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# **Integration Of Women In The Main Stream Of National Development**

**REPORT  
OF A NATIONAL SEMINAR  
HELD IN KATHMANDU**

**JUNE 9-11, 1981**

**Women Services Coordination Committee  
Bhrikutimandap**

**“.....Any effort towards development or progress will remain unfulfilled unless equal and joint effort is put in by women as well as men .....”**

**-H. M. Queen Aishwarya**



Her Majesty the Queen Aishwarya Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah  
inaugurating the Seminar on  
"Integration of Women in the Mainstream  
of National Development"

## INTRODUCTION

The present report contains the proceedings and the papers of a three day long national seminar on Women and Development held in Kathmandu during 9 – 11 June, 1981.

This seminar was organized by the Women Services Coordination Committee, (WSCC), in cooperation with the Agricultural Development Council, (ADC), Nepal. The theme of the seminar was "Integration of Women in the Main Stream of National Development". The general objectives of the seminar were to provide an opportunity for women engaged in various social, economic, political and educational activities and for senior government officials to discuss and review national policies and programmes related to women and identify the strategies and research issues to further effectively integrate women in the main stream of development.

The major focus of the seminar was on "integration of women in development". Emphasis was laid on the fact that women are central and not marginal to the process of development. They do, after all, constitute half of the human capital resources in rural Nepal. Underlying this theme is the recognition of women as a development resource.

Rural Nepali women are not only actively engaged in agriculture (of the active women, 98.1 per cent are in agriculture as compared to 92.8 per cent for men, Rana, 1978), "but also generate more income than men to the total household economy" (50 per cent versus 44 per cent, Acharya and Bennet, 1981). Women's significant role in the market economy, subsistence farming, farm

enterprise and female entrepreneurship are revealed in the findings of the several studies.

Integration of women should no longer mean only the addition of a few women's programmes by the government and non-government agencies. Fully mobilizing the productive potential of women will have direct impact on achieving the Sixth Five-Year Plan goals. The government and non-government agencies should have targeted integration in all their development policies, strategies and programmes. Women must be integrated in policy and decision making bodies at all levels from the National Planning or research institute to village panchayats. Further, what roles women play and what benefits they get must be part and parcel of national policy, development planning and sectoral programmes at all levels. Integration should mean equal access of women to the opportunities and fruits of development.

The seminar highlighted these issues of vital importance. Participants were urged not only to look into government policies and programmes and their impact on women and development, but also to develop policies, strategies to integrate women in development.

The first session was devoted to a discussion of a series of papers presenting information on His Majesty's Government's development programmes in relation of increasing women's role and status. In view of the importance of involvement of women in the development process, papers were prepared in all aspects of government education, local development, employment, law and health. The remaining sessions were devoted to a discussion as well as development of policies, strategies and programmes for fully integrating women in national development. The participants were broken into six separate groups and each group was responsible for the discussion and formulation of policies, strategies and programmes on one of the six major topics of the background paper.

A number of specialists from government, University and other non-government agencies were requested to prepare papers introducing the different topics selected for the seminar. Participants at the seminar consisted of senior government officials representing a number of different ministries and departments; Food and Agriculture, Trade and Commerce, Local Development, Education and Health; non-government institutions – Cooperative, CEDA, NWO, and other women agencies including BPW, NHEA; and representatives of donor agencies – UNICEF, UNDP, USAID, UNESCO, and NORAD.

The seminar was held at the Conference Hall of the Hotel Blue Star, Kathmandu during 9 – 11 June, 1981.

The seminar was inaugurated by **Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah** at the auditorium of the Rastriya Sabha Griha.

Some of the papers were revised by the authors after the seminar. The WSCC then undertook some editing in order to bring about a uniformity in style, appearance and size of the papers.

The seminar succeeded in achieving its objectives. It succeeded not only in having a lively and fruitful discussion on policies and programmes that affect women's involvement in national development, but also in drawing attention as well as Commitment of the government for the adoption and implementation of the policy and programme recommendations of the seminar. In fact, keen involvement of the senior government officials in the seminar and their support and guidance in the preparation of these recommendations demonstrate the willing commitment of the government in the implementation of the seminar recommendation.

Many persons and institutions were instrumental in the success of this seminar, especially Dr. Shao-er Ong, and the ADC whose interest and support made this seminar a success. We also extend our gratitude to The National Planning Commission (NPC), Mini-

stry of Foreign Affairs, (MFA), Nepal Women's Organization (NWO), Business and Professional Women's Club (BPWC), CEDA, Nepal Home Economics Association (NHEA). These organizations showed an active interest on the organization and conduct of the seminar. Especial thanks are extended to the Rt. Hon. Mrs. Shanta Pokhrel, Chairman, WSCC, Rt. Hon. Mrs. Kamal Rana, Rt. Hon. Mrs. Dil Kumari Shrestha, President, NWO, Honourable Member Dr. Mohan Man Sainju, NPC, Dr. Govind Ram Agrawal, CEDA, Dr. Shao-er Ong. ADC, President Mrs. Ambika Shrestha, BPW, Miss Sadhana Sharma NHEA, Jitendra Sharma, MFA and Mrs. Tula Rana, WSCC, who served as Organizing Committee members for the seminar. Their support, advise and kind assistance to me from preparation thru the seminar has been greatly appreciated. Rt Hon'ble Mrs. Kamal Rana, Mrs. Ambika Shrestha, BPW, and Miss. Sadhana Sharma NHEA also acted as chairpersons during various sessions and their contribution is gratefully acknowledged. A special word of thanks is due to all group rapporteurs for their active contribution and labour in the preparation of their respective group report. Special acknowledgement is made to the authors of the papers that were commissioned for their very lucid and stimulating papers. Gratitude is also due to all resource persons who gave valuable guidance in drawing up the seminar recommendations. Appreciation is also extended to the members of the advisory Coommittee who showed an active interest in the seminar. I wish to especially thank the secretarial staff of the WSCC for undertaking the arduous task of typing out the manuscript and various other odd jobs very efficiently and cheerfully. Finally, I am grateful to the sixty-nine participants who showed so much zeal and commitment throughout the seminar. They deserve credit for making this seminar a succes.

**Vijaya Shrestha**  
Coordinator  
August, 1981

# Programme

June 9-11, 1981

## INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN THE MAIN STREAM OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Women Services Coordination Committee*

*In Cooperation with*

*Agricultural Development Council*

<i>Reception to</i>	<b><u>Her Majesty Queen Aishwarya Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah</u></b>
<i>Welcome</i>	
<i>Address</i>	Mrs. Tula Rana, Member Secretary, WSCC
<i>Presentation of Badge and the Seminar Programme</i>	to <b><u>Her Majesty</u></b> by Mrs. Shanta Pokhrel, Chairman, Organizing Committee and WSCC
<i>Inauguration</i>	by <b><u>Her Majesty</u></b>
<i>Introduction of the Seminar</i>	Mrs. Kamal Rana, Member, Organizing Committee
<i>Remarks</i>	Dr. Shao-er Ong, Member, Organizing Committee
<i>Remarks</i>	Dr. Mohan Man Sainju, Member, Organizing Committee
<i>Vote of Thanks</i>	Mrs. Shanta Pokhrel, Chairman Organizing Committee and WSCC
<i>Master of Ceremony</i>	Mrs. Inu Aryal, WSCC

*Address by:* Rt: Hon Kamal Rana

**Your Majesty the Queen, Your Royal Highness, Rt. Honourable Prime-Minister, Honourable Ministers, Heads of Constitutional Organs, Respected Foreign Diplomats, Participants and Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Her Majesty the Queen by gracing this occasion and inaugurating this seminar has given great inspiration to workers engaged in women's development work.

Although it has been 35 years years that the wave of awareness for women's development in Nepal spread, the light of women's awareness could not have reached villages and households by way of programme being conducted in a planned way and organised at national level; without the able and strong leadership provided by **Her Majesty the Queen** in the context of United Nations Women's Year and Women's Decade.

It is definitely a matter of satisfaction that finally thought has been given to women's participation in national development, for the first time in the National Planning.

It is definitely a very encouraging step to accept the national policy of emphasizing programmes in which opportunities for women, especially in (a) making them more productive in agriculture, (b) providing more opportunity for education, (c) increasing

income by engaging them in rural industries, and (d) making healthy living by providing drinking water in villages and reducing their work-load, have been included in the Sixth Five-Year Plan.

In the context of all these pre-conditions, we can only feel that national development can progress rapidly not by alienating half of the population but only by making them participants in the main-stream.

Keeping this concept in mind, Women's Services Coordination Committee has organised this seminar on Women's Participation in the Main-stream of National Development with the following three objectives.

**Objectives of the Seminar:—**

1. To identify policy strategies as how to effectively integrate women in the main stream of development.
2. To identify methods as to how the policy strategies could be achieved in order to raise the role and status of women in the various fields of development.
3. To identify areas of needed research and action programmes in order to incorporate them in governmental and non-governmental programmes.

*Address by: Dr. Shao-er Ong, A/D/C Associate for Nepal*

**Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests and Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

On this auspicious occasion, this morning we pay our highest respect to the women of Nepal who have faithfully shared with men equal responsibility in carrying out national development programmes. Under your eminent leadership, **Your Majesty**, significant progress has been made in recent years in getting more women involved with the implementation of nation-building projects. From now on, more efforts should be directed to integrate women in the main stream of decision-making process of national development. As agents of development, women should also have equal right to share the development benefits equitably. This Seminar will explore various strategies and means to achieve this noble objective.

The Agricultural Development Council is very proud and happy for having this opportunity and privilege to cooperate with the Women Services Coordination Committee in this endeavours. The Council is also thankful to the United States Agency for International Development for a grant to enable us to conduct our expanded programmes, including this Seminar, in Nepal.

On behalf of the Council, Dr. Veit Burger, my colleague, and I wish the deliberations of this 3-day Seminar a great success.

(VIII)

*Address by:* **Dr. Mohan Man Sainju**

Member National Planning Commission

While reviewing the national development experience of developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America during the three decades following the Second World War, three things, besides others, seem to be most important:

1. For the all-round development of a nation, development efforts should reach the majority of the people;
2. Though it is the state and the government that plays the major role in development and change, non-governmental organisations and, specially, social service organisation should have the major roles; and
3. For productive change, mobilisation and participation of the general public must be present.

Because of the lack of these factors in fit measure, the ability of the developing countries to get the expected results in development has been rendered very ineffective. This inability has let the gap between haves and have-nots, and between the developed and the developing countries to increase alarmingly. Thereof on the one hand people-oriented development based on social justice has become a challenge for developing countries today, and on the other hand the "International Economic Order", and international peace, understanding and goodwill have become equally

as essential. It has also become apparent that the fulfillment of both these national and international objectives would be never possible without the active participation of almost half of World's populace. Women's participation in the national development process has therefore, become not only necessary; but vital as well for international goodwill, understanding and peace as well as for the all-round development of the developing countries.

The issue of Women's equality started gathering force of the United Nations around the middle sixties and took on its proper place after the International Women's Year 1975 was celebrated throughout the world on the call of United Nations. Although during this period some programmes were conducted in this connection in several countries including Nepal, most of the time and attention seem to have been mainly focussed on matters such as inequality between men and women, exploitation of women and lack of proper respect of women in national development. The seminar on "Women and Development" organised by CEDA in March 1975, the seminar on "Nepalese Women's Efforts for change" organised jointly by the U. S. Information Centre and CEDA in May 1978, and the national seminar organised by the Central Panchayat Training Centre in May 1979, can be taken as some of the examples of initiative taken after the International Women's Year in Nepal. These seminars have definitely helped to scrutinize various problems concerned with Women's development and Women's participation in the national development, it has also contributed in reviewing and evaluating the present situation, and then identifying ways and means to solve these problems. Besides this, an important research study aimed at the "Place of Women in Nepal" has also been completed and an objective analysis of the problems and facts has come to light.

It seems that some concrete efforts made in the direction towards giving proper respect to the place of women in the country after the advent of Panchayat System is not hidden from anyone. The initial step taken by the New Civil Code introduced in the year 2020 (Vikram Era) towards abolishing child marriage (early marriage), polygamy, un-matching marriage (December-May marriage), and other social evils has however no lesser importance. Similarly the provision of Women's Organisation according to the constitutional arrangement has also helped for conducting some concrete programmes to bring positive effect, in the country even if it be in a limited measure. Women's Literacy Campaign, and the arrangements of "Ratna Literacy Award" and "Ratna Social Service Medal" under the programme; and Women's Art and Craft Centre, and the arrangement of Judicial Service Committee and Family Welfare Programmes can be cited as some of the steps in this direction.

Our most revered, **Her Majesty the Queen**, who has provided clear guidelines saying, "It is our most important duty to help in the all-round development of ourselves and of the country by making Nepalese Women literate and educated and help them stand on their own feet", has made a most important contribution in this direction. Besides lending leadership in the total programmes of International Women's Year, **Her Majesty** has also made great contribution in instituting the Sixth Amendment in the Civil Code of the country. In addition to this, **Her Majesty** provided leadership in all the areas of social service and graced it by accepting the Chairmanship of the Social Service National Coordination Council. **Her Majesty** has also made everybody aware by saying, "Because of illiteracy, ignorance, superstition and unrefined social traditions, it is the duty of all of us to give proper education to Nepalese Women and make them able to fulfill the aspirations of their family and the country and thereby contribute in the international

field as well", and made an extra-ordinary contribution in the work of making available free textbooks to girls for primary education.

For the all-round development of the country, there is the need to increase national production, mobilize available manpower for productive work and gradually fulfill minimum basic needs of the general people by means of the development process. This can be achieved by maximum mobilization of women labour power and its active participation in various aspects of development on the one hand and extending development efforts to reach general public on the other. The major portion of the population being women, it is imperating that the total efforts of all-round development will remain incomplete if development efforts can not reach women. With this in view "The Policy of increasing Women's participation in development for the first time in the history of 24 years of planned development work" has been coordinated into the Sixth Five Year Plan as an inseparable part. Though important roles are being played by the regular instance, of activities at various levels of the society in the context of women's status and their contributions in Nepal, the data of the existing system show that the extent or quantity of women from economic point of view leaves much to be desired. The fact that the participation of women in the decision making process at various levels has been limited to some extent and that the opportunity for Women to occupy various posts and levels has been definitely narrow, has shown up on recent studies. It seems that proper evaluation of the contribution of active women, or women who contribute economically has not been done. It is also fairly obvious then that the need of women's participation has indicated clearly that the need of making women more active in the field of economic and social development has become ever more important. To these ends in-

creasing women's participation in the development work of the country—some policies have been formed as guidelines:

1. To involve women directly in Training, Production and Production Increasing Programmes that are available in the field of agriculture.
2. To gradually encourage Cottage and Rural Industries in increasing production and purchasing power and in solving the problem of semi-unemployment before and after the season of cultivation; and to encourage to run these through SAJHA Cooperative Institution by providing training, capital and marketing facilities.
3. To make them participants in population control programmes for the welfare of their family, society and nation, as well as in programmes which raise their economic and social status.
4. To give more roles in functional adult education, non-formal education, health education and nutrition programmes along with informal education programmes.
5. To make available more opportunities of employment and properly utilizing the knowledges, and genius of educated women.
6. To make necessary reform (amendment) in the existing acts and laws which impede women's participation in development work.

The above mentioned policy matters accepted by the national plan of the country are not sufficient in themselves. They can be taken as examples of functional policies. Besides this, various ministries, departments, corporations and agencies of His Majesty's Government will have to plan workable projects and schemes in their respective areas within their annual programmes and budgets, for implementing these policies. In other words, it is necessary for

every sector to accept the feeling that more participation of women in the fulfilment of their respective aims and objective is not only necessary but also inevitable. Along with this, efforts at non-governmental level will be needed to complement programmes conducted by His Majesty's Government. There can be no two opinions that non-governmental agencies that are engaged in the field of social service can be more effective than governmental ones in the campaign of making women active participants in an organised way by reaching villages and raising their awareness. On the other hand, proper efforts from His Majesty's Government becomes necessary in the definite objectives for Nepalese women for a certain period of time and providing additional opportunities and encouragement to women for increasing women's participation from the existing situation of great inequality.

This National Seminar on Women's Participation in the Main-Stream of National Development has been organised in a very important background. While on one hand the third amendment to the constitution has brought new political background, the formal acceptance of the policy to increase women's participation in the Sixth Periodic Plan seems to have made necessary basis and environment for conducting concrete programmes. Besides this, reasearch study on the status of Nepalese women, based on objective facts, is also available before everybody. In this situation the important questions of today can be understood as stated below.

1. How to implement the policy directions that have been made available by the national periodic plan ?
2. What additional provisions should be made in the sectional policies on the basis of available data ?

3. What kinds of programmes and projects should be conducted to increase women's participation in the fields of agriculture, industry, employment education, health, local development and law ? What should be its justification, aim, implementation phases, and implementation method ?
4. In which aspects of existing legal provisions, traditional values, attitudes and social customs related with women's development and participation additional research and study will be needed ? Similarly what kind of study and research in the existing development project planning, implementation and evaluation system will help increase women's participation ? etc. etc.

These questions are only some examples. Most important thing is effective implementation. In order for effective implementation finalization of justified project and proper analysis of questions as to where, how, when and why to do a project is not only necessary but becomes inevitable. In these context, this national seminar is expected to make important contributions.

