

Chapter 3

Training of Women's Groups

Introduction

Training of women's groups was one of the main components of the project, which envisaged providing training to as many women as possible through women's groups using the Training of Trainers (TOT) concept. Following the TOT workshop in each country, as described in the preceding chapter, a series of training sessions was provided to members of the women's groups based on their prioritised needs. The training aimed to enhance their capacity to organise themselves in the planning, implementation, and management of water- and energy-related technologies at the household and community level. In most cases, the main trainers were the women who had been trained in the TOT training, especially for the training on group building and the use and management of the water- and energy-related technologies that were covered in the TOT sessions. Skill development training on income-generating activities including micro-finance (savings/credit schemes) was organised from other sources. A conventionally structured training approach was not suitable, since the women had to find time out of their regular chores to attend the training sessions. Flexible strategies were adopted in recognition of the constraints faced by the women with regard to time, mobility, and educational level. The training courses were made shorter, with sessions provided to a series of small groups at different times and/or where appropriate divided into sessions of short units. Follow-up training was also provided. Training was provided locally so that the women did not need to travel. A set of eligibility criteria for selecting trainees based on their training needs was also put in place. This chapter documents the various types of training provided to the women's groups to build their capacity in energy and water management, and their coverage in each country. The outcome of the training is described in subsequent chapters on the adoption of technologies and their impact.

The training provided to the women's group members can be broadly divided into three areas:

- a) basic training considered necessary for all group members to enhance group cohesiveness and empowerment through gender orientation and group management training on saving credit and revolving fund;
- b) specialised skills training on use and management of water-related technologies; and
- c) skills development training on income-generating activities.

In Bhutan, all members of the women's groups took part in the basic and group management training. Ten women in Limukha were trained in making solar driers, and ten in Phobjikha in improved mud/metal cooking stoves. In India and Nepal, orientation and group formation training was provided to most members of the women's groups; some men also joined the gender orientation training sessions. Specific training was provided to different groups in water and energy technologies and various income-generating activities. The number of participants in the different types of training is summarised in Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

Training Component	Uttaranchal	Himachal Pradesh
Gender orientation	45	30
Group empowerment training	40	40
Tree planting orientation	40	
Account keeping /micro -finance	4	2
Improved cooking stove		25
Household electrical appliances		30
Rainwater harvesting pond/tank	20	24
Infiltration well	4	
Composting / vermicomposting	22	20
Food processing (pickle making etc)	16	
Off-season vegetable farming	4	
Tailoring and sewing	32	20
Loan management		20

Training	Palpa	Dhankuta
Training of trainer sessions	4	4
Group empowerment / Paralegal training	142	46
Gender training	36 (+5 men)	24 (+20 men)
ICS promotion	6	14
Kitchen management	16	18
Low-cost solar drier		7
Drip irrigation	21	15
Drip irrigation follow up	15	
Off-season vegetables	21	15
Beekeeping	16 (+2 men)	9 (+8 men)
Ginger production	26 (+11 men)	
Vermicomposting	12	
Food processing	4	5
Grass production	36	
Loan management		32
Tailoring & sewing	16	11
Non-formal education	48	
Marketing & quality control	3	3

Basic Training on Gender Orientation and Group Empowerment

Bhutan

A week-long group empowerment and management training programme was provided to the women's groups of Phobjikha and Limukha with technical support from the Ministry of Agriculture of the Royal Government of Bhutan. The objective of the training was to build the managerial and organisational capacities of women to initiate savings and credit schemes in the communities to ensure the long-term sustainability of the scheme. Thirty-three participants attended the training, ten women from the Phobjikha and eight from the Limukha project sites, and the remainder from the Phobjikha Conservation Area Project (PCAP). The training covered topics on understanding existing rural savings and credit mechanisms in Phobjikha and Limukha, the concept of small farmer associations and village banks, the group formation process, maintaining group cohesiveness, managing conflict-consensus building, record keeping and reporting, loan management procedures, and the drafting of a self-help group constitution, bylaws, and action planning. One major outcome of this training was the formation at both project sites of a women's welfare association with an executive committee comprising the chairman, secretary, treasurer, and member representative, together with the drafting of a constitution and bylaws. The constitution contained 17 articles covering the duties and responsibilities of members, the powers and functions of the general assembly and board of committee, the scope of business, share capital, eligibility criteria for membership, savings and credit mobilisation, lending terms and loan sanctioning procedure, record keeping and reporting, termination of membership, amendment of constitution and bylaws, and auditing and fines.

