

B- References

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and international level, with the ultimate goal of having good and strong ties and relations with these organizations.

3-New democratic elections have to be conducted to select and renew the women leadership in order to include young, educated, experienced and committed leadership.

4-The women's' association has to be independent rather than being inter-dependent on other political parties which usually take decisions while the women act as tools to implement the politicians Agenda.

5- Adult informal education, through its different tools and techniques should be promoted to help women to learn how to become self confident, independent and self-reliant.

Chapter: 4

Discussion and Conclusion

A- Recommendations for Improving Programming in the Problem Area.

The AWCSW should develop its methodology for empowering women's participation in sustainable development through enhancing the AWCSW and other organizations programs to involve the maximum number of Palestinian women to bring about changes in the Palestinian socio-economic situation in Palestine. This wide of active participation could be achieved through following and implementing some of the methods and tools suggested in chapter 3, page 19 which can be summarized as follows:

- 1- Conducting Awareness Campaigns on the Role of Women in Development.***
- 2- Conducting Conference and Seminars on the Importance of Religious and Cultural Diversity.***
- 3- Promotion of Rural Infrastructure Development***
- 4- Establishment of Income-generating Programs of Rural Women.***
- 5- Establishment of Micro-credit Scheme for Rural Women.***
- 6- Networking and Advocacy Training:***

In the light of this, I would like to suggest the following:

- 1- A comprehensive need assessment must be done for the AWCSW at the organizational level and the branch level in the 12 districts in order to:***
 - determine the root causes of the inactive participation.***
 - determine the strengths and weaknesses of the women's association.***
- 2- Tour studies are necessary for the association women leaders to exchange their experiences with other successful women organizations at the local***

be considered as the most powerful strengths of the women association, get still according to results of the need assessment done for AWCSW (2000) by the Welfare association in cooperation with the Near East Foundation, the report stated that the AWCSW is suffering from some weaknesses which need special interventions to strengthen the women association. These weaknesses can be summarized as follows:

- * Lack of financial resources.*
- * Lack of managerial, monitoring, planning and evaluation skills.*
- * Poor networking and communications with donor agencies.*
- * Lack of technical skills.*

The report suggested the following intervention and measures to help the association in solving its problems and strengthen its weakness points through:

- 1- Providing the women association with Technical Assistances.*
- 2- Human capacity building (Training the AWCSW Staff).*
- 3- Institutional building (Building the AWCSW).*
- 4- Supplying the women association with computers, internet lines and improving its infrastructure in general.*
(Welfare association and Near East Foundation's report,2000)

from traveling alone outside their village to attend school.

- 2- Established small sewing factories in the Balata refugee camp near Nablus, in the West Bank village of Kufr Na'maeh and in Jerico. The Balata factory, which makes Children's clothes and adult underwear, has become so successful that it is now self-supporting.*
- 3- Founded 128 kindergartens in the rural areas, which currently serve over 5,000 children. The kindergarten targeted lower income families who cannot afford private pre-school classes for their children.*
- 4- Worked with other women to draft laws on women's issues such as marriage, divorce and inheritance for the Palestinian Authority.*
- 5- Provided leadership training courses to women in villages and refugee camps to help them make independent decisions, both in politics and in their personal lives.*
- 6- Opened a counseling center in Jenin, which provides legal advice to women on marriage and divorce issues, seminars on health issues, and assistance in raising handicapped children.*
- 7- The establishment of Income-generating Programs of Rural Women:*

Income generating programs for rural women should be established in order to enable the women members of the AWCSW to participate in the economic activities of their association. The Near East Foundation used this approach through creating income-generating activities (Green Houses) in two different geographical rural areas (Bathan and Al-Shuhada villages in the northern part of Palestine) in Palestine in 2000. These two Green House projects created ten jobs. The women received salaries on a monthly basis and shared 25% of the total net profits. The women's organization also indirectly created 88 jobs in the first year. This and other types of income generating programs encourage women of the AWCSW to participate effectively in the economic activities of the association. Simialr projects should be established by the women in rural areas.

