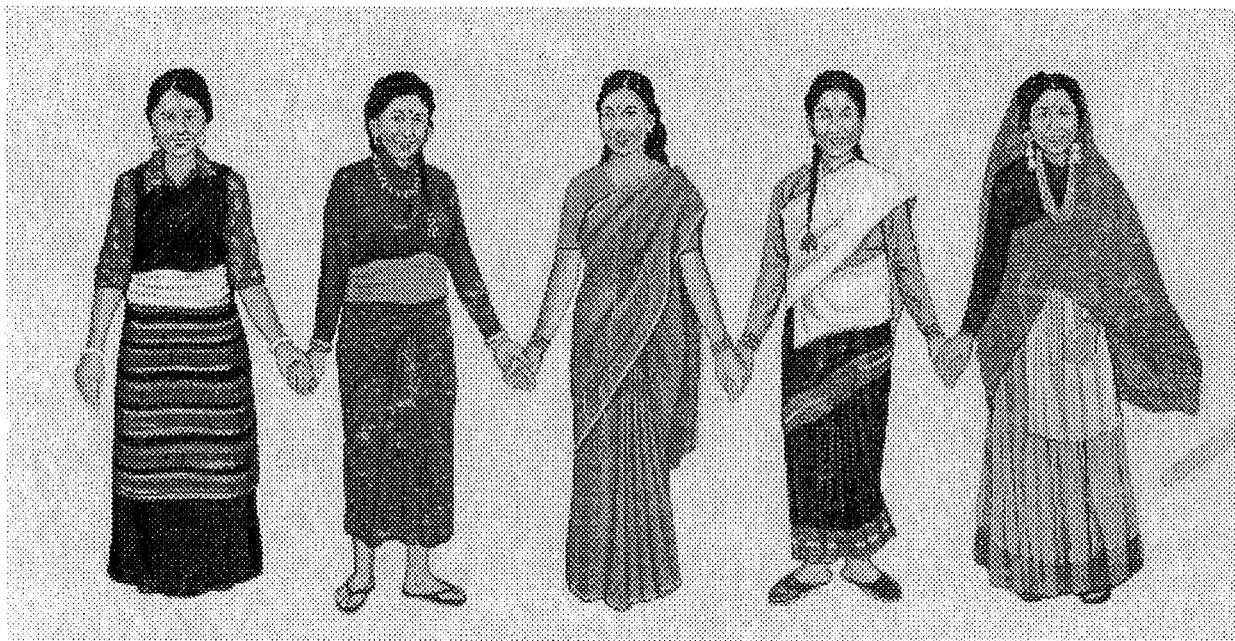


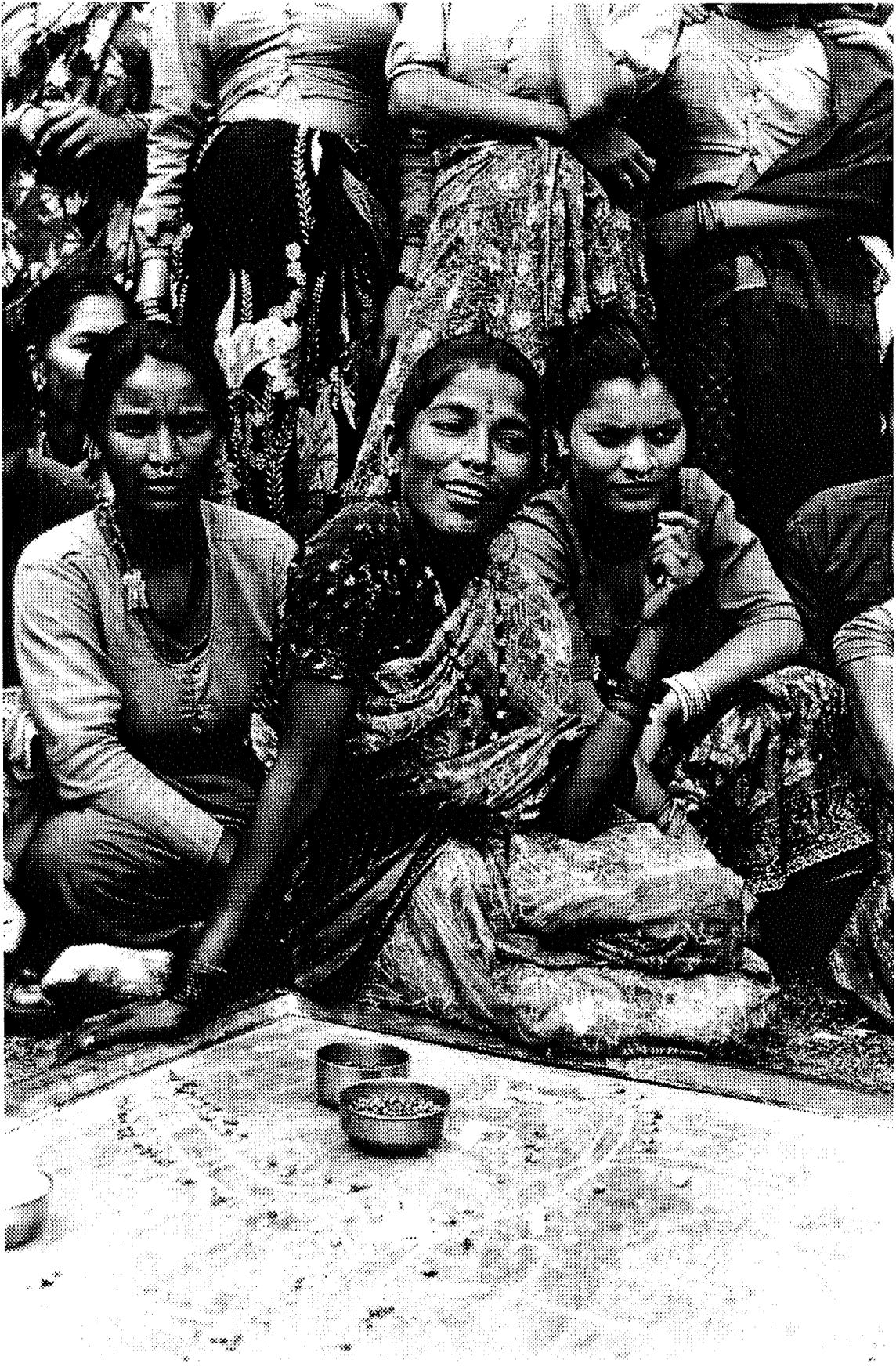
USAID/Nepal
Strategic Objective #3
Empowerment of Women
Customer Survey Report
June 1996

Empowerment of Women Customer Survey Report



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Strategic Objective 3: Women's Empowerment Team

Customer Survey Team Findings

Empowerment

- 1. Rural Nepali women are not empowered---not by their own estimation, nor by the team's assessment.*
 - 2. Rural Nepali women define empowerment almost unanimously as a complex of conditions: being knowledgeable, skilled, confident, having the ability and willingness to share time and skills; able to speak in public, earn money, and generally be able to stand on your own feet.*
 - 3. Rural Nepali women do not see the linkages between their problems, domestic and/or public, and their ignorance of their constitutional and legal rights. They see their problems as the way life is. They are totally unempowered from this perspective.*
 - 4. Rural Nepali women face significant constraints to becoming empowered: perceived high opportunity costs to becoming literate and, to a lesser extent, to any extra-household form of economic participation; ignorance of the legal system and how it could be used to change their lives in positive ways; little appreciation and lack of opportunity to take advantage of the value and power of group membership for supporting positive changes in their lives; the general cultural distrust of women as outsiders to their husband's family; extremely little "free" time to spend on additional income generating activities; and a very hierarchical socio-economic system which discriminates harshly on the basis of the ascribed characteristics of caste, gender, and age.*
 - 5. Women want to be empowered but do not know how nor do they have any knowledge. They ask, "show me how."*
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Literacy

- 1. Rural Nepali women clearly see the linkages between becoming literate and gaining critical life skills and knowledge; literacy is a undeniable step on the way to becoming empowered.*
- 2. Recent literacy programs and GON policy focus on women's literacy have brought about a rapid increase in literacy group participation and a tremendous demand for many more groups and further support services.*
- 3. Younger women have more opportunities to become literate than their mothers or grandmothers ever had. Nonetheless, rural women still lag far behind their husbands and brothers as well as their urban sisters in the critical basics of literacy and numeracy.*

Legal rights

- 1. There are many discriminatory laws, regulations, and customs against women. There is discrimination in wages and citizenship. Property is not registered in women's names. Girls are married younger than the known legal age. Wife beating and polygamy are not defined as bad, but simply the way things are.*
- 2. Yet, women do not see legal information as critical to their lives. They do not yet see (or know how to access) any alternatives.*

Economic participation

- 1. Rural Nepali women clearly do see the continuous linkages between gaining job skills and earning enough money to support their households and standing on their own feet, to becoming empowered.*
 - 2. However, women have almost no understanding of market processes or business practices. They therefore make relatively inefficient productive use of training opportunities and new technologies.*
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Conclusions

Women's empowerment

Empowerment for Nepali women is a complex set of conditions and achievements. It means being confident enough to come out of your house and speak in public, stand on your own, and have a job so you can support yourself and your family. It means being literate and so having knowledge which you can share with others and use to help others. It means not tolerating domination.

Rural Nepali women are not yet empowered, by their own definitions.

Empowerment is an exciting and scary change. For almost all we met, it is such a far-off condition as to be unreal--certainly no woman in their community is empowered. It is an impact better suited, according to some of our customers, for the young women just starting their families than for the old.

How do they think they can become empowered?

Nepali women clearly see the linkages between becoming literate and becoming able to gain knowledge about a host of important things that affects the lives of themselves and their families. They see the linkages between becoming literate and becoming skilled, with the ability--perhaps not for themselves, but for their daughters--to have a job beyond that of a basic farm laborer. They want and need to earn money sufficient to support themselves and their families. They almost unanimously see economic participation as critical to becoming empowered.

Nepali women do not yet see legal information as critical to their lives; in truth, they don't even know what it is. However, it is clear that this is because they do not yet see or know how to access any alternatives to the ways life events unfold. The team concluded that Nepali women are extremely eager to change their situation, though they are often naive and innocent of how this change will actually affect their lives. Again, they expect no big changes in their lifetime. Yet those who have had the opportunity to gain a little knowledge through a literacy class are aware that knowledge can open their eyes and their minds, and can give them a chance to make difference in their own lives. They want to be able to "do" for their families and themselves.

Recommendations

To increase women's empowerment, the team strongly recommends that the Mission...

- 1. build grassroots women groups in communities where no interested NGOs exist.*
- 2. use literacy groups as the critical entry point to augment existing women's groups (mothers groups, savings and credit groups and user groups).*
- 3. link these groups with additional services in post-literacy, legal rights, and economic participation.*

To increase women's literacy, the team strongly recommends that the Mission...

- 1. make sure women in target areas have opportunity to join literacy groups and become literate.*
 - 2. offer more basic and post-literacy groups (in market/business literacy, legal literacy, conservation literacy, and health literacy). The post-literacy should be provided as immediate follow-up to the basic.*
 - 3. clearly link literacy (basic and post-) groups to the problems that women experience, providing a more solid understanding of marketing, savings/credit, and income generating opportunities in their communities, helping to educate them more generally in the concept that they have both rights and responsibilities as Nepali citizens, and that there are remedies that can help them better resolve some of their problems.*
 - 4. supporting establishment of communities reading centers or libraries where possible, as well as supporting primary education for children and basic literacy for adult males.*
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....Recommendations

To increase women's awareness of their legal rights, the team strongly recommends that the Mission...

