

**Report
on the Study Tour to the NGO Forum
for the Fourth World Conference on Women**

**Beijing, China
1995**

By
HMG/JICA Community Development
and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project
HMG/JOCV Greenery Promotion Cooperation Project

Department of Soil Conservation
Ministry of Forests and Soil
Conservation, HMG Nepal
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Foreword

Under the Technical Exchange Programme of the HMG/JICA Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project (CDFWCP), four members from the Department of Soil Conservation, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, HMG Nepal, and a Japanese WID expert of the CDFWCP have participated in the NGO Forum on Women for the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Huairou, China, from 26 August to 8 September 1995.

It has been extremely useful for all of us to participate in such a meeting in order to exchange our experiences and ideas and gain knowledge about other activities on women in the world. At the same time, we had an opportunity to present our paper on *Gender and Community Development and Natural Resources Conservation in the Western Hills of Nepal* at our workshop held at Huairou on 2 September 1995. Many people have participated in our workshop and given us positive responses to our presentation. We have also displayed pictures and posters on the situation of women in Nepal and forest and watershed conservation programmes which had been prepared by the Department of Soil Conservation.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude for HMG/JICA CDFWCP to kindly provide us an opportunity to undertake this study tour as well as JICA China Office who had offered us generous assistance during our stay in China and those who had supported us to make this tour possible.

Yumiko Tanaka
Coordinator of the Study Tour
WID Expert, CDFWCP
Pokhara, January 1996

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(1) Purpose

The main purposes of this study tour were as follows:

- 1) To exchange knowledge and ideas on gender issues with participants from other countries,
- 2) To present the paper on *Gender and Community Development and Natural Resources Conservation in the Western Hills of Nepal* at the workshop to be held during the Forum, and
- 3) To learn innovative methods to be applied for HMG/JICA Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project and HMG/JOCV Greenery Promotion Cooperation Project to be implemented in Kaski and Parbat Districts

(2) Duration

The duration of the study tour was from 26 August to 8 September 1995.

(3) Members

Five members have participated in the Forum:

1) Yumiko Tanaka	WID Expert HMG/JICA Community Development Project Forest/Watershed Conservation Project
2) Samuyukta Rajbhandari	Assistant Ecologist Department of Soil Conservation
3) Indira Mulepati	Soil Conservation Assistant Department of Soil Conservation
4) Yamuna Kandel	Soil Conservation Assistant Department of Soil Conservation
5) Manju Shrestha	Soil Conservation Assistant District Soil Conservation Office, Kaski

(4) Daily Schedule

Date	Main Programme
August 26	Kathmandu - Bangkok
27	Bangkok - Beijing
28	Visit to JICA China Office, Embassy of Nepal
29	Registration with NGO Forum in Huairou
30	Global Tent to receive programme, Opening Ceremony
31	Inaugural ceremony, Session of Education in Japan, Session on struggles for women's equality
September 1	Session on women's role in community environment and economic development, Session on women's power in family, office and community, Preparation for our workshop
2	Session on legal rights for women in Nepal and trafficking of Women, Presentation of our paper at the session on Gender and Community Development and Natural Resource Conservation in the Western Hills of Nepal
3	Session on media, culture and communication, Session on community development through women's activities, Panel on empowerment of women, Session on women in environmental conservation, Cultural programme of China and other Asian countries.
4	Field visit to Ming Tomb and Great Walls
5	Session on institutional mechanism and financial arrangements and strategies, Session on UN strategies on gender equity, Session on adult education for rural women, Girl child labour in Asia, Women's rights are human rights.
6	Conference hall to attend Ms. Hilary Clinton's speech but could not enter, Plenary session on strategies for the future, Session on women's sustainable alternatives for managing natural resources, Visit to Global Tent for collection of books
7	Session on women in transition and population growth in Nepal. Bhutanese refugee women in appeal, JICA China Office to report about the Forum
8	Departure from Beijing.

(5) Summary of the Study Tour

There were about 35,000 participants from over 180 countries to participate in the NGO Forum on Women held in Huairou and the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing. The team of HMG/JICA experts participated mostly in the NGO Forum on Women from 30 August to 8 September 1995.

The main theme of the Forum was to look at the world through women's eyes. The opening ceremony was held at the Olympic Stadium in Beijing on 30 August. Ms. Irene Santiago, Executive Director of the NGO Forum on Women, officially opened the ten-days meeting, proceeded by Ms. Mongela's speech and a Chinese representative.

The inaugural ceremony was held in Huairou on 31 August. The keynote addresses were made by the video sent by Ms. Aung San Suuchi of Myanmar and Ms. Hunan Aswari, leader of the Palestinian Citizen's Right Activist.

During the Forum period, a large number of workshops and seminars were held in Huairou, regarding all kinds of women' issues, i e., human and legal rights of women as basic human rights, violence against women, education for women, politics and women, health and sanitation, family planning, structural adjustment and women, science and technology, media and women, environment and ecology, etc.

Ms. Hillary Clinton, the wife of the President of the United States, has visited Huairou and made a speech on human rights. She mentioned that it is time to act on behalf of women and women will not gain full dignity until their human rights are respected and protected. Unfortunately, the HMG/JICA team was note able to attend the session due to the limitation of entrance by the Chinese authority. She placed the importance of the NGO's role to enhance the women's rights. Importance of the girls education was also emphasized.

The HMG/JICA team presented a paper on *Gender and Community Development and Natural Resources Conservation in the Western Hills of Nepal* at Huairou on 2 September 1995. More that 60 people from Japan, USA, Nepal, Norway, Denmark, India, China and other countries have actively participated in the workshop and exchanged ideas and experiences. Ms. Makiko Arima, Representative of the Japanese Government delegation, Ms. Yoko Suzuki, WID Expert of JICA, Tokyo, also participated the the workshop. The HMG/JICA team also presented a lot of pictures and posters to provide the visual images of

Nepal in general and information about the natural resources conservation activities in Nepal. A video film on forest conservation programme of Nepal was also shown during the presentation of the paper.

The HMG/JICA team has attended various workshops as listed in the daily schedule. Each member has learned the lessons as stated in the following part.

(6) Lessons Learned by Nepali Counterparts

1) Lessons learned by Manju Shrestha

It was the first time that I have participated in the international conference held outside of Nepal. I have learned various things about the situation of women in the world through having participated in various sessions and discussions of the NGO Forum on Women. The lessons I have learned were as follows:

- Attitude of human being at all level must be changed,
- Commitment must be continued for women to come up,
- Women's organization must become active for the development,
- Male members should not feel it is the challenge of women but they should feel it is the opportunities to share their work together,
- The quality of the women's work should improve and women need to get similar opportunities with men in every aspect of life.

2) Lessons learned by Samyukta Rajbhandari

I have observed the following points during the sessions I have attended:

- It has been observed that clothing, culture and languages were different all over the world, but problems, pain and joys were the same.
- It was realized that women being the backbone of society, and they must be ensured in decision-making processes,

- For the empowerment of women, literacy should be given as higher priority because educated women can play vital role in development of community and nations,
- Almost everywhere women's contribution is not recognized. They are unrewarded and undervalued. So there must be laws to provide basis for equality because gender equality is essential for the sustainable development of the country, and
- It was also realized that violence and sexual harassment against women is one of the serious problems in most countries. Therefore it must be stopped in all places. In the Third World countries like Nepal, trafficking is one of the main problems which must be strictly prohibited. Some of the Nepali participants raised the issue of trafficking by workshops and mass meeting in front of the participants from other countries

3) Lessons learned by Indira Murepati

As the conference was attended by thousands of participants from more than 180 different countries, they presented different papers and discussed the women's issues faced by the whole world. However, the core topics of the papers remained similar because the slogan of the Conference was "Look at the world through Women's Eyes". In this way, an international understanding must be established for the progress of women all over the world.

Ever since human beings came on the earth, both male and female struggled together for better life and advancement of civilization. Thus, women are also liable to get all the same opportunities and rights as men. The lessons learned from this World Conference on Women were as follows:

- In many countries, women even do not get right for voting, which is directly the violation of human rights. Such kind of tradition should be abolished from all over the world.
- Actually women are backbone of society, because they take care of their families and look after their children. However, they are not supposed to plan their own families, which is extremely uncompromising for a mother. Such type of concept should be changed.

- In the developing countries, the girls are supposed to bear unnecessary burden. So they want to get rid of this burden as early as possible. Then the result is female infanticide. Although there is a law against female infanticide but its application is not so strict.
- Dowry has been a great problem for the poor people in such countries as India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Many newly married brides are burnt to death due to unfulfillment of committed dowry. The tradition of dowry should be declared as a crime.
- In the poor countries, due to the lack of education women do not know even about the consequences of being trafficked. So the education system should be made in such a way that more and more female could enroll.
- Poverty has been like a synonym for illiteracy in poor countries. Since most of the societies are male-dominated, female are deprived from the sunshine of education. Alleviation of poverty through effective programmes should be done.
- People are different from different parts of the world. But women's feelings, anxiety and joy were similar and their sorrows and joys from different parts of the world were shared during the Conference.
- There should be more opportunities for women to interact within and outside of the country. We came to know that women's organizations including government and NGOs should work together to solve the problems concerned with women all over the world.

4) Lessons learned by Yamuna Kandel

The main issues of the NGO Forum on Women were the role of women in development works of nation and making peace in the global context. Besides these, violence against women especially trafficking of women has got high priority among the participants from developing countries. The lessons learned were as follows:

- The question of under developed countries is different from that of the developed countries in terms of educational level, job opportunities and women's

participation in development activities and other issues at the national and global levels.

- The women in the developed countries were concerned about domestic violence, female harassment, sexual assault and murder in daily life. They have less opportunity on jobs at the national level. The women of developing countries were unknowingly suffering from above-mentioned problems due to their low literacy rate and socio-economic conditions and culture of the community. The trafficking of women is almost absent in the developed countries but this is the acute problems in the developing countries.
- We presented a paper at our workshop which was welcomed by other participants. We explained our views, opinions and activities about gender and natural resources conservation. Other participants involving in different development works such as education, health and sanitation in their respective countries expressed their opinions as well and we also learned a lot from them.
- The well-educated women can play a vital role, working together with uneducated women to build up the nation. The responsibility of educated women in modern society is that increase the literacy rate of women and schooling of girls in the developing countries and encourage women to participate in development activities like men. The empowerment of women to know and understand the current national and international problems and impact on their lives is essential which can be achieved by exchanging problems and their plans and activities taken by women and country for solving the problems at local, national and international levels.

(7) Conclusion

The study tour has generated higher motivation among the Nepali counterparts to work for the underprivileged women in Nepal and work together with the women involved in a similar developmental work in other countries. They also became aware of the importance of action rather than an endless discussion at the higher level. They also realized that women are competent to work as good as men in every possible way in developmental activities as well as organizing such a large meeting as this Conference.

ANNEX I

Annex 1

**Gender and Community Development
and
Natural Resources Conservation
in
the Western Hills of Nepal**

**Prepared
for
The NGO Forum on Women
Beijing, 1995**

**HMG/JICA Community Development and
Forest/Watershed Conservation Project
August 1995**

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Foreword

This paper has been prepared for the NGO Forum on Women, Beijing, 1995, under the Technical Exchange Programme of HMG/JICA Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project being implemented by HMG Nepal and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Kaski and Parbat Districts of Nepal for the period of 1994-1999.

