

**USAID and Nepal**



**Five Decades of Commitment and Development**

# **A Photo Retrospective**

## **USAID Mission Statement**

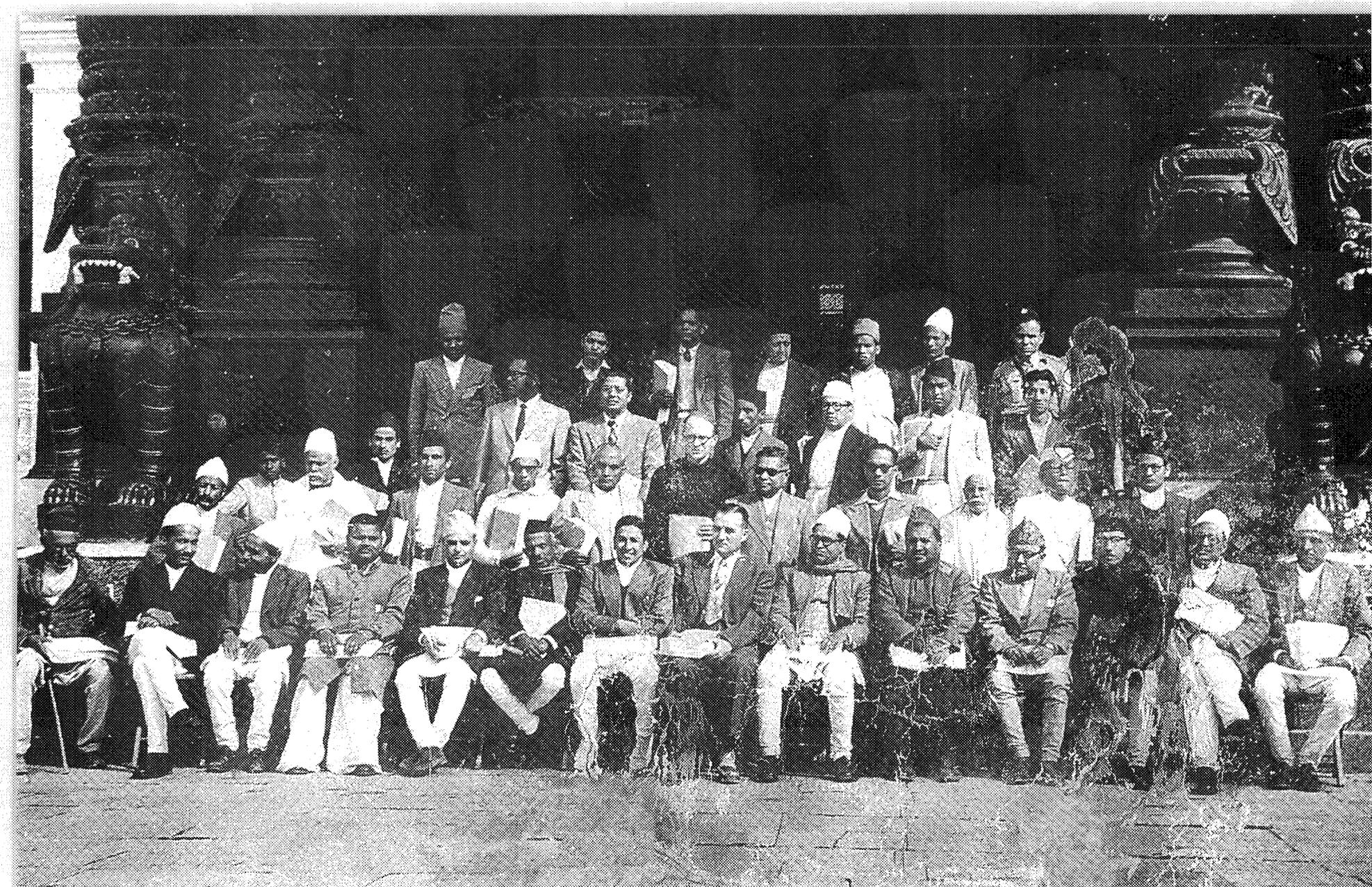
The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) administers economic assistance programs that combine an American tradition of international concern and generosity with the active promotion of America's national interests. USAID assists developing countries to realize their full national potential through the development of open and democratic societies and the dynamism of free markets and individual initiative.

## **Point IV Agreement**

On January 23, 1951, the United States and Nepal signed the Point IV Agreement for Technical Cooperation. Named after the fourth point in President Truman's 1949 Inaugural Address, the Point IV Program was an expression of U.S. concern for the need for material progress in underdeveloped countries and "the advance of human freedom, the secure growth of democratic ways of life, the expansion of mutually beneficial commerce and the development of international understanding and good will."

## **Education**

From the start, improving the knowledge and skills of the people of Nepal was a top priority for His Majesty's Government (HMG). In response, USAID and its partners have ensured that education and training, formal and informal, are an integral part of virtually every project undertaken. From developing Nepal's first adult education programs to providing training to over 8,000 professionals staffing public and private institutions around the country, USAID-supported programs have provided the Nepalese people with the necessary skills to respond to the evolving needs of the country. The development of Nepal's human resources has helped unleash the potential of Nepal's labor force.

