

FUNCTIONING OF THE MAHILA MANDALS IN MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICT

(BIHAR)

By

MEERA

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A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The status of women in the society is the index of its civilization. A woman is the pivot around whom the family, the society and the whole community moves (Devadas, 1978). As Jawaharlal Nehru (1963) has rightly pointed out, "In order to awaken the people it is the women who have to be awakened. Once they are on the move, the village moves, the household moves and the country moves". Shouldering important responsibilities in the family and the community, women are indispensable for economic, educational, political and socio-cultural progress, social change and development (India, 1978).

At the beginning of this century, women regained all their rights both socially and politically. A great awakening came towards the end of 19th century due to the untiring efforts of social reformers and reformist associations of that period. It was Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation who brought a dynamic change among women. At his bidding, women came out in large numbers to take part in the struggle for India's freedom. In the political awakening, the renaissance of the Indian womanhood was born. New vistas have opened up for the young women of today (Varadhappan, 1974).

A nation can rise only to the extent its homes are elevated. Women must study and work together to raise their standards of home living to the highest level of possible in

the country. The progress of a nation is really the sum total of the progress made in every home. It is the women who determine the standard of living by deciding what food the family will eat, what clothes they will wear and how the home can be set up and run. In her own special way, the mother can be a leader, regardless of how small her sphere may be, since she is the guiding light of her family and guardian of children (Sundaran, 1974). 1978

The women in the rural areas of our country have kept themselves away from the main stream of national life and progress over a long period. Recently there has been a realisation of the significant part this large group can play for the strong and healthy development of our country and efforts have already begun to assist them to become a homogenous part of the nation (Nurul Rusan, 1974). — not link!

The Community Development Programme started on Mahatma Gandhiji's Birth Day, October 2nd 1952, aims not only towards rejuvenating the village community but also towards promoting the welfare of women and children who form the back bone of the social system (Nehru, 1961). 1952 It properly organised, women can undoubtedly play an important role in creating the proper climate for the success of various social and economic programme particularly in the fields of cooperation and Panchayat Raj (Shinde, 1974).

A women's club in the village is an organised group of women or home makers under the guidance of extension workers and local voluntary leaders. Members elect their own

officers, plan and conduct club programmes, hold regular meetings usually once a week or twice a month and carry on worth while activities in farming, home making, community improvement and other related areas (USDA, 1973).

The main voluntary agencies working in the field of women's welfare today are: Mahila Mandals of Community Development Programmes, the Central Social Welfare Board, The Bharathiya Grameen Mahila Sangh, All India Women's Conference, Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust and the Home Science Association of India. These agencies work with the main objectives of carrying out intensive welfare work among rural women, for the betterment of their standards of living and to assist them to take part in all the constructive work done for the development of the country.

An earnest beginning was made during the First Five Year Plan with the organisation of welfare service for women and children in collaboration with voluntary organisation. At the centre an allotment of Rs. 4 crores was made under the Ministry of Education to be administered through the Central Social Welfare Board. The Central Social Welfare Board assisted 2,174 voluntary organisations with grants-in-aid amounting to Rs. 75.83 lakhs. In the course of Second Five Year Plan assistance amounting to about Rs. 2.6 crores was given to more than 3,700 voluntary welfare organisation. In the Third Five Year Plan, provision had been made for programme involving a total outlay of Rs. 28 crores (Government of India, 1968).

- Not with the
(ref.)

During the Fourth Five Year Plan, expenditure and outlay of social welfare programme was Rs. 41.38 crores, then the outlay for strengthening the voluntary organisation was Rs. 9.33 crores; outlay for social welfare on women welfare during Fifth Plan 1974-79 Rs. 22.01 crores and on grants-in-aid to voluntary organisations are Rs. 11.14 crores.

Promotion of voluntary and social action programmes in rural areas are new central sector schemes being implemented during the Fifth Plan period. A total outlay of Rs. 3.78 crores was originally approved for the ^{ch} same. The programme under the scheme include various measures for the promotion and strengthening of Mahila Mandals and Yuvak Mandals such as developing a strong model organisation (Government of India, 1978). *Not done*

The women's club organised in the rural areas can help to promote group living and to impart knowledge in the various aspects of family life. The members can be taught through better nutrition, home and kitchen management, clothing construction and child care and welfare, better health, better money management, value of education, literacy, equality and family planning through the use of methods such as home visits, campaigns, films, demonstrations and songs. They can be assisted also in leadership development (Dovadas, 1968). *done*

However, there are only a handful of such instances where the Mahila Mandals are functioning successfully. This

investigation is an attempt to study the existing status of Mahila Mandals and bring out success and failure in order to contribute some remarkable suggestions for their improvement.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

II REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature of the study on the "Functioning of the Mahila Mandals in Muzaffarpur district" is reviewed under the following headings:

- A. Women and National Development
- B. Voluntary Organisations Working for Women
- C. Highlights of Research on Women and Women's Programmes.

A. WOMEN AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

It is dealt as follows:

- 1. Women in India
- 2. Women's programmes for development.

1. Women in India:

Devadas (1976) urges that women need to participate in the rural and urban developmental programme. The numerous family and child welfare projects, nutrition programmes, socio economic ventures and efforts in the fields of agriculture and allied sciences require women's assistance to supervise at the grass root level. For this purpose women need to be built up and strengthened through their own organisations at the village, block and district levels. She feels that they must be helped to undertake economic activities through the provision of training, capital, marketing and cooperative facilities in areas such as agro-industries, handicrafts, tailoring, poultry raising, dairying and fruit vegetable gardening.

From time immemorial, women have been making their contribution to the economic growth of the world, from the stand points of production and consumption. From the simple rural, agricultural based economics to the computerised urban societies, women's role in augmenting household economy is unquestionable. The homemaker's role which had been confined mainly to her home and family has been now enlarged because of the changes brought about by the advancements of science and technology. These, in turn, have resulted in tremendous changes in her status and roles. Women have now come out of their sheltered households, entered the industrial concerns and all other professional and vocational venues to earn their livelihood and satisfy their age (Devadas, 1976).

It is the interest of a society to make full and most effective use of its human resources. The full development can only be realised with people's participation and the economic role of women cannot be isolated from the total frame work of development. Discrimination against women is incompatible with human dignity and the welfare of the family and of society prevents their participation on equal terms with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries and is an obstacle to the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and humanity. Socio-economic and political change creates a need to extend the spheres of knowledge and activity of all members of a society. Modern in demographic and social changes call for a redefinition of women's roles in family and society (ICSSR, 1974). 1975

Nehru (1958), pointed out that to awaken the people, it is women who must be awakened, once she is on the move, the family moves the village moves, the nation moves.

Legally and constitutionally, women in India enjoy a unique status of equality with men. They are equal citizens given all the rights and privileges endowed upon the people by the State. Women are free to choose any form of education and training to equip them for a career. All doors of specialised and higher learning are open to them. Women can aspire the highest office of the State. In practice the social status of women is not always equal to that of the male members in the society and in day-to-day life they suffer many disabilities on grounds of sex (Central Institute of Research and Training, 1975).

During the independence movement, women responded magnificently to Gandhiji's call, packed the prisons, faced bullets and inspite of abuse and assault, picketed foreign cloth and liquor shops so persistently that textile mills in Britian were forced to close down (Gandhi, 1964).

Not in ref → According to Jain (1975) women, as family members or citizens, cannot be isolated from the entire society. The many needs and demands such as adequate facilities in housing, education, water, electricity, transport and the like apply to all. Also the need for clean air, food, administration and a hundred other factors, in none of which the women's voice is heard anymore because of the ignorance of the classes. That the women have not promoted even a powerful

consumer movement, a territory so close to them, on their own in a country like India, is proof enough of deadly complacency. The oppression problem of price rise is thereby, used as a political baton by conscious citizens. There are other vital issues that touch women more like dowry. It is socially a most degrading institution and economically hazardous making a mockery of both law and human decency.

Cynthia (1973) pointed out that virtually the entire world has been swept by the ideology of equality for all. The inclusion of women in national economic life has not only been a necessity in many technologically, advancing countries, but it is an expression of the emancipation of women everywhere from second class citizenship. No doubt man and women have been granted the right to equality in general terms, as a vague human right. However for women the translation of that ideal into practice has been imperfect and unenthusiastic. Despite this comparative failure the ideology had considerable effort in giving women confidence in their right to select an occupation and the life style associated with it.

Kaur (1978) ¹⁹⁷⁸ stated that women is universally the nerve centre of the family, the welfare of the family is primarily her consensus. The Indian women should be sufficiently healthy and enthusiastic to undertake and fulfil her responsibilities both as a housewife and as a mother.

Report of the Public Cooperation Course by Punjab State in 1979, revealed that women have to work for the society as a whole. No matter whether they are educated or not they should know the fundamentals of being good citizens. The need for eradication of social evils like dowry, smoking and drinking habits were highlighted and it was emphasised that women in a village can play an important and effective role in such campaign.

Shelra (1978) states that the achievement of advanced countries could have been possible without the conspicuous countries of women even in the most sophisticated sectors and their economics. The millions of Indian village need women to educate them in the basic habits of cleanliness; they need women to teach them the principles of family planning, they need women to take on the innumerable social tasks, which no amount of government machinery in India can ever cope with.

Malini (1977) said that the unity and harmony is essential for the very survival of humanity, women can play a pivotal, crucial role to bring unity; women has non-economic legal and political battles. She has become the equal partner of man women's influence can preserve or destroy unit of the human race. Through culture and creative arts a woman can bring unity in every, walks of life.

By culture is meant values that have stood the test of time. As live bells puts it, 'our culture is what we are, our civilization is what we use'. Indeed, as artists, sports, persons, scientists, research scholars, ambassadors and ministers women have played an active role in bringing the gaps among varying groups of working. Other women who were not active in public life have built great minds. These personalities, moulded by women gifted with foresight and imagination devoted to the task of motherhood, contributed to the welfare mankind.

In a world torn as under by violence, women have to nurture the springs of basic human values, honesty, decency, self-respect and love of beauty of mind. In order to achieve all this a woman first needs to condition herself and in various ways. She can modify her outward and inner life and by mental discipline, become an example to the younger mind.