The main purpose of this paper is to present a brief description about gender perspectives on natural resources management, especially on natural resources conservation being undertaken in the Western Hills of Nepal, where the natural forest degradation has been taking place at an extremely high rate due to various socio-economic reasons. Although women have played a significant role for forest conservation and management, their contribution has neither been well recognized nor their voices been heard to be reflected in the decision-making processes of the forest management.

The Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (1990-2010) was approved by the Government of Nepal in April 1989, the main emphasis of which has been the promotion of community forestry to be managed by people themselves for their own communal use of the forest resources. Unfortunately, the women's roles in the community forestry management have not been well highlighted under this Plan, however, various efforts have been made, in reality, to promote women's participation in the planning and management of the forest resources under the projects and programmes carried out by government and non-governmental organizations at the grass-roots level. This paper introduces some projects as cases of women's participation in the community development and natural resources management in the Western Hills of Nepal.

The main writers of this paper are as follows:

1. Manju Kumari Shrestha, Ranger, District Soil Conservation Office, Kaski District,
2. Indira Mulepati, Soil Conservation Assistant, Department of Soil Conservation, Kathmandu,
3. Samyukta Rajbhandari, Assistant Ecologist, Department of Soil Conservation, Kathmandu,
4. Yamuna Kandel, Soil Conservation Assistant, Department of Soil Conservation, Kathmandu and
5. Yumiko Tanaka, Women in Development Expert, HMG/JICA Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project (CDFWCP).

We hope this paper provides you with variable insight into gender and natural resources conservation and management.

HMG/JICA CDFWCP
Pokhara, August 1995

I. Introduction

According to the 1991 census, the population of Nepal has reached 18.5 million, about 50% of which were women. The population growth rate was about 2.08 % per annum. The literacy rate was about 38.9%. The population density per sq.km. of total land and arable land was lowest for the High Mountain and Himal and highest for the Terai region. The national per capita agriculture land-hold is 0.2 hectare on average. Among the total population, 42.5% are below the poverty line. It is estimated that about 97% of the absolute poor live in rural areas (HMG, 1992).

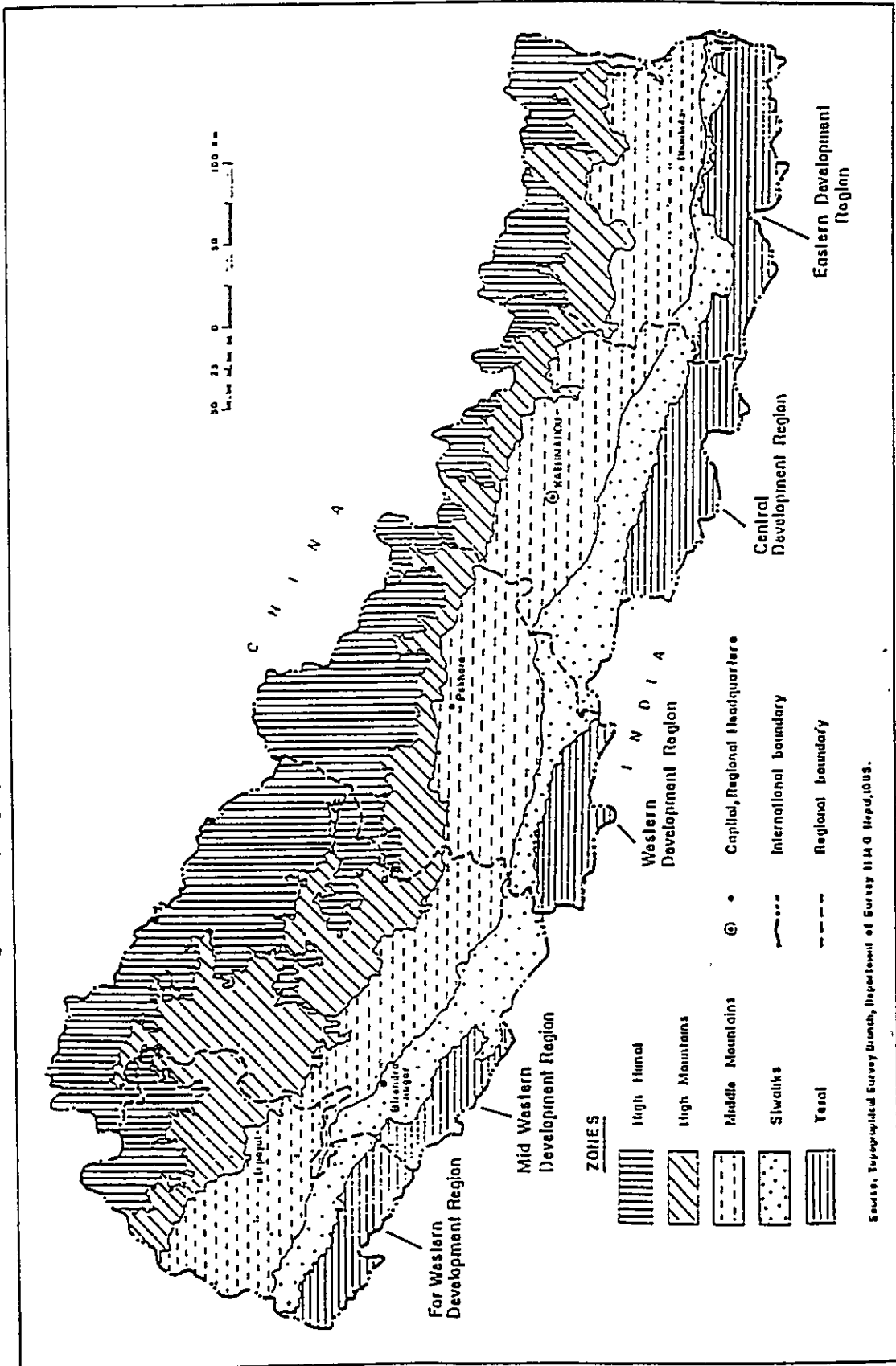
More than 80% of total area is comprised of hills and mountains with very steep slopes. The country is broadly divided into five physiographic zones: Terai, Siwaliks, Middle Mountains, High Mountains and High Himal. Pressure on natural resources has grown on a massive scale due to new settlements and higher demand for fodder, firewood and other forest products.

In rural areas, women have been the primary users of natural resources to fulfil their basic needs for fuel for cooking and fodders for livestock and their bedding materials. Therefore, women's skill and knowledge about conservation of the forests should be integrated into planning and designing of national forestry programmes.

Currently the government's strategy is focused on phased handing over of all accessible hill forests to the communities to be managed as community forest. It is expected that community forest would lead to make rural people self-reliant on fuel, fodder and timber and develop their community with the surplus forest products. Women's participation is highly emphasised in the management of community forestry and successful cases of women's forestry user groups activities have been reported.

The government agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and foreign donors have emphasised the need for greater participation of women in natural resources management programmes for their successful implementation. However the number of factors have worked to limit the inclusion of women in natural resources conservation. Even under the program specified for women, only few women usually have participated in nurseries management, tree plantation, plant production and construction of smokeless stoves.

Figure 1. Physiographic Zones and Development Regions of Nepal



In order to enhance women's participation in the protection and conservation of natural resources, present policy and plans should be revised. In community development programme, the participation of women should be encouraged in all aspects of natural resources management and emphasis should be placed on the involvement more woman members in the organisation of users group committees. Woman's participation in all aspects of natural resources management should be addressed through the formulation of user groups committees, provision of literacy and conservation education classes, technical skill training on natural resources management as well as overall community development programmes.

II. Natural Resources in Nepal

1. Forest Condition

In 1985, the area of natural forest was estimated at 5.5 million ha., or 37.4% of the total area of the country. Amongst the land categories, about 15.7% of land have a good potential to be developed into forest or pasture land. These land consist of shrub land and grass land below 3500 m. in altitude and non-cultivated land (MPFS, 1988).

Major forest types include tropical, sub-tropical, warm temperate, cool temperate, sub-alpine and alpine. The natural forest comprises with 59% hardwood, 24% mixed and 17% conifer species (MPFS, 1988). Hardwoods are dominant in the Terai and lower hills while conifer are abundant at higher elevations. The most common species are Sal (*Shorea robusta*), Fir (*Abies spp.*), Chir pine (*Pinus roxburghii*), Oak (*Quercus spp.*) and Blue pine (*Pinus wallichiana*).

Terai contributes only about 8% of the natural forests. The rest of the forest are fairly evenly distributed among Siwaliks (27%), Middle Mountains (32%), High Mountains (30%) and High Himal (3%) (MPFS,1988). However, Terai has made major contributions of hardwood supplies to such cities as Kathmandu and Pokhara, because of their easy accessibility.

Among the country's five development regions, Mid-Western development region comprises 30% of the forests while the other 70% are fairly evenly distributed among other four regions (MPFS, 1988)

Of the 5.5 million hectare of forest land, 59% has medium or 40 to 70% crown coverage. Among the total forest land only 15% have high crown coverage, and other forest land is degraded with crown coverage ranging from 10 to 40 percent. High density forests are left only in protected areas in Terai or inaccessible areas in the mountains. Densely populated Hill region constitutes more than half of the forest with poor crown coverage (MPFS, 1988).

If all the forests were accessible, then they could well provide people's basic needs. But due to limitation of road access and extremely rugged terrain, the forests are not accessible. In the middle mountains the accessible forests are also under heavy pressure, because the forest products cannot easily be transported to from remote forests.

The forest land is not well distributed in relation to the population density. The per capita forest land area in the Hills and Terai are only 0.26 and 0.11 hectare, respectively. However, other zones have over one ha per capita. The forest land area is about 0.37 hectare per capita on national average (MPFS, 1988).

At present, the plantation rate is less than the deforestation rate. The demand and supply situations of forestry products are not favourable. Therefore, for the better management of forestry resources, a 25-years Forestry Sector Master Plan has been implemented since 1988.

Table 1. Land Use, 1985 - 86 ('000 ha)

	Cultivated lands	Non Cultivated land	Grass land	Forest land/forest plantation	Shrub land/degraded forest	Other land	Total
High Himal High Mountains	8	1	885	155	67	2234	3350
Mid Mountains	244	148	508	1639	176	245	2960
Siwaliks	1223	667	278	1811	404	59	4442
Terai	269	59	16	1438	29	75	1886
FWDR	1308	123	58	475	30	116	2110
MWDR	302	113	212	991	52	274	1944
WDR	465	178	783	1641	76	1138	4281
CDR	608	229	437	900	142	619	2935
EDR	818	239	138	1063	238	238	2734
	859	239	175	923	198	460	2854
Total	3052	998	1745	5518	706	2729	1474
%	21	7	12	37	5	18	8
							100

Note: FWDR : Far Western Development Region
 MWDR: Mid Western Development Region
 WDR. Western Development Region
 CDR: Central Development Region
 EDR: Eastern Development Region

Source: Master Plan for the Forestry Sector (MPFS), 1988

2. Forest Degradation in the Hills

The Hill areas of the country, namely in the Middle Mountains, has an average altitude of 2,000 m. and contains several large and fertile valleys, including Kathmandu and Pokhara. The distribution and density of population is not uniform among the High Mountains, Hills, Siwalik and Terai zones. The Mountain and Hill zones, comprising 77% of the total physical area and 50% of total cultivated area, constitute 56% of total population.

(Table 2). If population density is considered in terms of cultivated land, the Mountain and Hill divisions are more densely populated at 0.12 ha. per person than in Terai at 0.21 ha. per person. Therefore, the increasing pressure upon the land and forest has grown beyond the carrying capacity.