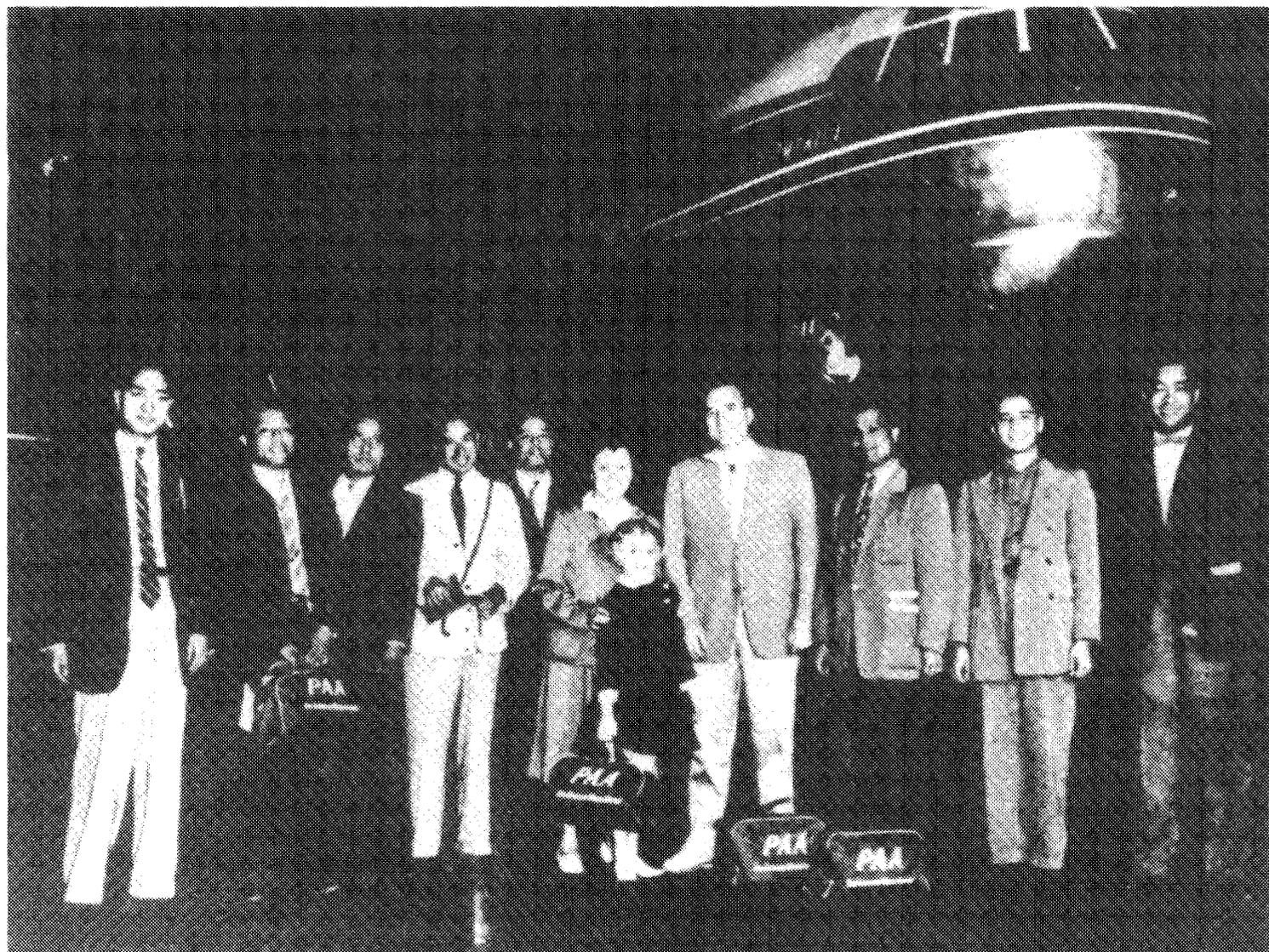


The first Nepalese Ministry of Education, developed with the technical assistance of USAID, 1953. Hugh B. Wood, USAID Education Chief and advisor to the Ministry, is seated at center. Dilli Raman Regmi, Minister of Education, is seated at his left. Trailokya Nath Upraity, Deputy Secretary of Education, is at Mr. Wood's right. One of the Ministry's first acts was to define the standards for primary schools around the country and get the schools running.



USAID Mission Director Paul W. Rose and Minister of Education Dilli Raman Regmi signing the Agreement for the Teacher Training and Related Activities Project, 1954. Also shown are Hugh B.Wood and Trailokya Nath Upraity.

In 1954, USAID Mission Director Paul W. Rose and Minister for Education Dilli Raman Regmi signed the agreement for the Teacher Training and Related Activities Project, which focused on planning a comprehensive education system and teacher training. By December 1958, all educational institutions established with USAID assistance, including the College of Education, Bureau of Publications, and the Bureau of Research, were operated by Nepalese who had been trained in the United States and Nepal. Later, the majority of these institutions became part of Tribhuvan University, where they still function today.



The first group of Nepalese participants under the USAID participant trainee program. In 1956, they traveled to the United States to study education. Upon their return to Nepal, they served as administrators for the USAID-supported College of Education.



The College of Education opened its doors in 1956 in Kathmandu, with the support of USAID. It was the first degree-granting institution in Nepal, providing courses leading to a Bachelor's Degree in Education and, later, post-graduate courses leading to a Master's Degree in Education. Its earliest programs trained 96 teachers and 100 school administrators. The College of Education continues to function today as part of Tribhuvan University. An additional campus, pictured here, opened in Pokhara in 1962.



Recognizing that literacy is critical to development, USAID and HMG have supported adult literacy since 1953. Starting in 1954, the Ministry of Education carried out literacy training through formal and informal programs. By 1958, 35,000 adults were literate. Today, literacy courses are used as a vehicle to teach women their legal rights, healthcare and money management. In 2000 alone, 130,000 Terai women benefited from literacy programs focused on women's empowerment.



USAID has supported every level of education in Nepal, including primary and secondary levels, which now have an enrollment of approximately 5 million students.

I happened to be at the right place at the right time... From my viewpoint, it was a rare privilege to have been at the scene to observe one of the most significant periods in Nepal's long history... One of the first acts of the new government following the departure of the Ranas was the appointment of a National Board of Education in 1952... Nepal had come into the middle of the twentieth century with virtually no educational system; she was relatively free to design her own system to meet the needs of her own people...those who expressed opinions—both their own and those of friends and neighbors—wanted to move in the direction of “free, public, universal, compulsory, practical, co-education...to achieve functional literacy and preparation for life”... My small contribution, if any, was made possible only by the quality and endurance of those many Nepalese who inspired, created, and developed a national system of education for Nepal.

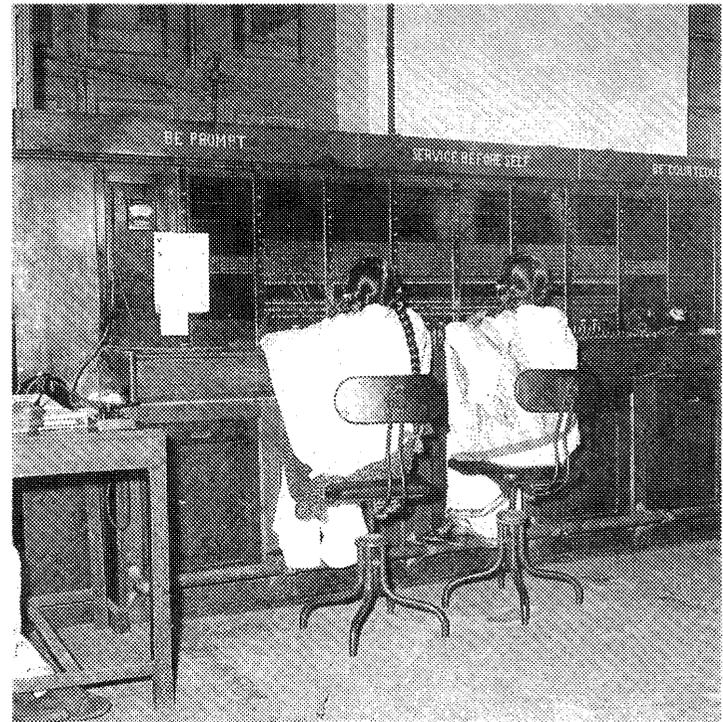
Hugh B. Wood  
USAID/Nepal Chief of Education 1953-1959

## **Communications**

Expanding and improving Nepal's practically non-existent communications network was vital to developing the nation's economy, security and political unity. To accomplish this essential task, USAID and HMG immediately built a telephone and radio communications network to facilitate information-sharing across the country.



