

## **Chapter 5      *Government Policies and Programs on Women***

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### **A.      Development Plans and Policies (1980/81-1996/97)**

At national level, government policies have tried to respond to women's problems in various ways. By the time of the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980/81-1984/85), HMGN had already emphasized women's involvement in all programs and projects, recognized legal impediments to their economic empowerment, and enunciated special programs for meeting their needs. The Seventh and the Eighth Five-Year Plans expanded on these themes. Required legal reforms were also to be implemented to facilitate women's participation in development. The Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992/93-1996/97), in particular, recognized the need for increasing women's representation at decision-making levels in the government, nongovernment and semi-government sectors, and for developing a monitoring system for recording gender discrimination at work. A suitable organizational structure for coordination and monitoring of activities relating to women was also envisaged.

During the Eighth Plan period, the Government formulated and presented an Action Plan in the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995). The main points of the Action Plan (HMGN, September 1995) are summarized in Box 6.

#### **Box 6**

##### **NEPAL'S COMMITMENTS AT THE BEIJING CONFERENCE**

- ◆ To revitalize women as integral rather than as sectoral beings following a life cycle approach, and to redesign "mainstreaming" programs with this perspective in sight.
- ◆ To reform laws discriminatory to women, particularly relating to ancestral property and violence against women; strengthen the law enforcement agencies for implementation of laws against violence; and provide legal as well as rehabilitation assistance to victims of violence.
- ◆ To incorporate women's needs and concerns in poverty reduction programs.
- ◆ To broaden the coverage of primary health care facilities, to reduce iodine deficiency, anemia, and maternal mortality to half the current rates and to provide immunization coverage to 90 percent by the year 2000.
- ◆ To achieve universal literacy within the year 2000, and to increase women's access to technical schools and short-term training through scholarships and quotas for female students.
- ◆ To institute within one year regulations and mechanisms to screen and audit all programs and projects from women's perspective, and to facilitate entry and career prospects for women at all levels of government institutions.
- ◆ To encourage and assist NGO's to work with community-based organizations for advocacy, institution building, and delivery of services to women.

## B. Sectoral and Institutional Achievements

The women in development (WID) policies in successive five-year plans have enunciated programs mainly in the areas of legal reform, institution building, employment and income generation, education, and health (Appendix Table A5.1). Legal reforms have been initiated in several fields, notably in facilitating women's employment and working conditions (Chapter 3). Several WID institutions, including a Women's Ministry, have been established. Employment and income generation programs have included major credit programs, technical training in agriculture, forestry, small-scale cottage industry, etc., and involvement in forest conservation and farmers' groups. Education programs have focused on increasing girls' schooling at all levels, and informal education for women and out-of-school girls and boys, especially from disadvantaged groups of population. Resources have been allocated for these components accordingly (Appendix Table A5.2). Health programs have concentrated on family planning and immunization and, in later years, on basic and primary health care and MCH services.

As regards gender-responsive institution building, both to mainstream/advocate gender concerns and to execute women/gender programs, several initiatives have been introduced at both central and local levels (see Box 7).

### Box 7

#### SECTORAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

- ◆ Establishment of a number of institutions, including a Ministry of Women and Social Welfare (MWSW), a division in National Planning Commission (NPC), and Women Development Division (WDD) in Ministry of Local Development (MLD).
- ◆ Increase in women's participation in sectoral programs, such as farmer training, forestry training, and other skills training (now 16—20 percent).
- ◆ Initiation of specific programs for women, including:
  - large national level credit programs such as Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW), Women Development Program within Small Farmers Development Project (WDP/SFDP), five regional banks, and Microcredit Project for Women (MCPW);
  - educational programs such as special provisions for female teachers, scholarships for girls, etc.; and
  - setting concrete targets for reduction of maternal mortality rate (MMR) and morbidity-related deficiencies.
- ◆ Extension of health facilities to increase the access of women and children to primary health care; expanding information, education and communication (IEC) programs for nutrition; health and sanitation information; and conducting immunization, nutrition supplement, and Vitamin A supplement programs.
- ◆ A comprehensive bill making women's right to property a little more secure and strengthening punitive measures against violence (pending in Parliament).

### 1. Central Level

HMGN's development structure is composed of the National Planning Commission (NPC) chaired by the Prime Minister, and line ministries. From a gender perspective, the Ministry of Women

and Social Welfare (MWSW) and women's machinery in NPC are most important at the national level, as their operations cut across all sectors.

Following the Beijing Conference in 1995, MWSW was created with a mandate of dealing explicitly with problems related to women. The creation of this Ministry and the inclusion of women in the Cabinet represented progress since there had been no women members of the Cabinet during the first half of the 1990s. However, the bracketing of women's affairs again with social welfare was not a positive indication. Further, the Ministry has had very few technical resources and staff to fulfill its mandate effectively. Therefore, its focus has been on gender advocacy and inter-ministerial coordination in its first two years of its existence.

Other important ministries from this perspective are Agriculture, Industry, Local Development, Education, Health, and Labor, all of which have some kind of formal organization for dealing with women's affairs. They vary from a large division (e.g., Women Development Division in the Ministry of Local Development) to a single focal point (e.g., Labor). Terms of reference are summarized in Appendix 2.

#### **Box 8**

##### **Ministry of Women and Social Welfare: Gender-Related Activities**

- ◆ Preparation and publication of a status report on women's development; review, analysis, and publication of women-related activities of selected INGOs; report on women's status in five districts; and initial preparation for establishment of an information center on women in the Ministry.
- ◆ Preparatory work for establishment of an independent Commission on Women and women's courts.
- ◆ A series of seminars at various levels on the law on women's inheritance rights and preparation of a draft law on the same.
- ◆ Preparation of indicators on women's development for monitoring purposes.
- ◆ Preparation of an Action Plan as a follow-up to Beijing Platform for Action (Appendix 3).
- ◆ Gender training and workshop for secretaries, joint secretaries, and media personnel.
- ◆ Organization of special preparatory courses for female applicants to section officer openings in the government.
- ◆ Organization of a working group for formulating policies and programs for preventing domestic violence against women, and preparation of a plan of action on violence against women.

Source: MWSW.