# Women's Development and Public Policies

- Bina Pradhan

## 1. Introduction:

As we move into the 1980s, it becomes clear that "development" is an evolving concept, changing with time and the level of its achievement in a particular country. The concept of development has shifted its emphasis from growth to people. Its indicators have also undergone change. Previously, the rate of growth, derived from the rate of investment and savings, was of central concern in development. It was believed that a high rate of growth would automatically take care of all groups, particularly the poor through its "trickle-down effects". But to the great dismay of all concerned development theorists and practitioners, it was found that the system did not work. Day by day discrepancies continued to widen between the rich and the poor. Today, the emphasis is on the people with a particular focus on the rural poor, and on those who are on the lowest rung of the economic strata. Eradication of poverty and the provision of basic minimum needs to the people have taken priority. The vast majority of these poor people live in the subsistence sector of the rural economy. Approximately half of these people are women, who play a dominant and crucial role in the subsistence sector, and have thus inevitably become a major concern of development strategies. The first part of this paper will highlight the magnitude of women's

contribution to the subsistence economy on the basis of the findings of the CEDA/Status of Women in Nepal project. This will be followed by an analysis of government and public policies on women. Finally, policy recommendations to help bridge the gap between the actual and desired status of rural women will be outlined.

## 2. Participation of Women in the Subsistence Economy of Nepal:

In the three year research project on the Status of Women in Nepal carried out in 8 villages comprising 8 major ethnic communities an attempt was made, for the first time, to generate and document information with regard to the actual participation and contribution of women in the rural economy, including their input in the decision making process; their role in the social and cultural milieu and their political participation. The focus of the study was on rural women from the point of view of development, as it is very important to begin with a clear understanding of who these women are, what they do and what their needs are in order to integrate them effectively in the mainstream development.

An examination of the survey data shows that the rural economy of Nepal is a subsistence economy where the household is the unit of production. Of the total household production, 81% is generated within the household for its own consumption and 18.6% of its income is derived from the market sector.<sup>1</sup> On an average, 70% of the household income is derived from the subsistence sector and 30% from other sources. Within this production system women contribute over 50% of the time and labour

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1. Acharya, M. and Bennett, L. The Rural Women of Nepal: Aggregate Analysis and Summary of the Eight Village Studies, Vol. II, Status of Women Field Studies, Part 9, CEDA., Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, 1981.

required to sustain the subsistence household economy. (See Table I)

The activities which go into the household production of goods and services can be categorised broadly into four activities,<sup>2</sup> namely, (a) "conventional economic activities", which are included in the census definition (b) "home economic activities",<sup>3</sup> which are not included in the census definition of "economic activities" but which are nevertheless productive and indispensable to the household production system, (c) "domestic activities" and (d) social/maintenances and leisure activities. The time input of each household member is very important in deriving the contribution made by them in various activities and accounts for their share of the total household income.

The aggregation of the village level time allocation data shows that women's average daily input in the conventional economic activities is 4.62 hours as compared to 5.81 hours by men.<sup>4</sup> Out of this, in agriculture alone, women spend 2.79 hours as compared to 1.73 hours spent by men. Thus, women's participation in agriculture is equal to that of men. In home economic activities or "expanded economic activities" the time input is 2.16

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2. This classification has been made following the census definition of what are economic activities and non-economic activities. According to the census definition, economic activities are those which fetch cash or kind income and labour force participation includes those activities where household members are engaged for 7 or 8 months or more. The conventional economic activities include, agriculture, animal husbandry, manufacturing outside income earning activities.
  3. The home economic activities include food processing, water fetching, fuel collection, etc. For details of the classification of activities see CEDA/Status of Women in Nepal, Project Field Manual, 1979, (mimeographed).
  4. Acharya and Bennet, Op. cit.

Table 1: COMPOSITION OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME\* BY ECONOMIC STRATA

(In rupees)

Economic Strata	Sectors	Household Production						Wage/Salary Income	Investment Income Trading	Total Household Income
		Farm Production	Kitchen Gardening	Animal Husbandry	Hunting & Gathering	Manufacturing	Food Processing			
TOP N = 84	Total	672028	20030	116754	61076	27713	232305	121151	166119	1417176
	Per household	8000 (47.4)	238 (1.4)	1390 (8.2)	727 (4.3)	330 (2.0)	2766 (16.4)	1442 (8.6)	1978 (11.7)	16871 (100.0)
MIDDLE N = 85	Total	423548	31675	71033	37605	14062	125261	106213	19907	829304
	Per household	4985 (51.1)	372 (3.8)	836 (8.6)	442 (4.5)	165 (1.7)	1474 (15.1)	1250 (12.8)	234 (2.4)	9756 (100.0)
BOTTOM N = 110	Total	263528	22048	40201	36673	10558	81893	100419	8897	564217
	Per household	2396 (46.7)	200 (3.9)	365 (7.1)	333 (6.5)	96 (1.9)	745 (14.5)	913 (17.8)	81 (1.6)	5129 (100.0)
ALL STRATA N = 279	Total	1359104	73753	227988	135354	52333	439459	327783	194923	2810697
	Per household	4871 (48.4)	264 (2.6)	817 (8.1)	485 (4.8)	188 (1.9)	1575 (15.6)	1175 (11.7)	699 (6.9)	10074 (100.0)

(Figures in the parantheses indicate row percentages.)

\* Based on 279 Sample households.

CEDA/Status of women Project in Nepal. Aggregation of eight village studies including: Kagbevi, Pagma, Thabang, Baloundol, Bulu, Katarche, Sukrawar, and Sirsia.

hours by women and 0.91 hours by men. The total daily time given to productive activities is thus 6.7 hours by women and 6.72 hours by men. This means that in conventional economic activities the labour put in by the females is 44.3% as against 55% by men. This suggests that even by using the census definition of the labour force participation the female participation rate is much higher than what the census data show. According to the census definition, the male participation rate is more than double the female rate. If the home economic activities are included, which have never been accounted for in the census data, the participation rate would become much higher. The time allocation data computed by the Status of Women Study show that the intensity of labour input by females is 50.2% as compared to 49.8% for males.<sup>5</sup> This shows that womens' participation and their input in the Nepalese rural subsistence economy is at par or slightly higher than that of men. This factor cannot be ignored while designing policies and programs for women. In addition to this women spend 4.03 hours in domestic work while men spend only 0.79 hours. Thus the total daily work burden on women is 10.81 hours as compared to 7.51 hours by men.<sup>6</sup>

Based on the input of time into various activities by household members a valuation of their contribution to household income was made. On an average it was found that women contribute 50% men contribute 44% and children contribute 6% of the total household income. In the food processing alone women contributed 84.73% as compared to men. These findings thus do not lend any support to belief that women's contribution to the household income is only a supplement to that made by men.

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5. ibid.

6. Acharya and Bennett, Op. cit.

The data on the decision making process shows that women are not merely silent workers shouldering the burden of both productive and domestic work. They exercise considerable control and influence in what they perform and produce within the household economy. The degree of control and influence varied among the eight communities studied. It was found that the degree of control and influence depends on the dichotomous nature of the communities, the degree of importance attached to female chastity and on the amount of input of labour into the activity<sup>7</sup> In dichotomous communities such as Brahmin-Chettri, Maithali and Tharu, where the participation of women is restricted to the domestic domain their decision making roles were limited. In communities Classified as non-dichtomous such as those of the Rai, Tamang, Baragaonle, Magar and Newar, where women participate in the public sphere of activities, the control and decision making role of women was high.

In the decision-making process, two kinds of decisions can be distinguished: namely, "Innovative" decisions and "normal" day-to-day decisions. Innovative decisions include decisions on agricultural inputs, education, disposal of household production and property, borrowing and undertaking of entrepreneurial and business ventures. These decisions affects the income and production of the household and entail major allocations of household resources. The normal decisions are those which are encountered in day-to-day living and do not affect the allocation of household resources.

With regard to women's role in development, our main interest is in their input in innovative decision-making as shown in Table II.

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7. For a detailed discussion of dichotomous and non-dichtomous communities See Acharya and Bennett, Op. cit.

Table II: Male/Female input into Normal and Innovative decisions in the households for eight villages.

Decision Categories	Male	Female	Both	Tradition	Total
I. Innovative Decisions	2178 (30.9)	2752 (39.0)	1002 (14.2)	1124 (15.9)	7056 (100.0)
1. Agricultural decision <sup>1</sup>	1197 (25.3)	1995 (42.1)	595 (12.6)	948 (20.0)	4735 (100)
2. Education and Health decisions	191 (48.0)	81 (20.4)	53 (13.3)	73 (18.3)	398 (100)
3. Disposal of Household production	304 (40.0)	299 (39.2)	125 (16.4)	34 (4.4)	762 (100.0)
4. Borrowing	140 (54.9)	40 (15.7)	61 (23.9)	14 (5.5)	255 (100)
5. Lands and Major animals	213 (59.0)	40 (11.1)	86 (23.8)	22 (6.1)	361 (100.0)
6. Entrepreneurial Ventures	133 (24.4)	297 (52.5)	82 (15.0)	33 (6.1)	545 (100.0)
II. Normal Decisions	1824 (35.1)	2125 (40.9)	718 (13.8)	528 (10.2)	5145 (100.0)
1. Labour allocation (Pajma & wage labour)	389 (46.2)	332 (39.4)	72 (8.6)	49 (5.8)	842 (100.0)
2. Who keeps the money	107 (39.2)	128 (46.9)	38 (13.9)	0	273 (100.0)
3. Who goes to Bazaar	127 (46.5)	101 (37.0)	45 (16.5)	0	273 (100)
4. Small items and household necessities	435 (32.8)	678 (51.0)	112 (8.4)	103 (7.8)	1328 (100.0)
5. Clothing and household durables	459 (45.9)	289 (28.9)	164 (16.4)	88 (8.8)	100 (100.0)
6. Gift religion and travel	307 (20.7)	597 (40.4)	287 (19.4)	288 (19.5)	1479 (100.0)
I+II=All Decisions	4002 (32.7)	4877 (39.8)	1720 (14.0)	1652 (13.5)	12251 (100)

1 Agricultural decisions include what crop to plant, whether to use own seed or improved seed and amount and kind of fertilizer.

The major decisions with regard to buying or selling of land and animals were made primarily by men. However, women exercised control over approximately 35% of such decisions, singly or jointly with the men. In some communities although the men make the decision the wives are invariably consulted and often the suggestion to undertake such decisions emanates from women.

With regard to the use and application of fertilizer, women shared equal responsibility and knowledge on home-made manure. But with the introduction of chemical fertilizer men made the decisions and women believed that men had better knowledge on the use of chemical fertilizer. This shows that although women control a majority of the decisions regarding traditional agricultural inputs their limited access to information and training on the use of innovative agricultural inputs relegates them to a secondary position in household decision-making on improved agricultural methods. With regard to domestic decisions on household expenditure and income men and women shared equal responsibility with the exception of Maithali and Tharu communities. Even in some areas where men made the decisions the women were consulted. Women had complete control on the small gifts and loans.

In the area of entrepreneurial decisions, women were found to be making 52.5% of the decisions as compared to 24.4% made by men and 15% made jointly. This pattern was most evident among the Braganle, Rai and Magar communities studied.

Thus, the findings of the Status of Women project show that women are major contributors and producers in the Nepalese rural subsistence economy and that they are a decisive factor in bringing about any change in the subsistence sector.

When this is the situation then it is somewhat unrealistic to talk of a separate development strategy for the development of women and the integration of women in the development process. Perhaps this is because of the fact that the programs and policies for women's development at the national level do not reflect the vital role played by women in the process of rural development.

### **3. Policies and Programs for Women and Development:**

Until 1980 there was no specific national policy nor had there been any serious thinking on the integration of women in the process of overall national development.

Plans and programs formulated and implemented for women were purely on departmental lines. These traditionally included education and training. Lately, the health ministry has started family planning/maternal/child health programmes. Apart from this, in the political sphere of activities there have been some specific provisions and legal enactments made by the government for women's political participation.

### **4. Educational Policies:**

Since 1951, national plans have emphasised education for both males and females. During the fourth plan period it was the policy of the government to increase female education and there was also a policy decision to make primary education free and distribute free books to rural schools.

The introduction of the New Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971, which coincided with the fourth plan period, laid down the policy to make available equal educational opportunities to both girls and women, in order to improve the status of women through education. This led to the initiation of the project on

Equal Access of Women to Education (EAWE). The project's emphasis was to give rural women a chance to enter primary teachers' training. By training rural women from rural areas to teach within their own areas, it was hoped that these female teachers could act as catalysts to inspire the local people to send their daughters to primary schools.

As a result of the government educational policy, the school enrolment for the school age population increased, from 0.10% in 1951 to 2.20% in 1961. During this period there seems to have been a considerable increase in girls enrolment in schools from 15.1% to 17%.<sup>8</sup>

In the period between 1971 to 1980, the increase in females enrolment as a percentage of the total school enrolment increase has been very gradual, being 18% in 1971 and 28% in 1980 for primary education and 16% in 1971 to 20.7% in 1980 for secondary education. In the higher secondary education enrolment of the girls steadily decreased to 10% in 1980 from 16% in 1971.<sup>9</sup>

Although the impact of the educational policy has been significant in the urban areas, it is doubtful if the free primary schooling and distribution of text books in rural areas have made any significant impact, particularly in female education as the economic contribution to the households by children, particularly girls, is so high that the comparative costs of sending them to school and finding substitutes for their labour deters parents from investing in formal education for their children. This is reflected in the education of male children also. In the 8 sample villages studied,

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8. Wood, Magh, and Knall, Bruno, Educational Planning in Nepal and its Economic Implications, Draft Report of UNESCO Mission to Nepal, Kathmandu, 1962.
  9. Educational Statistics - 1971 - 1980, H. M. G., Ministry of Education, Planning Division, Statistics Section, Kathmandu, 1980.

12.8% of the males received primary education, 4.6% secondary education and only 0.8%, higher education.

A study conducted by the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development (CERID) showed that there has been a steadily rising trend in girls' enrolment in some of the EAWE program has been implemented and that there seems to be a correlation between the girls' enrolment and the number of EAWE teachers serving in the district.<sup>10</sup>

Following the directives of H.M., late king Mahendra institutions such as Nepal Women's Organization (NWO) and Mother's Club have been running literacy programmes for over a decade. However, due to meagre resources and lack of proper records of trainees and followup programs, the rate of relapse into illiteracy has been high.<sup>11</sup>

#### 5. Policies on Training for Women:

Almost all the plan documents have stressed the need for training programmes for rural women in areas such as nutrition, child care, home science, population education, etc.

The women's Training Centre (WTC) is responsible for carrying out these training programs through its four regional centres. The curricula include food preservation, nutrition, family planning and child care, and skill development such as sewing, weaving, knitting, kitchen gardening and poultry farming. These training programs designed by the Womens' Services Coordination Committee (WSCC) and run by the WTC, the NWO and other

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10. Equal access of Women to Education Programme in Nepal; an Evaluative Study, CERID, National Education Committee, Kath. 1978.

11. Shrestha Ramesh, A study on Adult literacy- A Report Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, T. U. Kath, 1977.

institutions, reflect the policy decision to train rural women in Home Science related subjects and have limited relevance to the subsistence-oriented village economy where women's involvement is maximum as producers.<sup>12</sup>

The question arises, after training, what? Training in itself cannot be a change agent without concrete actions and jobs for the newly trained women to attend to. Investment of resources on such training may actually be a waste of scarce funds.

#### 6. Policies on Health/Family Planning:

The government has recognised the importance of population control and plans have emphasised the need to improve the health status of the people, by reducing birth rates and infant mortality.

Women's organizations have been asked by the government to increase their family planning efforts to complement those, provided by the government. The programs focus mainly on the supply of contraceptives and training of family planning workers. The mobile training unit of the WTC, supported by UNICEF carries out "on the spot" training on health and nutrition of children and mothers. The children's Organization conducts a modest nutrition distribution program and the Women's Services Coordination Committee (WSSC) has its own program on family planning and nutrition education.

But inspite of the government's encouragement to the family planning program it is said that in 1976, only 4% (as compared to 14% in Bangladesh and 10% in Pakistan) of ever married women in Nepal used a contraceptive method.<sup>13</sup>

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12. For detail of various training programs see Pradhan, B. Institutions Concerning Women in Nepal, the Status of Women in Nepal, Vol. I, Part 3, CEDA, Tribhuban University, Kathmandu, 1979.

13. Nepal: Development Performance and Prospects, World Bank, Washington D. C. 1979.

The nutrition training programs have limited usefulness as in many remote areas of Nepal, the problem is one of securing adequate quantities of food rather than having a balanced and nutritious diet.

## **7. Policies Regarding Political Participation of Women:**

In addition to the above policies in plan documents some policy decisions have also been made with regard to political participation by women.

Under the partyless Panchayat System, class organizations were formed with a view to ensure mass participation in national development. When the Panchayat System was introduced, all the different women's organizations which existed prior to the establishment of the Panchayat System, were merged into the All Nepal Women's Organization and the late King Mahendra legally recognised it as a "class" organization thus creating an institutional channel for representing women in national politics.

To encourage the women to participate in the development of the country, provision was made for the allocation of three seats to women in the National Panchayat.

In 1970 this was abolished. The constitutional amendment of 1976 made a provision for compulsory representation of women at all levels of village and district panchayats. Under the strict supervision of the Back to Village National Campaign (BVNC). But compulsory nomination was done away under the legislative act of 1978. Again, after the announcement of the referendum the BVNC was abolished, and with it, the central advisory committee of the class organizations, leaving the class organizations, including the NWO, without any leadership.

