Home Garden Division
 - iii) Soya Bean Project
 - iv) Animal Husbandry Division
 - v) Botanical Gardens
2. Teacher Training Project NCC/SCC/ICA
3. Ministry of Trades and Shipping (in consumer protection activities)
4. Cooperative Management Services Centre
5. Ministry of Health
6. Animal Products and Animal Health Department
7. Colombo Municipal Council Food Analysis Department
8. Sri Lanka Police Force (Crime Prevention etc)
9. Department of Small Industries
10. Department of Rural Development...
11. Ministry of Plan Implementation
12. Ministry of Education
13. St. John's Ambulance Brigade
14. Sri Lanka Women's Bureau
15. Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation
16. Sri Lanka Family Planning Association
17. Sri Lanka Industrial Development Board.

Discussions have already been held to collaborate with and get the assistance of the National Youth Services Council also in the future.

Present Project Staff:

1. Project Director
2. Trainee Director

3. Consumer Education Officers (two)
4. Member Relations Officers (two)
5. Sinhala Stenographer
6. English Steno-cum Accounts Officer
7. Translator
8. Clerk
9. Driver
10. Office Helper

Part IV

Development of the Project

Phase I

The project has been designed to work through existing Multi Purpose Cooperative societies (MPCS). In the first phase of the project, 5 MPCSs in the Kandy District., situated in close proximity to the school of Cooperation Polgolla were selected. The Project office was also located in Kandy. When selecting societies for the first phase, two fairly stable rural MPCSs, two not so stable and one urban MPCS were selected. Some womens activities had commenced in some of these Societies, while most had selected their Women's Committees.

The societies selected were :

Society	District
1. Mahanuwara MPCS	Kandy
2. Wattegama MPCS	Kandy
3. Kundasale MPCS	Kandy
4. Teldeniya MPCS	Kandy
5. Harispattuwa (N) MPCS	Kandy

(Please see accompanying map)

Phase II

In the second year of the project, it was decided to extend project activities to ten more MPCSs. In selecting the ten MPCSs the experience gathered in the first phase were made use of, at the same time keeping with the fact that as the Project was a pilot project, the project would have to gain a variety

of experiences working in different socio-economic environments and also paying heed to the cultural and language differences prevailing within the country. The assistance of the district level Assistant Commissioners of Cooperatives proved invaluable. Broadly the following criteria were used in deciding on the selections.

- i. Selection of Societies representing different economic and Social environments ;
- ii. Inclusion of Societies representing Tamil and Muslim inhabitants;
- iii. Society's willingness to work with the project, its willingness to allocate funds for such activity and that the Society had appointed its own Education Officer. Also the fact that it had taken steps to select women's committees in the Society.

The societies selected were :-

Society	District
6. Hiriya MPCS	Kurunegala
7. Bulathkohupitiya MPCS	Kegalle
8. Kirindiwela MPCS	Gampaha
9. Hanguanketa MPCS	Kandy
10. Palugasdamana MPCS	Polonnaruwa
11. Hingurakoda MPCS	Polonnaruwa
12. Kotapola MPCS	Matara
13. Tellippallai MPCS	Jaffna
14. Uva Paranagama MPCS	Badulla
15. Homagama MPCS	Colombo

The Societies selected included several Societies from the dry-zone colonisation areas and also areas with Tamil inhabitants. Out of the 26 Cooperative Districts in the country, the project had extended its activities to 9 districts at the commencement of Phase II.

Phase III

During the course of the second year of project Activities many MPCSs in the Island (there are 282 MPCSs) showed keen interest in working with the project. The NCC had over fifty applications from interested MPCSs by the end of the 2nd phase. While the clamour for extending project activities grew stronger, the Project staff itself was finding itself fully stretched as the staff

had not been increased to cope with the additional work. However, the NCC, in consultation with the Project Direction Committee decided to extend Project activities to 14 more MPCs during Phase III. For practical convenience 10 Societies from the 9 Districts already working with the Project and 4 Societies from 4 new Districts were selected. Thus the Project would be working with 29 MPCs in 13 Districts i. e., half the number of Districts in the country.

It was also decided to extend the project activities to and also a Cooperative Thrift and Credit Society to gain new experiences. as hitherto all activities had been confined to MPCs only. This would mean that the Project would be working with 30 Cooperative Societies during the 3rd Phase.

The staff of the Project was increased by the addition of one Consumer Education Officer, one member Relations Officer and one Translator.

