

Women Entrepreneurs in Mountain Areas



Editor
T. S. Papola



Women Entrepreneurs in Mountain Areas

PROCEEDINGS OF A REGIONAL WORKSHOP, DECEMBER 21-23, 1999

Editor

T. S. Papola

March 2000

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development
Kathmandu, Nepal

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ISBN: 92 9115 183 1

Cover Plates

Top Left - *Dhaka* weaver in Terathum, Nepal (File Photo)
Top Right - Making a straw hive in Munsiri, Nepal (Naomi Savile)
Bottom Left - Spinning yarn (File Photo)
Background - *Allo* cloth, Nepal
Boader - Silk on silk, Bhutan

Published by

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development,
GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal

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Foreword

The Regional Workshop on Women Entrepreneurs in Mountain Areas organized by ICIMOD from 21 to 23 December 1999 marked a major step in two thrust programmes under ICIMOD's Second Regional Collaborative Programme, namely Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Livelihoods and Gender Balanced Development in Mountain Areas. Its special significance lay in the fact that all the participants were directly involved in various aspects of enterprise development, as entrepreneurs, as representatives of women entrepreneurs' organizations, or as representatives of government and non-government institutions engaged in the promotion of enterprises among women in mountain areas. The zeal and enthusiasm shown by the participants in various sessions, and their eagerness to learn from and help each other, give me the confidence to believe that women's entrepreneurship has a bright future in the mountain areas of the region.

The workshop provided an excellent opportunity to the participants for mutual sharing of experiences and to ICIMOD for learning at first hand, and will help both greatly in their future programmes. I am confident that the present report on the proceedings of the workshop will not only exist as a record, but will also provide the basis for further action by the participants and their fellow-entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs' organizations, promoter institutions, and policy-makers in the field of development of women entrepreneurs in general and in mountain areas in particular. This document will also provide a guiding framework for the future activities of the ICIMOD staff coordinating the programme.

In view of the rising expectations and aspirations of a rapidly increasing population in most parts of the Hindu Kush-Himalayas, diversification of mountain economies is essential to prevent environmental degradation and further marginalisation of mountain people. The present workshop has identified a powerful force for change. ICIMOD looks forward to continuing to explore ways to support women entrepreneurs in the HKH region in their search for products, markets, and overall better livelihoods for their families and communities.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. T.S. Papola, who coordinated the workshop, and colleagues in the MEI and other divisions of ICIMOD who contributed to the successful organization of the workshop and preparation of this document.

28 February 2000

Egbert Pelinck
Director General
ICIMOD

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Mr. Egbert Pelinck, Director General, ICIMOD, for the encouragement and support that he gave to the organization of this workshop and the special interest he showed not only by participating in different sessions but also by agreeing to write a foreword to this document summarising its proceedings. Special thanks are also due to Dr. Mahesh Banskota, Deputy Director General, ICIMOD, and Ms. Jeannette Gurung, Gender and Development Specialist, for chairing the sessions at the workshop, and to Dr. Kamal Rijal, Dr. Syed Z. Sadeque, and Ms. Phuntshok Tshering for acting as resource persons for the working groups. The painstaking efforts of Mr. Rajendra Shah and Ms. Samjhana Thapa in providing all the support before and during the workshop are also gratefully acknowledged.

I would like to acknowledge with thanks the help rendered by Ms. Shyam Badan Shrestha, one of the Nepali participants, in organizing the field trip for the participants. Thanks are also due to Mr. Milan Shrestha for help to put together the workshop proceedings.

T.S. Papola
Head, MEI Division

Abstract

This report summarises the proceedings of a Regional Workshop on Women Entrepreneurs in Mountain Enterprises held from 21-23 December 1998 at ICIMOD. A number of recommendations were made on strategies, policies, and programmes for the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in mountain areas based on the background presentations on trends and issues from the studies conducted by ICIMOD, statements by participants on their experiences as entrepreneurs and representatives of women entrepreneurs' organizations and promotional institutions, and discussions in the plenary sessions and working groups. Specifically, the report highlights the suggestions made about the selection and diversification of products, marketing, and the policy environment needed to improve the access of women entrepreneurs to the assets and resources necessary to start and run productive enterprises. It also records the roles of different stakeholders and ICIMOD, as suggested by the workshop participants.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AKRSP	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme
CECI	Canadian Centre for International Studies and Cooperation
CMTCC-WID	China Enterprise Management Training Centre – Women in Development
DDC	District Development Committee
DPIC	District Programme Implementation Committee
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EDP	Entrepreneurship Development Programme
EDTP	Entrepreneurship Development Training Programme
FNCSI	Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries
FTG	Fair Trade Group
HAN	Handicrafts Association of Nepal
HMGN	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
IEDI	Industrial Enterprise Development Institute
ILO	International Labour Organization
MCPW	Micro-Credit Project for Women
MEDEP	Micro-Enterprise Development Programme
MLD	Ministry of Local Development
NGDO	non-government development organization
NGO	non-government organization
PAWE	Pakistan Association of Women Entrepreneurs

SAVE	Society for the Advancement of Village Economy
SME	small and medium enterprise
SMEDA	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority
SRSC	Sarhad Rural Support Corporation
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VDC	Village Development Committee
WASME	World Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises
WDD	Women Development Division
WEAN	Women Entrepreneurs' Association of Nepal
WO	women's organization

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CHAPTER I

Background, Objectives and Structure of the Workshop

In recent years, the mountain economies of several areas in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan (HKH) region have experienced diversification from subsistence-oriented food crop-based production to enterprise based market-oriented production. Some new activities have emerged and some old ones are increasingly being carried out for sale in the market. Vegetable and fruit production, commercially-oriented livestock holdings, sericulture, bee-keeping, products based on non-timber forest resources including medicinal herbs and plants, woollen products, tourism, and handicrafts for wider markets are some of the activities that have led to a substantial increase in the incomes of many mountain households.

The participation of, and benefits to, women in enterprise-based diversification vary in different areas and among different activities and products. In some cases, women have participated actively in the new activities and made a significant contribution to household incomes and family welfare, while in others they have been by-passed by these new developments. There are situations in which women have been able to achieve a degree of economic emancipation and control over the new incomes, and others in which the new activities have only led to an increased workload without any improvement in status and power. In most cases, enterprises run by women face more serious problems in accessing inputs and markets than do those run by men because of women's lack of mobility and control over assets and the necessity of combining household work with enterprise activities.

A number of initiatives has been taken in different countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region by government agencies, non-government organizations, development banks, and financial institutions, as well as organizations of women entrepreneurs themselves, to promote enterprises run by women through integrated projects, credit, entrepreneurship training, and promotion of collective marketing. These have had a varying impact on enterprise development and sustained income enhancement of mountain women and their households. The regional workshop on Women Entrepreneurs in Mountain Areas was organized by the Mountain Enterprise and Infrastructure Division of ICIMOD from 21-23 December, 1999, with the aim of sharing and documenting these experiences and thus learning about the processes and factors that determine the success of women entrepreneurs and the outcomes of

different programme initiatives, exploring possibilities for replicating the successful experiences, and identifying the elements of policy that are conducive to the promotion of enterprises among women in mountain areas. In his opening speech, Mr. Egbert Pelinck, the then Director General of ICIMOD, stressed that the workshop was intended to provide an opportunity, both for the participants to exchange experiences among themselves and for ICIMOD to learn about the constraints, opportunities, and facilitating factors in the development of entrepreneurship among mountain women.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the workshop were

- to facilitate exchange of experiences of enterprise development among women entrepreneurs and organizations engaged in the promotion of enterprises among women in mountain areas;
- to identify constraints to, and the factors and circumstances favourable for, the development of women's entrepreneurship in these areas; and,
- to make specific suggestions on policies and programmes related to credit, skill, and entrepreneurship development training and marketing for the promotion of women's entrepreneurship in mountain areas.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants in the workshop included women entrepreneurs and representatives of organizations of women entrepreneurs and of government and non-government organizations engaged in the promotion of enterprises among mountain women from Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. Altogether there were 26 participants from different countries and several staff members from ICIMOD (Annex 1).

DOCUMENTATION

ICIMOD has documented experiences of enterprise development in mountain areas through about a dozen case studies conducted over the past two years. Most of these covered issues related to women's participation in enterprises. The background material for the workshop was a paper summarising the trends and issues relating to women in mountain enterprises as revealed by these studies. Highlights of the paper, as presented in the workshop, are summarised in Chapter 2 of this report.

The participants presented brief accounts of their own experiences or the experience of their organizations, highlighting facilitating factors and obstacles and policies and programmes for the development of women's entrepreneurship. These presentations are summarised in Chapter 3 of this report.

METHODOLOGY AND PROGRAMME OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop programme is shown in Annex 2. Workshop discussions took place in plenary sessions and working groups. Following the opening session and the ICIMOD background presentation on trends and issues, the plenary sessions on the first day and a part of the second day were devoted to presentations by the participants. Most of the second day and a part of the third day were taken up by discussions in working groups on the subjects and issues identified during the plenary session. (Annex 3 shows the terms of reference and composition of working groups.) The final session on the third day was devoted to presentation of the working group reports and finalisation of the recommendations. Participants visited local enterprises run by women in the afternoon.

Structure of the Report

The report is divided into four parts. Chapter 1 describes the background to and organization of the workshop, Chapter 2 describes the major premises and emerging issues related to women's entrepreneurship based on the opening remarks of the Director General, ICIMOD, and the presentation by the workshop coordinator, Chapter 3 summarises the individual presentations by the participants, and Chapter 4 summarises the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Statement of Issues

The opening speech of welcome by Mr. Egbert Pelinck, Director General, ICIMOD, and the summary presentation by Dr. T.S. Papola, on the emerging trends and issues facing women entrepreneurs in the HKH region, provided a general overview of the subject and set the agenda for discussions. Dr. Papola's presentation was based on the major findings of the studies completed so far by ICIMOD, particularly those relating to the involvement of women as entrepreneurs and workers in enterprises.

THE PREMISES

The opening speech by Mr. Egbert Pelinck, the Director General of ICIMOD, provided an overview of the background to the workshop. ICIMOD has been engaged in research, demonstration, documentation, training, and advisory services for the promotion of sustainable development of mountain areas in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan for the last 16 years. The people in these mountainous and often inaccessible areas have lived for a long time on the margins of the development that has taken place elsewhere. Since its establishment in 1983, ICIMOD has been working to promote poverty alleviation and environmental conservation in the region. The main concern of the Centre's activities has been improving the livelihoods of people living in these areas through the promotion of diversified economic options and eco-friendly activities with a comparative advantage. The role and status of women has been an important and integral part of the whole programme.

