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6. Abstract of paper:

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Abstract

This paper is designed to evaluate rural women's socio-economic development in Malaysia as it relates to rural poverty and change in the agricultural sector. Special attention is paid to agricultural development in Malaysia as this has had a tremendous impact on rural Malay women's socio-economic development (Ariffin 1994, Rosa 1994, Chang 1998, Ahmad 1999, and Ng 1999). For the purpose of this work, the concept of "women's socio-economic development" is taken from the United Nations' Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women (1995). The UN's overall conceptualization of socio-economic development for women is basically changes in the social and economic relations of women as they are integrated into waged labour (Fourth World Conference 1995). Within this paper, analyses focuses on changes in rural Malay women's integration into waged labour with emphasis on female employment and levels of education. Literature and past research (Ahmad 1998, Rohman 1998, and Ariffin 2000)

have identified changes in employment patterns and educational levels as valuable indicators in measuring women's abilities to successfully enter into waged labour. This paper evaluates the validity of these two indicators as they relate to rural Malay women's socio-economic development. Ultimately, this research explores how these evaluations can be used to construct comprehensive, multi-indicator measures that can be used to better address rural women's socio-economic development and poverty as a process of interrelated and interdependent factors.