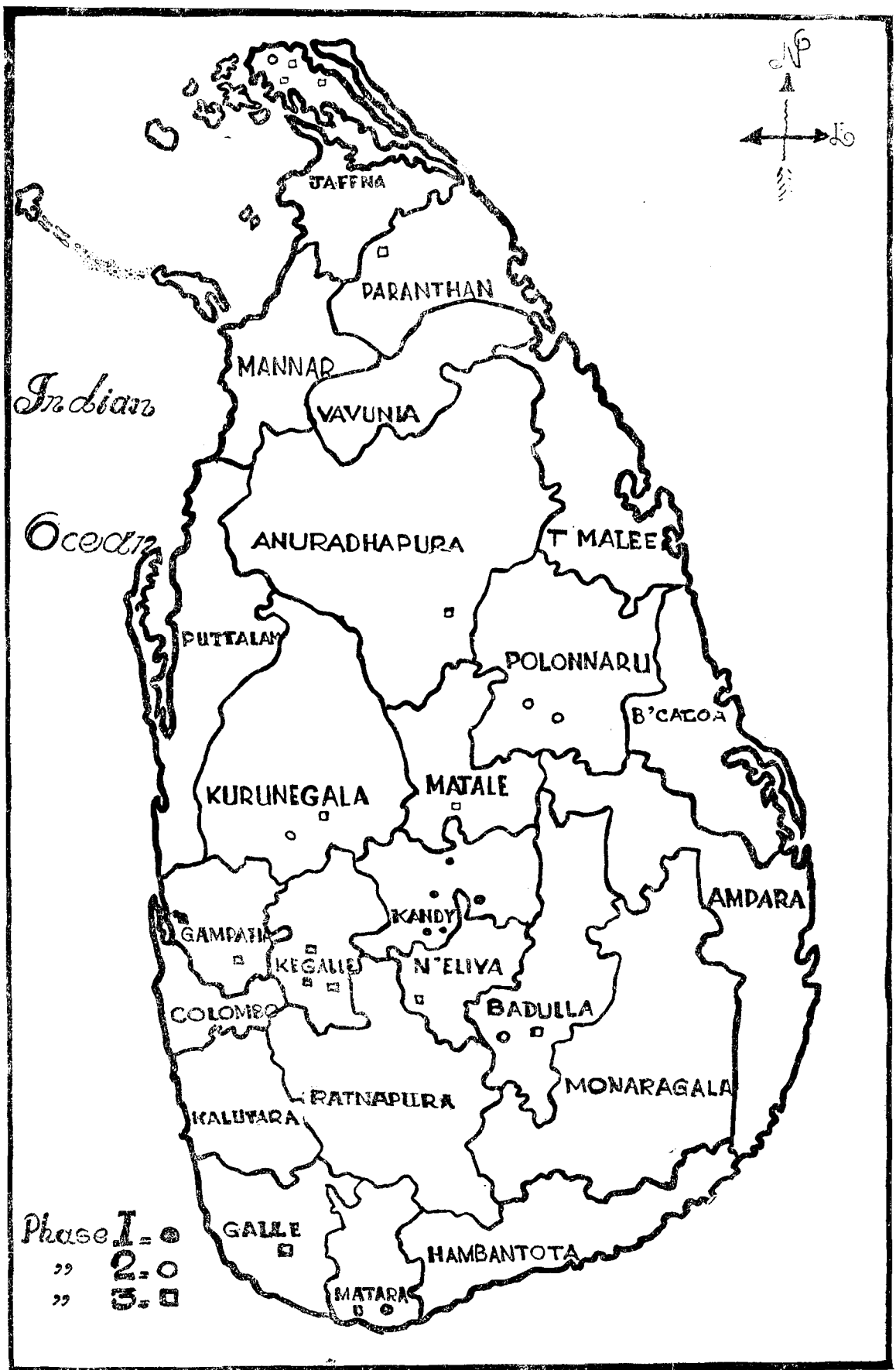
Societies involved with the project for

Phase III are :-

Society	District
16. Harispattuwa (S) MPCs	Kandy
17. Warakapola MPCs	Kagalle
18. Uda Palatha MPCs	Badulla
19. Alaveddi Mallakam MPCs	Jaffna
20. Valli (E) MPCs	Jaffna
21. Nallur MPCs	Jaffna
22. Matara MPCs	Matara
23. Galnewa MPCs	Anuradhapura
24. Baddegama Telikade Majuwana MPCs	Galle

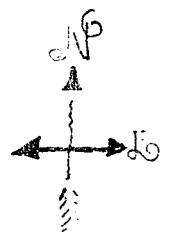
Society	District
25. New Rattota MPCs	Matale
26. Punakari MPCs	Paranthan
27. Kegalle District Thift & Credit Society	Kegalle
28. Ridigama MPCs	Kurunegala
29. Negombo MPCs	Gampaha

(See the Map)



Indian

Ocean



- Phase I. ●
- " 2. ○
- " 3. □

JAFFNA

PARANTHAN

MANNAR

VAVUNIA

ANURADHAPURA

T. MALEE

PUTTALAM

POLONNARU

B'CAEOA

KURUNEGALA

MATALE

AMPARA

GAMPATI

KANDY

KEGALE

N'ELIVA

COLOMBO

BADULLA

KALUTARA

RATNAPURA

MONARAGALA

GALLE

HAMBANTOTA

MATARA

THE MPCs in relation to Project Activities.

The Project carries out its activities through the MPCs which generally is a Society covering about 20 villages and a population of about 20 - 30,000. The membership is generally around 8000-9000. The MPCs has a central office and several branch retail points. It has also branch committees and an elected Board of Directors. The General Manager is the Executive responsible for the Management of the society and works under the guidance and control of the President and Board of Directors. An average MPCs would have a staff varying from 100 to about 300 depending on size.

