PD-AAV-542 Nepal

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523

August 9, 1985

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MEMORANDUM

TO: PPC/WID, Patricia Kay Davies

FROM: S&T/EN, Jack Vanderryn

SUBJECT: Women in Nepal

The attached paper by Shanta Pandey is a very graphic description of the problem faced by women in Nepal. Ms. Pandey's presentation of this discussion at the World Forestry Congress was made possible by S&T/FNR, through its Forestry Support Program.

I thought the material would be useful in helping to illustrate the problem, and thus assist the efforts of your Office.

Attachment a/s

cc: S&T/FNR, Jack Sullivan
S&T/EY, Janine Finnell

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Women in Development
Agency for International Development
Room [illegible], New State
Washington, D.C. 20523
(202) 632-3992

Date of Acquisition_____
Source_____

July 17, 1985

Merv Stevens
USDA/FS/FSP

Dear Mr. Stevens,

Thank you so much for making my participation in 9th World Forestry Conference possible. I enjoyed the Conference very much. I am sending a copy of my quick field-trip-report along with this. I would like to meet you sometimes before I go to Cleveland whenever you have time. Please give me a call to 429-1804. I want to talk with you the possibility of getting funds for my dissertation next year.

Thank you once again for all the arrangements.

Sincerely yours,

Shanta Pandey.

Shanta Pandey.

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NEPAC

# TRIP REPORT

## 9TH WORLD FORESTRY CONFERENCE

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| Venue | : Mexico City, Mexico. |
| Date | : June 30-July 13,85. |
| Attended by | : Shanta Pandey, Advanced Program Student,Cleveland/Nepal. |
| Sponsored by | : Forestry Support Program, U.S.D.A. of the United States. |

## ITINERARY

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|---|---|
| June 30, 85 | : Leave home at 6:00 A.M..Arrive Mexico City at 12:05 noon. |
| July 1-10,85 | : Conference participation. |
| July 11-12, 85 | : Sightseeing. |
| July 13, 85 | : Leave Mexico City at 12:48 P.M. Arrival at National Airport at 10:20 P.M. |

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

1. Presented an on-the-spot prepared paper " Successful participation of rural people, especially women in Nepal" at a Satellite Meeting of the 9th World Forestry Conference, on the 4th of July, 85. The request for this presentation was made by an U.N. FAO representative.
2. Participated actively in the discussion, made suggestions, comments, recommendations all throughout at the Conference.
3. Represented Forestry Support Program, USDA,CWRU and Nepal.
4. Met important Congress participants of the Conference, visited interesting historical places and observed different social events in Mexico City.

## TRIP DISCUSSION

I consider myself as one of the fortunate participants of the 9th World Forestry Conference not only because I received this great opportunity to participate but also because I could learn from and contribute to the Conference to the best of my ability. In addition to my acquaintance with the important Congress

delegates and my active participation throughout the Conference, I was also offerred an opportunity to present a successful case of working with rural people in rural Nepal in a Satellite Meeting of the Conference. In this presentation I highlighted one of my experiences of reaching grass-roots people in Nepal. The presentation went nearly as follows. I say " nearly " because I made a draft of this presentation after I presented the paper. It was because I was requested to present only a night earlier. It is probably worth mentioning here since quite a number of participants requested a copy of this presentation after my presentation.

" Thank you very much Mr. Mnzava. It is a pleasure to be invited here to share my experience of working with grass-roots people of Nepal, especially women. All of us in this Hall have directly or indirectly involved ourselves in planning, implementing or evaluating the rural development programmes relating to the management and better utilization of natural resources. I am sure we have gathered varied experience in the success and the failure of the rural development activities. Yet all of us have the same goal: the goal to improve the socio-economic quality of life of the people with whom we work. The rural people, especially women work very hard in order to meet their socio-economic need.

In my project I did not find women who did not want to learn if they knew that it was a learning process. I did not find women who didnot want to participate in education, extension training, local level meetings and discussion as long as they saw the relevance of these in solving their practical problems and as long as the opportunity to participate was provided to them.

However, women are left out of rural development activities. They are still far behind. Why?

Ladies and gentlemen, it is because we- the experts are still in the process of recognizing their practice oriented knowledge. We have yet to be able to respect their important role and contribution in all sectors of rural development. Once we are enlightened enough to recognize their valuable role and contribution to development, we will probably be able to search for an

an appropriate programme in rural development. Very few programmes, presently under implementation have shown their sensitiveness in this important sector of development.