2. Women's programmes for development:

Development in its wider perspective covers all aspects of community life. The accepted goals of national development such as maximum production, full employment and attainment of economic equality and social justice apply equally to men and women. This realisation in an equalitarian society is not, however possible unless special efforts are made to assist the under privileged groups. Our constitution, therefore stress the urgent need for promoting the education and economic interests of weaker sections of the people and

as women are handicapped by social customs and traditions, they need special attention to help them to play their full and proper role in national life (ICSSR, 1975).

Women play an important part in rural economic life. Even though, most of the rural women are illiterate they earn by farm labour according to census of India, 1971, 27.40 per cent female population participate in work out of which 18.92 per cent female population belongs to rural areas. Some are the days when women were confined to indoor jobs. Today they are increasingly taking part in the nation building exercise. The economic necessity motivates not only men but women also to seek employment opportunities for wages and livelihood. In economic field women are rather considered to be back door of village economy. According to investigation conducted in 1977, 6 per cent women in Maholi as agricultural labourers. This is only one per cent less than that of the agricultural labourers (Raswarajah, 1978).

Verma (1978) stated that, any appraisal of women's economic role and their opportunities for participation in economic activities cannot be done in isolation of the society's stages of development. The tremendous opportunities in the field of women's occupation in agricultural and newly industrial societies. The modern concept of economic role of village women has wider dimension in the vast field of economic activity related to village community. Assumption of economic role by village women would accelerate the pace

of rural economic development, because of the mobilisation of the complete human force of men and women and better utilisation of their energies and powers.

When launching the nation wide community development programme harnessing of women was visualised and efforts through proved sporadic, were made to harness them for nation building activities. Efforts were made to see that women were represented adequately in elective bodies like panchayats and cooperatives, women came to forefront with the introduction of the applied nutrition programme. They were also in the vanguard when the composite programme for women and school children were entrusted with Mahala Mandals and the like bodies. The women's programme section came into being in April, 1957 to reinforce the work of the planning, research and action Institute on the women's aid, to assist in the evaluation of women's programmes in operation in the state and to put out appropriate programmes, methods and techniques for work among rural women by carrying out action research through pilot project experiment. During the year 1958-59 the section was mainly concerned with the operation of the pilot project, women's programmes at district Etawah (planning research and Action Department, 1959).

Development touches all aspects of community life and was to be viewed comprehensively. Economic planning thus extends out into extra economic spheres educational, social and cultural. The overall development process envisages a

share in the development generated by the plans equally for women and men since the constitution stresses, the need for promoting with special care that the weaker sections of the people, the welfare and development of women, received particular attention from the beginning (ICSSB, 1974).

According to Supra (1974), to maintain the proper quantitative balance between various economic activities was one of the principal functions of the economic system, which it was felt should operate to give equal freedom of choice to men and women. The orientation of a society to give as a whole regarding the desirability that women should play an equal part in the country's development was taken as very important pre-condition for the advancement not only of the women but of the country as well.

The planning commission has defined three major areas for women's development; education, health and welfare. Among the programmes specially designed in these areas, the priorities have been the same till the end of the Fourth Plan. There has been a continued emphasis on women's educations in all the plans.

According to Oomen (1969) Women's Clubs aim at bringing about economic development and social changes with the following special objectives:

1. Improve the conditions of the village women
2. Educate women on their duties and responsibilities
3. Eradicate illiteracy among women
4. Broaden the outlook of women
5. Create interest in women to work for common causes
6. Remove social evils
7. Provide recreational opportunities for women
8. Provide opportunities for economic improvement
- and 9. Provide opportunities for the development of special skills and knowledge.

Savile (1965) gives the aim of Women's Club as follows:

To:

1. learn something and new for every day living
2. think together about the needs of the community and of each other
- and 3. enjoy recreation through games, songs, dance and outings

The USDA (1971) gives the following as functions of Women's Clubs:

1. Providing systematic ways of teaching women home living
2. Developing cooperative spirit through club work
3. Providing an excellent opportunity to teach that the women of the village are responsible citizens
- and 4. providing for the fulfilment of many of their needs and desires

Women's clubs have been established to accelerate the on-going process of social change in India. Devadas (1962) opines that in all the countries of the world, especially in

India, women have played a great part in giving continuity to the cultural traditions. As women have shouldered tremendous responsibilities in maintaining the integrity of their families inspite of changing conditions, their contribution to the cause of national independence is significant. Ravi of Jhansi, Kasthuba Gandhi and several others mobilised groups of young women for national emancipation. The various educational, economic and cultural activities which are being carried on in hundred of villages in the country by these women's clubs for the welfare of women is fascinating. This is but a step towards raising the status of women in our custom ridden society (Gopala Rao, 1974).

*Dr. R. K. Raghavan
Refer
to page 10*

Mahalir Manrams have been organised in the villages of Community Development Blocks to work for the welfare of women to enlist women's participation on a permanent basis on Community Development activities and for the dissemination of knowledge among women. According to the Report of the Department of Community Development (1972) there are 34 Mahalir Manrams on an average in every Community Development Block, amounting to 12,716 Mahalir Manrams in 374 community Development Blocks.

Not in scope

According to the Department of Community Development and Cooperation (1968) the functions of women's club are:

1. Home improvement education including home economics
 2. Health education including child care, maternity and postnatal care and family planning
 3. Occupational education including the stimulation and remunerative hobbies and utility craft
 4. Education in auxiliary farm practices towards implementing improved farm methods introduced by the village workers.
 5. Education in home, extension techniques and demonstration methods
 6. Education in the techniques of the stimulation of group activities amongst rural women, like the setting up of farm women's and home makers clubs, nursery school and creches
- and 7. Education in imparting in-service training to the village women, voluntarily associating themselves with development programmes so as to bring out potential leadership and to absorb them as extension service workers themselves in their own home surroundings.

Kumar and Patel (1972) state that characteristics of members and presidents, the organisation procedures of Mahila Mandals, the various activities taken up including individual and group projects, as well as the guidance from Gram Sevikas and Mukhya Sevikas influence the functioning of Mahalir Manrams. Financial resources, maintenance of records and separate buildings were the contributing factors to their efficient functioning. Religion, caste and marital status were positively and significantly associated with the effective functioning. Certain facilities available in the member's houses, the attitude of family members, member's understanding about the importance of Mahalir Manrams and

member's participation in various activities were also positively related with effective functioning. The larger the number of years a Mahila Mandal had worked, the more effective was its functioning. Factors like subscriptions contributed by members and the number of office bearers in position, were found to be significantly associated with effective functioning. Guidance from officials, the more number of activities taken up, the more the records and registers maintained and separate building facility, all contributed towards the effective functioning.

There is no greater force than women-force, once it is organised, basic to village development - when a Mahalir Manram has an established meeting place, where women know they are welcome to come, to work, to learn, to plan and carry out the plans made by them to fit their needs and desires, it becomes a democratic organisation for village and leader for several villages. It can become as influential as the village panchayat not in competition but in service and in getting things done. It is a place where new ideas can be discussed and knowledge can be acquired and dispersed (Mistry, 1971).

1978
 Mahila Mandals help also to create new village culture (Rao, 1973). In assessing the progress of the Community Development Programme in India one is tempted to enquire as to how far its impact has been felt by the women in rural India. Quoting Sarojini Naidu, Gopal Batnam (1974) explains that there was no power in the world that could set any limitation to women's achievements except woman

herself. When women were determined that they would rise to the full height and status of their capacity, there is no law in the world which can stop them.

The other programmes for women mainly concentrated on maternal and child welfare services, health and family planning. As regards social welfare the voluntary sector operated the bulk of the programmes, the efforts of the government being confined to provide institutional services. The second plan emphasised the need for special attention to the problems of women workers who suffered from certain handicaps. The Draft Plan gives priority to the training of needy women from low-income families, a programme of functional literacy for the age group 15-45 (which include child care, nutrition, health care and home economics) placement and follow up of successful candidates under the present scheme of condensed courses of education and socio-economic programmes (ICSSR, 1975).

According to Rao (1978) that the schemes of the socio-economic programme from Rs. 10,000/- to Rs. 15,000/- might be decentralised. This could be of great help in the rural areas. She also suggested that Mahali Mandals might provide with self-employment schemes with each Mahila Mandals being given assistance for setting up provision stores which would eliminate middle men.

Devendra (1978), suggested that the accounting procedures for Mahila Mandals may be simplified and the local Gazetted Officer authorised to give certificate of utilisation.

In addition to production-cum-accounting units, managerial and sales training will also be introduced to promote marketing of goods. In the fifth Five Year Plan the department of Rural Development provided financial assistance and training facilities to the office bearers of the 723 Mahalir Manrams in the year 1976-77. It has a targets of assisting 1300 Mahalir Manrams during the year 1977-78 and a programme to develop 1000 Mahalir Manrams in the year 1978-79. The department also proposes to introduce a new scheme of Rural Women's Organisation at the block and district levels. The building of this rural infrastructure would undoubtedly help in motivation of rural population for taking up programme of economic development (Chopra, 1978).

One of the finest examples of self-employed women is that in Ahmedabad, where in milk maids, vegetable vendors handieraft and puller have been organised into a well-unit work force of nearly 10,000 members. Loan were given to the members varying from Rs. 250 to Rs. 800 repayable in 20 monthly instalment at the rate of 16½ per cent (Varadappan, 1978).

Eswaran (1976), reported that a rural textile centre completely managed by women sponsored by Khadi and Village Industries Commission has been working at Salem. The unit was set up at a cost of Rs. 55,000. 30 women belonging to the weaker section are employed here, each worker earns Rs. 3/- per day.

Under the health programme the priority objective is to provide minimum public facilities and integrated family planning classified as follows:

1. Programmes under statutory obligations such as suppression of immoral traffic ACT 1956 or the maternity benefit Act, 1961.
2. Development programmes which provide essential services and opportunities such as education, health, maternity and child welfare, family planning, nutrition and training.
3. Programmes for special groups of women such as assistance to widow, aged, destitute women, hostels for working women in urban areas, scholarships for girls for schedule castes and tribes and free residential schooling in Ashram schools.

There is a three tier structure for planning and administering women's structure and development programmes with agencies at the central, state and local level. However the major responsibility for implementing these programmes lies on various department and other agencies of government, it is interesting to note that all the agencies engaged in implementing women's programme attach the highest priority to increasing women's earning power (ICSSR, 1975).

B. VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION FOR WORKING WOMEN:

The following are the voluntary organisation for women:

1. Central Social Welfare Board
2. Bharatiya Gramen Mahila Sangh

3. All India Women's Conference
4. Indian Federation of University Women's Association
5. Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust
6. Young Women's Christian Association of India

1. Central Social Welfare Board;

Central Social Welfare Board was set up in 1953 to promote and accelerate voluntary action, throughout the century. The founder Chairman of the Board was Smt. Durgabai Deshmuk. Among the general activities the main activities are: survey of the needs of social welfare organisation, to foster voluntary (non-governmental) effort, evaluation of their programmes and co-ordination of the assistance given by various central ministries and state government and render financial assistance to voluntary welfare agencies, to provide guidance and advice to regulate their working and even to set certain minimum standard of services.

Another set of institutions to come under the grants-in-aid programme, of the CSWB are the Mahila Mandals which were created by the Board in the rural areas. Mahila Mandals could be the three mile stones for any developmental programme i.e.

- i) initiating service in the remote areas
- ii) coordinating them with existing services
- iii) introducing voluntary organisation to the backward areas, thus creating an infrastructure.

The central board has been giving grants upto 75% of the estimated expenditure of schematic budget approved by

government of India for the scheme of Mahila Mandal programmes and the remaining 25 per cent is met by them by raising funds from their own resources (Social Welfare, 1978).

2. Bharatiya Grameen Mahila Sangh;

Established and registered in 1955. Membership individual members 10,000. The aims and objectives of this sangh are to federate existing organisation working for rural women's and to take steps to establish new Grameen Mahila Samities and Mandals in the states, district and village of India. To undertake intensive work among rural women with a view to securing better conditions, to satisfy their immediate educational, health, social and economic needs and help them attain progressively better standards of living, to encourage rural women to participate and cooperate in developmental work in allround advancement of rural life, to undertake pilot projects, to under take generally such measures as would help promotion of and ascertain by local leadership to undertake propoganda, publicity and publications, organisation or meeting, conferences, seminars and forums to send representatives, delegation, deputations to appropriate conferences, meetings and authorities.

The activities are organize training camps with a view to preparing rural women to participate in the development schemes and to develop local leadership among them runs condensed courses for the training of women, assist in running family planning services in rural areas. Throughout

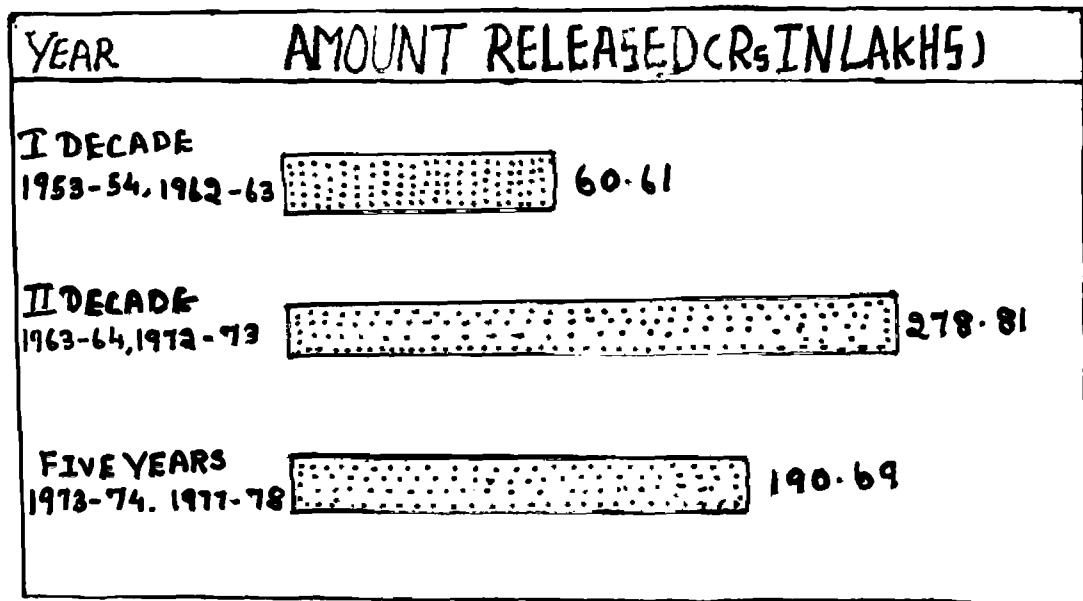


Fig: 1

GRANTS IN AID TO MAHILA MANDALS

India this sangh has been operating. The finance of this sangh that is income and expenditure of the central organisation Rs. 81,930. The sources of income from membership subscription and donations, grants-in-aid from the planning commission, government of India and international aid in kind (Publications Division, 1968).

3. All India Women's Conference:

Established in 1928 and registered in 1930. There are 66,000 individual membership under the correspondent Honorary General Secretary.

It aims to work for a society based on the principles of social justice, personal integrity and equal rights and opportunities for all, the source recognition of the interest right of every human being to work and to the essentials of life, by planned social distribution; to support the claim of every citizen to the right of enjoying basic civil liberties; to stand against all separatist tendencies and promote greater national integration and unity to work actively for the general progress, and welfare of women and children, to help women utilise to the fullest fundamental rights conferred on them by the constitution of the Indian Union; to cooperate with peoples and organisation of the world for the practice of these principles and permanent international unity and world peace.

The activities are, organizes conferences and seminars and participates in similar international meetings, undertake family planning work and small savings campaigns, runs a

journal as part of field work programmes, organises milk canteens, midday meals and clinics for children, mobile health units, dispensaries, nursery schools for different states of instruction condensed course classes for needy adult, adult women, social and adult education centres, recreational and hobby centres and libraries for children and women, vocational and industrial training centres, production units for the benefit of women. Throughout India it is working women with 43 branches. The income and expenditure is Rs. 35,570/- and Rs. 38,780/- respectively (Publication Division, 1968).

4. Indian Federation of University Women's Associations:

Established in 1920 and registered in 1921 under the correspondent of Honorary General Secretary with 13 institutional members as membership. Its aim is to bind together associations of women graduates of recognised universities to the intent that they may take concerted action and express united opinion, to stimulate interest of university women in civic and public life; to encourage independent research to promote national international cooperation particularly on questions affecting women to render help and guidance to members of other national associations.

The activities are to provide opportunities for educated women; to get together and discuss the matters of academic and public interest, organised debates, symposium book reviews, discussing on current topics etc., gives

scholarships to the needy students; to assist them in obtaining further education and offer scholarships to foreign student for studies in India, helps members to apply scholarship and travel grants. This association is operating throughout India with 13 member associations.

5. Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust:

Established and registered in 1945 under the guidance of secretary with trustees 28 as membership. This memorial trust aims to conduct and promote activities conducive to the general welfare of poor and needy women and children in the rural areas in India; to establish and maintain hospitals dispensaries, maternity homes; child welfare centres and institutions of similar nature for women and children in rural areas; is to provide and promote sanitary facilities to preventive measures affecting the health of women and children in rural areas; to promote and encourage primary education, training in handicrafts cottage industries and other useful crafts and arts amongst women and children in rural areas; to render help give grants to any existing institutions, carrying on or undertaking to carry on in rural areas work falling within all. Activities of this trust are conducts gram sevika and mukhya sevika training courses provides training in Home Science and midwifery organises condensed course of the CSWB pre-basic teachers training, training in Ambar Charka, training of women members of village panchayats runs hospitals, mobile health unit, balwadies and basic schools and children's homes, cooperative

with the programmes of sarvodaya. The programmes operated in rural areas of India, the sources of income from donation, grants-in-aid from the Government of India and other international aid (Publication Division, 1968).

6. National Council for Women in India:

This council was established in 1925 with Honorary General Secretary as Correspondent. National Council of Women's aims to promote sympathy of thought and purpose among women for the removal of legal, economic or social disabilities of women and for the promotion of the social, civil, moral and educational welfare of women; to ensure opportunities to women and children for their full and free development and advancement, to organise develop and coordinate the work of the existing state councils, to coordinate activities of other national organisations in India.

The main activities are nominates representatives to national and international meetings, runs nursery, primary and higher secondary school, libraries, hospitals dispensaries, health and maternity centres, first and home-nursing classes, arts and crafts classes, production counters and family guidance centres, under take research, distribute milk to children, cooperate with other organisations in family planning and eradication of baggary programmes. Throughout India it is operating and income for the council is from fees, membership, subscription and donations.

7. Young Women's Christian Association of India:

YWCA was established in 1965 with General Secretary as Correspondent. The overall aim being to promote physical mental and spiritual development of its members and to train them in ways of service, to include in its field of activities, young women from different social, racial, occupational, religious, cultural and age groups, uniting them in fellowship and mutual service to strengthen all forces working for the promotion of peace and better understanding with classes, creeds, nations and races.

The activities are the programmes and service to meet the needs and concern of women and girls in changing community; provides opportunities for growth of individual as responsible leaders and citizens, organize leadership training courses, emergency relief work, formal and informal education for adult, teaching cookery, public speaking dramas, interior decoration, home crafts for all income groups, welfare centers for child care, maternity centres and children's homes (Publication Division, 1968).

C. HIGHLIGHTS OF RESEARCH ON WOMEN AND WOMEN'S PROGRAMMES:

Countless actions and events around is highlighted by the world conference of International Women's Year held in Mexico City in 1975, provide a vivid testimony of the dramatically changing expectations of women. In all countries, women are increasingly impatient to wider the options for realising their potential and to participate on an equal basis with men in the productive and creative

achievements, as well as in the reward systems of their societies (Margaret Mead, 1976).

Equality development and peace were the three main themes of international women's year. The virtual exclusion of women from the development planning process has actually whittled down women's pre-existing functions and status in relation to men (Grant, 1976).

An expert's conference, such as those which had preceded the U.M. Sponsored World Conferences or other issues, seemed necessary to focus attention on this growing evidence to encourage further research, and to make recommendations for improving women's integration in the total development effort (Irene Tucker, 1976).

American Association for the Advancement of Science reveals in its seminar on "Women in Development" held in 1975 stated that by failing to notice and utilize the traditional productive roles which women are playing by reinforcement of values already in existence in the society which restrict women's activities to household, child-bearing, and child rearing tasks; and by super imposing western values of what is appropriate work for women in modern society on developing societies shows the negative impact of development on women.