(More details about the MPCs are given at Appendix I)

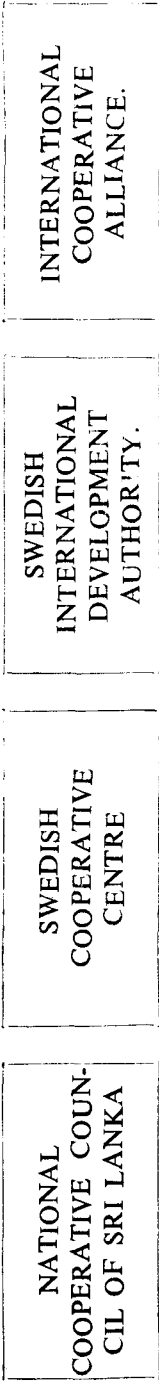
In the MPCs working with the project, the women members have selected their branch level women's committees, and these branch level women's committees have selected their central level women's committee. The branch level women's committee works in collaboration with the Branch Committee of the Society and also the Branch Manager and the staff. The central Women's Committee coordinates women's activities in collaboration with the Board of Directors, the General Manager and his staff, and more particularly. The Society's Education Officer. In very many Societies the Education officer is a woman.

Unlike the branch committees and the Board of Directors of the society which are elected under the by-law of the MPCs, the women's committees both at branch and central level have no by-law recognition, and function as advisory bodies to the elected committees. Proposals however have been made to give the women's committee and other group interests recognition under the by-law.

(The accompanying diagram shows this structure and the internal relationship of the MPCs and the women's committees).

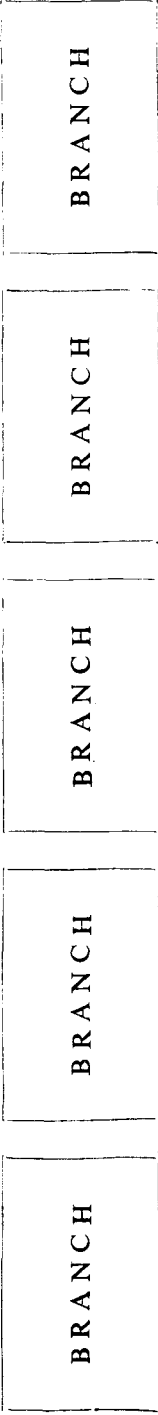
The main target group in respect of the selected societies were the central women's committee members, who along with members of the Board of Directors of the society, the Executives and the society's Education Officer were exposed to numerous workshops with the intention that they in turn would be able to carry out workshops at the branch level and motivate the branch women committee members, the branch committees and the branch manager and his staff towards increasing consumer knowledge and information and the greater involvement of the women in society and other activities.

**PROJECT FOR COOPERATIVE WOMEN'S CONSUMER EDUCATION AND INFORMATION
KANDY - SRI LANKA**



**OFFICE OF THE
PROJECT FOR COOPERATIVE WOMEN'S
CONSUMER EDUCATION AND INFORMATION**

**MULTI - PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES - MPCSS.
WOMEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEES: EDUCATION OFFICERS
AND NCC STAFF.**



GENERAL MEMBERSHIP

Part V

Approach Strategy of the Project

At the time of the commencement of the project, some MPCSSs had already elected their women's committees and had begun women oriented programmes within the society. However, the project gave a new emphasis and a new focus. Before programming project activities in the first phase the project decided that it should find out what really the position was in regard to women vis-a-vis the selected five MPCSSs and also what the women expected out of any meaningful programme. The project adopted several strategies :-

1. Conducting introductory discussion meetings which were attended by the members of the central women's committees of the 5 MPCSSs;
2. Conducting village level discussion sessions organised by the central women's committee and attended by both men and women members of the society and also non members.

Through these two means the project staff tried to ascertain the expectations of the women. These meetings were used also to explain some details about the project, its objectives and to emphasize the need for the women to determine what was most urgent to motivate women further.

3. Conducting a bench mark field survey which was done on a sample basis in respect of 300 families coming within the area of 15 branches on the basis of 3 selected branches for each of the five MPCSSs. The survey was conducted by the women leaders themselves, the leaders of one society conducting the survey in a branch of another society. In all 282 housewives were interviewed by the women leaders.

The survey tried to ascertain among other things awareness of the family, in particular the housewife in regard to :

- i. Consumer Information.
- ii. Basic foods and Nutrition.
- iii. Market prices of goods in every-day demand.
- iv. Environmental health and preventive measures.
- v. The cooperative society and the way in which it serves them.
- vi. The need for pure drinking water.
- vii. Means of supplementing family income.
- viii. Consumer protection.

(Details of the survey are available in a separate report. We had the assistance of Dr. J.M. Gunadasa to formulate the questionnaire, to train the women leaders for field level interviewing and to analyse the results of the survey and produce the report).

The survey was most useful as it clearly revealed that there was a wide information gap at the housewife level, that there was a keenness to know how to improve their living standards, that the women would be interested in participating in programmes which would help them in improving their living conditions, that the women could be properly motivated and leadership developed if the Project could use the strategy of satisfying their felt needs for information and active participation.

Target Groups:

Based on the above exercises, the Project identified the following target groups as those which would need concentrated attention:-

- i. The management of the societies the Board of Directors the President, General Manager and staff at central and branch levels; also members of the branch committees;
- ii. Women's Central Committees, Women's Branch Committees,
- iii. The general membership of the society with a special emphasis on the women; (exclusive of non member women)
- iv. Other institutions, agencies, persons working in similar fields and who would be associated with Project activities.

The target groups covered a wide spectrum of people of different levels of the social structure, different levels of literacy and different age groups. The strategies to be adopted by the Project had therefore to be multi-pronged and flexible to ensure involvement and support at all levels. Though the Project per-se emphasized the aspect of consumer education and information for women, in our approaches we viewed the task as a member relations programme with a focus on women and was in essence a cooperative effort in adult education.