India

A one-day gender orientation and group empowerment training session was organised for women in Uttaranchal (Bajeena and Naila) to sensitise them on their roles and motivate them to form groups with a set of rules and regulations. A similar training programme was organised with the help of the local partner NGO at the project sites in HP (Kunihar, Kotla, and Bhatuin) to train women on the role of gender in energy and water management, the formation of groups and their rules, record keeping and savings, and credit mobilisation. Group empowerment training was provided to group members every month with the help of NGO partners and field motivators using tools such as group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and presentations. All the women's groups have formed their own rules and regulations, they have regular monthly meetings to discuss progress, and each member is required to deposit a monthly saving of IRs 20.

Nepal

Group empowerment training was provided separately to all five women's groups in Palpa (142 members at the time of training) to generate awareness about group solidarity and collective action, and to develop skills and transfer technologies to help empower and strengthen the capacity of the women's group members. The training methods adopted were mainly group discussions, role-plays, question-and-answer sessions, and the presentation of posters. Group members defined their roles and responsibilities, prepared the rules and regulations, and enforced them properly.

Gender orientation-cum-training sessions were provided to women and men in Palpa and Dhankuta to raise awareness on the key gender concepts. The focus was on socially constructed gender inequalities in society, especially in relation to the efficient management of water and energy resources. The training covered such topics as gender concepts, socialisation, the role of gender, access to and control over resources, the need for gender development, equity and equality, positive discrimination, the legal rights of women, and the provision of women's participation in users committees.

In addition, two days of paralegal training were provided to 46 women in Dhankuta to increase understanding of women's issues such as double marriage, divorce, citizenship, women's rights to parental assets, and legal provisions regarding these. The main objective of these training sessions was to make women aware of the various issues. This training also linked legal aspects and the provision of water in the rural communities.

Non-formal education classes

In Palpa, six-month-long informal education classes were also conducted as requested by the women's group. Forty-eight members of the women's groups from the two VDCs benefited from the programme. In Bhutan, all the women's group members at the project sites have access to the non-formal education provided by the Department of Education.

Training in Energy-related Technologies

Improved cooking stoves (ICS)

In Bhutan, a stove specialist was hired to impart training to all the nine women in Phobjikha on the improved mud cooking stove with metal plate, metal chimney, and back boiler. Refresher training on two other types of improved cooking stoves (metal stove and back boiler and improved one pot hole stove) was provided to eight of the women from Phobjikha with the help of two stove technicians from the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The training was conducted at the house of one of the women's group members where both types of stove were installed.

In HP, improved cooking stove (ICS) promoters provided 'on-the-doorstep' training to 25 women users in the construction of ICS and their repair and maintenance.

In Nepal, a two-day-long 'ICS Promotion Training' programme on making ICS was provided to six women participants in Palpa with the help of CRT/N technicians. Similar training was provided later to 14 women in Dhankuta with the help of a local NGO. The techniques of building an ICS were demonstrated and the participants learned how to construct ICS for both domestic use and to cook livestock feed. This promoter training has provided a new source of income to these women who have begun to sell their services to construct the ICS – they have become 'energy entrepreneurs'. The direct achievement of this training has been that women who previously were not ready to install the ICS have been motivated to construct these stoves in their homes. Promoters have also been able to convince women who do not belong to the group to install them. ICS refresher training was also provided to some women in Dhankuta. 'Kitchen Management Training' was also an integral part of the ICS training in Nepal. A one-day orientation-cum-training session on kitchen management was provided to 16 members of the women's group in Palpa on the importance of proper kitchen layout with ICS

and kitchen management linked with health and sanitation aspects and time management. A three-day kitchen management training programme was provided to 18 members of the women's group in Dhankuta.