Poverty reduction and gender-balanced development, together with sustainable management of mountain commons, constitute the thrust areas of ICIMOD's current four-year programme, the Second Regional Collaborative Programme (1999-2002). The programme activity related to women entrepreneurs aims to contribute

to the capacity building of mountain women to enable them to participate fully in and benefit from the process of transformation of mountain economies from subsistence-based farming to enterprise-based production. It combines the objectives underlying the two thrust areas of poverty reduction and gender-balanced development.

Women are the backbone of household economies in mountain areas, although their contribution is mostly invisible and, therefore, remains unrecognised. The skill, industry, and perseverance with which they provide their families' sustenance offer an immense potential for more visible, remunerative, and enterprising activities that can alleviate poverty and raise living standards. Larger and more visible contributions to the family economy are also likely to result in an enhanced role for and empowerment of women in terms of household decision-making. Enterprise-based activities, however, involve access to and mobilisation of productive resources, new technologies, and inputs from outside the household production system, as well as access to marketing information and markets. Women, in particular mountain women, are often not able to take up these activities as a result of such handicaps as lack of ownership and control over productive resources like land and capital, and thus lack of access to credit; lack of time to acquire inputs and services as a result of time spent in household and farming activities; restrictions on social mobility resulting from tradition; and lack of education leading to lack of exposure to markets and access to market information.

Some women have been able to shed their shackles and overcome the constraints and obstacles, and they have become pioneers demonstrating exemplary efforts to run and promote enterprises. It is hoped that the experiences of such women and of organizations that have successfully promoted women entrepreneurs can be built upon to develop policies, strategies, and programmes that are favourable to promoting women's entrepreneurship in mountain areas. The participants were asked to focus on ways and means to improve the capabilities and access to productive resources of mountain women through the creation of an appropriate policy environment, on the one hand, and developing organizations of women producers and entrepreneurs for accessing markets, on the other. In this way women would be able to participate in, and share the benefits of, the emerging economic opportunities on an equal footing with men.

STATUS AND TRENDS

Dr. Trilok S. Papola, the Head of ICIMOD's Mountain Enterprise and Infrastructure Division, summarised the trends and issues in the development of women-run enterprises in the mountain areas of the HKH region. The paper was based on the results of a series of case studies on micro-enterprise development commissioned by ICIMOD in different areas and on different aspects and programmes over the last two years (Annex 4). The studies show that enterprise development in mountain

areas is generally constrained by lack of accessibility to inputs and markets and the limited, and often fragile and environmentally sensitive, resource base. Enterprise development in mountain areas can only be based on products offering a comparative, if not unique, advantage; but, even then, the inadequate infrastructure and uncertainty about the availability of food at affordable prices pose constraints to enterprise-based economic diversification.

The scale of most enterprises is small as a result of the limited availability of material, lack of capital and access to institutional credit, and lack of energy supplies and modern technologies. Small enterprises everywhere have problems in marketing their products, but for those in relatively inaccessible and remote mountain areas these problems are particularly marked. Mountain enterprises thus face the disadvantages of both size and location; and women entrepreneurs suffer from a 'triple disadvantage' with the addition of the constraints they face as 'women'. These specific women-centred constraints include the need to combine household and enterprise activities, social constraints to mobility, and the lack of access to and control over resources.

Even so, women participate significantly in enterprises, both as workers and as entrepreneurs. About one-third of enterprises are run by women; and women provide a similar proportion of employees and family workers. In activities like weaving with handlooms, handicrafts, and garment production, women constitute the majority of workers and entrepreneurs. In some areas, with the transformation of subsistence agriculture into commercial vegetable farming, women not only participate in on-farm activities, which they were mainly responsible for previously as well, they also now transport and market the produce. In Western Sichuan, China, women farmers participate actively in large numbers in the rapidly growing activities related to non-timber forest products, including the collection and processing of medicinal plants and herbs. Many women also work as employees and executives in plants processing these products, and some have become entrepreneurs in units engaged in the primary production and processing of agro- and forest-based products.

Women entrepreneurs are, however, by and large engaged in low-earning and slow growing activities, while the more remunerative and dynamic enterprises are mostly run by men. Women entrepreneurs are also mostly engaged in activities that are carried out at home—often on a contract basis—and often receive only a small return for their labour and enterprise. Lack of mobility and the need to combine enterprise activities with household work limit women's options in choosing product lines. Female-run enterprises also tend to be relatively small in terms of invested capital and manpower. The average capital investment in enterprises run by women is only one-tenth of that in ones run by men; and the average number of people employed is only three compared to eight in enterprises run by men. The small investment requirements may appear to be an advantage, but they also imply low productivity

and output and indicate clearly the limited access of women to capital. Most women entrepreneurs are keen to expand their enterprises, but see capital, followed by markets, as the most important constraint to their plans for expansion. Hardly any of the women micro-entrepreneurs studied had been able to gain credit directly from commercial banks. Yet enterprises run by women do no worse than those run by men. The majority of enterprises in female-dominated areas have grown relatively fast, and at least as fast as those run by men.

The special problems and needs of small and micro-enterprises have been recognised over the past two to three decades in different countries, and special promotional programmes involving credit, marketing, and training have been launched by governments and non-government agencies to assist in the development of such enterprises. A host of credit programmes has been launched by banking systems at the behest of governments and with the support of donors, and these programmes are being implemented either by banks themselves or by non-government organizations, quite often through community groups. Quite a few of these programmes on training and credit are meant to cater to the requirements of women entrepreneurs either exclusively or up to a minimum percentage. There are, however, hardly any programmes that focus specifically on mountain enterprises or women entrepreneurs in mountain areas.

Micro-credit programmes have improved women's access to credit to a significant extent. Over one-half of almost half a million beneficiaries of various micro-credit programmes in Nepal are women. A nation-wide credit-cum-subsidy programme in India stipulates that 40 per cent of beneficiaries should be women. In Pakistan, NGO programmes like the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) have a special focus on women and women's groups in their micro-credit programmes. But the focus of most micro-credit programmes has been primarily on poverty alleviation and the development of women's organizations around credit and savings. In general there has been no focus on enterprise development. The amount of credit available to an individual has been too small to start and run an enterprise of the minimum viable size on a sustainable basis. The capital requirements for even a micro-sized enterprise are much larger than the average amount of loans provided under these programmes. Further, the programmes do not have any special focus on hill and mountain areas and, as a result, most programmes have concentrated on more easily accessible areas in the plains where there is a greater potential for success. Most important, these credit programmes generally do not include the provision of other inputs and support necessary to run an enterprise. Mountain entrepreneurs feel the need for such services and support for technological upgrading, product selection, activity related infrastructure, and marketing much more than do those operating in areas in the plains with a better infrastructure and connections. This need is still more acute in the case of women entrepreneurs in the mountains because of their lack of mobility and access to information on technology, services, and marketing. Thus credit programmes have

contributed little to enterprise development in mountain areas, and even less to the promotion of women entrepreneurs.

Credit supply programmes have little potential for the successful promotion of income generating enterprises for women in mountain areas, unless potential activities with a comparative advantage in the specific location are identified before the credit programme is launched and market linkages established at the same time as the credit is made available. In many cases, substantial amounts of funds accumulated through group savings and credit schemes have remained idle as a result of the lack of identification and planning of development of productive investment opportunities. Even when appropriate activities are identified and started with credit from accumulated savings or from outside, the enterprises find it difficult to gain sufficient returns because there are no proper marketing arrangements or only exploitative marketing mechanisms for the sale of their products. Production and marketing of vegetables and fruit by women's marketing organizations, as promoted by the AKRSP in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, and collective marketing of handicrafts by the Handicrafts' Association of Nepal (HAN) and other members of the Fair Trade Group (FTG) in Nepal, are among the few successful experiments identified. These programmes could be studied and emulated in more areas and for more products.

Training for the development of entrepreneurial skills has been recognised as an essential input in enterprise development, particularly for small and micro-enterprises in rural areas; and many entrepreneurship development programmes (EDPs) are being conducted by government and non-government agencies. The need for training to impart entrepreneurial and managerial skills is more urgent for those entrepreneurs operating or intending to operate in areas and environments with very little exposure to business enterprises, such as remote mountain areas, and particularly for women with much more limited exposure. There seems, however, to be very little recognition of the special requirements arising out of the specific environment in which people will be operating, in particular the requirements of mountain entrepreneurs. Thus, in general, EDPs take no account of these needs, even though a significant number of trainee entrepreneurs from mountain areas participate in these programmes. Most programmes have paid special attention to potential women entrepreneurs. Some organizations only conduct EDPs for women, and others organize some exclusive programmes for women and also have a significant proportion of women participants in their general programmes. Women comprised around one-third to one half of trainees in the EDPs run in, or for entrepreneurs from, hill and mountain areas in India and Nepal.

Women trainees, however, seem to show a lower success rate in terms of starting a business enterprise after training: about 30 per cent of women and 45 per cent of men started a business after training. There are exceptions, the success rate for women trainees was 58 per cent in one of the programmes conducted in north-east India, primarily because most of the trainees belonged to societies dominated by

women and based on similar products. Demand-induced training programmes integrated with credit and marketing services also showed better results, as shown by the AKRSP programmes in the Northern Areas in Pakistan.

Markets and marketing of products evidently constitute major constraints in the emergence and expansion of enterprises run by women in mountain areas. The products mostly have limited, often only local, markets, and the women have limited exposure to non-local markets and limited access to information about them. As a result, they are not able to obtain a fair price for their products and, when they themselves do not engage in marketing, they have no access to or control over the income from the enterprise. Even so there has been a number of encouraging examples of success. In some areas, women have gained substantially from vegetable cultivation and livestock-related activities by participating both in production and marketing. In some cases they have carried out marketing through their own organizations. Projects and programmes have also helped in the marketing of products like *allo* (a nettle species) in Nepal, and handicrafts and natural fibre-based products in India. Systematic linkages with processing and marketing organizations have helped women to achieve higher prices for medicinal plants and other forest products in Sichuan, China. In addition, marketing organizations concerned with 'fair trade' have been instrumental in expanding markets and obtaining better prices for handicrafts produced by women in various parts of Nepal.

ISSUES

Summing up, the following issues emerge as the most important from the findings of the various studies.

First, mountain enterprises have the best chance to survive and compete when they deal in product lines with a 'niche' in these areas, generally by virtue of their being based on unique natural resources. Within the range of potential products, the most suitable for women to develop are those with which they are familiar and in which they possess traditional skills. Careful selection of products is essential for the successful operation of women-run, or indeed any, enterprises.

