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WOMEN-IN-DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN NEPAL'S RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION PROJECT

by

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are those of the authors and should not be attributed to the Agency for International Development.

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SUMMARY

In May 1985, the Center for Development Information and Evaluation (CDIE) of the Agency for International Development (AID) studied the effectiveness of AID's Resource Conservation and Utilization Project (RCUP) in Nepal in integrating gender issues into the project. The RCUP is a 5-year, $32 million project initiated to reverse the severe environmental degradation in two river drainage basins in Western Nepal.

Nepal has a longstanding national policy on women, articulated in several Five-Year Plans, which encourages women's participation in national development efforts. There is also a 25-year-old Nepal Women's Organization with units at the village, district, and national levels as well as a cadre of Woman Workers (extension agents who are placed in villages throughout Nepal). Despite this policy, however, there has been only sporadic ad hoc attention to gender issues within line agencies.

Efforts to involve women in project activities have sometimes been hampered by a tendency to confuse the traditional norms governing the role of women and their actual roles. A Nepalese woman's economic and, indirectly, her social roles are often shaped by access to productive agricultural land. If the land can support her family, a woman is more likely to stay in her village and work in the fields and at home. If the land cannot support her family, a woman will look for off-farm employment, sometimes far from home. Previously held beliefs that

Nepalese women are limited to village or domestic roles represent a cultural ideal, but do not, in fact, reflect reality for many Nepalese women who are economically active in the agricultural, trade, or service sectors.

Although a few project personnel have recognized the importance of gender issues in RCUP agricultural activities, there is not a clear understanding of their importance in forestry. Neither men nor women have experience with forest regeneration. When gathering fuel and fodder, women and children generally lop rather than fell trees, but they have not traditionally planted forest trees or protected seedlings.

Gender awareness has also not yet been translated into effective efforts to ensure women's full participation in local project decision-making. Many decisions are made by the head offices of line agencies in Kathmandu, where women are not well represented. Good decision-making is also hampered by the bureaucratic complexity of the project and by Nepal's formidable logistical problems and unreliable communications system.

The project has used special funds to stimulate women's participation. For example, stipends are given to female students at the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources to help compensate for the fact that families prefer to spend their scarce resources on boys' education.

In Nepal the important concern is to have well-trained, technically proficient, extension agents, whether male or female, who are motivated to reach out to women. It is not enough to simply put female extension agents in the field unless they understand the importance of reaching women and, more important, try to do so. Both men and women extension agents must be given specific directives and encouragement by their organization to reach out to female beneficiaries. Men can conduct extension work with women. Even among the most conservative Hindu castes (Brahmins and Chetris) it is still often possible for a man to talk to women in groups. It is often only a one-to-one conversation that is culturally inappropriate.

Programs to raise female literacy are also vital for women's participation in project activities. Agricultural Assistant trainee literacy requirements appear unreasonably high for some project areas: although otherwise successful, some male trainees also have not been able to meet the requirements. Women should be encouraged to apply for this type of training. An advertisement for Agricultural Assistant training in the Gorkha area did not mention that women could apply, even though the district has a stated goal of achieving a 20-percent participation figure for women in its agricultural training programs. In fact, the language of the advertisement could easily be interpreted to mean that women could <u>not</u> apply.

Furthermore, many training programs within the RCUP specify that candidates must "have the permission of the head of household." This is particularly difficult for women who might like to attend, but whose husband or parents are reluctant.

The history of RCUP has been marked by a commitment on the part of the AID Mission to encourage women's participation in project activities. The combination of AID commitment and a national tradition of encouraging women's involvement in development provided a favorable environment for integrating women into RCUP activities. The original project design, however, included only boilerplate acknowledgment of the needs and roles of women. Noticeable inclusion of women into project design and implementation did not begin until 2 years into the project. Since that time, the Mission has taken several significant steps to address gender issues. A growing awareness is obvious among the mostly male RCUP personnel, particularly at the district and local levels, of the varied needs and roles of women (e.g., farmers, cooks, fuel and fodder gatherers) and their importance to RCUP project activities. Nevertheless, many project personnel have only a limited awareness of the varied roles of women. They define "women in development" in terms of traditional household roles (e.g., cooks, kitchen gardeners) or highly visible non-traditional roles (e.g., students at the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources, social scientists for the project staff) rather than roles outside the household or agricultural sector.

Such an understanding of the reality of women's roles and the ways that these roles influence project implementation is especially important for project activities with the poorest women, who often perform many activities not prescribed by a cultural ideal.

Some gender-disaggregated village-level data are now available, but they have not been incorporated into the reports and documents that percolate through the various bureaucracies. Targeting women as project beneficiaries only indirectly as members of households does not ensure that they receive project benefits. In fact, "household" targeting may increase the likelihood that gender issues will be ignored in project implementation. Without gender-specific data, project planners often assume that men's and women's development needs are identical and that if men receive project benefits, so do women. In the project, focusing on women's household activities has led to a limited or erroneous understanding of the dynamics of resource use among both men and women on a nonhousehold level (e.g., agricultural land use, management of foraging animals).

For the project to actually benefit Nepalese women and be benefited by their contributions to efficient and sustained development efforts, the full range of Nepalese women's social and economic roles and the ways in which these roles complement those of men must be understood and integrated into project design, implementation, and evaluation.

PROJECT DATA SHEET

1. Project Title: Resource Conservation and Utilization Project (RCUP)

2. Project Number: 367-0132

3. Location:

   Nepal (Gorkha District, and portions of Myagdi and Mustang Districts)

4. Years: FY 1980-1985 (extended FY 1986-1988)

5. Funding:

   FY 1980-1985

USAID	$27,498,200*
Nepal	$ 5,060,500
Total	$32,558,700

   FY 1986-1988

USAID	$ 7,293,000*
Nepal	$ 1,377,000
Total	$ 8,670,000

   *Note: About $7,200,000 of FY 1980-1985 funding remained at the end of that period. This amount will be used during the project extension period (FY 1986-1988).

6. General Description:

   "The Resource Conservation and Utilization Project (RCUP) was designed as a five year project formulated within the framework of a long term perspective that attempts to arrest the rapid degradation of Nepal's environment in two river drainage basins in western Nepal. Reforestation, better range management, development of alternatives to open wood fires for cooking and heating, improvement of agricultural methods, and watershed management are among the resource conservation methods to be implemented in an attempt to control this degradation. A comprehensive training program is included to develop the personnel resources required to carry out the project and to deal with the problem over the longer run."

   (From "Project Extension Paper: 1985-88," January 30, 1985)

7. Project Goal:

To improve the standard of living of the rural poor through increased agricultural production, higher nutritional levels, and more employment opportunities.

8. Project Purpose:

To assist the Government of Nepal in the protection and restoration of the soil, water, and plant resource base upon which the rural population is totally dependent.

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

AID	- Agency for International Development
PDTI	- Panchayat Development Training Institute
RCUP	- Resource Conservation and Utilization Project
SECID	- South-East Consortium for International Development
USAID	- U.S. Agency for International Development Mission
WTC	- Women's Training Center

MAP

1. INTRODUCTION

According to the FY 1986 Country Development Strategy Statement for Nepal, the central theme for the Agency for International Development (AID) assistance strategy is balanced development of the fertile Terai region to the south and the less productive hill region. AID's program in Nepal is oriented toward the problems of a largely rural society. Efforts to address urban problems and identify urban trends are only a small part of the total program. Specific development objectives in Nepal are to increase rural productivity and income levels, broaden access to basic social services, and improve natural resource management. There are no projects oriented specifically toward women; however, Mission policy is to consider the effects of gender-specific roles on project outcomes.

The Resource Conservation and Utilization Project (RCUP) was chosen for field study because it offered an opportunity to examine gender issues in a variety of activities related to natural resource conservation and use. The project was designed as a 5-year project (1980-1985) and was originally envisioned as the first phase of a 15-year project to address the severe environmental degradation found in two river drainage basins in western Nepal. (One catchment area is in the Gorkha District and one includes portions of both Myagdi and Mustang Districts--see project data sheet and map.)

