

Department of Economics and Social Sciences  
Agricultural University of Norway



# **In Steep Terrains**

## **Organising Women in Nepal**

**A Case Study of Mardi Valley in Annapurna Conservation Area**

**Sofie Skåra**  
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## **Abstract**

"In Steep Terrains" describes the difficulties of organising women for the purpose of empowerment and development in Nepal, using a case study from Mardi Valley in Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA) in Western Development Region.

The data collection consists of a questionnaire, for quantitative data, and formal, informal and group interviews, to obtain qualitative data.

The Amma Samoas are a realisation of the ACAP social mobilizing concept. The goal of ACAP is to accomplish development simultaneous with conservation of ecological resources. ACAP wishes to withdraw from the ACA, leaving behind a network of institutions through which local people can take control over the management of resources. The main goals set for the Amma Samoas are empowerment of women and sustainable village development. The ACAP goals imply that Amma Samoas should be, when ACAP withdraws, sustainable organisations that are able to ensure that the goals set by ACAP will be maintained as long as necessary.

The thesis evaluates whether the Amma Samoas in Mardi are sustainable organisations, whether ACAP contributes enough to enable success of their own goals, and whether the goals of ACAP are maintained by the Amma Samoas today. The six sustainability criteria defined by OECD have been used in the evaluation process.

The findings show that the Amma Samoas are not sustainable, that ACAP does not perform good enough policies, and that the intentions of the women do not correlate with those of ACAP. The first negative finding roots mainly in the sustainability variable: "socio-cultural factors". The studied communities are dominated by hierarchic and patriarchal structures that hinder the realisation of ACAP goals. The second negative outcome is based on that ACAP functions under the hierarchic structure as well and thereby magnifies the inequality problems that exist in Mardi. The third negative finding grounds in that the social mobilization programs initiated by ACAP has not been combined with well enough education and training concerning the purposes and goals of the Amma Samoas.

## सारंश

यस "स्टीप टेरेन्समा" नेपालको पश्चिमान्चल विकाश क्षेत्रमा अवस्थित अन्नपूर्ण संरक्षण क्षेत्रको मर्दि उपत्यकाको वस्तुगत अध्ययन गरी स्थानिय महिलाहरुको सशक्तिकरण तथा बिकासका लागी मौजुदा समस्याहरुको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

संख्यात्मक तथ्याङ्कहरु प्रश्नावलीको माध्यमबाट र गुणात्मक तथ्याङ्कहरु औपचारीक तथा अनौपचारीक समूहगत अन्तर्वार्ताद्वारा संकलन गरिएको छ ।

अन्नपूर्ण संरक्षण क्षेत्र आयाजनाको (अ.सं.क्षे.आ.) उद्देश्य पर्यावरणीय श्रोतहरुको सरक्षण गर्दै स्थानिय बिकाशमा टेवा पुऱ्याउनु हो । यसको लागी स्थानिय जनताहरुको संगठनात्मक विकाशगरी श्रोत व्यवस्थापनको जिम्मेवारी स्थानिय संगठनहरुलाई सुम्पिदै जाने लक्ष्य अ.सं.क्षे.आ. ले लिएकोछ ।

यसैले स्थानिय जनशक्ति परिचालन गर्ने अवधारणा अनुरूप आमा समूहहरुको गठन भएको हो । आमा समूहहरुको प्रमुख उद्देश्य महिला सशक्तिकरण तथा दिगो बिकाश गर्नु हो । अ.सं.क्षे.आ. को दिर्घकालीन योजना अनुरूप समूहहरुलाई दिगो संगठनको रूपमा बिकाश गरी भविष्यमा कार्यक्रमहरु निर्बाध रूपले आमा समूह मार्फतनै गराउन सक्षम बनाउनु हो ।

यो शोधपत्रले मर्दि उपत्यकाको आमा समूहको संगठनात्मक दिगोपना, अ.सं.क्षे.आ. को निती तथा कार्यक्रमहरु र आमा समूहद्वारा सो को कार्यान्वयन बारेमा मूल्याकन गरेको छ । मुल्याङ्कनकोलागी ओ.इ.सि.डि. द्वारा परिभाषित छ वटा दिगोपना सम्बन्धी मापदण्ड प्रयोग गरिएको छ ।

यस अध्ययनबाट आमा समूहहरु दिगो नभएको, अ.सं.क्षे.आ.को कार्यक्रमहरुमा ठोस नितीको अभाव तथा आमा समूहको लक्ष्य र अ.सं.क्षे.आ.को नितीमा तालमेल नभएका जस्ता तथ्यहरु पत्ता लगाईएको छ । आमा समूहहरु दिगो नहुनाको प्रमुख कारण स्थानिय समुदायहरुमा बिधमान तहगत तथा पितृसत्तात्मक परीपाटी देखिएको छ भने अ.सं.क्षे.आ. ले सो परीपाटीलाई अबलम्बन गर्दै कार्यक्रम संचालन गर्दै आएकोले मर्दि उपत्यकामा बिधमान सामाजिक असामानता अझ बढेको पाइएको छ । यसको साथै आयोजनाद्वारा कार्यान्वयन गर्दै आएका कार्यक्रमहरुमा समूहहरुको उद्देश्य र भूमिका सम्बन्धि पर्याप्त तालिम र शिक्षाको अभावनै आयाजनाको निती र आमा समूहहरुको लक्ष्यमा तालमेल नहुनुको प्रमुख कारण देखिएकोछ ।

**Declaration**

I, **Kristina Sofie Skåra**, declare that this is a product of my own research work, and all other sources of materials are duly acknowledged. This work has not been submitted to any other academic institutions for any academic degree.

Signature:.....

Place and date:.....

To my father  
who brought me up  
to be a committed person

## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACA	Annapurna Conservation Area
ACAP	Annapurna Conservation Area Project
AS	Amma Samoa = Mother Group, an ACAP Sub-Committee
B	Brahmin
C	Chettri
CAMC	Conservation Area Management Committee
CAMR	Conservation Area Management Regulations
CDO	Chief District Officer
DDC	District Development Committee
F	Female
FMC	Forest Management Committee, an ACAP sub-committee
G	Gurung
GDI	Gender Sensitive Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HC	Higher Caste
HDI	Human Development Index
I	Interview
INGDO	International Non Governmental Development Organisation
KMTNC	King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation
LC	Lower Caste
M	Male
MT	Magar and Tamang
NGDO	Non Governmental Development Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
OC	Occupational Caste
PDDP	Participatory District Development Programme, UNDP
PM	Personal Message
Rs	Nepalese Rupees (NRS)
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SPSS	The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VDC	Village Development Committee
YG	Youth Group, an ACAP sub-committee

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Development aid to the “Third World” countries was established on big scale in the early seventies. The motives for aid at that time were partly to stem a global wave of communism, but for the most part its motive was, and still is, to eradicate poverty. In 1975 United Nations declared a decade for women. Development agencies made efforts to promote an understanding that the backward status of women observed in a majority of the worlds cultures, is a limiting factor to the eradication of poverty.

Nepal has, due to its history, been little exposed to both development aid, and correspondingly, a focus on the empowerment of women. The country is among the least developed in the world. It ranks as no. 34 from the bottom on the Human Development Index<sup>1</sup> (HDI) (NHDR, 2001) and it has a per capita income of only USD 1,100 (PPP exchange rate, 1999 estimate) (CIA, 2001).

Nepal established democratic governance in 1990. Before this, Nepal was a relatively isolated nation with a closed economy. The country undertook wide-ranging democratic and economic reforms after democratisation, prompting trade and foreign investment (Aryal et al., 1999 ; EIA, 2001). The reforms served also as an invitation to the establishment of development aid and interest organisations in Nepal (NHDR, 1998). Before 1990, organisations in Nepal could not be formed without explicit government permission (Acharya, 1995).

Wholehearted and thorough reforms for development in order to eradicate poverty are expected by donor agencies. This includes the targeting of the least privileged groups of Nepal. These groups are still not efficiently targeted and thereby there are today seen growing disparities between social groups (NHDR, 1998). One reason for the inefficient targeting of least privileged groups is that few existing social institutions in Nepal generate social capital friendly to human development. Social differentiation, like that of the caste system and gender inequality, leads to the exclusion of groups in the development processes. Although Nepal has had a system of village governance<sup>2</sup> there does not exist any tradition for democracy in the Nepalese culture (Brown, 1996). Decision-making power has traditionally been embedded in

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 6 for explanation of HDI

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 5 for Nepalese History and Politics

the social structures of hierarchy and patriarchy. The Nepalese society has had a tradition of placing decision-making power among the individuals who are considered to be highest up in the social hierarchic structure and not among legislative bodies that represent all personal preferences (Brown, 1996).

My thesis is a case study of five local communities in Mardi Valley that falls under the Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) located in Western Development Region. ACAP is a temporary project whose aim is to withdraw from the area, leaving behind a network of institutions through which local people can take control over the management of resources in a sustainable way (Rana, 1990). Various grass-root institutions were initiated in order to reach the goals of ACAP. One of the grass-root institutions has the intention to organise women with the aim to focus on women empowerment and village development. The empowerment of women is an important key to the alleviation of poverty in Mardi because they are a resourceful group and their present status is poor. The groups formed by ACAP are called Mother Groups or Amma Samoas.

The thesis puts a focus on, through the case study of Mardi Valley, the difficulties that exist in Nepal in organising women for the attainment of empowerment and local development. It describes features, both internal and external to the groups, limiting their success. It evaluates whether ACAP will be able to withdraw leaving behind sustainable Amma Samoas and if negative: what improvement should be made in order to attain sustainability.

In order to evaluate the sustainability of the Amma Samoas I have used the comprehensive list of sustainability criteria used by the OECD member countries in their development project evaluation work (OECD, 1988).

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

In this study I will evaluate the sustainability of the Amma Samoas by using six criteria of sustainability as suggested by OECD (1988).

Further I will evaluate the success of the Amma Samoas to achieve development objectives set for them by ACAP.

I will also include the evaluation of ACAPs ability to reach their own goals by looking at their policies and practices.

## **2 Development Models, Approaches and Theories**

This chapter describes the models, approaches and theories that are later used to analyse the results of the thesis. Reading it will purportedly give an overview of the topics that later will be brought about.

Representatives of development agencies are usually external to the locations they support. The most common practices for development agencies are either to bring in highly skilled and high capacity agencies to plan and implement development activities, or to channel support through existing local organisations. Doing the last may be more sustainable than the first, since the society may be enabled to operate and maintain the assets created on the basis of ownership and responsibility. Either way donors or moneylenders have a great influence on investment decision when it comes to the programs they support. This factor might become decisive for the development of a targeted area or even for the whole country, if a large percentage of the GDP comes from donors and moneylenders. In this way the world society may set the agenda and influences the type of development activities that exists in developing countries (Gosovic, 2000). Local communities thus get in contact with new values and ways of thinking coming from abroad. Globalisation and Cultural Imperialism are two expressions for this phenomenon indicating two different ways of thinking about the topic. Foreigners who set agendas want often also to create changes in attitudes through the projects they support, calling it necessary for the eradication of poverty. Examples of agendas having to do with local attitudes are gender, environment and democracy. Policies forced on the population “from above” may fail if the population is not receptive for attitude changes (Afshar, H. and Maynard M., 2000).

### **2.1 The Minimalist and the Maximalist Approach**

Different perceptions exist on which strata of the population is best to target in order to get an optimal development effect. In practice this will influence which development approach is chosen.

It is assumed that creating growth in a society, involving only one population-stratum will eventually lead to growth in other strata as well (Kangas, 2002) due to increased economic



turnover, thus increasing demand and supply among the targeted population. This effect is called the “trickle-down” effect. There may be an additional effect called the demonstration effect. This effect occurs because other strata copies the growth generation so that more and more people get involved in the initiated development activity. Research is done on receptiveness of targeting among different population-strata especially in relation to micro credit programs. A “minimalistic” approach assumes that it is futile to address the poorest (CGAP, 2000). The argumentation is that the trickle-down and demonstration effects can reach a longer way than by focusing directly on the worst off groups, because these are difficult to reach and hard to mobilise. It is further argued that it takes less effort to reach and generate processes of growth through the population strata already having some resources. One has to generate growth where there is an immediate potential for growth, which may “trickle-down” to the poor and involve them in the development process in the longer run. Critics emphasise that the trickle-down and demonstration effects do usually not trickle all the way down to the poor, but that the growth rather aggregates to the already privileged (Hulme and Mosley, 1996). The not so poor tend to be better organised than the poor, making the privileged strata stronger and more forceful. Furthermore, the different strata tend to have different basic interests. The privileged strata may have the power to include the less privileged ones in development, but they may not have the will.

The other approach is called the “maximalistic” approach. This approach suggests development aid to be focused on the poorest, arguing that poverty cannot be alleviated without targeting the poor directly (CGAP, 2000 ; Iddagoda and Dale, 1997). It is acknowledged that it does not come easy to create growth and development through the poorest, but the maximalistic approach argues that sustainable development ought to be based on a full scale and long-term support to the poor. Success with this approach ought to be based on an effective empowerment to enable the poor to take charge of their own lives and development. The maximalist approach would emphasise that disparities are due to structural reasons. Without changing the structural basis for disparities, non-targeted development will only increase the gaps, and the poor get poorer in relative or absolute terms. The maximalist approach therefore suggest that the best development effect comes from empowering the poor by making them organise themselves and initiate their own processes of economical growth based on values and ideas of their own.

2.2 Empowerment

According to Friedman (1992), there are three components needed in order to reach full empowerment, namely social, political and psychological factors. They are all equally important components in the aim of reaching empowerment. Political power depends on whether a person has an excess of social power (Friedman, 1992).

Social Power

Life / Space	Surplus Time
Knowledge / Skills	Appropriate Information
Social Organisation	Social Networks
Instruments of Work / Livelihood	Financial Resources

Political Power

Political Decision-Making		
Vote	Voice	Collective Action

Psychological Power

Sense of potency

Figure 2.1 Friedman’s model of empowerment (Source: Friedman, 1992)

”Empowerment” in this context relates to methods to promote participation of the intended beneficiaries in processes of planned change, i.e. development efforts.



Pretty (1995) classifies methods of empowerment based on different degrees of participation:

- Manipulative participation: An involvement of the beneficiaries that gives an impression of democratic attitude from the side of planners, although not based on true involvement of the people.
- Passive participation: Approach where the willingness to involve the target group may be present, but the methods to do it effectively may not be properly developed. As a consequence, the actual involvement of people becomes nominal and will not reflect the priorities of the people properly.
- Participation by consultation: This is as well an approach with limited participatory scope, but may give good results if consultations with targeted group are made in a thorough way.
- Participation for material incentives: Participation may not always appear attractive to the beneficiaries if it also involves cash contribution or voluntary work. To encourage such participation, incentives may be given, as with “food-for-work”. This approach may be neither empowering, nor discouraging.
- Functional participation: Participation is sought where and when it is found relevant. Quality of empowerment may vary with methodology applied.
- Interactive participation: There may be a full participation from the people concerned, as well as consultations and dialogue with the planners and agencies, allowing exchange of points of views as well as a two way sharing of information on feasibility of ideas and priorities.
- Self-mobilisation: All initiatives are in the hand of the beneficiaries, which may work well if they are well trained and organised. If not – this approach would not be efficient.

Although all of these approaches are participatory, only the last two or three is truly based on empowerment of the beneficiaries. All approaches may contribute to empowerment, but in order for success, they may also depend on what method is applied in promoting it. As seen with the last approach, a full participation would be successful in terms of empowerment only when a thorough training and organisational development takes place.

