CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 CONCLUSION

Findings in Chapter 4 would serve as an important and primary source of information to draw the conclusion.

Based on the finding in chapter 4, it can be stated women in Malaysia have experienced improvement in their absolute position in terms of literacy, education and training, labour force participation and employment in a growing number of sectors and occupation. The study also shows that the recent job creation tended to favour women than men. However, serious gender based inequalities persist. The finding shows women lagging behind men in all areas. The education and training have not broken down sex segregation in occupation and stratification of employment. Women relative to men, occupy the low status, low paying jobs with generally poor working conditions and little prospects of occupational mobility.

There are proportionately more men than women in professional and managerial occupations in Malaysia. The findings reveal that the higher proportions of women are accounted for by their concentration in “Feminised” profession, such as teaching and
nursing. Their numbers in managerial or decision-making positions remain much lower than of men.

The ready and seemingly endless supply of cheap, young, female labour is the cornerstone of successful export orientated industrialisation. This has undoubtedly generated unprecedented employment opportunities for women, saving them from the prospect of unemployment or low paid work in the informal sector. However, the increasing employment of women in the manufacturing sector has been confined to a limited range of export oriented, labour intensive industries. Within these industries women have been bunched into menial dead-end jobs that are ill paid, repetitive and have poor career prospects. Industrial work also has often exposed women to poor and sometimes exploitative working conditions. Labour shedding has been a common practice, enterprises often do not want to keep women workers after a few years when their wages increase or when decide to get married and have children.

In the service sector, women have been disproportionately concentrated in community services. Their participation as nurses, teachers and social workers can be explained as an extension of women's nurturing role into public domain. The terms on which women have employed have rested widely on an implicit elasticity of their labour supply and an explicit inferiority of treatment of female relative to male labour.

The female-male pay differentials or the so-called "gender wage gap" can be an important indicator of women's disadvantaged position in the labour markets. The findings clearly indicate there exist gender differences in wages within the same industry.
and for the same occupation in the private sector. Moreover only a part of this gap in earnings can be explained by differences in educational attainment and job experiences between women and men. This suggests that discrimination on the basis of sex is still widespread in Peninsular Malaysia.

Going back to the study objective which is aimed to find out whether the measure that were undertaken by the government had really improved women’s socio-economic status, it is found that the various measures undertaken by the government to integrate women in development to a large extent have improved women’s social and economy status. From the findings, women are seen to have made significant advances in all aspects of private and public life. However, there are some indications showing that women’s position relative to men remains less than satisfactory. Women still lag behind in assuming top managerial position, political power, and own business. The lack of commitment on the part of government can be held responsible for the persistence of gender inequality.

The above leads to one question, which is relevant in the case of Malaysia, that is whether facilities and support for working women have increased proportional to their increasing role in economy?

There is no doubt that export orientation, structural transformation, education, skilled training, health status, domestic domain and change in the society’s attitude towards women working as paid labour has increased the participation of women in the workforce, quantitatively and qualitatively. Nevertheless, as the country aspires to achieve the developed nation status, our concern for female labour should now move
beyond the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Broader assessment, such as the impact of globalization, women mobilization and rapid innovation of technologies on women need to be studied to see the actual status of women in Malaysia. But there is no doubt that this would remain a challenge for women.

Finally, female labour force participation should not merely be seen as a consequence of development, rather it should be seen as a cause of development. The women workers should not be just grateful that they have a job, rather there should be an on-going assessment on the part of policy makers as to the current needs and problem. Women’s contribution is most vital to the making of a better tomorrow in Malaysia.

Lastly I can conclude by saying that the dramatic increase in the labour force participation of women is the single most outstanding phenomenon of this century.

"The work of a woman is like a vein of water flowing underground, secretly making the ground greener".
5.2 RECOMMENDATION

Despite the various governmental policies and action plans to integrate woman into the national development program, women are still faced with problems such as gender stereotype, future challenges (industry restructuring and changing economic development), lack of training and knowledge and many more to mention. Therefore, in order to facilitate the continuous participation of women in economic development, some suggestions have been proposed as below.