These vicissitudes in policy decisions have disrupted the working of the NWO and prevented the effective implementation of programs for the development of rural women.<sup>14</sup>

It might be inappropriate for NWO to be categorised as an "Class Organization" and thereby be compelled to operate under political and bureaucratic dominance.<sup>15</sup> In any case, women cannot be categorised as a "single class". By definition they are not a "class". They can belong to different classes, such as "youths", "peasants", "adults", "labourers", etc. The policy to treat women as a "class", implicitly implies segregation of women from men. Implicitly, the only institutional channel for the participation of women is through the women's organization, thereby limiting women's participation in other organizations in the country.

#### **8. Policies of the Local Development Ministry With Regard to Women:**

A Women's Division has been set up under the newly formed Local Development Ministry with the main objective of increasing the participation of women in the process of development of the country and their involvement in income-generating activities through skill development. In order to meet these objective the ministry lays down policy measures to:

- a) give priority to those programs which involve women to the maximum,
- b) to train women in agriculture to increase agricultural productivity,

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14. Pradhan, Bina, Institutions Concerning Women in Nepal. The Status of Women in Nepal, Vol I, Part 3, CEDA, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, 1979.

15. Bina, Pradhan, 1979, Op. cit.

- c) to increase their skills and leadership in those areas where women themselves are able to undertake programs,
- d) to undertake research and evaluation in order to make the training programs more effective,
- e) to coordinate with the programs carried by different governmental and non-governmental organizations,
- f) to make policy decisions with regard to foreign funded programs, and
- g) to implement women's programs in those districts and regions where the integrated rural development programs have been implemented.

The Women's Division will organise training for women in agriculture and small-scale cottage industries, especially those related to agriculture and cooperatives. It will also hold seminars and training courses on leadership, the panchayat constitution and the National Code and courses for the trainees and rural women volunteers and representatives in order to make the training programs more effective

#### **9. Policies Incorporated in Sixth Plan:**

For the first time, in the history of planning in Nepal, a separate section consisting of three pages has been devoted to policies to enhance the participation of women in the development process. This reveals a rethinking of the role of women and is a crucial first step in initiating change. The plan incorporates six policy measures:

- a) In recognition of the important role played by women in agriculture it lays down the policy that women's participation in development will be increased through "additional programs

- in agriculture” and women inclusion in training programs undertaken to increase agricultural production and productivity.
- b) Priority will be given to cottage industries during the off agricultural seasons, by giving necessary training, resources and marketing facilities through cooperatives.
  - c) Programs which help to increase the social and economic status of women will be undertaken.
  - d) Formal and informal functional adult literacy, population education and nutrition education programmes will be carried out.
  - e) Provision will be made for ensuring equal job opportunities to women.
  - f) Legal measures which hinder womens participation in development, will be reformed.

However, the provision and policy measures made in the sixth plan are not adequate to ensure full participation and integration of women in the overall development process. Since half of the population are women and participation in the rural household economy is equal to that of men, their participation and integration should be viewed as equally important in the nation's overall development and not just in agriculture or cottage industries. Unless the women are knitted into the whole nexus of development programs in all sectors their full participation and integration can never be achieved.

The Sixth Plan document does not, however specify, what “additional programs” are to be undertaken for women. For instance, elsewhere in the plan document there has been a focus on small farmers as priority loan recipients. Nothing in the section on women has been mentioned about women being a priority group for any specific program.

## 10. Policy and Program Recommendations:

1. Women being the main contributors and producers in the rural household economy, the country cannot afford to leave them out of the main stream of development. In this context it is recommended here that the policy approach to the integration of women in over-all development has to take the form of the specific target group approach. Although the general target group approach to development of "small farmers" or "rural poor" does not exclude women, the "trickle down" effect is not likely to work any better than it has worked in the larger context of the rich and the poor. As it is evident that women are the center of subsistence production system, any development strategy emphasizing this sector would necessarily have to aim at increasing the efficiency of women.

2. As a part of the target group approach to development, sectoral allocation of investment must be made for males and females in each of the sectors. Each of these sectors must have specific targets of employment, delivery of inputs and services, extension programs and recruitment for training, etc.

3. At the ministerial level, within the sectoral allocation, specific programs for women must be identified, developed and designed. As an interim strategy specific programs in the form of projects must be undertaken to mobilize and encourage women to participate in the development effort.

4. Although full integration must remain a long term objective, any successful development strategy must incorporate special separate programs for women as an interim step towards achieving the ultimate goal of integrating women fully into the development process.

5. As farm production is the overwhelmingly dominant sector in the household economy, the first intervention strategy has to be in this direction. Specific intervention programs should be undertaken according to specific areas of women's involvement. Some of the areas identified under the Status of Women project are:

- a) Vegetable cultivation as an income-earning activity for women. There should be concentrated training, inputs and credit facilities for women in vegetable cultivation.
- b) Seed selection and storing is an important operation which determines the farm output of the following year. This task is performed mainly by women. Special training should be organised for women on seed selection and improved storage methods.
- c) As most of the decisions on the use and application of manure are under taken by women, they must be recognised as a priority group for receiving training or information on new technologies in fertilizers and pesticides.
- d) Women must also be set as a priority group in credit schemes for agricultural loans as in the case of small farmers.

6. The great cultural and geographical diversity of the country be taken into account in designing all programs including sectoral investment programs for women. Local situations, skills, practices and resources must be taken into account for any future investment strategy.

7. The programs and policies thus far designed and operated are training oriented. It is re-emphasized that training without a program or job to return to after acquiring new skills, is meaningless and cannot initiate change. It is, therefore, recommended

that as far as possible the training programs have to be tied in with action programs so that the knowledge acquired can be effectively used.

8. Institutions such as the NOW, WTC and Mother's Club must develop a grass roots net work to reach rural women. The institutions must begin a rethinking with regard to their programs for women and design appropriate programs and action projects as they are a complement to but never a substitute for, involving women in rural development programs.
9. The newly formed women's development division under the local development ministry should carry out action-oriented research programs on income generation for women. Selection of such programs have to be made on the basis of the ethnic and geographic features of each region of the country and tailored to the specific needs and resources of the community. It is proposed that such action programs be initiated on an experimental basis or as pilot projects with close monitoring and impact evaluation so that in the process of implementation research feed back can be obtained. This kind of applied research linked to action programs can evolve practical and viable income-generating activities in rural areas.
10. In order to make the NWO effective in carrying out programs for women new leadership committed to the cause of women should be inducted and greater professionalism in the operation of its programs should be developed. It is strongly recommended that NWO should operate as an autonomous organization and should not be categorised as a "Class Organization". The present categorization as a "class" has policy implications of segregating women from men.

## Women And Agriculture

- *Mr. Achhut Nath Bhattarai*

- *Mr. Chiranjibi Karmacharya*

Nepal is predominantly an agricultural country, with two thirds of its' GDP originating from agriculture. A more accurate characterization of an agrarian economy is evidenced by the share of the labour force engaged in agriculture. In 1975, this share amounted to 89 per cent. A similar situation exists in foreign trade. Nearly 80 per cent of Nepalese exports, consists of rice, jute, pulses, and oil seeds.

Given its share in the present economy, it is obvious that "agriculture will have to be the engine for development, since it will have to meet the increasing food need, and other basic needs of the population, create employment opportunities, distribute income more equitably, raise domestic resources for future development and increase foreign exchange earnings to import much needed capital equipment".<sup>1</sup>

### **The Role of women in Agriculture:**

It is believed that it was women who first observed the characteristics of various plants, while food-gathering in the forest. Consequently, they selected useful plants and started growing

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1. See Agriculture Sector Review, World Bank 1978, pp. 3-4.

them, harvesting and storing the product for future use. Thus, food-gathering economies gave way to sedentary agriculture and the establishment of permanent settlements.

In developing agriculture, women had adopted a role which was as important as their natural one of child-bearing and even to-day women in many developing countries have a similar role to play.

In Nepal, 94 per cent of the total population is engaged in agriculture including a great majority of Nepalese women. It is estimated that women contribute 50-80 per cent of farm work according to the regions they dwell in and the ethnic groups they represent. The 1971 census showed that 92.6 per cent of economically active rural women were agricultural workers.

Table I

The role of women in agriculture is crucial not only because of their number engaged in it but also because of the variety of agricultural activities which they perform. Except for ploughing, women are involved in all the operations required for growing food grains and vegetables and rearing livestock. Their involvement in agriculture can be observed in compost preparation and application, land preparation, specially clod breaking and land levelling, sowing and transplanting, weeding, harvesting, cleaning, drying and marketing produce storing. In livestock keeping, they collect fodder, clean animal sheds, milk milch animals and process dairy products. All this in addition to their regular household duties such as grinding and dehusking grain, fetching drinking water, collecting firewood, preparing family meals and looking after the children.

Thus, women have less free time than men, but ironically their unemployment and under-employment is higher than men.

Table 1. Occupational Division of Economically Active Population, 1971.\*

Economically Active Population	Professional		Administration		Typist		Shop keeper		Other Service		Farming		Wage	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
<u>Male</u>														
3,434,288	23,309	0.73	41,049	1.19	4,909	1.3	52,908	1.54	2,886,600	84	3,187,064	92.8	96,183	2.80
<u>Female</u>														
1,418,236	2,008	0.14	46	-	1,831	0.12	7,249	0.51	5,365	5.37	1,382,271	97.46	9,446	0.66

\* 2 Population Census of Nepal, Central Bureau Statistics (CBS), 1971.

only 31.15 per cent of women<sup>3</sup> over 10 years of age are economically active and 68.81 per cent of rural women are under-employed.<sup>4</sup> In reality women work harder than men and get little economic credit for doing so.<sup>5</sup>

Women are also seen carrying basketful of vegetables fruits and other agricultural produce on their head or on their back for marketing. Women are commonly seen bringing agriculture produce in Hats of Tarai, or Bazar or coming door to door to sell their produce in hilly Bazars.

Although, Nepal is said to be a male-dominated society, women play a vital role in decision making about agriculture. One survey showed that 75 per cent in Nuwakot district and 85 per cent in Dhanusha, made decisions singly or jointly about agriculture,<sup>6</sup> clearly indicating that women play an important role in choosing agricultural inputs, utilizing output for home consumption and marketing the surpluses.

Agriculture is based on ecological situation, and Nepalese agriculture varies in its three ecological regions viz. in Mountains, Hills and Tarai. However, the role of women in agriculture in these ecological regions basically remain the same except for emphasizing on particular type of activities such as livestock keeping in the Mountains. Thus, it is clear that without the active

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3. Data based on population census 1971.
  4. A survey of Employment, Income Distribution and Consumption pattern in Nepal. National Planning Commission 1968.
  5. See Robert Schroeder and Ealine Schroeder "Women in Nepali Agriculture: All work No power" The Journal of Dev. & Adm. Studies' Vol. 1. No. 2 January 1979, pp. 178 - 192.
  6. Chandani, Joshi 'Country review and Analysis on the Role and participation of women in Agricultural and Rural Development Nepal 1980, pp. 25

participation of women in improved farm practices and new technologies, agricultural production can not be increased.

### **Agricultural Policies and Programmes:**

National plans have a direct bearing on agricultural policies and programmes. Nepal has completed five national five-year plans, in which agricultural policies and programmes were directed to the improvement in production activities of farmers as a whole and did not separately formulate policies and programmes for rural women. It was implicitly felt that if development benefit reach to a family women, as the integral part of the house hold will automatically be benefited. Development strategists even argued that agricultural innovations need not be especially directed to rural women, who would eventually learn them through interaction with male family members, and observation made by working side by side with males.

The core of the agricultural development programmes in the Nepalese plans has always been food grain production, for meeting the food requirements of a growing population. Many agricultural institutions, both governmental and semigovernmental, have been established, reorganized, and strengthened to achieve this goal. Different infrastructures—Research institutions, Extension services, credit and input supply agencies have been established in the successive plan periods.

#### **1. Women in Agriculture Programmes:**

Agricultural research in Nepal is aimed at generating suitable agricultural technologies for the different climatical regions of the country. There are 7 agricultural stations, 6 agriculture farms, 23 horticulture farms and 11 fisheries scattered all over the

country where basic and applied research is conducted. Research on specific crops has been undertaken as a joint collaboration of commodity programs and the various technical divisions of the agriculture department. Women in agricultural research are very limited in number but they are increasing every year, specially in technical divisions like entomology, plant pathology, agricultural botany and soil science. At present, there are 35 women in different capacities, ranging from class second professionals to junior technicians working in the thirteen technical divisions. So far there are only two women officers working in agriculture farms and stations situated outside Kathmandu valley.

2. The extension services programme is an integral part of the country's agricultural effort. It began with three directional approaches, viz. agricultural extension, home science and rural youth with the emphasis on increasing farm output. After the transfer of the home science section of the then Department of Agriculture and extension in 1967-68 to the Home and Panchayat Ministry, only the general extension service and rural youth programmes were retained.

At present there are 72 district agriculture offices, with 1,600 agriculture graduates employed as junior technicians (JTs) and junior technical assistants (JTAs) and 3,000 Agriculture Assistants (AAs) engaged in agricultural extension. JTs and JTAs are assigned the job of disseminating improved agricultural practices through farm and home visits, demonstrations, group discussions, educational tours, farmers' training, etc. The AAs are paraprofessionals selected from the panchayats where they live, trained in general agriculture for a month and sent back to their panchayats to deliver extension services on a contract basis. Out of 3,000 AAs trained, only 12 are women.

The rural youth programme is aimed at preparing better farmers and housewives for the future. There are 631 clubs in 37 districts of the kingdom involving 111,119 rural youths. The major emphasis is on agricultural activities through individual and group projects supported with training. However in clubs where girls are also enrolled and in female youth clubs, home improvement skills such as sewing, weaving, crafts and nutrition education are imparted to girls along with agricultural training. The agricultural activities are guided by female JTs and JTAs trained in home science. The number of female JTs and JTAs presently employed is only 17 and the activities are limited to only a few districts.

As the personnel in Extension Service are all men, except to some extent in the rural youth class the involvement of women in extension services is virtually non-existent.

In the various training programmes organized and conducted for farmers on their own fields as well as at agriculture farms and stations, participation of women farmers has been negligible. Except for the special training conducted at the Khairenitara-training centre for women farmers, only male farmers have been trained so far.

In the Small Farmers Development Projects (SFDP), women groups are involved in areas of training such as population education, health, nutrition and handlooms rather than in agriculture. At present there are 35 women groups in different districts and 445 women are involved in the S. F. D. P.

In receiving agricultural services such as credit and supply of inputs women are far behind their male counterparts, due to many social and legal problems. In Nepalese society women are predominantly occupied in domestic chores. Middle and upper class

women seldom leave home for work or training. women from lower social stratas who work in agriculture as wage-earners have little opporntnity to avail of the extension services offered by various agencies.

Legally, women are seldom the heads of households. Household properties are legally in the name of male members. Women become heads of households only when they are widowed and, their husbands properties transfered to their name other wise the properties go to their sons or grandsons. The other forms of legally possessed property are *Pewa*<sup>7</sup> and *Daijo*.<sup>8</sup> Women who remain unmarried upto the age of 35 years inherit parental property equal to the share of their brothers. The discrepancy in property rights between male and female has reduced the economic status of women<sup>9</sup> and denied them access to agricultural credit and hence to improved inputs.

The number of educated women choosing agriculture as a profession are very few. Most of the women researchers presently engaged have no training in agricultural science.

Education is a key factor for development. Investment in female education is not taken palatably in our society, resulting in a low rate of literacy among women, high rate of dropouts, and less opportunities for government service. Women who meet the basic qualifications for preservice training in agriculture prefer other kinds of jobs. JTAs are selected from among high school graduates with 400 marks in vocational agriculture and no women

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7. *Pewa* is movable or immovabla property given to a women in life time writing by her husband or copartners.
  8. *Daijo* is movable or immovable property given to a women from her parental family and relations at the time of marriage.
  9. The Legal Status of the Nepalese Women. By Angur Baba Joshi, Women in Nepal International Women's Year Committee. Nepal 1976.

candidates have applied for this post. Probably, the very nature of extension work in the villages discourages women from choosing agricultural extension as a profession. Thus, rural women (specially in the Tarai) do not come in contact with male JTs and JTAs and their inclusion in agricultural development has been insignificant.

**A critical review of progress in agricultural development:  
Implications of non inclusion of Women in training and extension**

The ultimate goal of the agriculture development programmes is increased productivity through the extensive use of improved seed, fertilizer and improved methods of cultivation disseminated through extension services. Since women are important contributors to agricultural production, their non-participation in extension training programmes constitutes a major barrier to realising this goal.

Rural women need extension services and training in compost preparation, improved methods of cultivation of different food and cash crops, vegetable and fruit growing, livestock keeping, marketing and in post-harvest technology including seed selection and storage.

Scharoeder and Schroeder,<sup>10</sup> listing various agricultural activities that fall exclusive under women's domain point out that an increase in cropping intensity also increases the burden on rural women as they must be involved in various operations of crop cultivation. This shows that women's role in agricultural production is increasing and their inclusion in extension and training is an absolute necessity to boost agricultural production.

**Strategies for Integrating Women in Agriculture Development:**

The integration of women in all around development has become a national as well as an international concern. In Nepal,

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10. Op cit 7.....

women's organizations, and various other organizations are actively pleading the cause of women. But not much effort has been made to involve rural women in agricultural development programmes for increasing production.

A study conducted by CEDA on 'The Status of Women in Nepal' has clearly shown the role and contribution of women in agricultural production. Several studies have indicated that women, the main contributors to agricultural production, have been excluded in agricultural development programmes.

These programmes become male oriented in practice because the personnel being, predominantly male, direct their programmes towards males, and because prevailing socio-cultural norms prevent women from taking part in programmes where male participation dominates.

The following strategies to integrate women in agriculture development efforts are suggested.