## 2.3 Evaluation of the Success of Development Organisations

I will now touch upon some perspectives of organisational analysis. People who share recognition of values to be sought and maximised may establish organisations to achieve a common purpose (Olson, 1982). If stakeholders think it is worthwhile, organisations are sustained and tried kept alive. Organisations are sustainable if they are "likely to be able to secure necessary resources for its operations to provide a stream of activities and outputs that are valued by its stakeholders for as long as felt needed" (NORAD, 2000). An efficient organisation needs to have objectives and mandate, which are attractive to members and sponsors in order to ensure support and participation (NMFA, 1993). Moreover, it also needs to perform well and deliver quality products and/or satisfaction to its members. While participation in organised activities allows potential realisation and achievement of values, the possibility of reaching these will be based on understanding the situation of opportunities and limitations, costs and benefits. The success of a development organisation may be measured with five criteria:

1. Effectiveness
2. Efficiency
3. Impact
4. Relevance
5. Sustainability

These criteria are measured against the four elements of:

1. Input
2. Output
3. Purpose
4. Goal

**Effectiveness** compares Output with Purpose, stating whether the project contributes to development in the expected direction, or whether objectives are being reached: "Does the method

### Box 2.1 The Minimalist and Maximalist View of Success of Development Organisations

From chapter 2.1 we find that in order to reach a wanted effect, input cost will vary depending on whom you target. Poorer recipients will need more input in order to get the wanted effect, and the support may thereby seem less efficient. This is also shown in figure 2.2 where the x-axis represents the population with the poorest at  $x = 1$  and the most wealthy at  $x = 10$ . Low input costs are needed to get a high impact when targeting the most well off strata. Targeting the poor, illustrated by the green box, gives high input costs and lower impact. The minimalists would prefer to target at the orange box and hope for large trickle-down and demonstration effects.

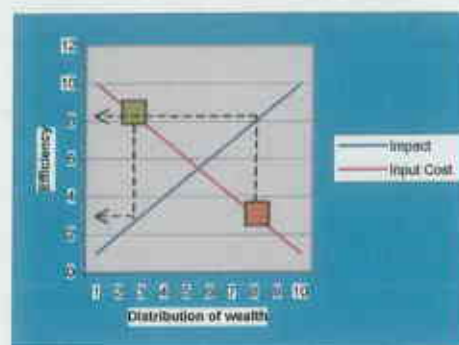


Figure 2.2 Input versus Impact (Source: Own, 2002)

work as intended?" These are usually tested as "pilot-projects".

**Efficiency** means ability to create "value for money": "Is the result reasonable compared to the Input?" and "Is it worth putting it into a full scale project?"

**Impact** compares Purpose with Goal, assessing whether the project makes a long-lasting difference to the society, achieving the overall objectives of development and solving the basic problems.

**The criteria of Relevance** assesses the combination of Outputs, Purpose and Goal by asking if these provide what is actually needed at this place and at this time, also with link to other development activities and national strategies.

**Sustainability** combines all the basic factors to analyse whether the positive effects of the project are likely to continue after the external assistance has been concluded. (NMFA, 1993)

The OECD report "Evaluation in Development Countries" (1988) has defined sustainability on the basis of six variables. This is a comprehensive list of sustainability criteria used by the OECD members as also reflected in NMFA (1993) and in NORAD (2000).

1. Policy measures and priorities in the recipient country
2. Environmental and ecological factors
3. Technological factors
4. Socio-cultural factors
5. Organisation, leadership and local participation
6. Financial conditions

Development assistance may support, nurture and keep organisations and projects alive, which could not survive on their own. In a phase of establishment, assistance may be justified while developing a basis for independence and self-sustenance. It is therefore most critical to assess whether support is given, and design is made, in ways that ensure sustainability. I want to discuss the six sustainability variables mentioned by OECD (1988) in relation to the Amma Samoas. I want to restrict the first variable to "Policy measures and priorities of the recipient" since I am working on micro level and not on national level. The main focus in chapter 5.2 will be on sustainability variable number six: socio-cultural factors.

### 3 Methodology

The two main categories of scientific research methods are the quantitative and the qualitative methods. These may be complementary and they may therefore supplement each other (Grønmo, 1996). By the means of quantitative methods, researchers will try to establish patterns and regularities in societies through numeration of particular features widely distributed. Qualitative methods may be used to analyse meanings and intra-connections of phenomena within a limited context. "The purpose of qualitative research is to explore a subject in order to increase understanding. What will be found is more open to the researcher interpretation" (Morris, 1993). The most common way of collecting data in my department is by using questionnaire for quantitative analysis. My thesis, on the other hand, is more orientated towards process analysis, and I therefore found it useful to, in addition to enumeration of quantifiable data, also apply qualitative methods. In addition to a detailed household based questionnaire I decided to use different kinds of interviews to get an accurate picture of the society and the problems facing the Amma Samoas. Our stay in the field was short and I was always aware that it would be impossible to return to collect more information. During my stay in the field area I therefore asked questions whenever I had opportunity to all kinds of people about a variety of topics. I made an effort to ask a variety of questions in order to maximise my understanding of the society. Holter (1996) divides interview objects in two categories: informants and respondents. Informants describe the social context she or he is a part of, while respondents are asked to tell about her or him self and her or his relation to the social settings. I made use of both categories of interview objects in addition to the use of questionnaire.

### **3.1 The Data Collection**

My data, both primary and secondary, was mainly gathered during my fieldwork in Nepal in the summer of 2000. I went in a group of five students from my department who all collected data for their master degree thesis. Two of my fellow students were from Ethiopia, one was from Tanzania and one was from Nepal. Jeetendra Arial, the Nepalese student, was the one in our group that got a key communication role in respect to our Nepalese surroundings, including locally recruited enumerators. My primary supervisor, Mette Wik was also with us during the first month of our fieldwork.

When preparing for my fieldwork in Norway I was keen to talk to Nepalese fellow students who knew the Amma Samoas in the region I was going. I read documents on the Internet about women's situation in Nepal and discussed the topics with my Nepalese friends. I also got in contact with other Norwegian students who had been doing fieldwork about Amma Samoas in Kaski District. In this way I managed to form a picture of the Amma Samoas.

The English knowledge among the women in the area where I did the fieldwork was very poor. I therefore depended on having an interpreter for the interviews. I got Ram Devi Palikhe, one of the enumerators for the questionnaire, to help me.

#### **My status as a data collector**

The relation between the researcher, interpreter and the informant or respondent is important in quantitative studies. There is a need for cooperation and also an understanding of the cultural frames of everybody involved in the process. Negotiation is necessary in order to come to a common understanding (Holter, 1996). The people we came in contact with in Nepal had a strong need to position my colleagues and myself according to their social setting, being curious about which caste we belonged to.<sup>1</sup> Our enumerators needed to convince the people we interviewed, the once we stayed with and the people who cooked for us that we were of appropriately high castes. This was necessary in order to make the people help and cooperate with us. If we had been of low caste it would have been impossible to relate with people in the way we needed in order to collect our data from all strata of the society. The people we came in contact with did not

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 4.3.1 for description of the different castes

so much question that I, being from “America”, had a high caste, but they wanted to know from what specific caste I came from. I answered, “Where I come from there are no castes at all”. The people, even the enumerators, could not comprehend this. “In a casteless system everybody will have the same caste, but which?” The result was that they gave me a caste I could belong to, so that is how I became a “Dahal”, which is a relatively low ranked Brahminsub-caste.

There are ethical perspectives to my role as a data collector, especially related to the interview inquiries (Kvale, 1996). I see my task of being as objective as possible to be very important. As a result of this I have tried my best to verify all the information and conclusions I gathered through double-checking and confronting my results with my surroundings. I have tried to treat information given confidentially, taking into consideration that the location is known and the individuals posted in different committees are officially known. One ethical problem is the lack of consent from the interview objectives existing in respect to the finished published thesis. I hope that my thesis will be received in a constructive way, not insulting anybody.

### **A change of focus**

I had planned to focus on women’s economic activities through gathering mainly quantitative data. When I arrived, however, I found that it was quite difficult to get information about the economic activities of the Amma Samoas. One problem was that few groups had noteworthy economic activities. Another problem was that the Amma Samoas held their economic reports confidential. My interpreter, Ram Devi explained to me that the reason for confidentiality was that the social norms specify that only males should engage in economic activities. This norm makes it sometimes necessary for females to hold their economic activity, for example loan taking, a secret to the public. The situation made it difficult to focus on what I originally had planned. Instead, during my stay in the valley, I learnt a lot about the social surroundings of the women in the villages, and I got to understand how social factors significantly influence management. I observed that these factors have impact on the efficiency of the economy and of the institutions. The change of focus influenced only parts of my planned data collection. The major changes were made on the interview side and led to a wider spectre of interviews than planned beforehand.



## **The data collection consists of**

### **Primary data**

- Questionnaire
- Formal interviews with key persons
- Informal interviews
- Formal groups interviews
- Information from key informants
- Participant observations

### **Secondary data**

- Information from literature
- Information from the Internet

### **3.1.1 Primary Data**

#### **Questionnaire**

Our group of five master degree students decided to make a joint questionnaire<sup>2</sup>. The reasons for this were that we needed common information and that we wanted a big sample. Both could be attained by cooperation. We hired five enumerators to help us with the questionnaire interviews. Two of the enumerators were Newari<sup>3</sup> females and three were Brahmin men. All of them had education at university level and they spoke English satisfactory. The questionnaire itself was in English. The enumerators asked the questions to our interview objects in Nepali and wrote down the answers in English.

The students in our group explained the intention of the different proposals to the enumerators and to each other. Jeetendra Aryal went thoroughly through the questionnaire with the enumerators so that everybody understood the intentions of the questions and so that everybody translated the questions in the same way. After testing the questionnaire twice and making all the necessary adjustments we were ready to start our survey. The group of five students and five enumerators was too big to stay in one place in the field. We therefore divided into two groups, collecting data in two villages at a time. Each student would join one enumerator during the

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<sup>2</sup> Questionnaire in Appendix 8

<sup>3</sup> A high status ethnic group in Nepal, see Appendix 4 for description

interviews. The students would check the questionnaires as soon as they were filled out to approve them or to return them to the enumerators so that they could be improved.

We collected data from 3 VDCs and 12 different wards.<sup>4</sup> The wards were chosen according to location. We wanted data from wards with different accessibilities. Some wards were situated close to the mouth of the valley and some in the bottom of the valley. We also chose wards located at different altitudes. Some of the wards had very scattered population while others were densely populated. The job of the enumerators included visitations of several lower caste houses. This comes theoretically in conflict with their social norms. I believe that the enumerators handled this problem very well even though I understood it was an issue for them as they rarely took food or drinks from such houses and since they washed themselves thoroughly after such a visit.

**Table 3.1      Distribution of Interviewed Households in the Different VDCs and Wards (Source: Survey, 2000)**

VDC	Ward number	Number of households
Lahchok	2	8
	3	16
	5	4
	6	5
	7	7
Rivan	4	21
	6	17
Lwang/ Ghalel	2	26
	3	15
	4	40
	5	24
	6	17
Total		200

The households we ended up interviewing were randomly chosen from a complete village registration list for the region.

<sup>4</sup> Political administrative units, see section 4.4.1 for description



### **Formal interviews with key persons**

My aim was to study Amma Samoas at five different locations. The ASs should have different distances from Lwang regional ACAP office<sup>5</sup> and the villages of the Amma Samoas should have different ethnic and caste-wise compositions. Another condition should be that the locations of the Amma Samoas should be identical to those of the study area of the questionnaire.

I had prepared questions for the interview with the Amma Samoa presidents before I came to Nepal and it turned out to be satisfactory when I tested it. I had used the interview guide from the thesis of Alstadheim (1999) as a format for my own list of questions.

The formal interviews consisted of 31 questions sited in Appendix 7: “Amma Samoa President Interview Guide”. In addition to the 31 fixed questions I would ask additional questions in order to get a proper idea of the specific ASs.

### **Informal interviews**

When started the interviews with the presidents I found out that I would need personal interviews with more Amma Samoas representatives. I also needed information from non-members to get a more objective picture of the Amma Samoas. I therefore randomly chose interview objects but at the same time made sure that many interest groups were represented. If there were conflicts concerning the Amma Samoas I made sure that “all sides” were represented. I also found it necessary to interview people from other institutions in order to get an idea about the different authorities in the valley. Informal interviews are data collections carried out through conversation. The questions can be formulated prior to the interview, but it is the free dialogue that characterises the process (Grønmo, 1996).

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<sup>5</sup> See figure 4.2 for location

I did all together 37 formal and informal interviews and the distribution of representatives was:

3 ACAP staff

1 CAMC staff

3 VDC staff

9 Amma Samoa Presidents

1 other Amma Samoa Executive board member

5 higher caste women

2 higher caste men

7 lower caste women

1 lower caste man

### **Formal group interviews**

I got in contact with 6 different Amma Samoa presidents that gathered her members so that I could conduct group interviews. The women were generally very busy as we visited the valley during the peak farming-season. The group interviews would take place in the evening, after dinner, at around 7.30 pm. The task of the group was to draw a map of their village and to locate AS activities, contributors, recipients, interactions with other groups, and to identify the attitude towards them among the other groups. I used Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Participation, Learning, Action (PLA) guides (Aune, 2001 ; Chambers, 1994 ; IIED, 1994), (Jones, 1996) in order to construct appropriate exercises for the groups. It took some trials to adjust the exercises, but I soon found how to get the information I needed in an efficient way. The strength of using participatory methods as a tool is that the participants can visualise their situation. The visualised situation creates a basis for discussion between the participants and thereby additional information may be gathered. Very few women were literate and if they where, they would draw and write very slowly. In order to carry out the group interviews in reasonable time, I therefore needed assistance from three people. Shova Palikhe, the other Newari enumerator, helped to draw the map and write while the women explained and directed her. Ram Devi Palikhe asked the women questions and kept the dialogue, and a third person, Jeetendra Aryal, translated to me what was said during the interview. The group interviews went very well, the women were eager to tell about their Amma Samoas. Each interview would take around three

hours. After each interview the women would demonstrate their most important source of income: the singing and dancing program.

### **Primary sources of information about the situation of ASs**

Group interviews were done in these five Amma Samoas:

Koleli AS, ward 4, Lwang-Ghalel VDC

Rivan AS, ward 6, Rivan VDC

Lahchok AS, ward 3, Lahchok VDC

Lwang Gurung AS, ward 2+3, Lwang-Ghalel VDC

Lwang Pariar AS, ward 2+3, Lwang-Ghalel VDC

Interviews were conducted with the AS presidents from these ASs. In addition the Lwang Nepali BK / Sarki AS president was interviewed as well as the AS presidents of Tathi, near Koramok.<sup>6</sup>

### **Information from key informants**

Ram Devi Palikhe

Besides being an enumerator and my translator, Ram Devi contributed by giving information based on her knowledge and background. She explained about the Nepalese family system and family relations and about women's status within economic.

Naresh Subedi

Naresh, a student at the Agricultural University of Norway, and a former flat mate, was the one that helped preparing for my stay in Nepal. He taught me some Nepalese during the semester before my fieldwork, and he explained about women's situation, about the caste system and about political and administrative systems in Nepal. He was also of great value in the aftermath of the data collection, as I needed to sort out my impressions.

Prem Chandra Gurung

Prem Gurung was the chief of the regional ACAP office in Lwang. Besides being of great mental support during the fieldwork he was a key informant on ACAP and on the Gurung people.

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<sup>6</sup> See chapter 4.1 for locations and chapter 4.4.3 and text boxes in chapter 5 for description of the different Amma Samoas

### **Participant Observations**

Participant observation is both an unconscious and a conscious process (Widerberg, 2001). It is a positive quality for an observer to come as an outsider to a society. An external person can identify features of a society that members of that society takes for granted, does not reflect over, or does not see as relevant for a problem statement. On the other hand it is not good to be totally unknown to the society one wants to observe. This is because it takes time to get a good enough understanding of a society in order to be able to comment on it.