C- Evaluation:

In spit of the AWCSW's success in implementing many of its activities and the achievements of many of its objectives during the last 20 years, which can

2- Technical Assistant and Capacity Building:

The main activities include:

- *Training program.*
- *On-the-job training (know-how).*

These two activities support women technically in the above-mentioned income generating activities. The aim is to enhance women's skills in agriculture, in general, and fish farming, in particular. The capacity-building program had also been carried out to build the capacity of different Palestinian governmental organizations and NGOs, due to the lack of skilled people to manage the new Palestinian civil institutions. Technical assistance also includes programs such as:

- *Housing.*
- *Child to child.*
- *Cans for kids.*
- *Art for kids.*
- *Need assessment methods.*
- *Fish farming programs.*
- *Social appraisal.*

(NEF Annual report, June, 1999).

2- The role of Women Association for Social Work (WASW).

A- Programs and Activities:

The Association's programs include 128 kindergartens, three nurseries, sewing training centers, home embroidery projects, children's libraries, co-educational summer camps, leadership training especially for rural women, activities and exhibitions and bazaars that sell traditional Palestinian products.

(Welfare Association and NEF report-need assessment for AWCSW, 2000).

B- Achievements:

AWCSW has accomplished among other things the following:

- 1- Organized literacy classes in villages for older women who have never attended school, and for younger women whose parents prevented them*

women's empowerment, one of these NGOs was the Near East Foundation which specialized in developmental issues which we can summarize its role as shown below.

The role of Near East Foundation (NEF)

NEF has sponsored innovative self-help initiatives, equipping individuals and community groups with information, training opportunities, new skills and technological assistance that enable people to improve their lives, increase their incomes, assist others, and more confidently claim a greater say in the running of their own affairs. NEF has continued to respond to changing human needs and aspirations. NEF works to foster dialogue between local communities, government agencies, and research and education institutions. NEF works in strengthening community development associations to provide training to its members in management and development skills in order to increase their effectiveness. More than anything else, NEF works for women's empowerment. The organization enables women to earn a living for themselves and their children. NEF programs in Palestine can be summarized as follows:

1- Women Empowerment Programs:

NEF had implemented many activities concerning women's empowerment in Palestine and continues to work with different women's associations, such as, the Association of Women Committees for Social Work (AWCSW) and the Union of Women for Action in the following:

Income Generating Activities:

These include:

- *Green houses in the West Bank.*
- *Fish farming in Jericho and Gaza Strip.*

Women are the main target groups for these projects. These projects have been established to create jobs for women and generate income for these women's associations in order to improve their financial positions and empower them to be independent.

6- Examples of Participatory Adult Education Methods:

There are many adult education methods, which can be used by the women's association to enhance active participation. The association can easily implement these methods since they are simple, easy to practice and very effective. Among these different methods are the following:

- ***Role Play:***

Moreno, the designer of psychosomatic ways, maintains that "the self emerges from the role" and that we are all players, and may play one role or another (cited in Vella, 1979, p.10)

- ***The Use of Games:***

The women should create learning games for their own community; those games could be played by individuals or by a group of women in a competitive way such as designing plans, sewing, producing and marketing products of their own. This type of games will help women to understand some of the development process through learning by action.

- ***The Use of Folk Materials, such as songs, dances, poems, proverbs, drama, and stories...etc.***

These different methods (1 and 2 above) could be applied in our Palestinian society at different community levels, because they are easy to implement. In fact, some of them are already being used at the public level. The third method mentioned above is very popular. The use of drama might not be possible in all communities in Palestine, especially in the rural areas, where there is a lack of theaters and trained pupils. Venues through which the traditional values can be expressed are lacking due to the absence of security and mobility, caused by Israeli military closures.

v- Possibilities of Empowering Palestinian Women:

1- The role of NGOs in empowering women:

Previous experience showed that, local and international NGOs in Palestine have played and still are playing a very important role in Palestinian

negative attitudes and stereotypes about the less-fortunate women. Training will help them to identify policy makers and other stakeholders that make decisions affecting their lives. (www.awcsw.com, 2001, p.4)

To achieve this, it is important to:

- *assist women in starting their own small businesses,*
- *train women in new skills such as administration, clothing design and physical therapy;*
- *encourage more women to become involved in political parties and to express their political views more openly.*

As we enter a new stage in our national history, the Social Work Association intends to be a major agent in changing and advancing the role of women in Palestinian society.

