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female employees. Some of the establishments involved even stipulate these recruitment guidelines to high schools that recommend their graduates, the complainants added.

(*Korean Women Today*, Summer 1994)

Women sidelined by economic liberalization

IN SOUTH Asia, where half of nearly one billion people live below the poverty line, governments have yet to take steps that will help millions of women workers in the informal economy.

The worst hit by such neglect is the textile and garments industry, which employs the second largest number of women in the region, after farming. Yet, the industry, however, is the region's top export earner and fastest growing sector.

Instead of improving livelihood, the strategy of economic liberalization has worsened the conditions of women in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. 'Global Trading Practices and Poverty Alleviation in South Asia—A Gender Perspective' revealed.

The growth of exports in the textile sector has pushed up local yarn prices, forcing handloom cooperatives, where the bulk of women are employed, to reduce their workforce. Women are fast losing jobs and incomes as a result.

A field study by India's Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), which is based in the western state of Gujarat, found that women workers were often turned away because of a shortage of yarn in factories run by the Gujarat Handloom Corporation.

New US program to keep girls in school

THE CLINTON administration has created a program to help keep girls in school in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The first year of the 10-year-program will cost about US\$11.7 million, the US Agency for International

Writer-columnist Ellen Goodman finds something amiss in current Congress discussions on the US welfare program which, when approved, will deny minor mothers any cash welfare benefits. Why are the fathers, who are usually much older, left out in this debate? By mistake, by design, or by instinct?

Jailbait

by Ellen Goodman

Do you ever get the feeling that someone is missing from the debate about US welfare reform?

The other parent? The father? The sperm donor? Men?

As the US Congress writes ever more punitive scenarios for mothers and children, the male of the species barely gets a cameo role. The only part he plays is as deadbeat dad. The only interest the lawmakers have shown is in establishing his DNA. The only policy they are talking about is getting a better grip on his wallet.

I have no problem with these proposals. But much of the welfare debate is focused on the never-married poor mothers—the women who get on welfare the earliest and stay the longest. The men in their lives don't exactly have deep pockets.

The favorite proposal of the moment, to deny cash benefits to any minor mother, comes with a prayer that it will prevent other pregnancies. The theory is that if the government gives girls an economic reason to say no, they'll control male sexual behavior.

But in real life, as opposed to think tanks and hearing rooms, the picture is a little different.

In real life, three quarters of the girls who have sex before they are 14 say they were coerced. In real life, two of every three teenage mothers are impregnated by a man over 20. In real life, 30 percent of the 15-year-old mothers have partners who are at least six years older.

We are not talking about powerful girls in equal relationships. In the inner-city culture that sociologist Elijah Anderson describes with terrible poignancy, a sexual 'game' goes on.

"The girls have a dream," he says, "the boys have a desire. The girls dream of being carried off by a Prince Charming who will love them, provide for them and give them a family. The boys often desire sex without commitment or babies without responsibility for them."

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Development (USAID), program administrator, said.

"Investing in the health and education of women and girls is essential to improving local prosperity," Hilary Clinton said during the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen last March.

The program has several broad aims, said Dr. Nils Daulaire, chief policy adviser to the USAID. At primary school level, it will pay for expert help in determining the reasons for the low enrollment rate among girls. "In some countries, especially as they reach adolescence, girls don't attend school because parents fear they are not safe," Daulaire said. Teachers will be trained to accept and integrate girls into a classroom, where they are usually ignored.

For older girls and young women, new literacy projects will incorporate lessons in health and sanitation to benefit the family, the USAID officer said. (Today, 9 March 1995)

Year of the Family— fiction only

PAPUA NEW Guinea should not be

In this game, the older male is an easy winner. A 13-year-old girl is by no means on a level playing field with an 18-year-old boy. Nor is a 15-year-old on a par with a 26-year-old.

To put it bluntly, a substantial number of the men are what can only be called sexual predators. A substantial number of the teenage mothers are what we used to call jailbait.

Remember jailbait? Maybe we ought to think about changing the sexual behavior of men as well as women. Maybe statutory rape is an idea whose time should return.

Statutory rape was the creation of a double standard. It implied that a girl below a certain age was too young to consent to sex. The object of the law was to protect female virtue. The subject of the law was likely to be a 17-year-old boy hauled to court by the irate parents of a 15-year-old girl.

But in the era of sexual liberation and equality, the old laws were re-written. We went from a double standard of gender to a single standard of power.

Today the object of the law is not female chastity but sexual abuse. And

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the subject is generally an older man or woman who has sex with an underage child.

I know that dusting off the laws and applying them to men who father children with young teens has its limits. We have different views of coercion and of consent than we used to. Teenage mothers could become more reluctant to point the paternity finger. I'm wary of matching policy that throws mothers on the streets with one that throws fathers in jail.

But look at the figures. Look at the culture. We're talking about adult men and adolescent girls.

We're talking about 'the game.' You don't have to be a Victorian to believe that society has an obligation to defend our young. Or that we have an obligation to state this clearly, publicly, unequivocally.

These days we are quick to attack teenage mothers. How about trying to protect them? Tell the girls they're too young. But send the word out to men. The word is 'jailbait'.

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