I had never before been to Nepal. I had on the other hand background information about South Asian societies as my family has close ties to Sri Lanka. I myself have been living in Sri Lanka for five years, three of them in a rural area quite similar to the location in Mardi valley. I am familiar to the caste system, Hindu religion and values, and both Sri Lankan and Thai Buddhism. I therefore recognised many features when I came to Mardi. I was none the less caught by surprise when it came to some aspects of the society. Especially the fine mechanisms of the caste system in Nepal were new to me, not only because I had to study it more actively but also because the Nepalese caste system is much more rigorous than anything I had seen before.

After having done observations it is necessary to confront the people being observed with your own interpretation (Widerberg, 2001). Usually this exercise reveals misunderstandings or it can bring about new information.

### **3.1.2 Secondary Data**

Most of the literature used in this thesis was gathered in Nepal during the fieldwork period. Being aware of that literature about Nepal would be difficult to get hold of in Norway, I spent considerable time in libraries and bookstores. I visited the ACAP library in Pokhara and the libraries of ICIMOD and The University of Nepal in Kathmandu. Most of the bookstores I visited were in Kathmandu.

Much of the data in the literature I collected was however outdated. The Internet has on many areas more updated information and a lot of the data in chapter three has been, for this reason, downloaded from the Internet. The literature on theory and methodology has been found in Norwegian libraries.

### **3.2 Data Analysis Method**

“Data analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating or otherwise recombining evidence, to address the initial positions of a study “ (Yin, 1989).

#### **Analysing quantitative data**

All the questionnaire data was entered into Excel-spreadsheet. I decided to use the The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to analyse the data. I reformatted and adjusted the data to SYLK (i.e. datafile.slk). The results are mainly represented in chapter four. The analysis I used in order to get an overview of the features of the society included univariate analyses, bivariate analysis and multivariate analysis. Univariate analysis is the analysis of a single variable for the purpose of description (Babbie and Halley, 1995). Procedures I have used to analyse a single variable are frequency, mean, standard deviation, dispersion and creating composite measure through cross-tabulations. Bivariate analysis is a mode of data analysis in which two variables are examined simultaneously for the purpose of discovering whether they are related to each other or independent of one another (Babbie and Halley, 1995). Procedures I have used are percentage tables, Pearson's  $r$  product-moment correlation, regression, t-tests, and analysis of variance. Multivariate analysis involves more than two variables. Procedures included are cross tabulation and multiple regressions. I have, in this thesis, made a selection of the findings, which I find most relevant to the discussion.

#### **Analysing qualitative data**

“To analyse means to separate something into parts or elements” (Kvale, 1996). According to Kvale (1996) there are six steps in qualitative analysis: The first step is when subjects describe their lived world during the interview. The second step would be that the subjects themselves discover new relationships during the interview. In the third step, the interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets the meaning of what the interviewee describes and “sends” the meaning back. In a forth step, the transcribed interview is interpreted by the interviewer. A fifth step would be a re-interview. A possible sixth step would be to extend the continuum of description and interpretation to include action, in that subjects begin to act from new insights they have gained during their interview. Ways of presenting the data are through “meaning condensation”, “meaning categorisation”, “narrative structuring”, “meaning interpretation” or

“generating meaning through ad hoc methods” (Kvale, 1996). I have used “generating meaning through ad hoc methods” as analytical method for the qualitative data I gathered with a main focus on “narrative structuring” and “meaning interpretation”. The “ad hoc meaning generation” allows a free interplay of all techniques during the analysis. Here the researcher may read the interviews through and get an overall impression, then go back to specific points, perhaps make some quantifications like counting statements indicating different attitudes to a phenomenon, and so on (Kvale, 1996). “Narrative structuring” implies that a narrative analysis of what is said leads to a new story to be told. The story develops the themes of the original interview. With “meaning interpretation” the interpreter goes beyond what is directly said to work out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent. This requires distance from what is said, which is achieved by a methodical or theoretical stance, re-contextualising what is said in a specific conceptual context.

#### **Definitions of units**

**Land size** land size is measured in ropani: 1 Ropani = 0,05 Hectare.

**Monetary values** are measured in Nepalese Rupees: 1 US\$= 70 Nepalese Rupees (NRS) corresponding to the value of NRS July 2000.

**Total income** comprises: hiring out labour and oxen, employment, remittances and farm income.

**Income per capita** means total income / total number of people.

**Assets** (value measured in NRS) comprises: property elsewhere, vehicle, radio and cassette player, wristwatch, biogas plant, jewellery, furniture and utensils.

**Household:** A larger part of the households were dependent on support from family members that worked abroad. Migrants are considered to be a part of the hh according to local understanding, but migrants are not included in the hh according to our definition. The conditions for being a household member according our questionnaire include common economy and common living location. We included the living location requirement in our definition because we collected data that related to the number of people present, like for example consumption.



### **3.3 Limitations of the Study**

#### **Limitations of the Questionnaire**

It is important to have enough time to prepare a questionnaire, both before entering the field and after having entered the field area. During the preparation it is important to be aware of both what data you strictly need and what is realistic to get. For the latter one you need background information. Our group came to the field with a too detailed and hypothetical questionnaire. We spent four hours on the first pre testing questionnaire interview. After two pre-test rounds and a lot of adjustments we ended up with 14 pages of questions and tables. The enumerators would use slightly more than one hour on one questionnaire after they got the hang of it. A lengthy questionnaire may be problematic in several ways. First of all the interview objects get frustrated because it takes too much time to complete the questionnaire, and after a while this will influence how they answer the questions. Second, the enumerators start shortening the questionnaire by skipping questions they feel are unnecessary or uninteresting or if the interview objects generally answer them poorly. The questions that were relevant for my thesis were placed on the last two pages of the questionnaire and I found that these pages were generally not filled out at all or filled out very poorly. Another factor that contributed to hasty filling of the questionnaire was that the respondents had a shortage of time. We did our fieldwork in the peak farming-season and therefore the respondents were busy with farming activities. They could generally not give us more than one hour in the morning for the purpose of being interviewed. This might have caused shortcomings in respect to the data quality. Large parts of the questionnaire were detailed questions about income, expenditure, production and consumption during the two last years. The information gathered should be used with cautiousness when considering how little time was spent on getting accurate answers. When the data was collected we saw that a lot of the answers gave too little variation in order to be useful in a questionnaire. Some of the tables were never filled because they were not relevant for the households. And yet some questions were never used by any of the students when we started to analyse the data.

When we came back from the field we got aid to punch the data. Our only responsibility was to re-check 50 questionnaires each, to make sure they were filled out correctly. It ended up with that I had to enter all the data I needed myself, because of all the mistakes. This illustrates that it is important that all the people involved in the process of your thesis get an understanding of the

importance of the work they are doing, both that it is important for the writer and that the topic is important. Only then will they do the incredibly boring work with the same passion as you would have done yourself.

Reliability of data is that quality of measurement method that suggests that the same data would have been collected each time in repeated observations of the same phenomenon.

High reliability will indicate high correlation between dependent and independent variables. The failure of reliability is random error. According to Babbie (1998), sources for random error are:

- If an interview object answers a question incorrectly either deliberately or unintentionally
- If an enumerator records an answer incorrectly
- Entering errors that are not detected

Validity of data is a term describing a measure that accurately reflects the concept it is intended to measure. The failure of validity is systematic errors. Sources for systematic errors are, according to Babbie (1998):

- Respondents are systematically answering a question incorrectly because it is not suited for the interview group.
- The enumerators are systematically asking a question incorrectly, recording an answer incorrectly or failing to ask a question.
- The data analyser is using the data incorrectly by including or excluding a variable.

Most of the respondents had difficulties in answering questions about income, expenditure and assets. The respondents did not have a clear overview of this information. They also found the large amount of detailed and difficult questions boring or unnecessary. The result was that both enumerators and respondents would haste through these questions. The respondents also tended to over- or under-estimate certain answers in order to give a wanted impression. Higher castes might want to over estimate income and assets to give the impression that they are wealthy, while lower castes might do the opposite. For example, in one lower caste family I visited, they did not want to send signals about the importance of remittances. When we asked the question about remittances, a small girl started to list up all the saris, watches and so on, her elder brother had sent to them from the Middle East. Her parents told her quickly to hush, as if she had done



something wrong. The major erroneous sources of our questionnaire data collection influence validity.

**Limitations of the Formal Interviews and Informal Interviews**

The major source of limitation to this part of the data collection was due to lack of translation willingness. The crew we had hired were knowledgeable in the English language but they preferred to speak in Nepalese. This caused a minimum of communication between the non-Nepalese students and the enumerators. I was kept out of many relevant discussions because nothing, or only small parts of dialogues were translated. For example one evening when we got a visit from ACAP and VDC staff, there was a long discussion about topics related to my thesis between the visitors and the enumerators, all communication happened in Nepalese even though I showed interest in joining the discussion. Another time I went with my interpreter to interview an Amma Samoa president and the two of them ended up doing an informal interview without anything being translated. I was careful to ask Ram Devi about all information in the aftermath of such events, but I had a constant feeling that I was not getting all the potential information. I got very frustrated with having to ask what was going on all the time and the atmosphere became very tense in the end.

Limitations to qualitative methods can be that the focus easily changes during the process of interviewing a lot of people. It is important that the respondents are exposed to the same processes (Grønmo, 1996). Interviews easily bring about misunderstandings about what is being asked and what is answered (Holter, 1996). This problem deepens when there are two languages and cultures involved as well as a third person, namely the interpreter. It is also important that questions are not leading and that the interviewer is not interpreting in a desired direction (Grønmo, 1996).

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### **Limitations of the Formal Group Interviews**

The women of Mardi valley are heavily engaged in agricultural activities during the peak farming-season. This had a strong influence on the group interviews I conducted. The group interviews were conducted when the women had finished cooking and eating. Not all the Amma Samoa members would come to the group interviews, and others were visibly tired. Another problem I faced was that not only women would gather, there was bound to gather curious men and children too, and this probably had an effect on what the women answered.

### **Limitations of Participant Observations**

Language was a limiting factor in my role as an observer. Visual observation is not sufficient in this process. Observations have to be confirmed through dialogue with the people that are being observed. My interpreter was an internal to the social norms and this made it less exiting for her to translate interviews that dealt with these topics. I might have missed important information and knowledge because there were features that I didn't understand that the people around me took for granted. The knowledge that I got might not have reflected the whole picture, as I became an active chooser of information.



**Figure 3.1 Collecting Data for the Questionnaire**

## 4 Description of Nepal and Mardi Valley

This chapter will describe Nepal based on secondary data and Mardi Valley based on secondary data in addition to the data I collected during my fieldwork.

### 4.1 Location, Physical Properties and Demography

Nepal is located between the great plains of Indian Sub-continent in the South, West and East and the High Tibetan Plateau of China in the North. Its altitude varies from 70 meters to 8,848 meters above sea level. The geography and topography of the country contributes much to the wide variation in climatic conditions that one can experience. There exist climatic extremes of cold arctic type to the warm tropical type within 160 km distance from the North to the South. Ecologically the country is divided into three regions, running from the North to South. They are the Mountain, the Hill and the Terai (Plain) Region (NRA, 1999).

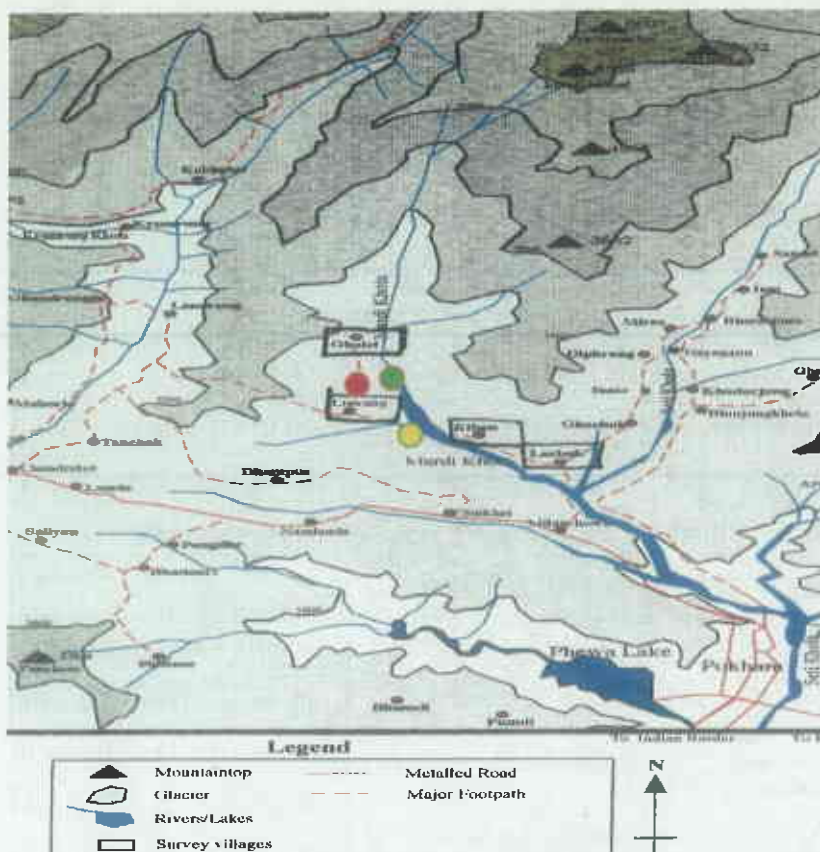
Mardi Valley is situated in Kaski District in the Western Development Region, in Gandaki Zone. Kaski District lies in the Hill Region, which comprises fertile valleys and basins. The region is relatively densely populated. 46 % of Nepal's 24,7 million people live



Figure 4.1 Map of Nepal (Source: Koketsu, 1999; modified)

there while it accounts for 42 % of Nepal's total land area.<sup>1</sup> Only one tenth of the Hill Region is suitable for cultivation. The main activities are farming related activities like animal grazing, cottage industry and cultivation of high altitude cereals.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for more demographic data on Nepal



Lumbre ●                      Koleli ●                      Koramouk ●  
**Figure 4.2**              **Map of Mardi Watershed (Source: Sesabo, 2001)**

Mardi Watershed originates from Machhapuchhre (6990m) and Mardi Mountain (6588m) and ends where Mardi and Seti River meets, at an altitude of around 900m.

The fieldwork was conducted in altitudes from 1000 to 1500 meters above sea level. The mouth of the valley lies one hour drive northwest of Pokhara. Mardi Watershed includes five VDCs: Lahchok, Dhital, Rivan and Lwang-Ghalel and partially Dhampus.

There is a gravel road alongside the river up to the

point of Koramouk. The road makes some motorised transport to Koramouk possible during the dry season. The valley plane is partially flooded in the rainy season (May to October) and there are frequent landslides in the area. This makes it difficult to keep the road in a proper shape. The journey from the tarmac road to Koramouk takes three hours by foot. The villages situated by the river plane are Rivan, Koramouk and Lumbre while the villages Lahchok, Lwang, Koleli and Ghalel are ascended (ascended in respective order).

The population of Mardi consists mainly of four ethnic groups: the Indo-Aryan, the Gurung (G), the Tamang (T) and the Magar (M). In my thesis I have classified the population in different ways depending on what I want to show. For most purposes I have divided the Indo-Aryans into three groups, the Brahmins (B), the Chettris (C) and the occupational castes (OC). I have chose



this categorisation based on features in relation to status of women within the different castes. I have also classified the population by dividing it in two, based on whether they belong to a high or low status group. This classification of groups may not be valid outside the fieldwork area. The classification is based on indications given by the local population of Mardi. I have called the two groups for the higher and lower castes according to the terminology used by the local population. The higher castes (HC) include Brahmins, Chettris and Gurungs. The lower castes (LC) include the occupational castes, the Magars and the Tamangs.