- 1. offer legal literacy and information that is more strongly linked to the problems women experience on legal rights and responsibilities, especially with regard to marriage, divorce and other matters of family law and secondly as relates to the business arena/ greater economic/agricultural productivity they are entering.*
- 2. give women's groups advocacy skills and information about how to approach local government (VDC and police) and higher levels of government with community problems they need help in resolving. The team recommends a strategy of legal awareness combined with stronger advocacy groups to address the women's legal priorities.*
- 3. give women's groups training in dispute resolution and mediation.*

To increase women's economic participation, the team strongly recommends that the Mission...

- 1. offer market and business literacy immediately following basic literacy, keeping the basic group structure and organization intact and maintaining and upgrading the literacy skills.*
 - 2. develop the business literacy groups with a solid focus on marketing, as well as savings/credit and income generating. Market information is critical to the women making best use of later training and opportunities.*
 - 2. encourage participants in saving and credit activities to work within the group as much is practical.*
 - 3. follow business literacy with selected TA for skill training, based on the women's preferences and market information.*
 - 4. follow skills training with linking women with information and support for taking loans from established Grameen-type organizations as well as saving and credit and income generation groups.*
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SO 3's Empowerment of Women Customer Survey Report

Introduction

This report provides the results of a customer survey to determine the empowerment needs and context of USAID/Nepal increasing women's empowerment strategic objective (SO) team's ultimate customers, the women of the midwestern and central terai regions. Field work was conducted in March 1996, using participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) and relaxed appraisal (RA) techniques. It was conducted by a 18-member team (ten women, eight men) of USAID/Nepal staff and staff from SO 3 team partners, all fluent in Nepali.

This customer survey provides the database, the foundation, for the new increasing women's empowerment program. This program will be designed with "bottom-up" participation from the ultimate customers, Nepali women. It will rely on frequent re-surveys of these customers, strong collaborative teamwork between the SO 3 team and its implementing INGO/NGO partners, and clear performance indicators to keep the program on target.

The Process

In February 1996, immediately prior to undertaking the survey, the team had participated in a two-week training course in participatory rapid appraisal and relaxed appraisal. This training was conducted by an anthropologist provided by USAID/Washington. The course was very similar to a RA course offered at the Bangladesh USAID Mission in 1995; the Bangladeshi course was the first step in a process which led over the year to design of a new democracy program.

The USAID/Nepal fieldwork was conducted in three weekly rounds, one with guidance and supervision during the training course and two successive rounds in the next month¹. The three rounds were of different durations: the first round was of five teams of four members, each visiting two sites in two days; the second round was of three teams of four members, each visiting four sites over the course of four days; and the third round was of four teams of four members, each visiting four sites in four days. The first round of surveys were conducted in the central terai (please see the map on the next page). The second and third rounds were conducted primarily in the hill and terai districts of the midwestern zone; four sites in a western zone terai district immediately adjoining the midwest were also surveyed. We estimate that the total population of the villages surveyed is about 6,000 people.

¹Please see the appendix for a description of the participatory rapid appraisal and relaxed appraisal techniques used in this survey.



The sites were chosen according to several factors: located in midwestern zone where USAID/Nepal is planning to focus its resources for the next several years; safety (political unrest which began just as the survey team was convened compromised physical safety in several of the areas and these districts were withdrawn from the survey); and variability of caste, ethnic group, geography, wealth, closeness to road, and prior contact with NGOs. All sites were rural, in accord with the USAID/Nepal strategy to focus on rural Nepal. Approximately three-quarters of the interviews and exercises were conducted with women, as the ultimate customers of SO 3. The other quarter of the interviews and exercises were either directed at the men or were joint (both men and women participated).

Each team was made up of four people, mixing USAID/Nepal staff and INGO partner staff. All teams had both men and women members, though not always in equal numbers. In general, the women interviewed the women and the men the village men, though such a gender rule was not necessary at all sites. At each village site, the teams conducted both PRA and RA exercises and interviews. The teams conducted on the average five to six PRA exercises and one RA interview at each site; participation in these exercises ranged from one interviewee to as many as 50 women enthusiastically participating in one exercise.

The PRA/RA methodology specifically called for the full team to meet at the end of each round of the survey to compare their experiences and discuss and distill their most significant findings. After each subsequent round, the team's discussions were more intensive and analytic, clarifying details, making comparisons, validating prior findings and identifying key sources of variation.

The Setting

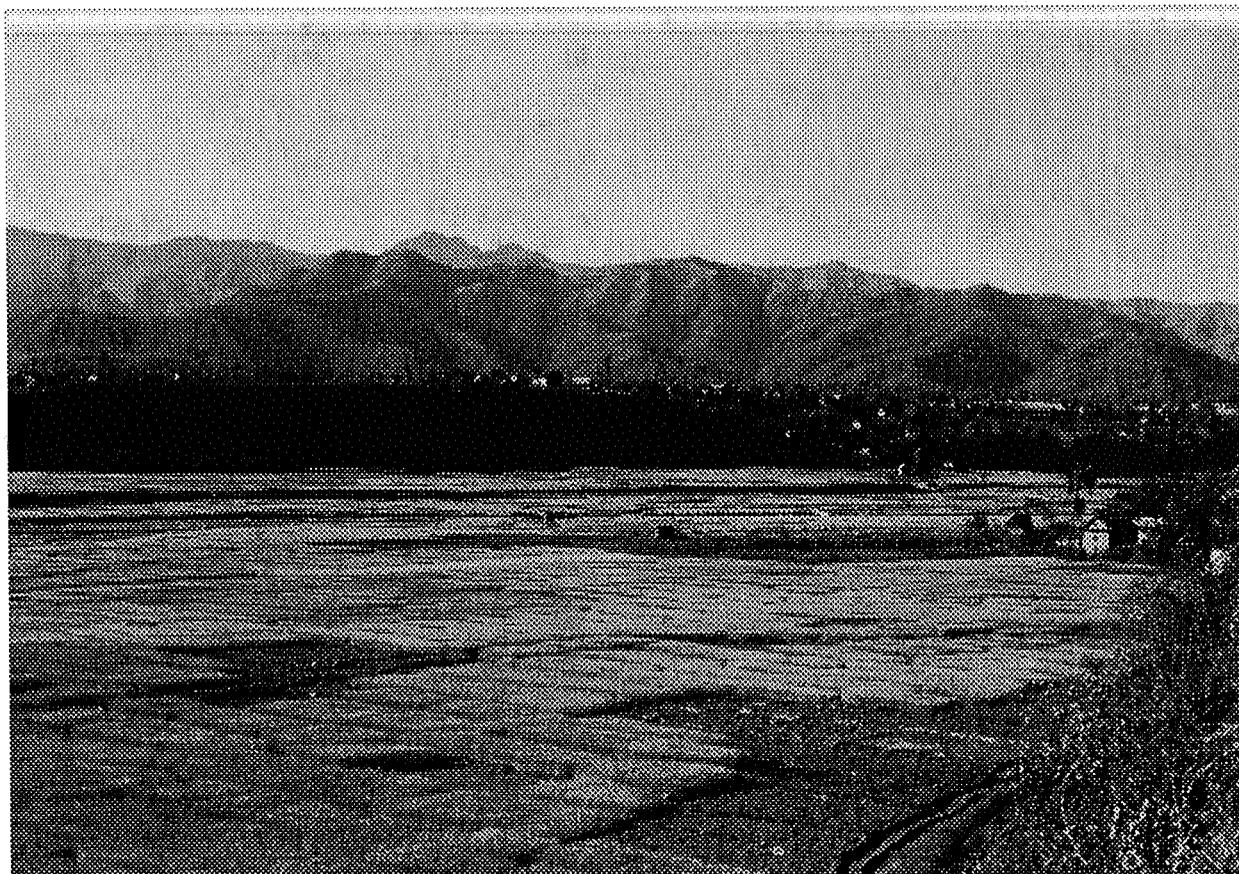
The greater part of the survey was conducted in Nepal's midwestern region. There are fifteen districts in the midwestern region: Pyuthan, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet, Dailekh, Jajarkot, Dolpa, Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu and Humla. The team visited six of these districts: Salyan, Dang, Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet, and Dailekh. Four other districts were prohibited due to some localized political unrest and the five remaining were high in the mountains, still snowed in and unreliably accessible at the time of the survey. Additionally, the team surveyed several other sites: Kailali and Kanchanpur Districts of the far western region, Nawalparasi of the terai belt of the western region, and the central districts of Chitwan and Bhaktapur. The areas included in the survey ranged from dry, flat terai to very wooded mid hills.

The midwestern region accounts for 13% of total population and 29% of total land area in the country. Though it is the largest region on the basis of land area, it has only 12.6% of the country's arable land. Only 6.9% of the total land area in the midwest is arable; nationally, the proportion of arable land to total land is 15.8%. Large areas of midwestern region are inaccessible by motorized vehicle and uncultivable. Only 9% of Nepal's total kilometers of black top road is in the region.

76% of the population of the midwest speaks Nepali. Nationwide, 50% of the population speaks Nepali as their first language. 13% speak a Tharu language; nationwide, only 5% of the people do. Almost no other languages are widely spoken in the midwest, though people from these ethnic groups do live in the region (esp. Tamang); nationally the percentage of people speaking Maithili is 12%, Bhojpuri 7%, Newari 7%, and Tamang 5%.

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The people of the midwestern region are 96% Hindu and less than 1% are Buddhist (nationwide, Buddhists are almost 8% of the population). 2.42% of the midwestern population is Muslim. Less than 1% of the population² follow other religions.



Dang Valley, in midwestern region

²Source: Nepal Population Census, 1991, Vol. 1, Part VI

"Hinduism...exerts a powerful influence on the social organization of the nation (even among some non-Hindu groups)...The Hindu system is organized according to strict hierarchies of caste, age, and gender, with emphasis on male superiority and female subordination. Within this framework, a sharp dichotomy exists between the "inside" world of women characterized by limited mobility and confinement to household and family roles, and the "outside" public sphere of men. Significantly, over time, oppression from [this system] has been internalized by women themselves such that they suffer from low self confidence and limited capacity to envision a better life. These psycho-social factors reassert themselves through a multitude of daily interactions as well as through inter-generational roles and relationships."³

"Nepal's sex ratio favors men, with 101.6 men to every 100 women. Nepal is one of only two countries in the Asia-Pacific region where females have a shorter life expectancy than men. For children, while a recent survey shows that the trend of higher female infant mortality has reversed, among the under-five [age] group, the death rate for girls is considerably higher than that of boys."⁴

Nepal's 1991 Central Bureau of Statistics census data show that the overall literacy rate for the midwestern region was 31.8%; this is 47.6% for males over the age of six and 16.3% for females above the age of six. Literacy rates for females over the age of six in the midwest range from 4.6% in the Humla District mountains to 25.5% in the mixed terai and mid hills of Surkhet; generally, women living in the midwestern terai show the lowest literacy rates and those in the midwestern hills the highest. Comparable statistics for the central region are 38.6% overall, and 52% for males and 24.6% for females. Female literacy rates in the central region range from 11.3% in the mountains to 57% in Kathmandu; the central terai districts specifically surveyed by the SO 3 team show between 40.9% and 48% female literacy rates. In this central region, the women living in the mountains show the lowest rates of literacy and those in the hills, the highest. Nawalparasi in the western region recorded a 25.2% female (above age six) literacy rate; Nawalparasi is in the terai ecological zone of the western region, where women have suffered the lowest rates of literacy in the region for decades. (Detailed charts of these data are presented in the appendix.)