2. Population in Terai and Hill regions (1952/54 to 1991)

Year	Terai Region		Hill and Mountain Region		Total Population
	Number of population	Percentage	Number of population	Percentage	
1952/54	2,904,009	35.3	5,331,070	64.7	3,235,079
1961	3,069,503	32.6	6,343,493	67.4	9,412,996
1971	4,345,966	38.0	7,201,017	62.0	11,555,873
1981	7,030,891	46.8	7,989,560	53.2	15,020,452
1991	8,606,291	46.6	9,855,790	53.4	18,462,081

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal

Economy of Nepal is predominantly agriculture based. About 94% of the population live in the villages. For the rural people, forests are not only the source for the fulfilment of basic needs but also for the income generation with different forest products for subsistence living.

The majority of rural people have to use forest products for cooking, heating and feeding livestock due to poverty and lack of alternative energy sources. Therefore, the main causes of forest degradation can be said as excessive cutting of trees for fuel and heavy lopping of trees for fodder

Soil erosion, fertility decline, sedimentation and flood have degraded the land, the causative factors being steep slope cultivation, use of marginal land, nutrient deficiency and population pressure. There is increasing pressure to cultivate more marginal land and allow encroachment of forest and grazing lands.

The major causes for the degradation of forests are specified as follows:

- (1) Deforestation for expansion of agriculture land,
- (2) Use of firewood, which comprise of 87% of fuel requirements in the country,
- (3) Use of timber wood in the ever-growing construction industry,
- (4) Illegal felling and export of timber,
- (5) Infrastructure development such as road, irrigation canal, industry, hydro-Power without environment impact assessment,
- (6) Exclusion of women in decision-making processes of forest conservation activities,
- (7) Lack of consciousness of the general public about the importance of forest, including the fire set by herders, and
- (8) Lack of political commitment in forest conservation.

3. Soil Conservation and Watershed Management Activities in the Hills

The country has several watersheds, ranging from big basins to small micro watershed. A study conduct by HMG/and FAO indicated that one third of the country's districts have marginal to very poor watershed conditions and the districts with good and average watershed conditions have very poor land units. Due to over exploitation of natural resources, most of the watershed are deteriorating physically and biologically. Watershed of Siwalik region are more geologically fragile, erodible and are deteriorating faster due to population pressure. There is high rate of sediment transport from the Hills towards low land especially during monsoon season causing severe soil erosion.

At present watershed management activities are extended to 43 districts of the country. Different activities like land use improvement, land productivity conservation, infrastructure protection, community conservation and extension program and erosion hazard prevention are implemented in these districts under soil conservation programme.

“Soil Conservation and Watershed Management Plans” of the HMG Nepal Master Plan for the forestry sector indicates that conservation and improved management on sloping terraced-land are required for agricultural sustainability and economic productivity for the Hill areas. In the Hill areas about 25% of sloping terraced-land is being excessively used and should be kept under permanent vegetation cover. Due to the heavy livestock pressure, overgrazed land contributes to huge amount of soil loss and land degradation.

Soil erosion, infertility, decline sedimentation and flood have all degraded the land. Their causative factors are steep slope cultivation, use of marginal land for agriculture, nutrient deficiency, population pressure, over exploitation of forests for fodder and fuelwood. Land degradation not only reduces the production but also leads to landslides and flooding that cut away the fertile land both upstream and down stream.

The policy of the Department of Soil Conservation (DOSC) shifted in the past years from a mostly technical-oriented to more people-oriented approach. Not only environmental conservation but also maintaining agricultural production and assisting people in natural resources management have become important issues.

To mitigate the problems with land degradation and environmental degradation through soil conservation and watershed management, the programmes being under taken by the DSC are categorised into three components as follows:

(1) Land productivity programme

This programme is implemented on private and community land through appropriate land use management to develop and improve the productivity of land. It includes on farm conservation, fruit tree planting, fodder/grass plantation, conservation ponds, nursery operations, conservation plantation and development of agroforestry in degraded and marginal lands and farm conservation.

(2) Infrastructure protection programme

This programme intends to protect the basic development infrastructures from erosion and landslides. It includes road slope stabilisation, gully treatment, trail improvement, irrigation canal protection, shelter belt and greenbelt development, landslide treatment and stream bank protection.

(3) Community soil conservation extension programme

This programme intends to mobilise and create awareness among local people to raise the level of peoples' participation in soil conservation activities. These programme includes micro-watershed conservation demonstration, conservation education and extension, conservation training and study tours, conservation exhibition, conservation education in school and conservation awards.

Realising the importance of integrated watershed management approach, the Eighth Five Year Development Plan (1992/93~1997/98) has targeted to provide soil conservation and watershed management services to 60 districts of the country. The major donors providing assistance to the soil conservation and watershed management programmes are ADB, AIDAB, CARE International, EEC, GTZ, JICA, USAID, and UNDP/FAO.

4. Community Development and People's Participation

Community development is the process of involving local people to make use of their initiatives and energy for the sustainable development. The main objective of community development is to empower local people through self-help programmes and provision of techniques for co-operative actions.

Community development is much broader concept than "user groups" in terms of sensitising the people about their multiple needs, and capability of community to achieve their needs. After the movement of democracy in the beginning of 1990 resulted in the restoration of multiparty system, local political bodies of Village Panchayat were abolished till the new Village Development Committees (VDC) were formed in May 1992. During this transitional period concept of community development was initiated to co-ordinate the activities of different user groups which had been a socio-ecological unit and not defined by Village Panchayat or administrative Ward boundary.

Community development must comprise such heterogeneous groups as women, teachers, local leaders, farmers, occupational castes and minority groups, who can enhance awareness about problems of soil erosion, forestry and farm cultivation by going through field demonstration, meeting and informal contacts.

People's participation is the most essential feature to conduct any programme successfully at the grass- roots level. At present it is aimed at every program activities to involve people in all stages of development, from decision-making to implementation stage. For effective

participation of people it is essential that they are well informed about the programme and develop common sense of creative awareness. Strategies must be developed to motivate local community for full participation in such activities as forest and soil conservation, and irrigation development.

Some of the factors which should be considered for the effective participation of people in community development would be as follows:

- (1) Local people must be well informed about the programme. They should be involved right from the beginning
- (2) Local people should be convinced about the benefits of the programme and awareness must be created among the villagers
- (3) To enhance the initiative of local people, benefit from the implement activities should be shared among them.
- (4) For effective participation, sense of belonging should be created.
- (5) Through meetings and discussion, people should learn how to develop community identity form, public opinion come up with communal decisions implemented.
- (6) Provision of series of incentives is necessary.
- (7) The participation of people in the management and utilisation of local forests has been increasing. The participation of people can further increase if people are made aware of the expected benefits by implementing the plan. It has been realised that to achieve the goals without securing people's participation and co-operation would be futile. Now the Department of Soil Conservation has adopted clear policy of implementing all conservation activities through user groups. Conditions and problems are developed for people's participation in watershed management activities.

5. Community Forests Management

The forests are protected, managed and utilised by local villagers to fulfill their daily needs for fuelwood, fodder, timber, foods and raw-materials are categorised as Community Forests. In other words, community forest is the forest managed by those who utilise them.

Community and private forestry programme was introduced to Nepal in the form of “Panchayat forest” and “Panchayat protected forest” in 1978. The programme was formulated in different Hill districts of the country. It had been realised later that Panchayat as a political unit was too big to gather common interest. Therefore, a smaller group of users need to be identified and authority should be given to them to make their own decision to manage their forest. The Forestry Master Plan has given adequate attention for the handover of all accessible hill forest resources to the communities if they are willing and able to manage themselves.

The central policy to community and private forestry is to develop and manage forest resources through the active participation of individuals and communities to meet their basic needs. After identifying the users and preparation of operational plan, community forestry program was extended to the communities especially in the hill region with the support of bilateral and multilateral donors. Forestry staff have been facilitating local users to make them willing and able to manage their forests to fulfil their basic needs. It is expected that community forestry would lead to make rural people self-reliant on the use of natural resources.

The procedure for handing over a forest to a community basically consists of the following:

- (1) Formation of user groups,
- (2) Delineation of a forest as a community forest,
- (3) Preparation and approval of operational plan, and
- (4) Handing over the forest to the user groups and implementation of the operational plan.

At present the community forestry programme is targeted to natural forests, because the villagers prefer existing forests to be turned into community forest rather than making new ones, in order for the quick benefit to be incurred. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have also assisted villagers to implement the community forestry programme.

As the primary forest users, women should be actively involved in community forests management. Village women should be included in community forestry committee works. Some argued that women had been the ones who were destroying the forest and so should work on committees to learn how to be responsible for protecting the resource. Others argued that women tend to make different and presumably more appropriate decisions regarding the forest management than men. Now there are many examples in different parts of the country where women are actively participating in community forestry programmes.

6. Women's Role in Forest Conservation

Women are the primary users of natural resources, providing the link between such resources and the individual household. For example, in rural areas it is women who are responsible for collecting firewood for cooking, fodder and grass for domestic animals and their bedding material.

In Nepal the conservation of natural resources has become more acute than before, because 90% of rural people depend upon forest products for daily uses. About 78% of firewood is collected by women and 6% by girls. Therefore, depletion of natural resources greatly affects the lives of women. It is, therefore, extremely necessary to create a proper atmosphere and opportunities for women to participate in the conservation of natural resources and include them in planning and designing of such programmes.

Women being the main consumers of natural resources at the same time, they are the direct victims of natural resources destruction. The proper utilisation of natural resources will keep good ecological balance. In this context, women can play a significant role. Traditionally they considered natural resources as fulfilling basic domestic needs, whereas men consider them more in terms of commercial possibilities.

Women being the primary users of forest, they should be actively involved in “Community Forestry Management” as well. Amongst the most significant barriers against women's formal involvement in forestry committees are cultural and social norms. However, there are many examples of such programmes with positive roles carried out with the participation of women. In community development programmes organised by government or non-government agencies, one of the main reasons for not including women is their illiteracy. So literacy programme can be a strong measure to enhance women's participation.

Women utilise forest products for household uses such as bowls, brushes, mats, baskets, twines and for medicinal purposes. In this way, women are unconsciously forced to deplete natural resources through their own desperate circumstances. The deterioration of natural resources more deeply affect women, because they are responsible for resource mobilisation and management. The time spent on collecting fuelwood, fodder and drinking water depends on availability of the supply. But because of the deforestation, it takes longer time for women to collect such materials daily. Women never intentionally destroy natural resources as their lives highly depend upon them, however they have no alternative sources of energy for their daily uses.

Women can play a major role in natural resources conservation through effective use of natural resources:

- (1) If women become more conscious about conservation, they can mobilise, conserve and preserve resources. Women do not usually destroy natural resources, since most women collect dead wood or branches and leaves for fuelwood and fodder which are easier to cut.
- (2) Traditionally, women are involved in such conservation programmes, as making compost for fertility of soil and green fertilisers and helping in the regeneration process of forest by regulating its use.

- (3) Women have played an important role in protecting soil quality through organic recycling and selection of crop in agriculture activity.
- (4) Traditionally, women are experts in finding suitable resources and maximising their use.
- (5) Women have always been careful about utilisation of available resources because of their direct link with nature. They usually try to keep ecological chains intact.
- (6) Women transfer the skills of efficient resource mobilisation and management to their daughters and other family members. Thus, conservation skills should not be lost but be sustained in the future.