Laying telephone cable by Durbar Square, Kathmandu

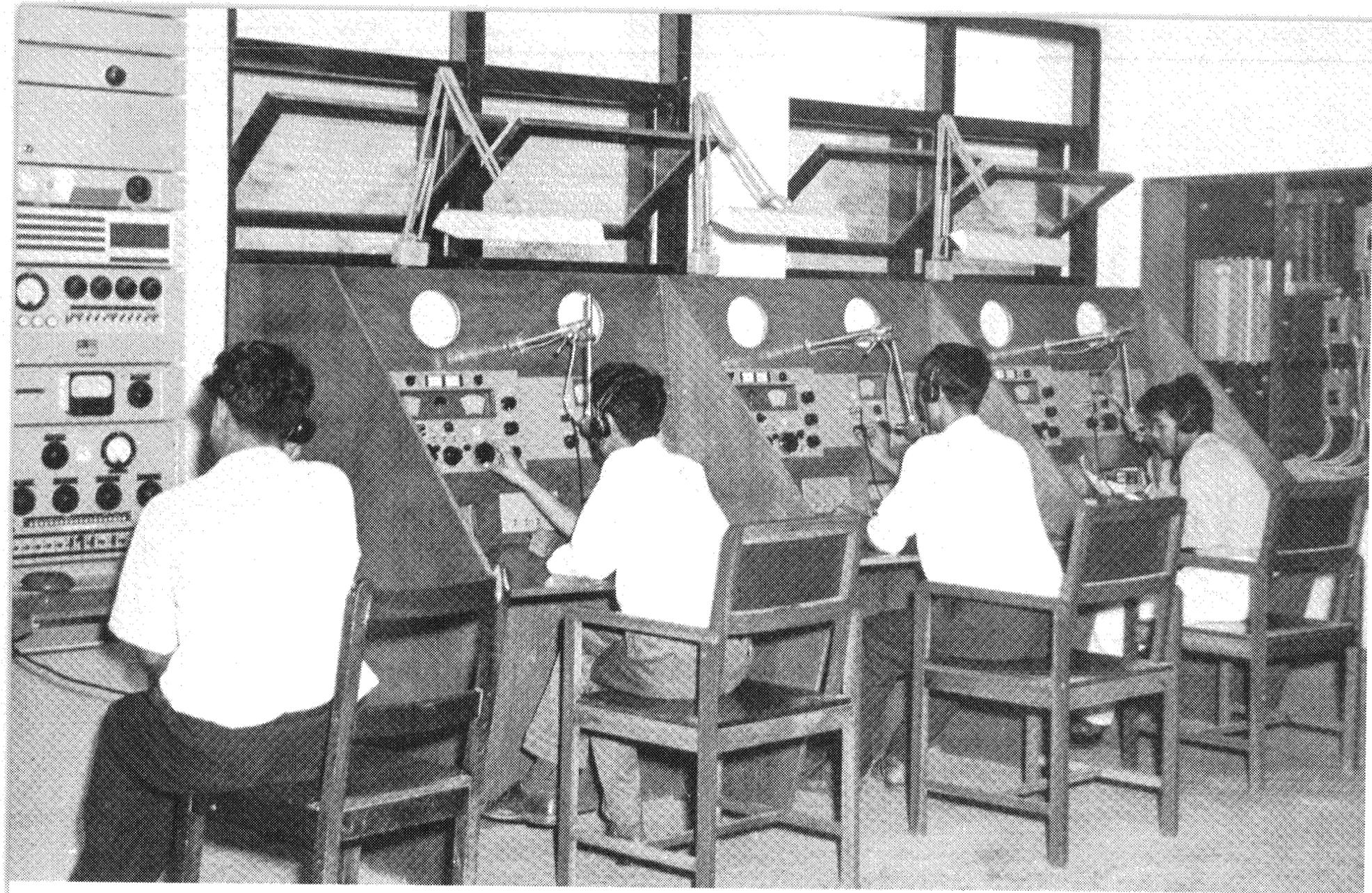


The first telephone operators at work

Beginning in 1959, together with India, Nepal and the Asian Economic Development Fund, USAID supported the development of a telecommunications system, which provided Kathmandu with 1,000 telephone lines and the country's first automatic exchange, housed in the Central Telephone Exchange Building. At that time, international telephone and telegraph facilities were routed through New Delhi and Calcutta via radio circuitry. Today, Nepal's telephone system has some 275,000 lines and a cellular phone network. The telephone system reaches far beyond national boundaries, connecting with satellites for internet access supplied by several private Nepalese internet service providers.



An internal radio communications network was established under the telecommunications project to link outlying towns to the capital. Stations were built and over 100 operators and maintenance personnel were trained. In 1965 USAID supported the construction of the new radio-broadcasting studio in Kathmandu (above). USAID-sponsored educational radio targeted out-of-school youth and adults. By the mid-1970s, radio education was an innovative alternative to classroom instruction. To address the educational needs of the rural poor, Radio Education Teacher Training (RETT) began providing rural teachers with the education and training they needed to do their jobs. The project, now fully institutionalized and Nepalese staffed, exists today as the Distance Education Center in Sano Thimi, Bhaktapur.



Radio operators at work

What began as a small project is now one of the most widely accessible institutions in Nepal today. Today, radio reaches rural areas with health, family planning, agriculture and anti-trafficking messages.

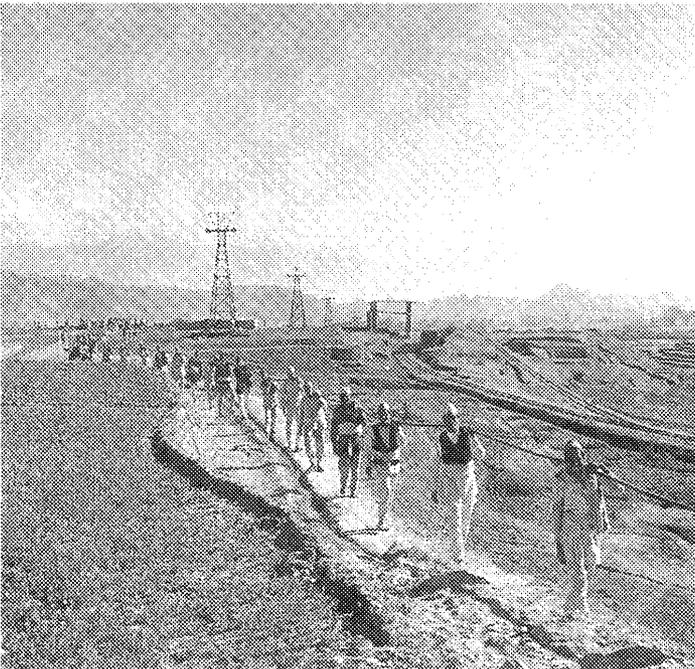


It was an exciting time in Nepal... We had bracing discussions in our homes...creating an atmosphere of freedom and independence... I well remember the gush of transistor radios that swept along the hiking trails and echoed down the canyon walls...and USAID introduced educational radio in rural schools for the benefit of both teachers and students... These were the years when the present King was a student at Harvard University, an inspiration to Nepali young people that they themselves might someday be heard in Nepal in their various professional fields... I fondly remember Nepal in its early days of transition from isolation... I envy the current USAID Mission its opportunity to move, with the Nepalis, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But I will be eternally grateful that I was there to savor the beginning.

