

## **Chapter 8**                      **Proposed ADB Medium-Term Gender Strategy**

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### **A. Assessment and Lessons Learned**

Considerable experience in dealing with women's issues has been gained in the past two decades. It indicates that an exclusive focus on women as an analytical category and on efforts to cater to their practical needs for food, shelter, basic education, and primary health are not sufficient to build a society with equal opportunities for women and men. In the absence of necessary structural and attitudinal changes, the prospects for their extensive involvement in programs and projects would be poor.

As discussed in Chapters 5 and 7, the focus thus far in most assistance programs has been on women's actual participation. But gender experts have repeatedly pointed out that, while participation is a necessary condition, it is not a sufficient condition for empowering women or for achieving an equitable resource distribution. It has also been pointed out that problems of gender equity may not be sufficiently achieved within the anti-poverty programs alone<sup>77</sup> (see Box 12). Women's "practical" day-to-day needs may be fulfilled to a certain extent with overall growth and the reduction of poverty, but their "strategic" needs to achieve empowerment may be addressed only through interventions directed at benefit-sharing and equity in ownership and access to resources. A step-by-step approach to elevating women's participation to empowerment and a practical monitoring mechanism with clear indicators on empowerment need to be developed.

The Asian Development Bank has committed itself to implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. In its recent policy paper, ADB emphasized the shift from a narrow WID approach to a more dynamic GAD approach, "based on considerations of social justice and gender equity, as well as on substantial evidence that investments in women are vital to achieving economic efficiency and growth."<sup>78</sup> Against this conceptual background, ADB's gender policy is being translated into practice through mainstreaming gender considerations in its macroeconomic and sector work, lending and technical assistance operation, and the increased number of projects in health, education, agriculture, natural resource management, and microcredit with GAD as primary or secondary objectives.

However, several reviews from a gender point of view of ADB early projects in Nepal have not been favorable. One review by CIRDAP concluded that in general the Bank projects were not addressing gender issues adequately.<sup>79</sup> It noted that, even when women's components were included in projects, they were lost during implementation due to the nonexistence of any mechanisms for monitoring and subsequent impact evaluations.

Through the portfolio review in Chapter 7, it was also found that while ADB's Country Strategy for Nepal proposed the integration of women's concerns in all its projects, serious gender consideration started to appear only in recent projects. Many projects have been macroeconomic in nature whose micro impacts on specific groups have rarely been considered.

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<sup>77</sup> CIRDAP (1995).

<sup>78</sup> ADB, *The Bank's Policy on Gender and Development* (1998).

<sup>79</sup> CIRDAP (1995).

**Box 12****From Participation to the Empowerment of Women:  
Achievements and New Strategy**

From a review of developmental efforts in Nepal, Acharya (1997) writes, "Nepal has reached a stage on women's issues where the implementation aspects are most crucial. Right policy enunciation has been made at the macro level, but there are no mechanisms to implement them either at the macro, meso, or micro levels. Women have gained somewhat in terms of educational and health status and political awareness, but gender differences in terms of access to resources and positions of power have changed little, in spite of much rhetoric. Attitudinal changes required for effective implementation of policies and programs on women have been rather slow to materialize .....The social attitude towards women has not changed much either. The family is still seen as the primary responsibility of women and good marriage and motherhood as the "ultimate goals" for them. This has affected various educational, development, and credit programs adversely. Girls are withdrawn from schools and skills development programs before they complete the courses because they have to be married off, credit cannot be granted to the unmarried women because they shift their residence on marriage, they must start motherhood early because otherwise they will be stigmatized socially, they must bear constant domestic violence because that is the only shelter they have, etc."

The *Human Development Report* (1996) concluded that such constraints have been somewhat universal. It clearly states that, in spite of much progress in many developing countries in the preceding five decades, the structure and quality of growth has not been satisfactory everywhere. It has been a "jobless, ruthless, rootless, voiceless and futureless growth." It has been very inequitable to women. In the same vein, the Beijing Platform for Action stated that "most of the goals set out in the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women have not been achieved. Barriers to women's empowerment remain despite the efforts of government as well as NGOs and women and men everywhere." Highlighted, in particular, were the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women; the inadequacies and inequalities in access to education and training, health care, and related services; the violence against women; the unequal access to power and decision-making roles; the inequalities in economic structures and policies and in access to resources; the bias in the mass media and the communications system; and inadequate mechanisms at all levels to promote women's interest and advancement.

Consequently, the task set by the United Nations for the forthcoming decades is not only to increase women's participation in development but also to empower them in such a way that they can bring about fundamental changes in those socioeconomic structures, institutions, and attitudes that reinforce or/and introduce new forms of gender inequities. HMGN has set itself the triple task of *mainstreaming, eliminating gender inequality, and empowering women* in the Ninth Plan Approach Paper and the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare has prepared a detailed Action Plan for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action.