It is evident that women are not really responsible for the destruction of natural resources. The main causes of natural resources depletion are short-sighted development policies, corruption, ineffective rules and regulations, licensing of furniture workshops and saw mills and exclusion of women from conservation policy making processes. In all government and non-government programmes concerning the conservation of nature, women's full participation should be encouraged in planning and implementation stages. Alternative sources of energy for fuelwood, such as electricity, solar heater, gas plant, fuel efficient cooking stove should be introduced as well. Both men and women must be encouraged in planting trees, fodder plants and grass, to use scientifically controlled farming methods, productive animal farming. Women should be more encouraged to participate in training and extension programmes. Both men and women of the poor households must be encouraged in income-generating activities such as bee keeping, silk farming, forest nurseries, mushroom cultivation and cottage industries.

III. Case Study on Gender and Natural Resources Conservation

1. Gender in Upper Andhi Khola Watershed Management Project (UAKWMP) in Syangja

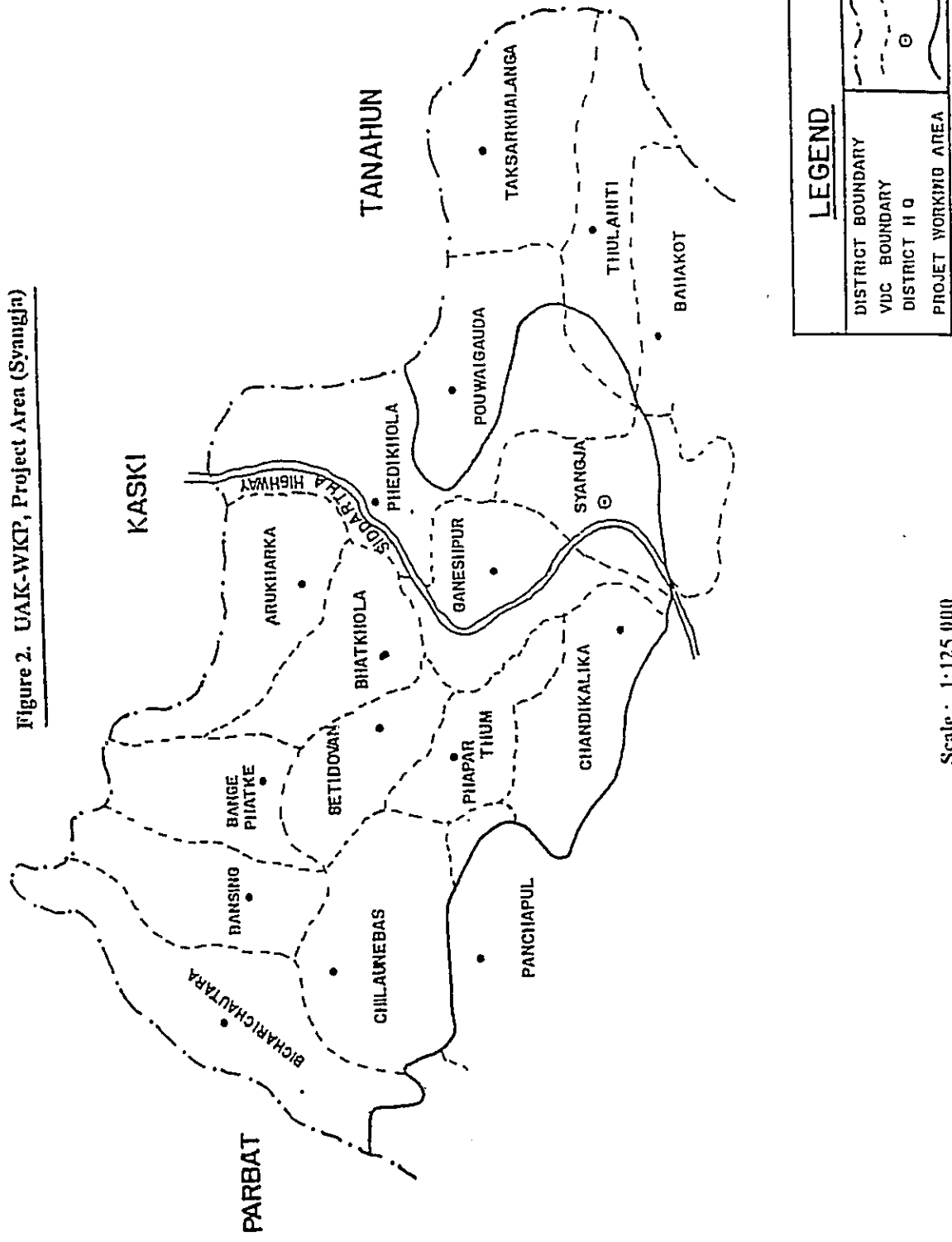
Women's role in community organisation have been well recognised in Upper Andhi Khola Watershed management Project (UAKWMP) undertaken by District Soil Conservation Office and CARE International in Syangja district. Within 7 VDCs, the project has mobilised community groups which identified problems and planned to implement the activities.

Participation of women were encouraged in all aspects of natural resources management in community development and user groups committees. There were a few Mothers Groups in Syangja but were inactive. Therefore, to mobilise high participation of women in community development, the Mothers' Groups were activated and new groups were formed. So far there are 63 Mothers Groups within 7 VDCs, among which 23 have been officially registered as NGOs with the District Administration Office. Mothers' Groups are locally known as "Ama Samuha".

Mothers' Groups (MGs) have emerged as the most active organisation for community development in such areas as in construction of foot trails, forest conservation, plantation and water sources protection. The MGs aims to encourage women's participation in community development through identifying problems, selecting activities and implementing the programmes. MGs have been recognised by UAKWMP specially to promote gender equality and equity in the community by encouraging women to participate with men in community development processes. The activities of MGs under UAKWMP include the purchase of utensils, construction and renovation of pit latrines foot trails, meeting halls and temples, forest conservation, kitchen gardening and literacy classes.

Community Development Conservation Committees (CDCCs) have been formed at the Ward level, which function as planning and co-ordinating bodies of MGs and user groups. Within the project area, 62 CDCCs have been established, which guided the MGs and user committees in needs identification, assessment, prioritisation and planning. They also served as a direct link with the Project. Women's participation have been highly encouraged, targeting up to 33% of the CDCC members.

Figure 2. UAK-WKP, Project Area (Syangja)



Scale : 1:125,000

The initial executive committees of MGs were elected by the general meeting. All household members within the Ward were invited to the general meetings. About 7-13 members were usually elected as executive committee members.

The establishment and management of communal fund has been promoted by the Project, which has been used for vegetable seeds, seedlings, fruit tree seedlings, crop seeds, cement and etc. MGs also started self-regeneration of fund from culture shows, from interest charged on loans, membership fees and by selling seedlings. They used their fund to make community temples (meeting places), school rooms and furniture for class rooms, and operating livestock farming and carrying out social works.

In addition, the users' committees generated fund by selling grass for livestock and charging fines for grazing livestock. Thus it changed livestock management from free grazing to stall feeding, which will improve the condition of forests and watershed. The communities planted trees and improved grasses in common degraded land as well.

The Project provided training to MGs on community development concepts, organisational management and technical skills such as kitchen gardening, pit latrine construction, smokeless stove construction and forest conservation. In addition, observation tours, income generating activities and intensive health care training have been organised for further community involvement.

The Project has emphasised the participation of women at all levels of community development processes recognising the role of women in subsistence agriculture, family welfare, conservation and management of natural resources.

The current problems some MGs face are the inability to utilise and mobilise their fund, due to a lack of education and relevant training, lack of sufficient support from other committees. In some activities performed by MGs, they showed full leadership in carrying out activities like construction of foot trails, forest conservation and conservation farming. Some groups have full control over the generation and disposal of their own fund and men participants from CDCCs assist them. MGs groups have led to strict actions against prevalent alcoholism and gambling among men in some places. In comparison to other groups MGs are more active in community development process within the Project area.

2. Women's Role in Community Development and Forest Conservation in Begnastal Rupatal (BTRT) Watershed Management Project in Kaski

Introduction

Begnastal Rupatal Watershed Management Project (BTRT) is jointly implemented by Department of Soil Conservation and CARE International in Nepal. This project has started in July 1985 and it is in its third phase now.

The project area is located about 10 kilometres east of Pokhara city in Kaski District in the Western region of Nepal. This project covers the area of 173 square kilometres, including seven Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Kaski District.

The project area represents a tropical Hill area of Nepal with steep hills surrounding the lakes and rivers. The project area includes two major lakes, Begnas and Rupa lakes, and three minor lakes Maldi, Khaste and Dipang. Begnas and Rupa lakes are situated at an elevation of approximately 650 and 600 metres above the sea level, respectively.

The total population of the project area is about 34,000 comprised of 52% male and 48% female. Regarding the ethnic composition, about 40-52% is Brahman, 21.88% Chhetri, 17.50% Gurung, 17.07% Occupational caste and 4.4% Muslim. The project area covers 8,242 hectares of agriculture land and 9,044 hectares of forest/pasture land.

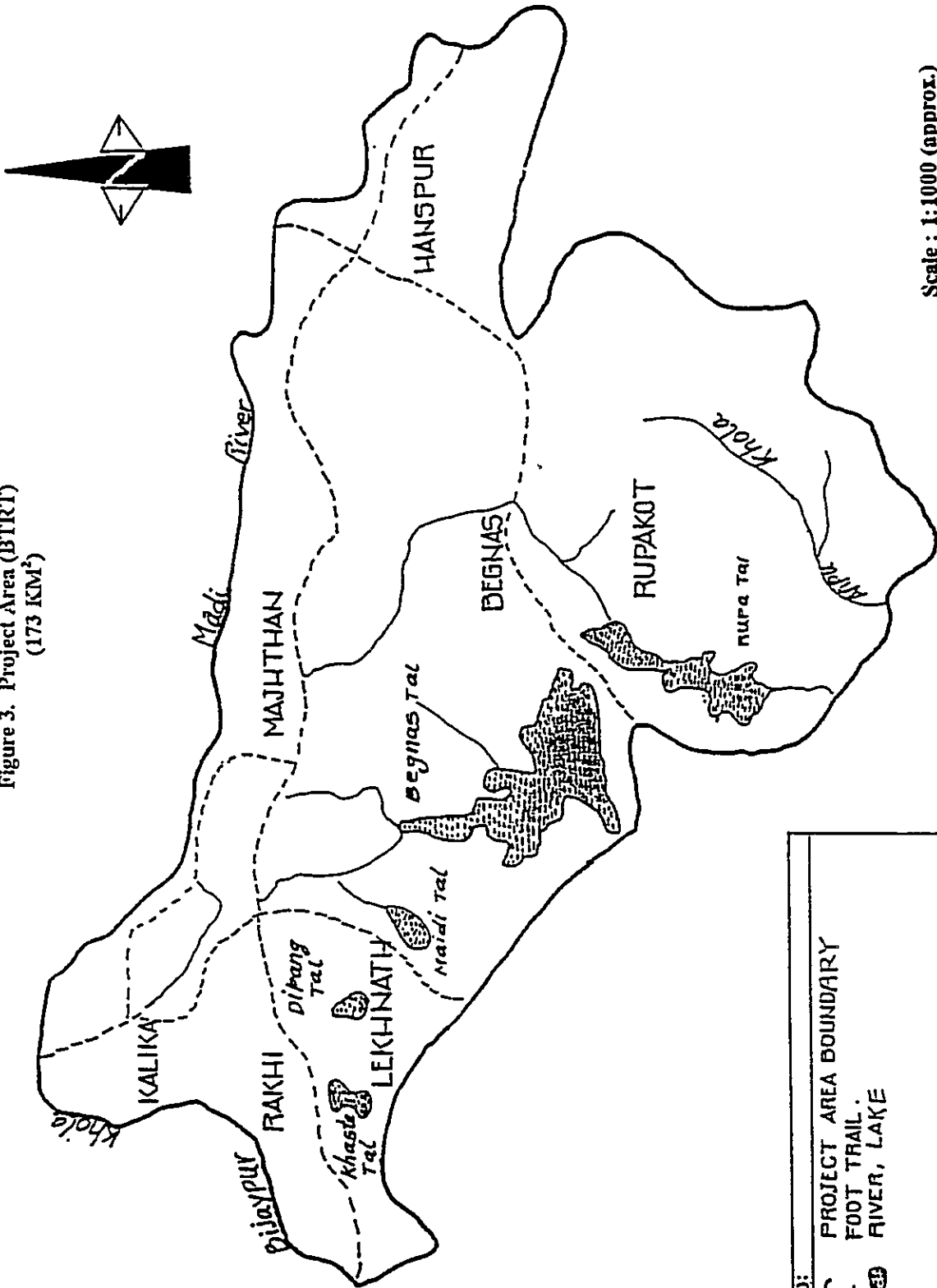
Project Goals

The final goal of the project is to stabilise the physical environment and increase the productivity of the project area through sustainable community management of its human and natural resources.