1. Increasing the number of women professionals in Agricultural Extension.

As it has been realized that women do not come in contact with male agents, it would be pragmatic to have female extension agents to reach women farmers.

1.a. Training of women in agriculture by the Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science (IAAs) to prepare medium level technicians as JTs and JTAs as well as agriculture graduates.

The IAAs should make a special effort to select high school graduate girls from different regions, to provide hostel facilities, scholarship incentives and job guarrantty in collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The problem of recruiting girl high school graduates who are willing to take agriculture as a profession may be encountered by lowering the prequalification to eighth class level and motivating guardians to send their daughters for the training.

1.b. As the policy to recruit high school graduates with vocational agriculture for the post of JTA already exists, encouraging girls to take up vocational agriculture by providing scholarship, and job guaranty may attract them to take agriculture as their career.

Efforts should be made to train more women as Agriculture Assistants (AAs). A joint collaboration of the Extension and Training Division of the Agriculture Department and UNFPA to train women AAs in Palpa and Kavre district will be implemented in the fiscal year 2038-39. Experience gained from this project should help in organizing and conducting training of women AAs.

Training the wives of JTs and JTAs and hiring them as paraprofessionals is another method of increasing the number of women extension workers. A comprehensive proposal which was finalized between the Department of Agriculture and CARE for this purpose could not be materialized because most of the JTs and JTAs do not take their wives to villages where they live without proper residence facilities. Now provisions have been made to construct house for JTs and JTAs in the Integrated Rural Development Project areas. So the possibilities of training wives of JTs and JTAs in agriculture and engaging them as paraprofessionals are brighter.

Rural youth clubs may provide their senior lady members for the training of women AAs or JTAs. These clubs may also serve as motivating centers for girls to take-up agriculture as their profession.

## 2. Inclusion of women in Extension and Training:

2.a. Inclusion of a certain number of women in every village teaching communication activities such as leader farmers training, group meetings, and demonstrations should be made mandatory.

2.b. The training centers located at different places in the country should organize and conduct agriculture training for at least four batches of women a year. The batch should comprise 30-40 women of a district. This will promote group affinity among trainees and may make them effective multipliers of learned skills. As women tend to share their experiences while they are at perma (exchange of labour forming a team). A pilot scheme may demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach.

2.c. The Womens Training Centers located at Dhankuta, Lalitpur, Pokhara and Surkhet must include more varied aspects of agriculture rather than just vegetable or kitchen gardening from a nutritional point of view.

2.d. As women have limited access to credit facilities because of their limited rights on property to put up a guarranty, the organization of womens' co-operative societies, or provision of loans on the basis of group liability as in the Small Farmers Programmes may encourage women farmers in taking up production activities and in making them self reliant and improving their status in the social structure.

Establishment of a Home Science wing in the Extension and Training Division of the Department of Agriculture and availing its support to the field staff (both male and female) may facilitate a family-oriented extension approach. <sup>11</sup>

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11. For further details see "Perspective Study of Agricultural Development for Nepal," working papers on Family Resources Development and Family well-being. FAO, March 1974.

**Concluding Remarks:**

Women constitute half of the total population and play an important role in agricultural production. Their exclusion from the agricultural development programmes in the past has not been conducive in increasing productivity. Reaching rural women by male extension agents seems to have little impact especially in the Tarai and it has become imperative to train more women as extension agents to encourage participation of women in agricultural extension programmes.

## Women And Health

– Dr. Suniti Acharya.

### **Introduction:**

The health status of a society is the outcome of interactions of complex biological, social and environmental factors. Some of these are—economic conditions, educational levels, socio-cultural structure and status, especially in the case of Women, availability of proper housing, nutrition, environmental sanitation and the availability of health infrastructure and health care facilities. All these factors are dependent upon the socioeconomic development of a country. Again, a healthy, productive population is a prerequisite for socioeconomic development. Until recently, health services were regarded as social services and inputs in health were given due importance in economic terms. However, the need for greater investment in health and the importance of healthy manpower for the socioeconomic development of the country are increasingly being recognized.

A women's health is influenced by what happens in community as a whole. Each family is inevitably affected by the cultural and environmental conditions of the community whose life it shares. Wherever human need is greatest, women and children seem to suffer most. The least developed countries of Asia have long-standing constraints on socioeconomic development that have proved to be especially restrictive to improve the quality

of life for these segments of the population. In order to understand the health problems of Nepalese women it will be necessary to look into the health status of the population as a whole.

**Health status of the Nepalese Population:**

The health status of the Nepalese population is very low. It suffers from all the syndromes of a developing country i.e. high infant mortality rate, high dependency ratio, high fertility and mortality rates, high population growth rate; low life expectancy at birth; high population density per sq. Km. of usable land; very high prevalence of PCM; low literacy rate; and low G. N. P.

Table 1. Health and Demographic Profile of Nepal

Population	-	13.741 million
Crude birth rate	-	45.7
Crude death rate	-	20.8
Total fertility rate	-	6.45
Life expectancy at birth	-	46.7 yrs.
Rural population density	-	614/sq. Km. of arable land
Literacy rate	-	19.2
G. N. P	-	110 dollars.

Although Nepal's high rates of mortality and morbidity have decreased over the past twenty years they still remain among the highest in the world. Successful smallpox-eradication and malaria campaigns and improvement in health facilities have resulted in an increase in life expectancy at birth from an estimated 37 years in 1960 to 45 years in 1977. Infant mortality, which is generally taken as an indicator of the quality of life in a society have declined from around 200 to an estimated rate of 150 per thousand, (Table 2). But this is still one of the highest in the world.

Table 2. Infant mortality rates/1000 live birth in selected Asian

	<u>Countries</u>	
Bangladesh	-	153
Burma	-	56.3
India	-	139
Indonesia	-	100
Nepal	-	150
Sri Lanka	-	42.4
Thailand	-	26.5

A population growth rate of approximately 2.6 per cent per year impedes governmental efforts to provide services. Less than 10 percent of the population has regular access to safe water. Diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, diarrhoea and other infectious diseases are still widely prevalent and constitute the major causes of morbidity and mortality. Recent nutritional surveys indicate that 5-15 percent of Nepal's children suffer from protein-calories malnutrition. Iron deficiency anaemia is very common. Iodine deficiency goitre and cretinism pose themselves as serious constraints to physical and mental development.

### **Health Programmes and Policies:**

To eventually solve these problems HMG has adopted the following model of health service delivery : decentralized basic health services addressing the critical health problems such as high fertility, T. B., Leprosy, Malaria, etc., delivered by village Health workers resident in the area they serve supported by the local community, and supervised and restrained by health posts and district level personnel. The agency responsible for the delivery of the services is the Integrated Community Health Services Projects (ICHS). This programme centres around a health post which covers

about 15,000 persons over 3-4 village panchayats, and is staffed by middle level personnel like health assistants, AHWs, ANMs and village health workers. Each unit is designed to employ 3-4 VHWs who live in the communities served by the health post. VHWs are trained in very simple preventive and curative procedures. At present there are 6 districts which are fully integrated and 23 district where all services except malaria control are integrated. A community health volunteer programme has started in two districts. This will go a long way in involving the community in health care programmes.

In addition to these services, there are five centrally directed programmes concerned with specific problems. These include the malaria project: the Tuberculosis Control Project: the Leprosy Control Project: the E. P. I. and the FP/MCH projects. In addition to these projects and health posts there are about 50 hospitals scattered all over the country which provide curative and preventive services.

#### **Health and Social Problems Peculiar to Nepalese Women:**

It seems that in ancient times women's status might have been much higher, as reflected in the saying "Yatra Naristu Pujyate Ramante Tantra Devata". (where women are respected there will be the presence of God). But through generations, this saying has been forgotten and women have been made to assume a low profile in every social sphere.

Available statistics show that as of 1971, 49.3 percent of Nepal's population was female. Of these, 39.90 percent were below 15 yrs. of age and 5.88 percent were above 59 yrs. Nepalese women are married early, over burdened with children and have lower life expectancy than men (Table 3).

Table 3. Life expectancy at birth in selected Asian countries:

	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Both Sexes</u>
Malaysia	65.0	69.0	67.0
Thailand	60.7	66.4	63.0
India	52.6	51.6	52.6
Burma	51.2	54.4	52.8
Indonesia	49.0	51.6	50.2
Nepal	48.2	45.0	46.7

The female literacy rate is extremely low and women have been able to attain higher educational level only on a limited scale, women's participation in political as well as administrative affairs is marginal, with very few women employed at decision-making levels in various government sectors. (Table 4).

Table 4. Percentage of women in Govt. Sector.

	<u>July, 1973.</u>	
<u>Gazetted:</u>	<u>Adm.</u>	<u>Technical:</u>
Special class	—	—
First Class	—	1.13
Second Class	1.6	2.49
Third Class	2.13	3.66
Total	1.83	3.23

The women of Nepal have a higher mortality rate as compared to the women of the developing countries.

In Nepal, though much has been achieved in a very short time in setting up of health infrastructures and health facilities, yet they are far from being satisfactory. In remote areas Dhamis, Jhankris, Sudenis, Dais or elderly lady neighbours are providing most of the health care, specially to mothers and children. Less than 5 percent of total deliveries are done in health institutions.

Some thought is now being given to the use of indigenous local healers like Dhamis and Jhankris in spreading health education messages.

#### **Life cycle of women:**

The major needs and problems specific to women are related to the biological and psycho-social needs inherent in the process of growth, development and reproduction. The stages of this process are all very closely interrelated-each stage influencing the next one. The growth and development of one generation affects the next generation.

Due to our cultural norms and the preferential attitude of parents towards boys, resulting inequalities in nutritional health and educational attention during childhood bring problems for girls in later life leading to malnutrition, emotional insecurity, and inferiority complexes with relation to male sibs. Nepalese women frequently marry and become pregnant in adolescence. There is greater risk of complications of pregnancy and child-birth for the young mother in her early teens and of death or poor health of her infant. Pregnancies, abortions and contraception among adolescents in many areas have given rise to many social problems. In the case of pregnancies occurring outside marriage might result to illegal abortions which girls often lead to sepsis and even death. In some communities the girls' humiliation may even lead her to suicide.

In Nepal death due to complications of pregnancy is still one of the common causes of death among women.

High fertility rates among Nepalese women and too many or too closely spaced pregnancies give rise to health risks both for mothers and infants, and to high maternal as well as neonatal

and post-neonatal mortality rates. Women also suffer from malnutrition, diarrhoea, and other communicable diseases. Finally, there are some cancers specifically affecting women such as cancer of the breast and cancer of the cervix of uterus: The earlier the beginning of sexual activity, the higher is the risk of cervical cancer.

Women's share in health care programmes:

The participation of women in health care in its broadest sense is far greater than that of men. Women have been traditionally assuming the role of health care providers in the community as traditional birth attendants and also as local healers using methods ranging from prayers and psychotherapy to sorcery.

Although the female literacy rate is quite low compared to that of males, the number of women health professionals far outweigh that of male professionals (Table 6).

Table 6. Health Professionals in Nepal,

Category	Total	Male	Female	Category	Total	Male	Female
Doctors	649	540	109	Dental Surgeons	17	14	3
Health educators	22	20	2	Dieticians	2	0	2
Health Inspectors	53	53	0	Physio-therapist	4	0	4
Nurses	700	0	700	Sanitarians	19	19	0
Lab. Personnel	127	108	19	Health Assts.	489	462	27
AHWs	1223	1271	5	Pharmacists	53	51	2
VHWs	1500	0	0	ANMs.	2	0	2
				Grand Total	2484		3036

Although the number of women health professionals is greater than that of males, women are not decision-makers at any level. At the national level all the programme managers are male and at the zonal level all the civil surgeons are men. At the district level, all the public health programme incharges and health inspectors are males. Even at the health post level, which provides services at the community level, the incharges are males. As a result of this programmes and policies are formulated without considering the special needs of women employees and the percentage of women consumers.

**Measures to impose the existing situation:**

**Research:**

Health services research has a vital contribution to make in identifying psychological, social, technological, managerial and operational problems and in seeking solutions appropriate to specific national situations. These research findings should then form the basis of policy formulation and program development.

Priority research areas in the context of Nepalese women and health would include research on High fertility, High maternal and child mortality, poor nutritional status and its relation to health and fertility. Research is also needed on the impact on fertility of those factors which have an indirect bearing on fertility control—such as educational programs, intensive MCH care nutritional supplements and female employment.

In the area of Psycho-social and cultural factors affecting the health status of different communities of women in particular, comparative studies on the following topics are needed:

1. Health impact of provision of general essentials of life (e. g. agricultural support, schools, sanitation), versus intensive health services delivery,

2. Community acceptance or rejection of existing health services,
3. Social, psychological and career problems of women health professionals.
4. Alternative cadre of women health professional at the village level and its impact on MCH care, e. g., Local TBAS with training vs trained midwives,
5. Alternative technologies for generating community involvement and support for health care programmes.

### **Programmes and Policies:**

The findings of the above mentioned research should form the basis of future programmes and policies, especially in the following areas.

1. Provision of Family Planning services and MCH services.
2. Improvement of nutritional status.
3. Health education.
4. General curative and preventive services and MCH.

### **Family Planning and MCH Services:**

In spite of being a priority program we have not been able to achieve desired goals in family planning. For the FP program, FP and MCH care must concern itself with morbidity including the factors related to the status of women.

The following services must be given much more emphasis:-

1. Maternal care: The care of a mother during pregnancy and safe delivery must be recognised as important services. Although Health Posts do have provision for AN Midwives, due to various organizational and social problems they are

not always present when needed in the field. Training of traditional birth attendants should be undertaken urgently and referral systems should be developed to send complicated cases to hospitals so that these women do not have to die of obstructed labour or bleeding. The development of a referral system is not so easy in practice, because of very difficult communication and transportation systems in rural areas. Some ways and means must be developed so that a woman in obstructed labour can be taken to the nearest health facility.

2. Child care: Unless we ensure the health of living children it is not logical to expect families to limit the number of their children. In our context, where 150-200/1000 children die before they reach one year, and roughly about 50 percent die before they reach five years of age - large families are viewed as a security in the hope that at least some of the children born will survive till adulthood. Our effort must be geared to provide good child care services so that the family even in the rural area, will not hesitate to adopt permanent sterilization after the birth of two children.
3. Nutritional Status: Nepal suffers from one of the highest rates of malnutrition in the world. The improvement of the nutritional status of children and mothers is regarded as a component of MCH and FP activity. Yet nutrition programmes received more than lip service as a part of FP and MCH programmes. Poor nutritional status may provide a constraint to the implementation of successful FP/MCH programmes. So this area must be taken as one of urgent priority.

Health Education:- Health education activities are of special relevance to women, and visual materials and information

should be carefully selected to project the image of women, with simple language and message appropriate to the prevailing sociocultural environment.

General Measures:- Intersectoral approaches to FP/MCH care should be worked out. This component should include the provision of day-care facilities for children of at least 12 weeks of maternity leave and promotion of breast feeding and better child health. An important measure for the successful implementation of FP programmes is to devise some method of wage compensation for at least one week for clients, coming for voluntary sterilization.

#### **Recommendations and conclusions:**

The access of women to health care must be seen as a part of the overall problem of access to health care by the population as a whole.

Primary health care should require active participation of women at policy level as well as at the community level in planning, implementing and monitoring health care.

Organizational and social problems of health services delivery to women consumers as well as the problems of women health professionals should be discussed with responsible, voluntary, women's groups, like the Womens Services Co-ordination Committee and political representatives like women members of Rastriya Panchayat and Raj Sabha. Close collaboration with government programme managers at central and community levels.

## Women and Education

-Padmasana Shakya

Female education in Nepal is recent phenomenon. In the past, education was based on a religious code of conduct deliberately framed to suppress women and education for girls and adult women in Nepal was not considered desirable. In Nepal nearly half of the population consists of women. Until we can enlist the services of women in the development tasks of the country, the process of development will be slow indeed. Therefore, it is very important that we educate not only urban women but also rural women and add efficiency and wisdom to the skills that they are already familiar with. According to the recent Educational report the literacy rate has gone up to 22%.

Table I Male and Female Literacy in Nepal - ( 1971 - 1975 )

Sex	1971	Percentage	1975	Percentage
Male	11,30,204	23.6	16,02,481	33.4
Female	1,82,519	3.9	2,60,479	5.0
Total	1,312,723	13.9	18,62,960	19.2

Source: National Education Committee, (Survey report of 1975)

Table I shows that in comparison to the state of affairs of 1971, female literacy increased in 1975. As 98% of the population of the kingdom of Nepal live in the rural area, the rural development programme must necessarily include mass scale literacy drives. In the fifth plan period 1974/75 - 1979/1980, attempts had been made to make 600,000 adults literate in the rural areas where as in the sixth plan 900,000 adults are to be made literate. While imparting adult education programme priority is being given to women. Her Majesty the Queen mother Ratna has given her Royal patronage to it. Every year the Ratna literacy shield is awarded to the district which makes the greatest number of women literate.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal has adopted the policy of universal primary education. Primary Schools have been established all over the country and primary enrolment has increased considerably. However, the statistics show that primary school enrolment has been dominated by male students.

Tables II, III, IV, indicate the status and the trend of enrolment of girls in schools.