Integration of Women in Development, a Regional Seminar at Kathmandu (1978), it is clearly linked with policies priorities and programmes concerning over all development.

This Seminar calls for special measures on behalf of women status today is the result of discriminatory law practices and attitudes. They also recommended that plans should be translated without delay into action-oriented programmes. They also stressed the need for women to participate in decision making at the national and local levels. It was noted that the world plan of action singled out two points related to the collection of data namely the need to analyse existing data by sex and to collect new data concerning women's contribution especially in rural areas.

Leola (1978) reports that, in advanced countries the entry of women as a powerful economic force shows itself in the paradox of unemployment rates in United States of America. The millions of Indian villages need women to educate them in the basic habit of cleanliness. They need women to teach them the principles of family planning; they need women to take upon innumerable social tasks.

The Mexico Conference 1978, on Integration of women in development was the first effort at the international level to enable the government to see that what facilities existed for women's integrated in development within their own government set-up.

The latest United National Seminar (1977) for Integration of women in Social, Economic and Political Development has made vital recommendations in respect of women's participation in development. Report of the Seminar held in New Delhi (1978), was an exercise of far greater

Not in text
 emphasis was laid on women's role particularly with reference to the decade for women. According to Bagharamaiah (1978) voluntarily organisation with capable voluntary cookers should given opportunities to prepare a strategy for the failure and plan for the government.

Not in text
 Brar (1979), states that unfolding the areas in which women to avail of opportunities to play their greater role in the family and the society, he also adds that Coosmen have to be educated not only in the formal sense but in the mental, physical and the spiritual needs of the child. The services available at the village level, in the form of a Halwadi, for children health services for the family and enlightened mahalir manram can bring about the desired results.

Not in text
 Patwari (1980) an women's education which would be the proper medicine to cure the ills of society. Emphasising the need for the uplift of women, he called for steps to abolish the dowry system.

Not in text
 The Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee (1978) has also initiated well organised and comprehensive programmes. For the rural areas having some educational and cultural contents. In connection to welfare of backward classes Sreedharan (1978) stated that Mahalir Manrams are integrated to build up base. For development of integrated services of health, nutrition, education and recreation for young children and family life education of young mothers so

that the problems the social life of vulnerable group will be reduced to maximum extent. Social Welfare Department gives assistance to these Mahalir Manram in the form of serving machines and cooking utensils worth of Rs. 4,000/- and guide them in day-to-day functioning. Steps are to be taken to organise rural women in India in an Institution form, so that their leisure and energies are channelised for constructive purposes (Chowdhry, 1978). *Not with*

A case study conducted by the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development in 1978, in Tamil Nadu state reported that a particular Mahila Mandal was started in 1960 and registered in 1964. All the women above the age of 14 years are admitted to the Mahila Mandal without any fee. The routine of Mahila Mandal covered nutrition demonstration, crafts, family planning and socio-economic programmes. The craft teacher who visits the Mahila Mandal once a week guides the work of the 40 members attending the class craft seems to be the most popular activity, irrespective of their age difference. The sewing machines are made good use of. In addition the members learn to make plastic wire bags, baskets from waste materials like tamarind seeds, old paper and rags bags of waste cloth left during dress making. Besides the Mahila Mandal has helped members to get sewing machine of their own standing as security for the bank for instalment payment with which they have bought the machine. The Mahila Mandal also took interest in making compost pits and kitchen gardens.

In the Fifth Five Year Plan the Department of Rural Development provided financial assistance and training facilities to the office bearers of 733 Mahila Mandals in the year 1976-77. It had a target of assisting 1,300 Mahila Mandals during the year 1977-78 and a programme to develop 1,000 Mahila Mandals in the year 1978-79. The department also proposed to introduce a new scheme of Rural Women's organisations at the block and district levels. The building up of this rural infrastructure would undoubtedly help in the motivation of rural population for taking up programmes of economic development (Chopra, 1978).✓

Outstanding work is being done by selected Mahila Mandals in the Nation. A Mahila Mandal in the Union Territory of Daman established in 1963, promotes activities connected with education, culture, religion, industry and child development and encourages women to evince keen interest in such type of activities. Apart from the routine activities, the Mahila Mandal is having a library, with a stock of 800 books on different topics. To the ailing people, the Mahila Mandal provides equipments and items like bed sheet, thermometer, hot water bag, ice bag, bed pan, spittoon etc. free of cost. These activities seek to build up will power and self confidence in women, make them realise that the best returns can be accomplished through unity and cooperation (Shah, 1978).

The importance of women's associations as reported by the Institute of Development Studies, 1977 are given below:

1. Women's Associations should be constituted at village level to break through the barriers of invisibility and poor access to:
 - a) determine and articulate the felt needs of different groups of women;
 - b) organise needed services with the assistance of professional and para-professional functionaries provided by the state or non-governmental organisations and
 - c) discuss issues affecting women and communicate their views to local and national authorities.

2. Women's associations should generate their own savings for development work and increase community participation although they will require governmental support through funds, personnel and training. The plans of action should be increasingly directed towards making them self-reliant and autonomous. To encourage women to make further training or to involve them in productive work outside the home or to ease their domestic work load if they are already involved in agricultural or wage employment - government of self help. Day care centres should be set up in rural areas.

EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

III. EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

The experimental procedure of the study consists of the following steps:

- A. Selecting the Area**
- B. Selecting the Samples**
- C. Selecting the Method**
- D. Conducting the study**
- and E. Analysing and Writing the Report**

A. Selecting the Area:

From Bihar State, Muzaffarpur district was selected for study, Parroo, Kanti, Aurni, Minapur and Motipur blocks were selected from each block ten villages were chosen. The list of villages is given in Appendix I.

Criteria for selection of the villages were:

- 1. Cooperation and interest shown by the people**
- 2. Easy accessibility and transport facilities to the village**
- 3. Since mother of the investigator was closely associated with the rural development work, she could get immense cooperative and reliable data from the respondents.**

B. Selecting the Samples:

Fifty Mahila Mandals were chosen for the study drawing one from each village, i.e. 50 Mahila Mandals from 5 blocks, 10 from each block.

From each Mahila Mandal one President, one member (randomly selected) and officials (either Gram Sevika or Mukhya Sevika) were selected for conducting the project. Altogether 50 presidents, 50 members and 10 officials, then total 110 samples were selected as samples for the study on functioning of Mahila Mandals in Muzaffarpur District.

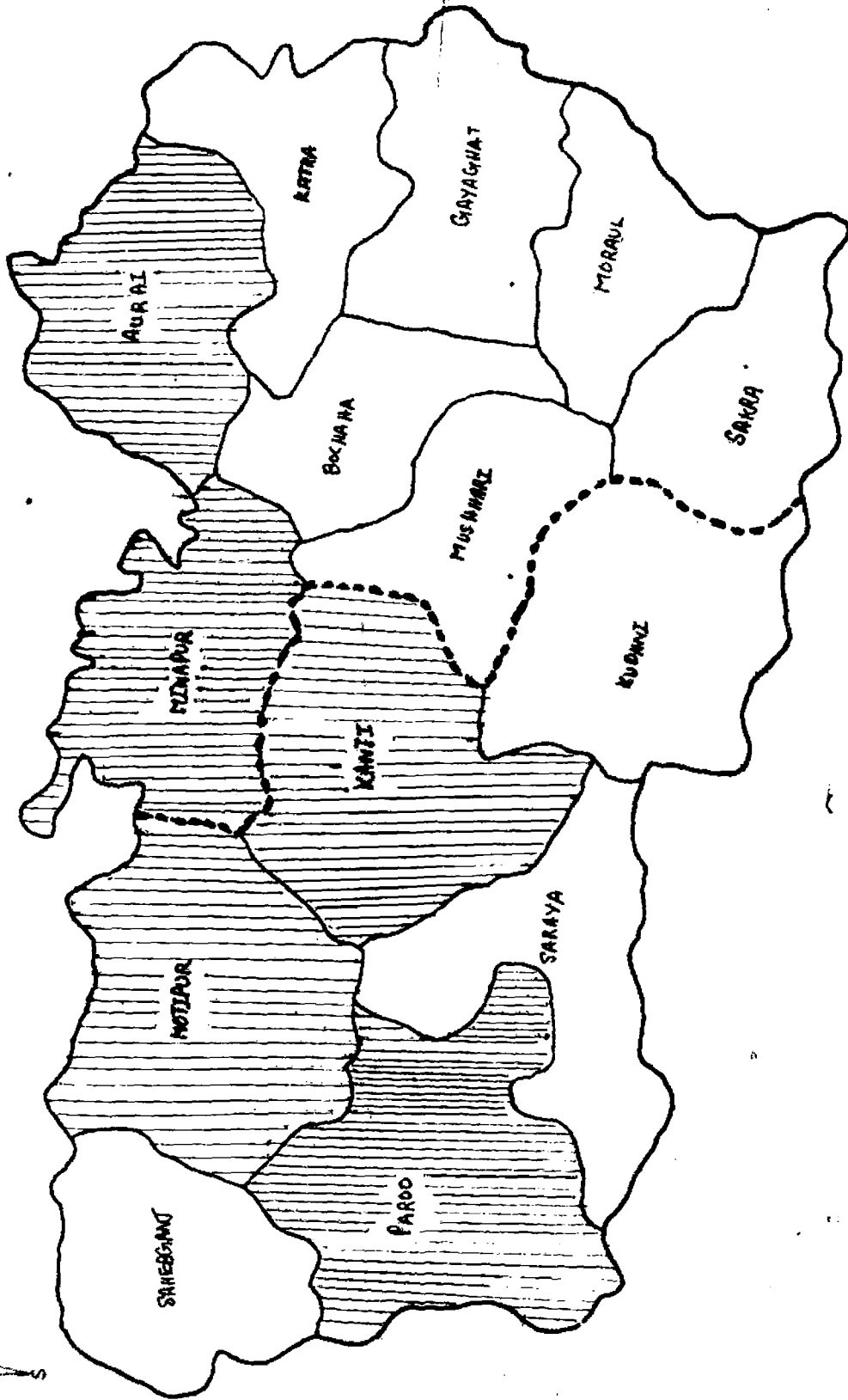
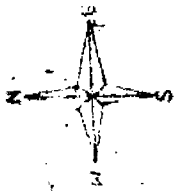
C. Selecting the Method: *not in book.*

Young (1962) has remarked that interview makes possible face to face communication and interstimulation between the interviewer and the interviewee which in turn, helps to secure interpersonal relationship. Hence interview has opted as the method for fact finding in this study. To understand the existing functioning of Mahila Mandals an interview schedules as given in Appendix II for officials and Appendix III for non-officials was prepared and administered to the samples of the selected Mahila Mandals.