There are five major programmes to create awareness of the soil erosion, mitigate land degradation and increase productivity of the project area. Within the framework of the programme, the project implements various activities related to the following three components:

1. Community organisation,
2. Agro-forestry, and
3. Bio-engineering

Figure 3. Project Area (BTRT)
(173 KM²)



Project Strategy

The Project's main strategy is to integrate the activities of these three sectors in the field. The project has given priority to mobilise people in the execution of soil conservation activities by giving more responsibility for their own development process. It intends to enable people to prioritise, plan, implement, maintain and evaluate intervention. It also intends to transfer skills, technical knowledge, resource generation and mobilisation techniques. Active participation of grass-roots people in all stages of the Project has been most essential.

Women in BTRT

The participation of women in community development and forest resource conservation/management in BTRT project area has been highly encouraged. The project realised that the development of the community cannot be done without participation of women. Because if women do not understand the value and the quality of development, the activities and programmes would have a high chance to be depleted.

Most of women in the community in the project area are illiterate due to social, economical and cultural reasons. The views of the community on women is, however, slightly different from those of the 10 years ago. Therefore, they are initiating to organise their own groups.

At present, 27 well-organised women's Community Development Conservation Groups (CDCGs) and 73 mixed (male and female) CDCGs exist in BTRT project area. Some of CDCGs are in the process to legalise their groups. Most women groups are involved in community development activities with technical and financial assistance from the project. Foot-trail improvement, spring water renovation, kitchen garden, household agro-forestry and management of natural resources are their prioritised activities for the community development.

The women CDCGs are also active to generate fund for their groups by monthly contribution. They accumulated about NRs. 130,496 (approx US\$ 2,610) in total for their fund. Short-term loan for emergency relief, pig and goat raising, trail maintenance etc. are their prime area of fund mobilisation. Seven locally hired women motivators (paid by the Project) are assisting to such women groups in BTRT Project area.

The Project area consists of 48% women's population and 42% of the women are illiterate. This situation is very critical for the Project to enhance sustainable community

development. Similarly, unless women are made aware of their role in the preservation of natural resources, these progress will bear little meaning. So that the literacy classes for women started in 1993 for the first time in the Project area. As a result, 123 women of nine communities in the Project area became literate by the end of 1993.

In 1995, the Project has conducted 18 basic literacy and 5 post literacy classes within the Project area with an aim to make 493 female literate. The Project trained twenty three local women teachers to facilitate the literacy classes with educational materials support from the Project.

In addition, women's groups are also involved in such income-generating activities as ginger, garlic cultivation, vegetable gardening, bee-keeping, goat raising, seed selling and environmental sanitation.

Similarly, the Project encouraged to develop women as a para-professional by providing skill development training. As a result, women have been trained in the following programmes. The trainees were also provided with essential tools to utilise their skills later.

- Improved Cook Stove Installation Training	12 women
- Cutting and Tailoring Training	8 "
- Coffee Cultivation Training	4 "
- Bee Keeping Training	12 "
- Basic Care/Maintenance Training	1 "
- Forest Management Training	24 "
- Fruit Propagation/Management Training	5 "
- CDCGs Management Training	63 "

Except the above training, 42% women involved in Agriculture/Natural Resource (ANR) management and 22% women participated in Bio-engineering related site-level orientation trainings. It shows that the women's participation has been higher in ANR related activities than bio-engineering.

On the other hand, women have actively participated in the management of forests. The project has planted 372 hectares area as community plantation and handed them over to the community as community forest, 1,680 hectares including natural forest. The project has prepared 76 forest management plans with active participation of 7,426 households. About

15% women are working as member of the forest user committee. One forest of 209 hectares is fully managed by women's group.

To achieve the goals of the Eighth Five Year Plan (1992/93-1997/98) prepared by the National Planning Commission of Nepal, it has been also focused to uplift women's participation in development programmes. The Plan realised and prioritised the necessity to design programmes for women's development. It also included to enhance women's development programmes and policy to raise their employment opportunities. The actual programme further emphasised the entrepreneurship training and market service to be extended to increase the involvement of women in traditional and non-traditional areas of occupation.

Experiences Gained

Definitely, the Project has given emphasis on women's development in the project's interventions. After the eleventh year of the Project implementation, the Project also realised to enhance more and vital role of women in the community development. In the Project area, however, most men in the community are not yet ready to accept the women as in the same level. Therefore, some women groups are forced to stay idle and some inactive due to these men's attitude.

At the same time, due to the lack of functional education and knowledge, men always feel that they should be at the higher level than women. Women are also unable to properly confront these prejudices.

In such situations, some adverse results also arise. However, the Project also realised that most women groups are more active than men's groups. Still women are lacking leadership development, managerial skills and educational opportunities. So they feel that they are helpless and are afraid to utilise their fund for productive activities.

The Project also realised to enhance its strategy for sustainable development of community and forest resources management by using available local human resources with more active involvement of women of the community.

Summary

The community development and forest resources management need to involve men and women equally, although it has been difficult to focus such gender equity in the developing countries. Until those problems are solved, they are unable to give spirit for sustainable development and management of their community. Similarly, in the developing countries, the gender disparity is also a social and cultural problem. So any programme or project must encourage the gender responsiveness in each and every aspect.

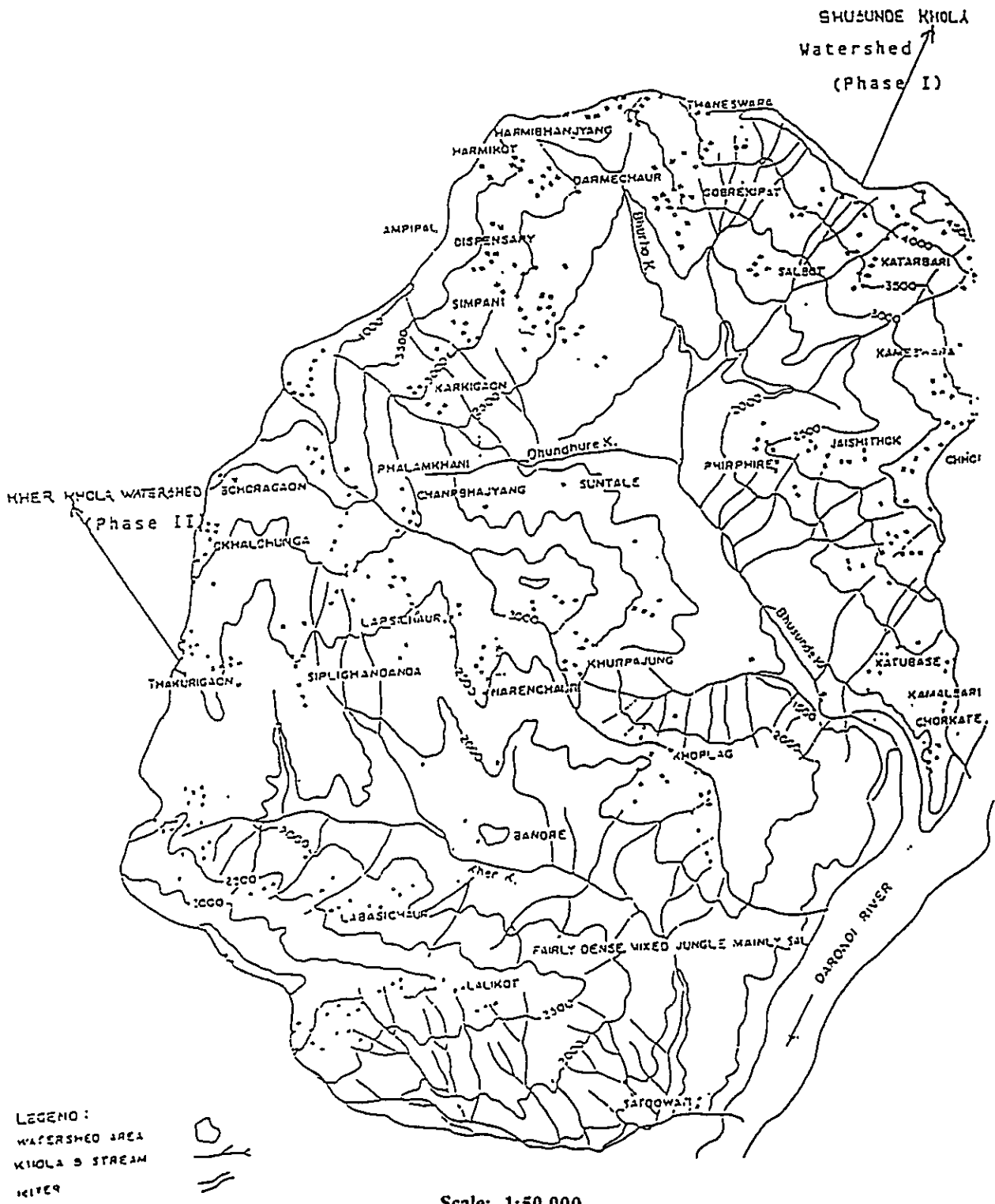
3. Gender in Community Forestry in Gorkha

Gorkha district is located in Western development region, covering the area of 361,470 ha. of which 112,535 ha. is forest. According to 1991 census, total population of the district is 252, 524. Women's participation in the management of community forestry is highly emphasised in the District with the support of District Forest Office (DFO), Village Development Committee (VDC), Save the Children's Federation (SC) and Women Development Office (WDO).

The Project, assisted by Save the Children's Federation (SC), has provided non-formal education to local women, which helped them to know understand the significance of forests and forestry policies. Thus they were encouraged to participate in the community forestry and several women's forestry activities user groups have been formed. The project assisted to link up with field staff of DFO for registration of the forests and provision of technical and financial support.

Women's role in the organisation of forest user group is of great importance because of women's responsibility for collecting forestry products as well as women's being affected by the degradation of forests. Women show high level of awareness and interest in the management of community forestry. Men also cooperate with women in management of community forestry. Mostly women manage the plantations while men manage the natural forests.