Solar driers

In Bhutan, two local carpenters and eight women in Limukha received training on making solar driers with the help of a skilled carpenter hired for eight days. In Dhankuta, Nepal, a week-long training programme on low-cost solar driers was conducted with the technical and resource support of the Cottage and Small Industry Development (CSID) Office for five women from five sub-groups of Sibuwā Banchare Women's Group. The major focus of the training was on delivering practical skills to the women on the construction of low-cost, plastic-covered solar driers. After training, the women were able to construct the low-cost plastic driers on their own. All the women now have these driers in their homes to dry vegetables and other food products quickly and hygienically.

Household electrics

In India, a one-day training session was provided to 30 women in Uttaranchal and to 15 women in HP on household wiring and simple electrical appliances. A toolkit was also provided to each of the participants to help them start repair work.

Training in Water-related Technologies

Bhutan

Some women in Bhutan received training on rainwater harvesting and drip irrigation during the TOT. Women in Phobjikha were then trained in the operation and maintenance (O&M) of the drinking water scheme constructed by the project in their village. The women have formed a committee of three members for the O&M of the water supply scheme.

India

In Uttaranchal, a one-day water management and water harvesting training-cum-orientation programme was organised for the women members of Bajeena and Naila villages on rainwater storage methods and the good use of this water. Practical training was given in Bajeena village on the construction of rainwater storage ponds, plantation, and social fencing for recharging the traditional water spring. Women in HP and Uttaranchal were trained in rainwater harvesting from rooftops.

Nepal

A one-day drip irrigation technology training session was provided to 21 women in Palpa focusing on drip irrigation, vegetable cultivation, and seeds and seedling plantation. The training also discussed the importance of organic manure, and how to make compost with natural green manure and its uses. A follow-up training on drip irrigation was held for 15 women in order to provide practical skills for preparing a seasonal and off-season vegetable nursery and to transfer seedlings from nurseries to fields as well as on the importance of green manuring, to strengthen women farmers' technical skills in vegetable farming. Similar training on drip irrigation and related issues was provided to 15 women in Dhankuta.

Training in Income-generating Activities

Based on the needs and priorities of women in the project areas, some specialised skilled training on tailoring, beekeeping, agro-processing and marketing were also provided to help enhance the income of women and address their productive needs.

Sewing

In Uttaranchal, 32 women from the Bajeena and Naila sites received training in sewing with the help of a qualified trainer hired from the village itself (Figure 3.1). In HP, 20 women received the same training spread over a six-month period provided by a qualified woman from the village.

In Nepal, 16 women in Palpa received a three-month-long training course in sewing with support from the CSID Office. Eleven members of the women's group from Dhankuta received hosiery training lasting three months, with support from the same office. The training has helped the women generate an income.



Figure 3.1: Sewing training in Bajeena, Uttaranchal

Organic composting and vermicomposting

In Uttaranchal, 22 women were trained in the NADEP composting technology (developed by Naryan Devrao Pandri Pandey). In HP, 20 women were trained in vermicomposting. The compost produced from these technologies has helped women increase the vegetable yields in their kitchen gardens.

In Dhankuta, 12 women were trained in vermicomposting and organic farming. The main purpose of the training was to orient and motivate the participants towards sustainable agricultural methods using various types of composting, organic pesticides, and natural farming practices. Women were made aware of various types of beneficial and harmful pests and their role in improving and suppressing production. The women also learned different methods of preparation and use of organic manure and organic pesticides through the use of effective micro-organisms, organic waste, cattle dung, livestock urine, and several locally available medicinal herbs and shrubs. The participants from each group were provided with a bottle of effective micro-organisms and 200 live earthworms in order to motivate them to transfer their acquired knowledge to their respective groups.

Training in off-season vegetable farming

Three days of training in off-season vegetable farming was provided to 21 women in Palpa and 15 in Dhankuta. The training focused mainly on growing vegetables, the types of diseases seen in vegetables, and pest problems in vegetables and their control. The importance of organic compost manure was stressed. There was also training in vegetable drying and the marketing of produce.