In the light of this, I would like to suggest the following:

- 1- *A need assessment must be done for the AWCSW at the organizational level and the branch level in the 12 districts in order to:*
 - *determine the root causes of the inactive participation*
 - *determine the strengths and weaknesses of the women's' association*
- 2- *Tour studies are necessary for the association women leaders to exchange their experiences with other successful women organizations at the local and international level, with the ultimate goal of having good and strong ties and relations with these organizations.*
- 3- *New democratic elections have to be conducted to select and renew the women leadership in order to include young, educated, experienced and committed leadership.*
- 4- *The women's' association has to be independent rather than being inter-dependent on other political parties which usually take decisions while the women act as tools to implement the politicians agenda.*
- 5- *Adult informal education, through its different tools and techniques should be promoted so as to help women to learn how to become self confident, independent and self-reliant.*

They hardly recognize how this will have a positive effect on their livelihood and their general status. These Awareness Campaigns will enable the women to discover their potential and become more aware of their rights and duties as citizens. Such awareness will enable them to elect trustworthy women leaders for their associations.

2- Religio - Cultural Diversity:

Conferences and Seminars should be held by the AWCSW to raise the awareness of women about the importance of Religious and Cultural Diversity. These conferences and seminars should enable the women to develop critical thinking and tolerance of multicultural and religious discussion.

3- Promotion of Rural Infrastructure Development

The deteriorating rural infrastructure is an obstacle to women's active participation and development. There is need to promote rural infrastructure development. This will give an opportunity for women to study in schools, travel and attend workshops, and seminars, which will increase their interest to participate and contribute to their own economic development.

4- Establishment of Micro-credit Scheme for Rural Women:

It is necessary that AWCSW establish its own Micro-credit Scheme for its rural women in order to enhance their socio-economic advancement. This involves financially supporting them through the establishment of micro-credits and grants for marginalized women. They must be given the opportunity to acquire loans for their businesses at a lower rate of interest with a long repayment period ranging between 5-7 years. These loans will allow them to implement their own projects, which in turn will involve them in participating in different socio-economic activities undertaken by their association.

5- Networking and Advocacy Training:

Networking and Advocacy Training is another approach that would encourage women to learn how to network and lobby for their own needs and interests. Strengthening the relationship between the AWCSW members on the one hand and the community members on the other hand, will change the

women of AWCSW live. The rural areas have very poorly developed infra-structures. There are very few educational and health institutions in these areas. Safe drinking water and electricity are also non-existent in most rural areas. Transportation in the rural areas is also a problem. These inhuman conditions are daily nightmares for the women; part of the problem is the lack of transportation while the other part is because of Israeli restrictions on movement.

This situation has adversely affected the participation of the AWCSW women in their own development. Their self-esteem, confidence and sense of community belonging have been greatly eroded by these deplorable rural conditions. In fact Hope, Timmel and Hodzi (1984, p. 3) argue, “[this urban-based development approach]...sets up a process which leads inevitably to the rich getting richer and the poor, poorer.”

2- Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Land:

Closures and security measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities include the siege of towns, villages, and borders, between the two neighboring countries. This hinders women’s mobility and access to travel between or among different towns and villages to participate in the economic development processes, education and training. I argue that it would be unrealistic to expect these women to actively participate in their own development in the midst of such structural violence.

These are some of the factors that are related to illiteracy and the misunderstanding of cultural and religious values, which in turn prevent women from participating in their associations’ development activities.

VI – Methods and tools for empowering women:

1- Awareness Campaigns :

AWCSW should involve its women members in its program activities by organizing Awareness Campaigns on the Role of Women in Development. The importance of these campaigns goes back to the fact that the association’s women in general do not realize the importance of their role in development.

martyred - supporting their families through working in their agricultural fields on a daily basis. This means that they cannot leave their work simply to participate in their association's development programs.

3- High Level of Illiteracy:

The high level of illiteracy among Palestinian women in general and the members of the AWCSW in particular – since the AWCSW is supporting and involving in its activities the most unprivileged and poor Palestinian women - hinders their participation in most of the association's economic activities. Since their illiteracy affects their social positions and status in the society, they do not feel competent enough to make meaningful contributions in major discussions regarding their organization. Their self-esteem is quite low.