Figure 4. Project Area (Gorkha)



Besides non-formal education, the SC Project has launched a women's development program since 1990. In each Ilaka (electoral area), two field-based female staff became responsible for women's development activities and one local community motivator was recruited. They assisted the women user groups in forest management and other economic and social activities in order to build their confidence. The user group members were encouraged to make a common fund, from which any member can borrow money according to the decision of the executive committee. It has been able to generate over NRS 60,000 in a couple of years through SC program.

Another SC activity included to encourage women for the use of improved cooking stoves which may reduce the consumption of fuelwood. The project provided training to the user group leaders on forest management and operation of plan.

Community Forestry Program started in Gorkha in 1989/90. Within 3 years period it has made a good progress in handing over community forests to user groups with an assistance of DFO. There were several women's forestry user groups which protecte and manage plantations and natural forests. Different case study showed that women from different villages strongly competed with each other to establish forestry plantations. Even after the plantation was completed, women struggled hard with some local elites to retain their access to these plantations.

Women can make on-the-spot sight decisions regarding the protection and utilisation of forest products due to their experiences and traditional responsibilities for collecting fuelwood, fodder and other forest products. Local people or outsiders often do not create disturbances in women's forests because they have soft corner over women. The community forest with a group of women recognise the significance of women's participation in social affairs.

Evidently a new trend is emerging in Gorkha with respect to gender in forest management. Most women groups prefer plantation and natural regeneration while most male groups concern about natural forest. Basic needs of fuelwood and fodder can be fulfilled from both types of forests Training and exchange visit programmes organised by the project has been highly appreciated by women participants for sharing experiences and learning from each other. In all cases, women have started their community forestry activities on a small and manageable scale They gradually expanded the size of forest after gaining some confidence Progress made in managing their forests has been remarkable

The development of community forestry in Gorkha is gaining momentum. After a user group being formed in one place, new user group gets established in adjacent villages one after another, mainly to prevent the other groups from stealing their forest products. Present government policy of handing over community forest to user groups have also been to provide them with financial and technical support as a major motivating factor.

There have been some cases which indicated that women user groups had developed capacity to keep up their community forestry without any financial support from outside. The women groups started patrolling the plantation site after the DFO stopped paying for the forest watcher. Then several women's forests user groups have started saving fund where they deposited certain amount of money on a monthly basis and spend them for the management of their forests. In some cases, the forests have already generated enough income to cover the cost of protection.

Women have been so far encouraged mainly to participate in the establishment and management of plantations. Only in few cases women have been involved in the management of natural forests. Therefore, SC, WDO, DFO and users themselves need to be encouraged to facilitate the participation of women in natural forests management as well. Special efforts should be made to select local women to participate in training on forestry extension as it would help lot for women to be convince of their significant roles.

4. Gender-responsive Planning in Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project (CDFWCP) in Kaski and Parbat

In response to the request made by the government of Nepal, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has launched a 5 year project (phase I) named Community Development and Forest/Watershed Conservation Project (CDFWCP) for Kaski and Parbat Districts of the Western Development Region in Nepal in July 1994. Simultaneously, the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) of JICA has commenced Greenery Promotion Cooperation Project (GPCP) in the same Districts to complement the CDFWCP's activities for the same period. The main counterpart agency in the Nepali government is the Department of Soil Conservation, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation

Previously, HMG/JICA Forestry Extension Project has been undertaken to investigate environmental conditions in the Western region between 1991-1994 . The results of this project has provided the important ideas and information for the formulation and designing these new projects.

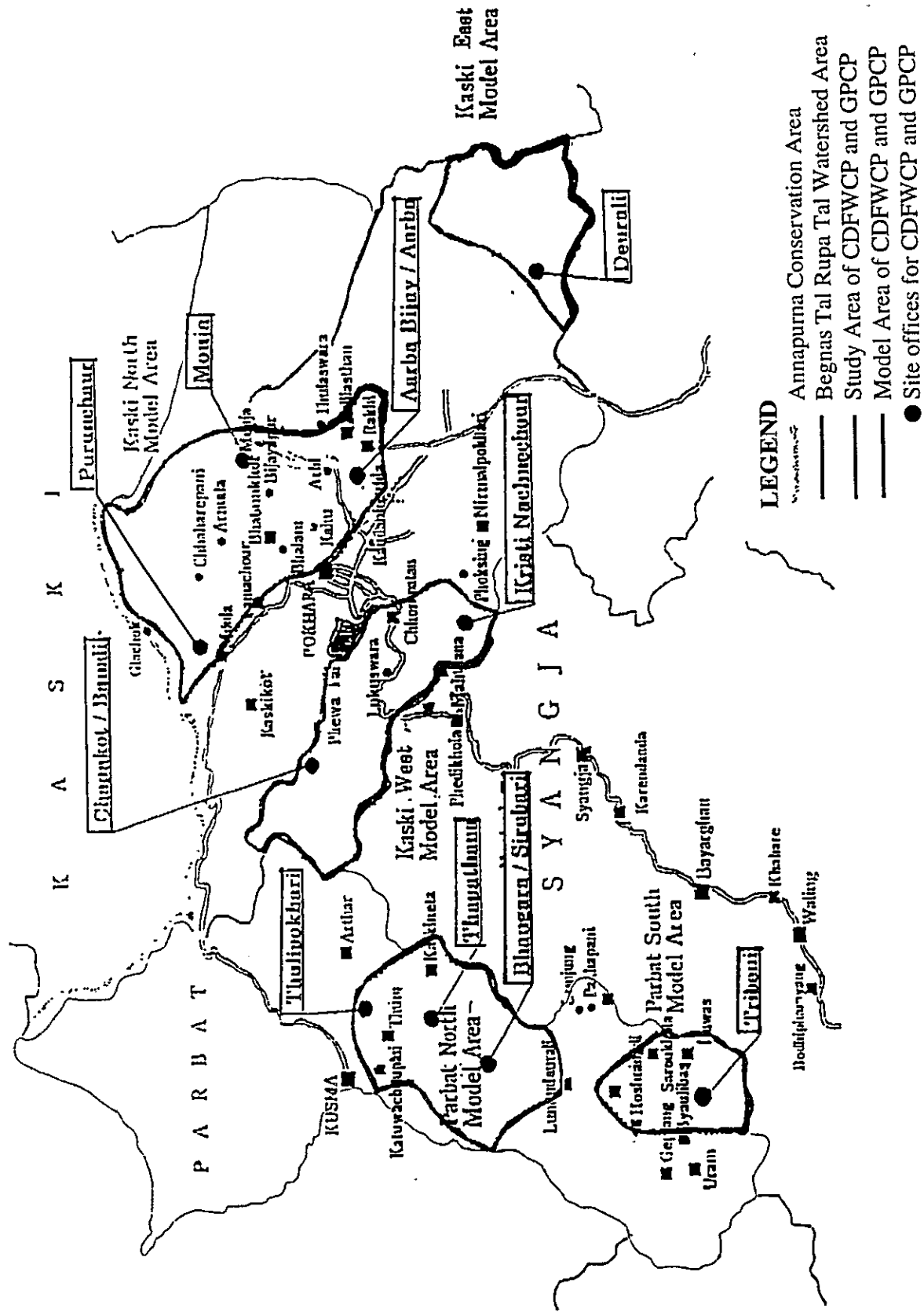
Background

Most of the environmental problems caused by the degradation of natural resources are closely related to the subsistent economy and persistent poverty prevailing in the rural areas of Nepal. As previously mentioned in chapter I, the Hill areas of Nepal comprises of 32 % of the total natural forests in Nepal, however, their condition is the poorest due to heavy pressure of population growth and other causes. The average crown coverage in the Hill forests is only about 10 to 40 %. The per capita forest area in the Hills is only 0.11 hectares, well below the national average of 0.37 hectares and the average of other zones of 1.00 hectares, except Terai (0.26 ha).

People leading the subsistent economy in the Hills depend their life upon natural resources, especially on forest resources. The fuelwood collected from the forests is the main source of energy for cooking, heating and lighting. Fodder trees are the most important sources for the livestock feeding and bedding. Livestock are the only and main sources for making the fertilizer necessary for agricultural production for the poor farmers in the Hills. The forests also can provide income-generating opportunities by providing timber, fuelwood, food, medicine and other materials for handicrafts.

The degradation of the forest mainly caused by the population growth, subsistent economy, encroachment and illegal cutting and remaining shifting cultivation severely affect rural life, especially the landless and lower income groups as well as women who have been the main collectors of fuelwood, fodder trees, drinking water and other materials necessary for their life from the forests. As well explained in the previous case studies, women have been the main users of the forest resources, yet they have been excluded from the decision-making processes regarding the forest conservation and management. In some cases, women have not been aware of the importance of the natural resources conservation, however, in other cases they have traditionally developed their own skills and knowledge about forest conservation, which have not been fully recognized and utilized under various development programmes

Figure 5. Project Area (CDFWCP and GPCP)



It has been under these recognition that the CDFWCP and GPCP have been commenced for environmental conservation through the enhancement of the people's participation in the natural resources management, which will in the end improve the rural life as well as the natural environmental situations for the sustainable development.

Main Goals and Objectives

The main goals of the CDFWCP and GPCP, as mentioned in the official agreement made between HMG and JICA, is to improve the natural environment in the Nepali Hills through community resources development and conservation. In this regard, the main objectives have been set as to improve the natural environment and land productivity, particularly to stop the depletion of forests and other natural resources and to expand the areas of greenery in the Hill areas of Kaski and Parbat Districts by organizing exemplary community development activities for the upgrading of the living standards of the rural communities, promoting their own initiative and effort, and paying due consideration to women and poor people.

Overall Approach

The CDFWCP, consisting of JICA's Project Team Leader, WID expert, Watershed Management expert and Coordinator, together with the Directors and counterpart staff of the District Soil Conservation Offices in Kaski and Parbat, will assist technically and financially the local communities in identifying, formulating and implementing the plans and activities for community development and forests/watershed conservation. The actual facilitators of these activities at the grass-roots level will be ten teams of volunteers, each consisting of one Japanese volunteer of JOCV dispatched by GPCP and one Nepali volunteer provided by two local NGOs. Each District also has one field manager provided by these local NGOs who had been contracted under CDFWCP.

The whole project, therefore, will be implemented in a tripartite coordination of Government of Nepal, JICA/JOCV and Nepali NGOs as equal partners. They will, however, act merely as a facilitator, since the main actors and implementors at the grass-roots level will be the community people themselves

Operational Guidelines

The overall Operational Guidelines have been developed for the smooth implementation of the CDFWCP and GPCP projects. The main highlight of the Operational Guidelines will be as follows:

(1) Basic Approaches

The basic approach of the CDFWCP and GPCP is the needs-driven and not the supply-driven, therefore the community's decisions on what kind of subprojects to be implemented will be fully respected. First, the communities must submit request forms to the site offices in the villages where a team of Japanese and Nepali volunteers stationed. Second, the requests will be examined for their economic and technical feasibility as well as the community's commitment and contribution. Third, once the requests/subprojects are approved, the communities will be responsible for their implementation. Trainings on skill development and awareness raising will be organized directly by the Project as necessity arise.

The budget to be provided to each Ward for three years will be 200,000 Nepali rupees as a ceiling. However, those large scale subprojects which are considered as necessary for community development and forest/watershed conservation might be separately considered and financed upon the unanimous request of several Wards or villages concerned.

