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STRATEGIES FOR THE AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION OF WOMEN FARMERS IN
THREE HILL DISTRICTS OF NEPAL

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Executive Summary

The participation of a WID consultant in the planning of agricultural extension for the women farmers in the hill districts of Parbat, Baglung and Myagdi was requested by Gary Alexis, a project leader in US/AID Nepal. The work was done with the project personnel of Agricultural Research and Production Project (ARPP), which is managed by Winrock International. ARPP is now involved in agricultural production and farming systems in the three hill districts. The project's overall goal is to increase the sustainable productivity of the Nepalese small farmer to provide for the ever increasing population (9.4 million in 1961 to 15 million in 1981). The objectives are: 1. to conduct comprehensive production programs in the hills, 2. extend appropriate new technologies, and 3. provide access to improved seeds for small farmers. More than half of the small farmers in Nepal are women and in some areas women make approximately 40% of the farm decisions (Acharya and Bennett 1981). In order for this project to achieve its goals the extension and training programs must be designed to fit the special needs of the women farmers.

During the first week in Kathmandu, data was collected through interviews of Women's Center workers and leaders, researchers in women's issues, ARPP staff and government officials. Two and a

half weeks of hiking to observe and talk with women in the villages of 3 hill districts provided information on agriculture, livestock and forestry issues and problems. A list of recommendations was prepared which address the channeling of information, technology and assistance to the women farmers. These recommendations can be grouped under four main headings which deal with activities on local, district, central government and project level.

I. Local

1. The training of local women as junior agricultural, livestock and forestry technicians, and agricultural assistants.
2. The use of existing networks within the three districts as channels for information to and from the villages.

II. District

1. The development of short agricultural training sessions which fit with the needs of women farmers as to location, timing, trainers and child care.
2. The sensitization of officials to women's issues and needs, so as to develop a support structure for women agricultural extension workers and trainees, within the district and regional offices.

3. The establishment of revolving funds for small loans to women farmers for income generating projects,, which would be used as incentives for participation in training sessions.

III. Project

1. The development of adequate support structure from female staff during the project period.

IV. Central Government (HMG)

1. Policy development for the hiring of women on the district level with assurances of job securiy.

Introduction

A major commitment of US/AID dollars in Nepal is to agricultural production. The increase in production is viewed as vital for the economic stability of Nepal. On the one hand because of the increase of its population from 9.4 million in 1961 to 15 million in 1981, (Asian Development Bank 1982) the country in most areas cannot feed itself. On the other hand agricultural products are seen as income generating exports. In order to feed itself by 2000 it has been projected that Nepal will need to increase its food production, conservatively, by 85% (Asian Development Bank 1982 Vol. 1). Unless the contributions of women in agriculture are considered and gender issues are incorporated into program planning, neither the goal of being self-sufficient in food, nor that of strengthening the economic basic by the export of crops, will be attained.

The planning of agricultural extension for the female farmers of Nepal is multi-faceted problem which involves, environmental, cultural and economic issues. In the last six years the attention of development programs in many countries has been increasingly directed to the consideration of the effects on and participation of women in the development process. Planners are realizing that programs written with male needs in mind often do not benefit and may even be highly detrimental to the females of the project area. A great deal has been written recently on the importance of training for the female farmers in Nepal, for it

has been found that information provided to males has not "trickled down" to the females. Surveys show that 67% of the on-farm labor is contributed by women and that on an average women make 40% of the agricultural decisions (Acharya & Bennett 1981). The gap in communication of information and technology to female farmers is therefore a major problem for the agricultural production goals of many US/AID projects. Experience from many countries has shown that the success of agricultural extension programs is directly related to the amount of: 1. personal contact between the farmers and extension staff, 2. familiarity of the worker with the area (a local person), and 3. the farmers' confidence in the extension worker. (Axinn and Thorat, 1972)

When considering agricultural extension for women in the hill districts of Nepal, one must not underestimate the contribution made by women to the total economic well-being of the family. Women's contribution to total family income (which includes subsistence goods and domestic activities) equal 50% compared to 44% for men and 6% for children 10-14 years of age. (Acharya & Bennett 1981). The involvement of women in agricultural decisions may differ by ethnic groups and tradition but usually females make 30-40% of the decisions by themselves. These facts must be considered when planning extension activities. The gender differences in division of labor must also be included in planning the timing of projects and choice of target groups for specific information.