4- Patriarchal System:

Like other women's associations and organizations in Palestine, the indirect control of the Association of Women for Social Work by other male-dominated political parties in the country had made the women to be dependent on men. This has limited their right to make their own decisions. This has affected the women's level of confidence in their association, resulting in limited participation in their association's economic activities.

B- The External Factors:

In addition to the internal factors that hinder women's participation in development activities, there are two external factors that have an impact on women's participation. The following is the brief discussion of these two factors.

1- Urban-biased Development Approaches :

It is important to note that Palestine receives the bulk of its funds for socio-economic and political development from international donor agencies and neighboring Arab countries, About 90 per cent of the total funds received from these bodies are provided with strings attached. In other words, this external financial assistance comes with many conditions. Most of the donor agencies/countries favor an urban-centered development approach. This has resulted in a general neglect of the rural areas, where most of the

co-educational summer camps, leadership training especially for rural women, activities and exhibitions and bazaars that sell traditional Palestinian products.

(www.awcsw.com, 2001, p.2)

III- Factors limiting women participation in development:

This section will deal with the factors that hinder the active participation of women members of AWCSW in their association development activities. There are both internal and external factors. I shall start reviewing the internal factors.

A- Internal Factors:

Internal factors are composed of four socio-cultural types. The following is a brief review of these factors.

1- Cultural and Religious Values :

Due to hegemonic and conservative social norms that exist in Palestinian rural areas, a section of women are not free to travel by themselves from village to city. However, it must be indicated that only uneducated women cannot freely travel, while educated rural females can travel to city, provided they return home before darkness.

Women have no access to mobility. They are not allowed to travel alone and participate in public meetings due to the low level of education especially of the women in the rural areas. Generally, people misunderstood the cultural and religious values regarding women's status and their rights to participate in economic development.

2- Poverty:

Poverty is the main hindering factor for women's participation in economic development activities. Women members of the AWCSW, especially those in the rural areas, are generally poor. Therefore, they do not participate in any of the AWCS economic activities, since they do not have the financial power to cover the travel expenses. Moreover, most of these women are acting as heads of households – since most of them lost their main family's households (husbands, sons or brothers) who were detained or injured / disabled or

II- AWCSW'S Background:

A- AWCSW'S Mission:

It works towards improving women's economic, social and cultural positions and defending women's basic right to work, to education and self-development. The Association publishes a newsletter in Arabic and English and magazine called AL FALASTINIA, as well as books and booklets about women prisoners and issues such as early marriage, divorce and health issues. (www.awcsw.com, 2001, p.1)

The AWCSW'S mission mentioned above could be obtained successfully only through achieving the main objectives of the association (AWCSW) as shown below.

B - Objectives:

The objectives of the Association are:

- *To raise the status of the women in Palestinian society by demanding equal opportunities in education and work.*
 - *To strengthen women's self-respect and self-confidence.*
 - *To improve women's educational level and their professional and administrative skills.*
 - *To provide education services to low-income women, pre-school children and the handicapped, especially in villages and refugee camps.*
 - *To strengthen the Association's relationships with other sectors of Palestinian society, especially with residents of villages and refugee camps.*
 - *To work with other women to draft laws for the new Palestinian Authority that will ensure equality for women in the family, the work place, and the future Palestinian Government.*
 - *To promote the implementation of democratic principles in elections, national institutions, the media and educational system.*
 - *To build a bridge of understanding and co-operation with solidarity organizations and women unions (World Women Association) abroad.*
- (www.awcsw.com, 2001, p.2)*

C- Programs and Activities:

The Association's programs include 128 kindergartens, three nurseries, sewing training centers, home embroidery projects, children's libraries,

Chapter: 3

Palestinian Women's Movement

(Their status and role in development Process).

The Association of Women Committees for Social Work (AWCSW).

I- Introduction:

The Women's movement in Palestine began in the early years of the twentieth century when social and charitable organizations with mainly humanitarian objectives were established. These charitable societies contributed greatly in promoting women's consciousness in the educational, social, economic, and political spheres. Women's activities in Palestine, however, have been isolated from national issues (www.GUPW.NET).