William Carter Ide  
USAID/Nepal Mission Director 1969-1974

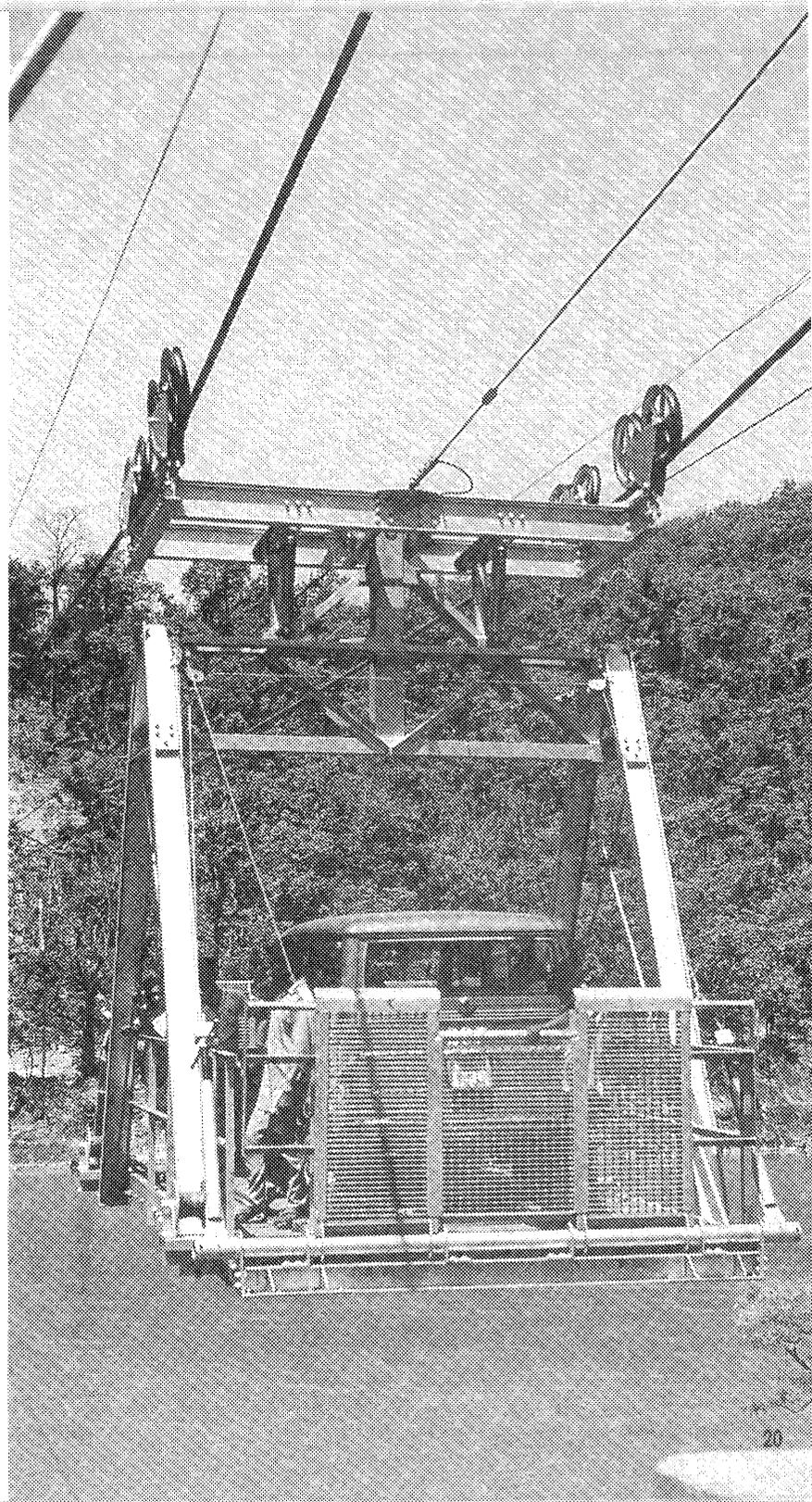
## **Transportation**

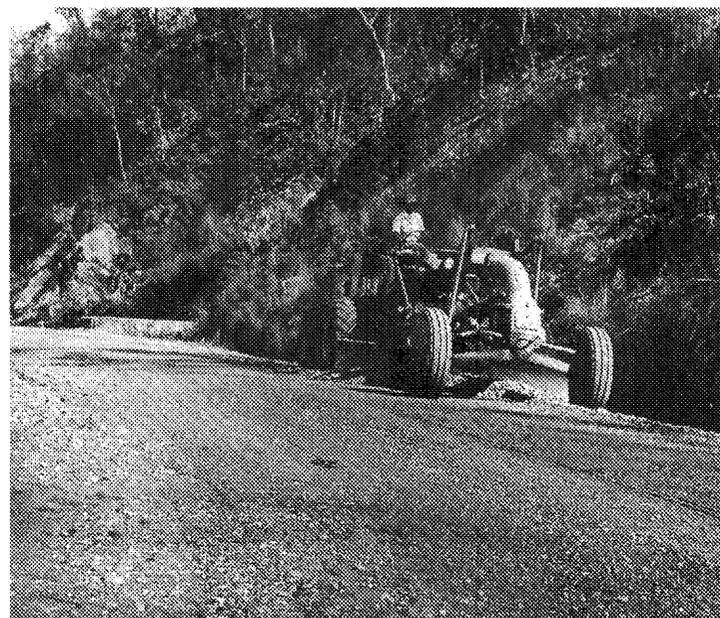
One of Nepal's impediments to development was the lack of roads. Early on, USAID and HMG concentrated a significant amount of effort on transportation, as it was the way to connect the far corners of Nepal. Today, HMG manages its transportation network independently and while it has expanded significantly in the intervening years, the groundwork laid early on provides its foundation.



An innovative project suited to Nepal's mountainous terrain, the Kathmandu-Hetauda Ropeway project began in 1959 and took five years to complete. It utilized local electricity, rather than imported diesel, thereby saving foreign exchange and reducing the cost of hauling goods. By directly traversing two high ridges, it cut off two-thirds of the distance required to haul freight by road.

The 45-kilometer aerial ropeway was built to carry freight, including food and other essential items, from the developing industrial town of Hetauda to Kathmandu. Here, a car crosses an otherwise impassable river.





The first USAID-supported road-building effort was the 87-kilometer link between Bharatpur and Hetauda, completed in 1959. Thereafter, the 60-kilometer track from Raxaul to Amlekhganj, which joined the Indian-constructed Tribhuvan Rajpath to Kathmandu, was widened and paved, allowing easy access from India to Kathmandu for the first time. In the 1960s and 1970s, Nepal's road building accelerated. USAID supplemented the efforts by strengthening the institutional capacity of the Department of Roads. Today there are over 4,000 kilometers of paved roads in Nepal.



During the 1960s and 1970s, USAID and other donors provided communication and navigation equipment to the Kathmandu airport and six other airfields around the country. Airfield buildings were constructed, including six terminals and three buildings at the Kathmandu airport. Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation (RNAC) officials were provided training, and in 1961 three DC-3 and two STOL Pilatus Porter aircraft were provided to the fledgling RNAC. A few years later, the U.S. financed a 2013-meter addition to the Kathmandu airstrip, allowing for larger international carriers to land. Today, airplanes transport passengers to almost all corners of the country, and international flights from around the world land in Kathmandu every day. The RNAC fleet consists of 13 planes.



In 1993, the first fleet of 10 USAID-supported Safa Tempos was introduced to Kathmandu. Over 600 of these clean-running electric three-wheelers now ply the streets of the city, providing pollution-free transport as well as numerous new employment opportunities.

The period 1974-1976 was a period of transition for Nepal... Our largest on-going activities at that time involved physical infrastructure: the Western Hills Road Project, the Terai Road Project, and a number of buildings. A new Agricultural College at Rampur was established, and major new undertakings in health and family planning were initiated. We also had technical assistance projects in agriculture and education. We trained a large number of Nepalese, which I believe was our greatest contribution to the development of Nepal—for it is they who are ultimately responsible for their country's development... It was a delightful and exciting period to be in Nepal. The Nepalese could not have been a more enjoyable group with whom to work.