Methodology of Intervention

The most urgent need was the development of enlightened leadership from within the socio-economic environment itself, who in turn could motivate their sisters towards increasing participation and involvement in society and social activities. But we in the Project were also aware of certain limitations in regard to the roles that can be played by local leaders alone because of

various politico-social and other factors. Hence, in the first phase of the Project, the Project staff got involved both in leadership training exercises and also village level workshops, the latter mostly to lend support to and strengthen the local level leaders.

The methods used at the various levels would vary depending on the target group and the environment. Basically however, the lecture method as such was sparingly used. The more common approach was a participatory one with the participants working in small groups and eventually meeting in plenary for evaluation and programming. We also used the residential workshop method as this helped interaction between the leaders from the various societies and helped also to refine their own methodologies of approach. The following methods have been used at these workshops :-

1. Group and plenary discussions after short introduction of a particular agreed subject;
2. Inter-group quiz contests;
3. Holding simulated meetings of directors, Branch Committees, General Body etc.
4. Use of drama to highlight a particular theme, a situation.
5. Preparation of posters, pamphlets and other visual aids by the participants themselves;
6. Making models of improved kitchens;
7. General discussions on agreed topics;
8. Field trips, observations and exchange of experiences;
9. Practical demonstrations-preparation of food, food testing, first-aid etc
10. Market surveys in respect of consumer goods and their prices;
11. Slide/film shows;
12. Regular evaluation by participants on each workshop or activity with the participants not revealing their identity in the written document.

Field Meetings

These workshops which would be attended by the Central Women's Committee members, society education officers, NCC District secretaries etc, were generally conducted at the Project office level, at the school of Cooperation, Polgolla, which has both residential and lecture hall facilities. The leaders trained in these workshops would, in collaboration with the Education Officer of the society conduct field level workshops to share her experiences and increase the awareness of the housewives at the village level. At the end of each monthly workshop conducted at Polgolla, the women leaders and education officers would prepare a programme of work for the coming month. This programme would be implemented at the field level by the leaders and education officers

and would be reported back at the next monthly meeting thus sharing the experiences and helping to even out the problems of intervention. The women leaders and the education officers would keep detailed books which eventually become valued exhibits at the central level monthly workshops. The field programmes were also supplemented by home visits by leaders and the Project had devised a recording system in respect of these home visits.

Mention must be made of the fact that some leaders were unable to maintain the enthusiasm of the housewives they worked with at the field level, for long periods. One of the principal reasons for the falling off of interest was that the housewives expected these meetings to provide them a way of increasing their income fairly quickly. Many adults are not interested in long term benefit proposals leading to better living and better health. They want urgent means to increase income. Hence the Project focus also on income generating activities, in consultation with the MPCs concerned.

Leadership Problems

The practical problems faced by many leaders working at the field level were many-some were because of their own limitations and some were because of the difficult Politico-Socio-Economic environment in which they worked. Listed below are some of the problems in regard to leadership and working at the field level :-

1. The leaders working with the Project were those elected by the women members. At the time of their election, they were not aware of the role they would be called upon to play. Their limitations, their rigidities, etc. all began to emerge only when they tried to play the extended role of leadership.
2. Some leaders were good leaders but they did not have the capacity to share the knowledge and experiences gained at the workshops.
3. Some leaders were quite possessive about their experiences and their increased knowledge. Perhaps the increased knowledge and awareness gave them a sense of superiority over their sisters in the village.
4. Because of the socio-political differences at the village level, even though some of the village leaders were themselves not directly involved, yet the background from which they came placed them in a disadvantageous position.
5. Some showed interest in the Project activities at the initial stages because they thought that there would be personal economic benefits accruing to them.

6. Some were status conscious-they thought that being elected to the central women's committee would enhance their image-they perhaps did not imagine a role which involved work and selfsacrifice.
7. Even among those who were interested and committed, there were some who could not spare the time for workshops and field level work.
8. Obstructionist activities by those who failed to get elected to the central women's committee were also not uncommon, thus preventing leaders from having effective workshops.
9. The general attitude of the villager to place less value on what their own people could tell them-the important place given to the "outsider" as motivator or leaders.
10. Disputes and disagreements between society officials and leaders or society officials themselves, which prevented the organisation of meaningful activities at the village level.
11. Disputes between various organisations working at the village level in activities similar to those of the Project.
12. Costs involved in field level activities and the unwillingness of some MPCs to meet these costs.

All these and many more prompted the Project to two further action programmes :

1. The inclusion of leadership training and group dynamics as a regular feature in the monthly workshops at Polgolla, and
2. The conducting of workshops at society level also with project staff involvement.

In regard to leadership training and group dynamics these became regular activities of the workshop and the assistance of guest lecturers, the Teacher Training Project etc, were obtained to highlight this very important ingredient for successful intervention.

Workshops at Society level

The workshops at society level with Project staff involvement were found necessary (1) to support the leaders in their environment, (2) to establish better relationships and dialogue between Project activities and society staff and (3) to make the society itself realise that this type of activity is an intrinsic activity of the society itself which will lead towards better member relations and increasing the internal strength of the society.

Because of the limitations of the staff of the Project and the extension of the Project to 15 in the second phase, the frequency of such involvement was limited to about once every 2 months.