The midwest region received about 2% of total credit provided by the banking sector. It is estimated that the percentage of loans going to women may be about 5%.

³ Taken from "The Status of Women in Nepal. A Review of the Literature" (in draft) by Anne Kaufman and Laura Wedeen, 1996, page 1. This literature review was commissioned by the Women's Empowerment Team, USAID/Nepal.

⁴ From Meena Acharya, 1994, The Statistical Profile of Nepalese Women, published by Institute for Integrated Development Studies, Kathmandu; quoted in Kaufman and Wedeen, 1996, "The Status of Women in Nepal," pages 1-2.

The region contributes less than 1% of Nepal's exports. In 1990/91 (the most recent year for which figures are available), it exported goods worth Rs. 44 million. The average land-holding size is 0.93 hectares as compared to 1.13 hectares at the national level. Its share of national agricultural production is: cereal - 12%; oilseed - 16%; potato - 11%; and, cattle - 21%. Among the five development regions, the midwest is the biggest producer of barley, accounting for 42% of the country's production. The agricultural labor force is predominantly and increasingly female, largely because of the strong out-migration of men to India for wage labor. Women here, as elsewhere in Nepal, work many more hours than do men, for two-thirds or smaller wages.

The formal legal environment, of course, is basically constant throughout Nepal. Nepali women generally have few rights and little knowledge about the law, legal processes, the judiciary, or fundamental human rights. While the 1990 Constitution guarantees equal rights to women, there are a number of laws which discriminate against women. For instance, there are 23 specific laws which show distinct gender bias in the area of property rights. Under the current laws, women have no right to inherit family property unless they remain unmarried until the age of 35 and then, continue to be unmarried. Both married and divorced women have few rights to the husband's property. Similar imbalance exists in other "domestic" issues such as marriage and divorce. Additionally, many ethnic groups continue to follow their own traditional codes, such as those allowing or even promoting polygamy or child marriage.

The following sections presents the team's overall findings and conclusions. It is divided into categories pertinent to USAID/Nepal's women's empowerment strategic objective and associated program outcomes.

Customer Survey Findings

* Empowerment

Empowerment is a relatively unfamiliar concept for rural Nepali women. There is no one Nepali word which includes the same set of denotations and connotations as the Western concept. The team translated the question and concept in several ways, allowing the village women to understand it from a number of perspectives; it was translated as being socially and emotionally powerful (as opposed to muscular), as being well-regarded, as being important [a *thulo manche*] in the community. These questions were always asked in an open-ended way. The women could respond with as many descriptions or labels as they wanted to offer.

Empowerment in the Nepali context encompasses a broad continuum, from being able to meet the most basic needs ("empowerment is having enough to eat and something to wear") to much higher level accomplishments (empowerment is being a leader, speaking with government officials). Though it might reasonably be said that the Western concept also encompasses a continuum, the Nepali continuum is significantly more basic.

In general, they do not feel empowered nor could they identify a specific Nepali woman whom they thought was empowered. They can say how they'd like to be, however.

The women surveyed responded that empowerment means

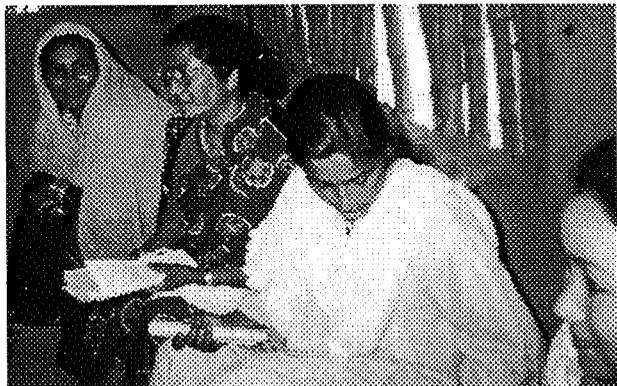
♀ being literate, having knowledge, understanding issues, and sharing knowledge with others: "the woman who knows everything will be the strongest woman," i.e., an empowered woman;

♀ being able to stand on your own legs, supporting yourself, having a job, and being able to make choices;

♀ able to help others, teach others, motivate others, help the village;

♀ not tolerating domination, especially men's domination;

♀ able to move around freely: the team notes one woman's comment, "If women have a reason like training to go to Dailekh or Surkhet, they are allowed to go; however, they are not allowed to go just to look around" and another saying, "Society does not allow women to go out";



♀ feeling confident, being articulate, feeling able to speak in public and with government officials; and

♀ being a leader, getting along with others, maintaining good relationships in village.

Interestingly, being wealthy or landed only rarely was suggested as being empowered and was more often explicitly denied. One 23 year old woman explained to the team that her family was rich, that she had four brothers, each of whom was either a physician or a veterinarian; she herself was illiterate. Instead of family wealth or status, women identified critical conditions that would help them "achieve" things themselves: being literate and having [job] skills.

Gita lives in Surkhet District, in southwestern Nepal. She is a member of the Badi caste. Badi are landless people. Traditionally both men and women work as entertainers: singers and dancers. But in modern times, the Badi have become dependent for income almost solely on Badi women working as prostitutes. There are approximately 25,000 Badi families living in various districts of southern Nepal. The women in Gita's Badi community identified her as empowered. Why? She became literate and then was able to get a job as a literacy group facilitator, and so was able to quit prostitution. Then she took a sewing class, and now she is a trainer for SAFE, a Nepali NGO working in HIV/AIDS education and prevention.



The team concluded that women see an empowered woman as one who is able to go beyond her ascribed roles (wife, mother, daughter/daughter-in-law, or according to caste) in rural Nepali culture. Most women seem very eager for the tools for this shift, especially literacy and skills (see below). They want to be able to "do" for their families and themselves. More are ambivalent and sometimes frightened of the unknown. They are hopeful of the possibilities that their dreams of independence and respect can be realized, and yet very uncertain that such opportunities are available for them.

*** Group membership**

Not many women are members of groups, though a wide range of possible special purpose groups exists at the village level: mothers health/nutrition groups, savings and credit as well as income generating groups, literacy groups, irrigation and forest user groups. Group size also varies considerably; some are very small groups, some encompass entire districts. Some are composed solely of women (mothers groups), some are composed of both men and women (users groups). Some are locally initiated, usually as an outgrowth of the women's adult literacy classes; others are organized by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or other outside elements.

A large number of groups were originally formed either as literacy classes or as savings and credit organizations, then sometimes developing other purposes as well. From the women's comments, it is clear that these groups have an impact beyond those immediate goals, in that they offer the opportunity for greater participation by rural women in decision making (especially opportunities outside the home) and provide an avenue for garnering respect from others. A few women explicitly asserted that simply being a member of a group was empowering.

Membership in groups of any structure or function is seen as giving women strength ("if you spit alone, it dries up fast; if you spit as a group, it can be a river"), a sense of unity, and a reciprocal sense of being valued, giving and receiving respect and responsibility. This can lead to a greater voice in village affairs and decision-making. Group membership frequently is associated with an increased income from some form of entrepreneurial activity, which then may lead to a greater voice in household matters, especially with regard to financial decisions.

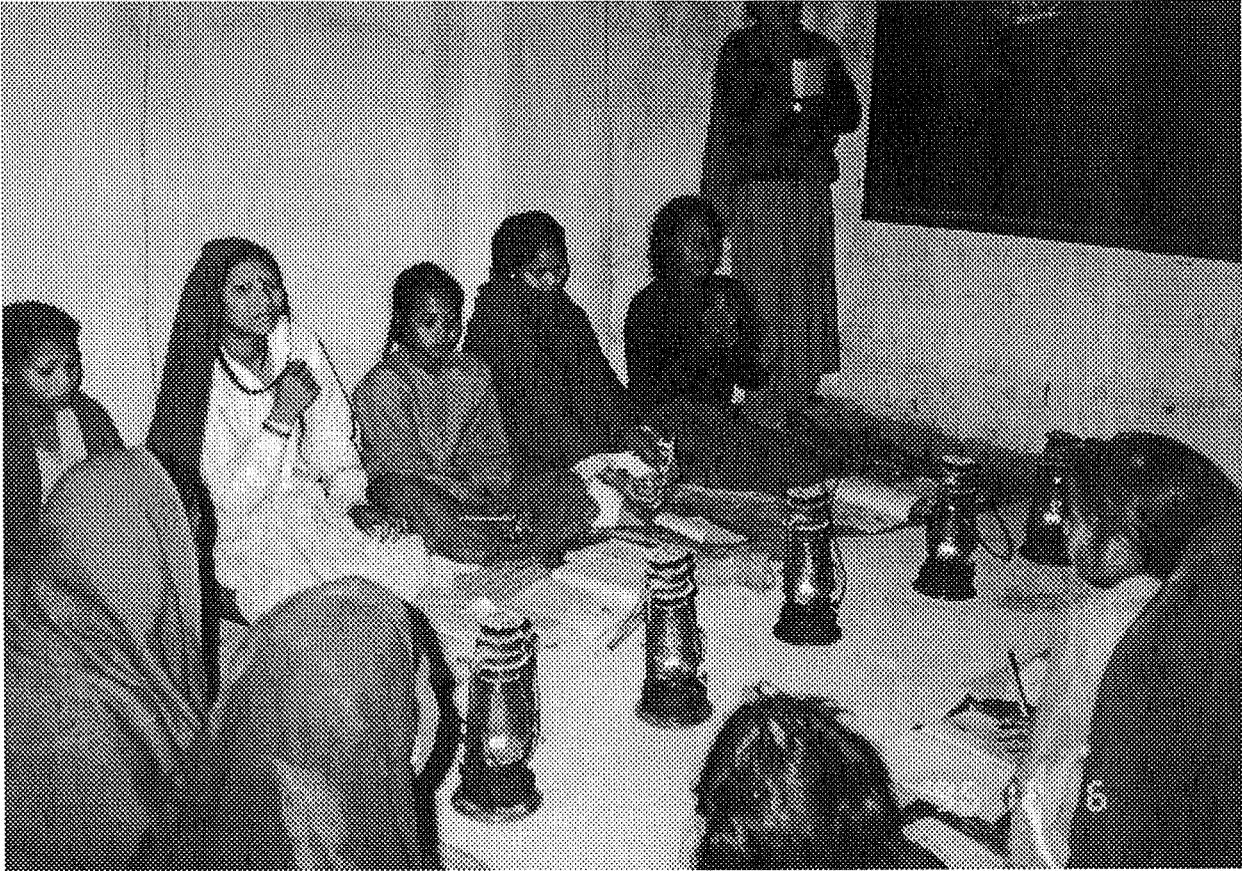
However, for those who are members of groups most village women have not yet realized how to more fully use this group strength. Their participation in groups is relatively new and the sense of strength fairly narrow (e.g., with a few very notable exceptions, women tend not to see group membership as a political force in their villages which could be used against wife beating or as a dispute resolution body).

* Literacy

Many women make no distinction in their comments between education and literacy; they are effectively synonymous because the women have almost no experience with either. In many areas few men or women were able to go very much further than simply becoming literate. Literacy for the masses is therefore new to most rural Nepali women, and in some areas the opportunities for becoming literate or educated are still greatly constrained. As one older man put it, "The chance for education is given first to boys because girls will belong to others." Women reported that their husbands and in-laws saw no value in their participation and denied them the opportunities even at night when other tasks are completed.