It was with these issues in mind that US/AID Nepal requested the participation of a WID consultant on the program planning portion of the Agricultural Research and Production Project in the hill districts of Parbat, Maygdi and Baglung. The end result of this consultancy was to be a set of recommendations. Background and data were collected in part from interviews of government officials, ARPP and US/AID personnel, Women Development Center workers and researchers of women's issues. Field data was gathered on a 2 1/2 week hike in the Parbat, Myagdi and Baglung districts, observing farm activities and talking with village women. I was assisted in these tasks by my counterpart Uma Gurung Pereira. Others who helped in a variety of ways were: Dr. Daniel Galt, socio-economist at ARPP; Mr. S.S. Bal, seed specialist at ARPP; R.B. Shrestha of ARPP; David Reed, Agro-forester for ARPP; Alex Gary and Charles Hash of the US/AID Mission. Netra Clogston, Vangedevane White and Bea Astengo made valuable contributions during our visit to the hills. ManjShrestha and Anju Moktan in the ARPP office cheerfully handled typing, supplies and transportation needs. The ARPP Office and personnel were excellent in supplying the necessary support for my stay in Kathmandu and for my hill trek.

Objectives

The major objectives of the field trip to the three hill districts of Myagdi Baglund and Parbat, were as follows:

1. To observe women's domestic and agricultural activities in the villages.
2. To identify existing channels for information dissemination within the three districts.
3. To identify existing women's networks in the district which may be utilized as information sources and contact persons.
4. To consider extension personnel, policies and methods used.
5. To develop recommendations on agricultural extension methods in these hill districts which will fit the needs of the women farmers.

Field Trip Data

Myagdi District was our first point of concentration. There is a well established Women's Development Center project in the village of Jhin, 3-4 hours walk from Beni. We spoke with a Women Center worker, Subitri, and her assistant Til Kumari. The supervisor, Udaya Laxmi Pradhana, was in Kathmandu for meetings.

The main activities of the Center are the training of women in skills such as weaving and sewing; the obtaining of funds for village projects such as water taps; the recruitment of women for adult literacy classes; the provision of a day care center for

children of poor women farm workers and the providing of help for women seeking loans from the district banks. They are also now involved in the selection of women to be sent for training outside the area.

A great concern was expressed, regarding ongoing funding for established projects such as the Day Care Center and for agricultural training of Womens Center workers, especially in kitchen gardens and livestock. We had time to observe the weaving activity and the Day Care Center in Jhin.

One evening I attended an adult literacy class held in Thaplakhet. There were 20-25 village women in a small unheated room in the local school. Small oil lamps provided light. Books and pencils were shared. The enthusiasm of the teacher, (principal of the school), made up for the lack of physical comforts.

In speaking with the president of the Women's Organization of the Jhin Panchayat, Sutala Devi Sherchan, we discovered that there are six women's groups in different wards which meet monthly to discuss the needs of the villagers. The groups have been working on tree planting and ginger cultivation. Ms. Sherchan showed us a tree nursery (one of several in the area) established by Resource Conservation Unit Project (RCUP), and an area near the village where the women's group had transplanted fuel and fodder tree seedlings. It became obvious that though much money had been spent on the tree nurseries, at project completion and

withdrawal of RCUP, the villagers had little or no training in how to care for the nurseries or how and when to transplant the seedlings. The interest and desire for such training is evident in the women of Jhin.