Moreover, in most cases, benefits for women are still based on "trickle-down" effects, while experience elsewhere shows that, without a special mechanism, women as a group do not benefit as much as men do. Project design should consider effective targeting of women where necessary.

Even where ADB projects have targeted women, the marginalization of the women's component within the overall project framework is also a source of concern. For example, although the women's component in the Upper Sagarmatha Agricultural Development project is progressing better than other components, their exclusive focus is on *small* savings and credit activities. There is a lack of attention given to cross-communication with other project components, which is accelerating the isolation of the women's component and hampering gender mainstreaming. Moreover, the lack of any unit at district level to gender-sensitize the other components of the project has marginalized the women's component. Effective linkages between women's components and other components of projects must be institutionalized from the very beginning.

### Box 13

#### Inadequate Gender Considerations in ADB-Funded Programs

- ◆ Lack of micro-level gender impact assessment
- ◆ Lack of effective targeting of women where necessary
- ◆ Marginalization of small "women's components"
- ◆ Insufficient gender training of project staff and other practitioners
- ◆ Lack of attention to women's empowerment while too much emphasis placed on women's physical participation
- ◆ Lack of thorough implementation strategies to address gender issues
- ◆ Attitudinal problems and lack of understanding on gender issues by its staff
- ◆ Failure to address women's property rights issues
- ◆ Gender not being institutionalized in monitoring and evaluation

Where women's income-generation activities are targeted, inadequate assessment of women's needs and of the marketability of the skills taught and products manufactured in the skills' development programs will lead to problems. The experience of the Upper Sagarmatha project again provides a good example.

Implementing gender-related activities often face difficulties due to a lack of understanding of gender issues and a lack of seriousness by project staff and other personnel involved. Training in gender awareness for all levels of staff involved is essential.

The management of agriculture/livestock/natural resources is an area of potential for women but also one of possible problems, as activities here are mostly land-based and women have very little access to land. First, therefore, broader legal issues of women's property rights need to be addressed in all related projects as well as part of policy dialogue. Second, women's participation should be seen as a first step to their empowerment rather than as a tool for the "efficient" use of human resources. In fact, given women's time and spatial constraints, additional project activities could impinge on women's optimum time management.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, unless projects provide sufficient incentives for women to

<sup>80</sup> N. Bhatt *et al.* (1994).

participate, their participation will not occur. Projects need to go beyond the "physical" involvement of women to the actual empowerment of women.

Monitoring and evaluation in ADB projects is a serious concern from the gender perspective. Even the project completion reports (PCRs) and project/program performance audit reports (PPARs) completed since 1993 — i.e., since the incorporation of gender as one of ADB's five strategic objectives — continue to be silent on the impact of projects on gender (see Table A7.3 in Appendix 1 for documents reviewed). The list of lessons learned prepared in December 1997 does not include any analysis of gender. Moreover, PCRs and PPARs on such projects as the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation and Second Livestock Development projects do not specify the experience gained in involving women in the projects or the projects' impact on gender relations or women.

In order to translate ADB's gender strategy into practice, more careful planning and designing of implementation and monitoring mechanisms is required. Even though the Third Livestock Development project specifies that benchmark indicators on project progress should include the extent of female participation in livestock activities, the impact assessment on decision-making may still be left out during evaluation unless there is a clear follow-up mechanism.

As discussed above, the major issue is how to elevate the focus from "how many women participated" to "to what extent were women empowered". Indeed, some programs or projects have tried to relate women's participation to empowerment through such channels as: the provision of opportunities for women's decision-making; increased income generation opportunities for women; freedom from violence within the domestic and public arenas; and changing the image of women as vulnerable victims to active agents for change. Moreover, ADB should not shy away from discussion of the legal rights of women, especially property rights.

## **B. Overall Strategy**

The ADB's overall mid-term strategy in Nepal focuses on poverty reduction through broad-based economic growth, human development, and sound environmental management. The list of pipeline projects (Appendix Tables A8.1 and A8.2) suggests that rural and urban infrastructure, water supply and sanitation, education, tourism, energy, and institutional development are likely to be the main sectors addressed over the medium term. Governance and capacity building are also likely to be important concerns for ADB and other funding agencies alike.

The ADB's gender strategy in Nepal should be formulated in the context of its overall gender strategy for the region and of its sectoral priorities in the country. Accordingly, policy dialogue should focus on legal reforms and the sensitization of government, semi-government and nongovernment structures and general operational modalities to gender concerns. Its interventions should include assistance for capacity building for gender analysis, gender planning, and designing gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in general.

Technical assistance (TA) activities, because of their experimental nature, could address issues that cannot be addressed immediately with loans. Non-tangible activities such as gender training or NGO strengthening would be good candidates. ADB's gender strategy in Nepal should include several TAs for capability building for women's national machinery including MWSW and women's cells in various ministries. Gender training for policymakers at the Staff College and capacity-building for the gender-

related programs of NGOs, including gender-based violence, should be an integral part of ADB's strategy (see Table A8.3. for specific suggestions).