D. Conducting the Study:

The investigator went in person to contact the block development officer to obtain permission to collect the information from officials and non-officials. The respondents highly cooperated and every Mahalir Mandal and report on the same as given in Chapter IV.

MAP OF
MUZAFFARPUR DISTRICT'S BLOCKS



COLOUR REPRESENTS THE BLOCKS
VISITED BY THE INVESTIGATOR

Fig 2

E. Analysing and Writing the Report:

The data collected from the president, members of the Mahila Mandals and Officials incharge of the Mahila Mandals are consolidated analysed and presentated in the subsequent chapter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are discussed under the following headings:

- A. Background information about the presidents selected and Mahila Mandal members**
- B. General details of the selected Mahalir Mandals**
 - 1. Information about the Mahila Mandals**
 - 2. Membership in the Mahila Mandals**
 - 3. Financial status of the Mahila Mandals**
 - and 4. Types of Mahila Mandals**
- C. Functioning of Mahila Mandals**
 - 1. Programmes and activities of Mahila Mandals**
 - 2. Equipments available in the Mahila Mandals**
 - 3. Records and Registers maintained in the Mahila Mandals**
 - 4. Aspects for which Mahila Mandals won the award**
 - 5. Problems in the conduct of the Mahila Mandals**
 - and 6. Suggestion for the improvement of the Mahila Mandals**

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRESIDENTS SELECTED MEMBERS OF THE MAHILA MANDALS

Background information of the official and non-official are discussed under the following headings:

- i) Educational status**
- ii) Occupational status**
- and iii) Income**

i) Educational status:

Table I gives the educational status of the presidents and selected members of Mahila Mandals

TABLE I
EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF THE PRESIDENTS AND SELECTED MEMBERS
OF MAHILA MANDALS

S.No.	Educational level	Presi- dent	Percen- tage	Members	Percen- tage
1.	Illiterate	-	-	18	36
2.	Upto primary	-	-	11	22
3.	Upto middle	27	54	17	34
4.	High school	20	40	4	8
5.	College Education	7	6	-	-

It is evident that all the presidents were literates. Thirty six per cent of the selected members were illiterates. Sixty four per cent of them have studied upto Middle school level.

ii) Occupational status of the presidents and members:

The occupational status of the presidents and members is shown in Table II.

TABLE II

OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS

S.No.	Occupation	Presi- dents	Percen- tage	Members	Percen- tage
1.	Mill worker	12	24	7	14
2.	Peon	3	6	—	—
3.	Agriculturist	22	44	23	46
4.	Labour	7	14	11	22
5.	Teachers	6	12	9	18

It indicates that 44 per cent of the presidents and 46 per cent of the members were agriculturists.

iii) Income status of the presidents and members of the Mahila Mandals;

Table III gives the income level of the presidents and members of the Mahila Mandals.

TABLE III

INCOME STATUS OF THE PRESIDENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE MAHILA MANDALS

S.No.	Income range in rupees	No. of President	Percen- tage	No. of Members	Percen- tage
1.	0 to 100	6	12	11	22
2.	100 to 200	13	26	16	36
3.	200 to 300	14	38	14	28
4.	300 to and above	12	24	7	14

12 per cent of the presidents and 22 per cent of the members were in the income range of Rs. 100. Twenty four per cent of the presidents and 14 per cents of the members income was above Rs. 300.

B. GENERAL DETAILS OF THE SELECTED MAHILA MANDALS:

Details of the Mahila Mandals are discussed under the following headings:

1. Information about the Mahila Mandals
2. Membership in the Mahila Mandals
3. Financial status of the Mahila Mandals
- and 4. Types of Mahila Mandals

1. Information about the Mahila Mandals:

Out of 50 Mahila Mandals in Muzaffarpur district 28 were established during 1962-1963 and 32 were established in 1965-1967 out of 50 Mahila Mandals 10 were not registered, the rest were registered under the cooperatives Act. Forty four per cent of Mahila Mandals were registered during 1970-75 and 36 per cent were registered during 1975-80.

2. Membership in the Mahila Mandals:

Membership in the Mahila Mandals is discussed under the following headings:

- a) Number of members enrolled
 - b) Reasons for irregular attendance in the Mahila Mandals
- a) Number of Members enrolled in the registers:

Table IV gives the picture of the members in the Mahila

Mandals as maintained in the register.

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF MEMBERS ENROLLED IN THE REGISTER

S.No.	Members	No. of Mahila Mandals	Percentage
1.	10 to 15	9	18
2.	15 to 20	6	12
3.	20 to 25	13	26
4.	25 to 30	22	44

It is appreciative that 44 per cent of Mahila Mandals were having more than 25 members.

b) Reasons for irregular attendance in the Mahila Mandals:

Table V discussed the reasons for irregular attendance.

TABLE V

REASON FOR IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

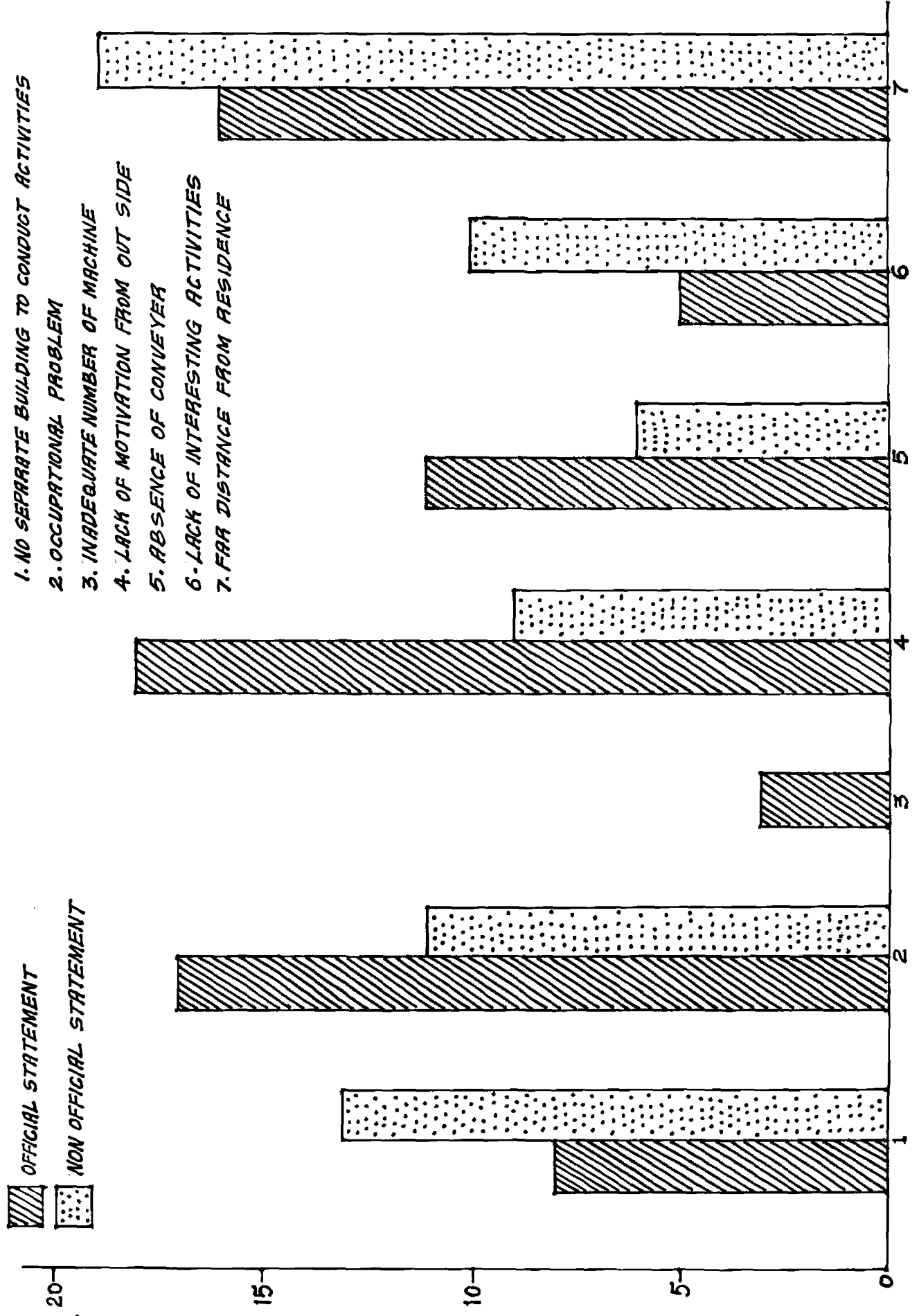
S.No.	Reason	*Official stating	Percen- tage	†Non Offi- cial sta- ting	Percen- tage
1.	No separate building to conduct activities	8	16	13	26
2.	Occupational problem	17	34	11	22
3.	Inadequate number of Machine	3	6	—	—
4.	Lack of Motivation from outside	18	36	9	18
5.	Absence of conveyer	11	22	6	12
6.	Lack of interesting activities	5	10	7	14
7.	Far distance from residence	16	32	19	38

*Official: Mukhyasevika, Gramsevika

†Non-official: Members and Presidents of Mahila Mandal.

Above table illustrate the reasons for irregular attendance. According to official statement 36 per cent were due to lack of motivation, 34 per cent due to occupational problem 32 per cent due to far distance from residence, 16 per cent due to lack of separate building and 6 per cent and 10 per cent due to inadequate number of machine and lack of activities.

According to non-official statement 26 per cent have irregular attendance due to no separate building, 22 per cent having occupational problem, 18 per cents were due to lack of



REASONS FOR IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE

Fig. 3

motivation, 4 per cent were due to lack of interesting activities. 38 per cent due to Mahila Mandals were far from their residence. 12 per cent were not attending due to absence of conveyer.