Given the resource constraints and lack of experience of MWSW, however, it is of crucial importance for such an important agency as NPC to have machinery for dealing explicitly with women's affairs. The roles of NPC are to approve plans and to conduct periodic monitoring and evaluation. NPC has a Women's Division mandated to review all programs and projects from a gender perspective and to coordinate programs with funding agencies. It also reviews progress on the implementation of the

Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>49</sup> However, the Division is located under the social sector instead of overlooking all sectors, which reflects the persistent perception that women's or gender issues are necessarily welfare issues.

Only three other ministries — Local Development, Agriculture and Education — have women's divisions. The Ministries of Health and of Labor each have one staff appointed as a focal point on gender issues.

The Women Development Division (WDD) in the Ministry of Local Development (MLD) is the largest of all existing WID institutions in HMGN. It is implementing credit programs such as Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) and Micro Credit Project for Women (MCPW). It has nearly 800 staff positions.<sup>50</sup> It was established in 1982 for implementing the PCRW program and has expanded continuously since. Recently its role has been expanded to include planning, programming, and administering programs for other disadvantaged groups as well. Accordingly, the Division has been renamed as the Division for Women and Target Group Development. A Joint Secretary heads it. The Division faces numerous problems, which are discussed under D-1 in this chapter.

The Women Development Division in the Ministry of Agriculture is the next largest, employing 16 staff. A Joint Secretary, a gazetted first class officer, heads it. Most of these staff, however, have a technical orientation without any expertise in gender or social mobilization.

The Ministry of Education currently has two separate units engaged in women's education development. The Women's Education Unit (WEU) is responsible for formal education for girls and women. The Non-Formal Education Program under the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) funded by the World Bank has a large-scale women's literacy program. The former has five personnel including two professionals, and the latter has 15 staff including 11 professionals.

Similarly, a Non-Formal Education (NFE) Council composed of representatives from different ministries, NGOs, and INGOs involved in NFE, has been established in the Ministry of Education. The chairperson of the council is the Minister of Education. The major responsibility of the council is to coordinate, manage and oversee the NFE policy formation process,<sup>51</sup> but it has no women's representation.

## **2. DDCs and VDCs**

With the promulgation of the new Act on Local Self-Governance, the DDCs and the VDCs are expected to play the key role in planning, programming, and implementation of development programs and projects. Government resources for local development, including the social sectors, are expected to be channeled entirely through DDCs and VDCs. As such, gender sensitivity in these institutions and their working processes acquire extreme importance in "mainstreaming" women in development and gender concerns.

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<sup>49</sup> Nepal ratified CEDAW in February 1991. However, as discussed in earlier chapters, discriminatory laws, including family laws, still exist in the country.

<sup>50</sup> MLD (1996).

<sup>51</sup> MOE, *Non-Formal Education Program Directives* (NFE Council, Kathmandu, 1993/94).

Hitherto, district and local level politicians and community leaders have shown little serious commitment to addressing gender issues, notwithstanding the lip service occasionally paid to them. The recent mandatory requirement to include a minimum level of women in local and district level elected bodies (Ordinance 1997) may contribute substantially to gender-sensitizing the locally elected political institutions in future (see Chapter 4). But the majority of these women need intensive training to increase their understanding of the administrative and political processes and of advocacy and planning for women.

### **3. Line Agency District and VDC-Level Administration**

At the time of writing, the district administrative system has no mechanism or machinery for gender sensitization, follow-up or monitoring district or local level programs, except the WD Office under MLD which is entirely focused on PCRW and MCPW. Moreover, while there are numerous women's programs at field level, much of the district administration is not even aware of them.

## **C. Sectoral Policies and Programs**

### **1. Credit**

Nepal has placed special emphasis on providing credit to women since the early 1980s. Two major programs — PCRW and the Women's Development Program within the Small Farmers Development Project (WP/SFDP) — were introduced in those days. The MCPW, funded by ADB since 1994 and administered by the PCRW office, caters to women's resource needs through local NGOs in both urban and rural areas. Five rural development banks (RDBs), one in each development region, have been established since 1990 in the public sector. They are modeled along the lines of Grameen Bank of Bangladesh and provide credit exclusively to women. Two NGOs, NIRDHAN and Center for Self-help Development (CSD), are also engaged in similar banking activities (See Appendix 4 for details). Numerous other international and national organizations also provide credit as an integral part of their community development programs. Their focus, however, is not on credit *per se* but on community mobilization.

PCRW, MCPW, and RDBs all provide credit to women through village-based branches. As of mid-July 1997, all these programs were collectively catering to the credit needs of nearly 171,000 women, lending NRs1,627 million to them — a substantial amount. Credit along with social mobilization has been found to be a powerful intervention for changing attitudes and behavior of, and towards, women. All these programs operate through groups, grant credit without collateral, and focus on small landowners and the lower middle class. The RDBs have completely dropped the requirement for collateral. The follow-up and supervision of credit is much stronger under RDB lending, interest rates are closer to market rates, and weekly repayment schedules are strictly followed. Repayment rates have been close to 100 percent and delivery costs much lower than in PCRW and SFDP, which suffered from high levels of overdue loans. PCRW and SFDP had large community development elements with various coordinated sectoral inputs, while RDBs are focused on credit along with intensive training to the groups on minimum standards of social behavior, literacy, and basic accounting. MCPW has a local NGO institutional-strengthening component besides credit. NGOs are expected to undertake both social mobilization as well as act as conduits for credit.

Almost all these programs, particularly PCRW and SFDP, have been found to suffer from problems of financial viability.<sup>52</sup> SFDP with a total operating cost of about 35 percent and PCRW with 66 percent can hardly survive with an interest income of 16—18 percent. Among the five RDBs only the one operating in the Eastern Development Region has achieved financial sustainability through increased outreach. CSD and NIRDHAN are operating with a total delivery cost of 19 percent against an operating rate of interest of 20 percent. The fund cost has been low for them at 6—8 percent, as they are getting funds from the Grameen Trust and commercial banks' obligatory allocations to priority sectors. With rising cost of funds, their financial viability might suffer. Because of financial viability and personnel financing costs, WDP/SFDP has now been completely abandoned while PCRW is being redesigned to concentrate on credit alone.

While the earlier programs of PCRW and WDP/SFDP have been evaluated many times for their impact on women, the RDB programs have not been extensively evaluated. Both PCRW and WDP/SFDP have been commended as much for their social impact as for income generation itself.<sup>53</sup> Credit was found to be necessary to receive endorsement from households, but only had secondary importance in women's empowerment. The most important element felt by women was the bonding together and the social mobilization for collective action against injustice to women. There is concern that the recent emphasis on credit may minimize the social mobilization and community development aspects of micro credit, jeopardizing the women's empowerment process. According to a recent UNFPA report, "Relegating social components to oblivion in the PCRW program may actually not be in women's interest."<sup>54</sup> One of the primary objectives of PCRW was to work with existing structures and the project provided valuable lessons for mainstreaming women in general.