Training in beekeeping

A week-long course in beekeeping was provided to 18 participants (16 women and 2 men) in Palpa with the cooperation of the CSID Office, Palpa, and ICIMOD (Figure 3.2). The objective of the training was to provide knowledge and skills on developing beekeeping enterprises, concentrating on practical know-how including honey extraction and marketing activities (see Box 3.1). Similar training was provided to 17 participants (9 women and 8 men) in Dhankuta jointly by ICIMOD, CRT/N, and SOLVE-Nepal. Another two-day, follow-up training was provided to the entire group in Palpa.

Food processing

A five-day training programme on food processing was conducted in Dhankuta for nine women from the Dhankuta and Palpa project sites. The main objective was to improve knowledge about the preservation of food and how to add value to products in order to earn more income. The training covered a variety of subjects related to the importance of food preservation and processing, hygiene and sanitation, quality control, safe handling, packaging, solar drying, labelling, marketing, and others. Several food items prepared from ginger, 'amala', 'lapsi', and apples were demonstrated during a practical session (Figure 3.3).

Ginger production

A one-day training session in the production of ginger was provided to 37 people (26 women and 11 men) in Palpa, with support from the District Agricultural Development Office. Participants gained practical knowledge and skills on the selection of ginger seed, diseases seen in ginger and their control, and related issues.

Grass production orientation

A one-day training session was also provided to 36 women in Palpa on fodder grass production to make them aware of the different types of fodder grasses available, their



Figure 3.2: Beekeeping training in Palpa



Figure 3.3: Training in food processing

Box 3.1: Beekeeping training concept

The rearing of honeybees in a hive, usually for honey and wax production, is called beekeeping. Traditionally in Nepal, bees are kept in fixed comb log and wall hives. These hives are easy to make and are cheap, but they do not allow for colony inspection and manipulation. Beekeeping does not require day-to-day care, heavy work and huge investment. However, to maintain healthy bee colonies, to produce clean and hygienic honey, and to multiply colonies, the bee colonies need to be managed. The ICIMOD indigenous honeybee project has been encouraging farmers to keep their bees in moveable frame hives. These hives have the following advantages.

- They allow the beekeepers to manage the bees by dividing strong colonies that would otherwise swarm; uniting weak colonies that would otherwise die; strengthening colonies by feeding sugar syrup and providing extra combs of brood or honey; inspecting colonies to find out the condition of the queen, and her egg laying and brood pattern; and detecting disease and providing medication if necessary.
- They facilitate non-destructive honey harvesting and reuse of the honeycomb.
- The volume of nesting and honey-storing cavities can be expanded or contracted as necessary for the comfort of the bees. A dummy board is used to reduce the volume of the nesting cavity and a honey chamber can be added to increase the space for honey storage.
- They are easy to transport and suitable for migratory beekeeping.

The bee project provides training on different aspects of beekeeping, including colony management, queen rearing, and value addition of bee products. The training provided in Dhankuta and Palpa districts focused on colony management techniques, such as the need to manage honeybee colonies in moveable hives; the observation of bee colonies (when and why); winter and summer management; the prevention, hiving, and management of swarms; uniting and dividing colonies; methods of honey and wax harvesting and processing; identification, prevention, and control of diseases; and so on. Some basic beekeeping tools such as the honey extractor machine were also introduced and participants were taught how to use them.

importance, their uses, and plantation methods. The training was provided with support from the District Livestock Office in Palpa.

Loan and savings management

Training in various aspects of loan management was provided to 32 women members in Dhankuta. The participants themselves selected the contents of the training: loans and their usefulness, terms and conditions for obtaining a loan, the proper utilisation of a loan, risk management, fund management for sinking loans, selection of good enterprises, and others. The five-day programme ended with a full commitment from the participants to utilise their savings and the revolving fund properly.

Training in marketing and quality control

With the support of the research organisation MANUSHI, a week-long training programme on marketing and quality control was organised in Kathmandu for six women (three each from Palpa and Dhankuta) to enhance their entrepreneurial skills. The training incorporated various introductory topics of business management – types of business, risk analysis and management, awareness and self realisation, the selection of a business, markets and marketing, target identification, quality and quality control, making a business plan, and others. A field visit to a pickle manufacturing site was organised on the seventh day of the training.