Second, while production can be undertaken economically at small, micro-, and household levels, marketing must be done on a larger collective scale to make the enterprises viable. It is important to identify and promote those marketing arrangements that have the best chance of realising remunerative prices from among the various forms such as direct retail sale to consumers, sale to traders, link-ups with large companies, and marketing organizations of producers. It is also necessary to obtain feedback from the market on the demand—in terms of quantity, quality, and variety of products. Direct participation by women entrepreneurs in marketing through their own organizations gives them the added advantage of exposure to wider markets as well as a better return for their efforts.

Third, programmes for the promotion of enterprises in mountain areas, particularly those meant for women entrepreneurs, should not be minimalist, providing a single input or service like credit, training, technology, or marketing, but integrated, providing all-inclusive support from a single window.

Finally, social, institutional, and legal mechanisms need to be evolved and strengthened so as to improve women's access to and control over the resources that are necessary to start enterprises, as well as over those resulting from their efforts in running enterprises.

In conclusion, the participants were asked to use the forum of the Workshop to help them organize and network and build on successes, to identify elements of favourable policies and programmes and later lobby for their adoption by relevant agencies, and to advise ICIMOD on ways of supporting these efforts.

CHAPTER 3

Experience Sharing: Presentations by Participants

This section presents summaries of the individual presentations by participants. Most of the presentations were accounts of the initiatives taken by individuals and organizations to promote small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in their countries, focussing on their learning experience and the main constraints and challenges faced, and making some recommendations. Some of the interesting cases related by the participants are presented in boxes. The names of the presenters are shown in brackets after the presentation titles.

BANGLADESH

There were four presentations from Bangladesh—two on organization-specific initiatives promoting women's entrepreneurship and two cases of experience sharing by women entrepreneurs. The first presentation was about the Green Hills and its experience of working as a local non-government development organization (NGDO) with indigenous tribes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Another NGDO, MIDAS, described its multifaceted approach to helping women entrepreneurs and providing technical assistance to them. One of the individual cases describes the experiences of a woman entrepreneur who specialises in textile weaving, the other those of a woman who launched a medium enterprise with credit support from MIDAS.

Green Hills: An NGO in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Jatan Kumar Dewan)

The local NGDO Green Hills implements community-based development initiatives in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. As an initiative rooted in the indigenous social fabric of the region, Green Hills has been implementing multidimensional programmes for the uplift of socioeconomically disadvantaged hill people, especially

targetting those not served by others, the deprived, and the poorest of the poor indigenous people. Its mission is to elevate the “quality of life of the dwellers of hill districts by providing need-based support and skills to the target community, and enabling them to undertake individual as well as collective programmes on a sound environmental footing, agreeing with regional harmony and accelerating productivity based on contemporary technological advances.”

Green Hills conducts several programmes such as small and medium enterprise (SME) development, entrepreneurship development training, water and sanitation, education; pisci-culture, and women’s development. It provides training in different types of small and medium enterprises such as groceries, bookstalls, traditional waist-loom, *batik*, screen printing, poultry, packaging, electrical shops, and similar.

Green Hills introduced an Entrepreneurship Development Training Programme (EDTP), mainly based on a high quality training model called ‘competence based economics through formation of entrepreneurs’, which was developed by the German Agency for Technical Cooperation. In the course of implementation of its SME programme, several problems such as a dearth of committed and competent trainers, lack of working capital, lack of resources to provide loans, and absence of proper marketing, were encountered. At the same time, the organization learned the following two lessons. First, before providing loans, it is necessary to provide training to help the borrower to conceptualise marketing, production, operation and maintenance, and financial plans, and adopt an entrepreneurial strategy in the changing competitive market. And, second, instead of micro credit, small and medium sized loans should be provided to make the enterprises feasible.

On the basis of their experience, Green Hills would recommend the following.

- Innovative and feasible mountain-based enterprises should be promoted.
- Active linkages should be established between banks and potential entrepreneurs.
- Exposure visits to successful mountain-based enterprises could strengthen the knowledge of the trainers.
- Successful enterprise-based exchange visits (domestic and overseas) could play a key role in encouraging and facilitating experience sharing among the entrepreneurs.

MIDAS: A Multifaceted Approach (Sharmin Akhter)

Micro Industries’ Development Assistance and Services (MIDAS) has been working for the promotion and development of micro- and small enterprises for generating employment on a self-sustainable basis. The MIDAS entrepreneurship development

programme aims at the development of indigenous entrepreneurship for the creation of small and micro-enterprises by organizing training programmes for potential and existing business persons and providing all-inclusive technical assistance.

A Women Entrepreneurship Development cell has been set up within MIDAS to support and promote women entrepreneurship in micro and small enterprises by providing investment counselling, techno-market information, technical and managerial services, financial assistance, marketing facilities, networking, and training. Women loan seekers are given priority, and less stringent rules are applied when choosing or sanctioning loans to a potential woman borrower, as MIDAS takes into consideration the relatively greater number of obstacles met with by women entrepreneurs compared to men in the conservative society of Bangladesh.

MIDAS has been giving training in related topics like business plan preparation, new business creation, financial analysis, showroom management, and business management. MIDAS has set up four selling outlets for groups of women entrepreneurs who do not have their own outlets.

One of the main problems faced by MIDAS is that the women entrepreneurs often compromise on product quality for short-term profit, at the expense of the project's goodwill and long-term prospects. Some businesswomen tend to be impulsive and have a low patience threshold. On the positive side, most of the women have very supportive husbands. Many husbands lend a helping hand in their wives' businesses, doing the more tedious chores, and sometimes managing the difficult task of controlling male workers and labourers.

Other Experiences **(Monjulika Chakma, Selina Begum)**

The two other presentations from Bangladesh on personal experiences and the lessons learned from individual enterprises are summarised in Boxes 1 and 2.

BHUTAN

The presentation from Bhutan offered a glimpse of the role of women in the management of small and micro-enterprises in that country. With the matrilineal and extended family systems prevalent in Bhutanese society, women are actively involved in a variety of enterprises. The presentation highlighted the fact that, although the country has ample opportunities for cottage, small-, and medium-scale industries, more favourable enabling mechanisms are needed to increase the knowledge and skills of women for the proper management of their businesses.

Box 1**BAIN TEXTILES: MY EXPERIENCE AS A WOMAN
ENTREPRENEUR IN THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS REGION
OF BANGLADESH***Monjulika Chakma*

The Chittagong Hill Tracts comprises the three south-eastern districts of Bangladesh. More than 13 indigenous tribes live in this area. The women of most of the tribes weave cloth using a waist loom for their own use, but not for sale. The Chakma women are traditionally skilled in weaving cloth. They weave *pinon* (a dress worn by Chakma women on the lower part of the body), *khadi* (a piece of cloth worn by women to cover their breasts), shawls, and other household cloths.

Ms Pancha Lata Khisa, my mother, gained esteem for weaving exquisitely designed cloth in Rangamati. The then district officials of Rangamati used to request my mother to weave cloth for them. After matriculation in 1961, I started my career as a school teacher. Along with teaching, I studied weaving. I first started selling woven tribal cloth from a showroom in my house.

Weaving cloth with a waist loom is very time consuming. Considering the time factor and cost, I decided to introduce more advanced looms for weaving and installed two handlooms. My business gradually increased. With a loan from Chittagong Hill Tracts' Development Board, I installed more modified looms there and named the enterprise Bain Textiles. The term 'bain', a Chakma word, means the traditional loom used by women for weaving tribal cloth.

At present, the enterprise is producing different types and designs of cloth. Tribal women are weaving on waist looms under the supervision of the enterprise. Bain Textiles has also been producing ready made products like shirts, *fautua*, *salwar kameez*, *punjabi lungi*, children's wear, bed-sheets, bed covers, table mats, sofa covers, and hand bags.

The experience gained from Bain Textiles indicates that hard labour, intelligence, tolerance, sufficient capital, and necessary assistance from appropriate corners are invariably required for success. Marketing facilities to sell the goods produced are also necessary. Motivation for developing entrepreneurship is badly needed among women in the Chittagong Hills Tracts region. Necessary assistance, particularly financial assistance, should be provided to women who want to run a business.

Box 2
SHUCHINI: ENTERPRISE WITH MIDAS SUPPORT

Selina Begum

My name is Selina Begum and I am the proprietor of Shuchini, Midas Mini Mart, Dhaka, Bangladesh. After I finished my studies in 1979, I worked in a garment factory as a production director for 14 years. We exported garments like shirts, T-shirts, and polo shirts to Denmark, Switzerland, New Zealand, Belgium, and other countries.

After a long time as an employee, I wanted to start an independent business; and in 1995 I set up a small factory, named Shuchini, with the help of a loan from MIDAS. I started making clothes like boys' *punjabi fatua* and shirts, girls *salwar kameez*, and dyed and blocked sarees. I also created many new designs and fashions of dresses.

I invested only 10,000 *Taka*¹ to start my business. Now my capital is almost 0.75 million *Taka*. These things were only possible because I was encouraged by my neighbours. My children also helped me a lot in my business in different ways.

Developing Women's Entrepreneurship in Bhutan
(Thinley Lham)

Bhutan is a landlocked country sandwiched between China and India. It has a population of 0.6 million, nearly 50 per cent being women. Bhutan's development philosophy of Gross National Happiness, as opposed to the globally common index of development—Gross National Product—has evolved organically from its unique historical, cultural, and economic framework. There are well-established mechanisms in the kingdom at the district and village levels that foster people's active participation in the decision-making process.

Bhutanese society is largely matrilineal and the extended family system still prevails. This not only provides social safety nets to the family members but also relieves old people of home and childcare responsibilities. The women of the household take the lead role. The household decisions are made jointly by the wife and husband and in most households women have control over the family finances.

Bhutan is still in its infancy in terms of industrial development. Bhutan's development began only about three decades ago, and women tend to be more cautious in venturing into business. However, with education and increased

¹ There are 51 *Taka* to one US Dollar

opportunities, women are becoming actively involved in new enterprises. The country has ample opportunities for cottage, small, and medium-scale industries. However, Bhutanese women lack the knowledge and skills needed for the proper management of business. The Bhutanese government should consider the following suggestions to promote small and micro enterprises in the country.

- Government development programmes need to include a component for the promotion of women's entrepreneurship through training and skill development.
- Government programmes should encourage home-based income generating enterprises.
- Credit should be provided to cottage industries based on the project proposal and without collateral.

CHINA

Reflecting upon the disadvantaged situation of women in Sichuan, the presentation from China discussed how successful the China Enterprise Management Training Centre – Women in Development (CMTCC-WID) programme of intervening through promotion of SMEs has been in improving the economic role of women in production activities. The presentation specified some key elements for the success of promoting of women's entrepreneurship.