Charles R. Grader  
USAID/Nepal Mission Director 1974-1976

## **Malaria Control**

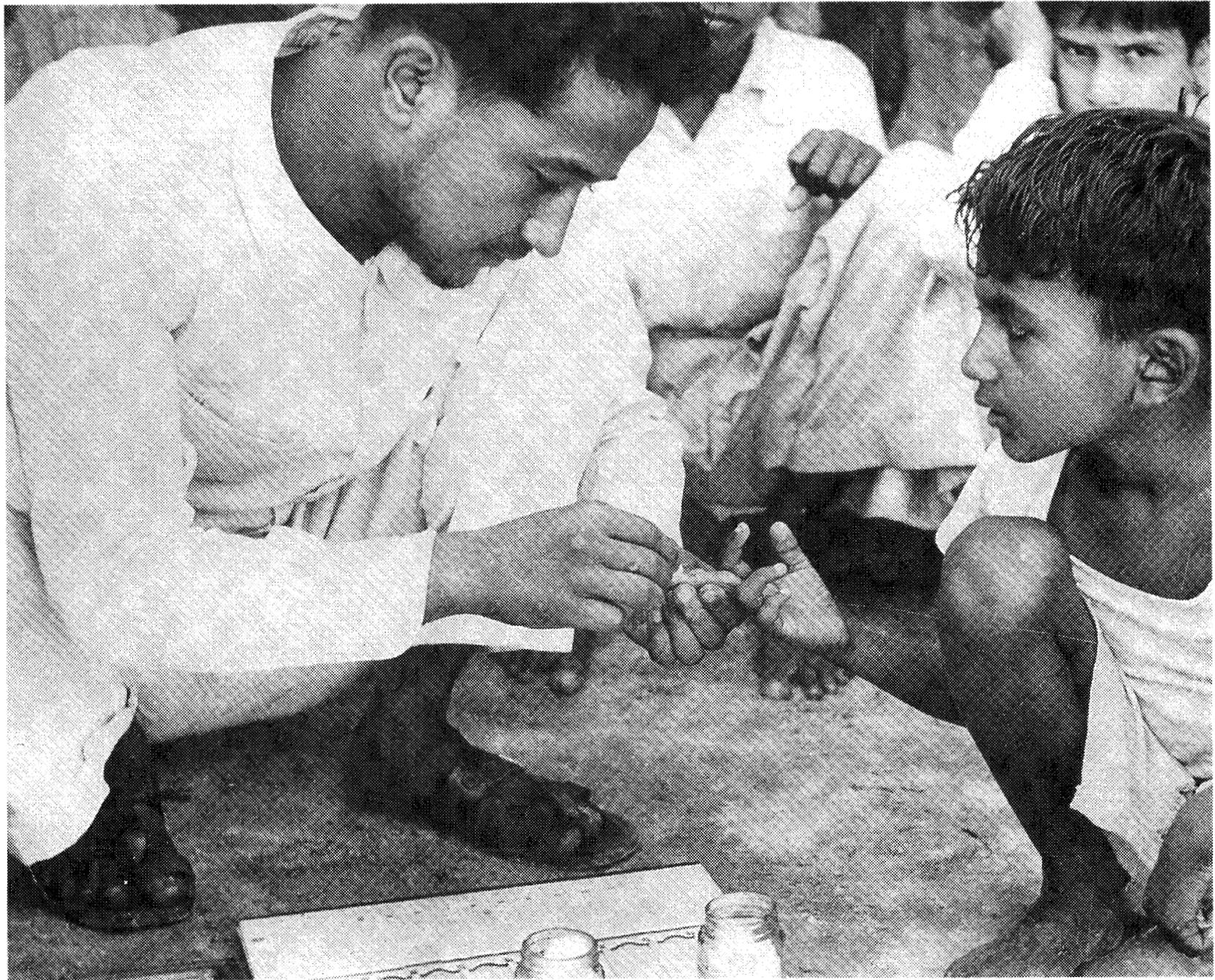
Malaria was Nepal's most serious health problem in the 1950s, afflicting nearly 25 percent of the population. As a result, some of the country's most fertile fields and richest forest resources were largely undeveloped. In August 1954, with USAID support, the Insect-Borne Disease Control Bureau (IBDCB) began working to control malaria. In its first year, IBDCB sprayed 70,000 houses, providing protection to over 335,000 people. By 1968, malaria cases dropped from more than 2 million annually to 2,468 cases, making the anti-malaria project one of USAID's most successful efforts in Nepal. Today, malaria remains under control, and the Terai, once uninhabitable because of the disease, now produces over 65 percent of Nepal's foodgrains.



A mule train loaded with insecticide for malaria control, 1956



Spraying homes with insecticide prevents the disease from spreading.



Passive case detection identifies people who need treatment and helps prevent the disease from spreading.



What was once an uninhabitable area is now the breadbasket of Nepal

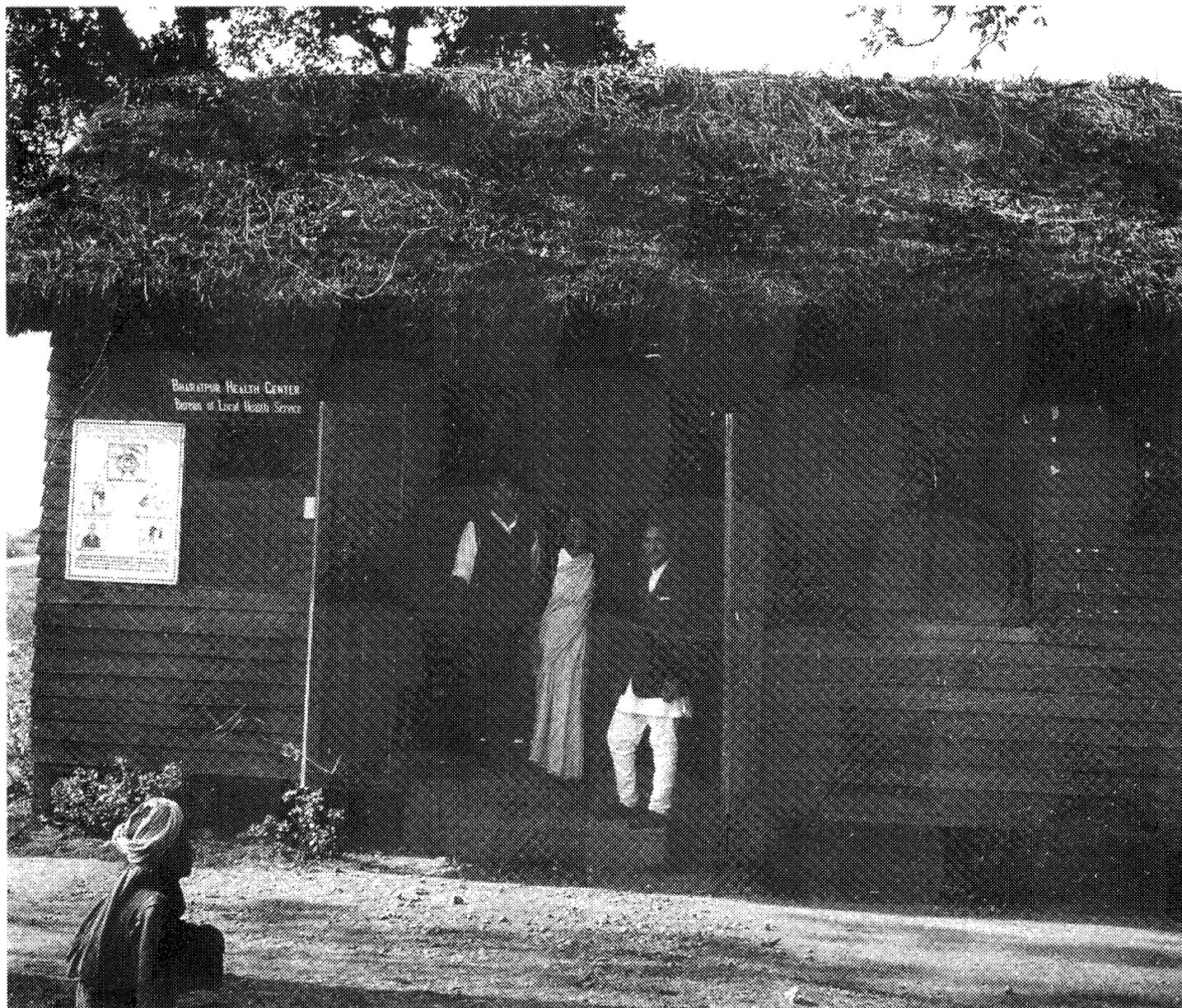
Lois and I remember our four years in Nepal as providing the best experiences of our many years with the U.S. aid program. Our Nepali friends and coworkers are dear to us. Our memories of Nepal's rich culture and natural beauty remain unmatched. In 1976 USAID's focus was on rural development benefiting the poor majority. We worked to ensure collaboration in project planning. Our joint planning produced the flexible, long term Rural Area Development project, which helped with many changes in remote areas. We also started USAID's continuing attention to the role of Nepali women in their nation's development. America's most important development input has been helping Nepal's educational system to grow and providing advanced training for Nepal's future technical and professional leaders. Our best wishes to Nepal and USAID/Nepal. Namaste!