3. Financial status of the Mahila Mandals:

A sum of Rs. 4,000/- is provided for the block, by Department of Social Welfare to carry out the activities in the Mahila Mandals as detailed in Table VI.

TABLE VI
FINANCIAL STATUS OF THE MAHILA MANDALS

S.No.	Items	Expenditure	
		Existing Rs.	Revised Rs.
1.	Honorarium for the convenors at Rs. 15/- year each quarters	1,800-00	1,800-00
2.	Contingencies for 30 Mahila Mandals at Rs. 50/- per month each	1,800-00	1,800-00
3.	<u>Training Camps:</u>		
	i) For nutrition demonstration programmes at Rs. 15/- each (15x5) Rs. 60/-		
	ii) Refreshments and other incidental expenditure for 40 trainees Rs. 60/-		
	iii) Charts, posters and publicity materials Rs. 30/- for training camps (150 x 8)	1,200-00	
4.	Five baby shows at Rs. 20/-	100-00	200-00
5.	Books for social education	300-00	360-00
6.	Educational tours	--	440-00

Though the officials of the Mahila Mandals were reluctant to express the financial position, a study of the real position concludes with the table which has taken from the publication, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (1978).

4. Types of Mahila Mandals:

Table VII describe the types of Mahila Mandals studied.

TABLE VII
TYPES OF MAHILA MANDALS

S.No.	Supervised by	No. of Mahila Mandals	Percentage
1.	Government supervised	14	28
2.	Supervised by Bihar State Social Welfare Advisory Board	19	38
3.	Nehru Yuvak Kendra	17	34

Out of 50 Mahila Mandals selected, 14 Mahila Mandals were supervised by the Government, 19 Mahila Mandals were supervised by Nehru Yuvak Kendra and 19 Mahila Mandals were under the control of Bihar State Social Welfare Advisory Board.

C. FUNCTION OF THE MAHILA MANDALS:

1. Programmes and activities of the Mahila Mandals
2. Equipments available in Mahila Mandals
3. Records and Registers maintained in the Mahila Mandals
4. Problems in the conduct of the Mahila Mandals
- and 5. Suggestions for the improvement of the Mandals

1. Programmes and activities of the Mahila Mandals:

Programmes and activities of the Mahila Mandals are discussed under the following headings:

a) Programmes and activities conducted in the Mahila Mandals:

Table VIII illustrate the activities and programmes conducted in the Mahila Mandals.

TABLE VIII
PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF MAHILA MANDALS

S.No.	Activities	Number	Percentage
1.	Craft	48	96
2.	Informal education	42	84
3.	Family Planning	45	90
4.	Nutrition education	50	100
5.	Cultural and religious activities	50	100
6.	Socio-economic activities	22	44

Craft includes

1. Tailoring and cutting
2. Embroidary
3. Basket and mat weaving
4. Knitting

Nutrition education includes

1. Kitchen gardening
2. Collective farming
3. Cooking demonstration
4. Fruit preservation
5. Nutrition from locally available food

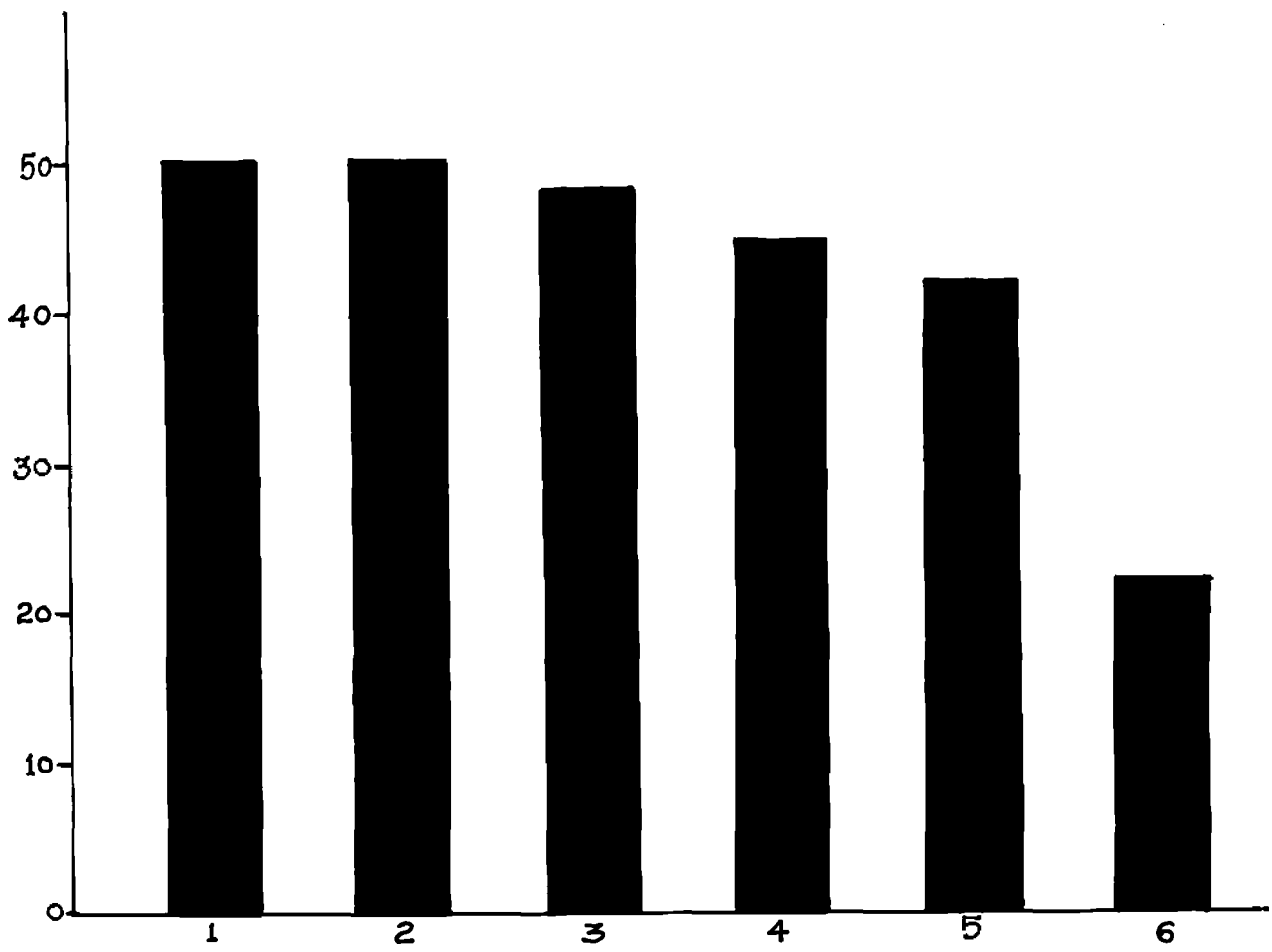
Informal education includes

1. Health
2. Hygiene, personal and Public
3. Labour saving devices

Cultural and religious activities includes

1. Special Poojas and festivals
2. Kirtans/Bhajans
3. Dance/Drama
4. Celebration of national days

- 1. CRAFT TRAINING
- 2. INFORMAL EDUCATION
- 3. FAMILY PLANING
- 4. NUTRITION EDUCATION
- 5. CULTURAL & RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES
- 6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES



ACTIVITIES OF MAHILA MANDAL

Fig -4



The members of Mahila Mandal of Paroo block at Constructive work

Fig-5

Socio-economic activities of the Mahila Mandals:

1. Mat and basket making (for commercial purpose)
2. Masks and paper pulps masks makings
3. Facilities for getting bank loans
4. Setting of shops.

It is evinced that nutrition education and cultural and religious activities were the activities conducted in all (50) the Mahila Mandals. In 48 Mahila Mandals craft activity was conducted. One of the Mahila Mandal have activities on a continued basis. There are large number of programmes which could be entrusted to the Mahila Mandals such non-formal education, functional literacy, motivational and educational aspects of family welfare, personal hygienes, better family budget training and production in rural crafts for women as the group. Hence vocational training could be arranged for self employment.

b) **Activities liked by the members:**

Table IX gives the activities liked by the presidents and members of Mahila Mandals (Samples 100).

TABLE IX
ACTIVITIES LIKED BY THE NON OFFICIAL MEMBER OF THE
MAHILA MANDAL

S.No.	Activities liked	Number	Percentage
1.	Craft	50	100
2.	Cultural and religious activities	50	100
3.	Socio-economic activities	50	100
4.	Nutrition education	22	44
5.	Family planning	10	20

Table IX reveals that craft, cultural and religious activities and socio-economic activities were the activities liked by all the members. It is indicated all other activities should be made in such a manner that it creates interest.

e) Aspects for which the Mahila Mandals have won awards:

Table X shows that how many Mahila Mandal won the awards.

TABLE X
ASPECTS FOR WHICH MAHILA MANDALS HAVE WON THE AWARDS

S.No.	Aspects of which Mahila Mandals won the awards	No. of Mahila Mandals	Percentage
1.	Cooking demonstration	7	14
2.	Best in tailoring	9	18
3.	Best in keeping kitchen garden	4	8
4.	Regular attendance	2	4
5.	Effective participation in family planning	1	2

It is encouraging to note that out of 50 Mahila Mandals 25 had won any one of the awards. Nine Mahila Mandals had won the award for their efficiency in tailoring. Seven had won the award for their efficiency in cooking demonstration and two Mahila Mandals for their regular attendance.

3. Equipment available in the Mahila Mandals:

Table XI shows the availability of equipments in Mahila Mandals.

Chosen for the study all 50 Mahila Mandals were having embroidery frames and other tailoring accessories first aid box, matres and sessels for demonstration; 43 Mahila Mandals were having sewing machines for tailoring and only 3 Mahila Mandals were provided with radio for recreation purpose.

TABLE XI

EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE IN THE MAHILA MANDAL

S.No.	Name of equipment	No. of Mahila Mandal
1.	Sewing Machine	43
2.	Embroidary frames and others Tailoring accessories	50
3.	First aid box	50
4.	Furniture	39
5.	Vessels for demonstration	50
6.	Stove	42
7.	Smokless Chula	3
8.	Matres	50
9.	Radio	3

All the Mahila Mandals are having Embroidary frames and tailoring accessories, first aid box and vessels for cooking demonstration. But only 3 Mahila Mandals are having Radio.