Taking the workshop to the society level has its advantages in that:

1. The Management and leadership of the MPCS are directly involved.
2. The problems faced by the members in relation to the society are brought to light.
3. There is a common learning experience wherein the management and the members learn about the needs, the potential and the priorities
4. The possibility exists for action programmes to be drawn up, taking into consideration the capacity of the society etc.

It will be useful to record also some of the adverse reactions in this respect, as these tend to affect the usefulness of the programmes and hence practical and meaningful remedial action has to be taken in time:

1. Indifference, lethargy and even obstruction of some staff at society level.
2. Fear among some dubious leaders that increasing awareness by the membership would expose their activities and jeopardise their leadership positions.
3. Fear that women might displace men in some of the leadership positions.
4. Transfer of enthusiastic education officers e.g. from their successful roles to places of unimportance;
5. The concept often mentioned that this type of work is 'outside' activity for the society - that the society is concerned more with buying or selling
6. Prevention of women's committee at branch level in playing a meaningful role in respect of the retail shop - cleanliness, price tags, display etc.

The society level workshop therefore began to gain in importance as a proper forum to get the correct dimensions of the project and also to a forum for the exchange of ideas and experience which would eventually lead to the Society performing its role more effectively.

Extension of Project - the need for change in Methodology

It will be seen from the above that the project has constantly been alive to the needs of the target groups and has evolved suitable methodologies of intervention to achieve the objectives of the project in the most effective way. Phase I was limited to 5 MPCSs which were within a radius of around 25 km, from the project office. The area was therefore compact and easily accessible

and the Project staff was able to have direct face to face contact with society officials, leaders etc. Very often. The extent of project staff involvement in activities at all levels was quite considerable.

In phase II, 10 more MPCs were added to the Project - the societies spread from Tellippallai which is over 300 km the North of Kandy to Kotapola over a similar distance to the South. There were also societies in Polnaruwa in the North East and Uva Paranagama beyond the hills to the South East. The project staff remaining static in 1980, we had to curtail project staff involvement at society level quite considerably while at the same time (1) increasing the capacity of the leaders, (2) getting the society level staff and other leaders and local level other agencies involved and (3) getting the district staff of the NCC and the staff of the Education Centres also trained in these workshops to enable them to play an important role.

With the 3rd Phase we have now extended our activities to 15 more societies. While continuing with the strategies as are relevant in the present context our methodology would be changed in several principal areas :

1. We would with the assistance of the NCC and its District Staff and the Education Centre staff help in local coordination of programmes.
2. We would re-emphasize the fact that this type of activity is an integral part a meaningful society level member relations programme and thus help the society to take on this responsibility.
3. We would reduce the project level monthly workshops and work towards periodical district level workshops for leaders, which would be conducted with local leadership - and where Project staff would get involved only occasionally.
4. We would emphasize the need for more society level programmes with the participation of local expertise both from the Department, NCC and allied agencies.
5. We would help societies in identifying suitable income generating activities and provide supporting services for their implementation and help in building up a "seed money" fund for this purpose.
6. We would arrange for periodical inter district leadership meetings to serve as a forum for discussion, exchange of ideas and experience and the refinement of methodologies to suit the changing situations.
7. We would concentrate in the production of educational materials, training leaders and other functionaries in the use of such material and thus help to disperse the implementation to local leadership and initiative.

8. We would continue to keep the focus on women in this expanded effort of member involvement and would work towards enhancing the more active and meaningful participation of women in cooperatives.

Part vi

Subject Areas covered in Workshops

1. Nutrition and Family Health - basic nutrition
(with the assistance of the Food Pyramid), balanced diet
 - Child nutrition and child care
 - Nutrition and the pre school child
 - Meals with soya bean
 - Causes of malnutrition, how one can avoid this,
 - Value of breast feeding
 - Nutrient values of various food items
2. Health and Home Management
 - Essential features of a village level health programme - community action
 - Improvement of kitchens
 - First - aid
 - Family and home
 - What one should consider when buying food items
 - How to preserve food
 - Savings
3. Cooperation
 - Cooperative principles
 - Cooperative society by - laws - member rights and duties, branch committees, the general body meeting, functions of the board of directors.
 - Consumer goods and credit sales - role of the Rural Banks in this context.
 - Cleanliness at branch retail shops - display of goods - price tags.
4. Consumer Protection
 - Introduction to the consumer protection law - rights of the consumer under the law.
 - The importance of consumer associations
 - Preliminary exercises in introducing consumer information

5. Home Gardens

the importance of home gardens
— distribution of plants and seeds.

6. General

- How to organise a village meeting
- Income generating activities (poultry, beekeeping, sewing, etc;)
- Training rural women for leadership
- Crime prevention
- Child protection

Part VII

Project Staff Development Programmes

The staff of the project has been exposed at various times to some of the following programmes with a view to enhancing their effectiveness:

1. Learning, teaching and education (training programmes conducted by the Teacher Training Project, TTP/NCC/ICA).
2. Training in the use of Audio Visual Aids and on the role of AVA in training & preparation of AVA (TTPO)
3. Preparation of work programmes (Cooperative Management Services Centre CMSC)
4. Methodical Preparation of Reports and their presentation (also training in typing (TTP))
5. Preparation of food from Soya Bean (Soya Bean Project)
6. Training in Home Gardening (Agriculture Dept)
7. Training on Office Machines (Duplicator etc.)
8. On the job training gained through participation in workshops of the project.
9. Participation at conferences and seminars. The project staff has participated in one or more of the following:—
 - i. Experts' Consultation on member Education (1979 April, Sri Lanka).
 - ii. Regional Seminar on Better Living Through Cooperatives, (1979 August, Japan).
 - iii. National Seminar on Better Living through Cooperatives (July 14—19, 1980, Sri Lanka).
This seminar was held for the Society Presidents, General Managers, women Leaders and Education Officers working with the project. (September 1980, Sri Lanka).