Table II. Comparative Primary Students:  
(Girls and Boys)

Year	Primary Students		Percentage of Girls	Total Students enrolment %.
	Total	Girls		
1975	4,58,516	8,4000	18.3	43.2
1977	7,69,049	1,69,640	22.1	69.4
1978	8,75,494	2,08,117	23.8	77.4
1979	10,12,530	2,70,740	26.7	
1980	10,67,912	2,99,512	28.04	

Table III. Comparative Lower Secondary Students:  
(Girls and Boys)

Year	<u>Lower Secondary Students</u>		Per-centage of Girls	Total Student enrolment, Primary Students %.
	Total	Girls		
1975	1,73,143	29,071	16.7	37.9
1977	2,26,639	41,788	18.4	29.5
1978	2,76,580	50,763	18.1	31.6
1979	3,42,929	68,133	19.8	
1980	3,91,427	80,889	20.6	

Table IV. Comparative Secondary Students:  
(Girls and Boys)

Year	<u>Secondary Students</u>		Percentage of Girls	Secondary Enrollment Percentage of Lower Secondary Enrolment
	Total	Girls		
1975	67,244	11,388	16.9	38.6
1977	82,158	13,598	16.6	36.3
1978	93,651	15,431	16.5	33.9
1979	1,06,109	18,253	17.2	
1980	1,21,007	21,613	17.8	

Source: National Education Committee.

In spite of the educational policy of the government to remove discrimination between boys and girls there exists wide gap between male and female education in our country. One of the prime factors is the drop-out rates of girls at successive stages of schooling, compared to those of boys. The new education plan has made vocational education compulsory. It is hoped that this vocational education may encourage the parents to send their daughters to the schools.

Table V. Higher Education.  
Enrolment of Students in Different Institutes - 1.

Name of Institutes	1974/1975			1975/76		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
<u>Technical:</u>						
1. Institute of Engineering	*	*	765	*	*	1065
2. Institute of Agri. and Animal Science	419	-	419	325	1	326
3. Institute of Medicine	671	478	1149	647	716	1363
4. Institute of Forest	215	-	215	182	-	182
5. Institute of Education	*	*	3726	*	*	4449
6. Institute of Applied Science and Technology	136	20	156	164	12	176
<b>Total:</b>			<b>6430</b>			<b>7560</b>

Name of Institutes	1974/1975			1975/1976		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Total B. F.			6430			7560
<u>General:</u>						
1. Institute of Law	264	20	284	423	31	444
2. Institute of Science	2017	335	2352	1956	290	2246
3. Institute of Bus. Adm. and Commerce	3290	192	3482	3158	196	335
4. Institute of Hum. Social Science	4673	970	14643	6182	2653	8835
5. Institute of Sanskrit	267	1	268	322	3	326
Total:			15029			15205
Grand Total:			21459			22765

Table VI. Higher Education  
Enrolment of Students in Different Institutes - 2

Name of Institutes	1979/1980		
	Boys	Girls	Total
<u>Technical:</u>			
1. Institute of Engineering	1532	52	1583
2. Institute of Agri. Animal Science	1084	10	1094
3. Institute of Medicine	981	772	1753
4. Institute of Forest	283	-	283
5. Institute of Education	4970	1208	6178
Total:	8850	2042	10892

Name of Institutes	1979/1980		
	Boys	Girls	Total
Total B. F.	8850	2042	10892
<u>General:</u>			
1. Institute of Law	2326	152	2478
2. Institute of Science	2939	528	3467
3. Institute of Bus. Adm. & Commerce	6721	653	7374
4. Institute of Hum. and Social Science	10928	4258	15186
5. Institute of Sanskrit	459	7	466
Total:	23373	5594	28971
Grand Total:	32223	7640	39859

\* Not Available.

Source: T. U. Planning Commission

From the Tables V. VI. given above, we find that though female education in Nepal is on the increase, yet it is increasing at a very slow rate. It is clear from those tables that the enrolment of girl students in Humanities and Social Sciences is higher. In the Bagmati zone, the number of girls student at University level is high, because of good educational facilities in the capital. In a country like Nepal proper and balanced development of education is a precondition for all round development of the nation.

#### **Reasons for low enrolment:**

Access to education is governed by many factors in Nepal although there is no discrimination of sex, caste or religion in

the field of education on the part of the government. Discrimination in our society is created by conservative parents who think investment on male education can be a support to them in their old age. On the other hand girls do not live with the parents for ever and investment on girls education is considered unproductive. Primary education has become free in Nepal. However, it has not yet been made compulsory. As a result schooling is more successful in the urban areas where parents do not use their children as supplementary labour for the family.

As a majority of the Nepalese people lead a subsistence economy, schooling expenses at higher levels fall heavily on the parents and they prefer not to invest their limited resources on the education of daughters.

#### **Measures Undertaken:**

His Majesty's Government of Nepal and other non-government agencies are playing important roles in promoting women's education and skills through the following programmes:

- 1) Free primary education
- 2) Free distribution of text books at the primary level,
- 3) Free education for girls at all levels in the remote areas, and Himalayan region,
- 4) In order to make women aware of their equal status with men, instructions have been given to glorify women.
- 5) Under the Institute of Education, Teachers Training Centres have provided special opportunities for women to serve as teachers.
- 6) Equality of access to education for women has been launched in Nepal since July 1970. The objectives of the plan are to

ensure women full equality with men and to promote their full participation in the development process through their access to education, science and culture.

- 7) The Women's Affairs Training Centre was set up in 1954 to impart skills and training to rural women. At present, this centre is responsible for institutional training and field training in all the districts.
- 8) Literacy programmes have been conducted in the country through different organisations such as the village panchayat, local clubs, and social services organisations like Nepal women's Organisation.

#### **Suggestive Measures:**

- 1) Female education should be made compulsory up to primary level. More and more girls should be given priority for admission to schools.
- 2) Since the main reason why girls are not educated lies on economic problems and social conditions. Economic aid should be given to girls. Arrangements should be made for free schooling up to the middle classes for girls in selected areas.
- 3) Men should play a more active role for the publicity and implementation of women's education. Men's encouragement is necessary to persuade illiterate women for education.
- 4) More Adult Education Programmes should be planned and operated especially in the rural areas. The programmes must be functional and work-oriented. The national development services programme being operated by Tribhuvan University can run female literacy programme in the villages.

- 5) Prizes at a national level should be given to those districts which succeed in enrolling the highest percentage of women in their schools.
- 6) Finally, curricula should be revised in order to produce skilled qualified, trained, and experienced lady teachers. An increase in the number of female literates will be possible if a mobile programme is conducted in various districts of the kingdom.

# Women and Local Development

*-Santla B. Rai*

## **Local Development**

Local development embraces almost all aspects of the nation's development activities. However, this paper will deal only with those activities which are done by mobilizing available local resources at the local level by local institutions in a parsimonious, judicious and holistic manner.

Nepal is an agricultural country. Over ninety-five percent of people depend on agriculture and over ninety seven per cent of the people are rural. It is obvious, therefore, that local development programmes have to be generated, mobilized and executed by people in the rural areas to meet their own felt needs.

The main features of local development planning have been adopted and institutionalized in the Panchayat. It is in the lowest tier of the village panchayat that the actual plans are formulated.

## **Selection and Execution Procedure**

The local development programmes are, therefore, selected, legitimized and executed by the communities in the village Panchayat cannot afford to run its programmes and needs technical, financial or material assistance from the district or the central

government, then the programme needs approval from the district Panchayat Assembly. The district assembly usually gives its approval on the basis of priorities accorded within the district's development plan. Technical and financial feasibility are the controlling factors in the decision-making process of the district assembly. Generally the assembly meets twice a year; to select and approve the district development plan and its annual budget and, then, to review the programmes. After the assembly's approval, the execution is handled by the district panchayat which is assisted by a secretary-cum-Local Development Officer and his staff members.

In the process of selection, the district assembly has to consider not only the required resources in terms of manpower and material for implementation of the projects, but also the degree of felt need, aspiration and participation of the local people. In order to support such projects, the government has channelled grant-in-aid funds through the Ministry of Local Development to the districts. In brief, all the people oriented self-help type of rural development activities, that are executed through the medium of local panchayats, are assisted by the government with grant-in-aid funds, necessary technical manpower and construction materials.

### **Local Development Activities**

Geographical conditions have made Nepal's rural settlements scattered all over the hills and valleys in remote and isolated places. In addition the problems of accessibility and communication have made the development effort a herculean task. The traditional approach of centrally planned and executed development strategies are not a viable means to develop Nepal. The Local Development alternative, which stems from the people and is supported by popular participation and use of local resources, probably provides

the only answer. This approach has been adopted and to respond to its horizontal nature, the local development activities are spread throughout the 75 districts of the country.

Some of the important programmes are as followings:

1) Grant-in-aid

Grant-in-aid programme for local development comprises most of the felt needs project activities. In this programme activities such as production, employment and income generation, social services and development of basic infrastructure are done at the grassroot level.

2) Community Water Supply System

This programme is a joint project of HMG and people with assistance from UNICEF and WHO. It is executed through the Ministry of Local Development. The community water supply programme plays a vital rôle in improvement of community health and standard of living. Women and children benefit primarily from this programme, because it saves them from the drudgery of fetching water from long distances.

3) Communication and Transportation

The construction of trails, tracks and low cost bridges in the hill and mountain villages also fall under the sphere of local development. Some of the mule trail constructions are assisted by WFP and UNDP. Most are done by the village panchayats with government grants and people's participation. Indigenously built local bridges are another field of activity attracting interest from many donor agencies. Development in the field of communications including transportations has had a positive impact on life in the area, (hill districts).

#### 4) Panchayat Irrigation

Recently, a panchayat irrigation programme, assisted by International Labour Organization (ILO), has been included in local development programmes. Panchayat irrigation schemes are small and medium sized irrigation projects covering an average of fifteen hectares of land. Since most of Panchayat irrigation schemes fall in the hill regions, they are popularly called terrace irrigation programmes

#### **Involvement of Women in Local Development:**

Although, no extensive research has been done on women's involvement in development programmes of the community, some studies on agricultural development and household surveys of farm communities reflect enormous involvement of women in community life. A study on labour participation in different activities and the contribution of men and women showed that out of nearly 907 working days involving farm and household activities the contribution from men came to 23 per cent and from women 77 per cent.<sup>1</sup> However, in the area of local development activities women's contribution has remained in most cases more indirect. In a traditional society a woman's leadership, however significant, is overlooked and her involvement in community development activities is considered as secondary.

The most needed local development programme for rural women is the supply of drinking water. Their felt needs are voiced in the community and are usually conveyed by their men-folk to the village panchayat for action. It is this social action in the community which indirectly involves the women

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1. S- B. Nepali, Planning for Agricultural Development, University of Reeding, U. K. - March 1981.

in the formulation of plans. I was then a Panchayat Development officer in Tehrathum district, some fourteen years ago, a group of elderly women approached me with a scheme, they were to contribute money to hire a maintenance worker to help me run the drinking water project smoothly and I had to make sure that they got the needed supply constantly. These elderly women, who were simple housewives, were supported by their menfolk who completed the six kilometer long water supply system.

Although women in Nepal do not come forward in a formal panchayat meeting or in government offices to participate in the formulation of plans, they quietly force their people to speak for them as they did in the case of the Tehrathum water project.

Tehrathum water supply project was a women-involved project, legitimized according to the policies laid down by the local development programme. Their involvement was indirect yet very significant. Once they had decided what they wanted, their voices reached every family including the member of the Rastriya Panchayat, the Savapati and the Pradhan Pancha.

The women in Tehrathum initiated the programme but in physical construction their involvement was virtually nil. On the other hand in the water supply project in Lahachowk of Kaski district, women were involved in construction work organised by the local Pradhan Pancha. They dug the canal, carried the pipes and helped other people to lay the pipes on a voluntary basis. In return they were assigned tapstands in their wards. Here the programme was formulated in a panchayat where there was not a single woman member in the panchayat office.

The third example of women's involvement in local development is quite different from the former two. Here a woman started a programme through her own individual leadership. In 1965-66

more than 16 kilometers of trail in the difficult terrain of Dhankuta district along the Kosi river from Baraha-Chhetra to Tribeni, was built by Majheni Ama. She went on to open up other trails leading to Muga, Sunbaluwa and Chainpur as well. Her work eventually won her a state award recognition from His late Majesty King Mahendra. Many such unknown, unsung, selfless and dedicated local development workers are contributing tremendously towards the nation's development.

So far we have discussed women's involvement in local development in male-dominated social organizations. Let us now look at the women-dominated Tribhuvah Ambote Village Panchayat of Sindhuli district. The entirely women membered panchayat was formed in 1977. The Pradhan Pancha backed by her colleagues started to build schools, bridges, trails, drinking water and irrigation schemes. The activities in the village panchayat are better organized when compared to other village panchayats. There is no doubt that given the equal status and opportunities women can excel in local development activities.

### **Integration of Women in Local Development:**

Some of the observations made earlier clearly show that women's involvement in the first stage of plan formulation is in most cases indirect and informal. Since the panchayat is the only body having the decision-making power, it is up to this body to make the effective use of women's contribution and accommodate their wishes in the formulation of plans. To assure the full integration of women in local development, in the absence of women panchayat representation the women's organizations involved in various local development programmes should be given the status of Panchayats and allocated budgets, manpower and materials.

In the name of institutionalization, the local development programmes come through the Panchayats. Except for the commu-

nity water supply project, most of the programmes directly related with women such as Nari Silpa Kendra, Women's Club, handicraft development, nutrition and child care, day care centres etc. do not get priority attention when submitted to panchyats as local development projects.

This rigidity in local level planning selection of projects can be countered by letting more women participate in panchayat meetings. Very few women candidates stand for election. This was demonstrated in the recent Rastriya Panchayat election where there were only 47 female candidates against 1049 male candidates. Therefore, provision for a nominating system should be made so that more women can enter the panchayat administration at Village, District and Rastriya Panchayat levels.

Time is another variable that determines women's participation in developmental programmes. As mentioned earlier out of 907 working days they spent 620 days or 77 per cent of their total time in family labour including crop production, livestock keeping, fuel wood collection, water fetching, cooking and house keeping, obviously such constant hard work narrows down the chances of their participation in local development activities. The time consuming nature of such work can be overcome by introducing technologies and devices in rural areas. The hydraulic-rams water lifts installed in Mustang, Myagdi and Kathmandu and gravity-rope-way system for fodder and fuel wood supply in Sikha Valley of Myagdi are some examples of new technology introduced in rural Nepal. For Applied Science and Technology (RECAST) of Tribhuvan University, has developed solar dryers, chulas, water pumps etc. Emphasis has been given to the study and development of local technologies and devices that may help rural women to save more time. With sufficient time in hand, rural women should be given

enough opportunity for their education, training and participation in Panchayat and developmental work.

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

This paper has tried to highlight the necessity of the "local development" approach for the development of Nepal. It has also attempted to reveal the significant role, however, indirect, that women play, and can be encouraged to play, in local development schemes. In order to increase women's participation and integrate these felt needs, visions, aspirations and productive capabilities into the planning and executed to identify the physical, institutional, social and cultural constraints that hinder women's participation in specific programmes and to identify felt needs of women in specific areas in order of priority; to recommend appropriate forum at the village level to increase women's participation, in the panchayat body; to recommend practical measures to institutionalize women organizations within the panchayat system.

## Women And Law

—Senior Advocate, Shilu Singh

Development works cannot be carried forward without the mobilization of the entire society and without the integration of women, who constitute half of the population. The question of the participation of women in development is as complex a problem as it is urgent. The concept of masculine domination, a corollary of our patriarchal society, is still reflected in the traditional values of our society, in the legal system of our country and in the legal and social status of our women. Unless we emancipate our women imprisoned in a continuous round of domestic chores and grant them rights equal to those of men, these women cannot bear equal responsibilities with men and consequently they will not be able to make any remarkable contribution to development efforts. Hence the question of granting equal rights for women is intimately linked with the problem of the development of the country and society. In every society the legal status of women is a measuring-rod to judge the level of social progress.

### **The Legal Status of Nepalese Women: Historical Background:**

An inscription discovered near the Buddhist Stupa at Chabahil, Kathmandu, reveals something about the status of women in ancient Nepal. This inscription of the Lichhavi

period, is the earliest discovered<sup>1</sup> so far is estimated to be about sixteen hundred years old and was inscribed by a lady. It mentions that she has established a trust for arranging occasional feasts for the Buddhist Sangh and for the worship of the Buddha and adds, in the end, her wish "Let me, as a result of this Virtuous deed, be born as a man in my next birth." The Lichhavi age is profusely praised by historians as a golden age which placed comparatively lesser restrictions on women, but this inscription proves beyond all doubt that even in that age, women were placed in a position far inferior to that of men.

The process of codification of Nepalese laws was begun in the 14th century, when King Jayasthiti Malla introduced a legal system based on the Hindu Scriptures.

The gradual transformation of social customs, traditions and laws along the lines of Hindu ideals has continued since then. After a gap of five hundred years, the second codification of Nepalese laws was undertaken in the year 1853 A.D. by the Rana Prime Minister Jung Bahadur on the orders of His Majesty Surendra Bikram Shah. Although this Code abolished discrimination due to wealth and position it continued to follow Hindu Scriptures by prescribing punishments on the basis of caste status among Hindus. While the multi-legal system of the different ethnic groups was carried over into the new Code, the removal of legal uncertainties brought about a certain degree of modernization in the legal and judicial system. Among the remarkable achievements of the age was the abolition of slavery and the practice of "Suttee".

In 1932, in accordance with the orders of His Majesty Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah Dev, the then Prime Minister Juddha

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1. Dhan Bajra Bajracharya, Inscriptions of Lichhavi Age, P. 3.