Helping Women and Their Groups Grow: the Role of CMTCC in South West China

(Li Xia)

Background

Situated on the upper reaches of the Yangtze River, Sichuan is a largely agricultural province with over 80 per cent of its population living in rural areas. Since the 1980s, there has been an increasing trend towards 'feminisation' of farming in China. Women are left to do heavy farm tasks in addition to the traditional domestic chores. Yet their socioeconomic status has hardly improved.

In the past 10 years, efforts have been made to decrease women's reproductive workload as well as increase their productive efficiency. It was realised that feudalism, which has a long history in China, has systematically subordinated women and, as a result, women's needs have often been neglected. Women were regarded as passive recipients rather than as active participants. The development of the economy does not necessarily mean the development of women. Women in the mountain and rural regions are still poor, still subordinated, still considered as passive recipients, and as a group are being ignored. Most of them are not prepared when sudden changes take place in the economy or the environment, they lack the confidence to make the adjustments necessary to cope with the new challenges.

In the process of implementing development projects, an effort has to be made to help women at the grass roots understand their roles in the changing economic context. Initiatives should focus on promoting gender awareness, the development of entrepreneurship, and improving women's access to skills' training, technology, and resources, particularly credit. The situation can only be changed fundamentally if individual women can improve and upgrade their capabilities for income generation, as well as undergoing a change in their thinking and attitude. The improved socioeconomic status of individual women will only be sustainable if a more positive environment is created in which their efforts are supported and their progress is encouraged. In order to create such an environment, it is necessary for changes to occur at the institutional level (community, village, educational, and other organizations) as well as the individual level.

The objective of CMTCC-WID is to assist rural women and their families in the mountain areas of south-west China (Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou provinces and Tibet and the Xinjiang Autonomous Regions) in their efforts to improve their socioeconomic status and quality of life. All efforts and activities are focussed on capacity building and sustainability. Capacity building consists of two levels: institutional and individual.

To accomplish the main goals, training is provided in basic business management and applied technology and skills; WID concepts and principles are promoted and reinforced; and rural women are assisted in their efforts to generate income and improve their economic status. Priority is given to women in the remote mountain regions. Training efforts are intentionally targetted to the rural professions and have taken village heads, women's federation staff, at the village level, and women teachers from village schools as effective instruments of promotion and communication. The all-round development of women is facilitated in the implementation of these activities, drawing upon the needs and interests of rural women.

The success of the programme is contingent upon a number of factors such as good understanding of the fundamentals of poverty alleviation; timely response to women's demands; commitment of stakeholders; good selection of training contents; and a good match of resources and needs. The WID Committee has contributed to the elimination of inequality between men and women in education. Lack of understanding of the value of training, lack of time, and limited resources have posed the biggest obstacles to the programme.

INDIA

In the presentations from India, the generation of self-employment opportunities for women through the organization of self-help groups was indicated as a promising option for mountain enterprise development, particularly in relation to niche-based products like off-season vegetables, milk production, and high-value cash crops (e.g.,

medicinal plants and herbs). It was also suggested that such economic activities should be kept in harmony with the natural resource endowment of the mountain region. One case study shows the way the private sector can tap economic opportunities, in this case by adopting a twin-pronged strategy of scientific techniques and organic fertilizers in herb farming. Another presentation described an experiment in harnessing natural fibre plants and trees to produce utility and decorative products. The last presentation described the experience of an NGO in training women entrepreneurs in mountain areas.

Self-employment for Women in Uttarakhand (Manjula Tolia and Anita Joshi)

Although rich in economic resources, the Garhwal and Kumaon region is dependent on the plains for all articles of human consumption, whether a morning cup of tea, dinner, clothes, or any other amenity of daily life. In the mountains, vegetables from the plains cost four times their price in the plains.

It is not that this region has no prospects for production. The region abounds in natural resources. However, the majority of people do not know how to relate these natural resources to the process of development. In the specific context of women, the mountains offer prospects for enterprises related to dairy products, herbs, wool, horticulture, floriculture, bamboo products, angora rabbit farming, bee-keeping, mushroom cultivation, woodcraft, wooden furniture, handmade paper, incense sticks, processing of fruit, pickles, squash, and jam, candle making, silk production, tea plantations, spices, paper bags, and many others.

The Government of India has introduced the *Svarn Jayanti Gram Svarojgar Yojna* (Golden Jubilee Village Self-employment Scheme), through which self-help groups of women living below the poverty line are formed and provided with self-employment opportunities like dairy farming, off-season vegetable cultivation, cattle rearing, bee keeping, farming of medicinal plants and herbs, wool-based products, and handicrafts. Active groups are provided 50 per cent of the cost of the scheme by the government in the form of a grant. A brief account of the programmes in two activities, off-season vegetable production and dairy farming, illustrates the potential for success.

Under another scheme, off-season vegetable production is being introduced as promising enterprise activity for hill women. Uttarakhand *Vikas Vibhag*, Government of Uttar Pradesh, provides one polyhouse per person to individuals and groups of rural women under a self-employment scheme. One polyhouse covers an area of 1,000 square feet and costs IRs 52,000¹. The woman entrepreneur has to invest IRs 18,000. Polyhouses are established on small landholdings in the hills and capsicum,

1 There are IRs 43 to one US Dollar (December 1999)

tomato, coriander, and similar are grown in the off-season. This scheme is proving successful in providing self-employment. The IRs 18,000 invested by the entrepreneur can be recovered in less than a year. Proper and adequate training in and knowledge about crop management, use of insecticides, and management of polyhouses are provided to the women entrepreneurs.

Milk production is another promising activity. The Women's Dairy Development Scheme has been operating in Uttarakhand for the last six years on the basis of cooperatives. The main aim of the women's dairy societies is the development of collective and organizational strengths of women. Women's dairy committees are constituted from groups of interested women. Four programmes are organized from time-to-time for the office-bearers and members. These dairy societies not only collect and sell milk, they also provide for the inoculation of animals and the distribution of fodder. The societies are significantly enhancing the income of women members. Their success is reflected in the fact that they are helping to establish women's self-help groups. The groups pool their savings and some have also started providing loans to needy members. Women's dairy societies are proving to be a beneficial government initiative under which rural women form groups and obtain self-employment.

The following recommendations were made based on the experience with the self-employment schemes as implemented among women in the hills.

- Voluntary agencies and the private sector should be involved in the implementation of the schemes. Large active, voluntary agencies should be involved in the formation and management of groups at the district level on a large scale. Better coordination needs to be established between the government and these agencies.
- Special training should be given to the officials of the branches of banks in the rural areas affected to sensitise them to the need for timely provision of loans and other facilities to women's groups under the scheme.
- The task of training women for the selected schemes should be assigned mainly to an agency established within the private sector.
- As women extension workers have a special role to play in activating women's groups, policy changes should be made to increase the number of women extension workers in the government sector.
- Programmes related to easier access to fodder, drinking water, and fuel should be given priority for the hills to save women's time.

A successful venture utilising herbal plants for medicinal and other products is described in Box 3.

Box 3**ANRORI AGRO HERBO MEDICA (INDIA) PVT LTD***Anita B Joshi*

Anrori Agro Herbo Medica (India) Pvt Ltd is a recently established company set up to systematically tap herbs for development activities. The initiative for the enterprise came from Dr. Bhaskara Nand Joshi, late husband of the author. The company is located in Anrori Village, which has a long tradition of herbal treatment, in a verdant valley surrounded by forests and terraced farming. It extracts essential oils, oleoresins and vegetable dyes, spices, liquid spices and spice oleoresin, herbal extracts, and similar products. It has motivated and trained the farmers to adopt a two-pronged strategy of scientific techniques and organic fertilizers in herb farming. It provides saplings and credit to farmers to grow herbs and buys them for processing. It has been developing products that are import substitutes, export-oriented, and eco-friendly. The organic and technical farming has brought about a mini-economic revolution and increased farmers' incomes many times. The company has sold domestically and also exported over 40 different herbal products.

The efforts of the company in herbal resource management and indigenous product development were recognised by the International Business Council with the awarding of the International Excellence Award in 1996 to Dr. Bhaskara Nand Joshi, the then Managing Director.

Other Experiences**(Kanta K. Sharma, Iqbal Singh)**

Dr. Kanta K. Sharma, Secretary of the 'Women's Development Forum', Dehradun, described an interesting experience of involving women in the production of natural fibre-based products in Uttar Pradesh Himalayas. This organization has been a pioneer in the designing and promotion of products from various fibrous plants like ropes, nets, masks, bags, baskets, and decorative items like wall hangings and mats. She described how the organization has helped mountain women to start business ventures and improve their household incomes. These products have been successfully marketed through handicraft showrooms and other outlets, with systematic linkages with shops and stores in larger towns and cities.

Mr. Iqbal Singh described the experience of the Society for the Advancement of Village Economy (SAVE), in Kullu Valley, Himachal Pradesh, using a systematic approach to entrepreneurship development which combines need and potential assessments, skill and entrepreneurship development training, provision of credit, marketing support, and follow-up. Such an approach can succeed in initiating and

sustaining enterprises even in inaccessible rural villages in mountain areas. SAVE undertakes entrepreneurship development programmes for village women and men, in almost equal numbers, after a promotional campaign in the area of the potential entrepreneurs through hand bills, posters, meetings, and personal contacts. At the time of the campaign, potential viable income-generating activities are identified and explained. Trainees are then selected out of the many that apply. The training itself is followed by an 18 month 'escort-service' to help trainees to start enterprises. The success rate can be as high as 70 per cent, compared to 30-40 per cent in most other EDPs.

NEPAL

The presentations from Nepal consisted of cases from the Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI), the Women Entrepreneurs' Association of Nepal (WEAN), the Micro-enterprises Development Programme (MEDEP) of the Ministry of Industry and the Micro-credit Project for Women (MCPW) of the Ministry of Local Development Women's Development Division (WDD), as well as the story of a successful women entrepreneur in knotcrafts. One of the most urgent measures thought necessary to help improve the access of women to flexible credit sources, time-saving mechanisms, and appropriate technologies was to develop an enabling policy environment for the promotion of SMEs. The approach should be one of cultivation of women's entrepreneurship skills combined with technical or training support for business planning and marketing.

Women Entrepreneurs in Cottage and Small Industries in Nepal: Status and Role of FNCSI (Anjana Tamrakar)

The Federation of Nepal Cottage and Small Industries (FNCSI) has more than 5,000 women members in 30 districts of the country. A survey recently conducted by FNCSI on the status of women entrepreneurs in cottage and small industries in Nepal found that there is a need to formulate a specific programme for women's entrepreneurship development in order to encourage and motivate women towards entrepreneurship. The study also identified lack of time due to excessive household responsibilities, social restrictions on mobility, low social security, absence of rights to parental property, low education, and low business awareness, among others, as the factors hindering the development of women entrepreneurs. The FNCSI study recommended the establishment of a separate women entrepreneurship development fund and launching of a 'credit guarantee' or 'small business insurance' programme to help women entrepreneurs access the much-needed credit facilities. Programmes on market information dissemination and market promotion should be formulated to help women entrepreneurs solve their marketing problems, and there should be an extension of support in market networking. Specifically, the study recommended the following.