However, the team found that women, especially the younger women, greatly value literacy. It is the single most cited referent for empowerment and is clearly the basic key to higher levels of empowerment. Women expressed the desire for literacy and education in very blunt terms; one Chitwan woman said she wanted to be reborn a boy "because boys are forced to go to school!" Literacy "opens the eyes" and "keeps open the inner eyes"; women need to read and write "so that we don't have to keep [information, thoughts] only in our heart." "One who cannot read, is blind." "*Kalo akchar bhainsi barabar!*" repeated one village woman; this is a common rural joke, meaning that because they are illiterate they cannot distinguish between the letters of the alphabet and the buffalo they keep. Both are black!

To the extent that there is a recognized distinction, it is that literacy is for adults, education is for children and requiring longer duration and is comprehensive. Education involves a formal course of classes over several years and paving the way for children to become doctors



and engineers. Literacy is viewed as an informal, short-term course which makes women capable of reading and writing basic things.

Literacy is seen as leading to greater skills which leads to greater income. "If I have education, I can get a job." "Once you are educated, money will come," according to a woman in Dang District. "Those who have studied get all good food; those who only work in the field, only get work to do." Literacy is often described as one of the characteristics of an empowered woman or an important contributor to becoming empowered. Being literate prevents embarrassment and gives you confidence, because you can sign your name rather than use a thumb-print (or have to ask someone to write your name for you) when you join a forest-user group, because you can prevent the shopkeeper from cheating you, you must sign your name to the registry to be a member of a Grameen clone bank, you can read instructions on pesticides and fertilizers as well as on medicine labels.

Literacy is a practical stepping stone. Women cited it as essential to business transactions, bookkeeping, and to entering politics. It was even cited as important in the domestic arena, as more men recognize the increased contributions and status of a literate woman: "If I had studied, I would have gotten a good husband."

Most older Nepali women (those in their mid-thirties and above) considered literacy more appropriate for younger women, if for any woman. The comment, "I'm too old!" was often heard; one woman, seen sitting in the doorway leading to an ongoing literacy class, said just that. But she also elaborated: "I never had a chance and it's too late for me. But, now I can make sure that nobody can come in and disturb *these* girls while they learn to read!" Many saw literacy as the route to empowering and changing the lives of their daughters, commenting, "Because we cannot read or write and so we are not empowered. We want our daughters to be better than us." Alternatively, an older woman in a different village in that same district commented, "Our mothers and grandmothers passed their lives easily without reading and writing, so we will pass our lives the same way."

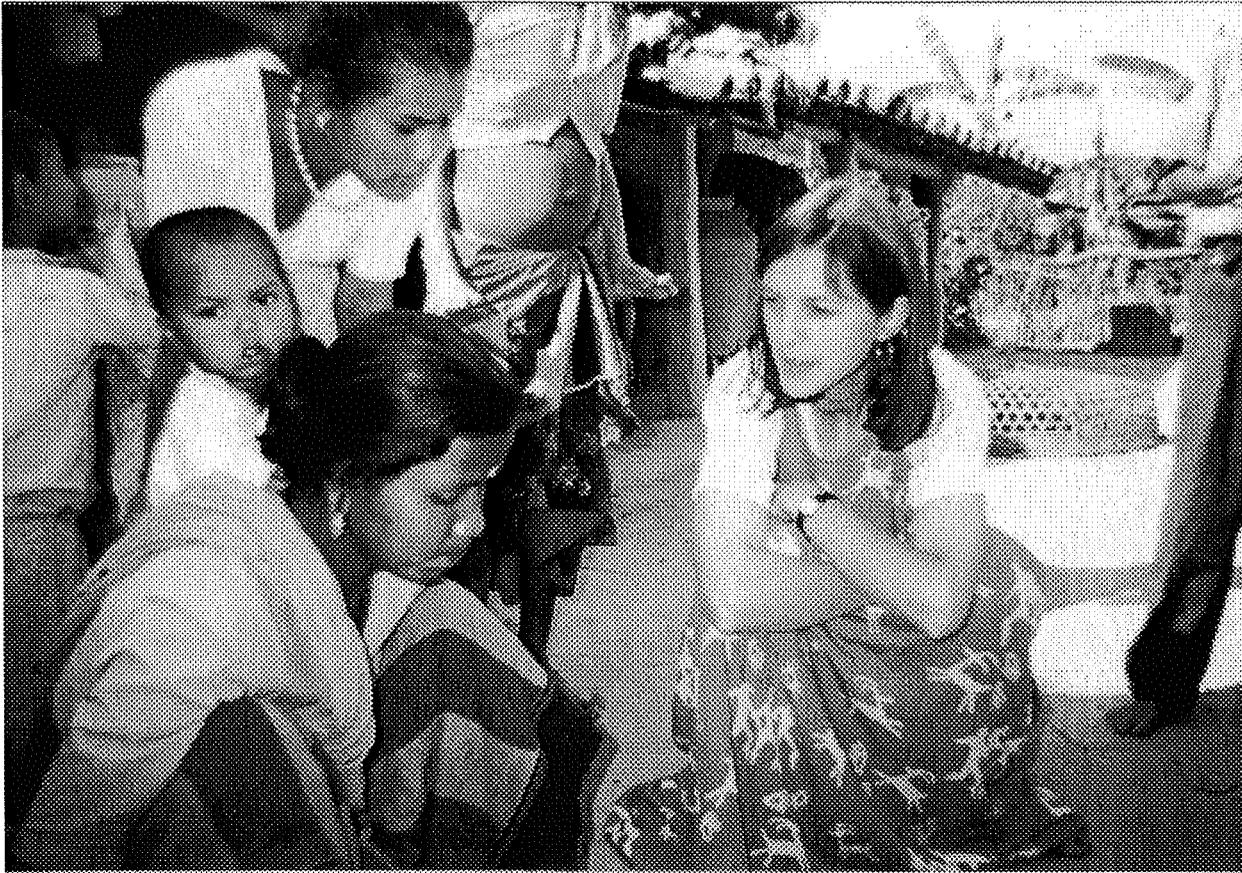
The team also noted that wherever there were classes, the women wanted more: more basic literacy classes, more months of basic literacy classes; classes on specialized post-literacy topics of many sorts, more things to read. The women enjoyed the experience and did not want to lose either the skill or any of the associated changes in status.

*** Legal awareness**

The concept of legal rights was even less familiar to rural Nepali women than was that of empowerment. Village women have very little awareness of their legal rights, and did often did not recognize that they faced legal problems. Pockets of legal awareness were found; those women who had been members of basic literacy groups were more likely to identify situations such as divorce and polygamy as problems, while those who were not literate did less often. In general, problems which have immediate, personal significance (whether the problem of a second wife or of others allowing their animals to graze on crop land) are identified far more often than those which concern others or are more general in impact. The team was surprised to discover that often women were much more open about discussing family planning (possibly due to the many years of exposure to this as a development issue) than domestic and community difficulties falling into the legal category. The impact of this is that the women often asserted that they have no legal concerns or problems.

They not infrequently can identify the legal age for marriage of girls, but then will go on and say that girls in their village marry much younger and that is not a problem. When shown drawings of situations which they interpret as illustrating legal problems (e.g., an angry looking man raising a stick as though to hit a cowering woman was taken as showing wife beating; a drawing of two women looking angry was taken as illustrating co-wives fighting, which raised the issue of polygamy), the women will then say that such things---wife beating, polygamy, being thrown out of the house, dowry, etc.---do happen in the village. Animal encroachment on grazing land and alcohol abuse is often mentioned once the general sense of legal problems is understood. A few women indicated that they had heard about inheritance laws and think that equal inheritance between sons and daughters is good.

Wife beating and polygamy are not always defined as bad, either because such behavior has traditionally been allowed within the mores of the ethnic group or because the women see



the "problem" as having some positive aspects, too. One woman explained that usually her husband was a god, but sometimes he got drunk and then beat her; it didn't change anything in their relationship. Another woman asserted that in difficult times, it was the first wife who helps you. Co-wives sometimes assert that they get along fine and are treated equally, so there is no problem.

Polygamy appeared to be common, varying in frequency among the districts visited; however, the team is reluctant to estimate just how frequently it occurred. Overall, polygamy was not a particularly sensitive topic, but in a few districts, the team was initially told it didn't occur but later discussions would uncover four households, for instance, in which the male had brought in a second or even a third wife. Women's reactions range from quiet acceptance, where the additional wives bring a lessening of the burdens on the first wife to very hostile, resented situations where the first wives are forced to serve essentially as servants to the new household or are even thrown out of the household without any further support.

The women have no sense that these problems can be resolved. What little they do know about their rights, they don't see as enforceable. Only a few assert that they would "go to court" to right a wrong; one particularly tenacious lady pursued a court case on her land rights for 18 years! However, most don't know who to go to for help. They see the police as far-away and

uncaring or siding with their husbands in situations of abuse. Both they and their husbands have no sense of power or right in connection to landlords, employers or shopkeepers who cheat them or treat them unfairly, only resignation and submission: "*ke garne?*" ("what to do?"), "*sahanai paryo*" ("[one] must bear [it]"), and "*estay chha*" ("that's the way"). They also do not see group membership as a possible solution, though stories of a group intervention in a neighboring village attract much interest (in one village, a shop selling alcohol was destroyed and in another, polygamy was reputedly eliminated).

The one legal safeguard against many of the trials of life that women very frequently mentioned was to have land registered in their own names. However, most commonly property was not registered in the woman's name, either by her father or her husband. Both men and women explained that people don't see women as "reliable." If they had a good husband, sometimes land was registered in the lucky woman's name. This gave them a sense of security against being thrown out of the house with nothing if the husband took a second wife. Some women also mentioned having property in their own names helped them to get a loan.

* **Democratic participation**

Most village women vote, but they vote for the candidates their husbands or educated children identify. Only a few reported making their own choices. Voting was not seen as a particularly important civic act; some women commented that they didn't want to vote because they didn't want to walk for two to three hours, to have to stand in a long line and get hungry.

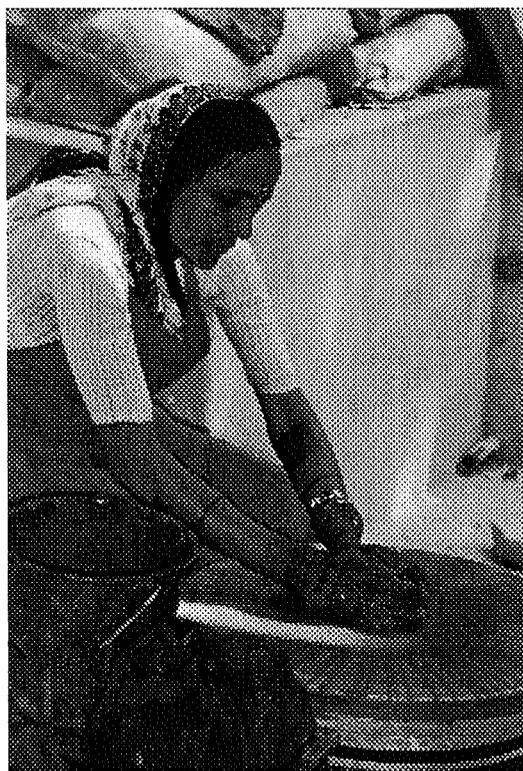
They are not aware that they have a right to demand that the people they vote for represent them or help them in public matters. There was no sense that the VDC or the police (or DDC or national government) officials had any responsibility to them or much to do with them. The only exception to note is that in a few sites, women noted that local disputes (either between husband and wife or between neighbors) were sometimes resolved with the help of the village head or the VDC; however, we also should note that other sites described an empowered woman as a woman who mediated such disputes.