Shamsher Rana brought out an amended version of the national Civil Code. An attempt was made in this Code for the first time to restrain to some extent evil practices such as child marriage and unequal marriage,<sup>2</sup> the evils which kill the creative initiative of women and obstruct social progress. The minimum age for marriage for the bride was fixed as the eleventh year for Brahmins and the fourteenth year for other high-caste Hindus (thread-wearing castes). The minimum age for the bridegroom was fixed as the sixteenth year for all high-caste Hindus including Brahmins. It was also prescribed that a bridegroom of an age between 30 to 48 cannot marry a girl below 12 years of age, in the case of Brahmins, and a girl below 16 in the case of other high caste Hindus. A bridegroom (belonging to the higher castes, including Brahmins) between 48 and 60 could now marry a bride who has already crossed 20 years of age, and groom over 60 years of age was prohibited from marrying any virgin girl. This was the first effort to curb child marriage and unequal marriage, but the amount of punishment prescribed was very light (the maximum being just one month's imprisonment). Moreover this restraint was not universal and was applicable to people belonging to a few Hindu castes. Even this legal provision was not effectively put into practice.

Another legal provision (already promulgated in 1900 A.D. and incorporated in the 1932 Code) concerning the right of a widow over her husband's share of property is very significant.<sup>3</sup> Whereas in the past a widow could not dispose of the property inherited from her deceased husband, this provision granted a widow over the age of 40 the right to dispose of one-third of such property in certain cases and the whole of movables and half of the immovable property in other cases at her own will. A widow below 40 years of age, on the other hand,

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2. See 13 of the Chapter on marriage of 1832 Code.

3. See 1 of Chapter on share of property of 1932 Code.

could dispose of, at her own will, one-fourth of such property in certain cases and half of the movables and one-third of the immovable property in other cases. However, in case the widow remarried, she would forfeit not only the right over her deceased husband's assets but even over what she had earned on her own during wedlock.<sup>4</sup> A woman's "Daijo" and "Pewa" (gifts obtained by the woman during or after her wedding from her paternal side and her husband's family respectively) was regarded as her absolute property which she could dispose of during her lifetime or make a testament of as she wished. But if she died intestate, the order of succession to that property was her son, husband, daughter, daughter's son and her husband's heirs. If she eloped with another man leaving her husband or even if she remarried after the death of her husband, she would forfeit her right over her own Daijo and Pewa.<sup>5</sup> Thus, although this code granted certain property rights for women, they were quite inadequate.

### **The 1950 Revolution and the Rights of Nepalese Women:**

The advent of democracy in Nepal through the 1950 revolution was an event of epochal significance marking a total change in the principles and policy of the state.

The interim constitution of 1951 announced by King Tribhuvan placed men and women in equal position in enjoying political rights. In the present constitution and the existing civil code, the independent existence of women is recognised and women enjoy equal political rights with men. In the case of economic rights, women enjoy comparatively better status than before. However, much effort is still needed for Nepalese women to get equal

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4. See 2 of the Chapter on Widows Share of Property in the 1932 Code.

5. See 5 of the Chapter on endowment of the Former Code.

status with men. To achieve equal rights for women is an integral part of the main drive for development.

### **The Constitution of Nepal and the Status of Women:**

Although Nepalese women enjoy equal political rights with men, they are still placed in an inferior status in enjoying property rights and in a number of legal provisions. The Nepalese constitution recognizes, in theory, the independent existence of women and guarantees that there will be no discrimination against women "in the application of common law" and "in joining government offices of other public posts". It means women can join government or public services like men and there shall be no discrimination against women "with the application of common law". However, the common laws are not formulated in this spirit and contain provisions which place women in a position inferior to that of men. The constitution is the fundamental law of the land and all laws shall be void to the extent that they contraven the provisions of the constitution.<sup>6</sup> But unless the constitution explicitly declares that men and women shall be considered equal in all respects, all laws unfavourable to women remain in force.

### **Singificance of the National Code of 1963:**

The new national code promulgated by His late Majesty King Mahendra in February, 1963, was a remarkable achievement for Nepalese women. According to this code marriage could not be imposed upon anyone without consent. Forcible marriage and marriage of a woman accomplished by fraud could now be annulled.<sup>7</sup> The Right of a wife to get a divorce under certain conditions was made applicable uniformly for all ethnic groups

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6. Art. 1, Pt. 1, Constitution of Nepal.

7. See, 7 of the Chapter on marriage: In the former Code (Sec 12), this right was given only to a bride over the age of 14.

for the first time.<sup>8</sup> Child marriage and unequal marriage were declared punishable crimes.<sup>9</sup> A husband committing bigamy would now be punished.<sup>10</sup>

Our laws are progressively raising the degree of punishment for bigamy, yet a bigamous marriage is only punishable, but not void. In other words, this code only discouraged and curbed child marriage, unequal marriage and bigamous marriage to some extent.

### **Achievements of International Women's Year: The Sixth amendment in the National Code:**

The Sixth amendment in the National Code of 1975 brought about a further improvement in the legal status of Nepalese women. The most important of them is the increased rights for women to participate in various economic activities of the society and hold property rights. The significant contributions of this amendment are as follows:

- 1) The amendment granted for the first time the right to an unmarried daughter above the age of thirty-five to a share in her parents' property equal to that of her brothers.<sup>11</sup> instead of the half-share inherited earlier.
- 2) In case of intestate succession prior to 6th. amendment the order of priority of the right of succession to the deceased's estate was that of husband, wife, son, son's son, other living in joint family with the deceased. The daughter would not inherit her father's property, if any of the above-mentioned

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8. See 1 of the Chapter on "Husband and Wife".

9. See 2 of the Chapter on "marriage".

10. See § Ibid.

11. See 16 of Chapter on "Partition" of the amended Code.

relatives of the deceased were living. The 6th. amendment placed a daughter in the order of succession after the son's son of the deceased.<sup>12</sup> However, in the case of intestate succession to the "stridhan" (exclusive property of a woman) even this amendment seems quite inadequate.

- 3) The 6th. amendment has considerably lessened the existing restraint on a woman to dispose of her property as she wishes. A spinster, married woman or a widow who is living separately can dispose of all her movable property and half of the immovable property as she wishes without obtaining anybody's consent.<sup>13</sup>
- 4) The amendment has added one new provision in the wife's right to partition from her husband. The code provided that a wife can claim partition from a husband who does not provide maintenance for his wife. The new amendment added a new clause<sup>14</sup> that a wife who has attained the age of 35 and has already been married for more than 15 years can claim separation of her share from her husband.
- 5) The provision for dissolution of marriage under a situation where the husband and wife cannot maintain a healthy relationship is also significant.<sup>15</sup>
- 6) The amendment has added a new provision (see 4 A) in the chapter on 'Husband and wife' which obliged the ex-husband to provide to his divorced wife a simple maintenance of food and clothing as fixed by the law-court for a period of five

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12. See 2 of the Chapter on "Intestate Succession".

13. See 2 of the Chapter on "Intestate Succession".

14. See 10 A, Ibid.

15. See 1, Sub-sec. 3 of the Chapter on "Husband and Wife".

years or till she remains unmarried whichever is a shorter period.

- 7) The amendment has also removed the shortcomings in the question of the custody of the children of the divorced parents.<sup>16</sup> Before the amendment the father had the decisive option regarding the custody of the children. It was now provided that if the child was below three, the father could choose to keep the child in his own custody or oblige the child's mother to bring up the child till the age of three. Thus, placing the mother in a position of obligation without any rights. According to the amended provision, if the child is below five, the mother can choose to bring up the child in her custody or oblige the father to do so and in both cases the costs would be paid by the father.
- 8) The amendment has contributed much to put more effective curbs on the evil of bigamy. The amended code fixes the punishment for bigamy as a term of imprisonment ranging from one to two months plus a fine, ranging from Rs. 1000.00 to Rs. 2000.00 both for the bigamous husband and for woman, who knowingly comes as a second wife. This comparatively stricter punishment is expected to put a more effective restraint on the practice of bigamy.
- 9) The prescribed period to file a complain against bigamy has also been extended to "within three months from the date of knowing of the offence". Before the amendment, there could be no proceedings, if no complaint could be filed within 35 days from the date of offence.

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16. See 3 of the Chapter on "Husband and Wife".

17. See 2 of the Chapter on "Marriage".

- 10) The amendment has raised the minimum age for marriage and fixed this age for a girl to 16 with her guardian's consent and to 18 without such consent. For the bridegroom, the age is fixed as 18 with the guardian's consent and 21 without such consent.<sup>17</sup>
- 11) The sixth amendment has, for the first time, introduced provisions for adopting a daughter and declared the rights of an adopted daughter as equal to that of an adopted son.<sup>18</sup>
- 12) The amendment has removed the whole chapter on 'Jari' from the former Code which had maintained the savage practice of killing of the 'Jar' (a man who commits adultery or elopes with another man's wife), by the wronged husband. If the latter did not choose such extreme punishment, the earlier code recommended different punishments and compensations based on the castes of the adulterer and adulteress. The new code of 1963 abolished this system and made uniform provision for all ethnic groups and castes. However, it granted the wronged husband the right to claim monetary compensation from the adulterer, which somehow amounted to considering the wife as the husband's personal property.

The provision that the wronged husband cannot claim punishment for the adulterer of his wife, if the former has himself brought the wife from some other husband or has more than one wife, reflects the lingering remains of the old concept.<sup>19</sup>

### **Do Nepalese Women now Enjoy Equal Rights With Man?**

Let us now examine whether, after the sixth amendment in the code, Nepalese women enjoy legal rights with those of men.

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18. See 9 A and 9 C of the Chapter on "Adopted Son".

19. Sec. 2 Sub Sec. 1 and 2, Ibid.

As mentioned above, the Nepalese constitution grants equal political rights to men and women. However, inequalities still exist in social status and property rights of women. Although the constitution prohibits any discrimination against women in the application of common law, the amended National Code still contains some legal provisions which put women in a position inferior to that of men. Such a situation arises partly out of the provisions of the law itself and partly out of the existing legal proceedings and interpretations of the law.

The right to divorce is granted to both husband and wife in certain circumstance, but they are placed in different positions in the exercise of this right. For instance, while a husband gets the right to divorce his wife, if she lives separately for 3 years continuously without his consent; the wife, on the other hand, can exercise her right to divorce if her husband leaves her and lives separately without three years. The law thus presumes that on the part of the wife, living separately from the husband without his consent amounts to a crime, while on the part of the husband, his only obligation is to provide maintenance to his wife.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding a woman's right to property, we find that a wife has a share in her husband's property, but the law imposes much restriction in her right to share the property as well as in enjoying the right to property. It is only over her "Daijo" and 'Pewa' and her own earnings that she has absolute rights.<sup>21</sup> A wife has only limited rights to enjoy the property received as a share from her husband or over the property which she has succeeded to from her husband's share. She can dispose all the movable and half of the immovable property as she wishes,

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20. Sec. 1, Sub Sec. 1 and 2 of the Chapter on 'Husband Wife'.

21. Sec 1, of Women's share of property and Woman's absolute property.

the rest of the property she can dispose of by a will, gift or a deed of sale only after obtaining consent of persons prescribed by law. In essence, a woman has full rights only on half of the property which she gets as a share from her husband's property or which she inherits from her husband and only a life-interest in the remaining half.<sup>22</sup> Her absolute rights are only over her "stridhan" property. Thus we find that the limited rights of a woman over her husband's property, which was first introduced in 1900 A.D., went on progressively increasing and reached the highest in the 6th amendment of the present code, but the restraint has not yet been completely removed. It is only in "stridhan" that all such restraints have been completely removed.

The above analysis shows that a woman's right to property as provided in the National Code has not yet reached perfection. Further, a woman's right to property as recognized by the National Code, is often shadowed in practice as a result of other laws and regulations. We can take, for instance one provisions in the Evidence Act, which directs a court to presume any property registered in the name of an individual as the joint property of all the co-parceners, in the absence of contrary evidence. Thus a women's property, including her so-called absolute property, the "stridhan", and also formally registered in her own name may be presumed by the court to be the common property of all the co-parceners, if she fails to furnish conclusive evidence that the said property is her "Daijo" or "Pewa" or her own earning. If her husband is a member of a joint family, not only he, but all his co-parceners may claim her property. The ruling made by the division bench of the supreme court in a case shows how vulnerable is a woman's "absolute" property in practice. In that case, a divorced women applied to the law court to evict her ex-husband's family

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22. See 2 Ibid.

members from a house registered in her name and which she claimed was purchased from her "Daijo" money. The division bench held that even property registered in the name of a divorced woman would be regarded as the property of her ex-husband's family, if the property was registered in her name before the divorce and if she could not prove conclusively that the property had been purchased from her "Daijo" or "Pewa" or her own earnings.<sup>23</sup>

Regarding a woman's exclusive property of "stridhan", a decision made by the Full Bench of the supreme court can be cited. In that case when a sonless woman died, her "Daijo" property over which she had exclusive rights was inherited by her husband according to the law on intestate succession. Such a property now became her husband's exclusive property over which his co-porceners would have no right. When he died, his widow (his second wife) got the inheritance.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the existing law of succession regarding "stridhan" may create an event, in which the "Daijo" or so-called exclusive property of a sonless woman could not be claimed by her own daughter, but inherited by her husband's second wife. The existing legal provision of the daughter's claim in priority order to succeed to the "stridhan" of a deceased woman placed only after the husband and the son is not at all satisfactory.

Likewise, the existing legal provision, although recognizes the right of the wife to succeed to her husband's property as his heir, places restriction on her full enjoyment of such property. As already explained, she has real control over only half of such property. As for the rest, she can dispose of by will or gift or deed of sale, only if she gets the consent of persons prescribed by

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23. Kamala Devi vs Hiranya Basnyat

24. Hiranya Kumari vs. Yaundhi Tiwari

law. The existing law on a women's right to enjoy her property needs improvement. Only if she enjoys rights over property, can a woman be really independent, and can her social position be improved. Only if she has full freedom and equal rights in the society, can she make her contribution to the development of society.

Over-dependence on legislation in order to bring about social change is a common trend in third world countries. Reform in law or promulgation of progressive laws cannot, by themselves, bring about social change successfully; for example, The law courts have not been able to successfully eliminate bigamy. Although the responsibility of filing a prosecution against bigamy has been entrusted to the government, the administration has not recorded much success in this field. Of course, our laws to restrain bigamy itself is rather too mild, and the punishment for bigamy is yet nominal, because bigamy has only been made punishable, but not declared void, but even the provisions made in the code is not successfully implemented. Effective social change can be brought about only through mass awareness of law and consciousness, along with legal reforms. Particularly this is more needful for women. It is being increasingly felt that success in restraining bigamy has not been achieved because of the procedural aspects of the legal prosecution.

### **The Need for Legal Reforms:**

As stated above, reforms through legislation in the existing law as well as their effective implementation are both equally important for the protection of the legal rights of women. The sixth five year plan draft, under its policy of increasing women's participation in development efforts has recommended "introducing reforms in existing laws to abolish obstacles, if any, on the mass

participation of women in development". Legal reforms should be made in accordance with such recommendations.

### **The Importance of Legal Literacy and Legal Aid Programmes:**

Besides legal reforms, the creation of an atmosphere for the guarantee of enjoyment of existing legal rights are equally important, or perhaps even more important for the advancement of the cause of women's emancipation. Women who are the victims of wrongs, are generally unable to go to the courts for legal redress. Raising the awareness of their rights among women and providing free legal aid services are urgently needed in a developing country like ours. On the basis of the contribution made by the Legal Aid Service Project conducted under the aegis of Nepal Women's Organization since 1964 through its programme of free legal aid for needy women and legal literacy drives, it has become apparent that the nation-wide expansion of this project is necessary for the emancipation of women.

# Women and Employment

-Padma Shrestha

## 1. Introduction:

International women's Year was a very important land mark in the history of women's development in recent times. A major objective of the world conference held in Mexico City in June 1975 was to "focus attention on the importance of the situation of women, not only as a matter of human rights, but also a crucial factor in development and international co-operation and peace, and in the establishment of a new world economic order. Underlying this is the concern to ensure that questions relating to the participation of women in the development process should cease to be acted upon in isolation as being of interest to women only, but should be regarded as important factors requiring attention within the framework of over-all development. "planning."<sup>1</sup> The participation of women in national development is best possible by providing them with gainful employment, by creating self employment opportunities for them and by motivating them to increase their level of efficiency.

Factors influencing the employment of women in Nepal:  
Opportunities and Constraints.

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1. Report of the UN Regional Seminar on the Participation of Women in Political, Economic and Social Development: Kathmandu (15-22 Feb. 1977) U. N., New York, 1977.

## 1. Economic Factors:

In Nepal the process of development has begun altering the traditional pattern of the division of labour between men and women, but the pace has been rather slow. Women are migrating to urban areas to work in hotels, factories and offices but only by the handful. Remuneration for their household work is not monetised and consequently they can never think of unionizing.

Due to the prevailing rates of seasonal and disguised unemployment in rural areas and the lack of opportunities the women's labour force remains unemployed specially during off-agricultural seasons. The following factors have been primarily responsible for this situation:

- a) Agriculture based on monsoon and hazards of weather.
- b) Slow industrialization.
- c) Lack of Capital.
- d) Lack of skilled manpower to train women in different skills.
- e) Lack of entrepreneurship and management skills.
- f) Under developed marketing channels and small size of domestic market with low purchasing power.
- g) Lack of incentive to reach overseas markets, largely due to lack of co-operation among women artisans and the existence of an oligopoly of exporters.
- h) Lack of training/orientation programmes in improved production technologies, marketing and quality control.