- Organization of programmes to promote awareness about the need for women's participation in economic activities for the economic development of the country
- Preparation and dissemination of lists of financially viable businesses
- Women's entrepreneurship development and other promotional programmes for the upgrading of women's entrepreneurial competence
- Establishment of a cottage and small industry development bank to provide credit to women entrepreneurs
- Dissemination of technological and technical information and development of skilled personnel to provide support to women entrepreneurs
- Promotion of the goods produced by women entrepreneurs

The Role of Promotion Organizations: WEAN (Renu Shapit)

The Women Entrepreneurs Association of Nepal (WEAN) is a non-profit and non-governmental organization founded in 1987 by a group of Nepalese women entrepreneurs with a view to empowering the women of Nepal through entrepreneurship. WEAN's target beneficiaries are women micro-entrepreneurs in rural areas and small and medium-level women entrepreneurs in the Kathmandu valley.

Women entrepreneurs face a variety of problems. They have a low level of confidence and their families have little confidence in their capabilities. The social perception of women is narrow. Balancing time between outside and household work is difficult. Women are considered to be weak and passive. Religious beliefs are also not favourable to women. Women cannot travel out of the home for a long period of time. They are looked at as consumers and spenders rather than producers and bread winners. They lack access to credit, training, and education. Most families do not support women in their enterprises. When in business, women mostly concentrate on traditional types of activities that are easy to enter but are very competitive and less profitable such as handicrafts, hosiery, garments, restaurants, and tea-shops. Women also lack business exposure and managerial capabilities.

WEAN has undertaken several initiatives aimed at reducing women's handicaps and improving their entrepreneurial capability. WEAN offers training, marketing assistance, micro-credit, networking, and other extension services as a package programme to urban and rural women entrepreneurs. It has developed effective training packages aimed at enabling low-income women entrepreneurs to create and develop their businesses so that they can improve the quality of their lives and that of their families. These training packages are related to entrepreneurship development, marketing, small business management, networking, book-keeping and account-keeping, and leadership development.

WEAN has successfully conducted technology-based women's entrepreneurship development training within and outside the Kathmandu Valley, for example, in the production of potato chips, herbal shampoo, soft toys, and detergents, spinning of wool, cutting and polishing of semi-precious stones, cultivation of mushrooms, and processing of fruit beverages, pickles, and jam. However, although the training helps rural women develop new skills, and self-esteem and confidence as entrepreneurs, most continue to face the problem of lack of access to credit. For this reason, WEAN launched a savings and credit programme based on a modified Grameen Bank model (see Box 4). Most of the credit goes to vegetable farming, raising poultry, tourism-related services, bamboo crafts, handloom textiles, and wool tie and die cloth products. WEAN has also taken some initiatives in developing and marketing new products (see Box 5).

The Micro Enterprise Development Programme (MEDP): A New Initiative in Capacity Building for Entrepreneurship Development
(Lakshman Pun)

The Micro Enterprise Development Programme (MEDEP) is an HMGN initiative started in 1998. The programme is being run with a gradual phase-in in a total of ten districts—two in each development region. It is designed to support the Ninth Plan (1997-2002), which has poverty reduction through the creation of off-farm

Box 4

WOMEN MICRO CREDIT AND SAVINGS INITIATIVE IN RASUWA DISTRICT, NEPAL

WEAN's Micro Credit and Savings' programme has been benefitting an increasing number of low income and illiterate women in selected rural and semi-urban areas of Nepal. Currently, it has an outreach of about 350 active women borrowers and savers in the Syabru Village Development Committee (VDC) area and selected wards of Lalitpur and Bhaktapur municipalities. WEAN focusses on direct lending and a savings mobilisation programme in order to ensure high quality and appropriate products and services, as well as to cover its costs.

WEAN conducts periodic monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The performance indicators include timely repayment, cost effectiveness, and progress towards operational and financial sustainability. The external evaluation conducted at the end of the third year of operation in the district focussed on both the operation and the effectiveness of the programme. The loan portfolio is monitored on a monthly basis through examination of loan disbursement, on-time repayment and arrears, group formation status, situation of new and repeat loan requests, client dropout reports, savings balance, and interest earned.

Box 5**PLAN/WEAN PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME TO PRODUCE
AND MARKET HANDMADE BANANA SHEATH PAPER**

PLAN-Nepal and WEAN are collaborating to promote micro-enterprise products with a special focus on the marketing aspect. This particular project intends to tap the comparative advantages of the area (Rautahat and Bara) in terms of availability of raw materials, labour, and skills of the local people. This project utilises waste banana sheath as the main raw material and converts it into a useful product—banana sheath paper. Women from marginalised and disadvantaged communities are the main beneficiaries of this joint venture.

WEAN is responsible for starting the production process as well as monitoring the production for a year. WEAN phases out by handing over the production unit, technical knowhow, and marketing expertise to the community.

employment as one of its key goals. The executing agency is the Ministry of Industry, financial support and technical collaboration are being provided by the UNDP and several national partner agencies.

Staff identified in the partner organizations at the central level act as contact persons for sharing information and participating in programme implementation. A District Programme Implementation Committee (DPIC) is formed at the district level comprising representatives of the district and regional level units of the central level partner organizations. The District Development Committee (DDC) is also one of the MEDEP partner organizations at the district level. The first step in the implementation of MEDEP activities in a district is an assessment of the resource potential, and socioeconomic and market situation in the area. 'Market centres' and 'programme locations' are identified based on the findings of the survey, and the consensus reached among the members of the DPIC. The programme locations are the entry points of the programme.

MEDEP covers three categories of target population: (a) unemployed and underemployed youth, including women, (b) owners and workers of small, informal income-generating enterprises, and (c) existing micro-entrepreneurs facing stunted growth. Target groups include landless agricultural workers, small and marginal farmers, petty traders, small irregular income-generating and occupational activities, family enterprises, cottage industries, manufacturing, agro-processors, and services.

MEDEP is based on creating horizontal linkages and networking among the local agencies concerned with the delivery of different components of MEDEP, as well as building sustainable partnerships among government organizations, local government

units, private sector groups, non-government organizations, and communities. MEDEP aims to create a sustainable service delivery mechanism by developing a network of the implementing partner organizations and enhancing their capacity to deliver the various services required by MEDEP's target beneficiaries in the district.

With the organizational structure of the programme in place, MEDP is now in the process of launching various components of its support for the creation and development of enterprises like training, credit, and marketing. Manuals on Training of Trainers, Micro-Enterprise Creation and Development, and New Business Development have already been prepared, and tested in the field, with the support of the Industrial Enterprise Development Institute (IEDI).

Micro Credit and Women Entrepreneurs: MCPW (Kabita Bhattarai)

The Micro Credit Project for Women (MCPW/NGO Support Unit) is being implemented by the Ministry of Local Development, Women's Development Division, in 12 districts (Dang, Salyan, Pyuthan, Chitwan, Kaski, Siraha, Saptari, Dhankuta, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Baglung, and Parbat) and five urban areas (Nepalgunj, Pokhara/Dumre, Bhaktapur, Dhankuta, and Kathmandu). CECI is managing the NGO Support Unit. Started in March 1994 with a total budget of US\$9.6 million, the project will be completed in March 2000.

MCPW is one of HMGN's efforts to improve the socioeconomic status of women in Nepal and to promote women's participation and integration in the country's national development, thereby contributing to poverty reduction. The project's objectives are to increase the income of, and provide employment opportunities to, poor women in urban and rural areas, and to develop alternative financial mechanisms through selected NGOs as credit agents and financial intermediaries.

The project has so far increased the institutional capacity of 95 NGOs through different training packages. Twenty-nine NGOs are working as credit agents, and another 41 have been approved to act as credit agents. A total of 2,351 groups with 16,403 members have been formed. Loans worth US\$147,058 have been accessed by 7,025 women. The loan repayment rate ranges from 92 to 100 per cent. Thirteen NGO cooperation associations have been formed. Savings worth US\$158,676 have been generated and mobilised. Altogether 16,403 target beneficiaries have been involved.

Women in Livestock Enterprises: Women Development Programme of the WDD of MLD (Hari Prasad Rimal)

The Women and Target Group Development Division (WDD) of the Ministry of Local Development (MLD) is also implementing a larger Women Development

Programme, along similar lines to the MCPW, in which livestock enterprises are the major activity supported.

The Women and Target Group Development Division (WDD) of the Ministry of Local Development (MLD) of His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMGN) is implementing the Women's Development Programme in 67 of the country's 75 districts. About one-third of the districts covered by the programme are in mountain areas and another third in the hills.

The programme was initiated in 1982 with the objective of improving the quality of life of low-income, disadvantaged, destitute women, and their families. The WDD provides credit and entrepreneurship development and skill development training for entrepreneurship programmes.

The major activities within the scope of WDD are women's group formation, income-generating activities, and institutional and community development. Groups of women are involved in a number of income-generating activities ranging from farm-based activities, such as animal husbandry, vegetable cultivation, and cash crop development, to off-farm activities, such as retail shops, tailoring, hosiery, and small-scale cottage industries. About 65 per cent of the credit is extended to the livestock sector.

As the mountain and hill areas of Nepal are not adequately covered by transportation facilities, the women entrepreneurs in these areas cannot sell their products at reasonable prices. Another major problem faced by the women entrepreneurs involved in livestock farming is their limited access to modern technology.

Other Experiences **(Shyam Badan Shrestha)**

The Nepal presentations also included the story of a successful woman entrepreneur in the knotcrafts sector, told by herself (see Box 6).

PAKISTAN

The main theme of the presentations from Pakistan was that social mobilisation, training, and credit support are the main preconditions for the empowerment of women. Referring to the changes brought about by the introduction of rural support structures (for example the increased mobility of women, enhanced institutional mechanisms, and improved intra-household decision-making power of women), the presentations made further recommendations for enacting legislation that protects women from discrimination and promotes gender equality.

Box 6 **ME AS AN ENTREPRENEUR**

Shyam Badan Shrestha

I was born the first child, fatherless and female, and faced constant hardships emotionally, socially, and economically. At the age of eight I had to earn my living. Struggling merely to live, and facing continuous insult as a poor and female child, taught me, at the age of 14, to set my goal towards higher education. The purpose of my life was to work, study, and stay alive. Educated and trained as a teacher, I had the opportunity to teach for 13 years in various school and colleges.