* **Economic participation**

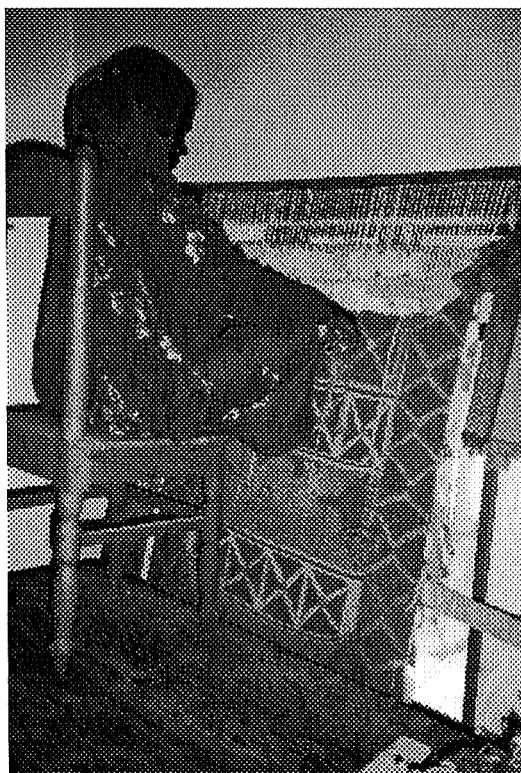
Almost all rural women are concerned with increasing their incomes, though there was some variation in the intensity of that concern. Also, there was significant variation in the ways women thought were open to them to earn money. Most saw the way to earn money in very familiar and traditional ways: if most other people in the area raised goats and buffalo, that's what they wanted to do. Some had no ideas as to how to earn money. Very few were innovative or risk-taking. Few saw ways to do these traditional things differently so that they would earn more income (i.e., no sense of "value-added" opportunities). A few were involved in "high value" activities, using better seed or growing a more profitable crop; these women in each case had been influenced by NGO activities in the area.

Becoming literate was jumbled into this concern: some felt they had to be literate first and then learn a skill, before they could undertake a business; others felt that they could not afford to become literate until after they had increased their incomes. Still others argued that skills were extremely critical if the woman were illiterate, "because even if we are not educated, we can do something; after learning some skill we can earn some money."

Income earning activities which would require a capital infusion to get started were complicated by the women's understanding of, comfort with, and access to any sort of credit scheme and capital requirements. That women rarely held land in their own names was a serious constraint to getting loans; many women raised the unwillingness of families to put land in women's names as a legal issue though only a few articulated it as an empowerment issue. Further, few women had any grasp of basic business concepts such as profit, any idea as to how to count their costs or price their products or assess the



marketability of an item, or how to do the basic bookkeeping of their enterprise.



Market understanding, knowledge and access were major constraints. Many villages were distant from markets, with poor or non-existent roads. Fewer than half the women felt that they could travel to the market town by themselves. In a few cases that travel would have to be by foot. Further, most women had only about three hours of "free" time per day, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. The rest of the day was taken up in household tasks, especially gathering wood and water. Other problems constraining the income women could achieve through agriculture were water shortages and deforestation (in one site the wood source was so far away women must stay overnight when they collect it)--clearly related to the women's household time demands.

Wage discrimination in agricultural wage labor was frequently commented on, sometimes with anger and sometimes with resignation. In one Surkhet

village, for instance, the daily wage for men doing transplanting of crops is Rs, 25-30; for the same work women are paid Rs. 15; for harvesting, men get Rs. 60/day and women are paid Rs. 40/day. The Surkhet women said that even if a man stands on the field, he is paid; women's wages "were not properly quantified." Even those women who were angry had no ideas as to how to remedy the situation.

Women saw their lives as being dominated by agricultural work, which they also saw as always harder. Especially the younger women would welcome trading or other wage labor if they had the opportunity and skills (literacy and technical). Tailoring¹, and then sewing and knitting were most often identified as skills the women wanted. (The team concluded that these skills were named simply because these were all the women were familiar with; in some areas, the women were not able to identify any specific skills at all.)

Parwati Bishwakarma, a 50 year old woman of an untouchable caste living in the midwestern terai, is illiterate. She lives in a community about 25 kilometers from the district center, but she has only visited there once. She does not know the King's name, nor can she identify any Parliament members. However, she says with some glee, "my husband knows less than me!"

She keeps the household money and makes decisions about buying of smaller items. Once she took a Rs. 1200 (roughly \$24) loan from a private sector bank. She found that she had to pay back Rs. 3500 (\$70), including the interest! Plus, she had to "feed" the karmachari (bank staff) another Rs. 900 (\$18)! Now Bishwakarma is afraid to go again to the bank for a loan, because if she can't pay it back she's afraid that next time they will want the land which is her son's inheritance.



Most of the savings and credit/small loan programs the women participate in were originally established by the Small Farmer Development Program (SFDP). In about one quarter of the cases, SFDP worked with a functioning literacy group to establish the economic group. Women who were members of a savings and credit group had usually taken out small loans. In areas where SFDP or similar programs do not operate, the situation is much grimmer.

¹Becoming a tailor is perceived to save a significant amount of money for a household. Tailors tend to be itinerant, coming to a village a couple of times per year. When a tailor visits a community, he/she does all the tailoring and stitching tasks anticipated until the next likely visit. A tailor is paid well, about 2 muri (1 quintal or about 100 kilo of high quality rice) overall, plus a half kilo of rice for each item stitched.

Customer Survey Conclusions

The team concluded that empowerment for Nepali women is a complex and very operational set of conditions and achievements. It means being confident enough to come out of your house and speak in public, stand on your own, and have a job so you can support yourself and your family. It means being literate and so having knowledge which you can share with others and use to help others. It means not tolerating domination. Rural Nepali women are not yet empowered, neither by their own definitions nor the team's.

An empowered woman is one who is able to go beyond her ascribed roles (wife, mother, daughter/daughter-in-law, or according to caste) in rural Nepali culture into an achieved role which the community respects. Most women seem very eager for the tools for this shift, especially literacy and skills. They want to be able to "do" for their families and themselves. More are ambivalent and sometimes frightened of the unknown. They are hopeful of the possibilities that their dreams of independence and respect can be realized, and yet very uncertain that such opportunities are available for them.

Empowerment--moving into these achieved roles--is an exciting and scary change. For almost all we met, it is such a far-off condition as to be unreal--certainly no woman in their community is empowered. It is an impact better suited, according to some of our customers, for the young women just starting their families than for the old.

Nepali women clearly see the linkages between becoming literate and becoming able to gain knowledge about a host of important things that affects the lives of themselves and their families. They see the linkages between becoming literate and becoming skilled, with the ability--perhaps not for themselves, but for their daughters--to have a job beyond that of a basic farm laborer. They want and need to earn money sufficient to support themselves and their families. They almost unanimously see economic participation as critical to becoming empowered.

Nepali women do not yet see legal information as critical to their lives; in truth, they don't even know what it is. However, it is clear that this is because they do not yet see or know how to access any alternatives to the ways life events unfold. The legal issues of highest priority to these women have to do with family relationships: marriage, divorce, dowry, polygamy; property rights might well be listed in that family category for those families owning land. Citizenship issues are also a very high priority for Nepali women; to participate in government or public activities (voting, getting a business license, etc.), one must first have citizenship papers. Other legal issues encountered in the course of economic participation, involving wage discrimination or business contracts and relationships and similar issues, will grow in importance as the women gain experience in this area.

The team concluded that Nepali women are extremely eager to change their situation, though they are often naive and innocent of how this change will actually affect their lives. Again, they expect no big changes in their lifetime. Yet those who have had the opportunity to gain a little knowledge through a literacy class are aware that knowledge can open their eyes and their minds, and can give them a chance to make difference in their own lives. They want to be able to "do" for their families and themselves.

To increase women's empowerment, the team strongly recommends that the Mission:

1. build grassroots women groups in communities where no interested NGOs exist.
2. use literacy groups as the critical entry point to augment existing women's groups (mothers groups, savings and credit groups and user groups).
3. link these groups with additional services in post-literacy, legal rights, and economic participation.

To increase women's literacy, the team strongly recommends that the Mission:

1. make sure women in target areas have opportunity to join literacy groups and become literate.
2. offer more basic and post-literacy groups (in market/business literacy, legal literacy, conservation literacy, and health literacy). The post-literacy should be provided as immediate follow-up to the basic.
3. clearly link literacy (basic and post-) groups to the problems that women experience, providing a more solid understanding of marketing, savings/credit, and income generating opportunities in their communities, helping to educate them more generally in the concept that they have both rights and responsibilities as Nepali citizens, and that there are remedies that can help them better resolve some of their problems.
4. supporting establishment of communities reading centers or libraries where possible, as well as supporting primary education for children and basic literacy for adult males.

To increase women's awareness of their legal rights, the team strongly recommends that the Mission:

1. offer enlarged legal literacy and information programs, that are more strongly linked to the problems women experience on legal rights and responsibilities, especially with regard to marriage, divorce and other matters of family law, citizenship, and to the greater economic/business/agricultural productivity arena women are increasingly entering.

2. give women's groups advocacy skills and information about how to approach local government (VDC and police) and higher levels of government with community problems they need help in resolving. The team recommends an SO 3 strategy of increased legal awareness combined with stronger advocacy groups to address the women's legal priorities.

3. give women's groups training in dispute resolution and mediation.

To increase women's economic participation, the team strongly recommends that the Mission:

1. offer market and business literacy immediately following basic literacy, keeping the basic group structure and organization intact and maintaining and upgrading the literacy skills.

2. develop the business literacy groups with a solid focus on marketing, as well as savings/credit and income generating. Market information is critical to the women making best use of later training and opportunities.

3. encourage participants in saving and credit activities to work within the group as much is practical.

4. follow business literacy with selected TA for skill training, based on the women's preferences and market information.

5. follow skills training with linking women with information and support for taking loans from established Grameen-type organizations as well as saving and credit and income generation groups.

To elicit the women's perspective on how to achieve women's empowerment, one team used the potato analogy. They explained:

"To get a good harvest of potatoes, you first plow and dig the field, Then you plant seeds and regularly offer water. You weed and check for bugs and watch the vines grow. Then, finally, you harvest."

Then they asked the women, "If our goal is to see empowerment of women, how shall we do it?" The women answered:

"First, we must make women literate through a literacy program. Then we must give them skills to do things better and earn some income. Next, women must be given opportunities to attend meetings and workshops and seminars to become more knowledgeable. Women then should get more rights and should be taught what is right and what is wrong. Then, they are empowered."

Appendices

The Participation Forum Workshop Notes*

Number 1

July 27, 1995

Rapid Appraisal and Beyond

On July 27, 1995, over forty USAID staff attended a workshop on rapid appraisal (RA) and participatory (rural) appraisal (PRA), organized by Anne Sweetser of PPC's Participation Initiative. James Beebe of USAID/South Africa, Christopher Gibbs, Senior Evaluation Officer at the World Bank, and Barbara Thomas-Slayter, Professor and Director of the International Development Program at Clark University were the speakers. These notes summarize the major points of the workshop and point to additional resources for those who want to learn more.

These workshop notes cover

- ✓ *The three principles of rapid appraisal*
- ✓ *The strengths and weaknesses of rapid appraisal*
- ✓ *Rapid appraisal versus participatory rapid appraisal*
- ✓ *A technique for institutional analysis*

*Workshops of the Participation Forum are occasional half- or full-day sessions focusing on discussion of participation methodologies and their applicability to USAID. Like summaries of the Participation Forum sessions, they are disseminated within USAID by E-mail and distributed to other interested parties in hard copy. For further information, please contact Diane La Voy or Anne Sweetser by E-mail, using either the USAID directory or INTERNET [dlavoy or asweetser@usaid.gov].