- i) No specific programmes to identify specific projects, develop schemes and feasibility studies for providing opportunities to women to run their own businesses or industries.
  - j) Lack of supportive facilities for working women in both rural and urban areas.
  - k) Paucity of information and guidance on various job opportunities.
  - l) Prejudices on the part of employers to employ women, as they require more facilities in terms of maternity leave creches, etc.
2. Socio-Cultural Constraints:
- a) Women are considered capable of doing only limited types of work. Jobs are labelled as "men's jobs" and "women's jobs"<sup>2</sup>
  - b) Low self-image of women acts as an obstacle in applying for skilled jobs.
  - c) Less time for wage employment, within the existing joint family system where household drudgery takes away a major portion of women's time and energy.

**2. Women's Employment in Nepal:  
Some Facts and Figures:**

Table - 1 reveals that the potential female labour force had increased from 2,383,000 in 1952/54 to 3,410,000 in 1976. In 1952/1954 potential female labour force was 51.56%, 49.83% in 1971 and 49.52% of total (male + female) labour force of Nepal, in 1976;

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- 2. Schroeder Robert and Schroeder Elaine, "Women in Nepali Agriculture; All work and No power", The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies, Vol. 1. Jan, 1979, CEDA, Tribhuvan University. Kathmandu.

Table 1. Potential Labour Force in Total Population:

Years	Population of Ages 15-59+ Potential Labour Force (in thousand)			Percentage of Total Population			composition of Potential Labour Force (%)	
	Both Sexes	Male sex	Female sex	Both Sexes	Male sex	Female sex	Male sex	Female sex
1952/54	4622	2239	2283	56.1	55.3	57.0	48.44	51.56
1961	5156	2498	2658	54.8	53.9	55.7	48.45	51.55
1971	6233	3127	3106	53.9	53.8	54.1	50.17	49.83
1976*	6886	3476	3410	52.6	52.3	53.0	50.48	49.52

Source: The Population Censuses 1952/54, 1961 1971.

\* Estimates of Rajbanshi, B. S. and Gubaju B. B., Population Projections of Nepal 1971-2001, Kathmandu, 1976 (mimeographed)

An attempt has been made here to estimate the size of the potential female labour force by the end of the decade on the basis of the 1971 Census and 1976 estimates (Table 2).

Table 2. Estimated Potential Labour Force Projections:

Year	Estimated Population between Ages 15-59 (potential labour Force) (in Thousands)			Composition of estimated Potential Labour Force (Percent)		
	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female
1977	7023	3549	3476	100	50.53	49.47
1980	7451	3779	3672	100	50.72	49.28

Year	Estimated Population between Ages 15-59 (potential labour Force) (in Thousands)			Composition of estimated Potential Labour Force (Percent)		
	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female
1981	7599	3859	3740	100	50.73	49.22
1982	7751	3941	3810	100	50.85	49.15
1983	7905	4024	3881	100	50.90	49.10
1984	8062	4109	3953	100	50.97	49.03
1985	8223	4196	4027	100	51.03	48.97
1986	8387	4285	4102	100	51.09	48.91
1987	8554	4375	4179	100	51.15	48.85
1988	8724	4468	4256	100	51.22	48.78
1989	8898	4562	4336	100	51.27	48.73
1990	9075	4659	4416	100	51.34	48.66

It is estimated that the rate of growth in this age bracket will be 2.1% for males and 1.87% for females per annum upto 1990. Even in 1981 there will be a demand for gainful employment from 3.74 million women whereas the economically active female population was found to be only 1.42 million in 1971. This shows how challenging this problem is.

Table 3 reveals that out of the total economically active population of 4.9 million in 1971, only 29.2% were women as against 40.8% in 1952/54 and 40.5 in 1961.

Table 3. Economically Active Population of Nepal By Sex:  
(In Thousands)

	1952/54		1961		1971	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Male	2,460	59.2	2,564	59.5	3,434	70.8
Female	1,693	40.8	1,743	40.5	1,418	29.2
Total:	4,153	100.0	4,307	100.0	4,852	100.0

Source: The Population Census 1952/54, 1961, 1971.

The overall rate of female (of 10 years and above) participation in the labour force has declined from 52.9% in 1952/54 to 35.1% in 1971. In 1961 this figure was 59.4%.<sup>3</sup> Ms. Acharya<sup>4</sup> has tried to explain this trend in the following manner:

“The apparent inconsistency in these statistics is usually explained by the fact that a stricter definition of labour force was used in the 1971 census than in 1961 or in 1952/54. Yet comparative statistics show an increased rate for men with a sharply decreased participation rate for women in the 1971 census.

According to the above logic the definition for male participation seem to have been relaxed, while those for female participation have been made stricter. It is more probable that the apparent

3. The Analysis of the population Statistics of Nepal, H. M. G. The Planning Commission, 1977. Table 6.1.

4. Statistical Profile of Nepalese Women: A Critical Review Vol 1, Part, I The Status of Women in Nepal, CEDA, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, 1979

decline in female participation rates reflect an actual decline in female participation rates in those activities which are conventionally included in economic activity”.

She further observes that “The recorded economic activity rate for Nepalese women, although low compared to that of men, is fairly high when compared to that of other developing countries, as is the percentage of the economically active population in general. The common factor among all these countries including Nepal is the higher percentage of children labourers and the extension of working life beyond the retirement age.”<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted that the figures of economically active female population include students, housewives, etc. Based on census data an attempt has been made here to present the percentage of women (above 15 years of age) actually engaged in the labour force.

Table 4. Percentage of people Employed in Various Sectors by Sex;

Years	Cons- truction		Transport & Commu- nication		Electricity, Gas & Water		Mining Quarrying Manu- facturing		Agri- culture	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1951	86	14	68	32	77	23	66	34	58	42
1961	96	4	80	20	80	20	73	27	58	42
1971	97	3	97	3	98	2	87	13	70	30

Source: The Population Census of Nepal 1952/54, 1961, 1971.

5. Ibid. P. 42

The Table 4 shows a sharp decline in employment rates of women in the non-agricultural sector. There was a decline in women's employment in the agricultural sector also in 1971, although it is generally observed that concentration of women in agriculture has increased in the recent past. If the work of rural housewives engaged in subsistence household activities is included as agricultural work, the percentage will be quite high.

Table 5 shows the declining number of women employed in different occupations.

Table 5. Composition of occupational Groups and women Employed:

Area	(In Percentage)	
	Years	
	1961	1971
1. Fishery and Farm Workers	41.79	30.40
2. Production Labour/Workshop	25.77	9.43
3. Sales Workers	19.15	11.67
4. Clerical and Administrative Workers	-	-
5. Service Workers	16.67	14.71
6. Prof./Eech. Workers	5.00	8.00
7. Unknown	34.37	-

Source: The Population Census of Nepal, 1961, 1971.

#### Recent Developments:

According to a survey conducted by Dr. R. S. Rana women comprised only 3.9% of gazetted officers and 3.5% of the civil servants of Nepal in 1975-1976.<sup>6</sup> Considering the fact that in 1961

6. Country paper, Nepal, Presented to the UN Seminar on Participation of Women in Political, Economic and Social Development, Kathmandu, Feb. 15-22, 1977.

and 1971 the percentage of "clerical and administrative workers" was nil, even this low figure of 3.5% is encouraging.

It is also heartening to note that the percentage of female professional/technical workers had gone up to 8% in 1971 from 5% in 1961. In 1971, women comprised 17% of the doctors, 16% of the professors, 15% of agriculture experts and 14% of the hotel owners concentrated mainly in urban centres, especially in the Kathmandu Valley.

According to the National Planning Commission's survey in 1977,<sup>7</sup> rural and urban underemployment rates were 63.47% and 43.64% respectively. During the year, the underemployment rate was 57.88% for males and 68.83% for females in rural Nepal.

#### **Conclusive Findings:**

From the tables given above it can be clearly seen that:

- a) The potential women's labour force (15-59 years age group) has been increasing.
- b) Female participation in the labour force has been declining.
- c) The percentage of women employed in various sectors and different occupational groups has been declining, except in the case of "professional and technical workers" up to 1971.

#### **Recommendations to increase employment of Women:**

At the national level a committee should be set up to diagnose the problems and identify sectors/agencies where more could be employed and to recommend necessary pre-requisite facilities for

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7. A Survey of Employment, Income Distribution & Consumption Patterns in Nepal, (Summary Report Vol. IV) H. M. G. National Planning Commission Kathmandu, Sept. 1978.

working women. This committee should include representatives from various sectors (both public and private) to make its recommendations more effective. The following suggestions are made to increase employment opportunities for women:

- 1) Jobs should be provided for in all development projects undertaken in rural as well as urban areas.
- 2) **Priority should be given to female workers wherever possible.**
- 3) Training facilities to augment women's skills should be established.
- 4) Different types of facilities for older women, such as re-entry in jobs by raising the age limit or opportunities for self-employment should be made available.
- 5) In establishments, wherever possible, part-time job should be available to women, so that they can combine domestic work as child rearing with productive work.
- 6) More technical information and credit facilities should be made available to women farmers.
- 7) Pre-requisite facilities, such as creches and day-care centres, family planning and motherchild care services should be established in rural as well as urban areas.
- 8) A system needs to be established to inform women about possible vocational opportunities including self-employment projects through different media.
- 9) Basic data on women employed in unorganised sectors for the formation of future employment policies should be gathered. A system of collecting and, analysing data for this purpose should be developed.

- 10) Self-employment information should be made available to women in the vicinity of their house and should be published through different media about its availability.
- 11) Labour saving technology has to be developed and introduced to relieve women from household drudgery. This will help women to be engaged in more productive work.
- 12) Drinking water supply programmes should be launched faster so that not only health condition of people will improve, but also women's time and energy will be saved for more productive endeavours.
- 13) Organisations and agencies entrusted to promote wage employment should review their programmes from time to time to assess whether they are giving women equal chance for employment and promotion within their organisations.
- 14) Special personal recruitment and resource allocation has to be made in the organisations/agencies which will be entrusted to promote employment as mentioned above.
- 15) Awards and other incentives should be arranged for those Agencies which provide opportunities for maximising female employment.
- 16) The central committee entrusted to promote women employment should see that "High priority on employment of women is in the objective of the forthcoming Sixth Plan."

#### **Research for the Formulation of Policy and Action Plan:**

A high level coordinating body, in collaboration with different research institutes, sectorial agencies and experts, should work out time bound research plans for the formulation of adequate policies. Some of the areas for study could be:

1. Study of women engaged in productive occupations in unorganised sector.
2. Reiewing of sectorial/agencies programmes in terms of employment areas where women could be absorbed.
3. Exploring the opportunities for women in non-traditional types of jobs.

#### **Legislative and policy Measures:**

The following measures are recommended:

1. The quota system has both advantage and disadvantage, but for some years (say, 10 to 15 years) it could be adopted. (it seems to have worked in Sri Lanka).
2. In the unorganised sector, discrimination wage exists. In agriculture, construction etc. Children and women are paid less. If law is enforced however, it could have adverse effect on female employment. Therefore, some type of legislative measure has to be taken in this area but with great precaution.
3. The factory Act to establish creches needs to be enforced, but to avoid adverse effect, certain incentive (such as cut in tax, facility for foreign exchange etc.) to the establishments which employ at least a definite number of women, should be provided.
4. In big projects policies should be adopted for employing certain percentage of women. If necessary, legislative measures need to be adopted but care has to be taken so that women are not employed in low paid jobs only. Job training should be provided to upgrade their skills.

5. A policy would be worked out to give opportunity to those women who have already worked on a part time basis or as volunteers in some agency in the rural areas e. g. family planning motivators, teachers in the literacy programme or agriculture extension leaders. Such women should be given priority for employment in similar types of jobs in the rural area. Rules could be little flexible to this type of candidate in terms of age bar and qualification to the possible extent.
6. Maternity leave should be extended upto 60 days. Despite the resolution passed during the international women's year for 60 days of maternity leave, only 30 days have been granted officially in Nepal.
7. Till the child becomes 6 months old the mother should get one hours' break to breast the child both in organised and unorganised sectors.

**Policy Measures to be Adopted:**

The following policy decisions should be made as a starting point:

1. An insignificant number of women are involved the important area of public decision making. This is not because there is lack of social justice. This situation should be corrected immediately.
2. Specific plans designed to promote women's employment should be developed and assigned budgetary allocations as part of the national five year plan.
3. Program nes designed to provide different kinds of employment for women should be formulated and government policy should

be oriented to create opportunities for the women. Particularly in industries and construction works.

4. The labour input of the women in agriculture, domestic work and cottage industries should be properly assessed and enumerated in the gross domestic product.
5. Hostel facilities for working women should be established at least in urban and semi-urban areas.
6. Facilities should be provided to train the women in modern agriculture techniques.
7. One of the major emphasis of Sixth Five Year Plan is to provide more job opportunities. Towards this His Majesty's Government should explore the possibility of establishing cottage industries and agro-based rural industries in different part of the country on the basis of the locally available resources, skill and raw materials, a country side plan should be formulated accordingly. For the effective implementation of such plan government should assist by providing training facilities, technical expertise production of materials and marketing facilities. There should be a constant monitoring and follow-up system.
- 8) Sajha (cooperative) programmes should be started with a view to create employment opportunities for women in different economic activities by pooling together the scattered and meager resources lying at the disposal of the women in the rural areas and urban areas. The Sajha organisation should offer the necessary guidance in this field.
9. Baby-sitting centres should be opened in different villages by training the local hands with local support. This will save a lot of women's time for other fruitful occupations. The local women organisation should make this arrangement.

# **RECOMMENDATIONS**

## Women and Agriculture

### GROUP-I

1. Among the policies included in the Sixth Five Year Plan, efforts should be made to make women active participants by involving them directly in the training and production programmes available specially in agriculture sector. In order to involve women in activities of growth and production it is hereby recommended that the concerned ministries and departments include, training, and dispensation of capital and marketing facilities to involve women in agro-based cottage and rural industries in their annual programmes, according to this policy.
2. Training Aspect. The number of women among staff at all levels in the various agencies engaged in agriculture development is very small. Because women workers can better understand women's problems and establish relationship with women farmers, it is most essential to increase the number of women workers (staffs) in agriculture development.
  - (a) In the annual Agriculture Assistant training conducted by the Agriculture Department, 10 women should be included in its current year's programme, and the number must increase every year.
  - (b) Institute of Agriculture and Animal Sciences should specially emphasize on preparing middle and higher

level women agriculture workers. Under the joint effort of this Institute and the Ministry of Agriculture women from different regions should be selected for agricultural training, and they should be provided hostel and scholarship throughout the training period and a job guarantee after the training.

- (c) Women from different regions should also be taken for J. T. A. training.
- (d) A tradition should be established to give priority for involving women workers, engaged in women's development in various government and non-government services and corporations, and exmembers (women) of 4-H Club, in agriculture extension work by giving them training in Agriculture Assistant, J. T. A., or J. T., according to their ability and qualifications.
- (e) Special Provision should be made to give priority to women in scholarships received from foreign countries in B. Sc. Agriculture. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Agriculture should attract women to avail themselves of such scholarships and the Women's Services Coordination Committee should also be active as the motivator.

#### **4. Extension Aspect of Improved Agriculture Technique.**

- (a) After the Extension Programme, which is due to start (especially for women) in the districts of Kavre and Palpa next year is implemented, there should be provision for the concerned agency to regularly evaluate its effectiveness.

- (b) Agriculture Training and Service Centres, established in various part of the Kingdom, should, compulsorily, include women, in at least 15% for Leader Farmers' Training. The Leader Farmers' Training Group, thus organised, should be provisioned to select one woman from each distirct for every group instead of selecting women from many districts.
- (c) Women farmers should be compelled to have maximum involvement in Farmers' Training, Agricultural Exhibition, Farmers' Tour, and in Training Programme related with Sajha (Sajha Educational Camp) to be conducted at the village level.
- (d) Training in various aspects of agriculture should be included in the training conducted by Women's Training Centres. But in order not to get any duplication of work while thus conducting trainings by various units, more practicable training should be conducted in a coordinated way by discussing with concerned units.
- (e) Since at the district level, women's organisation has been contributing a lot for the upliftment of women and has its organisation at vi'lage level as its primary committee, they should be encouraged to bring more participation of women in agriculture development programmes by bringing consciousness among women farmers to avail of agriculture extension services. Similarly, Aamaa Milan Kendra (Mother's Club) and institutions working for the upliftment of women should reach village level and assist in making agricultural tech nolgy, skill and knowledge necessary for women farmers available.

## **5. Agricultural Loan Aspect.**

- (a) In the context of involving women in agricultural production work, women should be included on the basis of common security by farming groups of women under small farmers project and by forming separate groups of women on the same basis, under Sajha institution organised for small farmers; and arrangement should be made to make loan necessary for agriculture, cottage industry and such productive and income generating work more easily available.
- (b) Agriculture Development Bank should make such loans available to women's group with due priority. Institutional group formation should be done by the concerned agency. But at the village level formation of such groups should be done by the ward.
- (c) While forming groups under Small Farmers Development Project, groups must consist of at least 10% Women Farmers.
- (d) It should be obligatory to have women member ward Sub-Committees and Managing Committees of Sajha institutions also.
- (e) While giving mid-term and long-term loan directly to Farmers by, Sajha institution and Agriculture Development Bank, there should be a regulation to make the spouse also a participant in it.

## **Miscellaneous Aspects.**

- (a) Facilities in the field work, such as team of two persons according to the situation, housing rent, residential facility etc. should be given to attract agriculture workers.

- (b) His Majesty's Government has presently accepted the policy of public participation in agriculture development in order to increase agricultural production. According to this, planning, implementation and also evaluation of agriculture development programme are to be done through the Agriculture Committees formed at Ward, Village and District levels. Women also should be given priority and compulsorily included in these Agriculture Committees of various levels.
  