3. Records and registers maintained in Mahila Mandals:

Records and registers maintained in the Mahila Mandals are discussed under the following headings.

a) Records and registers maintained by the presidents and (b) Records and registers maintained by Gram Sevika and Mukhya Sevika.

a) Records and registers maintained by the presidents:

Presidents of the Mahila Mandals were maintained by following records and registers shown in Table number XII.

SCALE
1cm = 5 percent

1cm = 5 percent

KEY

- Tailoring accessories
- First aid box
- vessels for cooking demonstration
- mattresses
- sewing machines
- stoves
- Furniture
- smokers chula
- Radio

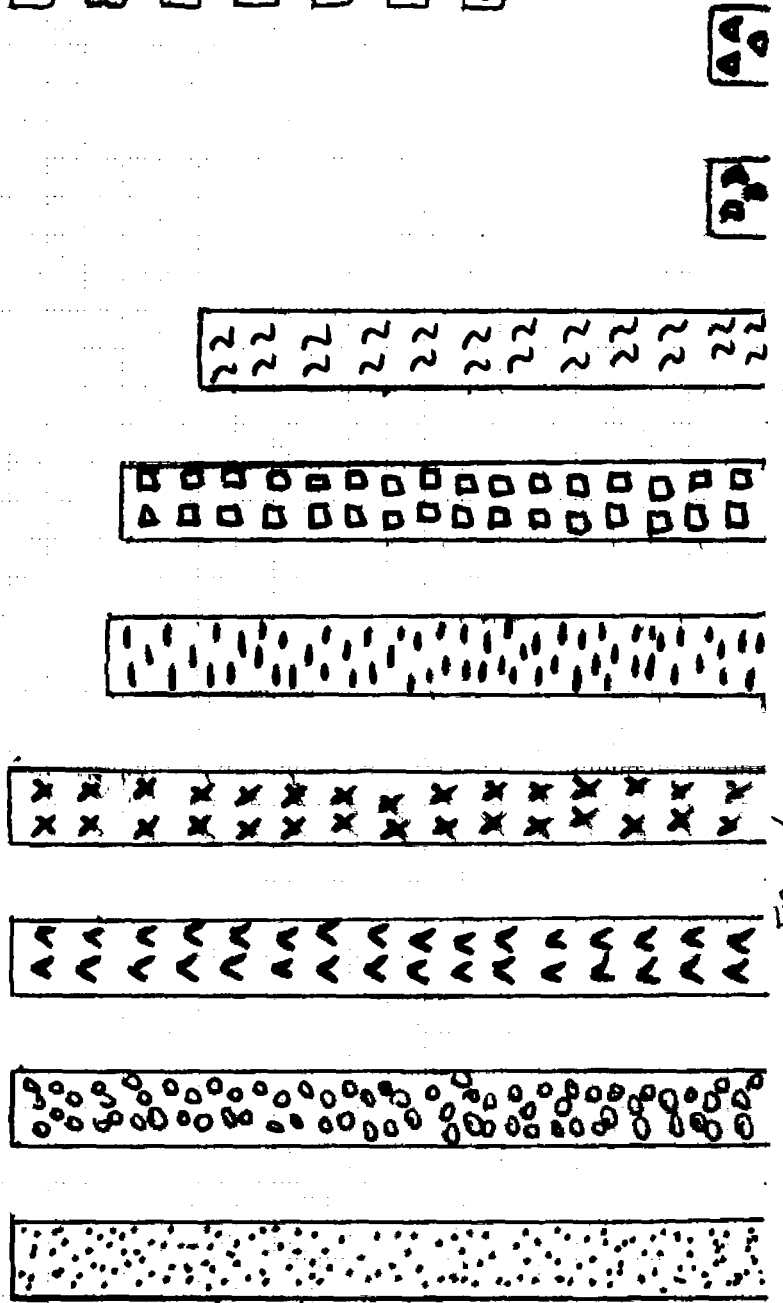


Fig-6
EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE IN MAHILA-MANDALS

It is encouraging to note that all the Mahila Mandals were having attendance registers and stock registers; 48 of them were having minute note books. Eleven were having visitors note books and 3 were having family planning registers.

TABLE XII

RECORDS AND REGISTERS MAINTAINED BY PRESIDENTS

S.No.	Name of registers	No. of Mahila Mandals/day
1.	Attendance Register	50
2.	Stock register	50
3.	Minute note book	48
4.	Family Planning Register	3
5.	Visitors note book	11

Above table shows that all the presidents of Mahila Mandal are maintaining attendance and stock register. But only three are maintaining family planning register.

b) Records and registers maintained by the Gram Sevika and Mukhya Sevika;

Table XIII shows that the number of records and registers maintained by Gram Sevika and Mukhya Sevika.

TABLE XIII

RECORDS AND REGISTERS MAINTAINED BY GRAM SEVIKA AND MUKHYA SEVIKA

S.No.	Name of Register	No. of Mukhya Sevika and Gram Sevika
1.	Village visiting register	10
2.	Target and achievement register	10

Above table shows that all the officials were maintaining village visiting register and target and achievement registers.

4. Problems faced in the conduct of Mahila Mandals:

Problems in the conduct of the Mahila Mandals as stated by (a) Officials (Gram Sevika and Mukhya Sevika) (b) Presidents and members are given below:

a) Problems in the conduct of the Mahila Mandals faced by officials:

Table XIV shows the problems faced by the Gram Sevika or Mukhya Sevika in the conduct of Mahila Mandals.

TABLE XIV

PROBLEMS IN THE CONDUCT OF THE MAHILA MANDALS FACED BY OFFICIALS

S.No.	Problems	No. of officials
1.	Lack of time to cover all the villages	10
2.	Absence of the Carvenes and members	6
3.	No separate building	3
4.	Geork loded apart from Mahila Mandal visit	8
5.	Lack of transport facilities	7

It is sympathetic to note that all the officials interviewed were having the problems of lack of time to cover all the villages. Eight of them were having the problem of such work load, seven were having the lack of transport facilities.

b) Problems faced by Non-officials:

Table XV illustrates the problems faced by the presidents and members of Mahila Mandals.

TABLE XV
PROBLEMS FACED BY NON-OFFICIALS MEMBERS

S.No.	Problems	No. of Non-officials
1.	No separate building	42
2.	Lack of profitable activities	34
3.	Lack of visits by the craft teacher and balsevika to the Mahila Mandals	6
4.	Poor maintenance of machine	19
5.	Lack of cooperation among members	22
6.	Inadequate number of sewing machines	67
7.	Far from residence	59
8.	Caste feeling	77

It is clear that 77 members were having the problem of caste feeling; 67 were having inadequate number of sewing machines; 59 members were residing far from the Mahila Mandals; 42 having problem of no separate building; 34 members were expressed the problems of lack of profitable activities in

Mahila Mandals.

5. Suggestions for the improvement of the Mahila Mandals:

Suggestions for the improvement of the Mahila Mandals are discussed under the following headings:

- a) Suggestion given by officials
- b) Suggestion by non-officials
- c) Suggestion given by the Investigators

a) Suggestion given by officials:

Table XVI evinced the suggestion which were given by officials for the improvement of Mahila Mandal.

TABLE XVI

SUGGESTIONS GIVEN BY OFFICIAL

S.No.	Suggestion	No. of officials
1.	Motivation programme should be effective	10
2.	Separate building should have for Mahila Mandal	7
3.	Financial assistance should increased	9
4.	Number of Mahila Mandal should increase	6
5.	Small scale industries should be started	4
6.	Transport facilities should be provided	10
7.	Gram Sevika should be appointed more	10

All the officials were suggested the motivation programme and transport facilities should be provided. Nine were suggesting to increase the financial assistance.

b) Suggestions given by non-officials:

Table XVII gives the suggestions for the improvement of the Mahila Mandals given by the Convenors and members of the Mahila Mandals.

TABLE XVII
SUGGESTIONS GIVEN BY NON-OFFICIALS

S.No.	Suggestion	No. of members	No. of Presidents
1.	Activities of the Mahila Mandal should be increased	50	48
2.	Activities should be profitable	50	50
3.	Separate building should be provided	39	47
4.	Technical person should be available to teach	37	45
5.	More financial facilities should be given	46	50
6.	Equipment should be increased	41	46
7.	Physical facilities should be provided	47	39

It is found that all the non-officials felt the need for profitable activities. Therefore the visit of craft teachers to the Mahila Mandals were enable to ensure the members well learn continuously. If financial facilities are stabilised then the presidents and members get encouraged majority of the members have suggestions towards increase in finance and inclusion for challenging activities in the Mahila Mandals.

e) Suggestion given by investigator for the improvement of Mahila Mandals:

By the close association with the officials in the Block and non-officials in the Mahila Mandals and visit to each and every Mahila Mandals gave the investigator an insight with realistic problems of the Mahila Mandals. On the basis of these problems, investigator offers the following suggestions for the effective functioning of Mahila Mandals.

1. Separate building for the Mahila Mandals should be provided
2. Financial assistance should be increased
3. Activities should be conducted according to the members interest
4. Activities should be profitable
5. Physical facilities should be provided
6. Agricultural and allied industries such as bee keeping, poultry are to be encouraged
7. Official members should evaluate the programmes properly
8. Education should be given to members about equality and unfeasibility.
9. Proper transport facilities should be provided
10. Welfare programme should be introduced for the needy women
11. Vocational training should be started according to the need interest of the members
12. As regard of motivation, the rural women must be helped to get registered under the societies cooperatives Act.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The study on "The Functioning of the Mahila Mandals" was conducted in Bihar State in Muzaffarpur district in 50 Mahila Mandals with 50 members, 50 presidents of Mahila Mandals and 10 officials (Gramesevika or Mukhya sevika). The results of the study are summarised as follows:

- 1) Since women's education was not satisfactory in Bihar in the earlier days only a negligible percent (3%) of presidents had the opportunity of college education. Hardly 27 per cent presidents could get the education upto middle school. However most of the presidents were qualified. Their amicable nature, their devotion to social work and their capacity for constructive work attracted the present generation for the establishment of Mahila Mandals. Same is the case with the members of Mahila Mandals. So far as the educational status was concerned. But their dedicated work and sincerity are to be appreciated which every member of such organisation must have.
- 2) As expected most of the members and presidents come from agricultural family since the Mahila Mandals are located in the villages and blocks and they are taking care of women's social, educational and economic upliftment. It depicts their interest in developing this organisation for their own welfare. The average per capita income of the Bihar as per the latest census is Rs. 402 and it is known for its lower percapita income in country. Hence

there is nothing surprising when the income levels of members and presidents is on the lower side.