During our conversations, requests were made for Junior Technical Assistant (JTA) and Agricultural Assistant (AA) training for local women who would return to work in the area. In talking with the women leader of Jhin and the Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) worker in the area, it was evident that agricultural training of both JTA and AA is of overriding concern. Recruitment, selection and training methods must be given careful consideration so as to fit with cultural, economic and environmental needs of the district. Concerns expressed were: 1. the need to select respectable women for training, 2. the problem of finding women with SLC (high school) pass qualification, 3. the reluctance of young women to travel far from home, 4. the problems of child care for women with young children, 5. the necessity of appropriate living facilities and female support during training, and 6. the guarantee of jobs and administrative support upon return to the district. These concerns were repeated in different forms in all three districts.

Another concern was the problems encountered by village women in obtaining bank loans. This difficulty is caused by several factors: 1. the women's lack of knowledge about how to apply for a loan, 2. the absence of women on the staffs of the

Agricultural Development Bank and the Small Farmers Development Bank, 3. the belief of bank officials that women are a bad risk, and 4. women's lack of collateral.

Mr. Bhimsen Gurung, ADO in Beni, we found to be a man with a knowledge of the need for female extension workers and a willingness to work in a variety of ways to include women farmers in the training process. His office gives short training sessions (2 days to 2 weeks) in the villages as well as at the Central District office in Beni. Some women have attended these sessions. The 2 week sessions could be used by Women's Center workers to fill their need for more agricultural information. The sessions offered in the villages are largely practical and fitted to the needs of illiterate farmers.

The use of women Agricultural Assistants (WAA) has not been successful, primarily because of lack of supervision and support from JT's and/or JTA's. There is a lack of incentives for improved interaction with neighbor farmers since AA's are paid the equivalent of \$1.50 a month. Mr. Gurung felt that supervision of women AA's by a woman JTA was vital in reaching women farmers. These women JTA should work to improve communication networks, provide moral and material support and include the WAA's in local training sessions. It is important to get the women to invest time in projects in order to insure the future success of the project. In order to obtain this type of investment it is necessary to clearly identify and demonstrate

the direct benefits of the project to women, whether it is increased productivity, time saving or income generation.

Netra Clogston, ARPP/PCV in agricultural extension was our very able guide during our stay in Myagdi. We discussed the possibilities of training local women JTA's for the district. She indicated that there are scholarships available in the district for bright girls from local schools to be sent to boarding school (Vidaya Mandir Ma.Be) in Baglung. Selection of girls for these scholarships is done through the Panchayat. If the girl does well and passes the SLC she is sent to Pokhara for further schooling. There are 3 girls from Jhin and 3 from Chimkhola (both villages in the Myagdi District), in Baglung at present. These may continue as candidates for JT and JTA training.

Adult literacy classes are being pushed by the central government and might be considered as a place to give agricultural information to women. These classes are requested from the District Education Office by a panchayat which can guarantee 25 women for the class and provide a large enough meeting place in a central location. A local school teacher is trained in Beni for 5-9 days. Each class lasts for 6 months, 5 evenings a week from 7:30-10:00 pm. The teacher is paid Rs200/month (\$10.00) and provided Rs175/month (\$8.50) for supplies. This is not sufficient, especially in the winter months when more kerosene is needed for lights. Books are supplied by funds from UNICEF. In

remote areas the drop-out rate for these women is very high. This may stem from the higher work load for women in areas of male out-migration and the woman's inability to see the direct benefits of the class to her. The inclusion of relevant agricultural information along with learning to read and write might supply these obvious benefits for the participants.

Baglung District

Our interviews in Baglung were limited because of our arrival just prior to the celebration of Constitution Day and late King Mahendra's Birthday. Mr. Chandra Man Palikhe, the ADO of Baglung District, was in Kathmandu for the occasion. We were, however, able to speak with a male JT in the ADO's office as well as with a veterinary technician with the Livestock Division. In the Baglung district there are 10 JT positions of which only 5 are presently in the district; 21 JTA positions with 15 in the district; and 68 AA's. There are no women in any of these positions. Two women have been sent from Baglung for AA training at Agricultural Training Center in Lumle with plans to send two more; four have been sent to Pokhara Agricultural Training Center and two to Khairanitar Center . These persons are not paid upon return but are expected to share the information obtained in training with their neighbors.