- iv. National Seminar on "Better Living Activities through Cooperatives" (1981 January, Thailand)....
- v. Kandy District Women's Seminar on the occasion of International Women's Day (March 1981).
- vi. UNICEF Workshop for establishment of a Project for Children's Welfare (March 1981).

Women Leader's Development

The women leaders of the societies in the first phase have undertaken the following field trips to increase their awareness:—

1. Model village at Ampitiya, maintained by the Health Department.
2. Medical Exhibition of Peradeniya University of Sri Lanka.
3. Model Kitchens of the Soya Bean Project.
4. Farm Women's Extention Programme.
5. Poultry Farm at Kundasale Government Farm.
6. Model Home Garden of the Department of Agriculture at Gannoruwa.
7. Children's ward of the General Hospital Kandy (in connection with Malnutrition and child nutrition)
8. NCC, the Sri Lanka Marketing Federation, Orchid Growers' Cooperative Society, Cosumer protection societies at Kotte and Kollupitiya, Food and Drugs Labouratory of the Colombo Municipal Council, Police Central Communications Centre.
9. Observation tour of improved kitchens in phase I Project area, by women leaders from Phase II.

Sewing Classes

A new activity of increasing interest to many is the regular sewing class conducted at the level of the society by the five MPCs in phase I. These classes were conducted once a work over a period of ten months. The classes were conducted with the assistance of sewing instructresses made available through the Department of Rural Development.

The trainees were expected to train others at the field level during the period of their own training. A test was conducted at the end of the training course and certificates presented by the Project to those who were successful. In addition, the societies which had the largest number of successes were also gifted sewing machines made available through two Japanese donors. Similar sewing classes have now been conducted in the ten societies of phase II during 1981 and a centralised test conducted in December 1981 for both Phase I and II Societies. The enthusiasm displayed is most encouraging and action is now being taken to extend these activities to Phase III Societies also.

Special Activities

The Project Staff and Women Leaders and Members of Women's Committees have been involved in the following:

1. Sale of flags for the ICA sponsored 'Buy a bucket of water campaign in connection with the International Year of the Child'.
2. Construction of new wells/improvement of drinking wells with the funds collected and with funds provided by the Consumer Guilds in Sweden and by the ICA. To date Seventeen wells have been completed and 4 more are in the process of construction or completion.
3. Women Leaders in Phase I societies collaborated to run a "Restaurant" during the period of the annual National pagent of Sri Lanka — the Esala Perahara in Auugst 1979. Since then, several Women's Committees have run canteens at various functions.
4. Women members took part in clearing and arranging branch retail shops in many villages.
5. Women's committees actively participated in society functions, sharamadana (self-Help) campaigns and other social activities in their areas.
6. The Project Staff in collaboration with the women leaders and the respective societies, organised programmes for three groups of visitors from the Consumer Guilds in Sweden to enable them to gain first hand knowledge of Sri Lanka rural Life, local food preperations, social activities etc.
7. Encouraging the savings habit among women in close collaboration with the Rural Banks of MPCSSs. There have been spetacular acheivements in this field.
8. Distribution of Month Old chicks to members to help improve income.
9. Special efforts to improve Women's membership in societies.
10. Home visits to members by Education Officers and leaders. The advice given during these visits are generally well recieved and implemented. By means of these home visits it has been possible to forge a closer relationship between the society and the member. It would appear that at times the home visits have been more effective than field meetings. Action is afoot to refine our methods, improve record keeping and reporting in respect of these home visits.

Part VIII

Dissemination of Information

The Project has used various methods and media to disseminate information about the Project to the concerned target groups and to those outside. Some of these are detailed below:

1. Publication of the Women's Education Bulletin since 1979 September.
2. Radio Programmes - discussions, talks, etc.
3. Feature articles in national news papers, contributions to women's magazines in women's pages.
4. Participation in cooperative and other exhibitions.
5. Popularising the concept of the Food Pyramids through the 1980 calender.
6. Preparing a game based on the Food Pyramid and distributing same for use at field level.
7. Improving society notice boards at the centre and at the branches to disseminate information.
8. Preperation of and distribution of books, leaflets etc. for use at field meetings.

Leaflets on the following subjects have been distributed:

- Cooperative Consumer Services
- By-laws of MPCSSs
- Introducing Nutrition and Balanced Meal
- Child Nutrition
- Better Child Care (booklet prepared by the Family Planning Association)
- Nutrition for pre-school children
- Improving kitchens
- Activities of Rural Banks
- Rights and duties of consumers
- Food preservation
- Member Responsibilities
- Consumer Protection Act 1979
- Soya Bean Menu
- Chart for measuring malnutrition (by age and height)
- Note on nutritive value of foods
- Pamphlet on project activities
- Booklet on Cooperative Principles
- Leaflet on Breast Feeding

More leaflets on nutrition and consumer protection are under preparation

The Consumer Guilds in Sweden have produced a short documentary film on project activities.