5.2.1 Re-examining the Biased View

The assumption commonly held is that women’s work must not interrupt or undermine the fulfillment of women’s reproductive role and duties. Men, women, governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, policy makers and the community leaders need to re-examine this biased view of women’s income and clearly recognize women’s economic rights and contribution. The cultural expectation that the family is the primary responsibility of a woman needs to be changed. Men must learn to share household responsibilities. This of course may take time in the case of Malaysia, which is still dominated by the traditional thinking but however this perception will surely have to change in due course.
5.2.2 Child Care And Family Strategies

A national comprehensive child-care and family care policy has to be developed. Policies that assume that both women and men can absorb family responsibility, child-care programs that are safe, reliable and accessible and family health care programs that cooperate with families to provide long term care for the elderly or the dependent in more humane family-oriented setting have to be developed.

The government should provide more state funded child-care facilities and out of school provisions and develop coalitions with other community organizations. Tax incentive and building permits should be provided to employers who provide provision of child-care facilities for their workers. Planners should also consider the location of child-care facilities to be placed at employment center, along transit routes and near park and ride lots because this will increase the accessibility of child-care services to working parents.

Certainly attitude must change and this requires education and socialization practices in the future that highlight these issues as global and not just “women issues”. Women must have equal political and economic power to transform those changes in attitude and behavioral outcomes that benefit families and societies. (Ollenburger J.C. & Moore H.A., 1992)
5.2.3 Information And Advice

The Malaysian Government has been formulating various policies and action plans to help integrate women into the development. But what is lacking is that the information about the program or facilities is not made easily available. Women do not get the relevant information. Information pertaining to National machinery and plans of action, collective agreement, family-friendly policies and measures, equal pay provision, sexual harassment laws and policies, corporate personal policy, national equal opportunity policies and anti discrimination legislation and international and regional treaties guidelines and other policy documents should be made easily available to working women.

To encourage more women to pursue non-traditional fields of study such as science, engineering and vocational and technical education, and career counseling programs need to be implemented to provide information instill greater awareness among students and parents regarding career opportunities in the professional and technical fields.

Public and private organization providing information and advice to women particularly in rural areas must be formed. They can offer a support package that combines various forms of assistance but it should have an in-built flexibility to cater effectively for the differing need and requirement of individual women.
5.2.4 Training

In response to the emerging pattern of industrial restructuring, specific training programs for women have to be developed. There is a need for a systematic development of both pre-training and re-training opportunity targeting women in manufacturing sector, which should be made available systematically. Specific modules need to be formulated around the particular needs of different groups of women according to their background, education, experience and motivation. Technical training programs that enable women to develop new skills and update existing ones, in line with market and sectoral development are also needed. The post-training and follow-up support also would help women.

Since education is not a one-time event in life, but an on-going process that should enable women to play an active role in the labour market, a high quality general education for girls and remedial education and training for adult women is necessary to meet today’s employment challenges. The employers and government should design training that responds to the complexities of the current labour market. Vocational training programs should be offered in close partnership between different sectors of society, including government, private business, employers’ and workers’ organizations and non-governmental organizations.

Women also need to have access to a wide variety of seminars on both general and specific topics. General topics that need to covered are creating awareness of obligations and rights, including those stemming from equal employment laws, equal opportunity
and treatment for women in recruitment and promotion, development of their professional skills and business skills training to help them run their own businesses. At the moment, INTAN (National Institute of Public Administration) has conducted some gender sensitive training programs.

Efforts need to be undertaken to improve women’s access to information and communication technology (ICT). Formal and non-formal training in areas such as computer literacy and application of ICT need to be conducted jointly by the government and NGOs, with special emphasis given to rural women. In addition, to enhance the effectiveness of the training programs, efforts need to be taken to ensure software development is gender sensitive.