The district Agricultural Office has run agricultural training sessions of 3-4 days duration, but no women have participated. Inclusion of women in agricultural training in this area is of great importance because of the male out-migration from the area as porters, laborers and soldiers. This increases the work load for the women farmers. Since plowing is an exclusively male task some fields may not be used by the woman. Many of the men try to return home for plowing time, or other male relatives may do the

plowing for the woman, otherwise the female farmer must pay to have it done.

In our discussion with the Livestock office, we were informed that two women, in the district, have been given seven days of livestock training and one woman was provided one month of training. This supplied them with very rudimentary knowledge of livestock disease diagnosis and some knowledge of treatment methods. Such trainees are regarded as leader farmers but receive no salary. The training appears to be below the level given to AA's.

The need for women workers in the Livestock Department is recognized. The village women are the ones who feed the animals and often milk the bufflo, except in Newari communities where males do the milking. The woman is often the first to recognize illness in an animal, but they are reluctant to ask for veterinary assistance from male Livestock Department staff. The Department has been looking for a female staff member but has been unable to recruit such a woman. A Veterinary Technical Assistant requires a high school pass (SLC plus one year of animal science training). An opinion expressed was that young women with an SLC pass who are interested in working have higher goals and are looking for more prestigious positions or careers. The training allowance is insufficient (Rs.200/month) and no travel allowances are provided, thus incentives are lacking. The Department staff felt that 8th class pass would be sufficient for

an individual to be given one year of training and be hired as a VTA.

In Baglung we also visited the Family Planning Office. They have an interesting program of small loans to women which they have instigated with funding from a National Population Council Grant. Each of the two panchayats within which the office has a program for family planning, was granted Rs6000 (\$300.00) to establish a revolving loan fund. Women who are practicing family planning and are part of the support group established in each village, are eligible for a loan of up to Rs.600 toward the purchase of small livestock or a sewing machine. The interest is 5% and repayment period one year. Of the loans given out this year, three had been repaid and seven are expected to be repaid soon. One woman who received a loan bought a pig for Rs500 and within a year had made Rs2000 from sale of the off-spring. These animals belong solely to the woman because of the Nepali concept of "Pewa": gifts given directly to a woman belong to her, not her husband or other male relative. Thus, income generated from such endeavors belongs to the woman and are usually used on the family.

The Luthern World Service has an office in Baglung for a community development project started in the panchayat of Galkot. The project includes; water systems, agriculture and health. From our conversation with the director we found that they have trained two village women at the Khairenitar Agricultural Center

who are now back living in Galkot. There were difficulties in finding women willing to go out for training. However, the Luthern World Service has encountered no problems in their male workers being able to talk with female villagers. This may be because of the Magar/Thakali make up of the village, and that the projects are insinuated by the villagers, not the outside agency.

It was our great fortune to stay at the Laliguras Hotel, in Baglung, whose owner is the President of the Mother's Club in Baglung. Mrs. Krishna Sherchan, is a respected and highly motivated older woman. She is working hard to find funds for income generating projects for women in the Mother's Club. Mrs. Sherchan had received three sewing machines from UNICEF but was looking for training for the women. We found this type of active woman and organized groups of women in all three districts.

We were invited to the home of Mr. Narayan Shrestha, (uncle of Mr. R.B. Shrestha of the Socio-Economic Division of ARPP) who is a suba (manager) with the Department of Forestry. He described for us the establishment of 24 tree nurseries by the Community Forestry Development Project (FAO). Seedlings were planted out in 255 plantations last year. These are small nurseries using low technology and are community run, with technical assistance from the District Forestry Office. This structure might provide a basis for women's involvement in planting fodder and fuel trees close to the villages and on marginal lands.