The RCUP organization and its U.S. contractor, the South-East Consortium for International Development (SECID) act as project coordinators. Project activities are carried out through a complex interorganizational management system involving 11 Nepalese Government line agencies, including the Departments of Agriculture and Forestry, and the Ministry of Panchayat (village councils) and Local Development. Project construction activities (e.g., construction of RCUP offices and the new Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources school building, trail maintenance, and tree planting) are carried out through contractors or through direct-hire laborers.

SECID has fielded a series of Women-in-Development interns from U.S. universities who have worked in villages on specific RCUP activities (e.g., cookstoves, kitchen gardens). In addition, the Government of Nepal has recently instituted a Woman Development Officer program. In the project districts, the Woman Development Officers are funded through the project, and their responsibilities will include project activities. These Woman Development Officers will be assisted by Woman Workers. (See Section 2.4.2.)

Early efforts by the project to include women have included training support for Woman Development Officers, setting admission quotas and providing stipends for women students at the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources, and operating

kitchen garden and cookstove information and dissemination programs. During 1985-1988, as the project expands its focus to include more village women in more project activities (primarily through the work of the Woman Development Officers), data on women's participation, project impact on women, and women's impact on community activities will be gathered with the help of the development officers. Institutional participation will be measured by the number of women enrolled at the Institute.

2. PROJECT SETTING

2.1 Geographic

The Kingdom of Nepal is a landlocked Asian nation of 145,391 square kilometers (56,136 square miles). The country has three distinct topographical regions, running laterally from east to west: fertile flatland in the south near the Indian border, hill country in the central strip, and the high Himalayas which form the border with Tibet to the north.

The distance from the northern to the southern border is only 150 miles. Within this space, the altitude drops from the high peaks of the Himalayas (Mt. Everest is 29,028 feet) to nearly sea level on the plains by the Indian border. This rapid decrease in elevation from north to south gives Nepal some of the greatest hydropower potential in the world. It also presents

formidable difficulties in travel from east to west. Because the river valleys run north to south, it is easier in many areas to travel south to India than east or west within Nepal. It is estimated that 35 percent of Nepal's population must walk for 3 days to reach a motorable road.

2.2 Social

The Nepalese are ethnically and culturally diverse. The predominantly Hindu people of the Terai area on the Indian border, almost one-third of the national population, are physically and culturally similar to the Indo-Aryan people of northern India. In contrast, the people on Nepal's sparsely populated northern border are closely related to Tibetans in appearance and culture. Both Indo-Aryan and Mongoloid racial groups live in the middle hill regions and account for nearly two-thirds of the national population.

Nepal is officially a Hindu kingdom, but Hinduism has been influenced heavily by the large Buddhist minority. In fact, many Nepalese practice elements of both religions.

2.3 Economic

The World Bank has classified Nepal as the fifth poorest country in the world. Per capita income is about $150 per year, only 35 percent of the adult population is literate, and life expectancy is only about 44 years. The FY 1982-1983 gross domestic product was U.S.$2.2 billion; foreign donor aid provides 60-70 percent of the total national budget. Ninety-three percent of the work force are engaged primarily in agriculture, and only about 2 percent are engaged in industry.

About 95 percent of households in Nepal are rural. Small farm, marginal farm, and landless households are 74 percent of the total. The 1977 National Planning Commission Study showed that the average farmed land per household was very low: 0.56 hectares (ha) in the Himalayan mountain region; 0.74 ha in the middle hill region; and 1.63 ha in the flat, fertile Terai area in the south, or an average of 1.14 ha for Nepal as a whole. (Average family size was 6 persons per household.)

More than half the economy is nonmonetized. According to the 1980 AID-sponsored study, "Status of Women in Nepal," only 20 percent of rural household income is derived from the monetized market sector. Family farm activities account for 80 percent of rural household income--mostly nonmonetized. Income distribution in Nepal is highly unequal: about 20 percent of the house-

holds control 59 percent of Nepal's total income. In 1977, 36 percent of the total population was below the poverty level (defined as 2 rupees ($0.11) per day at 1977 prices).

The social and economic roles of Nepalese men and women are extremely varied, reflecting the ethnic and cultural diversity of Nepal's population. peoples. For example, the Thakali women on the Tibetan border are traditional businesswomen who run traveler's lodges and invest the family money, and they have acquired a reputation as superior money managers. "If you marry a Thakali wife you will be rich," a young man told the team. Among the Magar people of Nepal's western region, the women also are relatively independent.

In contrast, Hindu women--particularly of the conservative Brahmin and Chetri castes--are not as free in their actions. The Hindu cultural ideal calls for women to stay in the protected home environment. Where it is economically possible (where their labor is not needed outside the home to supplement the farm income), Hindu women tend to follow this pattern.

However, recent research by team member Bina Pradhan indicates that among all ethnic groups and castes throughout Nepal, it is the agricultural productivity of the land that most determines women's economic roles. That is, if the land <u>can</u> support her family, the woman is more likely to stay in her village working in the fields and at home. If the land <u>cannot</u> support

her family, the woman looks for employment off the farm, sometimes far from home. This is an important point, for it runs counter to widespread current assumptions about determinants of women's roles in Nepal.

2.3.1 Role of Women in Local Systems of Production and Consumption

Organization of Production. Because the average land holding is so small (1.14 ha per household), many men and women must seek employment off the farm to survive economically. Nepalese men from the hill and mountain regions migrate to the southern Terai area seeking work. Other men leave Nepal to seek work in India as domestics, guards, or traders. Another traditional economic opportunity for Nepalese men has been service in the British and, later, the Indian armies. Such migrants usually send remittances back to their homes. Women may accompany their husbands to India, but it is very uncommon for a woman to go alone outside Nepal to seek work.

However, within Nepal the situation is different. The 1981 census showed that 53 percent of all internal migrants in Nepal are women. Some of this movement is probably due to the Nepalese custom of young brides moving to their husbands' village. But from the team's observations, it seems likely that many of these female migrants are seeking work away from their homes. In the

Gorkha District, for example, the team spoke with an untouchable caste woman whose land was insufficient to support her family. To supplement the family income, she and her 13-year-old daughter regularly did portering work which sometimes took them away from home for days at a time. In the more remote Myagdi District, the team was told that at least half of the lower caste women in the area seek employment outside the home--usually portering or construction work. Some of these women travel as far as 45 miles over difficult mountain trails to find work. Also in the Myagdi District, the team talked with some young women who were par. of a work group from a village located several days' walk from the RCUP construction site. The women said they had come for the same reason as the men and boys--to earn money.

Land ownership is held by men, but because women do much of the agricultural work in Nepal, men and women often share in decision-making on farm operations. Animals are considered household/property, and women share in the decisions regarding livestock. As mentioned previously, some Nepalese women are active in commercial enterprises: Thakali women, for example, run lodges and hotels in areas along the Tibetan border; other women sell fruits or vegetables where markets exist for such items.

Generally, men do construction work and heavier agricultural labor, such as building and maintaining terraces, herding large

animals, plowing, and milking. Women typically do such agricultural work as planting, seeding, weeding, harvesting, and storing, as well as the household work of caring for children, cooking, cleaning, and collecting fuel, fodder, and water. Table 1 lists some gender-specific tasks noted by the team in the areas they visited.

Although this is the general pattern of labor distribution by gender, men and women's areas of work often overlap, and other factors, such as the need to migrate to find work, also alter this pattern. The ways in which the economic roles of men and women complement and overlap each other are an important consideration in targeting information dissemination by gender. For example, it would make little sense to disseminate information on improved plowing or milking techniques only to women in areas where men do the plowing and milking. Similarly, it is more efficient and effective to disseminate information on improved seeds and crop techniques to women, who are responsible for most seed selection and general agricultural work in Nepal. Understanding the complementary labor relationships is important for ensuring effective as well as equitable delivery of project benefits.