3) All the Mahila Mandals concentrated on Nutrition Education and cultural and religious activities. Craft training was also got importance. Family Planning activities now a days get top priority (90%) in the Mahila Mandals followed by the informal education activities. As usual socio-economic activities gets the lowest attention(44%).

4) Membership of Mahila Mandal varied from place to place. A minimum of 10 members and maximum of 30 members constituted a Mahila Mandal.

5) Mahila Mandals in Masaffarpur district were supervised by:

- a) Bihar State Social Welfare Advisory Board
- b) Nehru Yuvak Kendra
- c) State government of Bihar. The three organisations controlled 33, 34 and 28 per cent of the Mahila Mandals respectively.

6) Most of the Mahila Mandals were registered and only 20 per cent of them were awaiting for registration. Fifty per cent of them were registered prior to 1973 and the remaining in the course of 1980.

7) Twenty per cent of the Mahila Mandals were not registered till now because of the ignorance of the need to register or of procedure and some were not registered because they did not fulfil the conditions laid down for registration.

8) Growth of the Mahila Mandals was retarded;

a) For lack of accommodation; (b) Improper transport facilities; (c) Bad approach roads; (d) Unhealthy sanitary condition; (e) Inadequate financial assistance (f) Lack of interest for want of proper working facilities and above all castes, religious and groups in the village; last but not the least important is the prevailing pardah system in Bihar.

9) Results of the study show that maintenance of records and registers on the whole was far from satisfactory. Most of the Mahila Mandals did not even maintain a visitors book. This was probably due to the absence of administrative staff. However the employees were maintaining the village visiting registers, target and achievements registers.

10) It is sympathetic that both Gram Sevikas and Mukhya Sevikas were facing crucial problems like heavy work load and lack of time to cover all the villages.

11) Mainly the problems faced by non-officials were due to absence of separate buildings. The concerned authorities should make a note of these and help the convenor to conduct the activities in an effective manner. Since in our villages, women are traditionally bounded, they hesitate to go to some others houses, and also there is need for the profitable activities in Mahila Mandal to encourage the members in effective participation.

12. Following were the constructive suggestions given by the officials and non-officials of the Mahila Mandal and also by the Investigator.

- a) Activities of the Mahila Mandals should be creative and profitable
- b) Separate building for the Mahila Mandals should be provided
- c) Financial assistance must be enhanced
- d) Better physical facilities are to be provided
- e) Conveners should try to educate the members about equality and untouchability
- f) Welfare programme could be increased for needy women
- g) Vocational training should be started according to the needs and interests of Mahila Mandals
- h) To motivate the rural women all the Mahila Mandals should be registered under the Societies (Cooperatives) Act.

The women's clubs i.e. Mahila Mandals are effective centres for women to be moulded as effective leaders, efficient women and energetic mothers. Hence the Mahila Mandals must be real change agents with interesting, innovative and improved activities and programmes to realise the set objectives. Women as creators of good citizens of tomorrow for the welfare state are of our great concern and assets.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

LIST OF VILLAGES IN SELECTED BLOCKS SUPERVISED BY THE
INVESTIGATOR

	<u>Villages</u>	<u>Blocks</u>
1.	Sisumpursaraya	PAROO
2.	Pokhraira	
3.	Deoria	
4.	Jaitpur	
5.	Karja	
6.	Chintaha	
7.	Budhanpur	
8.	Paroo	
9.	Bahilawala	
10.	Gahilu	
11.	Kanti	KANTI
12.	Mathiya	
13.	Hirpur	
14.	Kapaiphora	
15.	Kalwari	
16.	Larsanda	
17.	Kurhani	
18.	Turki	
19.	Gokhula	
20.	Dhapai	
21.	Rajkhand	AURAI
22.	Aurai	
23.	Bhadai	
24.	Babhangama	
25.	Bhalura	
26.	Kaphen	
27.	Athari	
28.	Manikpur	
29.	Gayaghat	
30.	Patani	

31. Baruraj
32. Jasauli
33. Jatauliya
34. Hardi
35. Baghat
36. Mahmadda
37. Sadha
38. Ratumpura
39. Mahmal
40. Barji

MOTIPUR

41. Minapur
42. Pannapur
43. Chapra
44. Gosaiपुर
45. Mushari
46. Gijas
47. Nawada
48. Dhanwanpur
49. Lakhnawri
50. Ratouli

MINAPUR

APPENDIX II

SRI AVINASHILINGAM HOME SCIENCE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN, COIMBATORE

SCHEDULE REGARDING THE OPINION OF MUKHYA SEVIKA AND GRAM SEVIKA
OF MAHILA MANDAL

Name of the interviewer ..

Panchayat Union ..

Village ..

Personal Data:

1. Designation ..

2. Age in years ..

3. Educational
Qualification ..

4. Years of experience ..

5. Married .. Yes No

6. How many Mahila
Mandals are there in
your Panchayat Union? ..

7. How many Mahila Mandals
under your control? ..

8. Have all Mahila
Mandals been registered? Yes No

If yes, Specify under which institution?

9. What are aims of these Mahila Mandals?

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

10. How many days in a week/month do you go to Mahila Mandal for Supervision?
11. What aspects do you supervise?
12. What guidance do you give for the Mahila Mandal?
13. How many Mahila Mandals have separate building for meeting?
14. If no where, do they meet it present?

Funds

15. What are the sources of income for Mahila Mandals?

Income

- a) Grants from
 - b) Contribution raised by
 - c) Mahila Mandal on its own
 - d) Grants from Panchayat
 - e) Membership fees
 - f) Any other source(specify)
16. How do they utilise the income?
 17. What are the activities of Mahila Mandals?

.....
S.No. Activities Normal activities Occasional Activities

.....

Do you conduct camps for Mahila Mandals Members?

Yes No

18. Who decides the activities?

19. On what basis are activities planned?

20. What are problems in planning programmes for Mahila Mandals?

21. How are they solved?

22. How do you evaluate the activities of Mahila Mandals?

23. What equipments do you have at Mahila Mandal?

.....

S.No. Equipments Number

.....

24. Do you conduct camps for Mahila Mandals members?

Yes No

25. Details of camp:

.....

S.No.	Name of the Camp	Time	Place	Activities	Evaluation method
.....

26. What are the incentives for Mahila Mandal?

Give details for the past five years:

.....

Incentive	How many Mahila Mandal has received the Prize	For which activities	Year	Prize
.....

27. Give the registers maintained?

.....

S.No.	Content	Need
.....

.....

28. Are you satisfied with the functioning of the Mahila Mandals?

Yes

No

Reasons

29. What are your suggestions you would like to give for the improvement of Mahila Mandals?

APPENDIX III

SRI AVINASHILINGAM HOME SCIENCE COLLEGE FOR WOMEN; COIMBATORE-43

**SCHEDULE FOR GETTING INFORMATION ON MAHILA MANDAL BY PRESIDENT
AND MEMBERS OF THE MAHILA MANDAL**

Name of the Interviewer ..

Panchayat Union/Village ..

Personal data:

1. Name of the interview ..

2. Age ..

3. Occupation ..

4. Education ..

5. Income per month ..

6. Mental status ..

General Information about Mahila Mandals

7. What is the name of your Mahila Mandal?

8. When was the Mahila Mandal started in your village?

Month. Year.

**9. What are the aims and objectives of your Mahila Mandal?
(From authorities record)**

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

10. How long have you been a member in this Mahila Mandal?

- Member
- Secretary
- President

11. Do you have proper building facilities to meet regular?

Yes No

If yes, rented Own

If nowhere do you meet at present?

12. Your Mahila Mandal registered?

If yes, give details of registration and organisation under which registered?

Date. Year. Institution.

Membership:

13. How many members are there in your Mahila Mandal?

14. Give yearwise members since inception(last 5 year)

15. Qualification of Members:

S.No.	Name	Illiterate	Upto Primary	Upto Middle	Upto High School	College Education
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

.....

16. Do you pay any Membership fee to the Mahila Mandal?

Yes No

17. If yes, what is the amount per month?

18. How often does your Mahila Mandal Meet(give days per week)

17. Do you attend the Mahila Mandal regularly?

Yes No

18. If Yes, how many days a week/month do you go?

18. How often you will elect the office bearers in your Mahila Mandal?

19. How often you will elect the member?

Funds:

20. What do you do with the membership fee?

21. Does your Mahila Mandal have a bank?

Yes No

22. What are the Sources of Income to you Mahila Mandal?

a) Grants from G.S.W.B./B.S.M.S.

b) Contribution raised by Mahila Mandal
on its own.

c) Membership fees.

d) Any other(Specify).

Activities of Mahila Mandals:

23. What are the activities Carried out by your Mahila Mandal?

S.No.	Activities	Members involvement
-------	------------	---------------------

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

24. How many are regularly participating in Mahila Mandal Programme?

25. Who is guiding the programme?

26. How often do you get the guidance?

S.No.	Type of guidance	Frequencies
-------	------------------	-------------

1. Gram Sevika

2. Mukhya Sevika

3. Balsevika

4. District Social Welfare Officer

5. Any other

Equipment Stock

27. Do you possess the following in your Mahila Mandal?

- a) Furniture
- b) Furniture for storage
- c) First aid box
- d) Sewing machine
- e) Charts and maps
- f) Cooking vessels for demonstration

Records

- a) Stock register
- b) Account book
- c) Attendance book
- d) Visitors book
- e) Others

28. Incentives:

Has your Mahila Mandal received any incentive/Prize?

Yes No

If yes, give details

.....

S.No.	Year	Sponsor	Activities	What was the prize
.....

.....

29. Have you participated in any public programme?

Yes No

If yes

S.No.	Activities	Types of programme	Sponsored by
-------	------------	--------------------	--------------

1. Competition
2. Radio Programme
3. Training Programme
(specify)

30. In what ways are you proud of your Mahila Mandal?

31. What are the benefits derived from participating in Mahila Mandals?

32. Do you have any problems in your Mahila Mandals?

33. Give the suggestions for effective programme?