### C. Policy Dialogue

*Legal Reform:* Legal reform is a priority of the Ninth Five-Year Plan. Reforms for equal property rights and an increase in women's representation at higher political and administrative levels are also priorities for Nepalese women. ADB's policy dialogue should support legal reform as part of its discussions on the Ninth Plan. Simultaneously, at project level, equal land rights in resettlement areas and equal access to public resources such as community forestry could be included as project conditions, as relevant.

*Gender Sensitization:* Gender sensitization is necessary at all political and administrative levels because, no matter what manuals are provided, the translation of programs into action depends primarily on human attitudes. Since gender bias is so ingrained in social attitudes, it is necessary to sensitize people to various visible and invisible indicators of it. It has to be considered as an ongoing process rather than as a one-time event because of the high turnover of personnel at district level and new recruits to the political leadership.

*Women in Government Administration:* The recruitment of more women to responsible positions in government administration in general and to ADB-funded projects in particular could be another area for policy dialogue. A good basis for dialogue is the amendments to the Civil Service Act (May 1998), which should facilitate the regularization of the Women Development Division and MLD Office and their staff in government service. They should also allow for the entry of older and more experienced women to higher level positions. Vacancies in district-level positions of women development officers and the low morale of PCRW staff have been major constraints in microcredit projects. Regularization of PCRW's structure and the filling of staff vacancies should improve the project delivery system significantly. ADB could facilitate the entry and promotion of more women to responsible government positions as part of the forthcoming loan on Civil Services Sector Program. Potential components could include

- ◆ TA for conducting special training for women candidates who want to take the public service examination; and
- ◆ Policy dialogue with the Government focusing on the possible introduction of special considerations into public service examinations for 4-5 years. These considerations could include setting separate kinds of general knowledge examinations for men and women entrants; or
  - filling certain positions, such as gender experts, or certain staff positions in social sector projects, only with women; and/or
  - lowering minimum entry qualifications for women for a specified period of time; and/or
  - setting a 20 percent quota for women's recruitment.
- ◆ Special attention to the following issues in ADB-assisted projects:
  - local recruitment for local positions;
  - providing adequate resources for transportation facilities, pair work, housing facilities for female staff; and
  - applying gender-sensitive tests to all advisory and other staff in project management.

*Decentralization:* The impact of decentralization on women's status thus far has not been favorable. Theoretically, the decentralization of authority and decision-making should allow local stakeholders, including women, more opportunities to participate. In reality, however, this has not taken place, since women are under-represented not only at the central level but also at district and village levels in both administrative and political positions. At the same time, as in other programs, the efficiency of service delivery in gender-specific programs such as girls' education and maternal and child health has not been great, due to a lack of coordination between the central and local administrations. These issues must be discussed during policy dialogue on decentralization (see also Section D below).

## **D. Capacity Building**

Providing for gender-sensitization programs in all capacity-building projects would facilitate capacity building in relevant agencies. ADB could assist the Government in capacity building both at central and district levels. This could be facilitated by the recent appointment of a gender specialist in the ADB's Nepal Resident Mission (NRM). The terms of reference of this gender specialist include: (i) implementation assistance to executing agencies; (ii) gender training for executing agencies and NRM staff; (iii) close monitoring of projects focusing on women; (iv) active participation in the in-country Donor Coordination Group on Gender (currently ADB is rarely represented); (v) liaison with the Government and especially with its focal points for women; and (vi) maintaining close links with in-country women's NGOs.

### **1. Central Level**

(a) *Women's Ministry and women's divisions or cells in sectoral ministries and departments:*

These institutions lack staff and resources for fulfilling their mandates effectively as reviewed in Chapter 5. Sectoral ministries also lack gender expertise to mainstream gender concerns. Assistance should be provided for building institutional capabilities for gender analysis and for monitoring and evaluation within the Women's Ministry and line ministries and institutions where applicable.

(b) *Development of a regular monitoring and evaluation mechanism and procedures:*

Effective monitoring is a major issue in all programs. Monitoring mechanisms need to be developed as an integral part of the monitoring process in the Planning Commission. MWSW should be assisted in developing its own mechanisms to monitor and evaluate development programs from women's perspectives. It should be helped to develop indicators for measuring the actual impact of various programs on women's social status and the process of empowerment. ADB could assist NPC, MWSW, and the Ministries of its priority sectors in this regard.

(c) *Development of a training infrastructure for gender sensitization:*

Gender sensitization is essential for all staff (male and female) in MWSW and other women's divisions/cells in various ministries, as well as for district and grassroots level workers. Various training

institutions within and outside government structures, e.g., Rural Training Academy, Staff College and women's training centers (WTCs), universities/colleges, and private sector/NGO training institutions need resources and expertise in designing and integrating gender sensitization materials in their various courses. In particular, WTCs, the Rural Training Academy, and the Staff College could be assisted in regularizing gender training in their own training calendars. A review of all their training materials and the integration of gender perspectives in their training would help to sensitize development programs to gender concerns.