The Association of Women for Social Work (AWCSW) is a member of General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was established in 1965 as a body within the Palestinian Liberation Organization and it is considered to be the official representative body for Palestinian women around the world. It is also the umbrella for all women's organizations in Palestine and in exile. The main goal of GUPW, since its establishment, has been to mobilize women within Palestinian communities to participate in various social, economic and political Processes, which contribute to their development (www.awcsw.org, 2001).

But in the 1980s, Women became more involved with political and national issues through various women Committees. The committees aimed to reach women from all social classes and mobilize them to struggle against class, gender and national oppression. The Association of Women's Committees for Social Work is a mass-based, grass-roots organization founded in June 1981. The highest organ of the Association is the Executive Committee, which consists of 21 members representing different areas of the occupied territories. The headquarters are located in Ramallah. The Association has over 250 branch committees located in cities, villages and refugee camps throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Over 10,000 women have participated in its activities over the last two decades. (www.awcsw.com, 2001, p.1)

of foreigners to replace Palestinians, has resulted in individual hardship and considerable collective loss. The situation has been worsened by the sudden decline in income from the Arab oil states. Palestinians in the Arab oil states lost their jobs and were often expelled in retaliation for Arafat's support of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War. Direct financial aid from the oil states to the Palestinians has also fallen for the same reasons. All of these factors have given rise to a dangerous level of unemployment, which must be addressed and solved.

In the light of the above, it is clear that the Palestinian economy is operating substantially below its potential. This situation is due mainly to the following factors:

- *The legacy of an inhospitable environment featuring a poor infrastructure, weak public services and obsolete legal and institutional frameworks.*
- *An economic orientation of asymmetric market relations with one partner-Israel - heavy dependence on the export of labor services, and vulnerability to external shocks and political instability.*

Estimates of GNP per capita in the Palestinian economy place it within the group of lower middle-income countries. For instance, estimates of Gross National Product (GNP) per capita range from \$1,323 to \$1,696 for 1993, while the average for lower middle-income countries for the same year was \$1,590. It amounts only to 12 per cent of Israeli per capita GNP. The per capita measures are converted from local currencies to the dollar by using the nominal exchange rate, and thus ignore differences in domestic price levels between countries. Allowing for these differences is likely to make the Palestinian per capita GNP close to that of Egypt and Jordan and probably to 30 per cent of that of Israel

(United Nations, 1998).

Gaza Strip population). Since 1967, and especially since the late 1970s, Israel has pursued a policy of building settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, mainly on expropriated public and private Palestinian land. According to Palestinian estimates in 1994, the number of these settlements had reached 194, most of which are in the West Bank, including 28 settlements constructed since 1967 within the expanded Jerusalem municipal boundaries. There are 18 Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip. The total population of the Israeli settlements in both regions is estimated to have reached around 150,000 by 1995, excluding settlements in the east Jerusalem area. These settlements have led to intensive and disproportionate use of scarce natural resources. For instance, the population of the Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip is 5,000, equivalent to less than half of one per cent of the area's Palestinian population, yet, they use 25 per cent of the Strip's land area. In the West Bank, Israeli settlements account for one third of the total water consumption, although their population is equivalent to fewer than 9 per cent of the Palestinian population. In addition, Israeli settlements "have broken up areas of contiguous Arab settlements and bifurcated private farmers' agricultural land with roads and other infrastructures" (United Nations, 1998, p.4).

3- Economy:

Following the Israeli occupation in 1967, the West Bank economy has been utterly disrupted. From its traditional agricultural base, the area has become more and more reliant on jobs in Israel. Palestinians have gone into Israel for both skilled and unskilled work, particularly in the construction industry. Palestinians have also been employed in the Arab oil states and income from these sources accounts for a healthy infusion of foreign currency into the West Bank and other areas. When the intifada (the political apprising of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation began in 1987, access to jobs in Israel became less and less certain because of strikes called by the Palestinian leaders, and because of the curfews imposed by Israel.