- Sets of slides on several subject areas are under preparation
- A variety of posters and leaflets have been prepared by the project: At field workshops, these are adapted by the participants to suit local requirements.

Preparation of Manuals and Guides

To meet the needs of the expanded situation arising in Phase III the project is in the process of preparing, field testing and finalising manuals, hand books and guides on a variety of subject areas covered by the project, to be used by the local leaders in their field workshops and programmes. Eighteen such manuals/guides are in the process of being published, after necessary field testing.

The already published manuals and guides are as follows:—

Guides:

1. Basic Nutrition.
2. Child Nutrition.
3. Food Preservation.
4. Soya food preparation.
5. Kitchen improvements.
6. Cooperative Principles.
7. Consumer Protection.

Manuals:

1. Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society and you.
2. Balanced meal.
3. Nutrition for pregnant and Nursing mothers.
4. Breast feeding.
5. Supplementary food for infants.
6. Kitchen improvement.
7. Food Preparation and Preservation.
8. Family Planning.
9. Personal and Environmental health.

The Pilot Project Role

Regional Seminar: As mentioned earlier, this project was conceived of and implemented as a pilot Project for the South and South-East Asian Region.

Once the Project had gained some maturity and valuable experience, the project was made the principal focus of a Regional Seminar organised by the ICA Regional Office, New Delhi, in September 1980, on the theme "Enhancing Women's Participation in Cooperative Activities". This seminar was attended by about 25 persons from 10 countries in the Region.

Fellowship Programme: During August 1981 a fellowship programme was supported by the ICA ROEC New Delhi, through which two Thai and one Indian Women Leaders were provided an opportunity to work with the Project and to study its methodologies and experiences.

Visitors: A visit to the project by many cooperators who are on various programme in Sri Lanka has become a 'Must' and this has helped the wider dissemination of information in relation to the project, to a large number.

Evaluation: The Project has been evaluated both by a team of persons appointed by the NCC on the advice of the Project Direction Committee and by a team appointed by the SCC/ICA. The latter team had a representative of the SCC in the team.

The findings of the evaluation have been most positive and encouraging and the impact made by the Project in the limited time of its operation has been judged to be considerable.

Committed and selfless leadership, continuing and sustained efforts and a separate focus and identity coupled with the responsibilities for field level activity being taken up willingly at the society level, will lead to a lasting contribution in motivating women to enhanced participation in the mainstream of cooperative endeavour. Towards this end we will endeavour.

Part IX

Needs for the Future

That the project has had commendable impact is not denied. Many societies involved in the programmes have been pleasantly surprised by the growing awareness of the member, both male and female, and the changes in the attitudes of the member towards his society. The realisation that the society belongs to the member and that the society will perform only to the extent members contribute to such performance is something that augurs well.

The need therefore is to maintain the focus and continue project activity

unabated at all levels, This would necessarily depend on the availability of properly motivated leaders and also the availability of proper material for such leaders at the field level.

In this context a need for more training complexes for ongoing training activities becomes most urgent. We have noticed that residential training for leaders have had tremendous impact. The availability of such training complexes at National and District level will help not only this programme but the totality of cooperative effort in the country.

There is also the need for more and well equipped trainers and properly field tested training material. All of these have to be built up as we go on and we are confident that we will succeed.

THE MULTY PURPOSE COOPERATIVE SOCIETY (MPCS)

Project activities are carried out through a selected Multi-purpose Cooperative Society. A MPCS generally covers about 15—20 villages, has a membership of about 5000, and generally has one central office and go-downs and 20 or more branch retail outlets. One MPCS would generally cover an area with a population of about 20,000 persons. In Sri Lanka today there are 282 MPCSs, some of which may have over 80 retail branches.

The members of the MPCS are grouped in geographical units covering one or two village, Each of these geographical units has a branch committee and also a branch retail outlet. Where however the population is dense one geographical unit may have more than one retail outlet, but however, there would be only one branch committee. A branch committee consisting of nine persons is elected by the members of the MPCS residing in that geographical area. The branch committee acts as an advisory body and is the link between the member and society, the Representative Body and the Board of Directors.

The representative body consists of delegates from the branch committees and is limited to 100 persons. Each committee can send one delegate at least. The number of additional persons depends on the population.

The business activities of the MPCS are conducted by the General Manager who is assisted by various staff both at the central office and at the branches. He functions under the general guidance of the President and the Board of Directors. Generally an MPCS has over 200 employees. One of the significant employees is the Consumer Education Officer who functions as the liaison between the society and the Project and who coordinates Project activity at the society and branch levels.

THE NATIONAL COOPERATIVE COUNCIL OF SRI LANKA

The National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka is the apex cooperative organisation representing the Cooperative Movement of Sri Lanka and is the successor of the Cooperative Federation of Ceylon. The Cooperative Federation was started in 1955, while the National Cooperative Council was registered in 1972. The membership of the Cooperative Council is open to any registered Cooperative Society in Sri Lanka. The affiliates of the Council include all the national level cooperative organisations; cooperative credit societies, fisheries and dairy cooperatives; industrial cooperative societies and other types of cooperatives. The National Cooperative Council represents nearly 3 million individual Cooperators in the country.