A realistic assessment of NGO activities and their impact on development is also a high priority. The quality of service delivery and organizational sustainability vary greatly among NGOs. While a few NGOs have emerged quite well at national level, a large number of NGOs at district and regional levels lack expertise and have little capacity of service delivery. ADB could assist in assessing the capacity of Nepalese NGOs and then strengthen their service delivery through its TAs attached to loans, as in MCPW.

Women's NGOs at central level have been more successful in advocacy and training than in sustainable group work or delivery of services. To support their networking for advocacy and to build their capacity for gender sensitization and training, ADB could provide support through its regional technical assistance modality.

## **2. District Level**

### *(a) DDCs, VDCs, and the district level development administration:*

District level political bodies and line agencies have no gender expertise for mainstreaming gender concerns. With the Decentralization Act (1997), all development programs and projects are supposed to originate from the grass roots. As such, gender expertise is required from VDCs to national levels. ADB could initiate a dialogue with the Government and UNDP (which is implementing the Participatory District Development Program [PDDP], see Chapter 7) for setting and regularizing a mechanism for gender sensitization of the planning and implementation processes from village to the national levels.

Currently, PDDP has four officer-level staff at its district units (PDDP 1996), one each in the fields of agriculture, engineering, social development, and information management. These officers are expected to help DDCs in institutionalizing participatory planning and information systems, establish linkages with line agencies, and provide sectoral technical inputs to the sectoral committees of the DDCs.

The inclusion of a woman officer in the PDDP unit with exclusive responsibility for following up on the integration of women's/gender concerns in all sectoral, VDC, and DDC programs should be considered for two reasons. First, without it, the integration of women's concerns in all plans and programs is likely to remain outside the regular planning process. Secondly, with no monitoring and follow-up mechanisms, women become marginalized with token representation in sectoral plans and programs formulated at the VDC and district levels. Alternatively, a social development officer could be assigned with the specifically defined task of providing a gender perspective to all DDC and VDC level

development activities including gender monitoring. He/she should spend at least 50 percent of his/her time on gender-related activities.

A second option would be to restructure the current Women Development Office operating under MLD at district level to function as a gender coordination office at District level. The problems of WDD/MLD — i.e. the permanent "temporary" nature of budget and staff and the creation of a large organization that loses its original focus on women — were discussed in Chapter 5. In addition, with the increasing availability of credit programs through rural development banks and other financial intermediaries such as NGOs and cooperatives, direct group organizations and credit preparation functions could be gradually divested from PCRW to these other institutions.

WDD and WDO should be assigned the functional responsibility for monitoring and supervising the incorporation of women's concerns in all sectoral district and VDC level programs. They should also organize and facilitate gender training for politicians and for administrative and field staff at VDC/DDC levels, and supervise and monitor the Microcredit Program implemented through NGOs. They should report progress to the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, as necessary. This unit could be placed under MWSW or MLD. Since ADB is already involved in microcredit, it could initiate a dialogue for structural change.

## **E. Stand-Alone Projects**

The ADB's strategy should also broaden the scope of stand-alone projects for women in cases where women and children predominate. For example, education and skills' development projects could be initiated for women and children working in carpet factories and the service sector.

It is necessary to increase the scope and depth of mainstreaming by providing women with employment opportunities in nontraditional sectors such as paper manufacturing, software development, organized trading, etc. In Nepal, even the so-called traditional sector such as garment making is monopolized by immigrant male labor. Training for sewing and knitting is widespread but not adequately linked to work in organized garment manufacturing industries. The apparel industry is also male dominated. A study could be commissioned under a TA project for CTEVT to explore possibilities for employing women in nontraditional sectors.

Targeting training at particular groups would increase its efficiency: for example, providing training to tailors and cobblers because many are losing their jobs due to the availability of mass-produced and imported items. The existence of minimum educational requirements and the lack of information make it difficult for the respective service castes to obtain training.

ADB could also assist the MWSW, along with the police force, in the development of a monitoring system for violence against women in general and trafficking in particular. It could conduct an extensive anti-trafficking campaign with the involvement of local community groups, teachers, NGOs, political leaders, and social workers. A further possible project intervention could be a focus on opening special employment avenues for those women who want to quit commercial sex work and for those who have returned from sex-centers in India or overseas. MCPW could make special provision for these women.

Some special income-generating projects are needed immediately to cater to the needs of

adolescents and young women. Currently all government or nongovernment programs refuse to involve unmarried girls on the pretext that they leave on marriage. Women's credit groups and the financial institutions, in particular, exclude them from their activities. Thus the most vulnerable (for example, to trafficking) and receptive group is left out of all income-generating programs. This reinforces their need to marry rather than provide them with other livelihood options.