Table 1. Division of Activity by Gender, As Noted in Areas Visited by the Team

Activity	Men	Women	Children
Caring for Fruit Trees	X	X	
Portering	X	X	
Restaurant/Lodge Operation	X	X	
Selling Agricultural Production	X	X	
Planting Paddy Rice	X[a]	X	
Plowing	X		
Agricultural Work Other Than Plowing[b]		X	
Terracing Fields	X		
Building Dikes in Fields	X		
Sowing Seeds From Mini-Kits	X		
Other Work on Mini-Kit Demonstration Farms			
Seed Selection for Planting		X	
Milking	X		
Herding Large Animals[c]	X		
Herding Small Animals			X
Castrating Animals	X		
Cleaning Animal Sheds/Collecting and Applying Manure as Fertilizer		X	
Collecting Animal Fodder			X
Fishing	X		
Collecting Fuelwood, Dung, Agricultural Waste for Fuel			X
Heavy Construction Labor[d]	X		
Gravel-Making[e]		X	
Hauling Rocks and Gravel on Construction Sites	X	X	
Construction, Operation, and Maintenance of Irrigation Systems	X		
Weaving and Sewing[f]		X	
Gathering Water		X	X[g]
Most Cooking		X	
Food Processing[h]		X	
Most Child Care		X	

[a]Terai region only.
[b]Planting, transplanting (rice), weeding, hoeing, harvesting, threshing, crop and seed storage, and the like.
[c]Occasionally, women and children also herd large animals.
[d]Crushing large rocks with sledge hammers.
[e]Crushing small rocks with a hammer.
[f]For household use and commercial sale.
[g]Girls only.
[h]Drying, rice hulling, grain grinding, seed oil extraction, and seed selection.

2.3.2 Organization of Consumption

Gender-related economic consumption patterns are less obvious than production patterns. In general, Nepalese women are more likely to be responsible for providing for children's food, clothing, and education, and funds for capital investments (e.g., buying additional land). However, the lines of responsibility in Nepal are not drawn as clearly by gender as they are, for instance, in some African countries. Furthermore, the patterns of gender-based household economic consumption vary among ethnic groups. The Thakali women, for example, have a good deal of control over household finances.

This is not to say, however, that Nepalese women share equally with men in the consumption of resources. It is common Nepalese household practice for the women to eat after the men and children have finished. This widespread practice is based on the Hindu ideal that a woman's most important duty is to serve her family, placing its well-being above her own. As a day-to-day practice, this could negatively affect women's nutritional intake, particularly women belonging to poor households with inadequate daily food supplies.

2.4 Political

Nepal is a monarchy, and its ruler, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, exercises broad powers over the country's panchayat (village council) system of government. Administratively, Nepal is organized into 75 districts divided into 14 administrative zones and 5 development regions (eastern, central, mid-western, and far western). In 1960, the late King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev dissolved the democratically elected Congress Party Government and introduced a new partyless system of "panchayat democracy," based on the traditional Nepalese village council. The panchayat is the channel for Government policy implementation. Although political parties have been illegal since 1960, they have continued to function unofficially and more or less peacefully.

Nepal has enjoyed a reputation as a nation with a quiescent populace not given to political or economic turmoil. This situation may be changing. For example, in the short period the team was in Nepal, there was a taxi strike in Kathmandu, a nationwide teachers' pay strike (all the teachers in Beni who had not been jailed had fled to the hills), arrests of political demonstrators in Gorkha, and soldiers and police in riot gear posted at strategic spots around Kathmandu in preparation for political demonstrations. Nepal, like any other country, is subject to internal political and economic pressures that must be

taken into account by any donor organization attempting to implement a project.

2.4.1 Women's Organizations in the Political Structure of Nepal

Women's participation in public life in Nepal dates from 1913, when a few women began to take an active role in striving to bring about social and political change. In the decades that followed, half a dozen different organizations represented women's interests and functioned as offshoots of different political parties active in the country. In 1961, women organized the Nepal Women's Organization, which integrated these other organizations.

The Nepal Women's Organization was classified as one of the six class organizations under the panchayat system. It has functioned as a vehicle for women's participation in the political system. According to the Class Organization Act of 2033 (1976), the class organizations are structured to parallel the panchayat system and to cover Nepal's 75 districts. The lowest level of organization is the village level (the primary organization), followed by organizations at the district, the zone, and the national levels.

RCUP seeks to utilize the existing structure of the Nepal Women's Organization by having its representatives sit on the

Panchayat Conservation Committees (at the village level) and Catchment Conservation Committees (at the district level).

2.4.2 Women's Training Centers and the Women's Development Section

As early as the 1950s, the Government of Nepal made efforts to improve the living conditions of the rural people. Among these efforts were training courses specifically targeted to village women, such as that begun in 1965 with USAID assistance. Training was mainly associated with the Community Development Program and concentrated on home sciences. After completing training, women were stationed in villages to perform community services.

With the establishment of the *panchayat* system of government, the training program underwent several changes. The home science training program was merged with the countrywide training program under the Ministry of Home and Panchayat (currently the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development). A training wing for men and one for women were established: the Panchayat Development Training Institutes and the Women's Affairs Training and Extension Center (now known as Women's Training Centers).

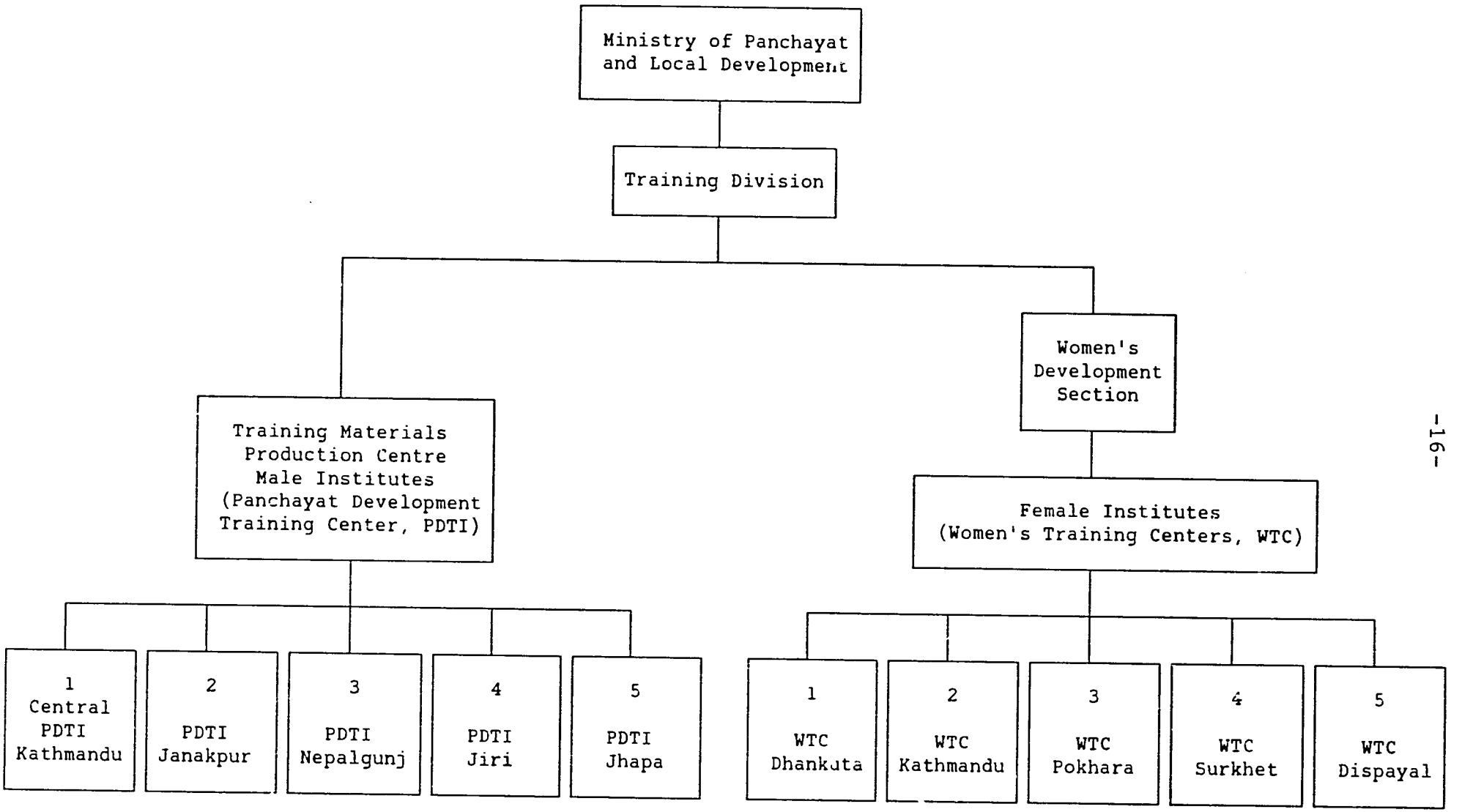
The training curriculum was broadened to include the *panchayat* system, maternal and child health care, and family

planning, in addition to home science subjects such as sewing, knitting, cooking, kitchen gardening, and nutrition. These training programs were open to members of the Nepal Women's Organization, professional women, and volunteer workers. For those who could not come to the Central Training Center in Kathmandu, a women's mobile training program conducted 3-month training programs in different villages.