From figure 4.3 it is seen that the population pyramid is tending towards a triangular shape for the female population, and more concave for the male population. The triangular pyramid with its high birth and death rate is one of the indicators of a developing country. The concave pyramid visualises the high migration rate among men in the reproductive age in Mardi. I found, by using SPSS, that there is a significant difference,

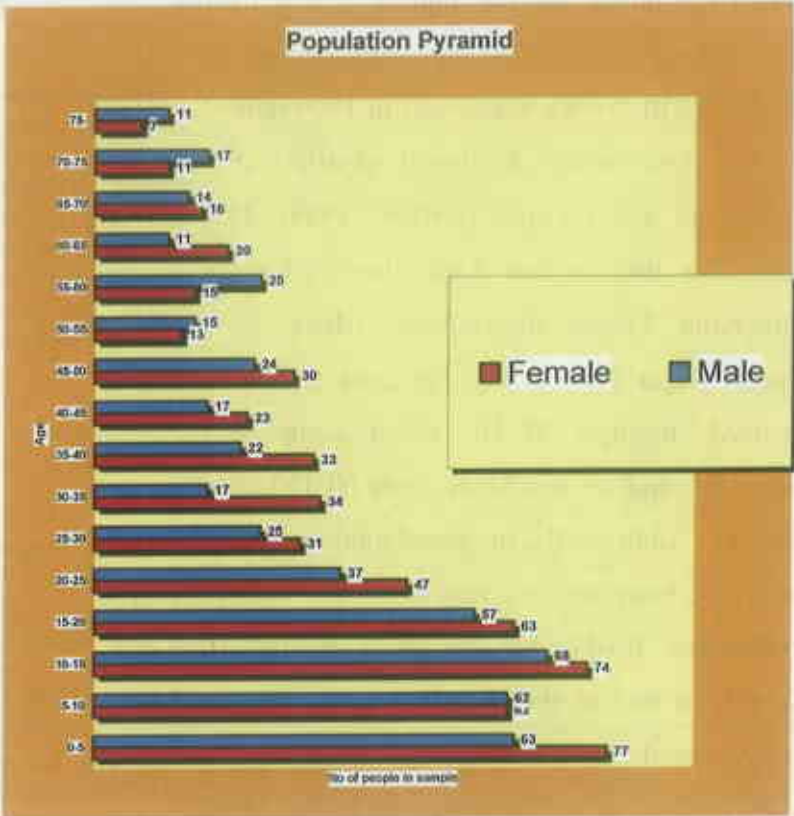


Figure 4.3 Population Pyramid of Mardi Valley (Source: Survey, 2000)

separated by six years, in the mean age of HCs and LCs, the HCs having a higher average age. This may indicate that LCs have more young children. Low average age is used as an indicator of low living standards. I found no significant difference in the mean age between the sexes. Mean age for men is 27,7 years and for women it is 27,1 years. More demographic data from Mardi Valley and Kaski District is found in Appendix 2.

## 4.2 Development Status

Almost half the population of Nepal live below the poverty line. The Nepal Human Development Report (NHDR) of 2001, published by UNDP, places Nepal 129th among 162 countries in its Human Development Index. As a comparison the neighbouring country India is ranked as number 115, Pakistan as number 127 and Bangladesh as number 132.

The Western Development Region, which Kaski District lies under, has the highest development status among the five development regions in Nepal (NHDR, 1998). Kaski was in 1996 ranked as the third most developed district after Kathmandu and Lalitpur (NHDR, 1998). One reason for this is that Kaski lies under the Annapurna Conservation Area, which is a popular target for tourists. The area is heavily financed, through ACAP, by a compulsory tourist fee and by donations from NGOs and INGOs. Additionally, the population has access to income from tourism, agriculture and through remittances. Kaski also lies centrally, not far away from one of the largest urban centres in Nepal, namely Pokhara. The location brings no doubt positive economic effects to Kaski. Mardi Valley is relatively deprived compared to other areas of Kaski. One cause for this is that Mardi does not have any tourism. The infrastructure is

### Box 4.1 Development Status and Economy of Nepal

Nepal receives today around 411 million US dollars (Fiscal Year 97/98) in financial aid per year (CIA, 2001) and 5,128 NGOs are registered in Nepal (NHDR, 1998). Aid counts for about 1,5 % of the GDP, and the GDP is \$27.4 billion (1999 estimate) (UNCTAD, 2001). External debt calculates to 57 % of the GDP. Per capita growth rate in agriculture, which employs over 80 percent of Nepal's labour force, has been negative through the 1990 (NHDR, 2001). Despite the 10 years of being a major development aid receiver, Nepal still faces serious economic obstacles. Investment levels are still very low and so are the savings (EIA, 2001). More data on the status of the Nepalese economy is found in Appendix 3.

The development status varies largely within Nepal. Poverty in rural areas is 2.6 times higher than in urban areas (NHDR, 2001). Incidence of poverty is most common in the mid-western and far western mountains followed by the eastern and far western hills (NHDR, 1998). The level of wealth is dependent on caste/ethnic group belongingness; prevalence of poverty is highest among the ethnic group, Limbus, followed by the socially downgraded untouchable castes (e.g. Kami, Damai and Sarki). Incidence of poverty is lowest among Newars followed by Brahmins (NHDR, 1998). More information on castes and ethnic groups are found box 4.3 and in Appendix 4.

poor, and this reduces the positive effects of a near location to Pokhara. The Gini-coefficient of the study area is calculated to be 0,58 (Aryal, 2002). This value is equal to the national Gini-coefficient (UNDP, 1998). The coefficient indicates a skewed income distribution, as it should have been equal to unity if distribution of wealth was equally distributed. The pillar of the

economy in Mardi is agriculture. The survey data shows that only 4 % of the households had no members engaged in agriculture. The main crops cultivated are rice, maize, millet and wheat. Intercropping with legumes is common. Other sources of income are pensions and remittances. Pensions come mainly from the Indian military service, which amounts to 33 % of the non-agricultural income (Sesabo, 2001).

In table 4.1 I have done bivariate correlation-tests to calculate matrices of Pearson product-moment correlations. I have tried to find what factors total income correlate with.

**Table 4.1      Total Income Correlated with Migration, Destination, Loan, Amount of Loan, and Land Ownership (Source: Survey, 2000)**

Two-tailed significance (P=)	Total income
Migration	0,000
Destination	0,000
Loan	0,487
Amount of loan	0,002
Land size	0,501

Migration and Loan are dummy variables: Households with migrated household members gives Migration = 1 while households that has taken loan during the two last years gives Loan = 1. Destination is transformed into destination categories: 1 = Nepal as destination of migration, 2 = India as destination of migration, 3 = The Middle East as destination of migration and 4 = East Asia as destination of migration. The table shows that total income correlates strongly with migration, destination and amount of loan. It is logical that total income correlates strongly with both migration and destination since migration and remittances to a strong degree contribute to total income. The fact that “households that have taken loan during the two last years” gives small correlation with total income is a positive indicator on that the poor households also have the possibility to take loans. These findings correlate with the findings of Sesabo (2001) and Aryal (2002) from the same area.

### 4.2.1 Migration

Remittances from migrant workers are of great economical importance in Mardi as it mounts to 27 % of total household income. The migration is both seasonal and more permanent. 48 % of the households in the survey registered that they had migrated family members. The migrants are almost without exception male, and from the age of 20-50 years old. Seasonal migration is mainly limited to the tourist season (winter), when temporary jobs are available in and around Pokhara. Permanent migration has a long tradition in the area, especially among the Gurungs. The migration was originally directed towards military services. These days migration is also directed towards cheap labour markets in India, the Middle East and in South East Asia. Amount of remittance is influenced by destination of migration. The potential income is greatest in East Asia followed by the Middle East, India and Nepal. The migration of men from Mardi for non-military jobs commenced in the 1980's (Gurung, P., 2000: PM).

### 4.2.2 Credit

71 % of the households have during the two last years taken credit while 5 % of the households are registered to give credit. The loan sources are both informal and formal. Informal loans include village moneylenders, relatives, ASs and friends. The Government Bank and the Small Farmers Development Program (run by Agricultural Development Bank) are the banks that people take formal loans from. Informal loans are the most common in Mardi counting to 163 registered loans compared to 44 formal loans.

**Table 4.2      Loan Characteristics in Mardi (Source: Survey, 2000)**

	Number of loans (Number of formal loans)		Average loan taken
Loan used for medical expenses	13	(1)	14.000
Loan used for consumption	59	(1)	15.000
Loan used for investment	53	(39)	24.000
Loan used for migration	59	(3)	64.000
Loan used for marriage	7	(0)	73.000
Loan used for other purposes	16	(0)	21.000
N=	207	(44)	



Average loan taken for migration is high, as expected. We also see that 79 loans are taken to cover expenditures (medical expenses, consumption and marriage) compared to 112 loans for investment and migration.

4.2.3 Education

*“Greater literacy and educational achievements of disadvantaged groups can increase their ability to resist oppression, to organise politically, and to get a fairer deal. The re-distributive effects can be important not only between different social groups or households, but also within the family, since there is evidence that better education (particularly female education) contributes to the reduction of gender-based inequalities”*

Drèze and Sen, 1995

Nepal has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world with only 27,5 % literacy (CIA, 2001). Female literacy rate amounts to 14 % (1995 est.) (CIA, 2001). The past political system in Nepal is responsible for the low status of the educational system. The Rana regime<sup>1</sup> did not want the masses to get an education because they feared that an enlightened citizenry would oppose their oppressive rule (Subedi, 1993). It was during the Panchat era<sup>2</sup> (1962-1990) that primary education was first considered a basic need (Shakti, 1995).

**Box 4.2 Educational Status of Nepal**

Only about three-fourths (72 %) of primary school age children are enrolled in schools (NHDR, 1998). Lower attendance and higher dropout rates are observed especially among female and lower castes and society harbour attitudes and practices that discriminate these groups and this have consequences within the school system (NHDR, 1998). Of the total number of children enrolled at the primary level in 1995, 60 % were boys compared to 40 % of girls. Systematic discrimination against enrolment of girls in primary schools exists in all geographical regions and social groups, including in the urban areas (NHDR, 1998). Literacy is highly unequally distributed among the various caste and ethnic groups. The high-caste groups and some ethnic groups are located in the upper literacy-ranges while the lowest-caste groups are found on the bottom of the literacy hierarchy (NHDR, 1998).

There has been a gradual increase of investment in education that can be seen when studying annual government expenditure. Educational investment mounted to 10 % of the total budget during 1975-1990 but increased to approximately 13.2 % during 1992-1997 (NHDR, 1998). Still the investment in education by the government is low. The foreign assistance component forms nearly 52 % of the total spending in the education sector today (NHDR, 1998). A large proportion of NGDO investment has been channelled through adult education and awareness programs. Adult education is seen as important, especially among the least educated groups: women and lower castes. The number of NGDOs and INGDOs that involve in these activities are estimated to be more than 500 (NHDR, 1998). The government plays a lesser role in adult education. Only 0,28 % of total budget of education is spent on adult literacy programs (Majupuria, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 5 for Nepalese History and Politics

The first primary schools in Mardi were established during the 1960s. The first primary school to be established was in Lahchok in 1960. It is therefore interesting to look at educational statistics for the age group below 45 years. When we asked about the education of the household members 68 (7 % of the population above 5 years) persons registered themselves as literate without being able to document number of years of education. These people have probably not gone to school, but they may have joined literacy courses. I have treated this category as missing data because I am only interested to look at attendance in governmental schools. I have treated the 79 (9 % of the population above 5 years) individuals who registered themselves as illiterate as if they have no education.

**Table 4.3      Education of the Population in the Age Group 15 to 45 (Source: Survey, 2000)**

Years of Education	Percentage of Population
0	21
1-5	22
6-10	39
11-14	3

There is a high drop out rate among school children. 37 % of the 15 year olds did not have more than 5 years of education

### 4.3 Social Structures

#### 4.3.1 The Caste System

*“Deep social rift and distance separate the high caste groups from those caste groups regarded as untouchables, not only in relation to ritual domain, but also in political power and economic privileges”*

(NHDR, 1998)

The caste system in Nepal has its roots in the Hindu Indo-Aryan group, but most other ethnic groups in Nepal have adopted the system as well (Brown, 1996). An archaic classification of castes places the population within the four main categories or “varnas”, meaning, “colours”. The groups are assigned to occupations. The groups are the Brahmins (priests), the Khsatriyas (warriors and royalty), the Vaishyas (merchants) and the Shudras (artisans and workers) (Eriksen, 1995). Falling outside these categories are the “casteless”, which ranks even lower.

#### Box 4.3 The Caste System

The caste system uses the principle of “jathi” (meaning “type” or “kind”), ranking castes according to purity and pollution (Dumont, 1980). Purer castes are considered to be higher and more polluted castes are lower. The polluted castes are considered to be untouchable by the higher castes.

Within the three main caste groups there are sub-castes that practically are seen as own castes (Dumont, 1980). These are ranked in relation to each other. The surname of a person will always report which caste and sub-caste one belongs to. This makes it easy to rank people you are introduced to relative to yourself.

There are different theories about the establishment of the caste system (Daniel, 2001). These are religious-mythical, biological and socio-historical theories. The religious-mythical and biological theories illustrate values of the caste system. One religious-mythical theory comes from the Rig Veda, an ancient Hindu scripture. It describes that the primal man - Purush - destroyed himself to create a human society. The different varnas were created from different parts of his body. The Brahmins were created from his head; the Kshatriyas from his hands; the Vaishyas from his thighs and the Shudras from his feet. The biological theory claims that all existing things are composed, in different proportions, of three qualities (Daniel, 2001). Sattva qualities include wisdom, intelligence, honesty, goodness and other positive qualities. Rajas include qualities like passion, pride, valour and other passionate qualities. Tamas qualities include dullness, stupidity, lack of creativity and other negative qualities. People with different strengths of these inherent qualities adopted different types of caste or occupation (Daniel, 2001).

Ethnic groups have also been integrated into the caste system (Brown, 1996). The ethnic groups are also classified as caste groups (Dumont, 1980). For example, the ethnic group called Tamangs are called the Tamang caste. The ethnic groups can divide themselves into several castes as well. In this way there are found higher and lower caste Tamangs (Palikhe, 2000: PM<sup>3</sup>). The ethnic groups do not have a pre-defined rank in the caste system. Their status may vary from region to region.

<sup>3</sup> PM = Personal Message

Box 4.3 continued:

The fact that non-Hindu groups and ethnic groups can find their place in the caste system means that caste is practised beyond its cultural and religious basis. It is a flexible system that can adjust to changes in the society. There is little left of the original caste system that existed due to its practical functions. Caste can be seen today as merely a system of justifying an unequal distribution of power and privileges (Brown, 1996). Low caste groups are excluded from many cultural, political and economic settings (NHDR, 1998). The strength of position of the system comes from the fact that it is based on religion. This leads to the conservation of its concepts and practices.

The caste system brings with it a “system of acting” based on how people are ranked according to each other. This system of acting is inconsistent with the egalitarian values of democracy (Brown).

The caste system gives room not only for ranking the castes according to each other, but also families will be ranked according to various factors within the cast sub-groups. Even within a household the family members are ranked (NHDR, 1998).

The pre-1962 state of Nepal upheld the caste system and sometimes even redefined caste/ethnic belongingness through the implementation of laws and directives (NHDR, 1998). There is now a law in Nepal to prevent discrimination on the basis of caste. However the law seems to have little effect in rooting out discriminatory practises (NHDR, 1998). When I searched in Nepali literature, including statistical reports, I found that there was a lack of material comparing the status of different caste groups. It is a serious mistake to avoid being observant on that people are part of a caste system. Ignorance leads to that focus is taken away from the problems that the caste system brings with it. As a result of these findings I have decided to use the terms higher and lower castes in my thesis, reflecting how I experienced the situation in the field.