## **F. Cross-Sectoral Strategies**

### **1. Social Mobilization, Group Formation, Nonformal Education, and Credit**

Social mobilization, group formation, nonformal education, and credit are considered to be powerful intervention strategies for reaching women effectively and for their empowerment across all sectoral programs. ADB should continue its emphasis on them as relevant. Group mechanisms provide a basic condition and scope for women's development and subsequent empowerment. Women who are initially shy and lacking in confidence in public slowly gain the confidence to express their opinions in public and may develop leadership qualities.

Savings and credit as an initial inducement for group formation serves a useful purpose in bringing women together. It also could help women to raise household living standards to some extent and to meet emergency needs from group funds at reasonable interest rates. It empowers women to the extent that household members and the women themselves feel that they are contributing to the maintenance of the household. This recognition by themselves, their immediate family members, and the local community seem to be the most valued aspects of these small savings/credit and income-generation programs. Women who form groups are also ultimately able to influence certain community actions of benefit to women, e.g., banning alcohol misuse in villages.

However, forming sustainable groups takes time. Sufficient time must therefore be allowed for their mobilization, growth, and maturity, while the ownership of collective assets — e.g., group savings, community forestry, irrigation facilities — seems to be a necessary element for group sustainability.

Functional nonformal literacy classes must also be an integral part of the group mobilization process in both rural and urban areas. Education is a necessary element in the empowerment of women. Women feel greatly empowered when they can read and write. They feel proud to be able to sign their own names instead of having to use thumb prints on credit transactions and other official and nonofficial papers, and to be able at least to read signboards.

Furthermore, to increase the empowerment of women, improving gender relations must be an integral part of all social mobilization programs. Field observation reveals that women are often aware of oppressive gender relationships in their own community but are powerless to do anything about them. When programs shy away from such problems, women become apathetic to them. A recent example illustrates this point. A Muslim women's group from Banke was concerned that a social mobilization program being implemented in the village was not dealing with their gender problems. These concerned the fact that local politicians were organizing gambling parties and selling alcohol instead of helping women to curtail such activities. As a result, they lost interest in VDC planning and credit programs, and had seen how other women in neighboring villages had improved their gender status vis-à-vis men by campaigning for prohibition of alcohol and gambling.

## **2. Emphasis on Disadvantaged Groups**

Along with its emphasis on gender, ADB should place special emphasis in its policies on increasing the access of disadvantaged groups to tangible and intangible assets. The women of disadvantaged groups are doubly oppressed, first because of their social status and, secondly, because of being women. It was noted in Chapters 3 and 4 that gender disparity in socioeconomic indicators is greater in some socially disadvantaged groups than others. For example, the lower the income stratum, the higher the gender disparity in education. Educationally, the regions of MWDR, FWDR, and Mountains in particular need attention. Moreover, while the health status of the Nepalese population in general is acute, the access issues are worse in rural areas and mountains.

### **G. Sectoral Issues and Future Strategies**

The main strategy in sectoral interventions should be mainstreaming as laid down in the ADB's gender policy and HMG's Ninth Five-Year Plan Approach Paper. Mainstreaming at sectoral levels, however, needs to be directed at creating maximum access to sources of employment, credit, technology, and educational and health facilities. At sectoral level, emerging gender issues related to ADB lending in Nepal may be summarized as: (i) incorporating gender perspectives in all programs and projects; (ii) sensitizing implementation mechanisms to gender concerns; (iii) ensuring that measures initiated to improve gender equity in project benefits are adequate; and (iv) developing indicators and mechanisms to monitor and evaluate project impact on women not only in terms of their participation but of their empowerment as well.

#### **1. Agriculture/Livestock**

The agriculture sector employs the largest number of women. Much of Nepal's agriculture, especially in the hills, depends on women but women still form less than 20 percent of the trainees in agricultural training programs. Notwithstanding the rhetoric, limited effort and resources have been spent on improving the efficiency of seed selection, weeding, and harvesting, although women's occupations are concentrated on these operations. Women's programs are still marginal to sectoral objectives and targets, and training programs and administrative regulations still do not facilitate women's advancement in spite of their extensive participation in agriculture. Very few women are represented at decision-making levels. Finally, lack of access to land and other resources severely limits women's choice in agricultural decision making.

ADB's agricultural programs and projects should target women as major actors in agriculture and not as minor participants. The *Agricultural Perspective Plan* (APP) prepared with ADB assistance explicitly seeks to ensure women's participation in agricultural programs through staffing and attitudinal changes rather than through having separate facilities for them. APP expects to benefit women from the expected high growth of dairy production; rapid growth in high-value crops; specific efforts to ensure women's participation in research, extension, credit, and oversight; and access to fertilizer and irrigation. In this context, ADB should pay attention to the following recommendations in its assistance programs:

- ◆ all agricultural extension and leader farmer training programs to involve both men and women on a 50:50 basis;
- ◆ special emphasis to involve women in the Terai;
- ◆ initiatives for developing and disseminating women-friendly technology for energy, food and fodder, in particular, in seed selection, postharvest cleaning and weeding;
- ◆ encouraging women's groups in natural resources management; and
- ◆ ensuring women's equal access to land, natural resources, and other assets (at least in ADB-assisted projects).