Since 1975, which marked the beginning of the U.N. Decade of Women, the number of Women's Training Centers has grown to include one center in each of the development regions of Nepal--Dhankuta (eastern region), Kathmandu Center in Jawalkhel (central region), Pokhara (midwestern region), Surkhet (western region), and Dipayal (far western region) (see Figure 1). The centers have conducted institutional and field training programs for women. The institutional training programs included Woman Workers training (1 year program), Chief Woman Workers training (3 months), Volunteer Woman Workers training (3 to 4 months), and periodic leadership training for the Nepal Women's Organization and women members of the panchayats.

Women trained as Woman Workers and Chief Woman Workers were recruited under the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development to carry out field training programs. There are now 210 such nongazetted class III and IV (the lowest ranks in Nepal's bureaucratic structure) positions.

Figure 1. Organizational Structure for Training Institutes Under the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development



The Women's Development Section was established in 1979 during the Decade of Women because the Ministry of Panchayat realized that building infrastructure for rural development required integrating women's needs into the overall planning and implementation work of the Ministry. Thus, the primary purpose of the section is to help rural women gain access to the services and inputs required for the development process. Although the Women's Development Section is not directly concerned with training, it is located within the training division under the mandate of the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development.

Since its inception, the Women's Development Section has initiated and carried out several programs for women, such as production credit programs for rural women supported by UNICEF; a vegetable growing and pickle-making project through the Panchayat Development Training Institute in Nepalgunj; a hosiery project in cooperation with the Women's Training Center in Jawalakhel and Ratna Jyoti Pariwar in Bhasipati; and a goat-raising project initiated through the local-level committees. The Section has also initiated a feasibility study of jute processing in Jhapa, a study of appropriate village technology, a study on incorporation of women in the Integrated Rural Development Program, and a project on seri-silk and nettle production and processing.

PCRW, implemented in 1982, is the largest program for women and is aimed at strengthening women's cadres for women-in-

development activities. Under the project, more posts for Women Development Officers have been created (24 at present). These women are to work in teams with branch bank managers; bank field assistants; and volunteers from the Peace Corps, Dutch Volunteers, and VSO to implement project activities that will help rural women in identifying and planning income-generation projects, securing the necessary credit and noncredit inputs, assessing basic community needs related to women and children, and organizing women into groups for community development. The project target is to recruit 75 Woman Development Officers, placing one in each of the districts, with assistance from the Woman Workers and Chief Woman Workers.

The recruitment of Woman Development Officers in the three RCUP districts (Myagdi, Gorkha, and Mustang) and the women-in-development programs carried out in these areas are the extension of an existing PCRW program of the Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development Women's Development Section. RCUP channels the budget for these programs through this Ministry.

3. PROJECT HISTORY

3.1 General Project

The project activities are intended to assist the Government of Nepal to reverse environmental degradation and to restore the soil, water, and plant resource base for Nepal's predominantly rural population. By doing this, it is anticipated that Nepal's rural residents will achieve an improved standard of living through increased agricultural production, enhanced nutrition, and increased employment opportunities.

Although the project had experienced initial startup delays, all of its subprojects were underway by the time of the team's visit in May 1985. Project activities currently include resource inventory and monitoring; watershed management and soil conservation; forest management; range/pasture management; livestock stall feeding programs; extension work in priority fields (forestry, range/pasture, soil conservation); technical field support; construction of project offices and staff housing; and professional training at the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources. (The project is not funding construction of Institute buildings, which is covered by World Bank funding with SECID/RCUP providing supervisory engineering staff for the Government of Nepal.) Some originally planned project activities (e.g., agronomy, research, fisheries) have been cancelled, and some other

activities (e.g., energy, irrigation, and drinking water programs) have been reduced in scope.

Table 2 shows progress (as percentages of 5-year targets achieved) by project activity, based on information in the January 1985 Project Extension Paper. Progress to date has been lowest in forestry activities. The team observed substantial activities in the turnkey RCUP building-construction projects and in soil conservation (gully control and trail improvements). The project line agencies have been active in such activities as distributing cookstoves and agricultural mini-kits, constructing fishponds and water schemes, and setting up a biogas generator.

The team observed many local people engaged in project-related activities. Much of this work was paid labor (e.g., building construction, trail improvement), whereas other activities, such as water projects, fishpond construction, or agricultural mini-kit distribution, were, in effect, Government handouts. As a result, local people often view RCUP as a source of temporary (although valued) opportunities for wage labor and as a provider of capital projects or technology for which the villagers bear no responsibility for maintenance or repair. For example, residents of one village in the Myagdi District had not assumed responsibility for repair and maintenance of water project equipment. In Gorkha, a project fishpond had completely dried up because the villagers preferred to use the available

Table 2. Progress Achieved in Project Activities as of July 15, 1984

Activity Category	Progress to Date (% of 5-year target)
Soil Conservation and Watershed Management	75%
Forestry	35%
Agriculture	75%
Livestock Development and Animal Health	75%
Drinking Water Supply	83%
Large-Scale Irrigation Schemes	45%
Panchayat and Local Development	
Small-Scale Drinking Water Supply	65%
Small-Scale Irrigation Schemes	55%
Ministry of Forestry and Soil Conservation Training Wing	63%
Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources	
Certificate Program	50%
Diploma Course	85%
Participant Training	43%
Turnkey Construction	50%
Women in Development	not given

Source: Project Extension Paper, January 1985.

water for crop irrigation rather than to keep the fishpond operating.

3.2 Process Analysis

3.2.1 Extent of Recognition of Women

Based on a review of project documents, direct observations, and interviews with USAID, the contractor (SECID), and Government of Nepal personnel, the team believes that there has been real progress over the past 5 years in the recognition of gender issues in the project. Although there has been much progress, much remains to be done. Table 3 presents a chronological summary of project activities, focusing on those pertaining to women-in-development issues.

Although the original 1980 RCUP Project Paper did recognize the relationship between women's various roles and project success, it did not discuss these roles in much detail nor did it define clear strategies or mechanisms to ensure that women's activities would be recognized and incorporated into implementation efforts. By sponsoring publication of the Status of Women in Nepal Series in 1979, AID demonstrated an awareness of the need for gender-disaggregated data and made available a quite detailed study. The second volume, published in 1981, provided

Table 3. Chronology of Women-in-Development Issues in Nepal's Resource Conservation and Utilization Project

Date	Project Activity
1978	SECID wins the RCUP contract to supervise all the fieldwork and direct, monitor, and channel resources through Government line agencies.
1978-1980	Project design is developed.
1979	AID-sponsored Status of Women Series (Vol. 1) is prepared by the Center for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) of Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu.
1980	Project begins.
1981	Status of Women Series (Vol. 2) is prepared.
1982	Arrival of Janet Ballantyne, Women-in-Development (WID) coordinator at the USAID Mission. With her commitment, the Government of Nepal finds more qualified women to participate in project activities. She recognizes the critical nature of Women-in-Development issues.
Jan.-May	First two SECID-sponsored fellows arrive: Carol Cooper studies women's roles in resource conservation and the design of appropriate nonformal training courses. Debra Davidson assesses women's roles in resource conservation and identifies channels for information dissemination in rural areas.
Sept.-Oct.	Marilyn Hoskins is hired by the project to write a report on strategies for involving women in RCUP activities and benefits.
1983	Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources conducts a female candidate survey.
Apr.-Aug.	Two more SECID fellows conduct fieldwork: Melodie Goosens-Conlon assesses the impact of RCUP's introduction of kitchen gardens, milk, and improved cookstoves on the nutritional status of rural communities, and women's responses to these changes.