### **Caste System and Wealth Distribution in Mardi Valley**

*We do not speak much at meetings, we are lower casts, and we are suppressed. The Gurungs will not touch us, and they do not listen to us. We are always invited to meetings and gatherings, but we do not participate much. The Gurungs speak mostly and they decide mostly. Lower casts have some special needs, and these needs are not taken seriously by the Gurungs.*

LC women, Lumbre

The survey data shows that the economic flows between castes are minimal. The economic flows that exist from middle class to lower class are mainly due to hire of labour. The salaries on the other hand, are very low, causing small income distribution effects. This observation is in thread with the traditional caste system where there is little flow of money and to a higher degree direct exchange of goods and services (Eriksen, 1995). Triggering growth in the upper income strata solely will therefore probably increase the income gap since there are few efficient mechanisms for levelling out the income distribution. The only significant levelling out mechanism in Mardi may be if poor households get access to loan for migration.

The first striking feature of the caste system in Mardi is that the castes are strictly separated, both socially and physically. The different castes live in separate clusters as illustrated by the AS maps<sup>4</sup>, and they do not interact with each other if it is not called for. The second striking feature is the visible difference in quality of living. One could for example see a big difference in the quality of lower and higher caste houses. The difference in house construction does not necessarily indicate the present day economical situation, the reason being that it takes time before an increase in income becomes visible through the improvement of buildings. The observation verifies however, that the wealth gap between LCs and HCs has been, at least in the recent past, large. The data shows that LCs are worse off economically compared to the higher castes.

**Table 4.4      Wealth per Capita and Caste (Source: Survey, 2000)**

Mean values	B	C	OC	MT	G
Total income per capita per year	9.644	9.391	7.781	7.134	14.789
Total expenditure per capita per year	9.424	10.445	9.092	11.183	14.277
Sum of assets per capita	25.312	33.279	19.206	13.328	99.715

From table 4.4 we see that the Gurung is the best off group among the castes. They have around hundred percent higher total income compared to the lower castes.

### Caste System and Migration in Mardi Valley

The tradition that only Gurungs migrate for work has slowly changed since the 1980s. Today all castes and ethnic groups migrate as shown in table 4.5.

**Table 4.5      Allocation of Households with Migration and Average Amount of Remittances Received with Respect to Caste (Source: Survey, 2000)**

	B	C	OC	MT	G	Average
Number of households with migration (Percentage of households)	19 (39)	9 (43)	30 (49)	5 (50)	32 (54)	95 (48)
Number of households with recorded remittances	13	7	21	3	15	56
Average amount of remittance for households with recorded remittance	40.000	40.800	70.800	68.000	92.000	67.000
N=	49	21	61	10	59	200

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix 9 for AS maps



Household remittance was recorded twice in the questionnaire; the other data giving an average remittance of Rs 95,900. The data in table 4.5 comes from the question in page nine in the questionnaire about total remittance income. The other set of values comes from page two in the questionnaire about how much remittance each migrant contributes to the household. I chose to use the data from page nine because the data in page two had one extreme value.

We see from table 4.5 that all castes have high incidence of migration and that remittances are high for OCs as well. It is found that half of the migrants to the Middle East come from OCs while 30 % of Middle East migrants are Gurung. The jobs in the Middle East are considered to be very challenging. The working and living conditions are very poor. These factors favour the OCs as a working group in the Middle East compared to other castes. Only ten migrants have East Asia as destination and eight of these migrants are Gurung. The cost of going abroad for work migration is very high. Access to loan is a critical factor to enable migration to the Middle East and to East Asia. Lower castes have good access to loan in Mardi as seen below.

**Table 4.6      Caste and Loan Taking (Source: Survey, 2000)**

Number of cases	B	C	OC	MT	G
Households that has not taken loan during the past two years	15	5	12	3	24
Households that has taken loan during the past two years (average loan per hh who takes loan)	34 (51,100)	16 (64,800)	49 (60,500)	7 (9,800)	35 (55,400)

Fourteen of the LC households have more than Rs 55,000 in total loan. Eleven Brahmin households, seven Chettri and nine Gurung households have more than Rs 55,000 in total loan.

**Caste system and Access to Land in Mardi Valley**

Land has low liquidity reflected in that it is not bought or sold often. Land liquidity may be extra low in Mardi because of land market failures. Even though households newly could have afforded land, it may not exist land for sale. The market failure may be strengthened by the high status it implies to own land. The present distribution of land may therefore, to a strong degree, indicate previous power structures in Mardi. Aryal (2002) also indicates that there are imperfect land rental markets in Mardi. Land can be categorised into Bari (meaning upland) and Keth (meaning lowland). Keth is more fertile, easier to irrigate and brings a higher yield. Owning more



keth used to be a matter of prestige in the past (Adhikari. 1992). 41 % of the population in Kaski district are landless or live on marginal farmland (<0,5 ha) according to ICIMOD (1997).

Table 4.7 Caste and Average Land Size (Source: Survey, 2000)

Ropanis	B	C	OC	MT	G
Average land size of irrigated keth	7,1	3,3	1,2	0,2	8,1
Average land size	10,8	6,1	4,1	2,7	10,5

The data tells us that higher castes have more and better land than the lower castes. This table represents also farmers who depend on sharecropping. Ten percent of the cultivated land in Lwang Sector is sharecropped (ACAP, 1999). From informal interviews we found that sharecroppers usually come from lower castes, but our data shows a more equal distribution, with 16 HC sharecroppers and 29 LC sharecroppers. Sharecroppers’ restriction is that half of the yield is to be transferred to landowner.<sup>5</sup>

### Caste System and Education in Mardi Valley

Even though LCs have improved their situation considerably since migration commenced, there is still a difference in educational level between the higher and lower castes. Mean years of education for higher castes is 4,9 years while it is 2,3 for lower castes. With a P = 0,088 the correlation between caste and education level is significant with  $\alpha = 10\%$ .

Table 4.8 Caste Wise Distribution of Children Aged from 7 to 15 Years that has No Years or Only One Year of Education (Source: Survey, 2000)

Number of cases	B	C	OC	MT	G	Total
Number of children with no or only one year of education	16	4	32	2	6	60
Total number of children aged 7 to 15	80	23	88	13	45	249

I have chosen to use the age group from seven to fifteen although children should commence school at the age of five. The reason for this is that a lot of families delay sending their kids to school for some years.

<sup>5</sup> Sharecropping in Nepalese is Adhiya which means half

### 4.3.2 Women

Women in Nepal, relative to their caste, have lower status than men. Sons inherit rank by birth, while females may attain status through first her father and later her husband (NHDR, 1998). Exclusion based on gender is both pervasive and deep. The result of gender disparity is observed by studying the gender-sensitive development index (GDI) in relation to the human development index (HDI).<sup>6</sup> On national basis the GDI is 82 % of the HDI (NHDR, 1998), which is serious considering that the HDI of Nepal is 0,378 (NHDR, 1998) and already extremely low.

Women's position according to religious principles is positive strictly speaking. Female values are sought after and women

have a respected place in the Hindu religion (Majupuria, 1996). The Hindu religion does, however, give room for differentiation between the sexes. For example it is said that if a man is not blessed with a son, the door to heaven will not be open to him (Majupuria, 1996). The United Nations has defined the status of women in the context of their access to knowledge, economic resources, and power, as well as their personal autonomy in decision-making processes (Acharya, 1995). In this light the position of Nepalese women is not heartening. This is mainly due to the rigid patriarchal society existing in Nepal.

#### Box 4.4 Women's Status and Roles

In virtually every aspect of life, women are subordinate to men (Acharya, 1995). Women lag far behind men in access to resources, education and knowledge, health facilities, modern avenues of employment, income and also on the political arena (NHDR, 1998). Their mobility is restricted by cultural practices. Nepalese women are discriminated against in the laws on property rights, which deny them inheritance rights in the parental household after marriage (Majupuria, 1996). A fundamental disadvantage women face in the exercise of their legal and political rights, besides economic powerlessness, is the cultural perception about their sexuality and sexual vulnerability and the subsequent possibility of physical violence against them. Tolerance of domestic violence, public rape, and girls' trafficking are clear examples of cultural attitudes that hinder women in the exercise of their political and legal rights (NPCS, 1998).

Nepalese women show submissiveness towards older generations, higher castes and other authorities (UNICEF and NPCS, 1996). Women are taught to not speak directly with authorities. They can for example not speak with men not belonging to the family. If women have requests or face problems, they should not speak directly to elder men in the family about it; they should only speak with her husband or the younger brothers of her husband (Palikhe, 2000: PM). If an authority, like for example a father-in-law, is present at a meeting, the daughters-in-law will not speak.

<sup>6</sup> Description of these indexes are given in Appendix 6

*Only few women speak at meetings. The old women just listen and they don't know what to say, because they are not literate. Most women will not speak their mind at meetings, they never went to school, and they cannot plan.*

Old Gurung lady, Lumbre

Kaski District has the third best women's empowerment index among all Districts in Nepal (ICIMOD, 1997). Around 30 % of Gurung, Tamang and Magar families are female-headed, while the Brahmin and OCs females head 20 % of the households. Almost 50 % of the Chettri household were women-headed. One third of all loans are taken by females.

The reason for the strong standing of women in Mardi is the high migration rate. Women have to take economic responsibility when the male migrate. Gurung females depend less on migration in order to gain economic responsibility as seen in table 4.9. This is because the Gurung culture allows women more freedom.

**Table 4.9      Percentage of Female-Headed Households Having Migrants and Taking Loan**  
(Source: Survey, 2000)

	B	C	OC	MT	G
Percentage of female-headed households that has migrants	78	60	90	100	41
Percentage of female-headed households that take loan	63	75	78	67	67
Percentage of female-headed households that take loan and has migrants in the household	62	38	67	67	29

There is no correlation between total income and whether the households are female or male headed according to the survey data.

**Box 4.5 Women's Relative Status**

Women's relative status will vary from one ethnic group to another (Majupuria, 1996). The Tibeto-Burmese women have more freedom to make decisions within the household and have greater freedom in mobility. Within the Indo-Aryan group there are variations in the status of women depending on the rank within the caste system. Women from the low caste groups enjoy relatively more autonomy than higher castes, especially the Brahmins (NPCS, 1998).

Also within a household there are differences in the status of the different women (UNICEF and NPCS, 1996). The patriarchal family system leads to that women move to the household of the husbands' family when they marry. Newly married women are therefore seen as outsiders who have to prove themselves. Her status may improve when she gets sons and when younger brothers-in-law bring new women to the household (UNICEF and NPCS, 1996). Daughters have less household core duties than daughters-in-law, but they are married and shift household when they are young. Senior female family members play a commanding role relative to the other females. But these women lives are only centred on taking care of household chores, fetching water and animal fodder, doing farm work in addition to making family planning decisions (Acharya, 1995). Their standing in society is mostly dependent on their husbands' and before that their parents' social and economic positions.

The family structure in Nepal creates a situation where the women ideally, through out their lives, are held economically irresponsible. It is not suitable for women to be associated with economic activities, neither personal nor official. Women depend on their fathers, father-in-laws or their husbands to take care of them financially (Acharya, 1995).

Traditional view that male household heads should be economically responsible is still present in Mardi. 66 % of the loans taken are by male household heads. 82 % of the women believe that they can take loan, but 35 % answer that they have not taken loan because it is not needed of them. 13 % give other reasons for not taking loan. Only 31 % of the LC women believed they could get more than 10,000 Rs. in loan. In an interview with LC women they stated that LC women could get loan up to Rs 5000 from Gurung village moneylenders and an interest rate of 34 %. Above this amount, men had to take the loan.

#### **Box 4.6 Women in the Economy**

Whatever income a woman gets should, according to the custom, be given to the household head. The household head is the distributor of economic resources in the family. If a woman wants to do something that requires financial support she has to go to her caretaker to ask for permission. She will not take up a loan herself, the loan should be taken by the caretaker. If she is offered a loan she should at least get permission (Palikhe, 2000; PM). This way of organising the economy pools the decision power to the household head in respect to activities. This may have negative impact on females in the household, especially daughters-in-laws, which often are considered as outsiders for a long time after the marriage into the family. In rural areas women rarely get any income. There is a tradition of labour exchange instead of payment that leads to less circulation of money (Majupuria, 1996 ; Dumont, 1980). Lower castes can nowadays work on higher castes land for money, but they usually get partially paid in food and/or liquor. In my area, for example, male workers were paid 80 or 100 Rs. per day while females were paid only 30 or 40 Rs. per day. The lower of the two sums included a lunch.



Women and education

The education of girls is often seen as a special favour. Studies show that 77 % of girls between 6 and 15 years drop out of school (Subedi, 1993). If a family suffers from economic constraints it is common to reduce the daughter's education before the son's (Subedi, 1993). Only 17 % of the rural respondents were willing to commit family finances to the education of daughters in 1993 (Shakti, 1995). However, a change in attitude towards education of girls has been observed.

Box. 4.7 Women's Education In Nepal

Some 20 years ago primary education for girls in rural areas was a luxury few rural households could afford. The Shakti study (1995) shows that 91,3 % of the rural population thought that girls should go to school, while the figure was 100 % for boys. Factors that influenced the variation were poverty and restrictive social norms. The argument used against education of girls is that it is difficult to find husbands for girls with good education. Furthermore girls are involved in household work and are invaluable since they perform almost as much work as an adult. Yet another argument is that education for girls is not considered to be a good investment.

The increase of female education, particularly primary education, does not seem to have made any measurable improvements in the economic conditions of women or their households (Shakti, 1995). Neither is there a positive correlation between education and authority within the household. This is possibly related to the increase of commercialisation of work with its propensity to favour males. The income gap between men and women leads to that women have lost control over even more decisions than in the past. However, it is significant that they show greater disagreement with men's decisions than before, which may indicate that literacy or education is beginning to give them more self-confidence (Shakti, 1995).

ICIMOD (1997) reports that 48,8 % of the girls in Kaski District are enrolled at primary level. The mean years of education for women in Mardi is 2,9 years while it is 3,4 years for the male population. According to the questionnaire 80,7 % of the males above 5 years have some education while 67,2 % of the females above 5 years have some education.

Table 4.10 Caste, Sex and Education of the Population Above 15 years (Source: Survey, 2000)

Percentage	B		C		OC		MT		G	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No education	18	42	32	64	43	65	33	46	26	42
1 to 5 years	18	19	12	12	28	25	22	27	27	20
6 to 10 years	53	39	52	24	29	10	44	27	44	37
11 years or more	10	2	4		1				3	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N=)	(60)	(65)	(25)	(33)	(80)	(88)	(9)	(11)	(62)	(90)

The table shows that females have less access to education than males, and that OC women are the worst off group when it comes to educational level.

## 4.4 Administrative Units

### 4.4.1 The Political Administrative System

#### Box 4.8 The Political Administrative System in Nepal

Administratively the country is divided into 75 **Districts** with 75 District Development Committees (DDC) (UNDP, 1998). A Chief District Officer (CDO) heads each district. The CDO is mainly responsible to maintain law and order in the district and also to co-ordinate developmental work conducted by different ministries and local agencies at district level (Pant, 1997). Sixteen Districts in the North constitute the Mountain Region, 39 Districts in the middle constitute the Hill and 20 in the South fall under the Terai Region. Similarly, **Development Regions** are made up of Districts. There are 16 Districts in the Eastern Development Region, 19 in the Central, 16 in the Western, 15 in the Mid-Western and nine Districts in the Far-Western Development Region. Each Development Region is divided in two or three **Administrative Zones** or Anchals (Pant, 1997). Districts are further divided into a number of **Village Development Committees** (VDCs) and **Municipalities** as local units. Currently, there are 3,913 VDCs and 58 municipalities including one metropolitan and four sub-metropolitan cities. VDCs and municipalities are sub-divided into smaller units, called **wards**. Elections for ward boards are mandatory (NHDR, 1998). Wards consist of four ward members and one ward chairman. The law says that one woman has to be represented in every ward board (NHDR, 2001). The ward chairman is represented in the VDC board. There are nine wards in every VDC (Pant, 1997). Additionally the VDC is obliged to have at least one female representative in the VDC board. The rules to include women in ward and VDC boards were implemented at the local elections in 1997 (Gurung, R., 2002: PM). There is no rule to include lower castes in ward or VDC boards. (Gurung, P., 2002: PM; Gurung, R., 2002: PM) Information about Nepalese history and Nepalese politics can be found in Appendix 5.