## **2. Agriculture/Livestock**

As the overwhelming majority of women are concentrated in agriculture, agricultural training for women has received much attention for some time. Already in the Fifth Five-Year Plan, a policy declaration was made to have at least 10 percent female agricultural extension workers. However, as of today, there are only 111 female extension workers among more than 10,000 male colleagues. Among 11,500 staff in the Agricultural Ministry, only 176 (1.5 percent) are women. They are composed of three First Class officers, 12 Second Class and 40 Third Class, with the rest in non-technical positions.

The difficulty in recruiting female field workers derives both from the general scarcity of female field workers and the view that female workers cannot be posted in the field away from family, due to family responsibilities and lack of physical mobility. However, the successful experience with field-based women development workers in PCRW shows that, with special care in recruitment and placement, many women workers may want to work in the field. The problem is that the Ministry tries to recruit young

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<sup>52</sup> Salikram Sharma and Vishnu Nepal, *Microenterprises in Nepal: Dynamics, Prospects and Constraints* (submitted to ESCAP, Bangkok, 1996).

<sup>53</sup> IIDS, *Third Small Farmers Development Project* (Kathmandu, 1989; Centre for Women and Development, *Production Credit for Rural Women: An Impact Evaluation Study* (Kathmandu, 1989); Goonting, D. *Preliminary Research Findings. An Impact Study of Micro-Credit Intervention for Disadvantaged Groups: The case of PCRW in Nepal*) USRPD, University of Guelph, Canada, 1994.

<sup>54</sup> Meena Acharya (with Pushpa Acharya), *Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women*, A Status Report, (UNFPA, Kathmandu, 1997a).

female graduates of the Agricultural Campus in Rampur without providing sufficient incentive. There are many single and widowed women of relatively young age (25—40) for whom such work opportunities would be welcome. But they lack training, have no opportunities to further their qualifications and face severe entry limits to government jobs.

During the Eighth Plan period, there was a mandatory requirement that all farmers' groups both for crops and livestock include at least 20 percent women. Accordingly, the Five-Year Strategic Plan<sup>55</sup> prepared by the Women Farmers' Development Division (WFDD) of the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) suggested two approaches for women's development in the agriculture sector. First, qualitative interventions from a gender perspective in the ongoing programs of MOA; and, second, the development of entrepreneurship among women farmers. Accordingly, WFDD reports several examples of training in gender sensitization for farmer groups in agricultural development. According to its report, of the 3,420 agricultural groups during 1995/96, 16 percent were women's groups and only 32 percent of groups involved women. Similarly, in livestock, female groups constituted 12 percent of the total.<sup>56</sup> Thus, there is still a long way before achieving this 20 percent target.

WFDD is also initiating two programs. One is ongoing, providing revolving small credit to ADBN to be lent to WFDD's groups in eight districts. The government is providing NRs1 million each year for this revolving fund. Another program is for capacity building, transferring non-technical women professionals to technical jobs and making them focal points for the gender program. It will also place five gender experts in regional offices under the Ministry and introduce a women's commercial farmers' program in 33 districts under the World Bank-funded Agriculture Extension and Research Program (AERP). WFDD has developed 18 packages for female commercial farmers. This program for commercial women farmers is expected to be implemented in 7 districts in the current fiscal year (1998/99).

### 3. Community Forestry

Promoting community forestry is one of the main strategies adopted by the Government for forestry management in recent years. Although community forestry was introduced in the mid-1970s, the actual devolution of ownership and authority for forest management to local communities was formalized only through the Community Forestry Act (1995).<sup>57</sup> Most attempts to involve women in forest management have been sporadic and entirely dependent on personal initiatives by the forestry staff or project personnel in the mid-1980s. The Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985—1989/90) for the first time spelt out *"Participation of women will be increased in the field of forestry. Their participation in conservation, development and growth of forests will be increased. Women will be made more aware and conscious about the many sided benefits to be derived from well managed forest resources, because women can contribute remarkably."* The Eighth Five-Year Plan followed the same line.

Nevertheless, as in other sectors, the Plan failed to introduce specific measures to achieve the maximum participation of women. Several case studies indicate that, given the chance and cooperation of

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Agriculture/HMGN, *Female Farmer Development Program Progress Report* (in Nepali) (Kathmandu, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> IDS (1989).

<sup>57</sup> Ministry of Forest/HMGN, *The Forestry Act 2049 and Forest Guidelines (2051)* (Kathmandu, 1995).

the community, women can plan, manage, and conserve forest resources well.<sup>58</sup> It requires, however, a positive approach on the part of forest officials towards women's groups, and intensive work with the community — both with men and women — to explain the importance of involving women in forest management and use. Furthermore, forest officials must respond promptly to women's problems and demands, and legitimize their rights over the forests.

The Community Forestry Department has started to generate data on women's participation. According to the Departmental Data Sheet (for 30 September 1997), women constituted 19 percent of the total executive committee members of the forest users' groups. Of a total of 5,939 forest users' groups, 158 were women-only groups. Thus far, the focus has been to involve more women in the forest users' groups for planting, maintaining, and managing the forest, while little attention has been paid to how much benefit and control women gain through these programs. In addition, most of the plots managed by women's groups are tiny and cannot be compared to those managed by male groups. In some cases, it has been found that women can participate more effectively in resource-sharing in male/female mixed groups than in women-only groups (personal observation). Nonetheless, women-only groups are a good and accessible beginning to get them to participate effectively, eventually in mixed groups.

#### **4. Health and Population**

The primary aim of HMGN's health policy has been to improve health standards of the general population by making primary health services accessible to the majority of the rural population and increasing their access to modern medical facilities. In view of the primary role of women in family planning and in providing basic health care to children and other family members, HMGN's basic health care and family planning programs have targeted women since the early 1970s. The Health Policy (July 1997) sets following targets to be achieved by 2000: (i) reduction of the infant mortality rate to 50 per thousand; (ii) reduction of the under-five mortality rate to 70 per thousand; (iii) reduction of the total fertility rate to four; (iv) reduction of the maternal mortality rate to four per thousand live births; and (v) increase in the average life expectancy of the population to 65 years. HMGN intends to accomplish the stated targets through a mix of preventive, promotive, and curative health services.