Table 3. Chronology of Women-in-Development Issues in Nepal's Resource Conservation and Utilization Project (cont.)

Date	Project Activity
1983 (cont.)	
Apr.-Aug. (cont.)	Karen Roesing monitors the effectiveness and impact of RCUP smokeless stove installation.
May	Seven women enter Institute classes (1 diploma level and 6 certificate level).
May	RCUP/WID coordinator/consultant social scientist, Shanta Pandey (M.S. Social Work, U. of Delhi) is hired (first woman staff member of the project).
1984	
May	National seminar on employment of female Institute graduates is held.
June	Don Messerschmidt (SECID social scientist) produces an update of Hoskins recommendations and summarizes the progress made in implementing her suggestions.
July/Aug.	Shanta Pandey leaves the project to pursue doctoral studies in the United States.
July/Dec.	Two more SECID fellows conduct fieldwork:
	Holly Reid evaluates the efficiency of improved cookstoves and the health impact of smoke from both traditional and improved cookstoves.
	Sally Sontheimer works at the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources with its first two classes of female students.
Aug.	Second group of women enter the Institute in diploma and certificate programs (1 in diploma program and 11 in certificate program).
Oct.	Seventh SECID fellow conducts fieldwork.
	Kathy Luchok focuses on the planting, care, and use of kitchen gardens to benefit village women and their families.

Table 3. Chronology of Women-in-Development Issues in Nepal's Resource Conservation and Utilization Project (cont.)

Date	Project Activity
1985	
Jan.	Second coordinator/consultant social scientist, Murari Aryal, is hired to replace Shanta Pandey.
May	Women Development Officers begin working in the project districts. Proposal submitted to AID to have SECID fellows serve for 1 year and to have one work with each Woman Development Officer.

additional data. However, there is little evidence in the Project Paper of the use of these data in project planning.

Even 5 years into the project, the team still found RCUP personnel (especially in Kathmandu offices) who have only limited awareness of the varied roles of women and who define "women in development" in terms of traditional household roles (e.g., cooks, kitchen gardeners) or of highly visible nontraditional roles (e.g., female students at the Institute, women social scientists working for the project). If project personnel are aware of the broader scope of women's activities, they did not indicate this awareness, despite the team's efforts to include women's other roles in their discussions.

The team was more encouraged, however, in discussions with (male) district- and local-level line agency officials, such as

district Agricultural Development Officers and local Junior Technicians. From their own field experience, several of these men had come to recognize the major role that Nepalese women play in agriculture and had concluded that to do their job properly they must reach women. Furthermore, they believe that focusing on men in agricultural extension efforts is often not as efficient or effective as focusing on women. One officer commented, "With the men I cannot guarantee [results]. Of 100 men trained maybe 50 will keep trying project techniques." He added, "Women are very disciplined and have more sincerity [in learning and applying new technologies]." In his experience the success of demonstration plots was much greater for women trainees than for men.

What the team did not find, however, was an understanding of women's roles outside the agricultural sector or the household (e.g., in commerce or portering work) or the ways these roles might influence project implementation. Such understanding is especially important for project activities with the poorest women, who often seek employment off the farm and who thus perform many additional activities not prescribed by a cultural ideal that calls for women to stay in a protected home environment.

3.2.2 Accommodation of Project Design to the Target Group

Project Delivery Systems and Institutions. For the first few years, the project energies were directed primarily toward preparing management and implementation plans, selecting project sites, and delivering technical packages. The construction of RCUP district facilities, in fact, remains a major project activity. During this early period there was no social scientist on the U.S. contractor team (SECID), and social concerns in general did not figure as prominently in project implementation as they did later.

As social concerns and the awareness of gender issues increased among project personnel, specific packages were designed for women, such as the improved cookstoves program. In 1984, women-only kitchen garden training programs were begun, implemented by Women in Development Interns working for the U.S. contractor.

The project training programs also have made efforts to include women. The Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources instituted a minimum 10-percent quota for female enrollment to ensure that women are actively recruited. Because families will use their limited funds to subsidize boys' education over girls', the project has provided special funds for female Institute students to cover field expenses and the like. Extra security

measures were taken by providing separate living quarters for the women and a dormitory supervisor. In addition, the Institute has held at least one seminar to discuss employment opportunities for its women graduates.

However, although the Institute has admitted women to fill its "women's slots," they have not been allowed to compete with males for any of the other slots, thus keeping some qualified women from attending the Institute. The quota has been valuable for countering male resistance to female resource managers, but unfortunately, the quota has been viewed more as an upper limit for female admissions than as the minimum level acceptable.

In Gorkha (and perhaps other areas), Agricultural Development Officers have received circulars from the Ministry of Agriculture notifying them of the requirement that at least 20 percent of all agricultural trainees be women. When women travel out of town for agricultural training, extra security measures are taken and they are provided separate quarters with a woman dormitory supervisor. But constraints to the training of women still exist. Women have less free time than men to go away for training, and frequently they must receive permission from a male head of household to go.

A significant and innovative new program that may have profound effects on the project delivery system is the new Woman Development Officer program. This program is currently being

instituted throughout Nepal with the goal of placing one Woman Development Officer in each of Nepal's 75 districts by 1995. These officers will help village women assess their needs and organize self-help efforts (e.g., production credit programs) to address them. The development target for this program is the village household, which will be approached through efforts directed at the women of the household. Project activities will be only one part of the wider Woman Development Officer program.

The Woman Development Officer program was established because it is believed that female officers will have a better understanding of village women's needs and will be better advocates. These officers are college-educated women; over half have postgraduate training. At the time of the team's visit, one officer had recently been placed in the Myagdi District and one in the Gorkha District. Another was to be placed in the Mustang District soon. All three are supported by the project. For the first few years, these development officers will work at the village level, familiarizing themselves with the area and building rapport with the people. In the RCUP project areas, Woman Development Officers will move to district-level responsibilities in 3 years. By this time a cadre of Woman Workers and Chief Woman Workers will be trained and available to take over the work at the village level and act as officers' assistants at the district level. The Woman Worker program, begun 25 years ago to help educate villagers about the new panchayat political system

and to facilitate development activities, now has 210 Woman Workers and Chief Woman Workers in Nepal. Plans call for a total of 2,000 by 1990. If implemented as planned, these cadres of trained, dedicated workers and their supervisors can make an important contribution to RCUP and other development projects in Nepal.

Safeguards Against Possible Negative Impact on Women. The primary safeguards built into the project to guard against negative impacts on women have been specific to the training programs, (e.g., extra safety measures for women trainees). On a broader level, safeguards were theoretically built into project design through the requirement that at least one woman representative serve on Panchayat Conservation Committees, the village-level RCUP committee.

Provisions for Participation by Village Women. The project has encouraged the participation of at least one woman on each Panchayat Conservation Committee. These women are usually the heads of local committees of the national Nepal Women's Organization. The project is now encouraging the addition of at least one more woman member to each Panchayat Commictee in the belief that two women would encourage each other to speak out and that an additional woman would provide broader village representation. Project officials believe these should be mature (40-50 years

old), married women, because they will have more experience and are likely to have daughters-in-law at home to take over responsibilities in their absence.

There have been other efforts to ensure women's participation at the local level. In one project area in the Myagdi District, a Women's Services Coordination Committee was formed to publicize and explain project activities to women villagers. This group included at least one woman from each of the nine wards (panchayat subdivisions). Efforts also are being made in RCUP areas to include more women in agricultural training sessions. To date this has consisted primarily of women-only kitchen garden training, but there is a growing awareness that women would benefit from a broad range of agricultural training.

One major problem with the project's delivery system is its heavy reliance on the panchayat as a conduit for delivery of information and services to villagers. Because the panchayats are controlled by the local elite, project benefits frequently go to better-off villagers with political influence within the panchayat. In addition, the pervasive influence of the local elite in the panchayat structure means that women active in project extension work and women Panchayat Conservation Committee representatives are often close relatives of male village leaders. For example, one of the two women members of a Panchayat Committee in the Myagdi District was a close relative of the

chairman of the district-level panchayat. In the Gorkha District, the team spoke with a woman Agricultural Assistant, also a member of the local Panchayat Committee, who was the sister of the pradhan panch (village leader). Such women, it should be noted, may be better educated and more articulate than other village women and may be well qualified for their positions. But their strong ties to the local power structure contribute to the politicization of project activities at the local level and do little to ensure that village women as a whole are considered in project decisions.