In the livestock sector, in addition to a 50:50 involvement of women in all programs at each stage of the project cycle and in all kinds of activities, special attention is needed to improve the technological basis of women's traditional animal care methods, and to design special credit and extension programs that cater to women's specific needs and educational levels.

Traditionally, small girls and women have kept goats or poultry, the income from which they have been able to use for themselves. They should also be encouraged to raise cow and buffalo calves for sale. This would open new avenues of employment and income for poor women as evident from the experience of many poor women's groups organized under the PCRW program.

Livestock projects should have separate programs for animal raising and milk producing activities. This is because milk production for commercial purposes using high quality animals is an expensive and risky undertaking. Women do not have the space or resources for this kind of activity on their own. Traditionally, rearing calves up to breeding stage and raising animals for meat have been a more practical activity for landless and marginal households and women. Furthermore, dairy products and fresh milk production are commercially viable only in areas accessible by road. This factor limits the scope for this activity as a poverty reduction strategy in remote and difficult areas. But these are precisely the areas in which poverty is concentrated. Alternative means of intervention need to be developed for such areas.

Special provisions for lending to unmarried young women are needed in all livestock projects. Currently they are mostly excluded from such projects for reasons mentioned earlier.

A fodder development program for poor households and women is essential. Scope for livestock activities as a source of income for poor households is declining, due to the increasing shortage of free grazing lands (Box 14). The development of community fodder lands for these households must be an integral part of all livestock projects. Community forestry may relieve this problem to some extent but livestock and community forestry projects have rarely gone together in such activities.

**Box 14****The Disappearance of Free Grazing Lands**

The disappearance of free grazing lands has been vividly illustrated by the food scarcity in Humla District of the Far-Western Development region in 1998. An article entitled *Community Forestry: A Curse to Humli (people of Humla district)* in the 7 June 1998 *Desantar Saptahik* (Weekly Newspaper) quotes the opinion of the Simikot VDC (District Headquarter) Chairman, Mr. Pamamutup Lama, in the following manner, "The Community Forestry has destroyed an important part of our livelihood. Till six years ago, a Humli household used to raise more than 500 sheep in an average. There were pastures for the grazing of sheep. The sheep trade had been the mainstay of the Humla economy. In the winter the sheep used to carry salt and clothes from Tibet through Dailekh, Bajura, Kalikot, Acham to the Terai and then carry grains from the Terai to Tibet. Transportation of salt, clothes and grain in these districts used to be through people of Humla. Until two years back, we could graze the sheep through these districts by paying NRs1,000 royalty annually. But with the initiation of community forestry in these districts, the forest users groups have not only prevented sheep to graze in the forest but they have even restricted the sheep to pass through these forests." According to this, since sheep-raising is a traditional occupation of the people of Humla and the mainstay of the district's economy, the Government must therefore, devise a way to encourage this business in Humla.

**2. Rural Infrastructure**

Rural infrastructure includes rural roads, irrigation facilities, rural energy sources, and rural markets. ADB's future strategy in Nepal is likely to focus on building rural infrastructure building to boost broad-based agricultural development. Women have appreciated such projects because they can benefit from them in several ways. Currently, ADB has several rural infrastructure projects. In most hill areas, men migrate to urban areas in Nepal or to India in search of employment. Hill women seem to welcome the employment opportunities generated by projects in their own localities. With new employment opportunities, women expect their husbands to stay at home. They also expect to be employed themselves and to receive assistance for starting small businesses. But specific attention to women's concerns in such projects has been minimal. ADB's future strategy needs to:

- ◆ ensure that women are provided with equal ownership and user rights in all transfers of public assets in these areas;
- ◆ encourage women's participation in decision-making in user groups; and
- ◆ specify how specific gender policies are to be achieved at project level.

ADB's current rural roads project seeks to include at least 20 percent women in the road construction work force but how this might be achieved is left unattended. The shift of focus from new construction to the maintenance of roads created more opportunities for community user group-based

contracts. This allows more employment opportunities at local levels. It is also likely to generate a greater sense of ownership of roads among the local population. However, it will need special measures to ensure equal employment opportunities for needy women in such projects. With specific efforts women are found to be working with their own brigade, for example, in Beni-Arughat road in Gorkha, under a project assisted by GTZ. These efforts should be studied for replication on a wider scale in ADB projects.