##### **a. Preventive and Promotive Health Services**

Preventive health services are provided with special emphasis on programs that directly reduce the infant and child mortality rates. The programs include those related to family planning; maternal and child health; safe motherhood; expanded immunization; control of diarrhea; acute respiratory infection; tuberculosis; leprosy; malaria and Kala-Azar; control and prevention of communicable diseases and non-

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<sup>58</sup> Harihar Acharya, *Participation of Women in the Management of Community Forests in Gorkha, Nepal* (draft) (Save the Children Fund/US, Kathmandu, 1992); Deepak Bajracharya, et al., *Women and the Management of Energy, Forests, and Other Resources*, MPE series No.3. (ICIMOD, Kathmandu, 1990); Anne E. Inserra, *Women's Participation in Community Forestry in Nepal: An Analysis for the Forestry Development Project* (USAID, Kathmandu, 1987).

communicable diseases; HIV/AIDS; and the initiation of primary health services in urban slums (Appendix Table A5.3).

Promotive services include intensive information campaigns on: health information and education from the center to village levels involving political workers, teachers, students, NGOs, women, and voluntary health workers. Nutrition programs under this component include promotion of breast feeding; growth monitoring and prevention of iodine deficiency disorders; iron and vitamin A deficiency; and education to enable mothers to meet the daily requirements of children through locally available resources. Environmental health programs in this package focus on the importance of personal hygiene, the collection and management of solid waste, inspection and enforcement of clean water and food standards, and management and construction of public latrines and urinals.

### **Box 9**

#### **HMGN's Health Service Structure**

HMGN's health care system is composed of a five-tier referral system from the village to the center. Preventive, promotive, and curative health services are conceptualized as an integrated package to be delivered in the rural areas through sub-health posts at the village level and primary health care centers at the 205 electoral constituency levels. The old health posts are also to function as sub-health posts in VDCs where they are located, in addition to supervising other sub-health posts or those converted into PHCs. Sub-health posts are to be established in a phased manner in each VDC. Each sub-health post has a provision for one village health worker, one mother and child health worker and one auxiliary health worker. The sub-health posts dispense preventive, promotive, and some first aid health services at VDC level. Two emergency beds and one maternity bed are provided in each primary health care center. The latter also provide training and supervise and monitor the PHC activities of sub-health posts.

One hospital in each district and one zonal hospital each in all the 14 zones of the country are providing successive referral services. Regional and central hospitals will provide higher level services; specialists services are also to be provided through mobile units.

#### **b. Achievements and Problems**

Nepal has made much progress in building primary and secondary health facilities. For example, the number of primary health care facilities expanded from 351 in 1975 to 816 in 1988 and 2,850 in 1995. Their distribution, however, is uneven among ecological and development regions (Appendix Table A5.4). In terms of facility per population, the Terai has the lowest density. However, the sparse population and difficult mountainous topography requires more facilities per population in the hills and mountains. The Terai population, in spite of the lower density of health facilities, has better access to such facilities because of the availability of transportation, a network of private practitioners, and the closeness of facilities in northern India.

The level of women's access to these facilities is still quite limited. In 1995, there were only 1,489 auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) nationwide who were responsible for assistance during pregnancy and delivery. For the female population in the 15—49 age group, there were 7,070 women per ANM on average, a figure that was even higher in rural areas. In addition, there was a total of only 4,015 village health workers (VHWs) and 1,996 mother and child health workers (MCHWs) (Table 5.1). As a result, there were as many as 306 people for every auxiliary health worker of all kinds, including auxiliary health workers, health assistants, public health nurses, and staff nurses. Resources have been concentrated on building primary health care infrastructure in recent years, with the referral system and secondary health having received much less attention. The quality of services is also a major problem.

**Table 5.1: Number of Health Personnel in Government Health Facilities, 1995**

Facilities	Number
Doctor	852
AHW+HA+PHN+SN	6,983
ANM	1,489
MCHW	1,996
VHW	4,015

Source: HMGN/MOH (1995) Health Information Bulletin, Vol. 9.  
HMGN/CBS (1994), Subnational Population Projections Nepal 1991-2011.

Note: AHW = auxiliary health worker, HA = health assistant, PHN = public health nurse, SN = staff nurse, ANM = auxiliary nurse midwife, MCHW = mother and child health worker, VHW = village health worker

At the end of FY1996/97, each VDC had either a sub-health post or a health post. PHCs had been established in 80 out of 205 parliamentary constituencies. However, the regional and rural/urban differences in access to health facilities present a severe problem.

Improved services to women have been facilitated by the establishment of sub-health posts at VDC level with VHWs and MCHWs, the general decentralization of management of health services, and efforts to ensure popular participation through female community health volunteers (FCHVs) and mothers' groups. However, while health, family planning, and population programs are primarily targeted at women, they have often lacked gender perspectives. The primary concerns in these programs have been to ensure healthy children, fertility control, and safe motherhood, while women's special health needs and men's roles have been largely neglected.

Even when health needs of women are mentioned at the policy level, they are lost during implementation. For example, although HMGN's family planning program includes management of infertility<sup>59</sup> as one of its objectives, there is no program designed to address this issue in the family planning packages. Similarly, management of side effects, infection prevention and counseling, post-partum FP services, treatment of abortion complications, and raising awareness about late marriages form part of the strategy advocated. But no programs exist to cater to such needs. Safe motherhood targets and programs seem totally unaware of the pregnancy and motherhood related morbidity such as

<sup>59</sup> Ministry of Health, *Annual Report*, Department of Health Services 2051/52 (1994/95) (Kathmandu, 1996).

prolapsed uterus (e.g. MOH/HMGN, *Annual Report*, 1994/95) which is quite common in Nepal. Violence against women is also increasing as discussed in Chapter 3. With increasing domestic violence, and the spread of venereal diseases and HIV/AIDS<sup>60</sup> increasing the risk of family planning methods failing, health packages should pay immediate attention to such issues.

## 5. Education

Nepal's education system comprises of five years of primary education, 10—12 years of secondary education, and 3—6 years of higher technical and university education. The vocational streams usually start after 10 years of school education.