In need of income, and available time, Palestinian workers returned to agriculture, often rehabilitating and enlarging their farmlands. The end of easy access to employment in Israel for Palestinians, and Israeli employment

The combined area of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (6,165 sq. km) constitutes 23 percent of the area of pre-1948 British Mandate Palestine, and is approximately one-third of the area of the state of Israel. The West Bank is 5,800 sq. km in area, 130 km long and ranges between 40 to 65 km in width. It lies between Israel to the West and Jordan to the East. The Gaza Strip is 365-sq km in area, 45 km long and between 5 to 12 km wide. It borders Israel to the North and East, the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula to the South, and the Mediterranean Sea to the West. The Gaza Strip is mainly coastal plain and sand dunes, while the West Bank is more diverse, featuring four topographic zones. The Jordan Valley, along the Jordan River, is a fertile plain of around 400 sq. km, while the eastern slopes are a rocky, semi-arid area of 1,500 sq. km, leading down to the Dead Sea. The Central Highlands constitute the largest zone, 3,500 sq. km, rising 1,000 meters above sea level in places. The Semi-Coastal zone consists of 400 sq. km in the West and Northwest. The West Bank is divided into three main districts with eight sub-districts, each of which is named after one of the main cities. The northern region comprises the sub-districts of Jenin, Tulkarem, and Nablus, while the central region includes Jerusalem, Jericho, Ramallah and Bethlehem; and Hebron constitutes the southern region (Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, 1997).

According to a demographic survey conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) prior to the recent census, the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is estimated to have reached 2.75 million in 1997 (1.70 million in the West Bank and 1.05 million in the Gaza Strip). The population density differs markedly between the two areas. In the West Bank the population density is 284 persons per square km, whereas in the Gaza Strip, the comparable figure is 2,888. In Gaza City, the population density is 14,000

persons per sq. km, which is one of the highest population densities in the world. According to PCBS projections, the population is expected to exceed 3 million by the turn of the century, reflecting an annual population growth rate of 5.4 per cent. This unusual high rate combines both natural increase (3.4 per cent per annum in the West Bank and 4.6 per cent in the Gaza Strip) and Palestinian returnees from the diaspora since 1994. Almost 40 per cent of the resident populations are registered as refugees from the wars of 1948 and 1967 (28 per cent of the West Bank population and 64 per cent of the

Chapter: 2

Brief Background of the Country

A- Introduction:

This brief study has grown out of my last ten years of work experience in Palestine where I worked with women's associations such as, The Women Association Committees for Social Work and The Union of Women Federation, through their leaders and members in different areas of the country. After attending a course about Participatory Adult Education at the Coady International Institute, I have found that it is worthwhile to deepen my understanding of leadership problems in Palestine and to examine the ways of enhancing the empowerment of female leaders. This study addresses this need. It explores women- leadership problems in Palestine and the need to empower female leaders.

B- The Socio-Economic and Political Conditions:

1- Historical Background:

The term Qadiyat Falasteen (Palestinian cause) designated a political issue, which first emerged in the early 1920s as a result of the interplay between three factors. The first of these was the British occupation of Palestine and the imposition of the British mandate, resulting in the creation of a distinct geo-political entity, separated from the rest of Greater Syria and defined as "Mandated Palestine". The second was the birth of political Zionism, which secured a British promise to facilitate Zionist effort aimed at creating a "Jewish National homeland in Palestine." Finally, there was the nascent Palestinian Arab resistant movement against both the British occupation and the Zionist enterprise. The Palestinian cause was largely influenced by eye-witness reports and was governed by an idealism that held that the "Nakba / catastrophe" of 1948, in the words of one witness "inflicted such a painful wound in the heart of every Arab political leader and people (www. Alahram.com, Alahram Newspaper, 1998).

2. Geography and Population:

- *maintain the social system and reproduce existing social relations.*
 - *transmit knowledge.*
 - *encourage individual advancement and selection.*
 - *provide for leisure time pursuit and institutional expansion.*
- Aid in future development and liberation.*

b- What is Empowerment?

According to Hope, Timmel and Hodzi (1999, p.105): Empowerment is a process of enabling women to participate actively in identifying and analyzing critically the causes of their problem and uniting with them in finding solutions. Women themselves will be transformed, grow more confident, more creative as they participate in transforming the structure.

c- What is Popular Education?

For the purpose of this study, Popular education is a non-formal adult education process. "It is a social activity which takes place within specific social, political and economic relations and links with community development questions, democratically and internationally" (Spencer, 1998: p.16).

d- What is Development?