### 3. Education and Training

Education and training issues include social constraints on girl's schooling and rural/urban and regional gaps in female education levels; heavy workload of girls, specifically for those above the primary school age groups and low quality of public school teaching; the rigidity of formal schooling hours; the high cost of girl's education; the lack of innovation in all out-of-school training directed at women; the lack of needs assessment and marketing research; and the lack of gender sensitivity in training materials, and inappropriate methodology and training patterns.

ADB projects in the education sector should pay specific attention to gender-equity issues and ensure marketability of skills taught. Specific strategies for the education sector should include:

- ◆ continuation of revisions to books and reading materials, recruitment of female teachers, and the wider provision of scholarship programs for girls;
- ◆ integration of gender as a specific subject in all primary/secondary school teacher's training;
- ◆ provision for special schools in low caste localities because children from low castes are often mistreated by teachers as well as by students in mixed schools
- ◆ community-based local NGOs could be assisted in opening and managing special boarding school facilities for children in situations of special risk;
- ◆ provision for incentives for specifically disadvantaged areas and educationally disadvantaged caste/ethnic groups, both in the hills and in the Terai;
- ◆ specific efforts to cater to girls in the 10-17 age groups, for example by splitting school hours into two, four-hour shifts, allocating more resources for girls' hostels, providing more scholarships to girls, recruiting and training more female teachers, and providing day-care centers attached to schools, etc; and
- ◆ giving special attention to gender issues in physical structures and buildings funded by ADB, e.g., convenient toilets, special reading and common rooms for girls in selected areas where strict *purdha* is practiced, etc.<sup>81</sup>

In particular, it is considered that, since ADB is involved in teacher's training at primary and secondary levels, gender sensitization should be included in *all* training programs, irrespective of subject. This will help to sensitize the future generation to gender concerns.

Training in skills' development should match the needs of the area where it is given. For example, training in computer skill can be useful only if concentrated in and around urban areas, while training in sewing, knitting, and textile-making should be concentrated in those areas where good

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<sup>81</sup> CERID (1997).

employment opportunities in these occupations exist. Only then can women use them to generate incomes. An example in point is the knitting industry. This is generating good incomes for women in and around the Kathmandu and Pokhara valleys while in the Far West region it has failed. Moreover, training programs could be made more useful if they were conducted in consultation with the private sector.

Since the decentralization of management decisions has become an urgent efficiency issue in education, this should be a priority condition for lending to the sector. Resistance to decentralization is visible in BPEP management and further ADB lending should be conditional on the actual decentralization of management structures and the activation of school management committees (SMCs) occurring. SMCs should be left free of political intervention, and given total power over school management including a role in pay scales, incentives, hiring and firing of teachers, etc. SMC members should be parents of the children in the school rather than politicians. It should also be a condition that a certain proportion of SMC members should be mothers of children in the school.

#### **4. Health and Nutrition**

Malnutrition in Nepal is widespread and most of the health problems originate in the lack of sanitary facilities, health awareness and reproductive health, including maternal mortality. Maternal mortality arising out of malnutrition and the lack of ante-natal and post-natal care is the largest killer of women. A severe lack of trained health personnel to deal with ante-natal and post-natal care at village level is a major problem. There are urban/rural and regional disparities in access to health facilities. Moreover, the lack of knowledge about reproductive health needs other than family planning, and ante-natal and post-natal care is a major constraint on planning health services in this field. Surveys have not yet provided this kind of information.

Inefficiency of the whole health delivery system is a major issue. As in the decentralization of education, so the decentralization of the health management system and an increase in community participation are crucial to improving its systemic efficiency. The health sector strategy should continue to advocate decentralization of decision making to various levels. Gender sensitivity of the programs can be ensured in two ways:

- ◆ Selected mothers or other women's groups in the village should constitute the main representation on Sub-health Post (SHP) management boards. This management board should be given complete power over the SHP management including a role in pay scales, hiring and firing of staff, etc.
- ◆ The health sector strategy should continue its emphasis on MCH services and training of lower level health professionals on ante-natal, post-natal, and delivery care on a priority basis.

At the same time, there should be a slow shift of emphasis from an exclusive focus on MCH to reproductive health as required by Nepal's commitment at ICPD (1994) and the Beijing Platform for Action. The recommendation of MWSW on ensuring women's health in accordance with the lines laid down by the Beijing Platform for Action include a series of measures, of which the following may be relevant for any health sector projects financed by ADB:

- ◆ targeted health information extension program including STDs and AIDS;

- ◆ involvement of men in all sanitation awareness, FP, AIDS, and other extension programs;
- ◆ incorporation of health education in school textbooks;
- ◆ establishment of adolescent health care and information centers including treatment of HIV and AIDS;
- ◆ extensive gender training to all health personnel and communities; and
- ◆ establishment of a gender-oriented health monitoring unit which should include NPC, MOH, and other related agencies; this should establish a system of gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis on health issues.