The major issues in this sector are the quality of education, the disparity in male/female access and attainment and the rural/urban and regional differences (see Chapter 3). In spite of the expansion in education facilities, the female adult literacy was only around 24—25 per cent at most in the mid-1990s and it is considered to be the main barrier to achieving the objective of 67 percent overall literacy by the year 2000. Responding to the illiteracy problem, HMGN formulated a special education policy for women in 1992.<sup>61</sup> The main objectives of this policy are to increase female literacy and educational levels through formal and informal education. The objectives and targets are to be achieved by:

- using various media channels to develop a positive attitude to women's education among the public;
- providing scholarships to girls from primary to higher secondary and proficiency certificate levels;
- facilitating girls to complete their secondary level education by providing them with hostel facilities;
- encouraging educated women to become teachers; and
- developing female teachers as community change agents.

In 1991/92, the Ministry of Education (MOE) established a separate Women's Education Section (WES) along with the initiation of the Basic and Primary Education Program (BPEP), to strengthen the school educational system. This program includes a special women's non-formal education component.

### a. Formal Education

Current efforts to increase female education relate to both formal and non-formal education. The targets set for 2011 include an equal number of boys and girls in all grades, and a gender enrollment rate (GER) of 100 percent in grades 1—5, 70 percent in grades 6—8 and 50 percent in 9—10. The Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP), which started in 1992 and is funded by the World Bank, includes special scholarships for girls at primary, secondary, and intermediate and campus levels; recruitment and preparation of female teachers; advocacy through various media channels; and follow-up and community awareness programs.

<sup>60</sup> Shanta Dixit, *Sexual Diseases Transmitted by Men in Asmita* (Kathmandu, 1992).

<sup>61</sup> MOE, *A Report on Women's Education, Primary School Scholarship Program (BPED/WEP, Kathmandu, 1997b)*.

The major emphasis of BPEP is on raising community awareness and on the encouragement of community involvement. Special efforts are made to (i) identify the problems at community level and find solutions; (ii) develop an action plan for educational awareness according to the needs of the community; and (iii) implement the educational awareness program in the community. BPEP has a strong advocacy program carried out through posters, calendars, brochures, street dramas, processions, television, and women's education activity bulletin. The prime objective is to create an awareness of the importance and benefit of women's education.

Compulsory recruitment of female teachers is another interesting component of this program. The recruitment of female teachers has expanded rapidly since 1992, when it was made compulsory for primary schools to have at least one female teacher.

BPEP has a strong monitoring and evaluation component. The main objectives of this program are to (i) identify the difficulties in implementing women's education programs at field level; (ii) ascertain how to make future programs more effective; and (iii) investigate how to make the programs more practical and functional so that substantial improvement can be made in women's education.<sup>62</sup>

For the future, private schools are expected to play a more prominent role, which would increase the financial burden on parents, discouraging girls' enrollment. Some policies are in place to mitigate such a possibility, including the proportion of female teachers (including quotas in teacher educational programs), scholarships for female trainees, separate training programs for women, and separate facilities for women in training institutions.

The need for separate sanitation facilities for girls in all schools, the elimination of gender bias in the curriculum, textbooks and examination questions, and the inclusion of gender awareness training in training programs are also proposed in the Secondary Education Program (SEP).<sup>63</sup>

#### **b. Nonformal Education (NFE)**

In Nepal, the history of providing adult literacy classes dates back to the 1950s. Since then, MOE has been providing reading and writing programs through various channels. In recent decades, many government and nongovernment agencies including INGOs have begun to conduct literacy programs, and the number of such agencies has been increasing every year. The objectives of the current NFE policies of the Government as described in MOE/BPEP 1996/97 are to:

- achieve literacy for most women over 15;
- reduce gender difference in literacy rates by increasing women's literacy; and
- develop functional knowledge and skills to promote a healthy environment at home and in the family and community.

NFE for women comprises three elements, i.e., basic literacy, postliteracy and skills' training (Appendix 5).

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<sup>62</sup> MOE, *Mahila Sikshya Gatibidhi* (Kathmandu, 1995 and 1996/97).

<sup>63</sup> MOE, *Secondary Education Perspective Plan* (Kathmandu, 1997a).

Another MOE program is *Chelibeti*, directed to school-age girls who are not in school. It aims to prepare them for school entrance at appropriate levels, and is particularly popular among the rural population. Similar programs are also implemented for out-of-school boys from disadvantaged groups.

### c. Achievements and Problems

Progress in education and literacy was discussed in some detail in Chapter 2. Educational facilities have expanded rapidly to meet the increasing demand. The number of schools expanded from 14,332 in 1981 to 30,748 in April 1996, and the number of teachers from 46,288 to 121,599.<sup>64</sup>

The student/teacher ratio has improved significantly, and the proportion of female teachers has also gradually increased. Before the implementation of the policy on the mandatory recruitment of female teachers, women teachers formed only 12—13 percent of the total number of school-teachers compared with the current 19 percent (Appendix Table A5.5).

Between 1987/88 and 1995/96, a total of 110,389 people received adult education through nonformal education classes sponsored by MOE.<sup>65</sup> Since 1991, NFE programs and activities have been conducted on a much larger scale by NGOs and INGOs, which have contributed to accelerating the women's literacy process by about one percentage point a year.

The Ninth Plan Approach Paper<sup>66</sup> reconfirms the targets and approach to women's education. The Government's policy is to develop remote communities and disadvantaged groups through NFE, with priority given to those areas where the literacy rate is very low.

The Center for Educational Research Innovation and Development (CERID) has conducted a small-scale qualitative review<sup>67</sup> of the NFE programs of selected agencies. It found that literacy has been successful in bringing positive changes to rural communities where NFE has been conducted. The participants of literacy classes showed a tendency to use new skills, and were more articulate in expressing their needs. However, literacy classes that do not offer skills other than reading, writing, and computation are not as popular as integrated ones.

The review also concluded that there has been a little change in women's lives and everyday practices as a consequence to literacy classes. The participants gained knowledge and understanding of various subjects, but they did not change their behavior in the area of health and sanitation. Similarly, they learned about and discussed women's issues through the classes on women's empowerment and women's rights, but they did not lead to them to change their behavior. To make the programs more effective, the review recommends that men also need to be included in classes on health and sanitation and women's issues.

<sup>64</sup> MOF, *Economic Survey* (Kathmandu, 1997).

<sup>65</sup> MOE (1996/97).

<sup>66</sup> NPC/HMGN, *Revised Approach Paper to Ninth Plan* (Nepali, 1997).