The following day we visited the village of Mulpani, about 40 minutes walk west of Baglung. This is a production research site for ARPP. In the village we spoke with two of the women leaders; Mrs. Dhan Kumari Regmi, school teacher and treasurer of the Women' Organization and Mothers Club, and Mrs. Tara Panta, Health worker in the panchayat and secretary for the Mother's Club. There are 30 members in the Mother's Club. Many are anxious for more training in agriculture and livestock. Mrs. Regmi, knew one of the women who received a loan from Family Planning revolving fund, Rs500 to buy a female goat. From the kids she was able to generate between Rs2-3000.

There are two women in the area with one month of agriculture training from Khairanitar. However, there appears to be little or no supervision or support for these women farmers.

Parbat District

Our last stop was Kusma. Here we spoke with Mr. K.P. Bharal, the ADO. The district has 54 panchayats. There are 10 JT of which three are working out of the district, 15 JTA of which four are working outside the district and 40 AA's. There are no women workers and no PCV is assigned to the district.

The need for local women, JT's and JTA's, is recognized but cultural difficulties exist in this district in finding women who

will leave home for training. The people are predominantly Chetri and Brahmin, groups within which the women are protected within the family. There are 26 high schools in the area. If a student has a 200 level pass on the SLC and appropriate vocational courses (agriculture), they may be hired as a JTA without further training. However, there is no assurance that they will not be transferred out of their home district. This policy may need to be examined carefully as to its detrimental effects on female applications for JTA positions. There may also be resistance to hiring females since these positions are often used by young men as a means for upward mobility.

In speaking with Livestock Department officials similar culturally generated problems were expressed. Loans for livestock are initiated by the male family head, not by women, yet it is the women who care for the livestock and need the assistance in large and small livestock loans. Here the existing Women's Organization groups may be utilized as channels to the women for loan information and encouragement for women to attend local field training sessions.

We visited the Local Community Development Office and met the Director, as well as the President of the Zonal Women's Organization, Mrs. Rupana Sharchan, and the President of District Women's Organization, Mrs. Bim Kumari Pradhan. These women and their groups are working on projects such as adult literacy, cottage industries, and vegetable gardens. They have been

requesting training but have been unable to pay for trainers from the Women's Center. They asked for agricultural training for local women and indicated there are many 7th and 8th class pass women as well as a few SLC pass young women. Their concern was the lack of assurance to the women trainees of a secure job in their home district upon completion of their training.

We found that there is a Mother's Club in Kusma and that others are being organized in the villages. The Small Farmers Development Bank has UNICEF money to fund child care facilities in Pang and Khaniyaghat. They provide agricultural and livestock loans to groups of small farmers. Women farmers need assistance in applying for such loans.

Institute for Agriculture and Animal Science; Rampur

Upon completion of our trek in the hill districts we had an opportunity to visit the IAAS Rampur campus and meet with faculty members. During this time we found out that of 10 women entering the JTA training, only two had completed their training. One is working but is on the Rampur campus. The concern was again expressed regarding the career goals of girls with high school pass being higher than a JTA or JT. Yet, the IAAS does not provide training for women without the SLC pass.

An interesting suggestion to reach more female farmers was offered by Mr. Mirari Subedi a teacher and researcher with IAAS.

He saw the formation of mobile teams as a way to provide the agricultural training necessary in the villages for both male and female farmers. Women trainers would be a part of such a team.

Recommendations

The goal of these recommendations is to provide several possible actions which are related horizontally to all other actions on the same administrative level as well as vertically to actions occurring on other administrative levels. The basic concepts which underlies all these recommendations is that in order for actions initiated by the project to continue past the period of project funding they must: 1. Be of direct benefit to the target individuals, 2. Necessitate involvement of local groups in decisions making and implementation so the project becomes a part of the community, and 3. Be funded in such a way as to insure their continuation either by funding from HMG or by self-generated income.

Local Level

Use of Existing Groups and Networks

Women's Development Center

The Women's Development Office has workers located in Jhin. These women are already involved in selected agricultural

projects such as tree planting, kitchen gardening, as well as knitting and sewing skills for the village women. Consideration should be given to the channeling of funds to the women of Jhin for the rehabilitation and use of existing tree nurseries established by a previous US/AID project. Women are the collectors of fodder for their livestock and fuel for their homes therefore are most concerned with the success of tree nurseries and plantations. Existing nurseries could become self-sustaining, as a tree seedling source and a training area for the region. The women need to be trained in the maintenance and management of these facilities.