Of particular interest to ADB in this lending could be the incorporation of health information in school textbooks, the establishment of a women's health monitoring system in MWSW, and special emphasis on male roles in water supply and sanitation along with greater involvement of women in the management of water supply facilities. Long-term participatory research to ascertain the health needs of adolescent girls and boys and women's other reproductive needs besides mothering should also be funded.

## **5. Water Supply and Sanitation**

A review of water supply and sanitation projects and a discussion with the lead sociologist in the project reveal that the involvement of a few women in users' groups is not an effective way to encourage women's actual participation. Therefore, the project should:

- ◆ aim for more majority-women groups in male out-migration areas;
- ◆ recruit and train more women technicians;
- ◆ provide intensive training in gender issues, group organization, and technology to women and men technicians;
- ◆ include men in health and sanitation users' groups;
- ◆ include gender issues related to male/female division of labor in the household and public arena on matters related to health and sanitation; and
- ◆ include women's representation in the steering committees at various levels

## **6. Tourism and Other Urban Employment**

Lack of appropriate training, dangerous working conditions and wage discrimination are the major gender problems faced by women in this sector. Child labor — especially young girls — seems to be employed extensively in the textile sector, particularly carpets. A lack of laws on sexual exploitation in the workplace is another problem. Moreover, the lack of accurate data on various aspects of industrial employment including tourism is felt to be a major constraint on the analysis of nonagricultural employment and of workers' perceptions, problems, and needs.

Women entrepreneurs face severe problems in terms of access to credit and marketing networks. Technological innovation is needed to support them to reduce production costs, to improve product specialization, and to explore markets. ADB should incorporate the following gender strategy for tourism.

It should support a separate program for women entrepreneurship development to mainstream women in business activities. The present skills development training provided by different organizations are traditional and lack business management and networking components. As such, these programs have not been able to promote women entrepreneurs in spite of their good intentions. To start with, a national study is necessary to clarify the psychological, social as well as technical problems that the women face in business management and, to recommend solutions. For example, women's limited mobility and access to technological innovation are two major constraints besides credit in the production and marketing of goods. The study may suggest the establishment of a separate institution to assist women in this field. A few nongovernment organizations — such as Women Entrepreneurs' Association of Nepal (WEAN), the Association for Craft Producers (ACP), the Janakpur Women's Development Center (JWDC) — are presently working in this field. However, they operate on a very limited scale. Similar efforts are needed from the government sector as well. Streamlining institutional credit facilities to suit the requirements of women entrepreneurs and legal reform to ensure property rights to women are essential for this purpose. A general awareness campaign to enhance the status of entrepreneurial activities and entrepreneurs through the public media is also recommended.<sup>82</sup>

Women's access to credit could be facilitated through facilitating the direct access of institutions such as WEAN and ACP in Kathmandu, the Association of Cottage and Small Industries in Nepalgunj, and JWDC in Janakpur to NRB funding. Such associations could also be assisted to explore marketing opportunities and to reduce costs through the provision of technical assistance.

Other measures for the urban sector should include:

- ◆ continuation of women's involvement in the management of tourist facilities as planned under the eco-tourism component of the Second Tourism Development Project;
- ◆ ensuring 50:50 participation of women and men in all related training because the tourism sector employs many women but they are concentrated mainly in traditional jobs such as clerks and receptionists. Few women have reached the higher levels of the organizational hierarchy;
- ◆ establishing a fund for the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers and public education packages to prevent trafficking, drug use, alcoholism, and the spread of STDs and AIDS, etc. in tourist areas; and
- ◆ providing adequate and equal access to credit for individual women in the tourism sector to enable them to expand their business.

## **7. Energy**

The most pressing energy sector issues for women include access to various kinds of energy including fuelwood for cooking. Community forestry projects have generated much interest among women in last few years and should be further expanded. The bio-gas ovens distributed widely have made women's lives much easier and women appreciate them.

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<sup>82</sup> Jyoti Tuladhar, *Factors Affecting Women Entrepreneurship in Small and Cottage Industries in Nepal: Opportunities and Constraints* (ILO and SIDA, 1996).

In Nepal, ADB's energy sector lending in the near future appears likely to focus on medium-sized hydro-electric power stations. A major social problem with such projects could be the involuntary resettlement of the people in the project areas. Usually, compensation and income assistance have been targeted at household heads and female family members have been bypassed. In the case of female household heads, they are more vulnerable than male heads to such external changes in terms of acquiring new knowledge and access to new resource bases. Therefore, special measures have to be taken to monitor that women family members and female heads of households receive adequate compensation and rehabilitation assistance, as appropriate.

Furthermore, any assistance given to resettled families and small businesses should include women on an equal basis. Since these energy projects will also generate considerable employment in construction and opportunities for technical training in maintenance, efforts should involve women in such activities to the largest extent possible. At the same time, women's needs and concerns regarding the design and location of resettled sites must be reflected through their participation in resettlement planning. This will be particularly important for determining the location of the house (to facilitate access to water and fuelwood) and the design of the house to allow enough ventilation for cooking.