<sup>67</sup> CERID, *Impact Study of Adult Education in Nepal* (Kathmandu, 1997a).

Another review by CERID<sup>68</sup> on secondary education has also pointed to the lack of administrative capacity and coordination among agencies involved from the central to school levels as one of the major obstacles in implementing girls' education policy and programs. For example, in most cases, the scholarships do not arrive at school on time. In certain cases, the schools are slow to prepare the necessary documents, thereby delaying the receipt of scholarships. In other cases, the District Education Office (DEO) itself is slow to distribute scholarships to schools due to frequent changes in personnel or other administrative reasons. Similarly, the lack of clarity on their scholarship policy among local education administrations and/or schools is also reported. Head teachers and school management committees (SMCs) are not sensitive to gender issues either. Some head teachers are not even in favor of having female teachers. Moreover, the communities are not closely involved in school activities, and local initiatives to promote girls' education are negligible. DEOs do not have specific policies to promote girls' education in their respective districts, and schools lack basic physical facilities such as toilets for female teachers and students.

## **6. Skills Development and Other Training**

### **a. Government/Semi-Government Sector**

HMGN has tried to involve women in various training programs for many years. The first Women's Training Center was established in Kathmandu in 1956. Successive development plans have been emphasizing skills development training for women since 1975. Numerous small training-cum-income generation projects have been initiated for women by government, semi-government, and various private sector and foreign agencies in the last 40 years. In the Eighth Five-Year Plan, HMGN provided credit, technical know-how, entrepreneurship training, and market services to women. The Ninth Five-Year Plan promises to increase women's participation in all technical, entrepreneurial, and management training. But major training institutions such as the Academy of Local Development, the Cottage and Small Industry Development Board (CSIDB), the Labor Department's Skill Training Centers, and the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT), have only started to consider training for women. Private sector initiatives are limited in nature and not very accessible to women due to their high cost.

### **The Academy of Local Development and Women's Training Centers**

Prior to 1993, there were five women's training centers, one in each of the five development regions. Since 1993, all training institutions under the Ministry of Local Development have been reorganized into semi-independent bodies within the Academy of Local Development Training. There is one training center in each region under the Academy providing various leadership and community development training programs. There are two women's training centers, of which only the one in Kathmandu is running at full capacity. Currently, each center receives budget allocations only for staff and administration. The Women's Training Center (WTC) in Kathmandu runs regular training programs for women development officers (WDOs) and other staff of PCRW. Other types of training programs for

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<sup>68</sup> CERID, *Gender and Secondary Education: A Study Report* (submitted to Secondary Education Project/Cambridge Education Consultants Ltd., 1997b).

women are conducted on a demand basis. WTC/Kathmandu has started some gender training as well, but programs are still minimal. Other institutions under the Academy of Local Development Training have yet to consider integrating gender issues in their training courses.

### **Cottage and Small Industries Development Board (CSIDB)**

CSIDB has been focusing on training on skills development and entrepreneurship for the rural population. It trained 9,071 people in FY1996/97 in the areas of food processing, baking, hair dressing, sewing and knitting, candle making, bee keeping, wool spinning, computers and typing, masonry, carpentry, basketry, entrepreneurship development, etc. However, it does not maintain gender-disaggregated data, and it is estimated that about 20 percent of its trainees are women. They participate mostly in traditionally female subjects, such as typing, computers, and sewing and knitting. Only since 1995/96 has CSIDB started a Women Entrepreneur Development Program to improve the capability of women entrepreneurs and to promote potential women entrepreneurs. Since only two women officers are assigned to the program, it has been able to organize only a few training courses that have benefited 348 women.

### **Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT)**

Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) is responsible for the overall development of technical education in the country. It is responsible for operating 10 public sector technical schools, two VTCD programs, and one Technical Teachers Training Institute. Although the Council's planned programs and activities for the coming five years include gender sensitivity in curriculum development and the development of special training programs to meet the needs of women and other underprivileged groups, only a few short courses have been organized for women so far.

### **Industrial Enterprises Development Center (IEDC)**

The focus of the IEDC has been to develop entrepreneurs in urban and semi-urban centers. It assists small-scale industries in expansion activities and business management through information, consultancy, and training services.

IEDC conducts mainly three types of training: (i) training of trainers; (ii) new business creation, which deals in motivation, business idea generation, marketing development and business plan preparation; and (iii) management training, which concentrates on marketing, finance, accounting, and management. As of February 1996, it had conducted trainers' training courses for 419 participants, of which 116 were women. Similarly, in new business creation and small business consultancy, 549 women had been trained.

### **Hotel Management and Tourism Training Center (HMTTC)**

HMTTC caters to the growing needs for skilled personnel in the tourism sector. It provides both primary and on-the-job training to personnel required for the hotel, travel agency, trekking agency, and other related sectors. As of December 1994, HMTTC had trained 7,923 people in its various short-term courses, of which 18.2 percent were women. Available data, however, do not indicate the extent of women's participation by course, possibly reflecting HMTTC's indifference to gender equality.

### **The Skills' Development Training Centers**

The Skills' Development Training Centers (one each in the five development regions) under the Labor Department have also been conducting various skills development programs at different levels. These Training Centers train about 5,000 persons per year, but the Labor Department keeps no gender-disaggregated information. There appears no specific curriculum provided for to women. According to one case study (the Training Center in Parbat), most applicants for the sewing and knitting courses are women and, for typing courses, the applicants' gender balance is about equal. However, there are high dropout rates. According to the manager of this Center, these are due to a lack of prior market surveys, needs assessment and appropriate course materials. He also indicated that women trainees dropped out because of marriage. Furthermore, the dropout rate was much higher in urban areas.

### **Achievements and Problems**

Overall, skills development training for women at the above mass training institutions is still very traditional and concentrated on cutting, sewing, knitting and weaving, etc. When skills have been taught for small-scale cottage industries, the viability of these industries and the marketability of their products have been ignored. Women have been unable to receive a fair wage for their labor and have therefore abandoned the activity subsequently. There is still a general tendency to assume that women's labor is "free": i.e., women's time has no opportunity cost. Hence, low-return activities are forced on women, and they eventually lose interest in them. This is particularly true for poor women for whom survival is their prime concern. Furthermore, training programs for women are not systematically institutionalized and they lack any meaningful follow-up.