Lwang ACAP Sector includes the seven VDCs: Dhampus, Ghachok, Lahchok, Lwang, Machhapuchre, Rivan and Sardi Khola.

The political administrative system in Mardi follows the rules of representatives but they do not have formal elections. All ward board members are decided upon through discussions at open village meetings. The legal provision of one woman representation in the VDC board is not always effective as they often do not participate actively or they fail to come to meetings (VDC staff, 2000: I).

Tax income for the VDCs in Mardi is minimal and comes mainly from tax on collection of timber, non-timber forest products and handicrafts (VDC staff, 2000: I). Tax on land varies from 0,12 to one rupee per ropani per year depending on land quality and total land size. 25 % of the tax collected in each VDC is transferred to the District Development Committee. Minimum tax per household is two rupees per year. The main source of income for the VDC is the annual donation of 500.000 rupees per VDC from the Government (NHDR, 1998). This arrangement has existed since 1994.

VDC priorities in Mardi are river control and other investments due to calamities, irrigation facilitation, path construction, drinking water facility and



investment in education. Most VDC projects demand that villagers contribute with free labour. The VDCs concentrate on a few large projects per year where only some wards benefit. Every VDC has access to an additional 30.000 rupees from District level for women development activities, but information about this is not present in Mardi.

#### 4.4.2 ACAP

The Nepalese NGO King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation was formed in 1982 (KMTNC, 1999). **The mission** of KMTNC is: *“To promote, conserve and manage nature in all its diversity balancing human needs with the environment on a sustainable basis for posterity - ensuring maximum community participation with due cognisance of the linkages between economics, environment and ethics through a process in which people are both the principal actors and beneficiaries”* (KMTNC, 1999). KMTNC is supported by organisations in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Japan.

**The objectives** of ACAP is to conserve cultural heritage, sustainable social and economic development, natural resource conservation, development and management of sustainable tourism, local residents' full involvement in the management of natural resources and community development and finally: empowerment and equality of women (KMTNC, 1997). The program priority differs in the different regions depending on the features of the regions.

#### Box 4.9 ACAP

ACAP is one of over 80 projects that KMTNC is, or has been, undertaking. It is both the first as well as the largest conservation project in Nepal (KMTNC, 1997). ACAP is spread out in five districts of the Western Development Region and covers 55 VDCs. The seven Unit Offices, located in the field are: Jomsom, Manang and Lho Manthang in the Northern Program Section and Bhujung, Lwang, Sikles and Ghandruk in the Southern Program Section (KMTNC, 1997). The area lies directly North of Pokhara and reaches to the border of China. This means that the area encompass the Hill and Mountain Climatic Regions. The integration of the seven units was three stepped and took place over a four-year period (Gurung, S., 2000: 1<sup>7</sup>). The yearly budget of ACAP is approximately 1.4 million US \$ (Gurung, P., 2002: PM). The project is financed by foreign aid in addition to income from a fee that tourists pay in order to enter the ACAP area. ACAP has an estimated 70.000 visitors per year (Gurung, P., 2002: PM). The Nepalese Government gives economical support only to one sector through the Ministry of Tourism. Among the most important donors to ACAP are the American section of World Wildlife Foundation (WWF-USA), Trans Himalayan Aid Society (TRAS), The Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), Members of the Governing Board of Trustees of KMTNC (KMUKT) and The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Gurung, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> I = Interview

The Annapurna Conservation Area was officially gazetted in 1992 and the KMTNC was given authority to manage the area for ten years (KMTNC, 1997). “The **ultimate aim** of ACAP is to withdraw from the ACA, leaving behind a network of institutions through which local people can take control over the management of resources” (Rana, 1990). The Conservation Area Management Regulations (CAMR) was implemented in 1996 and provides a legal framework for ACA (Gurung, S., 2000: 1).

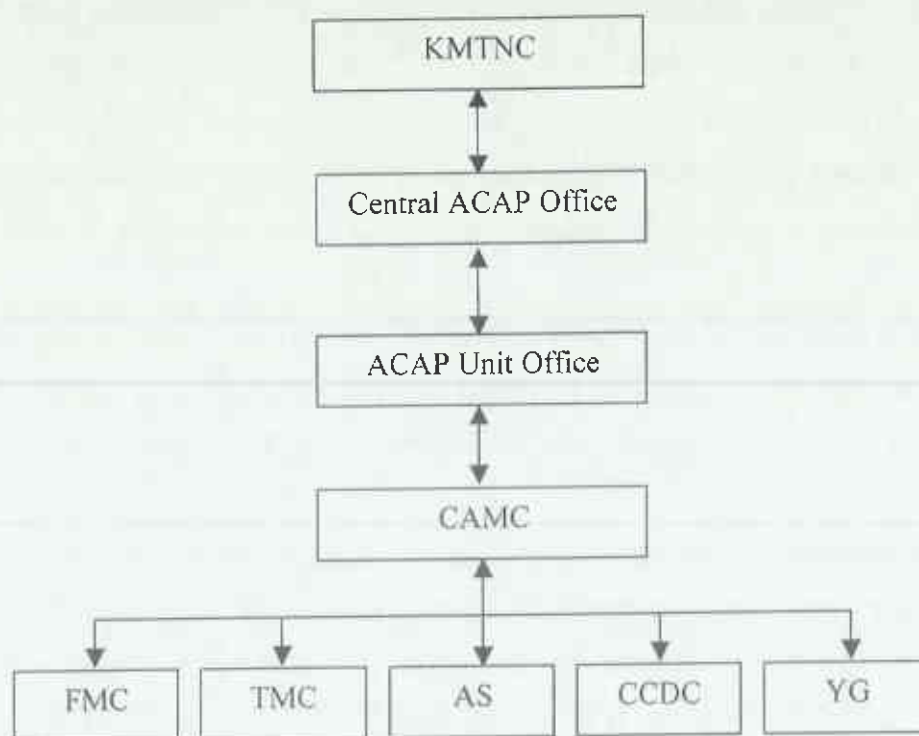
### **Structure of ACAP According to Leader of Lwang Unit Office**

For every VDC in ACAP there is a **Conservation Area Management Committee (CAMC)**. The CAMC is formed under the CAMR and is entrusted with the responsibility to manage, utilize, and protect all the natural resources within its respective VDC. The **Central ACAP Office** distributes the funds to the **ACAP unit offices**. The CAMC is responsible to distribute the funds available, partly through the **sub-committees**. The sub-committees operate on ward level and are more or less informal organisations.

#### **Box 4.10 The ACAP Structure**

The sub-committees are initiated by ACAP to organise interest groups. Examples of sub-committees are Forest Management Committee (FMC), Lodge Management Committee (LMC), Amma Samoa (AS), Cash Crop Development Committee (CCDC), Electrification Management Committee (EMC), Health Post Management Committee (HPMC), Youth Group (YG), Farmer Group (FmG) and Father Group (FG).

The CAMC is responsible to approve the participation list for the programs that the ACAP unit offices organise. The CAMC consists of 15 members elected for four years. Nine members are elected ward representatives, one person from every ward in the VDC. The VDC chairperson is de-facto member of the CAMC. Additionally there are five CAMC members that are selected by the ACAP unit offices. These five members represent less privileged groups. The occupational caste is represent by two persons, two are women and the last one is a social worker.



**Figure 4.4** The Official Structure of ACAP According to Lwang Unit Office Staff

#### Box 4.11 The History of the ACAP Structure

The structure drawn above is a new structure, only a few years old. Previously the sub-committees had to contact the unit offices directly in order to get money for projects, now all applications has to be sent to the CAMCs. This is an improvement of structure because previously the sub-committee activity was to a greater extent decided by geography and personal chemistry between unit office staff and applicants. Not only were the sub-committees who knew the people at the unit office more encouraged to apply for programs and projects, but also the unit office needed knowledge and trust about the applicants in order to give them assistance (Gurung, P., 2000: 1). In the new structure the CAMC boards have elected representatives from every ward and also from disadvantaged groups. The democracy is substantially improved by the new structure by that the population have a broader contact network than before. A larger part of the society should in theory have better opportunity to apply for money.

ACAP divides its focus into two categories: programs and projects. Programs are courses initiated by the unit offices. Information about the courses are given to the relevant sub-committees, which then have to send a prioritised list of whom they recommend to join the program. Projects are activities that the different sub-committees themselves can decide upon and apply money for.

The development strategy for ACAP lies somewhere in between the supply and demand oriented. ACAP has a strong focus on local participation at the same time they have goals that are not formed at grass root level. An interview at

the Central ACAP Office revealed that mapping of needs and priorities among the different social groups in ACA was minimal prior to establishment. There has still not been any detailed demand oriented mapping procedures in the ACAP system. On the other hand the ACAP system is based on demand oriented procedures, as described above. The difference is however crucial if the different social groups have unequal opportunity for signalling their needs to ACAP.

ACAP can also be said to use social mobilisation as a mean to empower the local population. The accomplishment of ACAP bases itself on local participation and the ultimate aim ACAP is to withdraw from the ACA, leaving behind a sustainable network of institutions.

### **Lwang Unit Office**

The Lwang Unit Office became part of ACAP in 1990 (Gurung, P., 2000: PM). Lwang Sector includes an area of 505 km<sup>2</sup> out of which 190,6 km<sup>2</sup> is forest and 42 km<sup>2</sup> is agricultural area. Lwang Unit Office embraces seven VDCs and therefore also seven CAMCs. The ACA is first and foremost a geographical area. Only 56 wards, and not seven full VDCs (63 wards), are included in Lwang Sector (CAMC member, 2000: I). SNV is the major donor to Lwang Sector. They have supported Lwang Sector since the start in 1990 (KMTNC, 1997). The program priority for ACAP in Lwang Sector is “Natural Resource Conservation”, “Agriculture” and “Community Development” (KMTNC, 1997). ACAP is the most dominant institution in Mardi, except in the Southern part of the valley where UNDP conducts the Participatory District Development Programme (PDDP). The attitude towards ACAP is generally positive. People are happy if ACAP projects or programs target them. There is a general discontent among the population that is not targeted by ACAP as seen from below.

*“We had a lot of expectations about ACAP when they came. We expected programs for lower castes but this never happened. The lower casts have bad land, land that more frequently has landslides. But we never get help from anyone. The Gurungs get assistance from ACAP for their land that has high calamity risk.”*

LC household head, Lwang

*“That is not true, you are a drunkard. If the lower castes applied for ACAP resources, then they would also get help.”*

His son and employee at ACAP

The questionnaire shows that 79 out of 85 women and 72 out of 81 men are satisfied with the ACAP activities they have been involved in.

**Table 4.11 ACAP Support to HC and LC Men and Women (Source: Survey, 2000)**

Percentage of population	HC		LC	
	M	F	M	F
Literacy	8	17	5	18
Equipment against calamities	7	8	17	8
Seeds / Seedlings	12	11	10	10
Tap / Dam	5	8	5	3
Other	20	15	8	18
N=	129	130	60	62

Some households are targeted more than once by ACAP. From the questionnaire we find that ACAP targeted men from 20 % of all HC households and 20 % of all LC households. ACAP targeted women from 26 % of all HC households 21 % of all LC households. We see that both women and lower castes as groups are well targeted by ACAP.

**Table 4.12 Reasons for Not Participating in ACAP Activities (Source: Survey, 2000)**

Number of responses (LC responses in brackets)	M	F
I am already involved in ACAP activities	11	11
I am busy / I have other priorities	86	63
No invitations, only committee members invited, only rich people invited, no information about program, no information in time	57 (26)	89 (50)
I do not have education or confidence	12 (7)	11 (5)

We see from table 4.12 that large parts of the population signify that they would like to join ACAP programs, but do not because they feel excluded.



### 4.4.3 The Amma Samoas

Amma Samoa means mother group. Amma Samoas are a national phenomenon, having become a common institution in Nepal only after the democratisation in 1990 (Rai, 2000: I). GDOs, INGDOs and NGDOs have, after 1990, been responsible for spreading the institutionalised form of Amma Samoas. The different organisations initiated the ASs having different aims for them. The result is that ASs have different functions in different areas of Nepal. The ASs in the Annapurna Conservation Area have a function of ensuring community participation of women (KMTNC, 1997).

ACAP has some jurisdiction in regard to the sub-committees existing in the Annapurna Conservation Area. ACAP has the duty to form CAMCs at VDC level and sub-committees at ward level. The sub-committees are responsible towards ACAP. All women in a ward should be members of the local AS and all women should join the AS meetings which are held once a month. The programs that the ASs make should be approved by the CAMCs. The ASs can apply for support in order to put their programs into action. The ASs have to contribute with labour in order to raise money to partially finance their projects and in order to carry out the AS projects. According to the experience of ACAP, the AS has emerged as the most important sub-committee to include social aspects of development (KMTNC, 1997).

#### Box 4.12 The Amma Samoas as a National Phenomena

The origin of the Amma Samoas is unknown, but women in Nepal have a long tradition of forming groups for work, religious and social reasons.

Lwang village had two religious Amma Samoas that were formed in 1981. The original Amma Samoas of the Gurung society had religious functions. Traditionally Gurungs gathered and went from home to home singing religious songs in order to collect money for a fund. The fund was spent at a yearly picnic that was organised around New Year, western calendar. The groups later started using the fund for other activities like for example building temples, roads and other community based activities.

In many areas of Nepal the Amma Samoas are informal, collective action women groups working as primary health care institutions (Rai, 2000: I). The Health Authorities have initiated these groups. Other ASs focus on politics (Palikhe, 2000: PM). After the democratisation of Nepal the political parties tried to form ASs and to get their executive bodies to represent their parties. Politically aware ASs can give many important votes, because a lot of women are potential voters.

By looking at the table below one finds that ACAP has failed to make the AS membership mandatory for all women.

**Table 4.13 Women's Representation in ASs (Source: Survey, 2000)**

Percentage	B	C	OC	MT	G	Total
Households without women represented in an AS	40	33	46	38	27	37
N=	43	18	48	8	51	168



Only 63 % of the households have women represented in an AS. Only 54 % of the LC households have women represented in an AS. The reason for N being so low is that the two last pages of the questionnaire were poorly filled out<sup>8</sup>.

### **Activities**

AS initiated activities are; road construction, building community houses, construction of resting places, construction of temples, construction of schools, cleaning and sanitation programs, establishing child care centres, establishing recreation centres, water tap constructions, water tank constructions, dam constructions, forest plantations, loan giving, literacy programs and collecting cutlery as rent out for parties.

The AS loan giving activity is very limited mainly due to the generally small funds that ASs have. Other activities are usually prioritised, this also because loan-giving activities are risky. Loans from the AS can be given for burial, marriage, medical treatment, calamity repair and consumption. It is not documented that AS loans are used for income generating investments. The AS activities are mostly village constructions that everybody benefit from, but location of construction may limit the benefit to fewer people.

### **Funding**

The ASs build fund from two main activities. Their main source of income is by collecting money at festive occasions. The AS members perform a singing and dancing program, for example when a migrant returns. The women thereby get money from the migrant or his household. The other main income is from hiring out cutlery owned by the ASs. Other sources of income varies from AS to AS. Koleli village/AS, for example, collects annual fees, maximum Rs 200, from all households in order to build fund for their village development projects. The Gurung AS in Lwang collects ten rupees per year in fee from all AS members.

In order for an AS to get financial aid from ACAP they first need to register at the Lwang Unit Office. They have to meet certain standards like having monthly meetings, having a board with at least five board members and they should be able to give a financial report and a report about

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<sup>8</sup> See chapter 3.3 for explanation

their program. Regular elections for board positions are not a requirement. Furthermore they have to be able to finance parts of the project they apply for. ACAP uses the policy mentioned lastly in order to minimise risk. If the AS is forced to pay parts of the project themselves, they are more likely to do a good job (ACAP staff, 2000: I). The ASs are allowed to apply for money from other places as well. The only other possible place to apply for money for the ASs in Mardi is the VDC, with exception of the AS in Lahchok where PDDP exists. Amma Samoas do not generally apply to VDCs for money. An ASs has to be registered at the District Development Committee to receive money from the VDC. The AS can be officially approved only after fulfilment of certain administrative requirements and provision of a qualified program. Few ASs are registered at the DDC.