Samuel H. Butterfield  
USAID/Nepal Mission Director 1976-1980

## **Health**

In 1951, one of every five babies born did not live to celebrate its first birthday. For those who did survive, the average life expectancy was 28 years. Nepal's hospitals had 600 beds and half were in the Kathmandu Valley. Doctors, nurses, auxiliary health workers, health posts, and a service delivery system for the rural population were non-existent.

Formal health service development began in 1956 with the organization of the Ministry of Health. Today, healthcare programs have grown in accordance with the needs of the Nepalese way of life in order to reach the largest possible population. Female Community Health Volunteers trained in family planning, first aid, prenatal care and early childcare, make health services available to villagers right in their homes. Infant mortality, while still high, has dropped to less than 1 death per 10 births, and life expectancy has grown to almost 59 years. New projects, such as HIV/AIDS prevention programs, strive to protect the health of Nepal's people and Nepal's future.



In 1957, a small thatched hut served as the first health center in Bharatpur.



Inside the Bharatpur clinic, a patient is examined. In the 1950s, immunization and prevention of communicable disease was emphasized.



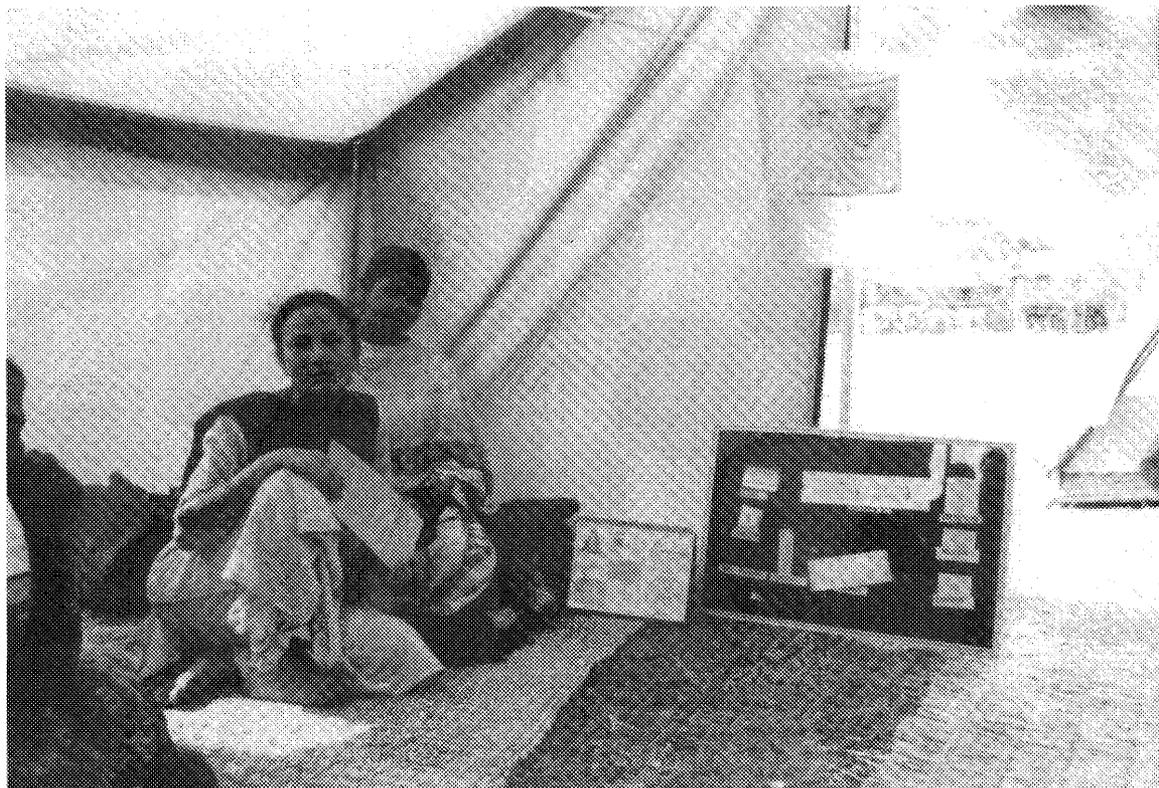
In 1959, while the new 15-bed Bharatpur hospital and training center (in background) was being constructed to replace the thatched hut clinic, the first class of Public Health Nurses graduated from the Bharatpur training center.



In 1963, King Mahendra unveiled the plaque at Mahendra Chikitsalaya Hospital in Bharatpur, formally marking the beginning of better health services for the people of that region. Since then, USAID-supported healthcare projects have spread across Nepal at many levels.



In 1961, USAID-supported construction for the surgical wing of Bir Hospital in Kathmandu began with the successful digging of a well.



Since 1967, USAID and Nepal have worked in partnership to address population growth. Focusing on making family planning widely available, the partnership has trained over 20,000 health workers in family planning service delivery around the country.



The Jumla Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) intervention trials in the 1980s showed how barely literate individuals could successfully identify and treat ARI. Village health workers were trained to count respiration in children, and to use antibiotics to treat respiratory infections such as pneumonia. Since then, the program has helped establish a national policy and has continued to expand across Nepal.



With USAID/Nepal's support, Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) are trained to prevent, diagnose and treat childhood diseases and to provide health education, family planning services and first aid. Here, an FCHV delivers life-saving Vitamin A to a child. Community studies show that mortality was reduced by 26% to 30% in children 6 – 60 months of age after the Vitamin A program was implemented.



A travelling magician and his puppet draw a crowd. The show highlights the importance of eating the right foods and getting Vitamin A capsules for good health. Before Vitamin A is distributed in a village for the first time, the puppet show helps draw attention to the event as well as create awareness. The Vitamin A program is adding 10 new districts to its coverage each year.