A pilot project of a revolving fund for small loans to women farmers might be tried through the Women's Development Office. These loans should be used as incentive for women's participation in specific subject training at district level or agricultural assistants training. The funds would be used to establish income-generating projects using the skills gained during training.

Panchayat Women's Organization

This is a political body of women with a good infrastructure which extends from the village panchayat up to the central government in Kathmandu. The women in the village organization are usually influential and respected in their

community and are already involved in kitchen gardens and successful businesses.

There already exists in each district a panchayat network with women's organizations and various committees. These should be utilized for the communication of information to the farmers and feed-back on needs and problems. Use of women on Panchayat/Forest Committees has already proved to be successful in the care and maintenance of forests in Darchula District. (Chand & Gronow 1986)

The Women's Organization could be used to identify appropriate women in their area for agricultural training (AA, JTA). In order to avoid the use of this training opportunity for political purposes, the women leaders should be asked for lists of women who match the selection criteria. The final selection should, however, be made by a central project staff (short-term female supervisor) after talks with the candidates.

Officer's Wives in Remote Areas

An officer's wives club could be used as a resource if they are organized at their district headquarters and trained at a central institute with a variety of skills. They could give back up support for women's groups, schools and training centers. This use of their skills would give

motivation at the local level where the morale of officers is often quite low.

Scholarships for Women JT and JTA Trainees

Scholarships from the project should be provided for at least two trainees from each district, which would cover travel, training, and living costs.

- a. Educational Criteria - At present a 2nd level SLC pass (High School) is required for JTA training. If an SLC pass woman already has the necessary agricultural courses she may be hired directly as a JTA. However, many SLC pass girls are looking towards university training and other careers. Because of this goal disparity and the possibility that the JTA training may be used as a jumping off point for further schooling, it would be worthwhile to look closely at the possibility of substituting a requirement for certain skill levels for which the candidate may be tested ie, reading and writing Nepali, basic English and math. This might encourage older women whose family are grown and who have the respect of the community to apply for the training. Such women JTA's would be more likely to remain in the district to work.

- b. Background Criteria - The candidates must be from a farming family, have the respect of the community and be able to travel away from home.
- c. Service Pay Back - The candidates must be willing to commit to 3-4 years of service in the district on completion of training.

Selection of Women for Agricultural Assistant Training

Groups of women farmers should be selected from lists provided by local Panchayat organizations. Groups of 4-6 may feel more secure in travelling outside the district. Close supervision and follow-up should be provided. Project scholarships should be provided for this training and follow-up.

Training For Women Farmers

Village Sessions

Local womens groups should be encouraged to request the ADO for specific training needed in the area. Short-term training (4-6 days) on specific topics should be held within one-two hour walking distance of a group of villages, during slack farming times of the year (December and January, July and August). These sessions could be conducted by a mobile

team of extension workers who could cover a variety of subjects (Agriculture, Forestry, Livestock).

Agricultural Information Via Adult Literacy Classes

Interest is high and funding is available for adult literacy classes for women. However, the drop out rate is also high. Some of these woman may be retained by providing agricultural information as a part of the reading material. The material should be very simple, relevant and based on the farmers needs.

The teacher could be helped with material developed in Kathmandu and the District Agricultural Offices as well as by support from district JT and JTA.

Incentives to try new techniques learned might be provided in seeds or plants given out to class participants. Follow-up and encouragement for these women is important and could be provided by women AA's and JTA's.

District Level

JT, JTA, Postions For Women Trainees

At least two positions within each district should be secured for women trainees who successfully complete their

training. Since filling permanent positions is under the control of the Regional Office, these positions marked for women should initially be supported by the project but should be on track to becoming permanent HMG positions allocated for women JT or JTA's. There should be at least two such positions per district at the beginning with the goal of reaching equal numbers in male and female extension workers as more women obtain training.