According to Canada Council for Economic Development, development is ..."a complex process, involving the social, economic, political and cultural betterment of individuals and of society itself. Betterment in the sense means the ability of the society to meet the physical, emotional and creative need of the population at a historically acceptable level and to free human labor time from an incessant treadmill of basic needs production. It thus involves increasing standards of living, but not conspicuous consumption, and it implies a form of society that allows for an equal distribution of social wealth..."

Canada Council for Economic Development (1991, p. 20):

I argue that any development initiative must be sustainable. In this context, "sustainable development means, the development, which ensures that, it meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (Redclift:, 1987: p. 10).

primary source of data for this study includes my experience working with women's associations in Palestine over the last 10 years. Secondary sources for this study include references such as manuals, books, journals, and research conducted concerning the importance of adult education in social change and women's empowerment.

6- Definition of Concepts:

a- The Meaning of Adult Education:

According to UNESCO (cited in Tray, 2001, p.26) Literacy and Adult Education are a means for people to overcome poverty and exclusion, establish and reinforce democracy, achieve justice and comprehensive peace, enhance economic and social well-being and improve their health and ensure their food security. Adult education helps to prevent and eliminate gender and racial disparity, and other social problems such as violence against women, drug addiction, environmental destruction, and HIV/AIDS.

Adult education has to be implemented in participatory methods, based on the following principles (Www.hochawai.edu/intranet):

- *Adults have established values, beliefs and opinions.*
- *Adult are people whose style and pace of learning have probably changed.*
- *Adults relate new knowledge and information to previously learned information and experiences.*
- *Adults are people with bodies influenced by others.*
- *Adults have pride.*
- *Adults have a deep need to be directed.*
- *Individual differences among people increase with age.*
- *Adults tend to have a problem-centered orientation to learning.*

Therefore, Participatory Adult Education is a social activity, which takes place within specific social, political and economical relations and links with community development questions, domestically and internationally. Adult Education is the struggle to create a new understanding and actions based on dialogue between the different people in society.

The aim of Adult Education is to (Spencer, 1998, p.16):

murders in the Gaza strip and West Bank were "honor killings." Today, many women's organizations actively campaign for the victims and provide emergency assistance, including counseling. There is also a lack of financial resources, low participation of women in decision-making, and a high rate of illiteracy among women in rural areas, among other things. However, the main obstacle for the advancement of women and of Palestinian society as a whole is the Israeli occupation, which has prevented development in every respect, especially in terms of the economy. Conditions of Palestinian women are highly affected by the political situation and the insecurity and instability that have characterized Palestinian society for more than four decades. Consequently, the advancement of women in Palestine is partly dependent on the success of the peace process.

3- Significance of the Study:

The significance of this study is manifold. It will serve as a resource material for local organizations. It will also identify methods of adult education that these organizations could use to empower women and enhance their role as agents of social change. The study will also contribute to a better understanding of the problem being investigated. It will educate and inform women in my community and others so they are able to help themselves and others to become involved.

4- Key Research Questions:

- *What are the main internal and external factors limiting the active participation of the AWCSW in their association's development activities?*
- *What participatory adult education methods can AWCSW use to enhance the active participation of their members in the association's activities?*
- *What role can "Non-Government Organizations" play to encourage AWCSW women to participate in their own development?*

5- Methodology:

The methodology that was used in this research is that of a case study research. Moreover, this research was also qualitative and descriptive. The

cupation. In fact, women ran many households because male family members had been arrested, deported, injured, or killed. Palestinians lived under an Israeli military control that included curfews, the deportation of political activists, arrests, school closures, and a general disruption of daily life (The Palestinian Women General Union, 1998, Acc.date:2001).

In 1992, when several technical committees were formed for the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC) was established in order to address the issues that affected women in the occupied territories of Palestine. WATC represented women from the six major political parties and pressured the Palestinian National Authority to eliminate any form of discrimination and violence against women In its Website (www.awcsw.com, 2001), the Women's Affairs Technical Committee says that it will attempt to achieve its goals through the following means:

- *Empowering the women's committees and institutions;*
- *Lobbying for more decision-making posts for women within the Palestinian National Authority (PNA);*
- *Working for more female representation in the municipal and legislative elections;*
- *Networking between women's institutions;*
- *Informing women about challenges and developments;*
- *Developing the administrative and organizational skills of women and their institutions;*
- *Ensuring the drawing up of gender-sensitive policies and legislation in the various spheres;*
- *Developing the assertiveness of women.*