[Between 1981 and 1985, there was] an emphasis on integrated programming in rural development, health and population... What rapidly became evident was the bedrock importance of continuity in our aid program. The success of [new] projects... depended ultimately on the foundation we had built together... The United States aid program had worked with Nepal in virtually every key sector. More importantly, it was continuing to do so... [We] had been contributing for over twenty-five years to education, public administration, agricultural expansion and diversification, forestry development, irrigation, health, communications, roads... almost thirty years of education projects of one kind or another, often with different emphases, added up to a most substantial shaping of the entire education sector. The same was true for agriculture, forestry, government capacity... Perhaps the relationship among these activities had not always been appreciated at the time, but it certainly became evident as we entered the 1980s.

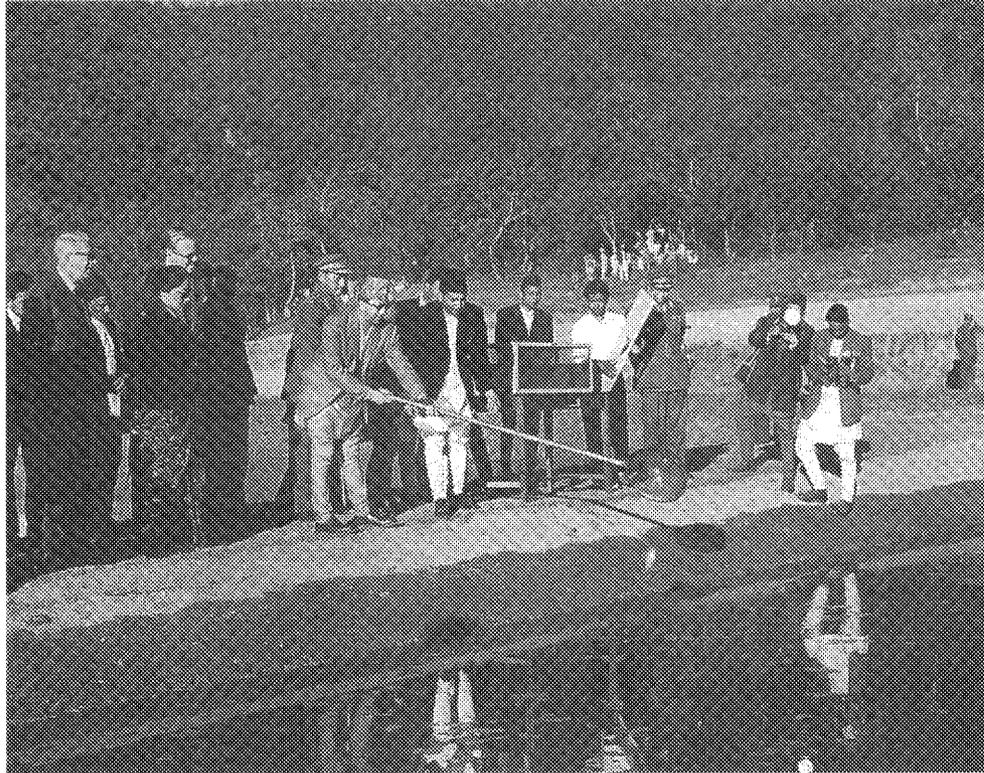
In effect, over the years the United States and Nepal had worked together through projects in so many sectors that the entire development threshold had been significantly lifted. Nepal had been able always to depend upon the United States. The aid funding levels may at times have been modest by other standards, but that was secondary to the commitment.

Building collaboratively on work of the past was the essence of the aid meaning.

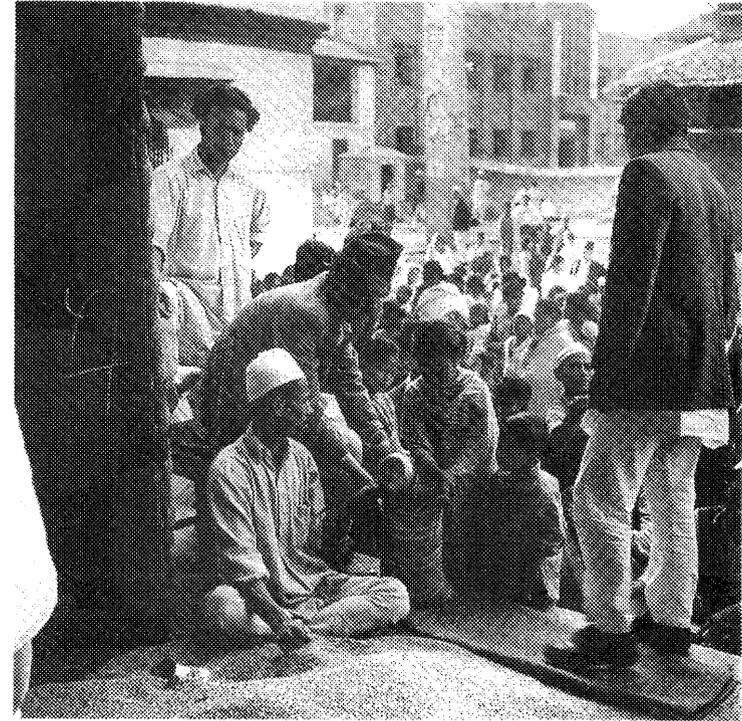
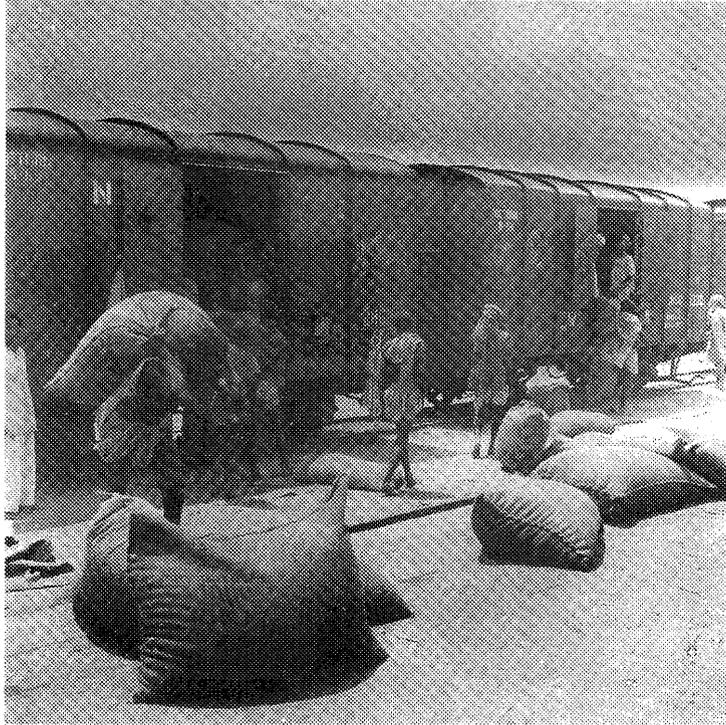
Dennis J. Brennan  
USAID/Nepal Mission Director 1981-1985

## **Agriculture**

The first Point IV technical assistance team to Nepal had significant agricultural expertise. They provided basic training in technical management of research and extension, and laid an institutional base for agricultural research in Nepal. In the 1960s, USAID and HMG focused on the urgent need to increase food grain production. Today, agriculture continues to be the primary occupation for 80 percent of the economically active population. USAID/HMG programs have built on the foundation laid in the 1950s and 1960s, focusing on broadened private participation and policies supporting continued transformation from subsistence agriculture to market-oriented agriculturally-based growth.



Agricultural projects of the 1950s included development of fish farms at Janakpur, Godavari, Pokhara and Kathmandu. Here, King Mahendra releases fingerlings (baby fish) at Godavari fish farm, 1956. Fish farms are still functioning in the Kathmandu Valley today.