Women Jt, JTA's Designated As Field Personnel

It is vital that women JTA's realize when being sent out for training that upon returning to work in the district they will be assigned to field work with the responsibility for contact and supervision of WAA's; working with women farmers groups as support after training and participation in field training sessions. The tendency to use women staff as office help must be avoided.

Project Hiring Of Female JT/JTA's

All three districts are requesting female JTA's, however, the supply of trained females JT's willing to work in these hill regions is very low. If such individuals are available one JT per district could be tried as part of the project. As trained women return to the district more should be hired per district.

Departmental Staff Training in Gender Issues

The Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Forestry are presently staffed by males, some of whom are knowledgeable in needs of women farmers. However, in order for this program to succeed it is imperative that all staff, from top administrators to support staff be made aware of the important issues and problems. Women JT and JTA's, no

matter how well they are trained, will not succeed in their role as extension agents to all farmers unless they are provided the support and respect necessary from departmental offices. There are too many examples of harassment and degradation of women working in male dominated fields, for this attitudinal problem to be ignored. Rural areas are especially difficult because of cultural restraint and lack of education.

Workshops and seminars should be organized and required for officers at all levels. These workshops should cover such subjects as the need for women's extension and women workers, the problems encountered by women as workers in this field, the male attitudes which need to be changed, and the support structures needed for women to function efficiently in their positions.

The workshops should be conducted by persons (both male and female) knowledgeable in the area of gender issues and able to communicate these ideas effectively. Workshops (seminars) for Regional Administrators should include the issues of sexual harassment and equality in work and resources. Workshops for office and field staff should take place at each district headquarters and include practical aspects of women worker's needs in office and field situations. This type of training may be only necessary in the initial phases of the project. An evaluation of

official and staff attitudes as well as the reactions of the new female extension workers would need to be done, after the first 6 months of their employment and after one year, to spot recurring or new problems which need attention.

Women Extension Workers Support and Follow-Up

It is imperative that strong support and follow-up be provided for the newly trained and hired women workers during the project period. It is impossible to predict all problems and obstacles which may be encountered in the three districts. Support from a central project level female supervisor will be vital. This individual would provide for the women, continuity from recruitment to training through the first couple of years of working in the district. She would also provide: 1. feedback to training centers of information on the appropriateness of the curriculum and 2. information to district offices on the needs and problems encountered by the new women workers.

Interdepartmental coordination

The project should organize and fund joint meetings for district officials of the Agricultural, Livestock, and Forestry offices in order to discuss training sessions coordination, and the inclusion of women This would help avoid duplication, make more effective use of time and

resources, and point out the interrelationships within these different endeavors.

Project Level

Nepali Woman Extension Supervisor

There is great need for strong sympathetic support when establishing women's participation a perviously male dominated field. The requirements are that it be from a strong, respectable female who knows the language, has training in agricultural extension and gender issues, is willing to spend 2-3 months in the field with the women workers, is able to work with district, regional, and project officals to communicate the needs of the women, and who can return at 6 months periods to re-evaluate the situation.

Job Description and Responsibilities

The woman extension supervisor filling this position would be in the field for 2 months at least twice as year so as to collect information, advise, and evaluate the women's agricultural extension programs within each of the districts. She would work with the district officers, women extension workers and trainees as well as women's groups (Women Development Center and Women's Organization). An important part of her role would be that of liason between women

farmers and district training officers and between the district offices and the project leaders

The women's extension supervisor would also be responsible for the selection of appropriate women for training from lists supplied by village groups. This would involve verification of information provided and interviews of each candidate. Once the trainees are selected she would supply these women with training center information and help them in their preparation to leave the village. She would also be an important contact person for the trainees throughout their training and as they start into their work in the districts. Using information obtained from the field and from the various offices she would be able to advise those at project level who are responsible for the coordination of the agricultural extension efforts.