After 10 years of dedicated teaching at a school in Kathmandu, I was thrown out for no fault of my own. I decided "I am not working under anybody". Thus 'Nepal Knotcraft Centre' was established with just Rs 200 (US\$ 3) capital investment (later Rs 25,000 was added) in 1984. My other motivation was to provide employment opportunities for socially and economically underprivileged women, like me, especially young girls who wanted to educate themselves but could not pay the fees.

I had to face several challenges and difficulties. I had no business background either in my mother or my husband's families. I had no training or skill to start a business. There was a lack of raw materials suitable for macrame (knotcraft) work and of skilled manpower, as I was the first to start knotcraft in Nepal. Technical information was also not available. Also, people looked down on manual work.

My teaching background helped me to solve the problem of formal skill training. I taught myself the skill from books, experimented with various knots and yarns, and thus learned by doing. To solve the problem of raw materials, I explored the local market thoroughly and made enquiries with different government and non-government organizations. When Nepal faced the problem of supply of petroleum from India for nearly a year in 1988/89, ten girls were working with me. They were constantly worried about whether they would become unemployed. I had to use my ingenuity to overcome the problem. I started to produce cornhusk dolls – using raw materials available in Nepal—an environmentally friendly waste product. That opened up a whole new area – unheard of in Nepal at that time.

I developed a skilled workforce by training young women free of cost and then employing them. To obtain the technical information, I went to various libraries and bookshops, the Cottage Industry Board, and individuals engaged in to similar work. I also invented tools and boards and had them made locally for use in knotcraft.

I had by then become recognised as an entrepreneur, innovator, and organizer and became associated with WEAN, finally becoming its President. I was able to develop the training section at WEAN Nepal as a strong component, and I was also involved in the establishment of the WEAN cooperative—a marketing cell of women producers in Nepal—as a promoter, member, and shareholder. I was able to help establish 'Dhaka Weaves 'P' Ltd.,' and to organize a special promotion exhibition for Dhaka textiles – showing different items, designs, and colours. The exhibition resulted in many new enterprises starting up in Dhaka weaving.

As President at WEAN for many years, I was able to create more than 1,000 women entrepreneurs/clients through integrated programmes in micro-enterprise development training, micro-credit, marketing, and networking. I also helped in the development of handicrafts made by women through the 'Handicraft Association of Nepal'

Pakistan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (Begum Salma Ahmed)

The Pakistan Association of Women Entrepreneurs (PAWE) was registered as an NGO in 1985. PAWE is a member of the governing body of the World Assembly of Small and Medium Enterprises (WASME) and is affiliated to the ECOSOC (the Economic and Social Council of the UN). In this way, it has direct exposure to all UN meetings such as those of UNCTAD, UNDP, UNICEF, and ILO. The main goal of PAWE is to motivate women in urban areas to enter the entrepreneurial field and become economically independent.

PAWE would like to increase its coverage and activities in mountain areas of Pakistan. Based on the geography of the area, the following projects have been identified and recommended as the most appropriate for mountain women.

- Handlooms, traditional handicrafts, carpets, and garments
- Export of fruit and vegetables
- Hides of livestock—the development of a Persian lamb called Karakuli in Afghanistan is a case in point
- Organization of mining in the Balochistan mountains which are rich in chrome, coal, marble, and other mineral resources
- Making fashion jewellery (particularly in the Northwest Frontier Province)
- Joining with women in urban areas to open health resorts and beauty centres where they can use medicines made of Ayurvedic herbs

The following suggestions are made to help the development of enterprises in these and other products by women in mountain areas.

- The Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA) should provide funds to women in mountain areas on soft terms.
- NGOs should lobby for women to obtain credit from SMEDA and the State Bank of Pakistan.
- Access to credit should be based on collective projects of women against a collective collateral to be provided by the NGO and to be backed by the Women's World Bank.
- It is imperative to have representation of women from the mountain areas in Parliament for successful advocacy with government.

The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (Uroos Bibi)

The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) is a private, non-profit organization established by the Aga Khan Foundation to help improve the quality of life of the villagers in northern Pakistan. Its approach is based on the twin objectives of improving the quality of life of the region's small farmers and developing a replicable model of participatory rural development. In working to achieve these objectives, AKRSP has developed an integrated strategy of human resource development, collective capital formation through regular savings, and practical techno-economic interventions to raise local farm productivity. AKRSP responds to the needs of women, especially rural women, by fostering the development of women's organizations (WOs). AKRSP enters into a contract with WOs to provide technical assistance and training, and training in organization and management, for specific productive packages. In a large number of cases, WOs have taken up local legislative, executive, and judicial functions.

AKSRP believes that the 'sewing machine approach' to women's development lends legitimacy to the notion that women's activities in agriculture are unproductive and that agricultural activities routinely performed by women have no room for productive investment. To alleviate women's work burdens, AKRSP has developed and distributed a wide range of appropriate technologies to WOs such as butter churners, nutcrackers, and fruit dehydration chambers.

AKRSP has developed two major types of production package: subsistence and graduated packages. The subsistence package focusses on the basic and practical needs of women, such as nutritional improvements at the household level, and addresses the constraints that women face in meeting these needs. Recognising the constraints on the mobility of women, AKRSP has worked with the WOs to access markets, by both developing packages that cater to village and local markets and by introducing merchants to the WOs. Four credit windows are available for use: short-term loans, medium-term loans, the WO credit programme, and the micro-enterprise credit programme. Two cases of successful entrepreneurs who received training and credit support from AKRSP are presented in Boxes 7 and 8.

Box 7

CASE STUDY ON POULTRY FARMING

Ms. Shahida Numa (a participant at the Workshop) is 40 years old and one of the most successful entrepreneurs in Gilgit district. Shahida is the master trainer and poultry specialist of the Women's Organization, Princabad. Shahida set up her enterprise with an initial investment of PRs 16,000 eight years ago. Her gross income was PRs 1,075,207, providing a net income of PRs 311,794 after deduction of all expenses.

When asked about the changes in her life, Shahida answered that she now feels independent and satisfied. Even when decisions are made together with her husband, she is always the person responsible for the management of the enterprise. Now she contributes to the household expenses and the education of their children.

Women's ability to raise the income and improve the overall standard of living of their families is to them the most important benefit of participating in a WO.

Women are beginning to play an increasing role in determining household expenditures as a result of their contributions to household income. Many women have made education of their children, particularly their daughters, a priority for income expenditure.

Women's income-earning activities have led to a rise in their status within the traditional family unit and an increased capacity to negotiate for changes at the household level. As women gain new skills and knowledge, their feeling of self-worth also increases and they gain the necessary confidence to take a more vocal stand at the household level. At the individual level, women are enjoying more respect and authority within the family unit and are participating increasingly in household decision-making processes. The change is reflected positively in intra-

Box 8

CASE STUDY ON THE HONEY PACKAGE

Ms. Chambelli is 35 years old and a honey entrepreneur. She received honey management training from AKRSP. She purchased two colonies from AKRSP with a 50 per cent subsidy. She produced 12 more colonies by hatching bees, and extracted 200 kg honey from these colonies in one season. She sold this honey at the rate of PRs 200 per kg in the Gilgit market. Her total income in one season was PRs 20,000, after meeting the cost of bees and hives; and a net profit of Rs16,000 after deduction of PRs 4,000 in expenses. She is happy with her enterprise and plans to expand it in the future.

household relationships between the sexes. Finally, women's increasing recognition as breadwinners is substantially altering family relationships at the grass roots' level.

WOs provide a platform for women's cooperative action and solidarity at the village level. In its effort to synchronise women's strength and influence, the WO has proven to be an effective mechanism to support women's issues and to make their voices heard more clearly at the village level. WO savings can mark the entry point for a new mutual interdependence of men and women on the premise of women's increased bargaining power in the village. Although women have limited decision-making power on financial investments at the household level, WO loan facilities initiate a dialogue between men and women at the community level. Following their participation in WOs, women not only shape the process of economic development of their community but, most importantly, also shape its social framework. To women, WOs are an instrument for establishing linkages and cooperation with actors beyond the immediate village environment.

Women's productive activities show great prospects for providing sustainable benefits. The growing demand for women's produce at the village level also ensures expanding marketing opportunities for women. Women entrepreneurs have both a strong interest in improving their present performance and a high learning curve. Education is the prime avenue for empowering women. With more education, women have greater access to employment opportunities and increased ability to secure their own economic resources. Legislation that protects women from discrimination and promotes gender equality also needs to be enacted by the government.

Women Skill Development Project (Salma Waheed Murad)

The 'Women Skill Development Project' is a United Nations pilot project launched in the 1980s in the slum areas of Karachi, in Lyari and Chakiwara. Training was given to women in manufacturing consumer items such as bleach, liquid soap, detergent, prickly heat powder, talcum powder, Vaseline, balm, candles, jam, jelly, and pickles, as well as such things as book keeping, and book binding. They were taught complete marketing skills, including such things as market surveys, market feasibility studies, packing, and labelling. Each woman was provided with the materials for the skills they wanted to learn.

After receiving training, the women trainees displayed their products at an exhibition organized for them. The women sold their products and immediately started generating income. Stalls at women's bazaars and credit were provided to them. Government hospitals were requested to buy bleach, detergent, and other products from these women. Some of the women started marketing in their neighbourhoods.

Family members who were jobless also helped them to sell their products. These enterprises do not need large premises, a small room is sufficient.

Sarhad Rural Support Corporation: SRSC (Humaira Daniel)

SRSC was established in 1989 as a private, non-government, non-profit rural support programme working for poverty reduction. The programme works by helping villagers from male and female, village-based community organizations. The programme helps these communities to make the best use of their skills, community resources (including forests, water, barren and fertile land, and animals), and capital to improve their standards of living. SRSC's mission is to harness people's potential to help themselves by establishing a network of institutions at the grass roots' level in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. SRSC is engaged in a broad spectrum of development. The needs identified for and by the women beneficiaries are built into the various components of SRSC.

SRSC's approach emphasises the participation of marginalised rural communities at all levels of planning, designing, and implementation of the process of sustainable development. Through social guidance, the potential of rural people, especially the poorest, to undertake and implement initiatives themselves is harnessed.

The primary objective of social organization is the evolution of cohesive rural institutions at village level so that effective community participation and decision-making can take place in the identification, planning, and implementation of village development activities. The ultimate objective is sustainability through increased cost-sharing in certain activities, and independent development of linkages with government and other development agencies.