The Activities represented in table 4.14 are the AS projects I could get detailed economic information about regarding ACAP expense coverage of AS projects. Several projects were mentioned without specifying ACAP expense coverage. These projects can be studied in the Amma Samoa Maps in Appendix 9.

**Table 4.14      Percentage of AS Project Expenses Funded by ACAP Compared to Total Cost of AS Project (Source: Survey, 2000)**

Percentage	Koleli	Lwang Gurung	Lwang Pariar	Lwang NBK/Sarki	Tathi	Rivan
Caste of AS board members	B	G	LC	LC	G	B / C
Road 1992		17			33	
Cutlery 1992		39				
Road 1993	31	14			33	
Road 1995			15	9		30
Road 1998	16					
Cutlery 1998		21				
Temple					33	
Forest						25

The result of the ACAP policy to only partially finance projects is that the ASs who are not able to build a big enough fund, will not get anything done. We see from the information gathered from the different ASs that ACAPs share of funding varies a great deal. It is noteworthy that the HC ASs are often given better deals than the LC ASs.

**Characteristics of the Amma Samoas studied in Mardi Valley**

The data collection consists of, to a certain extent, different types of information about the different ASs. This is because the interviews with the AS presidents were mostly informal, except for the 31 set questions listed in Appendix 7. Every president would be interviewed with the intention to study special features and difficulties of their AS. The Amma Samoa group interviews were however conducted in an identical way in all the six groups studied. Each studied Amma Samoa has got a short presentation in text boxes in chapter five.



**Left Figure 4.5**  
**Right Figure 4.6**



**Hindu Temple Built by the Amma Samoa in Lahchok**  
**The Holy Mountain of Machhapuchre Seen from Mardi Valley**

Below, in table 4.15, is a list of characteristics of the eight different ASs studied during the fieldwork in 2000. It gives an opportunity to compare characteristics of the different Amma Samoas as well as to observe which features dominate the Amma Samoas in Mardi. An explanation of the observations will be tried given in chapter five. The table below is based on the 31 questions listed in Appendix 7 asked to the AS presidents. Some information is additionally collected from the Amma Samoa group interviews presented in Appendix 9.

**Table 4.15 Amma Samoa Characteristics (Source: Survey, 2000)**

	Koleli AS	Rivan AS	Lahchok AS	Lumbre AS	Lwang, Gurung AS	Lwang, Pariar AS	Lwang, NepBK/Sarki AS	Tathi AS
Castes of AS members	B	B,C,OC	B, C	G,B,OC,T	G	OC	OC	G, OC
AS presently active	Yes	No	Yes	(No) <sup>9</sup>	Yes	(No)	(No)	No
Year of formation	1989	1987	?	?	1991	1994	1994	?
Number of other committees that the president is active in	3	0	1	0	7	0	3	0
Number of years that president had her position	1 year	Since formation	Since formation	Since formation	Since formation	Since formation	Since formation	Since formation
Registered at DDC level	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Fund is kept by	Treasurer	Treasurer of YG	Treasurer	President	Treasurer+ two banks	President	President	President
Number of women attending AS meetings	10-25	10-20	13	?	25-35	17-20	9	7
Can men attend AS meetings	Yes	?	Yes	?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Co-operation with other AS	Yes	No	Yes	?	No	No	No	Yes
Does AS have elections	No	No	No	No	Yes	?	No	No
Does AS give loan	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	?
Which executive board member positions exist in the AS	President	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Vice-president	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
	Secretary	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
	Treasurer	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
	Second Secretary	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
	General executive board members	0	5	8	0	8	0	0

<sup>9</sup> (No) = Not active at present moment due to lack of fund

## 5 Results and Analysis

This chapter describes the results found when applying each of the six sustainability variables that OECD (1988) has defined, to the Amma Samoa as an organisation.

### 5.1 Policy Measures and Priorities of the Recipient

There is an organisational problem of defining the recipient in the case of ACAP and AS. This is because not only the ASs but also ACAP can be seen as a recipient. ACAP has to account for their policy measures in order to remain viable as an organisation, especially since they depend on donors. ACAP also sets goals for the women involved in the ASs, like the goals of empowerment and sustainable development. The ACAP goals for the ASs are the priorities of ACAP. Creating and sustaining the AS is their policy measure. The priorities of the women in the ASs may however not always correlate with the goals set for them by ACAP. I am interested to analyse to what degree ACAP has managed to translate their goals into practice through the ASs, and whether the members of the ASs seem interested in the goals set for them. I want to find out whether the members set their own goals and to what degree these correlate with the goals wished for by ACAP.

#### ACAP Goals for Amma Samoas

The ACAP goals and objectives specifically relevant for the Amma Samoas are:

*To enhance the status of women by empowering equal role to them in decision-making processes in conservation and sustainable development (KMTNC, 1997).*

*To bring sustainable social and economic development to the local people (KMTNC, 1997).*

Other goals are related to the structure of ACAP and its sub-committees<sup>1</sup>:

Amma Samoas should be ward based, representing all women in a ward (KMTNC, 1997).

The structure of ACAP should be democratic (KMTNC, 1997).

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter 4.4.3 for ACAP structure and jurisdiction



The two latter goals are primarily demanded donors. The motivation for the two goals is to secure an equal distribution of empowerment and village development. If the two goals are not put into life the situation may cause higher disparities between social groups and in this way eradication of poverty, the main goal of all development aid contribution, will not be reached.

### **AS Members Perception of Goals**

Olson (1982) explains organisational logic in this way: *"The creation and existence of voluntary organisations depend on the ability to offer the members individual incitements. It is not a result of the collective good that it produces."* The women I spoke with in Mardi clearly highlighted the importance of individual incitement. The women were not conscious about the ACAP goals set for them. The members did not see themselves as a unity of women. No one mentioned that the Amma Samoa was a vehicle for empowerment of women, psychologically, socially or politically. The survey shows that 91 % of the women say that village development is a positive AS effect, while only eight percent of the women say that the AS leads to empowerment of women. When AS goals were discussed, they expressed the importance of individually being able to contribute to village development.

In order to understand the depth of this attitude it is useful to highlight the tradition of individual contribution to village development in Nepal. The culture encourages village investment by private persons. It is common that people get their names engraved on the construction if they contribute with a larger sum to it, for example when a resting place is built. The Gurung family we stayed with in Lahchok had contributed a lot of money when the main road in the area was built. They were considered to be one of the most wealthy, high status families in the village. Donating money for village welfare is an important way of increasing personal status. Another example that highlights the tradition of contribution, comes from the Pariar AS in Lwang: A common question in all the AS group interviews I did, was what future plans they had for their AS. When I interviewed the Pariar AS, they informed me that they did not have funds to do activities. An old lady said that if they had money, she wanted to build a temple, so that her name could be written on it. In that way she would be remembered by future generations. The example described above shows that the women focus the investment on projects that yield the highest statuses. These may not be projects valued by donors. The feature described above, also found in the other studied ASs, indicates that there



has not been given good enough education about the intentions of village development and women's empowerment, namely to alleviate poverty.

### **Box 5.1 The Pariar Amma Samoa in Lwang**

In Lwang village there used to be one Amma Samoa, but in 1994 they split the Amma Samoa up in order to segregate the women caste wise.

The Pariar caste is one of the castes that are categorised as occupational. They are tailors by vocation. The Pariar women experience discrimination from ACAP and the Gurung AS. These experiences led to that the women preferred to form their own AS even though this has its economical disadvantages. The AS has presently a nominal fund. The Pariars are demanded to contribute labour to Gurung projects without having authority to demand contribution from the Gurungs for their own projects. They do not get a direct invitation from ACAP to join income-generating programs. This invitation goes only to the Gurung AS and this AS is then responsible to contact the lower caste ASs. The result is that Gurung women always get first priority to join the income-generating programs. The Gurung AS has once expressed repentance for not offering LCs representation at an income-generating program, and this was when a sowing course was offered. It is not relevant for the Gurungs to use sowing knowledge in income-generation. They have traditionally other sources of income and additionally seamstresses are associated with the Pariar caste. Further the Pariar women complain about that they, as a caste and especially as LC women, are not represented when decisions about the village or the valley are to be made. No invitation is given even though labour and money contribution is demanded from them. They were for example not represented when there were discussions about building a road into the valley. The result of this was that the Pariars face problems paying the household contribution decided upon at the meeting. Another source of discrimination the Pariar women complain about is the discrimination of their children going to the children day care centre run by the Gurung AS. All staff is Gurung and the Gurungs refuse to clean the LC children and their cutlery. The LC children also get a separate eating-place.

### **Box 5.2 The Nepali BK / Sarki Amma Samoa in Lwang**

This AS is comprised of two occupational castes. The Nepali BK are black-smiths by occupation, and the Sarkis are shoemakers. They do not have much to do with the Pariars and the Nepali BK / Sarki AS therefore does not cooperate with the Pariar AS. The Sarki caste group is of the lowest rank in Lwang. The two castes are aware of their caste identity in regard to each other. They have for example separate cutlery collection. Before they got their own AS in 1994, they were attached to the main AS of the village. At this time they were not involved in decision-making processes, but they were obliged to join the sanitation and cleaning program. The president prefers the present situation with separate ASs based on caste due to that they reduce situations where they feel discriminated against. It was the Gurungs, together with ACAP that encouraged the LCs to withdraw to from the main AS and form their own ASs. The funding for projects is a main constrain for the AS. The fact that the AS has to pay a big share of a project compared to the share funded by ACAP is a limiting factor for AS activities. In 1995 the AS wished to build a road. The AS contributed Rs 25.000 while ACAP only gave Rs 2.500 to the project. The AS complained to ACAP about the small contribution, but without result. ACAP said that this share of funding was equal for everybody. The president is not aware about the present ACAP structure. She knows nothing about the FMC and CAMC and how to apply through these. She also feels sorry for that her members are not invited to all programs organised by ACAP.

The opportunity for some women to personally contribute, and thereby to increase personal status, is present through the ASs. The Amma Samoas create chances for personal empowerment of the active and already resourceful women, since the contribution comes in the form of time and money. The less resourceful women in the valley are not necessarily empowered through the Amma Samoas. In this way one can say that the goal of

empowerment is met to a limited degree, while the goal of village development seems to be shared by both ACAP and the Amma Samoas.

The goal of implementing a democratic and representative organisational structure is trickier to accomplish.

*“In the CAMC there are one woman and two lower castes. The woman comes to the CAMC meetings but the two lower castes does not come regularly.”*

CAMC board member

The quotation may illustrate a consequence of women’s and lower castes low status. Poor status of actors has negative effects in respect to democracy. Most women have problems speaking in front of authorities. Lower castes have problems speaking in front of higher castes, females have problems speaking in front of males and AS board members have problems speaking with the authorities they depend on in order to make their organisation successful.



**Left Figure 5.1**  
**Right Figure 5.2**



**The Pariar Amma Samoa of Lwang**  
**The Gurung Amma Samoa of Lwang**

People may not easily differentiate the traditional patriarchal and hierarchal structure from the structure of democracy (Brown, 1996). In this way groups that had few opportunities before

democratic governance may not realise the benefits of the present system. People who do get in contact with the new bureaucratic system may perceive it more as a hindrance than of help, because they cannot work their way through the system in the same way as they did before. The actual behaviour of individuals or groups must be understood to be an effect of their calculations of opportunities and limitations within the social setting (Barth, 1966). A further discussion on the shortcomings of democracy in ASs and ACAP will be presented in chapter 5.4 and 5.5.

Cases where AS and ACAP goals are perceived as different, may give an indication of both units being inefficient. It gives an indication that there has been a lack of communication between ACAP and the ASs. There has been a lack of education of the women on the topics of democracy, women's empowerment and on village development. The result is that the Amma Samoas are not enabled to make the change that it was created to do. These observations also send signals about the sustainability of the Amma Samoas.

## **5.2 Environment and Ecological Factors**

Environmental and ecological factors are central to all ACAP activities since the aim of ACAP is to work for development while also taking the environment into consideration (KMTNC, 1999). The environment and ecology of the area is consequently often strengthened by ACAP activities. Projects undertaken in Mardi valley are usually small scale. This minimises negative environmental impact of the projects. The activities conducted by the ASs will therefore, most likely, not have any adverse effects on the sustainability of the environment.

## **5.3 Technological Factors**

ACAP has a policy to contribute with technical solutions to development problems through the projects supported by the organisation (Gurung, P, 2000: I). For example from Lahchok AS map we see that ACAP contributed with two technicians for the construction of a water tap based on gravitation in the village. The sub-committees may apply for material, professional and monetary help for projects. Furthermore ACAP offers professional and material help through their programs, like for example the tea planting training course, where participants both attain training and receive seedlings. As for environmental sustainability, use of technology is based on a wish to conserve nature, and is therefore simple, which may easily be maintained by the beneficiaries (KMTNC, 1999). There is supply of necessary technology



to the area through ACAP, but the distribution of support to different sub-committees and social groups may be skewed and thereby not contributing to alleviation of poverty among all social groups.

## 5.4 Socio-Cultural Factors

Hierarchy is a key word in trying to understand the Nepalese society. People relate to each other in a hierarchic way (Dumont, 1980). Caste is an important factor deciding hierarchal status within the village, but the status of a person in Mardi, is based on a number of factors besides caste, for example:

- Position within family
- Gender
- Education
- Age
- Family reputation
- Family history
- Attainable influence from people in influential positions
- Economic factors like land ownership, income and remittances

Such factors may determine the hierarchal system that blends with the caste system. There exists a strong loyalty towards the hierarchal power structures in the Nepalese society even though it is felt discriminative for some groups. This can be explained with that individuals in a society might not be totally aware of the consequences of the social structure (Eriksen, 2001). The individuals are unconsciously controlled by norms or there are so high sanctions for breaking the norms that individuals do not consider doing it (Eriksen, 2001). Below are some illustrations of how Amma Samoas influence the sustainability of socio-cultural factors.

### 5.4.1 Position Within Family

The hierarchy existing based on family position in the Nepalese society can be observed when having dinner with a traditional Nepalese family. The youngest daughter-in-law makes the dinner. The wife of the household head or the oldest daughter-in-law will instruct the activities. When dinner is served, the patriarch in the household receives food first. Ideally one and one person should eat at a time, but family members with approximately the same status, can eat at the same time. The family head should eat alone and nobody should start before he has finished. After the family head has eaten, the other men get food in turn

according to status, usually decided by age or income contribution. Even male children get food before the women start eating. When the males have finished eating, or almost finished eating, the wife of the household head gets food. After her, the daughters of the household head get food. Thereafter the daughters-in-law eat, the wife of the oldest son first. Then the daughters of the daughters-in-law get food. Last to serve herself will be the youngest daughter-in-law. This demonstrates clearly the status of the family members and thereby also the status of these groups of people in the society.

Communication with people in the Nepalese language occurs by using nicknames. Examples are Dhai, Bhai, Didi, Bahini, Kancha, Kanchi (meaning big brother, young brother, big sister, young sister, smallest brother and smallest sister). These terms reflect solidarity, but at the same time it carries with it a rank. Getting a nickname leads to getting a rank in a social setting.

The status frontiers relevant for the discussion about the AS and ACAP goals are not only the ones between men and women as may be expected. As important is the status between women as shown in the example below.