What Is Rapid Appraisal?

Anne T. Sweetser

Rapid appraisal is a form of qualitative research derived from the participant observation methodology of socio-cultural anthropology. It is used for preliminary design and evaluation of applied activities. RA is fast and flexible but rigorous. It is grounded in recognition that all dimensions of a local system (be it an irrigation system or a political system) cannot be identified in advance, and that attempts to do so reflect primarily the outsider's culture. Instead, a team of individuals with contrasting expertise can develop an understanding of a system by synthesizing information from several sources: prior research and reports, direct observation, and semi-structured interviews. During a rapid appraisal, time is allocated to ensure team member interaction in an iterative learning process. The goal is to grasp an insider's perspective on the system and to understand it as a whole, rather than to come up with a statistical description of its constituent units. Rapid appraisal is an excellent tool for surveying customer needs, because it can ensure that new activities are grounded in a fuller understanding of customer perspectives, and if participatory planning processes are used (as in PRA) it can lay the basis for empowering beneficiaries and producing sustainable results.

The Principles of Rapid Appraisal

James Beebe

In 1991, I organized a rapid appraisal in conjunction with a project sponsored by the Department of Agriculture and USAID to help the Ministry of Agriculture in Poland to deal with its economic transition. The ultimate goal was privatization of state farms, but the government needed to maintain them and keep them from failing in the meantime. I would like to discuss the three principles of rapid appraisal by describing how they were applied in Poland.

The rapid appraisal followed three years during which the state farms had been trying to cope with severe problems related to the transition of the Polish economy. For the very first time, farm directors had to deal with high inflation and interest rates, prices that did not cover production costs, and a general lack of demand for their produce. The situation was complicated by an uncertain government agricultural policy. Inadequacies in the management skills of the farm directors became apparent, although there was no solid information available about the management of the state farms. The conventional wisdom was that managers tended to be quite similar, but the rapid appraisal showed that this was not the case.

A Systems Perspective

The first of the three principles of rapid appraisal is use of a systems perspective. It is very important to note that the elements of a system *cannot* be identified in advance, nor can

decisions be made in advance as to which elements of a system are most important for understanding a given situation. Rather, understanding can be gained by listening carefully to what interviewees mention.

The first task of a rapid appraisal team is to make rough approximations of the system and those elements that might be most important in the specific context. These informed guesses must be recognized as hypotheses. They are the starting point for repeated and critical reevaluation as the team clarifies its understanding of the system as viewed by insiders.

A range of techniques may be employed to obtain information about a system. In Poland, we used semi-structured interviews with both individuals and groups of people from farms representing the full range of variability. When we arrived in the country, we were invited to a meeting of all of the managers and senior staff of the state farms. That gave us a chance to explain what we were doing and to carry out group discussions. Interestingly enough, the group was very negative about the future of the state farms, but individuals were not as negative. It is common to encounter such differences between group and individual responses.

After the initial meeting, the appropriate team spent over 110 hours interviewing the directors and senior staff of the state farms, whenever possible, in the field. Our purpose was to get the participants in the system to define the major components of the system, including what they felt was most important, what they felt was going wrong, and what kind of assistance might help.

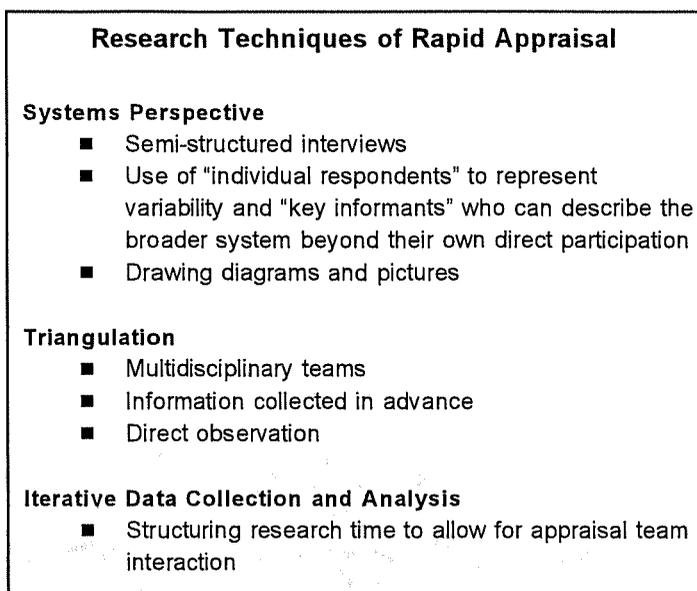
Following the basic principle of a systems perspective meant that there were things we could not do. We did not go in with a questionnaire, because we could not know in advance what the participants were going to identify as a major part of the system. We could not know the relevant questions.

Triangulation

The second principle is use of triangulation. The term comes from navigation, and means trying to find a position or location by means of bearings from two known points. When applied to rapid appraisal, it means systematically combining the observations of team members with different backgrounds and using a variety of research methods. The assumption is that for most situations, there is no one best way to obtain information, and even if there were, it could not be foreseen. Similarly, no single person's impressions of a situation can be perfect. Team members must employ triangulation in a highly conscious fashion, maintaining clarity about each person's tendencies toward bias, the sources of information, and the system being investigated. This improves the quality of information and ensures cross-checking. Rapid appraisal must triangulate among people by listening to the viewpoints of different groups. It is also necessary to triangulate among methods to combine information from

interviews and direct observation with information collected in advance.

In Poland, we used the perceptions of a multidisciplinary team and multiple research methods, and we combined information from various sources with direct observation. We traveled over 2,000 kilometers as we tried to make sure that people had an opportunity to show as well as tell us about their situations.



The Iterative Process

The third basic principle of rapid appraisal is iterative data collection and analysis. As information is collected, it is used to modify the research process. Research time is structured so team members have plenty of time to interact. We spent almost as much time talking with each other about the implications of what we were learning for the next step of our research as we spent collecting the information. We made extensive use of microcomputers and printers to produce notes and outlines, and we met repeatedly with the people in the Ministry of Agriculture. Over the course of two weeks, we had eight meetings with them, which included having them participate in some of our interviews. We showed them the information we were collecting and discussed its implications with them. The iterative process includes both the appraisal team and the partners.

Rapid appraisal is a process during which the researchers begin with information collected in advance, and then progressively expand their knowledge and deepen their understanding by gathering new information through semi-structured interviews and direct observations, and sharing their interpretations of this new information as it is collected. It can be thought of as an open system that uses feedback to learn from its environment and progressively change itself. The research effort is structured to encourage participants to rapidly change questions, interviews, and direction as their understanding evolves.

On one of the rapid appraisals I conducted, all members of my team were from a traditional academic community. They were upset by the notion that as the research progressed, the questions and the methodology changed. It was difficult to get through to them the notion that a rapid assessment focuses on understanding a situation from the perspective of the

participant, not on how many people do what. These academics had spent their entire careers making sure that their hypotheses were not corrupted by collecting data.

Findings of the Appraisal

Among the managers of the Polish state farms, we discovered confusion about what a market economy really meant and uncertainties about the power of information and the difference between production and profit. One manager was still meeting the production goals that had been issued two years before and wondered why his farm was failing. Some managers were devastated to discover that the market would not always pay for products at the cost of production. Cash flow appeared to be a critical issue.

These findings were not particularly profound, but we probably would not have anticipated all of them. For example, cash flow was not anticipated as an issue by the appraisal team or the Ministry of Agriculture. In the past, managers of state farms had been able to get short-term credit from state banks and did not need to be concerned with cash flow. If the appraisal team had designed a questionnaire, it would have been impossible for us to have picked this up, but, when we asked managers to show us their farms and explain what was happening, the issue was uncovered. On one farm we saw tractors sitting in the parking lot and unharvested fields. We found out they had no money to buy fuel.

In another appraisal, USAID was looking at the issues of land tenure in the Philippines. We sat down with an aerial photo and got people to draw out where the plots were and tell who farmed them and who owned them. The discussion also got into types of soil in various plots. We discovered that they had an indigenous soil classification system which correlated very closely with some of the issues of tenure. We could never have come up with this information from a survey questionnaire developed in advance in an office.

As a result of the rapid appraisal in Poland, we were able to suggest how to help the farms survive until they could be privatized or their status changed in some other way. It took us two weeks to finalize our report and two more weeks to get it translated into Polish. A rapid appraisal should both collect and disseminate material rapidly. Rapid appraisal is nothing more than organized common sense, but it can be done in a rigorous way.

Absolute Requirements

The three basic principles allow for a tremendous amount of flexibility on what techniques are used and on how the pieces are put together. However, there are a few absolute requirements. First, it is not possible to start with a questionnaire and have a systems perspective. Second, at least two people must be on a team ideally both insiders and outsiders for the principle of triangulation to be observed. Third, a rapid appraisal cannot be a

one-shot effort. The process must consist of collecting information, talking about it, analyzing it, and then collecting additional information.

A rapid appraisal should be neither too short nor too long. There's a danger that too many resources will be invested in it. The purpose is to get enough information so that additional research can be carried out or an activity can be started up. If too much time is invested in a rapid appraisal, people might place too much confidence in it.

To maintain a certain amount of rigor in the process, a checklist of the team's activities should be prepared. It should identify who was on the team, how much time was spent, what types of people were contacted, what types of information were collected, and so on. Ideally, this checklist should note the date when some of the issues raised should be revisited.

Possibilities for Participation

This approach offers possibilities for participation on multiple levels, perhaps even participation of the people in the community as full team members. There is a lot of leeway as long as the focus is on listening to what people have to say. A wide range of specific techniques are available: focus groups, individual interviews, use of key informants, use of ecological transects on site, asking people to diagram their input.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Rapid Appraisal

Christopher Gibbs

Providing decision-makers with information that is relevant, timely, accurate, and practical is a challenge and does not happen as often as it should. Rapid appraisal, or rapid rural appraisal, as it was originally called, was designed to fill a gap between what were quick and dirty and long and dirty analyses, where dirty referred to cost-effectiveness. Formal research methods may have scientific validity, but they provide too little relevant information, too late, at too high a cost. Rapid appraisal is attractive because it is less costly and quicker than formal methods of investigation and holds out the promise that it can provide a different kind of information from the formal surveys. It is notably valuable when an interpretive understanding of a situation is required. Formal research methods can fall down when the object of the inquiry cannot be easily quantified.

Limitations

Rapid appraisal's advantages of cost, speed, and type of information come with some equally large limitations.

First, the validity of the information gained can be questioned: Are the findings sound? How much random variation is there in the results? Numerous factors can contribute to low reliability of information; three are associated with rapid appraisal.

- Rapid appraisal does not employ probability sampling and therefore may be criticized for producing results that are unrepresentative. If someone asks, To whom exactly does this conclusion apply? rapid appraisal may not provide the answer. Is it 50 percent of the population or 70 percent of the population? Rapid appraisal may not provide reliable information on this.
- Individual judgments can affect the conduct of the inquiry substantially. A lot of judgment is required to employ rapid appraisal effectively because there is so much flexibility in the approach. This flexibility can help investigators to achieve depth, but it comes at the price of potential bias or distortion. The risk is that investigators hear only what they want to hear.
- Qualitative information can be very hard to record, code, and analyze. How will the information collected on tapes, in diaries, or through maps be presented? Clearly, anthropological colleagues have worked with this problem for many years, and we can learn great deal from them.