In addition to working towards agricultural development, USAID/Nepal has played a role in emergency relief. During the early 1960s, a drought caused a severe shortage of food and grain across Nepal. Surplus U.S. agricultural commodities, such as wheat, were shipped in and sold to the public at a very low cost. The proceeds from the sale were used to finance development projects.



A field of mustard. Mustard oil is used extensively in Nepal.



Harvesting Sal leaves from which plates will be made.  
Leaf-plates are a good source of income for rural women.

USAID's high-value agriculture model, which promotes intensive production and marketing of cash crops in hill areas, has been incorporated into Nepal's twenty-year Agriculture Perspective Plan.

People throughout Nepal are benefiting from the introduction of improved crop varieties, increased trade and increased access to high-quality/lower-cost agricultural inputs and products made possible by USAID-supported projects. Here, corn is dried and stored for later use.





Current price information, made available with USAID's support, sparks high-value crop production and sales across Nepal. Accelerating the commercialization of agriculture in Nepal is considered key to achieving economic growth.

I arrived at Dasain in 1989, during the last months of the Panchayat era. It was a period of enormous change and transition for Nepal and an exciting time for the USAID Mission. Those were heady days. After the formation of an interim government, USAID provided technical assistance and commodities to strengthen the Supreme Court and the Commission drafting the new constitution. When the first elections were held, USAID was instrumental in providing not only technical assistance, but also in financing numerous election observers. USAID, the Embassy, USIA and their Nepali counterparts made a formidable team, not only in helping to ensure free and fair elections, but also in helping to educate an entire new generation of political leaders. It was a unique period of time in Nepal's history and all of us felt privileged to be part of it.

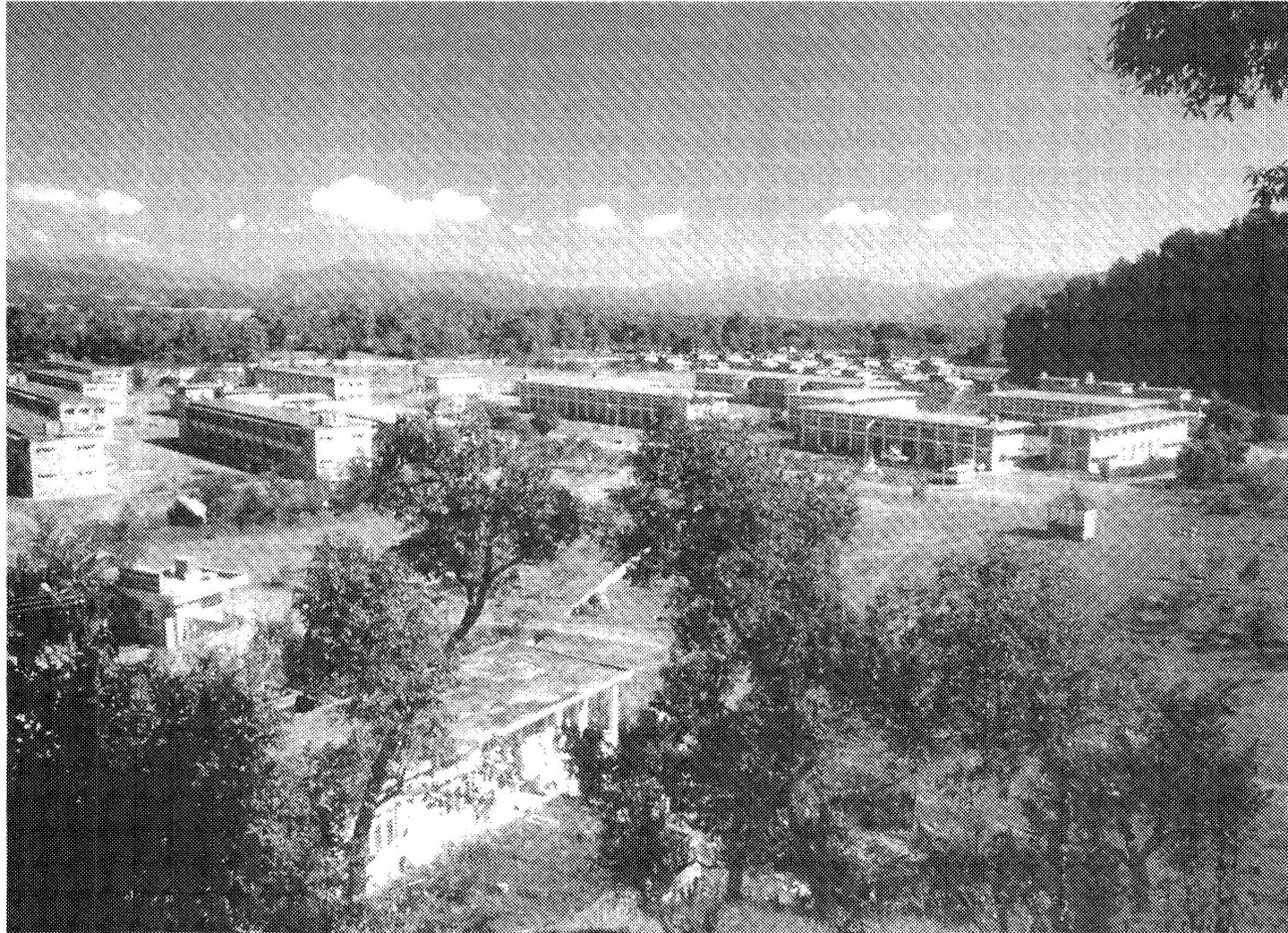
Kelly C. Kammerer  
USAID/Nepal Mission Director 1989-1993

## **Forestry**

Working on the premise that resources are best managed if local people have a stake in their protection and use, USAID has supported HMG in the formation of Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) in Nepal for over a decade. The key to the program's success is shifting the management from government bureaucracies to local users. This, combined with enabling legislation, has provided communities the requisite skills and legal authority to manage and harvest forest resources. To date, more than 123,000 hectares of land have been turned over to over 1,300 Community Forest User Groups nationwide.



Community Forest User Groups plan for their forest's future, determining schedules for planting new trees and culling old ones, so that the community does not deplete a much-needed resource.



In the early 1980s, the Resource Conservation and Utilization Project addressed natural resource conservation on a number of different fronts, including the development of the Institute of Forestry, which trains natural resource management workers through a 2 year B.Sc. program. The Yale University School of Forestry provided technical support, and the project included curriculum development, staff and faculty participant training and in-country training.



Students monitoring tree growth to assess the progress of a plantation. Increasing biomass—or tree and foliage density—is a primary goal of USAID-supported forestry projects.



The hill pictured in the foreground at left is owned and managed by the Community Forest User Group (CFUG) pictured at right; the chairwoman of the group is standing in the center of the photo. The hill has been under their control for only five years. The hill in the background is not under the control of a CFUG.

With strong program funding and the excellent USAID Nepali, U.S. and other nationality staff, I believe the USAID program made a significant difference in Nepal's development, particularly in agriculture, health and grassroots democratic and economic growth, especially among women. In fact, I would cite the progress the USAID program made in its "Empowerment of Women" objective, the only one of its kind in all of USAID, as the most significant achievement... The exhilaration one would experience in seeing these all too undervalued and under-appreciated women express their enthusiasm and hopes for the future was the highlight of my time in Nepal.

Frederick E. Machmer Jr.  
USAID/Nepal Mission Director 1995-1998



United States Agency for International Development  
Kathmandu, Nepal

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