Project user groups were designed to ensure broad village involvement (including women's involvement) in project activities and were intended to be sustainable, self-reliant organizations. It is not clear that this has been accomplished in existing groups. In fact, a woman member of a water user group in the Myagdi District told the team that the user group met regularly but did nothing. When asked why she took part in such a group, the woman member said, "The pradhan panch told me to."

Table 4 at the end of this report presents data on women's participation in project activities. The data show that women and men both took part as staff, trainees, beneficiaries, and paid laborers. The range of project activities is wide, so generalizations are difficult. In some activities, such as the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources, participation met

the targets. In others, such as the cookstove activity, results fell short of targets. Indicators are given by activity, with findings relevant to the activity presented under "comments." (The team visited only a small percentage of the project activities because of the geographic range of the project and the limited time available.)

4. GENDER ISSUES IN PROJECT PERFORMANCE

4.1 Socioeconomic Assumptions

Before discussing how the understanding of and the attention given to gender issues affected project performance, several implicit socioeconomic assumptions about women's roles that apparently underlie original RCUP strategy should be mentioned:

1. Farmers are primarily men. Women are viewed in terms of household roles (e.g., cooks, kitchen gardeners, and, by extension, nursery workers). (Women also farm and even leave the home to become porters, so these assumptions inaccurately describe the activities of both men and women.)

2. Providing project technology or information to male heads of household will benefit women as part of the household through a trickle-down effect. (No evidence to verify or question assumption.)

3. Male heads of household will be able to clearly understand and articulate women's needs for goods or services in project areas. (No evidence to verify or question assumption.)

4. Using the village panchayat system will enable project benefits to reach the greatest number of people, including women and the poor. (We found this assumption to be false: project benefits tend to benefit the relatively well off. However, it would be difficult for the project to adopt any other organizational approach because all government-to-government rural development projects in Nepal work through village panchayats.)

5. It is very difficult for male extension agents to reach women because women are frequently restricted in their interaction with men outside the family. Women have less freedom of movement than men. (These assumptions may be true in many, but not in all cases. The knowledge and personality of the extension agent is of utmost importance and must be considered, as well as the size and dispersion of the group with which he or she is working.)

6. It is more effective to train married women than single women. Training single women will not benefit the area because they move away from their natal villages when

they marry. (This assumption unduly narrows possibilities for involvement of women.)

7. RCUP capital construction projects (staff offices and housing) will enhance the project area resource base and help attract professionals to the project area. (The validity of this assumption will be proved or disproved with time.)

8. Agricultural demonstrations will have a spread effect, and the new crops introduced through such demonstration plots and the distribution of agricultural mini-kits will increase production and lessen the pressure on the land. (This assumption will be proved or disproved over time.)

9. Residents of the project areas are aware of the need to conserve natural resources. (If they are, then adoption of project innovations will be enhanced and sustainability will be much more likely.)

Many of these assumptions have been, or are now being, challenged as a result of work done by project social scientists, SECID Women in Development interns, and others.

4.2 Equity: The Importance of Project Outcomes to Women

4.2.1 Impact on the Status of Women

The major contribution of the project to the status of women has been an increased awareness and acceptance of professional women. The Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources has made a strong effort to include women trainees. The women students have done well, and, although problems still remain, the all-male teaching and administrative staff now seems more prepared to accept women professional foresters.

Another profession opening up to Nepalese women is the position of local Agricultural Assistant. The team found progress uneven; for example, there were several female assistants in the Gorkha District and none in the Myagdi District. Furthermore, women Agricultural Assistants tended to be of the more privileged classes; in at least one case, the woman was related to the pradhan panch.

The newly hired Woman Development Officers and their Woman Worker assistants offer the greatest promise for raising the status of women at the village level.[1] They will provide role

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[1]Although the Woman Development Officers are part of a nationwide Government program, the three in the districts covered by the project are being funded by USAID.

models as involved, educated women. In addition, they will identify women villagers with leadership potential to be trained as Woman Workers and to serve as role models for other village women.

The team found that married and unmarried women are affected differently by the project activities (although, given the nature of Nepalese society, most women eventually marry). Line officers were resistant to training unmarried women. One Agricultural Development Officer said he had trained a group of unmarried women who then all moved out of the district when they married. He therefore believes it is a waste of district resources to train unmarried women.

4.2.2 Sensitizing Professional RCUP Staff to Gender Issues

Although the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources has made efforts to recruit female students, and although these women are changing the traditional views of women's roles by their very presence at the school, a continuing effort, as conducted by the RCUP social scientists in the past 2 years, is needed to sensitize the Institute's male teachers and students to gender issues. Producing a quota of female foresters is useful, but it is even more valuable to produce a cadre of male and female foresters with a sensitivity to and appreciation of gender roles in the interrelated areas of agriculture, animal care, and forestry.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the team spoke with several experienced district- and local-level officials who had independently concluded that reaching women was vitally important to fulfilling their professional responsibilities. Other officials, however, continued to define women's issues in the project solely in terms of traditional household roles or highly visible nontraditional roles (e.g., Institute female students). Conversations with such officials showed that more work is needed to sensitize project professional staff to the complexities of women's roles and their relationship to project activities.

4.2.3 Effects of the Project on Women's Workload, Income, Access to and Control of Resources, and Human Capital Aspects

The team found little indication of positive changes in women's workload, income, or returns to labor as a direct result of project activities. Women work as paid laborers on project activities, but their wages are almost invariably lower than those of male laborers. Because women laborers continue to be responsible for many traditional household tasks, their workload remains the same. They have merely substituted construction work for traditional work in the fields. Both men and women find it difficult to save money while doing such work and may return home as poor as they set out.

One woman in the Myagdi District increased her income by selling excess produce from her kitchen garden. However, her case was unusual. Because she was a woman of position and influence with close relations to project officials, she had enough land to produce a surplus, and she had easy access to the market in the district center because she lived in town.

Women (as well as men) receive free plants from project nurseries (e.g., vegetables, citrus, fodder, and fruit tree saplings). Because women do most of the agricultural work, having access to superior drought- or pest-resistant plant varieties is of special benefit to them and helps increase their returns to labor.

The team was told that the Gorkha project biogas plant substantially reduced the time needed for grinding, hulling, and oil extraction, which is done by women. But the district also had a water mill that provided the same time-saving services for far less cost. Because women preferred to use the water mill, the biogas plant has had difficulty meeting its operating expenses during the wet season when the water mill is operating.

Other project activities may enhance women's nutrition and health. When women actually use the improved cookstoves, they inhale less smoke and may suffer fewer respiratory problems. (However, women do not find the stoves convenient enough to use for all their cooking needs.) The kitchen garden training in the

Gorkha District included lessons in cooking chapatis (wheat pancakes); because wheat had been introduced into this area only 4 or 5 years previously, many women did not know how to cook with it.

4.3 Implications of Women's Roles for Project Success

1. The team found that although a Nepalese cultural ideal for women (especially in Hindu households) may be a protected life within the confines of the family, economic necessity draws many women away from home to seek work. This has implications for the project, for although project planners often assume that women cannot leave home for training or other project activities, many women are, in fact, quite mobile.

2. It has been assumed that male extension agents cannot talk with women villagers because of social sanctions against women talking to men outside their families. This is true mainly of one-on-one male-female conversations, which might elicit gossip. There are few restrictions on male agents addressing groups of women.

The team was told of older, experienced male agents who had no trouble reaching women, whereas younger, less experienced male agents did. The primary reason was that women, being the expert farmers, asked more detailed questions. Therefore, inexperienced

male agents preferred to talk to men because they did not pressure them for answers to very specific questions. The foremost concern for extension agents, whether male or female, should be knowledge about their subject.