New legislation has been introduced, including a woman's right to give her nationality to her children, to keep her own name, and to obtain a passport without the permission of a male relative. The highest decision-making remains male-dominated, but some Palestinian women have entered the public arena. For example, Mrs.Hanan Ashrawi is a Palestinian activist and Legislative Council member. Also, during the 1998 Palestinian Council election, twenty-eight candidates were women (only five were elected). Women's organizations have been somewhat successful, but some difficulties peculiar to Palestinian social conditions remain, such as "honor killing." UNICEF estimated that during 1999 more than two-thirds of all

Chapter: 1

Problem Statement

1- Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to examine the internal and external factors hindering the active participation of the women of the Association of Women Committees for Social Work (AWCSW) in some aspects of their programs, with a view to identifying Participatory Adult Education approaches that could enhance their participation. This Chapter describes the nature of the problem and the key research questions. The main concepts used in this study are also defined in this chapter.

2- Nature of Problem to be Addressed:

Women make up 49% of the approximately 3.2 million inhabitants of the Palestinian territory, an area composed of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Half are under the age of fifteen, which is the legal age of marriage for girls. The adult literacy rate for women is 77%. Although participation of women in the labor force has risen with increased education, women still make up only 14.9% of the salaried labor force. Most of the women work as teachers, nurses, in the textile industry, and in commerce. The informal employment of women in agriculture is very common (The Palestinian Women General Union, 1998 Acc.date:2001).

Unlike other Arab countries in the region where the campaign for women's rights did not take off until after the Second World War, Palestine has had active women's movement since the early 1920s. However, the women's movement did not flourish until the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza during the 1967 war. Its main purpose was to mobilize the Palestinians against occupation, and not to address social issues.

During the late 1970s, several political parties had women's committees in which college students and others such as political activities raised concerns about the difficult situation of Palestinian women under Israeli occupation. Women were very active in the Intifada (The Palestinian political appraisal) and the Palestinian uprising in 1987, which demanded an end to Israeli oc-

ملخص

إن الهدف الرئيس لهذه الدراسة هو فحص العوامل الداخلية والخارجية التي تعوق المشاركة النشطة بعامة للمرأة في عملية التنمية المستدامة و المرأة في اتحاد لجان المرأة الفلسطينية للعمل الاجتماعي في فلسطين بخاصة. إن هذه الدراسة تركز أكثر على العوامل التي تمنع وتعوق النساء في اتحاد لجان المرأة الفلسطينية للعمل الاجتماعي من المشاركة النشطة في عمليات التنمية المستدامة بالنظر والتعرف على طرق تعليم البالغين / الراشدين بالمشاركة والتي يمكن لها أن تعزز مشاركتهن بشكل أكبر.

إن هذه الدراسة يمكن لها أن تساعدنا في تعميق فهمنا لمشكلات القيادة التي تعاني منها المرأة الفلسطينية و تساعدنا في فحص طرق تعزيز القيادات النسائية وتقويتها. ومن هنا تأتي الأهمية المضاعفة لهذه الدراسة باعتبارها مصدرا ماديا للمؤسسات المحلية والتي ستعرفها بطرق تعليم الراشدين بالمشاركة، حيث تمكن هذه المؤسسات من استخدامها لتقوية المرأة وتعزيز دورها باعتبارها قوة للتغيير الاجتماعي، وربما تساهم هذه الدراسة من في تعليم النساء حول التنمية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية.

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to examine the internal and external factors hindering the active participation of women in sustainable development in general and the case of the Association of Women for Social Work (AWCSW) in Palestine in particular, with a view to identifying Participatory Adult Education approaches that could enhance their participation..

The study could help us to deepen our understanding of leadership problems in Palestine and to examine the ways of enhancing the empowerment of female leaders.

The significance of this study is manifold. It will serve as a resource material for local organizations. It will also identify methods of adult education that these organizations could use to empower women and enhance their role as agents of social change. This study might be informative and initiate some ideas that might educate women in socio-economic development.

**FACTORS HINDERING WOMEN'S
PARTICIPATION
IN SUSTIANABLE DEVELOPMENT:
CASE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN COM-
MITTEE FOR SOCIAL WORK IN PALESTINE**

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