The women's programme seeks to bring women into the mainstream of village development by improving their social and economic conditions and status. SRSC has been quite successful in creating awareness among men and women about the need for women to participate actively in their own development, as well as in the development of their families and communities. Credit is extended to women community organizations across the region for multiple purposes such as livestock rearing, poultry farming, agri-inputs, small shops, and many more.

The women's enterprise development programme is closely linked with SRSC's credit and enterprise development programme which offers training in enterprise development as well as support to start small businesses in the village. The programme aims to remove such obstacles and constraints on the development of women enterprises as the small scale of production in certain enterprises like mushroom and strawberry growing, low risk-bearing ability, mobility, market

awareness and exposure, inaccessibility to market due to geographical conditions, and exploitation by middlemen. It aims at building self-confidence and enhancing product quality consciousness among women. It also attempts to enhance knowledge among women entrepreneurs about the institutions providing support to small enterprises.

CHAPTER 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

WORKING GROUPS

The Workshop identified issues for further discussion on the basis of the presentations in the preliminary session and by participants under three broad headings: (i) Products of Women-Run Enterprises; (ii) Marketing; and (iii) Institutions, Policies and Programme Interventions. Three Working Groups were formed to discuss these issues in detail and formulate recommendations. The conclusions and recommendations from the Working Groups are summarised in the following.

Products of Women-Run Enterprises in Mountain Areas

The main questions posed and considered under this theme were as follow. Are there specific product lines on which women entrepreneurs are concentrating? Are they reasonably remunerative? What other possible product lines are there, and what are the ways to diversify women's enterprises into more dynamic product lines? How can productivity and returns be improved in the existing product lines?

The group found that women entrepreneurs mostly concentrated on certain specific product lines, the more important among them being: woollen products, weaving/handloom products, herbal products, bee-keeping, dairy products, fruit farming, vegetable farming, floriculture, *papad* making, small-scale lodges, restaurants/tea-stalls, natural fibre-based products, and bamboo products. This represents a wide range of product lines with varying scope for dynamic expansion and widening markets. In themselves, these product lines are not necessarily less remunerative than those in which enterprises run by men specialise, but in general they offer only small returns to individual entrepreneurs because the size of the operations is small.

Women-run enterprises face problems in both enlarging the scale of production and improving productivity and returns. The main factors restricting the former are the limited availability and often dispersed location of raw materials, the lack of access to capital and credit, and the lack of appropriate market information and market linkages. Thus the group made the following recommendations.

- Improved access to credit
- Developing cooperatives and other forms of organizations of enterprises run by women entrepreneurs, especially in similar product lines
- Support for market research for diversifying products
- Facilitating information sharing through meetings and workshops and exchange visits
- Documentation of, and incentives for, regeneration of the mountain natural resources on which many enterprises are based

The major constraints to raising productivity and returns on women-run enterprises were identified as lack of skills and technology, quality control, suitable energy inputs, and lack of information about markets and the prevalence of exploitative marketing channels. The group recommended the following.

- Well-focussed skill and entrepreneurship development training for groups of women entrepreneurs based on product lines
- Support for upgrading technologies
- Development of appropriate energy
- Collective marketing of products

In addition, some products faced special problems and, therefore, required specific measures.

Weaving enterprises were suffering from a lack of new designs, and therefore required help in developing designs and patterns in accordance with market demand.

Herbal products' enterprises suffered not only from the dispersed location of raw materials, but also from the general scarcity of such materials, often created by unrealistic laws and regulations restricting their use. Instead of a general ban on use, the regulatory regime should allow use with incentives for regeneration.

Floriculture enterprises had difficulty in acquiring greenhouses and polyhouses and needed constant monitoring. Linking with larger marketing organizations might make it possible to procure the equipment and services more easily.

In the case of dairy enterprises, insurance for animals and veterinary services were identified among the major requirements needed to improve the risk-bearing capacity of farmers and yield and returns.

The Group felt that ICIMOD could help by documentation, facilitating information sharing, identifying experts and support agencies, and providing advisory services to the governments and other institutions concerned.

Marketing

The Working Group on Marketing dealt with the questions of how seriously markets and marketing act as constraints for women entrepreneurs in mountain areas? what are the different ways of improving access to markets and ensuring remunerative prices? and what steps do entrepreneurs and their organizations need to take to improve markets and marketing for their products?

The group unanimously reached the conclusion that marketing is a major problem in most cases. The main factors contributing to this problem were the small production scale, limited access to information, distance to markets, lack of knowledge about and skills on marketing, and lack of quality control.

The participants noted various forms and channels of marketing in vogue and found that systematic linkages with larger marketing organizations, be they government sponsored, privately run, or project/programme sponsored, have helped improve the situation. The sustainability of these arrangements, however, can only be ensured when they are backed by entrepreneurs' own organizations. The participants and their organizations can help women entrepreneurs at the local level by providing advisory services and training. They should help entrepreneurs form producers' organizations based on products and services. Besides working as suppliers of raw materials and support groups for value-added production, these organizations would also engage in marketing. The group found that self-managed collective organizations were the most effective at reaching out to larger markets, maintaining prices, and reducing risks.

The group felt that ICIMOD could render technical assistance to build up knowledge and skills. It could help women entrepreneurs and their organizations to increase their knowledge by providing access to information, facilitating experience sharing, organizing study tours, assisting in organizing trade fairs, conducting market research, and facilitating the formation of networks. Skills could be enhanced by providing training in business and marketing, for which ICIMOD could also provide small grants. ICIMOD could help shape government policies and programmes and help to establish linkages with donors. At the policy level, ICIMOD and women entrepreneurs' organizations can join together in advocacy for more favourable policies.

Institutional Arrangements, Policies and Programme Interventions

The Group on institutional arrangements, policies and programme interventions covered a large number of issues under three major headings: (i) specific conditions,

constraints and needs of women entrepreneurs in mountain areas; (ii) rights, access to, and control over assets and resources; and (iii) existing policies and on-going programmes in relation to the specific requirements of women entrepreneurs, particularly in the areas of credit, skill, and entrepreneurship development and access to technology, inputs, and support services.

The group noted the following problems related to the specific conditions and needs of women entrepreneurs in mountain areas. First, the lack of physical and social mobility and education pose constraints to mountain women in accessing knowledge and skills about products, markets, and technology. Second, mountain women have limited access to productive assets, including capital, as a result of the prevailing socio-legal regimes of ownership and control. Third, they are generally not aware of their own potential and opportunities because of their suppressed and subordinate condition in the family and society. Fourth, there is a general lack of gender sensitivity in policies and programmes, and thus women are generally not able to take advantage of their positive elements.

The issue of rights and access to, and control over, assets and resources is highly critical and important. It is imperative that women are able to exercise equal rights over family property and assets. This will automatically increase their confidence, self-esteem, and decision-making power; ensure their position in society; and add to their future security. In the specific context of starting and running enterprises, it will provide collateral, if required, to enable them to access credit and capital.

The group suggested that the laws of inheritance be examined thoroughly and should be rectified where found detrimental to women. Representatives of women should be equal participants in this review. Further, awareness of the laws and their implementation should be ensured by different stakeholders.

The group made the following observations and recommendations on the question of the extent to which ongoing policies and programmes cater to the requirements of women entrepreneurs in mountain areas in respect of (a) credit, (b) skill and entrepreneurship development, (c) access to technology, and (d) other inputs and support services.

Credit

- The credit facilities available to women are in places insufficient, meagre, or non-existent. Credit should be available for women entrepreneurs on soft and sufficiently flexible terms.
- Group collateral should be accepted for an interim period until assets are created that can be mortgaged.
- Loan procedures and formalities should be simplified and reduced to the minimum in order to ensure timely disbursement according to need.

Skill and Entrepreneurship Development

- Training programmes should be based on needs.
- Ongoing programmes need to be examined in order to ensure that they are women-focussed.
- Apart from technical skills, training in business, administrative, and financial management and leadership should be imparted to women entrepreneurs with a particular focus on women in mountain areas..

Access to Technology

- All existing technologies have been male-focussed. A radical change is needed from the development stage onwards in order to have technologies that are women-friendly and women-specific.
- Access to technology or technology transfer is often expensive. It should be made more economical and accessible to women, since mountain women entrepreneurs are mostly micro-entrepreneurs.

Other Inputs and Support Services**General**

- Urban to rural networking is essential in order to organize marketing outlets.
- Facilities for non-formal education should be developed, including adult literacy programmes targeting women.
- Support institutions such as the Chambers of Commerce, Trade, and Industry and Export Promotion Bureaus should be gender-sensitised.
- Changes and amendments are required in the policies of the central banks to ensure greater access to credit by women.
- Development agencies and enterprises should emphasise vocational training for women.
- There is a need for a sustainable information and communication system at national and regional levels on emerging opportunities suitable for women and for special windows for women to introduce their enterprises through the media and other communication channels.
- The government should encourage the development of eco-friendly tourism programmes and the setting up of small-scale resorts in mountain areas which women could run.
- Various inputs should be given through organizations with access to grass roots' women.
- A separate cell for women's entrepreneurship development should be set up at the district level, managed by women, providing all facilities such as financial and technical support.

- Irrespective of the employment status of the spouse, the other partner should be free to take up any entrepreneurial or other gainful employment.
- All enterprises should be required to set up day care centres/nurseries/crèches for the children of women workers.
- Insurance services should be provided to cover the risk of women's enterprises.
- Information should be encouraged on linkages between micro- and macro-groups for marketing.
- Transportation facilities should be developed in mountain areas to promote efficient marketing of the products of mountain enterprises.

The group suggested the following in respect of the role that organizations of women entrepreneurs and others could play in the promotion of enterprises among women.

- Strengthening local, regional, national, and international networking
- Demand-based capacity building
- Advocacy with all agencies concerned and follow-up to ensure that suggestions are implemented
- Formulating specific programmes related to women entrepreneurs
- Monitoring and evaluation

The group called upon the governments to strengthen the efficient functioning of infrastructure and support systems in mountain areas with the participation of local entrepreneurs. It also stressed the need for a well coordinated system for transfer of technology, knowhow, and forward linkages in the provision of inputs and marketing, as well as proper implementation of national policies on financial and non-financial services in mountain areas. A national policy for preferential treatment in marketing support, including purchase and price preference for items manufactured by women entrepreneurs, could be considered. Larger investment in mountain areas by the private sector could also help to provide a better climate and support for the development of women's entrepreneurship.

The group felt that ICIMOD could help by providing training, workshops, and a database; facilitating the exhibition of products; coordinating with different institutions to gain their support for mountain women entrepreneurs in the region, both on a national and an international scale; encouraging joint ventures among mountain entrepreneurs of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region by providing technical assistance and other guidance within its mandate; organizing and supporting study tours in the HKH region for mountain women entrepreneurs, to assist them to interact better and learn from each other's experience and successes; publicising developments in women's entrepreneurship; and organizing and promoting professional women's associations.