- (c) While giving away awards in Grow More Food Competition, it should be given to the couple (family) rather than to the individual.

At last, Women's Services Coordination Committee should play the main role in matters of coordination, promotion and programme implementation of the various suggestions mentioned above. For this, there should be arrangement to immediately start programme by establishing contact with various organs of His Majesty's Government and other agencies according to need. Simultaneously, there should also be arrangement for follow-up and evaluation.

## **Women and Health**

### **GROUP II**

#### **Suggestions for Policy Formation.**

1. In the development programme of basic health services, the women are taken only as those who avail the facilities offered, but what ought to be done is the inclusion of women in this service oriented vocation as well as in its decision making body as: example head of the department, hospital superintendent, head of the district health office, etc.
2. One of the problems facing the health services is that, shortage of the trained manpower for health or the health worker. And this has hindered with HMG's health services programmes to solve this problem, the minimum requirement fixed by the Public Services Commission for AHW, HW, ANM and village health worker as class eight, this should be changed. The Ministry of Health should be given full authority to fix the minimum educational qualification required in selecting candidates for training or appointment in the health services programme. And for the implementation of these, the Ministry of health should play an active role.
3. After the minimum medical facility services (of doctors) has been achieved in all the districts of the kingdom, newly trained doctors and nurses should be given a six months training in ven-

ereal diseases treatment, six months training in surgery, six months training in general medical emergency treatment, and six month training in general medicine, at a hospital with training facilities, and not appoint directly to district health offices as is the practice.

4. To fill in the need of lady doctors, scholarships under Colombo Plan should be divided equally between the male and female candidates. If such an agreement is chalked out with the Department of Education, the problem of lady doctors could be solved to some extent.

5. For women, working in agencies and health services under the Ministry of Health, should be given maternity leave of eighty days as spelled out by International Labour Organisation Union.

#### **Suggestions for Health Services.**

Following the clarion call of the World Health Organization 'Health for all by 2000 A. D.' HMG has envisaged action programmes to give the minimum basic health services to the maximum number of people in our country. But for those action programmes to be successful – as most of our women and children live in the village i. e. the ward level. The interested local workers should be given the training and be involved compulsorily with the following services:

- a) Maternity Care
- b) Treatment of Diarrhoea
- c) General Medical Aid
- d) Nutrition programme
- e) Dissemination of the benefits of Breast feeding
- f) Vaccination

- g) Health Education
- h) Clean Drinking Water
- i) Prohibition of Smoking and Alcoholism
- j) Child Health Care
- k) Personal and Environmental Hygiene.

For the implementation of those programmes, the non-government agencies such as, the Red Cross, Family Planning Association, Mother's Club, Nepal Women's Organisation, should support HMG and work for mass participation. The Women's Services Co-ordination Committee should play an active co-ordinating role for this. This committee should have direct link with the various levels of HMG to solve the problems arising in Health Services Programme and also should help in the expansion of the health services programme.

And women should be concerned not only with the areas of health but as a multipurpose programme for planning and implementation. That is to say, together with health programmes, women should also concern herself with grow more food campaign, arrangement of drinking water, environmental cleanliness, equality of male and female offsprings, protection of profitable traditions, and boycott of evil customs and practices, which will effect positively in the women and child health. So, we should plan and implement the women health programme as a multifarious programme.

Every Industrial district should have the policy of offering free medical facilities to its staff.

#### **Services Concerning the Training.**

1. The traditional mid-wife, faith healers, and the elder ladies of the family who have been offering health services, and profes-

sional health workers should be given basic health training to make them more efficient. For cases, such as not being able to deliver the baby or excessive bleeding in women, which cannot be coped by the traditional mid-wife, there should be arrangement and resources for transporting the patient to the nearest health centre, as fast as possible. At present, there being no adequate arrangement a lot of women succumb to death before any treatment is administered.

2. When appointing a health worker in the village, and for better benefit and co-operation between social organization, like Nepal Women's Organisation, Women's Training Centre and and Department of Labour, a qualified and trained worker should be given preference.

3. To make the health and nutrition education more effective, it should be included in all the levels of training.

#### **Concerning Research Works.**

- a) Research and survey ought to be done to find the cases and death rate of women in our country. To study the indirect effect on family planning the following research are necessary:
  - i) Effect of educational development programme on fertility rate.
  - ii) Effect of mother and child care on fertility rate.
  - iii) Effect of employment opportunities for women on fertility rate.
  - iv) Effect of malnutrition of children on fertility rate.
- b) Research should be initiated to find out whether the health services offered to a community is in accordance to its need or not.
- c) Research should be done to find out whether the health services offered to the community are accepted or rejected.

## **Women and Education**

### **GROUP-III**

#### **1. Increasing admission of female students**

- a) In the present context, Women's Services Coordination Committee and Ministry of Education, with coordinated effort, should aim at conducting pilot projects in two villages of hill and terai household areas, and should find out how many girls could not go to School due to household work by conducting research and also find out measures to solve these problems.
- b) Efforts should be continuously made to open girls' schools at places where feasible and needed. Request should be made to give more priority to girl students in distributing scholarship given by the Ministry of Education at School level (at each School).
- c) To provide scholarship to encourage girl students.
- d) To publicize and broadcast through mass-media in order to encourage girls to get admission in Schools This can be done through extension.
- e) Women's Services Coordination Committee should ask Radio Nepal, Family planning, etc. to publicize Women's Education and should also make materials available for this.

2. As the number of girls going to Schools is very low in Far Western Development Region, educated ones should be given priority in employment in order to encourage guardians to invest in their girls.
3. To request the Ministry of Education to include income generating subjects suitable, such as secretaril Science and Accounting for girls just as there are subjects of boys in trade Schools.
4. As the economic condition and educational situation are complementary in a country, more and more (maximum) training should be given to women who are employed in some vocation in order to make them capable to play deciding role in future.
5. Functional literacy for women engaged in household work
  - a. Women's Services Coordination Committee should request the Ministry of Education from time to time for curriculum and materials necessary for this and to assist in preparing additional educational materials.
  - b. This should be conducted through governmental and non-governmental institutions.
6. Girls also should have well-equipped schools with educational materials as the boys. Girls coming from such schools are expected to be much more capable of playing decisive role in future.
7. In order to make the teaching profession more attractive teachers should get more facilities, and there should be provision of textbooks, suitable school building and hostel.

8. There should be separate quota of scholarship for Higher Education for girls, such as in Engineering, Medicine, etc.
9. Some quota of scholarship provided by the University should be allocated for girls.
10. Scholarship quota should be allocated in different schools also.
11. Some areas for research:
  - (i) How can guardians be motivated to send girls to schools ?
  - (ii) What are parental reasons for not sending their daughters to school ?
  - (iii) How far has the Adult Literacy Education Programme been useful ?

## Women and Local Development

### GROUP-IV

Taking local development into consideration in the context of women's participation in the main-stream of national development, this group has taken those programmes that are run with limited resource and means and reflect people's aspirations to improve economic conditions and living standard of local people.

In order to achieve the above objects this sub-committee recommends for starting the following programmes:

1. Programmes that are to be conducted after His Majesty's Government determines Policy.
  2. Programmes that are to be conducted after the National Legislative prepares Act.
  3. Programmes that are to be conducted after the National Planning Commission includes them in the Plan.
1. **Programmes that are to be conducted after His Majesty's Government decides through various agencies:**
    - a. Primary Committees of Women's Organisation in village and Town Panchayats be made active, and while planning annual District Development Plan, the programmes of these primary committees should compulsorily be included in the Village

- and Town Development Programmes; all the Village and Town Development Programmes of the whole district should be included in the District Development Plan; and at least 20% of the annual budget given for the programme of these Panchayat areas in a district should be compulsorily provided for the programme coming from women.
- b. After sending the special programmes of women's Development that come from villages to the District Panchayat, the District Panchayat, the concerned development technicians and women representatives should jointly find out the feasibility of projects sent by villages and should compulsorily conduct programmes of Women's Welfare.
  - c. Women should be made participants in decision making by making provisions to make them compulsory members in villages and towns, panchayats, various coordination committees of District Administration plan, District Education Committees, School Managing Committees, District Food Committees, Sajha Committees, etc.
  - d. While conducting programmes of Women's Welfare coming from villages, the right to make decisions in matters of construction, campaign, purchasing goods and such other necessary works, keeping in view of local situation and need, should rest with the District Panchayat in the District in which women representatives are included. While making such decisions it is necessary to keep in mind such works in which mostly women labour is employed.
  - e. There should be provision to nominate women representatives to be included in the above mentioned village and district level committees by Nepal Women's Organisation, Local Administration and Panchayat from among women working actively in the district and villages.

- f. After thus sending the District Development Plan including also Women's Development Programmes, to the Centre (L. D. M.), there should be coordination between the Local Development Ministry and Central Nepal Women's Organisation in order to conduct the programme effectively and provide technical and material support and plan policy. Thus, as mentioned in the booklet on the objectives, policy, working scope, organisational structure of the Local Development Ministry, representation of Nepal Women's Organisation, Women's Service Coordination Committee and women actively involved in social services in personal capacity should be made essential in the Local Development Committee of the Council of Ministers, Local Development Central Executive Committee, Integrated Rural Development Project Committee and Development Committee.
- g. In order to conduct Women's Welfare Programmes in the district harmoniously, one local women programme coordinator in 3 or 4 districts of different geographical regions should be appointed on experimental basis to assist the Local Development Officer. If it is found to be useful it should be extended to the whole kingdom. Women workers will then be able to work in cooperation with the Women Programme Coordinator.
- h. It is most essential to have on-the-job and institutional training (specially of such type that will support programmes spending the above mentioned 20%) that will develop skills and knowledges of women in Nepal. Development of these skills and knowledges should be based on agriculture and agriculture-base cottage and home industries in which Nepalese women are presently engaged. Besides,

it is also necessary to pay attention to improve quality and upgrade level of rural technology.

- i. There has been difference among certificates of skill training distributed by public and private training centres for developing various skills and vocations. It is urgent on the part of the Ministry of Education to take immediate action in bringing uniformity among such centres and grant them government recognition.

**2. Programmes to be done by formulating act by the National Legislative:**

- a. To determine the legal status of Village and Town Primary Committees of Nepali Women's Organisation and its District Committees in the Village, Town and District Panchayats and involve these committees at all levels of Panchayat in decision making body by establishing coordination with local Panchayats. It is not creating two parallel or equivalent institutions. But without the strength (power) of Women's Organisation, planning and implementation aspects will remain incomplete. In absence of legal provisions, programmes of Women's Welfare will also come from men and it will not be possible for women to participate in the main-stream. As an alternative to it, it is necessary to have the provision of nomination of women members in Village and Town councils and Village, Town and District Panchayats.

**3. Programmes to be done by the National Planning Commission by including Plans:**

- a. It seems obligatory to have women representation in the membership of the National Planning Commission in

order to make women's full participation in Women's Welfare Programmes and in the national main-stream.

- b. A National Policy for National Development should be formulated keeping in view the participation of women in it, and there should be a section in the office of the National Planning Commission itself to prepare programmes according to it and include them in the Sixth Plan.
- c. While coordinating Women's Welfare activities in the National Planning Commission, extensive research on Women's Welfare Programmes should be conducted.

**Miscellaneous:**

In the field of women's participation in the main-stream of national development, Women's Services Coordination Committee should establish active coordination among programmes being conducted by public and private institution for women's welfare and should bring effectiveness in its policy and programmes. This seminar, organised by the Coordination Committee so as to bring effectiveness in its policy and programmes seems to be very useful. Such efforts should continue.

**Women's Training Centre:**

The Local Development Ministry should evaluate the training conducted by various Women's Training Centres and should follow up and continue successful programmes and should give up the unsuccessful ones. Local demand and need should be taken into consideration while giving training. At present, more emphasis should be given to agricultural training.

## **Women and Law**

### **GROUP-V**

1. In order to completely control polygamy the present punishment is not enough. There it seems necessary to take effective measures to remove polygamy by bringing and raising social consciousness and awareness through various programmes by the various agencies of Panchayat, class organizations and social institutions.
2. There should be no restrictions on women in matters of her share in property of any kind in the family.
3. After the first step of making husband entitled to get his wife's property, in case there are no children and vice-versa, son and daughter (after the age of 35) should be treated equally. It means the right to property inheritance, after the death of both parents, should go to son and single daughter living in the same household then to son and single daughter who have set up independent household then to the grand-son from the son and then to the married daughter.
4. Clause No. 1 of the Chapter on Foster-son, which makes provision of keeping foster-son obligatory, should be removed and according to the will of the person he/she should be allowed to have foster-son of his/her own dynasty and sect (GOTRA).

## Women and Employment

### GROUP-VI

1. His Majesty's Government should make legal provisions by taking decision on providing employment to women by giving them due priority in all the government and non-government agencies, industries and projects and schemes.
  - a) His Majesty's Government should prepare act and rules regarding appointing female candidates with due priority if there are any female candidates having equal qualifications for any post.
  - b) To make provisions to give priority to provide employment to women in concerned agencies of His Majesty's Government, and in programmes and projects of agriculture, health, education and cottage industry of rural areas.
2. Women should be given priority for the next ten years in institutions and agencies dealing with skill development and at least 10 to 15 percent of quota should be reserved for their training.
3. Provisions of child care centres, mother and child service, Family Planning and Health Services should be made obligatory, through the Governmental Labour and Law Ministry and nongovernmental agencies, for women working as permanent or temporary employees in organized sectors and institutions and in offices of His Majesty's Government.

4. National Planning Commission should conduct studies regarding the full employment opportunities to women working in un-organised sectors and also make provisions thereof.
5. Legal provision of paying similar wages to women for similar work in construction and development works in His Majesty's Government and in organised sectors should be strictly implemented by the Labour Ministry.
6. His Majesty's Government should make provisions in civil service code and in other concerned act and law for making the duration of maternity leave 60 days (to give 60 days leave for two times and in the third time 30 days only).
7. Social Welfare Ministry should make provision in the rules that the concerned agency or institution should arrange hostel or residence for solitary women workers who are far away from their homes.
8. Machines and equipment that are necessary for skilled and trained women in order to run small and cottage industries, should be made available to them through commercial banks under the hire-purchase scheme, and Commerce and Industry Ministry should manage for it. Simultaneously, Finance Ministry should pay attention to establishing more women's bank and Women's Cooperative Credit Institutions.
9. Provision of giving concession of some percent in income-tax to such industrial institutions which provide 50% jobs to Nepali women should be managed by Finance Ministry.
10. His Majesty's Government should make provision to appoint women at decision-making levels in political, technical, social and administrative spheres.

**COMMITTEES**

**And**

**PARTICIPANTS**

### *Organizing Committee*

- Rt. Hon. Shanta Pokharel, Chairman Women Services Co-ordination Committee, Chairmman.
- Rt. Hon. Kamal Rana, Member.
- Rt. Hon. Dil Kumari Shrestha, President Nepal Women's Organization, Member.
- Dr. Mohan Man Sainju, Member National Planning Commission, Member.
- Dr. Govind R. Agrawal, Executive Director CEDA Member.
- Mrs. Ambika Shrestha, President Business and Professional Women's Club, Member.
- Ms. Sadhna Sharma, President Ad Hoc Nepal Girha Bigyan Sangh Member.
- Mr. Jitendra Sharma, Under-Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Member.
- Dr. Shao-er Ong, Associate, The Agricultural Development Council, Member.
- Mrs. Tula Rana, Member-Secretary, Women Services Co-ordination Committee, Member-Secretary.
- Dr. Vijaya Shrestha, Research Officer, Women Services Co-ordination Committee, Co-ordinator.

### *Advisory Committee*

- Mr. Bed Bahadur Khadka, Secretary, Ministry of Food and Agriculture.
- Mr. Ram Narayan Shrestha, Secretary, Ministry of Local Development.
- Mr. Surya Prasad Shrestha, Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Commerce.
- Dr. Laxman Raj Poudyal, Secretary, Ministry of Health.
- Mr. Tej Prasad Prasai, Secretary, Ministry of Education.
- Mr. Karna Dhoj Adhikari, Secretary, Ministry of Home and Panchayat.
- Mr. Bam Dev Acharaya, Secretary, Ministry of Land Reform.

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- 13) Dr. Fateh Bahadur Malla, Chief Planning Officer, Ministry of Health, Teku, Kathmandu.
- 14) Ms. Frances Freeman, Women Services Co-ordination Committee, Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu.
- 15) Ms. Gladys Gilbert, USAID, Rabibhawan, Kathmandu.
- 16) Dr. Govind Ram Agrawal, Executive Director, CEDA, Kirtipur, Kathmandu.
- 17) Ms. Indira Rana, Advisor, National Population Commission, Naxal, Kathmandu.
- 18) Ms. Indira Shrestha, Programme Officer, UNDP, Lazimpat, Kathmandu.

- 19) Mrs. Janak Rajya Laxmi Devi Shah, Member, Social Services Co-ordination Committee, Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu.
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- 21) Hon. Kalpana Bista, Member, Rastriya Panchayat, Mahakali Zone.
- 22) Mrs. Kamala Neupane, Janapath-16, Dharan, Sunsari.
- 23) Ms. Kamalesh Lata Rajbhandary, In-Charge Seed Tech. & improvement Programme, Agri. Botany Division, Khumaltar, Lalitpur.
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- 25) Hon. Kamal Shah, Member, Rastriya Panchayat, Kathmandu.
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- 49) Ms. Roshan Karki, President Mother's Club, Local Branch, Lalitpur Town.
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- 57) Rt. Hon. Santa Pokharel, Chairperson, Women Services Co-ordination Committee Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu.

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