(2) Scope of Subprojects

The scope of subprojects will be classified under the following three categories:

- 1) Community Infrastructure Programme (such as drinking water, small irrigation canals, health clinic and sanitation),
- 2) Forest/Watershed Conservation Programme (such as plantation of trees, tree nurseries, gully control dams and energy-saving stoves), and
- 3) Income-Generating Programme (such as bee keeping, goat raising, vegetables and fruit trees growing), especially for the underprivileged and poor women.

Any requests/subprojects will most likely fall under any of these categories of programmes, thus will not be rejected on the basis of their field of activities but of other criteria such as community participation and gender consideration.

(3) Social and Gender Consideration

The higher priority will be given to those subprojects which will commit maximum women's participation in the decision-making process and sharing of benefits. There will be minimum 50 % of women's involvement in the management committee of the User Groups to initiate any of the activities. Simultaneously, the lower castes people will be given a high priority to be involved in the activities.

It has been well recognized that this kind of criteria for the subprojects may lead people to think that the Project is forcing them to do something they don't want to do. However, this is considered as a positive challenge of the Project and not as a norm to be achieved. The whole Project implementation is a learning process for all the parties concerned, where people will try and solve the problems together with new measures and approaches along the way.

(4) Socio-economic Survey

Micro baseline survey will be conducted at the beginning of the subproject identification in a participatory measure. Participatory Rapid Appraisal method will be fully practiced by the teams of Japanese and Nepali volunteers.

Apart from that, JICA has launched another 2-years project called Development Survey on Integrated Watershed Management in the Western Hills of Nepal starting in 1995. This Development Study will not only produce topographical maps but also overall watershed management plans based upon socio-economic survey of more than 10,000 households in both Kaski and Parbat Districts. The results of this study will further guide us to develop new approaches and strategies upon its completion.

Future Directions

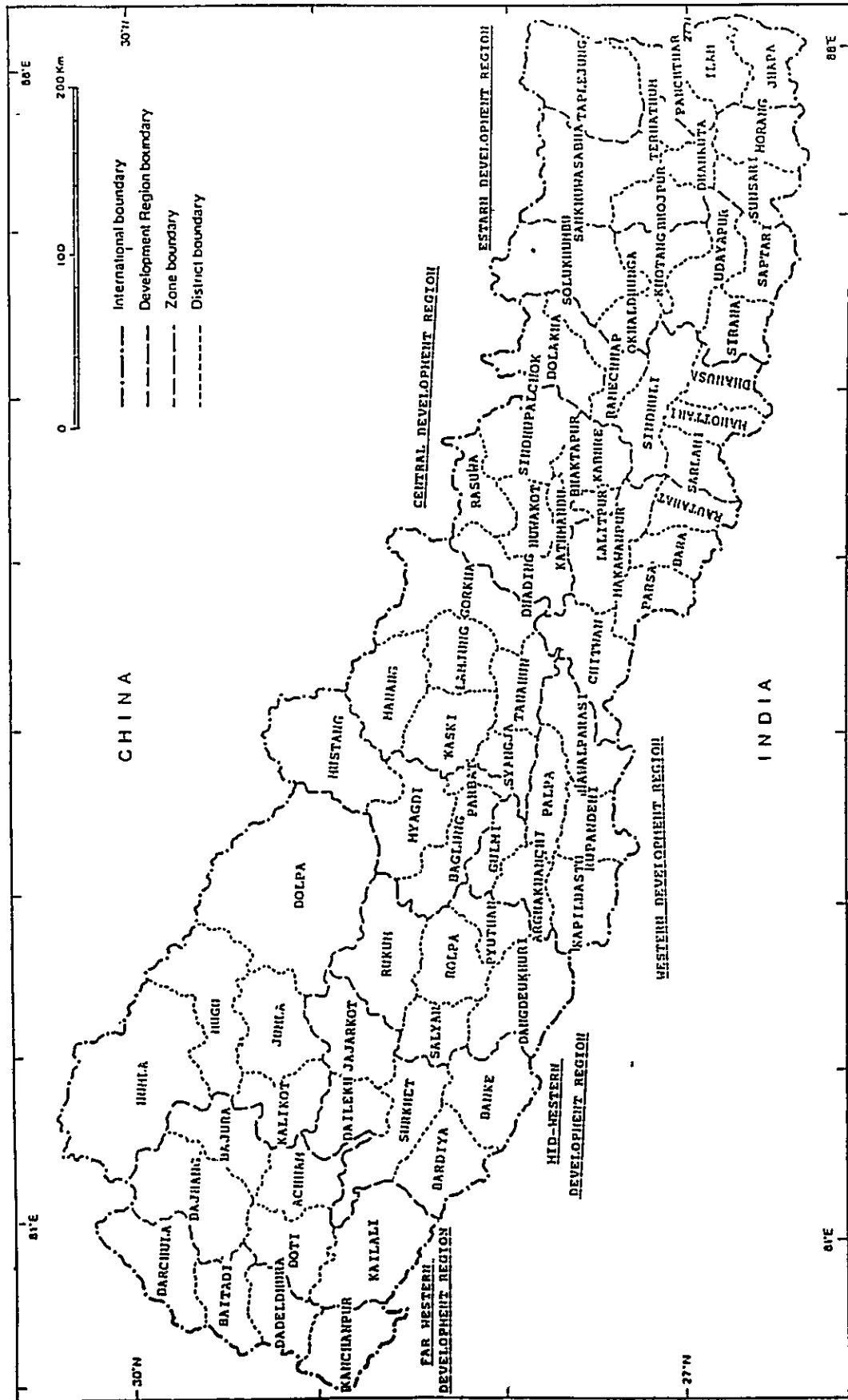
The CDFWCP and GPCP have just started and the information dissemination about the projects have been completed in July 1995. The actual identification and formulation of the subprojects will be commenced soon at the grass-roots level. Therefore, it is too early to evaluate whether the strategies and approaches proved to be correct to serve the poor rural communities in the Hills. However, the aforementioned Operational Guidelines is quite unique and innovative where all the new ideas and approaches are ready to be tried out.

IV. Conclusion

Nepal is a mountainous country facing severe challenges in the management of its resources. The country's population has increased sharply which caused an increase in livestock and the deforestation and destruction of natural resources. It directly effects reduction of soil fertility and increase of landslides and soil erosion. Nepal loses about 1.7 mm. of alluvial top soil every year. The rate of deforestation over the past two decades has proceeded 2% per year, as the result only 29% of original forests remains.

Natural resources are essential not only to fulfil the basic needs of people but also to progress and develop the country. Women play a significant role in conservation of natural resources. They are responsible for collecting fodder, fuelwood and drinking water. Therefore, women can become effective conservationists and resource managers. Now it is well recognised that one of the major obstacles to natural resources conservation is an exclusion of women from the policies and programmes concerned. It is also necessary to make them aware of the importance of their roles in the conservation of the nature. Not only men but also women should be more encouraged to plant trees and fodder grass, to use environmentally sound farming methods, productive animal farming land, newly developed fuel efficient stoves. Special programmes need to be also introduced for both men and women for population control and poverty alleviation. It has been also urged that the government should develop new laws for natural resources conservation with gender sensitive perspectives.

Annex I : Districts and Regions in Nepal



Annex II : General Geographical Situations of Nepal

1. Physiographic Situations

Nepal is fairly small land locked country covering an area of about 1,47,181 km², extending from East to West along the central Himalayas. It is located between 26°22' and 30°27' North latitude and 80°4' to 88°12' East longitude, adjoining to People's Republic of China in the North and India in the East, West and South. The nearest sea coast is 1127 km away.

One of the most important features of the country is the sharp contrast in elevation. More than two third of the country (80%) is covered by rugged Hills and mountains with steep to very steep slope. The country's elevation varies from 60 meters in the south to 8848 meters in the North above the sea level. Nepal has eight of the world's ten highest peaks, including Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest: 8848 m).

Due to extreme range of the topography and climate especially in the geologically unstable and environmentally fragile mountain zones, development of the country is severely limited.

Nepal has been divided into five physiographic zones namely High Himal, High Mountains, Middle Mountains, Siwaliks and Terai.

- a) High Himal zone occupies 23% of the total area and lies above 4000 m. It is an area comprising of rocks, ice-covered massifs, snow fields, valley glaciers and meadow lands
- b) High mountains occupy 20% of the country with an altitude between 1000 to 4000 m at the foot slope of High Himalayas. As high mountain slopes are long, straight and steep, they are sensitive to erosion and give high rates of sediment delivery.
- c) Middle mountains is the central belt of the country with an altitude between 200 to 3000 metres and occupies about 30% of the total area. It is composed almost entirely of a network of ridges and valleys together with less than 5% flat land.
- d) Siwaliks, the lowest ridges of the Himalayan mountain system running all along the east-west length of country and occupying 13% of the total area at an elevation of 120 to 2000 m. It encloses several cultivated valleys, locally known as Inner Terai or Duns and some intricately dissected outwash plains

- e) Terai is an extension of gangetic plain between foot hills of Siwaliks and Indian border. It covers 14% of the total area in between 60 to 330 m. with a gentle slope of less than one percent.

Geologically, Himalaya and other mountain ranges have been formed by the orogeny resulting from the collision of the Indian Sub-continent with the erosion continent. The Siwaliks are made up of sedimentary deposits. To the north of them, there are older, mildly metamorphosed sedimentary strata.

2. Climate and Precipitation

Due to great variation in topography and elevation, the country experiences wide range of climates. However it belong to sub-tropical monsoon climatic region. The Terai and Siwaliks have hot monsoon. The lower middle mountains have warm temperate monsoon climate while Higher middle mountain have cool temperate climate. The high mountain have an alpine climate and high Himal above the snow line has a tundra type climate. Most of the areas experience a wide range of temperature depending on elevation.

Precipitation greatly varies from one place to another. The average annual precipitation in the country is about 1600 mm. with regional variations. On general the Eastern Nepal receive more rainfall than western Nepal. About 80% of the total precipitation occurs during the monsoon season (June-September).

Nepal is drained by three major rivers; Sapta Koshi in the east, Karnali in the west and Sapta Gandaki in the middle. All these rivers originate in the Himalayas so they have significant discharge even in the dry season. The combined flow of the rivers of the country is about 200 billion cubic metres in a year.

3. Land Classification

According to the HMG's Land Resource Mapping Project (LRMP), the categorisation of land is as follows:

- i) Cultivated land consists 21% of the total area of the country. Most of the cultivated land is concentrated in middle mountains (40%) and Terai (43%).

- ii) Non-cultivated inclusions are the pockets of land close to cultivated lands occupying about 7% of the total area. Such land is mostly concentrated in middle mountain but evenly distributed throughout the country.
- iii) Grass land occupying about 12% of the total area especially in High Himal mostly concentrated in western and middle western region of the country.
- iv) Forests, with at least 10% crown coverage constitutes 37% of the total land of the country Forest land is evenly distributed among the development regions except for Mid-western region which has much more than others.
- v) Shrub land occupies about 5% of the total land area. Mostly such land is concentrated in middle and High mountains region.
- vi) Other land include some abandoned farmlands as well as water bodies, rocks, snow and ice peaks. These category constitutes about 18% of the total area and highly concentrated in High Himal of mid-western and western regions.

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ANNEX II

Annex 2

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. KOKEN NOSAKA, HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN AT THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

Madam President,

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to you on the assumption of your important role at this historic Conference.