The Main functions of the National Cooperative Council are, among others, to promote and develop the Cooperative Movement of Sri Lanka; to educate, guide and assist the people in their efforts to develop, expand and strengthen the movement; to serve as an exponent of the cooperative opinion and to express views on behalf of the movement. Activities of the National Cooperative Council include organisation of cooperative education and training programmes, development of inter-cooperative relationships; promotion of research activities connected with the movement; production and publication of cooperative literature; publication of books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers etc and to provide information on cooperative and allied matters to the general public and students.

The National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka is an active member of the International Cooperative Alliance. It participates in the affairs of the ICA Regional Office for South East Asia. It has very cordial relations with advanced Cooperative Movements. With the support and assistance of the Swedish Cooperative movement, the Council is operating two technical Projects i.e. Cooperative Teacher Training Project and the Women's Consumer Education and Information Project. Both these Projects have provided a lot of technical help to the National Cooperative Council and to the Movement. The Council has also good working relations with international organisations eg. I:L:O: M.A.T.C.O.M. and others.

National Cooperative Council of Sri Lanka,
Cooperative House,
455, Galle Road,
Colombo 3.

SWEDISH COOPERATIVE CENTRE.

The Swedish Co-operative Centre, SCC, was set up in 1968 as a foundation to take care of the fund administration and implementation of the technical assistance programme financed by the funds collected by the Cooperative Movement in Sweden.

The Board has eight members, 3 from the Swedish Consumer Cooperative Union and Wholesale Society (Kooperativa Forbundet KF) 3 from the Federation of Swedish Farmers (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund LRF), and 1 from the Swedish Union of Cooperative Consumer Guilds (Kooperativa Gilleförbundet). The Director of SCC is a member ex officio and Secretary to the Board.

The Activities of SCC are the following :

- * Financial and personnel assistance to the ICA (International Cooperative Alliance) regional offices for South East Asia and East and Central Africa respectively, and to LATICI (Latin American Technical Institute for Cooperative Integration).
- * Organising of educational activities and training programmes for cooperative leaders from developing countries, in collaboration with ICA and SIDA.
- * Assistance to SIDA on a consultative basis in matters related to Swedish Governmental assistance to developing countries in the Cooperative Field.
- * Assistance through various Projects to promote Cooperative development in general.
- * Recruitment of Cooperators for assignments in developing countries.
- * Information to Cooperative members and employees as well as the general public in Sweden about developing countries and the role of cooperatives for the economic and social development.
- * Annual fund-raising campaigns to secure a continued assistance to developing countries.

SIDA is financially supporting the voluntary cooperative assistance to various ways, e.g. by financing seminars and training programmes for individuals. SIDA also finances special cooperative Projects through SCC, and finally gives tangible financial support to the information programme of SCC.

Of SCCs income of about US\$ 1.5 million a little more than $\frac{1}{3}$ is contributions from consumer cooperative society members; the same grants from SIDA and the remainder contributions from agricultural cooperatives, cooperative employees and OK society members.

Of the expenditures about $\frac{1}{4}$ is going to ICA, New Delhi for education and advisory services in South-East Asia, $\frac{1}{7}$ goes to seminars and scholarship holders in Sweden, roughly the same are central administration costs. Then a little more than $\frac{1}{10}$ is spent on Projects in Latin America and East and Central Africa respectively, $\frac{1}{10}$ in reserves., and finally a little less than $\frac{1}{7}$ is given to a number of smaller Projects, recruitment of Cooperative experts, information and taxes.

THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

Is one of the oldest of non-governmental international organisations. It is a world-wide confederation of cooperative organisations of all types. Founded by the International Cooperative Congress in London in 1895, it now has affiliates in 66 countries, serving over 336 million members at the primary level. It is the only international organisation entirely and exclusively dedicated to the promotion of Cooperation in all parts of the world.

Besides the headquarters of the International Cooperative Alliance, which is in London, there are two regional offices, viz., the Regional Office and Education Centre for South-East Asia, New Delhi, India, and the Regional Office for East and Central Africa, Moshi, & Tanzania. The Regional Office in New Delhi was started in 1960 and the office in Moshi in 1968. The third regional office has just started functioning for the West African Region.

The main tasks of the Regional Office and Education Centre are to develop the general activities of the Alliance in the Region, to act as a link between the ICA and its affiliated national movements, to represent the Alliance in its consultative relation with the regional establishments of the United Nations and other international organisations, to promote economic relations amongst member-movements including trading across national boundaries, to organise and conduct courses, seminars and conferences, surveys, and research, to bring out publications on cooperative and allied subjects and to support and supplement the educational activities of the national cooperative movements. The Regional Office and Education Centre now operates on behalf of 14 countries i.e., Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

International Cooperative Alliance
Regional Office & Education Centre for S-E Asia
Bonow House, 43 Friends Colony
New Delhi 110065. India

THE SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) is the central Government agency which prepares and implements Sweden's programme for bilateral development cooperation. It is an agency of the Ministry for Foreign affairs. Policy guidelines and appropriations to international development cooperation are determined by the Government on the basis of parliamentary decisions.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs is responsible for international development cooperation. He is assisted by the Office for International Development Cooperation at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. This Office prepares the government's decisions on development assistance activities and administers the appropriations to U.N. development programmes and activities.

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