SUMMING UP

The concluding session was chaired by the Director General of ICIMOD, Mr. Egbert Pelinck. The conclusions and recommendations of the working groups were presented, discussed, and accepted unanimously. The Director General expressed his overall satisfaction with the proceedings of the Workshop and remarked that it signified a promising beginning for greater fruitful collaboration among the women entrepreneurs in the mountain areas of different countries in the HKH region, as well as between their organizations and ICIMOD. He urged the participants to take the follow-up steps they had suggested within their own areas of operation and assured them of help and support from ICIMOD whenever possible under its mandate.

Finally, the workshop coordinator summed up the major highlights of the conclusions and recommendations of the workshop as follows.

- Women-run enterprises in mountain areas are mostly concentrated on products based on local resources and skills; but they lack support for product development and diversification and for sale in wider markets. They need strong support from government and non-government organizations in these areas.
- Marketing constitutes a central problem because of both limited access to information on markets and lack of mobility and organization among women entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs need advisory services and training in locating and promoting markets from government and non-government agencies. They need to organize themselves into producers' groups for marketing.
- Enterprise development among women has so far been on a low key, because of their lack of access to assets and resources, the lack of sensitivity to their potential, and problems in programmes and policies. Reforms are necessary in the legal and institutional framework to provide women with rights to property and access to credit and training for enterprise development, and to reorient policies and programmes to make them more suited to the conditions of women entrepreneurs.

The Workshop concluded with the understanding that the recommendations will be followed up by the participants themselves and by ICIMOD. The participants agreed to establish networks for sharing information on products, technologies, and markets. From ICIMOD, they expected documentation and facilitation for sharing experiences, advisory services, and advocacy for appropriate policies. They suggested that ICIMOD organize a Workshop like the present one every year.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX 2

Programme

DAY 1: December 21, 1999 (Tuesday)

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|------------------|---|
| 09:15-09:35 a.m. | Welcome and Opening by Mr. Egbert Pelinck, Director General, ICIMOD |
| 09:35-09:45 a.m. | Introduction of Participants |
| 09:45-10:00 a.m. | Statement on Workshop Objectives/Programme |
| 10:00-10:10 a.m. | Group Photograph |
| 10:10-10:45 a.m. | Statement on Issues in Women's Entrepreneurship in Mountain Areas
<i>Presentation by Workshop Coordinator, Dr. Trilok S. Papola</i>

Discussion |
| 10:45-11:00 a.m. | Tea/Coffee |
| 11:00-13:00 p.m. | Presentations by Participants
<i>Chair:</i> Ms. Jeannette Gurung, ICIMOD

Bangladesh
India |
| 13:00-14:00 p.m. | Lunch: Hosted by the Head, MEI Division |
| 14:00-16:00 p.m. | Presentations by Participants (continued)
<i>Chair:</i> Dr. Kanta.K. Sharma, India |

China
Bhutan

16:00-16:15 p.m. Tea/Coffee

16:15 p.m. Presentations (continued)
Chair: Ms. Kabita Bhattarai, Nepal

Pakistan

18:30 p.m. Dinner/Reception hosted by the Director General

DAY 2: December 22, 1999 (Wednesday)

09:00-10:30 a.m. Presentations by Participants
Chair: Dr. Mahesh Banskota, ICIMOD, Nepal

10:30-11:15 a.m. Discussion to Identify Issues for Working Groups
Formation of Working Groups

11:15- 11:30 a.m. Tea/Coffee

11:30-13:00 p.m. Working Group Discussions

13:00-14:00 p.m. Lunch: Hosted by the Deputy Director General

14:00-17:00 p.m. Working Group Discussions

Day 3: December 23, 1999 (Thursday)

09:00-10:30 a.m. Finalisation of Working Group Reports

10:30-12:30 noon Presentation of Working Group Reports
(Tea/Coffee at 11:15 a.m.)

12:30-13:00 p.m. Closing Session

Afternoon: Field trip/sight seeing.

Terms of Reference for Working Groups and Composition of Groups

The workshop participants were divided into three working groups, each group dealing with a given theme. The themes for the working groups were as follow.

- Group I. Products of Women-run Enterprises in Mountain Areas
- Group II. Marketing
- Group III. Institutional Arrangements, Policies, and Programme Interventions

Each group was asked to come up with ideas on what the participants and their organizations could and plan to do on their respective themes and suggestions for ICIMOD within its mandate and capacity.

Group I: Products of Women-run Enterprises in Mountain Areas

- Are there some specific product lines on which women entrepreneurs are concentrating?
- Are they reasonably remunerative?
- If not, the need, desirability and possible ways to diversify products of women's enterprises into more 'dynamic' products with expanding markets
- Ways to improve productivity and remuneration in the existing product lines

Group Composition

1. Ms. Salma Waheed Murad, Chairperson
2. Ms. Sharmin Akhter, Rapporteur
3. Ms. Selina Begum
4. Ms. Tenzing Lheden
5. Ms. Dechen Wangmo

6. Ms. Manjula Tolia
7. Ms Renu Sthapit
8. . Mr. Kamal Rijal, Resource Person

Group 2: Marketing

Is it a major problem in most products?

- Different ways of improving access to markets and ensuring remunerative prices
- Linkages with larger/urban organizations, role of chambers, larger urban enterprises
- Government agencies, NGOs, project-supported marketing sustainability
- Collective marketing through fair trade oriented marketing organizations
- Producer-owned organizations
- Any other

Relative potential effectiveness of different modes in different product lines

Group composition

1. Ms. Shyam Badan Shrestha, Chairperson
2. Mr. Naichu, Rapporteur
3. Ms. Monjulika Chakma
4. Ms. Manu KC
5. Ms. Li Hong
6. Dr. Anita B. Joshi
7. Ms. Shahida Numa
8. Dr. Zahir Sadeque, Resource Person

Group 3: Institutional Arrangements, Policies, and Programme Interventions

- What are the specific conditions and needs of women entrepreneurs in mountain areas?
- How important is the general issue of rights and access to, and control over, assets and resources; and what could be the short and long-term strategies to deal with it?
- To what extent do on-going policies and programmes, general or women-focussed, cater to the requirements of women entrepreneurs in mountain areas, in respect of
 - credit,
 - skill and entrepreneurship development,
 - access to technology,

- other inputs and support services?
- In what respects do these programmes need reorientation for this purpose?

Group composition

1. Ms. Begum Salma Ahmed, Chairperson
2. Ms. Humaira Daniel, Rapporteur
3. Mr. Hari Prasad Rimal
4. Mr. Iqbal Singh
5. Dr. Kanta K. Sharma
6. Ms. Thinley Lham
7. Ms. Uroos Bibi
8. Ms. Anjana Tamrakar
9. Mr. Jatan Kumar Dewan
10. Ms. Phuntshok C. Tshering, Resource Person

ANNEX 4

ICIMOD Studies on Micro-Enterprises

ICIMOD, Kathmandu, has, as part of its Mountain Enterprises and Infrastructure Programme, initiated a series of activities on the development of micro-enterprises in mountain areas with the objectives of documenting experiences of enterprise development, and providing inputs for policy and programme formulation and training in the sustainable development of enterprises, particularly in high value products with a special comparative advantage in mountain areas. As part of this initiative the Centre has commissioned several studies to document various aspects of enterprise development in the mountainous and hilly areas of Bangladesh, China, India, Nepal, and Pakistan. These studies are listed below.

- Awasthi, D.N., Singh, N. and Srivastava, P. (1999). *Promoting Small and Micro-Enterprises Through Training Interventions: The Indian Experience*. MEI Case Study Series No. 99/5. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.
- Badhani, K.N. (1998). *From Subsistence Farming to Market-Oriented Enterprises: The Case of Vegetable Growing Farmers in Garampani Area, Nainital District, India*. Discussion Paper Series No. MEI 98/5. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.
- Dhungana, S.P. and Thapa, B. (1999). *Credit based Micro-Enterprise Development Programmes in Nepal*. Discussion Paper Series No. MEI 99/1. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.
- Gurung, M.M. (1999). *Training Programmes for Development of Micro-Enterprises in Cottage and Small Industries Sector in Nepal*. Discussion Paper Series No. MEI 99/2. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.

Hazarika, N. and Bhatia, A. M. (1999). *Spices and Fruit for Micro-enterprises: A Study of the Potentials of Ginger and Pineapples in West Garo Hills District (Meghalaya)*. MEI Case Study Series No. 99/1. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.

Mohmand, A. G. (1999). *Micro-Enterprise Development in Mountain Areas: A Review of NGO Initiatives in Pakistan*. MEI Case Study Series No. 99/4. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.

Mondal, A. H. 'Development of Micro Enterprises in CHT' (unpublished).

Palni, L. M. S., Rikhari, Hem C., and Sharma, S. (1999). *Enterprise Development in Natural Fibre-based Products: A Study of the Status and Potential in the Central Himalayan Region of India*. MEI Case Study Series No. 99/2. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.

Rongsen, Lu (1998). *Enterprises in Mountain-specific Products in Western Sichuan, China*. Discussion Paper Series No. MEI 98/7. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.

Shahi, S. K. and Kachhapati, C. K. (1999). *Collective Marketing of Micro-enterprise Products - The Case of Handicrafts Marketing*. MEI Case Study Series No. 99/3. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.

Sharma, U. (1998). *Development of Micro-Enterprises: Ilam and Bhojpur Districts*. Discussion Paper Series No. MEI 98/1. Kathmandu: ICIMOD.

about the editor

Dr. T. S. Papola has an M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Lucknow, India. He is currently the Head of the Mountain Enterprises and Infrastructure Division at ICIMOD, Kathmandu. He is a development economist with about 35 years of experience with various academic institutions and the government of India. He taught Economics at the universities of Lucknow, Bombay, and Cambridge, U.K., and at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad. He was Director of the Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, from 1977-1987 and a Senior Advisor to the Planning Commission, India, for eight years before joining ICIMOD in 1996. He has also worked in various consultative and advisory capacities with international organizations such as ILO, UNCTAD, UNICEF, and UNIDO. Dr. Papola specialises in regional development, labour, and manpower economics and industrial and enterprise development. At ICIMOD, he has been responsible for developing a programme on enterprise development in mountain areas in products with comparative advantage and with environmental comparability. Dr. Papola has 12 books and over 75 papers in reputed journals to his credit.

Participating Countries of the Hindu Kush-Himalayan Region



Afghanistan



Bangladesh



Bhutan



China



India



Myanmar



Nepal



Pakistan

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