3. Because Nepalese women have traditionally performed the majority of farming activities, they are vitally concerned with project soil conservation schemes for agricultural land. District Agricultural Development Officers have already begun to recognize women's important contributions here. However, because women have not traditionally been involved actively in forest regeneration efforts, the forestry projects do not fit as well into women's traditional behavior patterns. When gathering branches for fuel or fodder, women and children practice a form of conservation by lopping rather than felling trees, but they have not traditionally engaged in planting forest trees or protecting forest seedlings. (Men also have no traditional model to follow in reforestation activities.) Lack of knowledge of gender roles and, therefore, attention to them may have contributed to forestry target achievement being lower than for any other project component. Lack of attention to gender has been shown in a number of cases around the world (by Marilyn Hoskins and others) to have contributed to forestry project failure.

Because so many RCUP forestry regeneration efforts involve wage-labor (to transport seedlings, plant trees, and so on), the

team is concerned that the incentives for participation of both men and women in project activities may rely too heavily on the immediate benefits of receiving cash for labor at the expense of other necessary, but lower paying, activities and of long-term, sustainable forest management.

4. The basic project implementation strategy is to target information and project inputs (seed mini-kits and the like) to the male heads of household. In theory, women and children will benefit in a trickle-down effect. But this implementation strategy ignores the fact that women do most of the farm work and will be the actual implementors of agriculture projects. Teaching new agricultural techniques only to men is most likely a misdirection of effort. Furthermore, this strategy does not take into account the female heads of households. Good statistics on households headed by women are not yet available in project areas. It is hoped that the socioeconomic surveys to be carried out in RCUP project areas by newly assigned Woman Development Officers will supply more information on the needs of these households.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Recognition of Gender Issues in RCUP

1. Continue efforts underway to increase the awareness of gender issues among project planners, policymakers, and implementors. Specifically, increase the awareness that Nepalese women have a wide range of economic roles (e.g., in agriculture, commerce, construction, portering) and social roles, depending on their caste or ethnic group, age, marital status, and other variables.

2. Define more clearly the relationship between village women's activities and RCUP forestry activities. In assessing the relationship between reforestation activities and the activities of village women, RCUP has no traditional model to follow because women have traditionally exploited rather than tried to regenerate forests. Because women are more concerned than men with fuelwood and fodder collection, the woman-forest relationship is an important gender concern (although it should be noted that participation by both men and women in the project is necessary for sustainability).

5.2 Participation in Project Activities

1. Give more specific guidance to line agencies involved in the project on ways to incorporate gender issues into coherent overall line agency goals. USAID is only the eighth largest donor in Nepal and policy leverage is limited. However, policy dialogue between USAID and the Government of Nepal should continue in order to encourage institutionalization of gender concerns.

Gender issues must be incorporated explicitly into line agency goals to ensure that village-level representatives address them. This is one way in which USAID can exert leverage in project areas. If attention to gender issues is made a part of the job performance criteria, both male and female workers will have more incentive to reach out to women villagers. A further incentive would be to use evidence of outreach to women as a criterion for evaluating job performance and giving raises and promotions.

The team found that within the line agency bureaucracies, men and women agents tend to act in the same way: when directed to fulfill a quota, perform a task, and so on, they do so; without such direction, they do not. Quotas are helpful in encouraging village-level agents to seek out women for project activities. However, these should be stated as "minimum acceptable quotas" to avoid excluding other qualified women on a competitive basis.

It may be possible to increase the number of female applicants to the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources by allowing women to apply through their district Woman Workers or Woman Development Officers. Currently, they must travel to Hetauda to apply for admission, regardless of where they live.

2. Identify geographical areas where women most need outside help in order to share in project benefits and focus gender-specific activities on these areas. There may be less need for women-focused activities among the Thakali people of the Mustang area where women have, in the words of one anthropologist, "ruled the roost for hundreds of years." Conservative Hindu communities, in contrast, may need special outreach efforts, training, and so forth to ensure that women participate in project activities and share in project benefits.

3. Formulate specific provisions for reaching female heads of household in project areas. Little data exist on female heads of household in project areas. More data and analysis would help determine whether there is a need for a special outreach program for such households.

4. Have the new Woman Workers and Woman Development Officers gather data on female heads of household as they conduct their socioeconomic surveys.

5. Reemphasize institutionalization of project activities and processes at the local level and encourage women's partici-

pation at this level. Project decision-making power should be decentralized to conform with Nepal's Decentralization Act of 1982. However, alternatives should be found to the heavy reliance on the panchayat system which tends to channel project benefits to the local elite (frequently to the male elite). Using traditional organizations (e.g., women's labor exchange groups) could give women more of a voice in local-level project planning. Also, independent, nongovernmental organization involvement in the project should be encouraged.

More use should be made of existing models, such as the "facilitators" (e.g., the Woman Workers and Woman Development Officer models) or the model of one expatriate woman and one Nepalese woman working together in a village combining professional guidance and cultural insight.

Having at least two women representatives on each Panchayat Conservation Committee should be emphasized.

6. Continue active support of the Woman Development Officer program in project areas and efforts to coordinate this program with Woman Worker programs and other development programs in the project area. The Woman Worker and Woman Development Officer programs have their own purposes and activities in project areas. Project activities are only one part of a wider program. Therefore, although these professionals can help to encourage women's participation in project activities, the proj-

ect line agency staff should not rely on them entirely. Line agency staff should work with them to encourage women's participation in project activities.

7. Continue special subsidies for women where useful. Special funds are needed for some village-based technicians whose line agencies pay them little or nothing. An example of how this need may be met is illustrated by the RCUP plan to pay a woman livestock technician in the Gorkha area Rs50/month in order to bring her salary in line with that of the Agricultural Assistant who has similar duties.

8. Provide child care at training sites to solve some of the difficulties women have in attending sessions.

9. Continue the policy of special security measures for women students at the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources and for women trainees attending project classes away from home. These measures have included separate lodging for women and women dormitory supervisors. Such measures are highly valued by the women's families and, in some cases, are the deciding factor in determining whether a woman may attend Institute classes.

10. Coordinate project efforts with population control and literacy programs. Reducing population pressures on the land will help ensure RCUP's long-term success. The project should

either change existing literacy requirements for project training activities or coordinate these activities with other donors doing literacy training.

5.3 Recommendations Designed To Ensure That Men and Women Share Appropriately in Project Benefits

1. Use more effective extension techniques to deliver project benefits to women. Demonstration plots should be emphasized, especially those convenient to women's homes, because they can help convince women farmers of the value of new agricultural technology. Well-trained extension agents should be used to disseminate information. Meetings and training sessions should be structured to make the best use of women's often limited time (e.g., avoid extended preliminary meetings, lack of organization). Followup classes should be arranged to build on women's enthusiasm and to draw additional women into project activities.

The project should try to regularly inform local branches of the Nepal Women's Organization on project activities and make concrete suggestions for involving women.

2. Continue efforts to ensure that gender issues are incorporated into professional training programs and that women students are fairly represented in such programs. Gender issues should be included as part of the training curriculum for both

men and women, and the Institute of Renewable and Natural Resources should ensure that all its graduates, both men and women, are aware of gender issues.

Women who will be doing jobs similar to those that men are performing should receive similar training following a similar curriculum. For example, women Agricultural Assistants should not receive short-duration training in cooking, family planning, hygiene, and general agriculture, while male Agricultural Assistants receive longer training in specific agricultural subsectors and techniques.

Efforts are needed to recruit women for project area professional training programs. Translating the English-language brochure on the Institute recruitment program for women into Nepali was a valuable step; translating it into the vernacular for those who do not read Nepali should also be considered.

In addition to training women professionals, efforts should be made to place them after graduation. The Institute has begun to address this issue and should be encouraged in its efforts.

3. Encourage the livestock stall-feeding program, which is of vital concern to women, the major gatherers of fodder. A major contributing factor to the degradation of Nepal's environment has been the strain put on the slopes by free-foraging livestock and by fodder gathering. The stall-feeding program should encourage a more careful use of scarce resources.

4. Design project technical packages and dissemination activities to reach both genders. Cookstoves should be designed to meet the needs of the users. A followup program to kitchen garden training would help participants (and project implementators) to learn from their mistakes. More attention should be paid to ensuring acceptable germination rates for the mini-kit seed packages. Charging a nominal fee for agricultural mini-kits in project areas might make farmers feel that they have a bigger stake in the success of the demonstration plots.