In addition, program packages are not designed to cater to the poor. For example, it is difficult or almost impossible for the poor to enroll in skills training programs, since the educational requirements for entry are often too high for them.

#### **b. NGOs and the Private Sector**

Aside from the Government, there have also been some initiatives from the nongovernment and private sectors to enhance women's skills in business enterprises. For example, the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (WEAN) was established in 1987 as an NGO to promote women's entrepreneurship in the country. Its membership is open to women entrepreneurs from all over the country. It offers different training in enterprise development, small business management, practical marketing, establishing and maintaining accounts, skill enhancement, and other related subjects. Further, WEAN has established a cooperative society as a marketing outlet for products of its members. It has also started a group savings and credit program among its members. Similarly, the Association for Craft Producers (ACP), registered in 1984, is another major organization providing different training and marketing and design services to small-scale craft producers, especially women. Currently, it is working with 824 craft producers. Another prominent organization working towards women's skills enhancement and subsequent socioeconomic status is Janakpur Women's' Development Center (JWDC). The center provides training in different skills to the illiterate Maithali women of Janakpur district. Paintings and crafts produced by these women are marketed by the center. Its major area of concentration is Maithali paintings. Different funding agencies have been supporting such initiatives financially and technically, and are working towards their financial sustainability.

## D. Implementation Issues

This review of selected policies and programs directed at women indicate that, at the planning level, appropriate policies and programs exist in many areas. Translating them into action, however, has been difficult. Women's concerns and needs tend to be marginalized and lost during implementation. The structure and attitudes of the executing machinery are of crucial importance in this context.

The major reasons for difficulties in implementation derive from (i) lack of efforts in and understanding of the concept and process of mainstreaming at the sectoral levels; (ii) marginality of the women's programs in sectoral goals; (iii) inadequate capacity of women's institutions where they exist; (iv) lack of women's machinery in other important ministries; (v) dependency of WID institutions on donor support; (vi) lack of any effort to recruit and promote more women at or to higher decision-making levels; and (vii) lack of gender sensitivity at district level both in terms of institutional structures and gender awareness. Some of these are discussed below.

### Box 10

#### Key Issues in Implementation

- ◆ Gender insensitivity of the sectoral and project implementing agencies in general
- ◆ Lack of capacity for gender analysis and gender planning in WID institutions
- ◆ General insensitivity of major training programs to gender issues
- ◆ Insufficient efforts to include women's representation in decision-making roles
- ◆ Lack of interest in women's programs at the district level and absence of a coordinating mechanism
- ◆ Lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

#### 1. Marginality of WID Institutions

As discussed earlier, WID institutions, including the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare (MWSW), are inadequately staffed and funded. For example, MWSW has only nine professional staff, headed by a joint secretary. It is also responsible for child issues. The women's division in the NPC is headed by an undersecretary who ranks only fourth in the NPC hierarchy and does not have sufficient authority to enforce necessary decisions through the various sections of NPC and/or sectoral ministries.

The ministries of Health and Labor have one staff each appointed as focal points on gender issues with very few resources or programs. Although legal reform and the prevention of violence are priority issues for women, the Ministries of Law and of Home Affairs have no women's unit.

The Women Development Division (WDD), under the Ministry of Local Development with nearly 800 staff positions, faces numerous problems, the most important of which is its permanent "temporary structure and temporary staff." Funding Agencies have funded the whole structure for the last 17 years. There is, therefore, a lack of a sense of ownership by the Government, which is why its 'temporary' nature persists. Some of the most capable female staff have left, because they could not cope with their permanent "temporary" status. In addition, while the WDD has been upgraded and expanded,

it has lost its original vigor and thrust due to overly complicated bureaucratic procedures. As Pradhan notes, "Bureaucratic concepts of power, government structures, seem to take over as WDD/PCRW moved to a higher echelon of the government structure" (1995).<sup>69</sup> Added to this is the increasing direct intervention of funding agencies, thus imposing further bureaucratic layers. PCRW is a good example of how gender programs and gender ideologies become constricted and diluted in the process of regularization.<sup>70</sup>

Another major aspect of marginalization is lack of budget. Institutionalizing budget allocation has been especially difficult in the case of mainstreaming as opposed to women-specific activities.

## **2. Lack of Expertise for Mainstreaming**

### **a. Central Level**

Even in the cases where work programs have been developed and budget and staff allocated, there is a general lack of understanding of the concept and practice of "mainstreaming." The inconsistency of WID efforts with mainstreaming is most glaringly reflected in the training program of the Women's Cell in the Ministry of Labor, which has an annual knitting and sewing training program for 150 women in rural areas. However, the Cell pays no attention to the nature and content of large-scale training programs provided by multiple training institutes under the Labor Department. The Cell is not even able to provide gender-disaggregated data on non-women-specific training programs. The lack of needs' assessment and market studies are considered to be major barriers to designing appropriate programs for women at the training centers. The training programs often reinforce the gender stereotypes rather than provide new kinds of opportunities for women. The Cell is hardly aware of these problems.

### **b. DDC and VDC Levels**

As discussed earlier, the district administration has no current mechanism or machinery for gender sensitization, gender mainstreaming, or monitoring. The only office that caters to women's interests is the Women's Development Section, which is implementing women-specific activities of PCRW and MCPW. As such, gender sensitivity hardly percolates to local levels even when programs are directed at women.

For example, even the Education Ministry, which deals directly with literacy and enrollment levels of women and girls, has paid no attention to raising the gender awareness of its implementing machinery: such as the district education committees (DEC) and the district NFE development committees, established to improve the effective implementation of formal and informal education programs at the local level.

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<sup>69</sup> Beena Pradhan, *Assessment of PCRW: Towards Future Strategies* (draft prepared for UNICEF). Kathmandu (1995).

<sup>70</sup> M. Acharya (1997a).

Similarly, while the district agricultural and forestry offices are required to maintain gender-disaggregated data on farmers' groups, such data are neither processed nor analyzed regularly at district level.

### 3. Lack of Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

Incorporating gender concerns in the monitoring and evaluation of all development programs is crucial to ensure gender mainstreaming in their implementation. In fact, this is the most neglected area, as evident from the lack of gender-disaggregated data and women-specific indicators. The regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms — such as quarterly reviews in the Planning Commission, National Development Council (NDC) meetings or Parliament — rarely discuss gender implications of development policies and programs<sup>71</sup>.