Short-Term Outside Woman Consultant

There is need for a woman on the project headquarters level. As a short-term consultant she could be brought in to evaluate progress and talk with participants from local to central government levels. For coordination and continuity the same individual should be used for 6 weeks on a 6-9 month cycle. It would be advantageous if this individual had experience in Nepal, knew Nepali and had a background in agricultural extension.

Use Of Peace Corps Volunteers (Posting 2-4 in each of the three districts)

Women PCV's especially those who are requesting an extension of their time in Nepal and therefore know th language, could be use to great benefit as support persons in the field. They could work with the female extension workers; WAA's and women's groups in giving encouragement, spotting problems, and conveying needs to district headquarters. They would provide the continuity between the periodic visits of the female project level supervisor. In order for them to be of value to the project they would need to have basic training in agriculture, livestock and/or forestry as well as women's issues. An encouragement for PCV participants might be the use of this time with the project as work towards an advanced degree. Arrangements for such a program could be made with interested universities in the USA during the PVC's home leave.

Training Center Selection

Training centers to be used for training of women JT and JTA's will have to be carefully examined as to curriculum, environmental setting and living facilities.

1. Environmental Setting - To train an agricultural extension worker in the terai and then expect them to work happily and efficiently in the hills is a contradiction. To conclude that these trainees will be able to translate theoretical information into practical

applications in an entirely different setting is unrealistic.

There are several agricultural training centers within the hill districts; Kairenitar, IAAS Lamjung Campus and Karnali Agricultural Training Center. The pros and cons of each of these centers should be assessed carefully as to whether the training is appropriate for women JTA's assigned to the hill district.

2. Entry requirement - The necessity for an SLC pass needs to be explored with attention paid to the possibility of using 7 or 8th class pass.

3. Curriculum - Forests, livestock and agriculture are not independent entities inspite of the separation of the responsibility for their care and improvement into three departments. Underlying all these and man's survival is the environment and its natural cycles and flows. The curriculum, while providing necessary specific information must also give to the students a holistic environmental view which ties together diverse information. Such an approach can provide a flexibility for practical applications which can respond to cultural constraints, local conditions and resource availabilities. This may sound very conceptual and hard to implement, but the training of the teachers and leaders of tomorrow with a view to the interdependences

of all natural and man-made systems and the importance of adaptability is vital for man's survival in not only in Nepal but the world.

4. Living Facilities - Special consideration must be given to the support system provided for women trainees. In order to persuade respectable young women to leave home and to complete their training, it is necessary to insure culturally acceptable living conditions. Ideally this is a separate women's hostel with cooking facilities and a sympathetic matron. If such facilities are not available, arrangements should be made with respectable families in the Training Center area who would provide appropriately supervised living conditions for the women.

HMG Policy Level

Policies For Hiring of Women As Estension Workers

Hiring Basis: Job and Pay Equity

A careful examination of governmental hiring policies needs to be done in order to determine if these are detrimental to women applying for the extension positions. Are there requirements which will eliminate women from consideration? Are there subtle inferences in job descriptions which made it difficult or impossible for women to compete for a job in

their district? If such barriers exist extension positions may need to be created in the districts which are specifically designated for women workers. Care must be taken that such positions are not classified as lower position than equivalent male positions. The project positions used to place women workers into the three districts should become permanent HMC positions in order for the work to continue after termination of the project.

Job Security and Incentives

Thought must be given to the practice of punitive transfers out of district. This may be a deterrent to women who come from the district and have family and cultural commitments in the area. Other incentives could be used to encourage and reward good work such as merit increases in salary and advanced training.

ACTION RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

1. Methods to increase the usefulness and success of women AA's and JTA's in the field. What types of incentives besides salary may be used.
2. Evaluation of the attitudes of department officials and support staff towards female extension workers.

3. The use of mobile teams for short training sessions within villages. These could be one subject sessions for a whole group of male and female farmer, or multiple subject sessions in which there are several smaller groups in each session.
4. Investigation of interdepartmental connection and cooperation in training of rural women.
5. Investigation and development of appropriate female labor-saving technology.

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