Four actions can raise the validity of rapid-appraisal findings. First, investigators should have a sound conceptual framework for the investigation before they start. Some of the short reports that have come out from CDIE explain as clearly as any I've seen how to prepare for a rapid appraisal. Second, a variety of techniques should be employed. Third, information gained through one rapid-appraisal exercise should be cross-checked with another. Fourth and this is very hard investigators should maintain high standards of self-criticism.

RA, RRA, and PRA

Rapid appraisal (RA) was first developed in the late 1970s in two workshops organized by Robert Chambers at the University of Sussex in response to (1) biased perceptions based on "rural development tourism" (the brief rural visit by the urban-based professional) and (2) the defects and high costs of large-scale questionnaire surveys. The technique came to be called rapid rural appraisal (RRA).

Participatory rural appraisal (PRA) describes approaches and methods such as group mapping, diagramming, and storytelling that enable local people first to share, enhance, and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, and then to plan and to act. Like RA, it owes much to the traditions and methods of participatory research, applied anthropology, and field research on farming systems.

In **RA** (or **RRA**), information is generally elicited and extracted by outsiders as part of a process of data-gathering; in **PRA** it is generally owned and shared by local people, as part of a process of their empowerment.

Source: Robert Chambers, "Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Analyses of Experience" and "Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Challenges, Potentials, and Paradigm," *World Development*, Vol. 22, Nos. 9 and 10 (September and October 1994).

The second weakness of rapid appraisal is that it doesn't provide data from which generalizations can be made about populations. Rapid appraisal helps to enrich the picture, but it doesn't provide information about the extent or pervasiveness of a phenomenon. For example, it may tell you that rural women are being deterred from using certain birth control methods, but it can't tell you how many are being deterred for a particular reason.

The third weakness of rapid appraisal is that its findings often lack credibility. Decision makers often prefer precision to a rich description. I'm not saying that's right. I actually think it's frequently wrong, because often the precision that decision makers gain is a false sense of precision.

Strengths

Provided its limitations are kept carefully in mind, rapid appraisal is clearly useful when description is all that is needed, when what is sought is an understanding of attitudes or motivations, when quantified data needs to be interpreted, and when the aim of the investigation is to generate suggestions or recommendations. James Beebe's Poland example is classic: There's a problem to solve. Where should we begin to look for a solution? Let's talk to the people concerned. But let's talk in a structured and careful way so that we can come to conclusions fairly quickly.

In addition, rapid appraisal is useful when there's a need to develop questions for a subsequent formal study. Frequently, formal and informal methods can very usefully complement each other.

World Bank Rapid Appraisals

The World Bank is using participatory rapid appraisal (PRA) methods increasingly. An example is a recent poverty assessment for Uganda. One member of the team decided very early on that she wanted to make sure that poor people themselves contributed to the poverty assessment. What was their perspective on poverty? What did they feel it was that kept them poor? What did they think would make them better off? And how should assistance be applied to reduce poverty? The Bank employed an experienced PRA trainer from India in this case, a woman who was a protégé of Robert Chambers, to train social workers, government officials, and representatives of NGOs in Uganda to carry out an informal appraisal of poverty issues by talking to men, women, and children. The process resulted in a substantial enrichment of the picture. Unfortunately, the findings were not as fully integrated into the strategy for poverty reduction as they should have been. That's a function of the difficulty people have interpreting this kind of information in a way that is bureaucratically convenient or acceptable.

An Exercise in Institutional Analysis

Participants in the workshop broke into small groups to do an exercise in institutional analysis. They were asked to: 1) make a list of the most important institutions in D.C.; 2) rank them (big, medium, or small); 3) label large, medium, and small circles of construction paper with names of institutions of corresponding rank; and 4) arrange the circles on a sheet of flip-chart paper to represent their interrelationships.

Participants immediately asked about criteria for selecting institutions, and they were urged to answer this and similar questions within their groups. There were revealing contrasts between the institutional maps produced by the groups. It was clear that using this technique one could easily identify differences between men and women or other significant subgroups within a community and then work to facilitate understanding of the various perspectives among all community members.

The following pointers were identified during the exercise:

- Carrying out an institutional assessment has a catalytic effect and there is great diversity of opinions from group to group. Therefore, to be effective, an institutional analysis ought to be done with a couple of different groups and a couple of different neighborhoods.
- It is important to clarify the task and the criteria used for setting priorities and analyzing relationships. The exercise showed how different groups set different criteria so that they could get what they wanted out of the analysis.
- Who is in the assessment group is very important. If the assessment is part of an RRA or PRA, some thought should be given as to how the groups are formed so that a cross-section of people within any community is being represented.
- To minimize the extent to which some individuals might be afraid or nervous about expressing their true opinions in the presence of powerful or influential people in the community, pair-wise ranking may be used as a way of prioritizing. It's a systematic way of getting people to choose one out of two. In this case, the entire list of institutions would be presented in pairs. At the end, those institutions with the greatest number of votes would be assigned big circles and so on down the line. This system allows people to avoid having to say, "This is the most important thing to me."

In Egypt, PRA methods were used to develop a natural-resource management project among Bedouin people in the Matruh region. These people had been nomads for generations but had become increasingly more settled recently. They were among the poorest people in Egypt. To help them, government would have had to earn their confidence and not simply attempt to control them. A traditional livestock project would almost certainly have failed.

PRA was employed through a task force that included central government, local government, and the Bedouin communities themselves. Several techniques were used: semi-structured interviews; participatory mapping; transect walks (walking with the Bedouin through the areas that they were familiar with and going to the water holes and discussing with them issues that related to their management); seasonal calendars (interpreting how their life varied over the

year); social and historical profiles; and matrix ranking techniques. Special attention was paid to talking with women.

The result was a project that was far more than the sum of its components. However, this PRA wasn't very rapid or cheap. The whole process took three years, and it cost about \$350,000. But this actually compares very well with the cost of other World Bank project preparations. Its distinct advantage was that the project became immediately effective and didn't go through the usual revving-up period. Furthermore, while the Bank's project planners lost a degree of control, they gained an enormous amount of ownership.

In Morocco, a PRA was used very successfully to prepare a sector study for women. This was done in a society where gender issues do not surface readily and where control of local affairs has been made a fine art. The aim was to find out what women's priorities for development were by asking them. The task manager for this project knew nothing about PRA when she started, but she knew that she wanted to talk to the women. To pull it off, she had to teach herself the basics of PRA, convince her supervisor and division chief that it was going to be useful, assure the government of Morocco that it was not going to be subversive, train people in Morocco in the techniques, carry out the assessment in several rounds, and build the findings into a document that Bank staff unfamiliar with this sort of an approach would respect.

In this case, the process is not yet over, but it already appears to be quite successful. Women feel empowered to speak up in community meetings, and the director of statistics in the Ministry of Agriculture, who has been the prime contact for this project, now favors the use of PRA on a much larger scale. Again, this process has taken time and has not been cheap, but it has produced a new kind of product and has brought about a changed set of relationships among the stakeholders that I believe promises much more value in the future.

Institutional Mapping: An Example of PRA

Barbara Thomas-Slayter

Participatory (Rural) Appraisal, PRA, is a spinoff of RA or RRA, in which the emphasis is shifted from rapidity to participation. PRA appraisals may take a couple of months, not two weeks. When completed, a community has in hand an action plan in which the people themselves have determined what they want to do, who is going to do it, and what kind of outside help they may need.

It is very important to involve people from the local community through such methods as options assessment, pair-wise ranking, and voting. When the people with whom Clark

University works come to grips with real choices and what seems best for their community, I have found them to be quite fair in decision making.

Institutional analysis can make a significant contribution to problems that now occupy the development profession. For example, it can be used to address a question raised by the emphasis on democratization: How can community organizations or institutions effectively build capacity, including an increase in accountability for their efforts? Ultimately, a combination of grassroots participation, political pressure, legal restraints, structural change, and strengthening of local institutions is needed.

Institutional analysis has helped Clark's work in PRA in several cases by facilitating linkages between local communities and outside donors, and between local organizations and national governments. These have promoted improvements in four areas: strengthening civil society; more effective management of development projects, including greater gender equity; increased agricultural productivity; and greater conservation of natural resources.

Two methods of institutional analysis are available. The first is to invite a representative from each of the major institutions in a community to a meeting. At the meeting, the roles and activities of the different institutions are discussed. All the representatives are asked to describe something about their organizations. Then they are asked to rank these institutions by their importance to the well-being or the development activities of the community. The other method is to ask the participants to create a diagram showing the relationships among the organizations. Different sized circles are cut out of construction paper to represent the organizations. The group is asked to mount these on a flip chart in a way that visually shows their relationships.

In Kenya, Clark carried out an institutional analysis of Chevaluky. The exercise was carried out in neighborhood communities. Lo and behold the government was represented by the smallest circle, and it was isolated spatially. The pattern showed up in all neighborhoods. The appraisal team members were quite curious about this, but the local members knew what was going on. It came out that the chief was hopeless. He was an alcoholic, a lecher, and a cheat, and the local government had disintegrated within that community. Nobody was going to come out and tell us that directly. We needed to have some process to reveal this information.

A PRA carried out by Clark and GTZ last summer in northern Somalia found it hard to get beyond the council of elders, a group of senior males who controlled the community and wanted everything to go through them. An institutional analysis revealed that there were a women's organization and a youth organization. The problem arose then of who was to control the activities that were coming out of the PRA. The council of elders wanted

everything to go straight through them but eventually conceded certain kinds of water responsibilities to the women's organization, because, after all, water was women's responsibility. So they were willing to let go of a portion of their responsibility as a result of community-wide institutional analysis.

Institutional analysis yields an overall picture, not a precise roadmap. But it should show how the host organization of a USAID project is regarded, for example. It could be that the host organization is regarded by both men and women as outside the mainstream and that USAID should be working with another organization.

An institutional assessment provides guidelines and will introduce subtle questions that straightforward questionnaires might not reveal. It can reveal which institutions are most important in the eyes of the community, which seem to have the respect and confidence of the community, and which should be able to engage in sustainable development activities most effectively. It also shows the relationship among institutions. The diagram created shows the institutional importance through the size of the circle and the institutional relationships in the way the circles are arranged.

Practical Considerations
Workshop Participants Speak Out

Follow-up

Binah Shupak: I carried out a participatory rural appraisal in India. There the biggest bugaboo was that people got great information but forgot to follow up. They viewed their work as a final picture, whereas in the villages, the picture is constantly changing. Many villagers were so sick of rapid rural appraisal because investigators came to the villages and talked to the villagers, but nothing ever came of it. It is a concern in the rapid-rural-appraisal community that aid workers will carry out rapid rural appraisals to get the approval that they need from higher-ups but ignore the work which rapid rural appraisal is meant to inspire.

Combining RRA or PRA with Standard Surveys

Barbara Thomas-Slayter: It doesn't need to be either/or. Qualitative, descriptive data can help define a focused survey: a short, crisp, to-the-point survey to explore problems that have been identified through a participatory or rapid rural appraisal. I think the two work well together. For instance, we were working in an area in Kenya called Pwani, a community on the periphery of Lake Nikuru. Issues concerned community access to the park. A PRA was carried out to find out what the people in the community were concerned about. The PRA was followed up with a random-sample, probability survey based on what was specifically of concern in that community as revealed by the PRA: access to certain timber products, better control of animals that were destroying their crops, etc.