For instance, Nepal is one of the countries that is losing its forest land at the highest rate in Asia. It is estimated that Nepal-one of the smallest countries in Asia, loses 240 million metric tons of soil per year as a result of soil erosion. This problem of Nepal was also highlighted by Dr. Swaminathan in his speech yesterday. 95 percent of the fuel-energy in the hill region of Nepal comes from fuelwood. In order to meet the present fuelwood need of Nepal, Nepal needs to plant 1.3 million hectares of forest land by the year 2000. Further, 84 percent of fuelwood collection in Nepal is done by women and young female children together. Similarly, it is the women's job to collect fodder for animal bedding and animal feeding. Women are the ones who are mostly responsible for grazing cattles and cooking family food. In some areas of Nepal women seem to spend as long as 11 days a month collecting firewood. The story is similar in Agricultural sector in Nepal. Women spend more time growing food in comparision to men. Yet, in both agriculture and forestry sectors women's access to education and training is limited. This is not because the women are not interested to participate but because their access in these sectors is made more difficult. The studies have also shown that women extension workers have significantly higher access to rural women in comparision to men extension workers. Yet our present attention to develop appropriate programmes that would itself encourage women's participation in development activities is not adequate. For instance, in Nepal out of a total of 1573 agriculture extension workers, only 39 are women. Institute of Agriculture and Animal Health Science in Nepal has a large dormitory for men students whereas women students have no similar housing facility. In natural resource management, the Institute of Forestry has been producing trained graduates for last two and a half decades. Until 1983, no women ever applied. It was not because the women did not want to apply nor there was a complete scarcity of qualified women. It was because the Institute had never been able to provide an appropriate atmosphere for women's participation. We built a large spacious on-campus dormitory for men students during the construction of the Institute. However, it did not occur to us to build a similar housing facility for women students until recently. In 1983, as soon as the housing was arranged for

women 7 qualified women applied. In 1984, 52 qualified women applied for admission. Presently, we have 19 women students on-training in this Institute.

Let us look at another example at the field level. Rural women in Nepal receive second hand information if at all they receive. Plant nurseries are headed by men. As a result, women feel less comfortable to visit and collect seedlings. Forest guards, rangers are all men. Most of the project planners are men, implementers are men. There is a banner of a pretty Gadwal women hugging the tree, representing Chipko movement in our neighbouring country, India. This age old close relationship of women and tree will be mentioned in detail by Mr. Sundarlal Bahuguna in a few minutes. On the other hand, if you remember, all the slides shown by our previous speaker Mr. Gecolea from United Nations were from Nepal. I am lucky that I can remind you of these slides here. Those slides were shown as a successful case of community participation in communication. In all the slides except one, there were men discussing and men delivering messages to men. Those slides represent the present community participation concept practiced in Nepal. I cannot understand how we can ignore the fact that a community is also composed of women, children and older people. Further, all these sections of a community are the users of the forest products. Therefore, their potential for preservation and better utilization of forest resources must be adressed in all development activities. We must utilize the women's force fully in this sector.

Pardon me gentlemen, I am not underestimating the men's interest to women's involvement in forestry. It is just that in some cultures even though men may be more qualified, women are able to reach women and disseminate informations to women more effectively. Hence, they must be participated in the development programmes.

For instance, my fieldtrips to rural areas of Nepal was a little different in comparision to the visit made by my other male colleagues. One of the reasons was because I am a waman and that I had an easier access to women. Although in my initial visits, I was met by the male key persons of the village, I could meet women without much difficulty. The male key persons, priests or other local leaders normally suggested to have a dialogue after lunch in the afternoon. Later I discovered that the participants available at this time of the day were mostly the male village leaders, the priests or those men

who could afford to miss a day's work. When I asked them how I could also meet the women and other farmers of the village the answer I got was that the poor farmers and the women were required to work in the farm in the day time. So we suggested to have a meeting after five or six in the evening. But even this time of the day did not bring more women. However, it did bring more poorer men farmers. Meanwhile, I learned that the women were busy cooking the family meal, putting the children to bed, milking the cows and so on, between five and eight in the evening after a day's farm work. So finally, I could manage to have a village dialogue after nine o' clock in the evening, which was participated and shared by more men and women of all levels.

Thus, some of my concerned suggestions and issues from the field are as follows:

1. Restlessness:
   Most of the time we, the experts tend to have a short period of time in the field. As a result, we have less time to figureout what time of the year we are in the field in terms of the appropriateness and time availability from the perspective of the rural participants. We have also less time to understand what time of the day is most appropriate for the participants to participate in the dialogue. As a result, it is not uncommon to have a handful of people of the village participating in the design, implementation and evaluation of the projects. The restless experts most times may assume that they know enough about a village and the villagers. In order to overcome this, it is essential that the experts are more relaxed with time and sensitive to people's participation while visiting the rural areas.
2. Women Professionals:
   We lack adequate number of women field extension workers and women planners. We need to train and hire more women professionals in these sectors so that more women in the villages can be reached.
3. Synchronization:
   We need to synchronize our fieldtrips with the season of the year and time of the day at which women and men are more available to participate.

I could go on and on but I would like to stop here so that we have more time

for discussion.

Lastly, my special thanks to Dr. Marylin Hoskins whom I met fromally only yesterday and she suggested me to share this experience of working with grass-roots people with you. Thank you."