Forms designed by NPC (NPC, September/October 1993) for the quarterly and annual monitoring and evaluation of development programs, however, do reflect some gender concern. Many forms require gender-disaggregated data. Yet, the attention given to gender breakdowns is quite uneven among the forms applicable to various ministries. Surprisingly, in spite of the overwhelming importance given to women in health programs, the data related to infant deaths and immunization rates, the incidence of various diseases, the number of recipients of nutrition or vitamin supplements, are not required to be collected by gender. Only hospital patient information is reported for men and women separately.<sup>72</sup>

This lack of attention to gender-specific information is more acute at sectoral levels. Only when projects have special components on women does WID monitoring take place. Most reporting formats cover only technical aspects, whether or not they are funded by external agencies. The Ministry of General Administration does not publish data on government personnel, broken down by categories and gender. Even the *Annual Report* of the Department of Health Services (1994/95) has little gender perspective in its reporting formats when not reporting on programs specifically directed to women.

Further, even where gender-disaggregated data are provided, they are rarely adequate to explore the level of benefit and control by gender. For example, the newly-designed National Forest Users' Group (FUG) database form requires two kinds of social data to be reported: the total number of members in community forestry committees, and the user group's income and expenditure during the fiscal year. Only the number of women participants in the committees is required to be reported, whereas it would have been useful if percentage of forestlands, income and expenditure were also reported separately for male and female groups.

At the district level the situation is worse. There are numerous women's programs at field level. The district administration is rarely aware of such programs. Gender-specific data are not collected, consolidated, or analyzed at district level. The sectoral units have no interest, time, or resources for gender analysis. Some of the offices, however, forward gender-disaggregated data to women's unit in the respective line ministry when requested. Even in the health sector, no gender-disaggregated information is processed by district administration, even on such simple things as health posts and hospital visits.

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<sup>71</sup> M. Acharya (1997a).

<sup>72</sup> NPC, "Reporting Forms for Various Ministries and Departments" (1993).

### **E. Looking Forward: The Ninth Plan and Women's Empowerment**

The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997/98-2001/02) Approach Paper issued by the NPC in 1997 changes the approach to women's problems to a certain extent along the lines of the Beijing Platform for Action. With regard to women's issues, its main objectives of development policy are specified to involve women actively in various development fields, to increase women's access to political, economic, and social sectors, and to promulgate legal reforms to ensure women's equal legal rights. Equal participation of women is to be promoted by incorporating specific policies, targets, and programs for women in sectoral development policies and plans. Special laws are promised for increasing women's participation at all levels of decision making, for establishing women's rights in landownership and for technical training in all fields. Specifically, the policies enunciated are divided into three major categories, namely, mainstreaming, eliminating gender inequality, and empowerment (Box 11).

At the policy level, HMGN has included international concerns and accepted that women as half of the nation's population need to be empowered in their own right, and not only for increasing the efficiency of development programs and projects *per se*. Because of political instability, the Ninth Plan has been under preparation for almost two years. Successive governments have revised it. Since it is still under preparation, how the policies on women will be integrated into ministerial or departmental programs is not clear as yet. Committees have been formed by the Women's Division in NPC for coordinating sectoral programs, but the sectoral ministries have little interest in such committees. Most of the sectoral subcommittees constituted for the preparation of the five-year subsectoral plans at departmental level do not have women represented on them. For example, many of the committees responsible for preparing five-year plans on crop, vegetable, fruits, or livestock had no women's representation, despite the overwhelming importance given to women's participation in the *Agricultural Perspective Plan (APP)*.

The translation of the Plan's objectives into practical programs is going to be a difficult task. The sectoral chapters in the Approach Paper for the Plan, except on education and health, are mostly silent on how to ensure women's participation in their programs. For example, the Chapter on implementation specifies policies for ensuring access of marginalized groups to the fruits of development, but women are not specifically mentioned as being part of such groups. In addition, there is no mention of the importance of gender sensitivity to the implementing machinery, rules and regulations, and to the process of development administration.

**Box 11****HMGN's Ninth Five-Year Plan: Gender Strategy****Mainstreaming**

- ◆ Formulation of clearly defined policies, targets, and programs at national and regional levels
- ◆ More scientific and realistic calculation of GDP statistics to include women's contributions therein
- ◆ Consolidation, expansion, and further development of existing institutions dealing with women's issues; establishment of an effective mechanism to coordinate all these institutions
- ◆ Development of gender-disaggregated indicators and strengthening of monitoring and evaluation mechanism to measure women's participation in development

**Elimination of Gender Inequality**

- ◆ Review of all laws discriminatory to women and their reformulation to incorporate gender equality
- ◆ Affirmative action policies and programs to reduce current inequality in economic social and other areas
- ◆ Strengthening of punitive, rehabilitation and other measures to protect women's human rights against all kinds of violence by coordinated efforts of government, nongovernment, and local institutions
- ◆ An institutional arrangement for education, training, and publicity on eliminating gender biases from policy to implementation levels

**Empowerment**

- ◆ Special legal provisions for mandatory representation of women in formulation of policies and programs at all levels — from local to national
- ◆ To ensure women's rights in ownership of land, agricultural training, marketing, and other income-generating activities
- ◆ Development of a health system based on the healthy life-cycle approach to a woman's life, particularly to ensure wider access to qualitatively-improved facilities for safe motherhood, delivery, etc.
- ◆ Continuation and expansion of programs such as female student scholarships, recruitment of female teachers, and special facilities in technical education
- ◆ Increase women's participation in all technical, entrepreneurial, and management training, and their access to institutional credit, other resources, and assets for income generation so that they can benefit from employment in various fields
- ◆ Introduce and encourage adoption of technological improvements in agriculture and other fields so as to reduce the drudgery of women's work and increase their productivity

Recently, the Ministry of Women's Affairs prepared an Action Plan as a follow-up to HMGN's commitments during the Beijing Conference (Appendix 4). The Action Plan lays down in detail policies, strategies, and programs required for implementation for each of the 12 issues identified by the Beijing

Platform for Action. It also identifies responsible institutions for each of the actions required. Some of the relevant recommendations have been incorporated in Chapter 8 of this study. However, the Action Plan is only a recommendation from the Ministry of Women to HMGN. It is not an official document for which HMGN is responsible for action, unlike the Ninth Five-Year Plan of HMGN. Further, major issues are not placed in a Nepalese context nor are they strategically prioritized. The policies and programs recommended are repetitive and only generic in nature.