Christopher Gibbs: Some of the impetus for developing rapid appraisal methods was the slowness and costliness of baseline surveys. In too many cases baseline surveys took too long to complete and were incomplete; the moment had passed before they were finished. The opportunity to do something had passed.

At the World Bank, we are trying to use some rapid or informal methods in impact evaluations. We find that the kind of information we are getting from baseline surveys isn't really highly relevant for evaluating impact. Virtually nothing in the baseline surveys helps us to understand what a project really might have accomplished for people in terms that they value, or what impact meeting the main physical objectives of the project has had on people's lives.

Nevertheless, let's not be fooled: records are useful. When James Beebe did his work in Poland, he had an awful lot of information about the state farms to work with before he got there. The World Bank's poverty assessments are all based on a living-standards measurement survey, a fairly detailed survey of what is going on with respect to people's education, health, nutrition, mortality, morbidity, and so on. The Bank does not use rapid appraisal by itself in these areas. There may not be enough time for a full baseline survey. In such cases, a slightly less perfect tool might provide some useful insights.

The Need for Baseline Data

Curt Grimm: In a number of cases where PRAs have been used, the other component the quantitative data is missing. To move in the direction of results-based, performance-based management, one needs baseline information. But PRAs do not yield baseline information. It is not possible to measure progress on the basis of information from a rapid appraisal.

James Beebe: There may be situations where a rapid appraisal *can* produce baseline information. That baseline may not always be as quantitative as some of the people in USAID are interested in. Also customers may be involved in identifying the indicators. What impact in this community tells you that you are making progress? I would be very suspicious of studies that didn't start with trying to get an understanding of the local customers, the local participants in the system. But rapid appraisal is not an end in itself. It should lead either to additional studies or some sort of action.

Quantitative Rapid Appraisal

Binah Shupak: Rapid appraisal can be quite quantitative. If quantitative data is needed, the rapid appraisal should be planned to obtain it. Information can be obtained from villagers which produce percents, and it is much more accurate than what can be obtained from conventional sources. For instance, to find out about infant mortality rates in an area, the village could be mapped and the houses identified where people have died, including when they died, what they died of, and what their ages were.

Another example: to compare customers' use of different medical services, we gave them a rupee and asked them how much they would spend for various goods and services. That will yield percentages. By going to different groups, you can compare the percentages.

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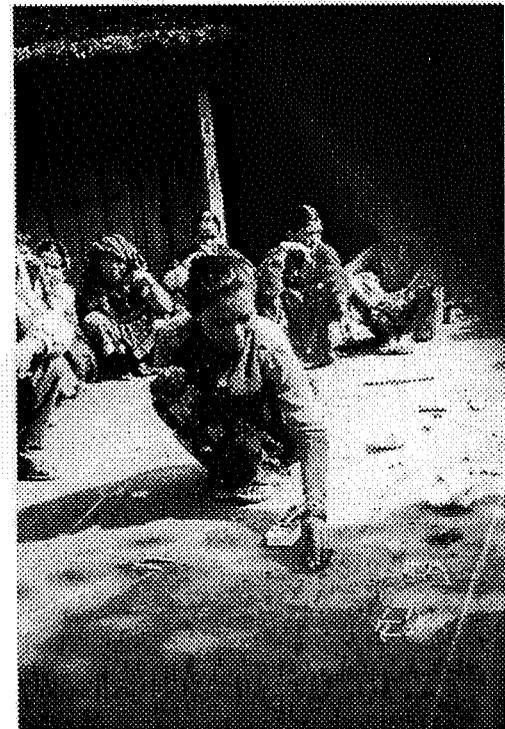
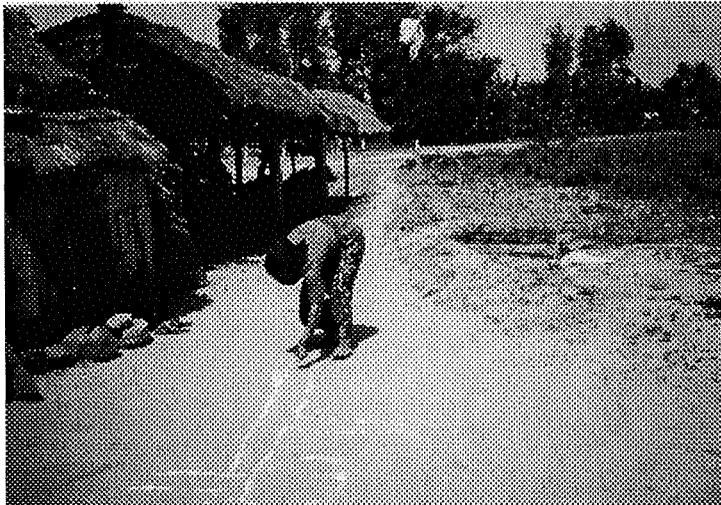
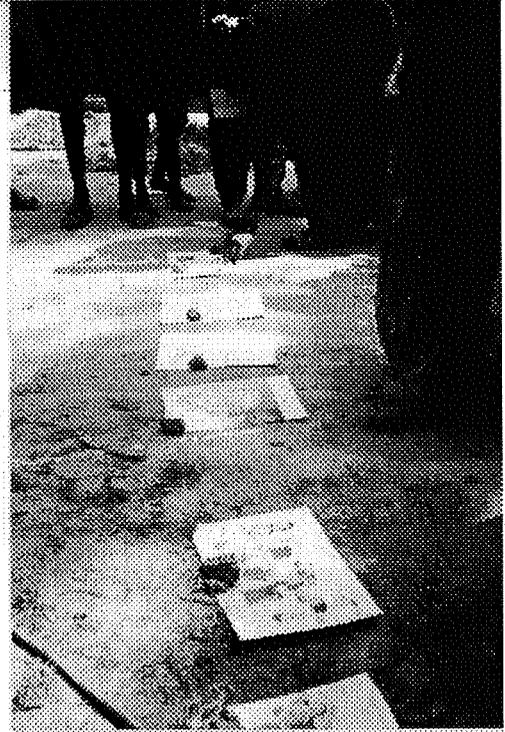
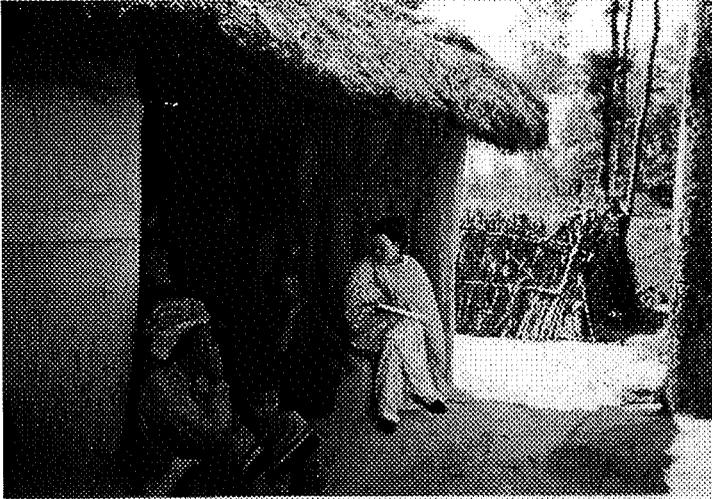
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Voting Exercise - Positive Images of Women

- we asked women to ~~then~~ choose a photo that they felt was of a positive women's situation that they like. After voting, women ~~enjoying~~ explained why they had chosen that photo.
- each individual interpreted the photos differently; a village leader greatly influenced the women (though not negatively); it would have been better if many people participated with men, women,

1	photo of two people getting married - early age marriage	1	photo of temple - religious
2	photo of wealthy home - wealth & possessions	1	rupia note - money
4	photo of woman voting - voting behavior	1	photo of man dragging woman in anger - angry husbands
7	photo of woman teacher - educated, teaching	4	photo of women in a group, as in a meeting - women's group
1	photo of man with two wives - polygamy	1	photo of pregnant woman - pregnancy
5	photo of two parents with two children - nice family	2	photo of women working to earn cash - income generation

young & old (possibly using different colored seeds to show where each group votes most heavily)

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART - VOTING
Division of LABOUR

φ	Leaf	Pen	Detail	Small circle	Big circle	Square	Star	Upward arrow	Heart	Wavy line	
ROADSIDE	CHILD CARE	ROCKY TERRAIN	HOUSE WORK	ANIMAL CARE	CUTTING ROADS	SCHOOL	CONCRETE ROADS	RUNNING WATER	HEALTH	SHOPPING CENTRE	
Shaded	Shaded	Shaded	Shaded	✓	✓	Shaded	Shaded	Shaded	✓	✓	OLD OR MORE
Shaded	✓	Shaded	✓	✓	✓	Shaded	Shaded	Shaded	✓	✓	OLD TO MIDDLE
✓	Shaded	Shaded	✓	✓	✓	Shaded	✓	✓	✓	✓	MIDDLE PAPER
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Shaded	✓	✓	MIDDLE FOR DISCHARGE PAPER
Shaded	✓	Shaded	Shaded	✓	Shaded	✓	Shaded	Shaded	✓	✓	Young OR MORE
Shaded	✓	Shaded	✓	✓	Shaded	✓	Shaded	Shaded	✓	✓	Young OR MORE

* we asked people to agree on what different age/sex groups were on in the household than one person would mark an X or ✓ (no or Yes).
 * this worked very well but using X or ✓ was difficult for everyone to easily see (use coloured beads or rocks)

Literacy Rate for Population 6 years and above by Gender in Midwestern Development Region

	1981		1991	
	Total	Total	Male	Female
Pyuthan	16.5	32.7	51.4	17.0
Rolpa	14.9	27.7	46.6	10.2
Rukum	13.8	28.8	46.8	11.3
Salyan	13.5	29.8	47.5	12.5
Dang	21.5	39.9	55.8	24.4
Banke	18.2	34.6	46.4	21.8
Bardiya	13.9	29.4	41.6	16.8
Surkhet	21.5	42.6	60.2	25.5
Dailekh	18.6	29.8	48.3	11.3
Jajarkot	11.5	23.6	38.0	9.0
Dolpa	12.6	23.3	37.5	8.4
Jumla	18.2	25.4	41.5	8.5
Kalikot	8.5	19.6	33.6	5.1
Mugu	9.5	22.0	37.9	5.2
Humla	13.1	19.6	33.7	4.6
Average MWDR	16.4	31.8	47.6	16.3

Source: Population Monograph of Nepal, 1995
Central Bureau of Statistics,
National Planning Commission Secretariat
Kathmandu, Nepal

Regional Comparison

	East. Region	Central Region	Western Region	Midwest Region	Farwest Region	NEPAL
Population (%)	24%	33%	21%	13%	9%	20 m
Total Land Area	19%	19%	20%	29%	13%	14,718,100 ha
Arable Land as % of total land	24.6%	24.4%	16.1%	6.9%	9.7%	15%
Irrigated Area as % of cultivated Area	43%	37%	31%	26%	34%	36 %
Cereal Production	28%	31%	21%	12%	8%	5,878,660 mt
Oilseed Production	15%	38%	17%	15%	16%	165,560 mt
Potato Production	33%	37%	13%	11%	6%	780,380 mt
% of Cattle	25%	22%	19%	21%	13%	7,359,300 no.
Number of Grain Mills	1,113	2,473	1,438	409	296	5,729
Female Literacy	29.2%	24.6%	28.9%	16.3%	13.3%	25%
Credit as % to Total	15%	72%	8%	2%	3%	Rs14,220 b

Sources: Statistical Year book of Nepal, 1991 and 1995, HMG, CBS;

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