I also would like to express my most sincere appreciation to the Government and people of the People's Republic of China, the host country, for all their efforts to ensure the success of this Conference. It is indeed significant and opportune that the Fourth World Conference of Women should be held in China, a country that has achieved remarkable economic progress and a country where "women hold up half the sky". I also would like to pay special tribute to the Secretary-General, H.E. Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, and the Secretary-General of the fourth World Conference on Women, Mrs. Gertrude Mongella.

Madam President,

Last month, I was appointed Minister for Women's Affairs. It is the goal of Japan to create a society in which there is an equal partnership between women and men, and it was to realize this important goal that the post of Minister for Women's Affairs, to be held concurrently by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, was created three years ago. While I may be one of the few male representatives attending this Conference, I believe that a society in which there is an equal partnership between women and men can be realized only if serious efforts are made by men in cooperation with women. This conference has drawn great attention in both the private and public sectors in Japan. In addition to six thousand participants in the NGO Forum, twenty four Diet members, including four male members, are attending this Conference.

Since the First World Conference on Women, the international community, with the United Nations playing a central role, has been making continuous efforts for the advancement of women, considerable progress has been made. However, when witnessing the feminization of poverty, civil wars and regional conflicts in which the human rights of women are violated, I

am profoundly aware of the enormity of the problems facing the international community.

At this conference, we must identify the problems to be overcome, and show the world the course of action it must take to achieve international peace and prosperity.

Japan has always regarded the activities of the United Nations, such as the convening of the World Conferences on Women and the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as providing valuable opportunities for the further promotion of national domestic policies concerning women. I think it is imperative that individual countries and the international community take actions for the advancement of the status of women, in accordance with the course of action that is to be devised at this conference.

Madam President,

In the view of Japan, the course of action should comprise three principal pillars: first, empowerment of women, second, respect for the human rights of women, and third, partnership between women and men, partnership between NGOs and governments, and partnership across international borders.

Madam President

The goal of actions undertaken under the first pillar, empowerment of women, is to fully develop the potential of women and enable them to choose from various possibilities.

One key to the empowerment of women is education. As a result of the efforts that have been made in Japan to create a better educational environment, the enrolment of women in higher secondary education has been higher than that of men since 1989. Nevertheless, further measures must be taken to enhance educational opportunities for women throughout their lives.

Participation in the work place and in decision-making processes is another key to empowerment. Although Japan, having passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Law, has certainly made progress in ensuring equality in employment, many women still find a thick "wall" in front of them. The Government of Japan therefore intends to promote an environment in which women can fully realize their potential abilities. It will do so by

making greater efforts to employ and promote women in public service, by encouraging private enterprises, political parties, and other organizations to do the same, by supporting entrepreneurial activity by women, and by promoting the participation of women in decision-making in agricultural communities and in management.

In the global context as well, it is essential that women participate in economic and social development on equal terms with men and thus fully benefit from the process in order to ensure that balanced, sustainable development is achieved. To that end, in implementing development assistance, donors need to enhance cooperation in order to empower women and remove gender inequality in all aspects of women's lives.

In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that my country will pursue the "Initiative on Women Development (WID)". This initiative attaches special importance to the three priority areas of improving educational standards, women's, women's health, and economic and social participation for women. Japan intends to promote this initiative through a comprehensive approach, bearing in mind the inter connections between these three areas. I would like to call upon the inter-relatedness of community and its citizens to work together to realize the goals agreed upon in these three areas. While assistance my Government provides in the field of women in development already substantially exceeds the level of \$ 600 million a year, I will make efforts to expand the development assistance in this field for the implementation of this "Initiative on Women in Development".

Madam President,

The second important pillar of the Conference in ensuring the human rights of women It has been reaffirmed in international forums that the human rights of women are universal and must not be violated. Japan, for its part, has made constructive efforts to enhance respects for the human rights of women. Moreover, Japan highly evaluates the fact that there is now agreement on the importance of reproductive health and reproductive rights, and on the need for generic approaches ensure these rights.

On the other hand, problems such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment remain serious. The human rights of women and their fundamental freedoms must not be violated, my Government accordingly intends to take strong action so that women will no longer be victims of prostitution, sexual crimes, or sexual exploitation.

Moreover, many women in different parts of the world are still facing, threats to their honor and dignity, such as violence and inhuman treatment. The Government of Japan regards these problems as matters of grave concern and will therefore vigorously launch new initiatives to tackle them.

For example, in cooperation with the "Asian Women's fund", which was established in July, the Government will support activities in a thoughtful and effective manner for the protection of women's human rights, conducted at the grass roots level by Japanese and foreign NGOs. These include activities to care for women who have suffered violence, research on the prevention of violence against women, and activities to raise public awareness.

Furthermore, with a view to supporting efforts undertaken in various parts of world to eliminate such problems, the Government of Japan welcomes the strengthening of the UN activities in this field and is determined to actively cooperate with them.

In addition to tackling these contemporary problems relating to women's human rights, the aforementioned "Asian Women's fund" is also meant to express Japanese people's atonement to former "comfort women", reflecting Japan's sincere remorse for its past history. The government of Japan intends to extend the greatest possible cooperation to this fund, so that its objectives may be fully attained.

Madam President,

The third pillar of this conference is the enhancement of partnership. I think it is important to establish not only equal partnership between women and men, but partnership between NGOs and Government, and partnership across international borders.

Last summer, in an effort to further strengthen the national machinery, my Government set up the "Headquarters for Gender Equality" whose president is the Prime Minister and whose members are members of the cabinet. I serve as vice president. This Headquarters is at the center of efforts to promote comprehensive measures, suggesting the blueprint of gender equality in the twenty-first century.

Looking ahead to the twenty-first century, the first fundamental principle is the equal partnership between women and men, Japan has made efforts to promote measures, including the enactment of a law concerning nursing care for the aged and child-care leave and the enhancement of day-care services, in order to make working life compatible with the family life. This year the Government of Japan has ratified ILO Convention No. 156. It is also considering a review of the legal system pertaining to marriage, for example by introducing a legal measure that permits a couple to retain their respective surnames after their marriage, further constructive measures are also necessary in various fields particularly education to promote de facto equality between women and men, mutual understanding and cooperation.

Second, my Government attaches importance to partnership between NGOs and the Government. It intends to involve all the people in the effort to accomplish gender equality, reinforcing the cooperative relationship between NGOs and the Government that was established in the cause of preparing for this conference.

Third, partnership across international borders is also necessary. The connections among the fifty thousand people who are gathered in Beijing for this conference will open the door to twenty-first century. My Government suggests that information on women's issues be transmitted all over the world, for example through the Internet. In addition, it proposes that opportunities be created to strengthen Japan's relations with other national machineries, especially in the neighboring Asian region, in order to exchange views on policies for resolving women's issues.

Madam President,

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the realization of women's suffrage in Japan. Ms. Fusae Ichihara, who was a leading advocate of women's suffrage, stressed that without peace, there can be no equality, and that without equality there can be no peace. Each is indispensable for the realization of the other.

Having learned the lessons from the past, Japan has made the objective of securing world peace and prosperity the foundation of its foreign policy. As the only country to have experienced the horror of nuclear weapons, Japan finds nuclear tests by some nuclear weapon countries extremely regrettable. Japan strongly urges those countries to exercise self-

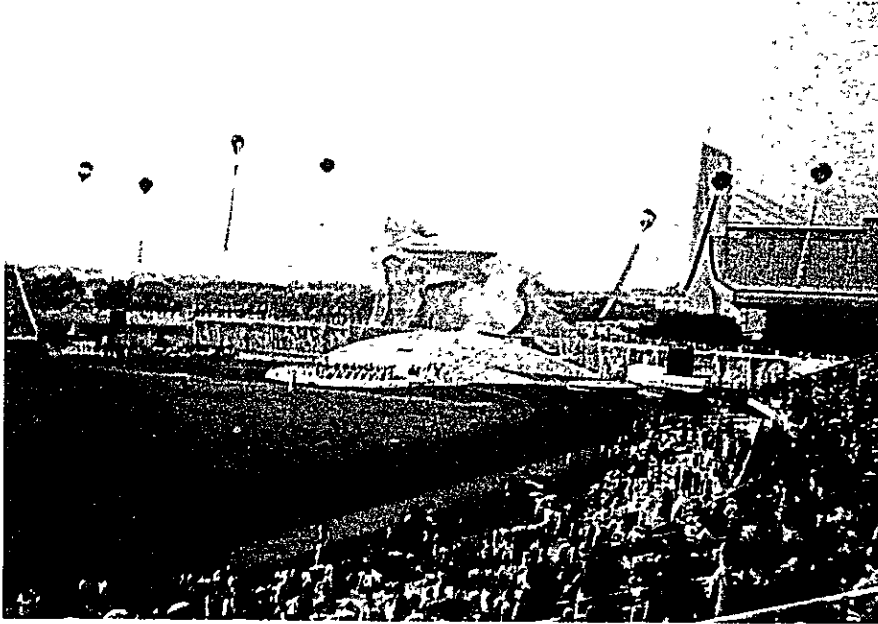
restraint, and sincerely hopes that all nuclear weapon countries will earnestly strive for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons. In wars, it is always women and children who suffer first. It is for this reason that the World conference on Women have consistently expressed a strong wish for peace. Women must no longer remain helpless victims of war, it is time they became active participants in the creation of a peaceful world.

It is our responsibility to the girls of today, who will be tomorrow's women, to ensure the success of this Conference. Let all of us gathered here strive to make this successful Conference, one that future generations will look back upon as a genuine milestone on the path to gender equality.

Thank You

ANNEX III

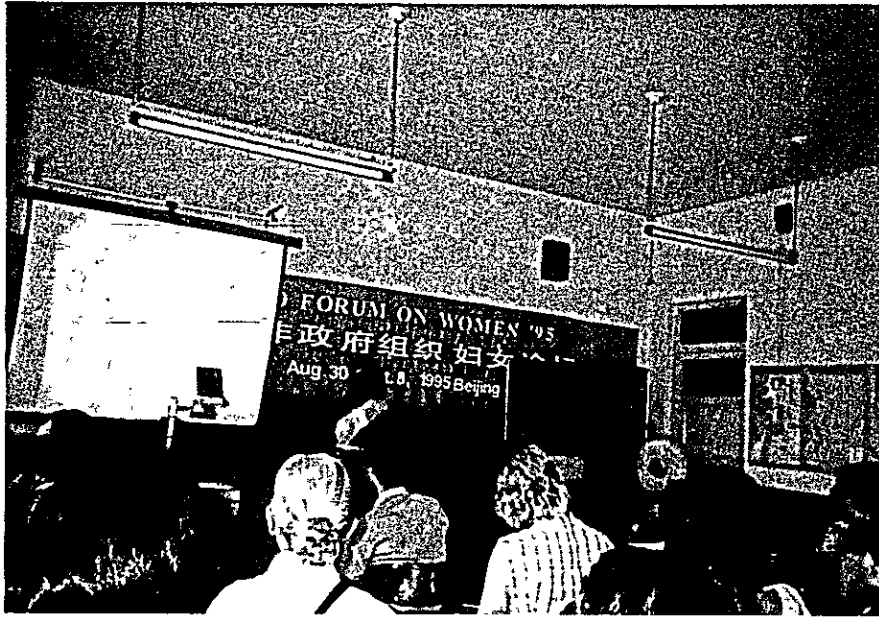
Annex 3. Photographs taken at the NGO Forum



Opening Ceremony of the NGO Forum



Opening Ceremony of the NGO Forum



Paper presentation by DSC staff



Paper presentation by DSC staff



Photo exhibition by DSC at the NGO Forum



Participating in the demonstration

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