5. Continue to support the Women in Development Internship program sponsored by the U.S. contractor (SECID). This program places U.S. graduate students in villages to work with women on specific RCUP activities. Internships are currently 6 months long. However, because the interns have had limited or no Nepali language capability, a longer internship program, including some language training, should be considered. Interns should be encouraged to coordinate their work with ongoing Nepalese outreach programs (e.g., Woman Development Officers) to ensure the sustainability of their activities.

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Institute for Renewable Natural Resources	Hetauda	- 17 women are enrolled in a certificate program (of 110 admitted annually). - 2 women are enrolled in a diploma program (total of 109 students). - Goal is to have women constitute at least 10% of total students. - In the first year, 6 women applied for 11 seats; in the second year, 66 women applied.	The project has made special efforts to ensure the security of women students (women's dorm and female warden). Women are also given an additional stipend because many families allocate scarce financial resources only to boys.
Nurseries	Myagdi	- Women get Rs15/day; men get Rs20/day. - 75% of total nursery workers are women. - Of 24 labor leaders, 5 are women (male and female labor leaders receive equal pay). - No women foremen out of 5 positions.	The lower wage rate for women is justified by the claim that women can carry only about half the number of seedlings as men. The team was told in one area that men can carry 200 seedlings and women only 100. In another area the team was told that men carry 80-90 seedlings and women only 40-50. Given such discrepancies--and the team's own observations of Nepalese women carrying very large and heavy loads--the team concluded that this belief was not borne out by the evidence. Foresters prefer to hire women to plant trees because women's labor is

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location (cont.)

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Nurseries (cont.)	Myagdi		cheaper. The Beni nursery had difficulty hiring women because the job was too low in status for town women and the wages too low to attract women from outside the village. More women are employed in the nurseries in the smaller villages outside Beni.
	Gorkha		Because the seedlings are planted in June and July when farm planting is done, the project can sometimes only get children to work on tree planting activities in its 17 nurseries here.
Stoves	Myagdi	- Although many stoves were being used as designed, the team saw several stoves that had been modified to better meet the needs of cooks.	
	Gorkha	- One village asked for 35 stoves but received only 25.	The team heard very mixed reviews of the cookstoves. Some people said they saved much fuelwood and used their new stoves extensively; some no longer used the stoves. In general, women agreed that the

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location (cont.)

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Stoves (cont.)	Gorkha		stoves took much longer to cook food and were good for cooking rice but not millet or wheat. The cookstoves were also not considered practical for large families. Cookstoves with adjustable rings to hold pots in potholes were highly valued.
Construction	Myagdi	- Wage rates for men and women on turnkey construction projects vary. Unskilled men get Rs25-30/day; women get Rs20/day. (The official Government rate for such labor is Rs15/day for women and Rs22/day for men.) - Men have access to semiskilled and skilled positions on the construction crews. (One contractor claimed he paid men and women equal rates of Rs30/day. Because this was the busy planting season it is possible he had to pay these rates to lure workers from the land.)	Women laborers said they came long distances to work on the construction project for the money--exactly the same motivation as the male laborers'.

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location (cont.)

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Lokta Bush	Myagdi	- In 1984 several women were included in a group sent to a UNICEF Lokta bush pilot project for training in paper-making techniques.	The team saw large piles of paper that had been produced and were being marketed.
		- 9 of 40 people trained were women.	
Kitchen Gardens	Myagdi	- 25 women attended a 6-day training session.	
		- 2 women trained in kitchen garden techniques came in second and third in the annual agricultural exhibition contest.	
	Gorkha	- One class of 20 women has been held so far.	
Agricultural Mini-kits	Myagdi Gorkha	- Most of the kits went to male heads of household.	Where women were included, the team was told by the pradhan panch that it was because women are "backward" and "because it is the policy of the Government to include women in development activities."
		- Germination rates were very uneven, due to inferior seeds.	

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location (cont.)

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Agricultural Mini-kits (cont.)	Mustang	- "8 or 9" women received mini-kits.	Benefits from the agricultural mini-kit program are difficult to measure at this point because it is still on a limited, demonstration scale.
Leader Farmer Training (other than kitchen gardens)	Myagdi	- Mostly men receive the training, although a recent training program had 9 women and 15 men.	
	Gorkha	- The district Agricultural Development Officer had received a directive that 20% of all agricultural trainees must be women; 11 women had been sent out of the district for training.	
	Mustang	- "Very few" women involved in leadership training programs.	
Fishpond	Myagdi		Men do the fishing. The Panchayat will control the benefits when the project is turned over to them. The school and temple will benefit from the profits. Uncertainty exists about the water supply for the fishpond, but meetings are being held to resolve the problem.
Water	Myagdi	- 15 women and 10 men attended a local meeting to discuss a multipurpose water scheme serving a project nursery, fishpond, and community drinking water project.	Nepal is not providing maintenance funds. Sustainability will be up to the local users group.
		- 2 of 7 on the users committee are women.	

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location (cont.)

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Fishpond	Gorkha		The fishpond was dry, because farmers prefer to use available water for field irrigation.
Women Development Officer Program	Myagdi		The program started in May 1985. It has a work plan and will emphasize individual training. The program began sewing classes for 20 women; held a 2-day seminar on health, village cleaning, and credit; and has begun a socioeconomic survey of village. It hopes to distribute 10 stoves.
	Gorkha		The program just started. A successful village meeting was held to introduce the program; both men and women participated. Two women were selected for training as agricultural assistant and livestock assistant in the village. Area Women Workers will go to Kathmandu for 1-week training and will return to assist the program. The program has begun a socioeconomic survey of village.

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location (cont.)

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Biogas Plant	Gorkha	- All 75 members of the overseeing committee are men. - 17 land certificates held as collateral for plant financing and construction all belong to men. - The plant is having financial problems.	It is difficult to collect manure for the biogas plant because people prefer to apply it directly to their own fields. Ninety percent of manure gathering is done by women. Women prefer to use the water mill during the wet season when water power is available because it costs them less. Users of the mill are mainly women.
Stall Feeding	Gorkha	- The livestock office has organized a training session. - Each of 68 panchayats was requested to send 1 representative, based on achievement in livestock raising; 29 came--all men.	This training program to encourage feeding of livestock in stalls instead of free foraging included information on napier grass fodder and soil conservation programs. (Successful plantings of napier grass to stop erosion usually is done by women.)
Agricultural Assistants	Gorkha	- Currently 12 women are Agriculture Assistants in Gorkha, of a total of 150. - Gorkha District is served by a main paved road, so it is easier for women to get to outside training and women are more exposed to outside influences - 3 of 14 current Agriculture Assistant trainees are women.	

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location (cont.)

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Agricultural Assistants (cont.)	Myagdi	- No women Agricultural Assistants.	
		- No hostel for women trainees in Ramput (training center used by Myagdi District).	
		- Facilities only for male trainees.	
Participant Training		- 2 women enrolled in B.S. program in the Philippines	
		- 1 woman nominee for M.S. program in the U.S. to begin in summer 1985.	
Community Participation			A suggestion was made recently that at least two women be involved on each Panchayat Conservation Committee. (One would be a member of the Nepal Women's Organization and one would not.) The overall effectiveness of the Committees varies greatly among panchayats. The usual pattern has been 11 members plus 1 position for representative from the Nepal Women's Organization. One woman on the Myagdi District water user group told the team that she thought participation in this group was a waste of time

Table 4. Gender Issues and Participation of Women in RCUP Activities, by Project Activity and Location (cont.)

Project Activity	District	Indicator	Comments
Community Participation (cont.)			and that she was only participating because the pradhan panch told her to.
"Guan Sallah" (Village Dialogue)	Myagdi Mustang		Gaun sallah is a type of community participation first proposed and guided by a SECID social scientist several years ago. After the initial pilot tests in 1983, this idea has not taken off in project areas. Evidently, it was costly and time consuming and not likely to be institutionalized. The project has adopted a modified gaun sallah methodology for the preparation of Panchayat Resource Development Plans. Preparation of one plan for each district was underway during our field visit, but the team did not witness any activity.

Note: The team visited Gorkha and Myagdi Districts. Information on other districts was obtained through interviews and document reviews.