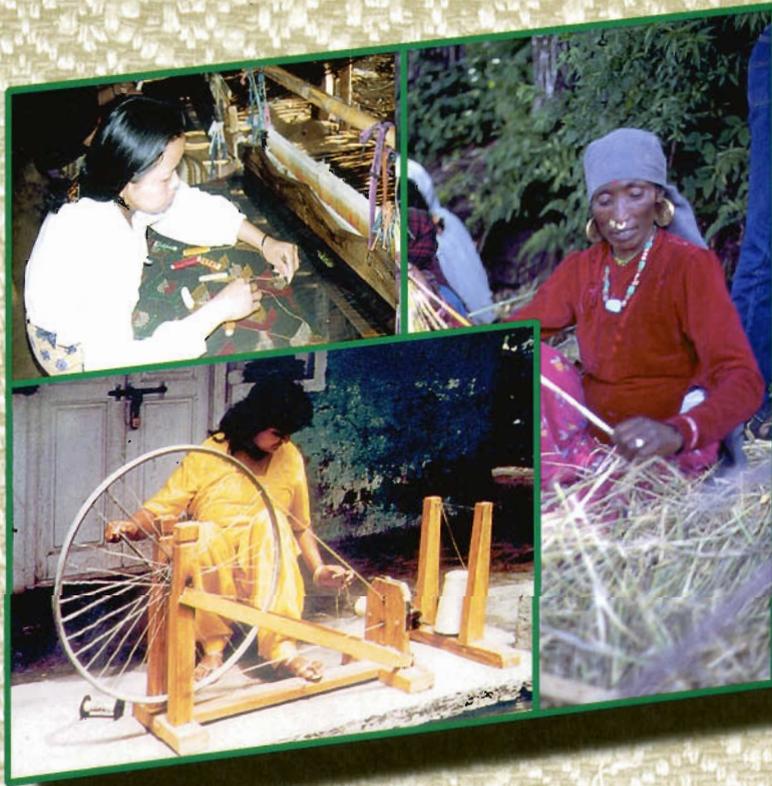


Women Entrepreneurs in Mountain Areas



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
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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 - *Alla* cloth, Nepal
Boader - Silk on silk, Bhutan

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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

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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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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