In Rivan, one of the oldest ASs in the valley, the women complain that they are getting old and have no energy to do AS activities any longer. Instead of giving away responsibility to younger women in the village they have let the village Youth Group take over all previous AS activities. They

### Box 5.3 The Amma Samoa in Rivan

The AS of Rivan was not functioning at the time of the study. This ward has a mixture of castes consisting of Brahmins, Chettris, occupational castes and Magars. The AS board members were Chettris and Brahmins. Rivan AS was one of the ASs first to be established in the valley (1990) and it used to be a successful AS. The five first years of their existence they focused on cleaning programs and sanitation programs. They made people aware of hygiene and tried to make people from one household go to toilet in one place. Today there is a prosperous youth group in the village. They started up two years ago and they quickly took over all AS activities. One year ago they took over the AS funds as well. The majority of the YG members are males. Unmarried women can also be members of the group. By law there should be at least one unmarried female board member. There is no restriction for married men to join the YG. The AS as well as the rest of the village, was content with that the "youth" had taken over the responsibility for village development. The Youth Group was described as the rising sun by the AS president. She points out that the women in her AS were getting old and that it was natural to give the responsibility for the development of the village on to their sons. The AS board members did not have any energy to perform the AS programs any more. None of the women in the village had given it any thought that there should be successors within the AS. This had never been discussed. Feelings that were expressed were related to that the women did not want to compete in collecting money with their sons and grandsons. Several women use the argument of economic burden for their passivity. It is not fruitful for the village to have too many groups that collect money. Women, especially young married women, cannot compete with the YG due to their time constraints. One woman put it this way: "The young women are not interested, they want to sleep. They have small children to take care of". Another reason for young married woman not taking over AS duties was that their husbands did not want them to go out.

had never discussed to have an AS election in order to bring younger women into the AS board, giving their own organisation new blood and energy. The board members of Rivan AS find it logical and respectable to pass the responsibility for AS-type activities to their sons, who are active in the Youth Group.

The situation described above gives an illustrative example of how the culture of hierarchy influences the sustainability of organisations. The hierarchy existing between the women based on relative family status causes the organisational disintegration experienced in Rivan.

The problem of including younger women into the boards is that these women necessarily have to be daughters-in-law in relation to the women that already sit in the board. Their own daughters are, according to the norm, married away and live in other villages. Due to the poor status of daughters-in-law, they are rarely included to be “on team” with their mothers-in-law. Older women did not hold it a secret that they thought it was a bad idea to include daughters-in-law more actively in the AS.

The poor status of young women gives practical consequences as they are expected to do more household cores than senior women. This also reduces their ability to participate actively in the ASs. The argument that daughters-in-law are too busy is used when explaining their absence from the AS. “They have children to take care of, they work in the field and they are responsible for the cooking. Daughters-in-law spend their 24-hour day doing their duties or sleeping. They do not have any spare time” (Magar, 2000: I).

#### 5.4.2 Gender

Women’s status in Nepal is lower than that of men. This affects men’s attitude towards women and it also affects the women’s perception of themselves. It also affects how organisations in Mardi relate to the AS and the other way around. Organisations are influenced because they consist of individuals and these individuals have attitudes that correspond to the society. How the other organisations in Mardi relate to the ASs becomes an important topic when acknowledging that the AS is the only organisation in the valley that is dominated by women.



*"The tendency of Nepalese women to move against the best interests of the group because of the influence of male family members is not to be viewed lightly by those genuinely interested in women's status. Current women's organisations would do well to reflect now, at the turn of the century when women's political participation is still negligible, on how much has been lost in the past because of this."*

Rana, 1997

The president of Tathi AS told us that she wanted to join the executive board of the AS when it was founded. Her husband was in India at the time and she didn't dare to ask her father-in-law if she could join. She was very scared about how he would react. At last she got the courage and she told her father-in-law how much good work the AS had done other places. Her father-in-law was quite liberal and he gave her permission. The respect for authorities shows itself as shyness and is also a result of little self-confidence and a lack of training in how to express oneself. Most of the women I interviewed, except the AS presidents, said that they felt uncomfortable at meetings and that they would not speak, even in the AS meetings.

#### **Box 5.5 The Amma Samoa in Tathi**

In the ward Tathi, I met the Gurung president of a non-functioning AS. In this ward the majority of population are lower castes. There are only very few Gurung houses in the ward. The reason for the idleness of the group is migration of the board members to Pokhara. The Gurungs have higher management skills and the president feels that the LC benefits from being attached to the Gurung AS. If there were more Gurungs in her ward, on the other hand, she would want to have separate caste ASs. The Gurungs do not like to collect fund through singing and dancing programs at LC homes. If there were more Gurungs in the ward they could collect fund from their own caste resulting in a sustainable Gurung AS.

The president describes the LCs as very backward and she feels responsible as a Gurung to help the poor through the AS, especially by offering them representation at ACAP literacy programs.

It has been difficult to convince LC men to bring their wives to literacy programs. They have nonetheless managed to increase female attendance by using the argument that wives should know how to read and write letters to migrated husbands. The AS has constructed two roads, but these were situated in Gurung areas. ACAP contributed 50 % of the funding for the roads.

Men's attitudes towards the ASs are positive. Out of 120 men answering questions about whether they liked their female family members to join the AS or not, only seven answered no: four LC men and three Gurung men. To the question addressed to men why they liked women to involve in the AS, they answered most frequently that it was because the women were able to socialise. Secondly, it was because of village development.

A large proportion of both male and female expressed frustration with that the AS took a lot of time. This can be understood by that ASs require every household to contribute with labour, once a month, for cleaning the village. In addition every household has to contribute with labour if an AS project demands it. The frustration lies also in that the social system exerts expectations about women's duties and use of time as well as what they are expected not to do. Expectations towards women's use of time vary from caste to caste. Brahmins are most conservative in their expectations, while the most liberal are the ethnic groups, like the Gurungs, Magars and Tamangs. Spending time in an AS can be seen as provocative and not in line with how a woman is expected to manage their time. This attitude has changed dramatically since the establishment of the ASs. In the Brahmin ward, Koleli, it was very tough to get the first AS on its feet ten years ago. Women did not attend meetings. The

#### **Box 5.4 The Amma Samoa in Koleli**

Koleli is a Brahmin village. The women's attitude towards the local Amma Samoa was heavily influenced by the change it had brought to women's participation. Previously women from this village did not attend village meetings. Today women are an important resource group for village development through the Amma Samoa. Half of the female population comes now to important village meetings.

The local schoolteachers are heavily involved in politics and they are concerned with the development of the village. They encourage the women to have their Amma Samoa meetings, and they themselves participate actively at these meetings. The three schoolteachers in Koleli have a big influence on the women in the process of decision-making. When I asked the president "Who decides how to use the money?" she answered that the AS can come up with a suggestion, thereafter they will get advice from the teachers. The next step is that the teachers will help them approach ACAP. The women say that they wanted to build a temple, but this was not a priority for the teachers. Instead they persuaded the Amma Samoa to apply ACAP for money to build roads.

Loan giving occurred until 1996, but now all money is spent on village development. Loans were given for consumption, medical expenses and school fees. "If a woman needs a loan today she can go to agricultural groups, farmers groups, relatives, family or village moneylenders. There is no special reason for the Amma Samoa to be a loan giver" the treasurer of Koleli AS said.

The president is a woman in her forties. She is the third Amma Samoa president in Koleli and she has been engaged for one year. Her predecessors withdrew from their positions because of lack of ability to continue. She was chosen as a president due to her skill in talking at gatherings. She is also a member of three other village-based committees.

population was very sceptical towards the AS and they did not believe that it suited women to join such an organisation. Only after they observed the success of the Gurung AS in Lwang, were they convinced that an AS could draw benefits.

*Women could not influence village decisions before. Before the AS was formed, it was a closed society for women. People didn't like daughters-in-law to go out, to speak in front of men, or participate in meetings. If*

*women came to meetings they were disliked and therefore we never went. Since we got the AS, there has been a change in attitude: Now we can work with men and go to meetings with men.*

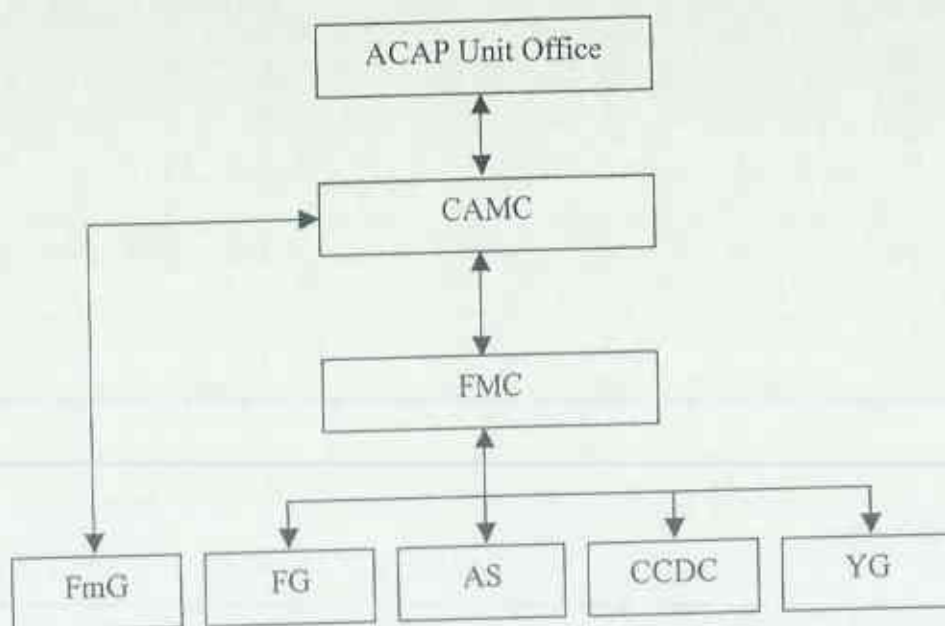
AS president, Koleli

Even though most families approve of the ASs, they necessarily do not accept all aspects of it. For example Brahmin women have limited freedom of movement, especially after dark. The ASs depend on women turning up for the singing and dancing programs, and these activities are mainly carried out after dark. One of the arguments for the Brahmin AS of Rivan to give away responsibility to the YG was that there was a problem of low attendance at programs carried out at night.

There is not only a problem of expectations of how women should use time but there is also a real time constraint. Women do have a substantial and heavy workload. Mardi has a high migration rate, leaving a lot of male responsibilities to women. Furthermore, young women are more affected by time constraints than others because of their heavy duties. Poor women also have a tighter time constraint due to extensive workloads in order to make ends meet.

Women's role influence how ACAP and AS programs are received. There are programs that women will not join because it is found inappropriate or unnecessary that women gain more knowledge than men. The president of Tathi AS told that ACAP had offered a literacy course for women. This ward consists mostly of LCs. The LC women did initially not turn up because it was found inappropriate by their families that they should get literacy education. Education is not sought after in cases where the literacy rate is low among men. It is inappropriate that women gain higher status than men through getting more knowledge than them (Shakti, 1995). Attitudes towards women attaining knowledge vary between caste groups and the educational level of the different families. The Gurungs are more open to women's participation and women will therefore also want to join more programs.

The communication that exists between the male and female dominated organisations in Mardi is a communication about the prevailing culture and social structures and not about knowledge. In this way communication with male dominated organisations may become a weakness and not a strength for the women. The statement is illustrated with the fact that the women engaged in ASs have negligible information about their place in the formal organisational structure of ACAP. None of the AS presidents could draw the organisational map of ACAP presented by figure 4.4. The maps drawn by the AS presidents would differ from ward to ward. A common feature was that the Forest Management Committee (FMC) had a more fundamental role than that described by the Lwang Unit Office. This will be illustrated below:



**Figure 5.3** The Organisational Map of ACAP According to the Gurung AS President of Lwang

The Gurung AS president of Lwang told that she misses the structure that existed before 1997. At that time, economic benefits from ACAP and access to ACAP training programs depended even more on whether you had personal contacts. Since her house neighbours the Lwang Unit Office, she had frequent meetings with ACAP staff, and as a result, the Gurung AS got through more of their suggestions than what they do now. Now the AS has to send a written proposal to the CAMC in order to get support.

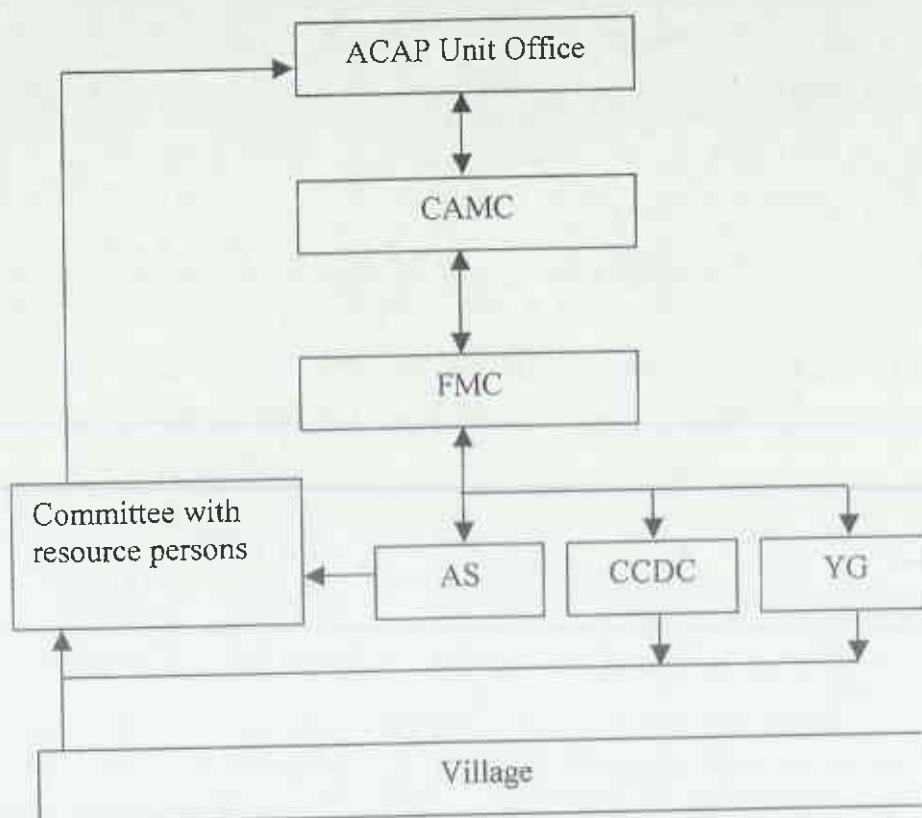
She told that the FMC is a ward-based sub-committee with a lot of power. They are the once that decide which AS activities should be recommended to the CAMC. When I asked her whether all sub-committees had to go through the FMC she told that some sub-committees, like the farmer sub-committee, could apply directly to the CAMC. She said it depended on what type of activities they applied for.

#### **Box 5.6 The Gurung Amma Samoa in Lwang**

The ACAP Lwang Unit Office regards there to be only one AS in Lwang village. Women in the village, on the other hand, say that there are five. The Lwang Unit Office describes the other ASs as sub-divisions of the Gurung AS. The four other ASs are either LC ASs or ASs placed in the periphery of the village centre. The women in Lwang found it natural to divide the AS based on caste. They found it unpractical to operate as one group due to that lower castes have to be treated differently than the Gurungs.

The president discusses the strong position of the FMC in the village. There is no formal election for this committee, but yet they decide what AS activities should be recommended to the VDC and the CAMC. The AS was recently registered at the DDC. The DDC demands registered groups to undertake regular elections. The AS has had one election so far. In this election all members of the board was re-elected.





**Figure 5.4 Organisation Map of ACAP Drawn by the AS President of Koleli**

In some villages, like for example Koleli, it seemed like all of the sub-committees as well as the whole village had to agree upon a project before ACAP was approached, even though the project was a typical AS project. This reality weakens the autonomy of the AS. The decisions are not taken by the AS members but by male authorities. An example of this is that the women in Koleli AS strongly wish to build a temple. The teachers in Koleli has disapproved saying that this is not a village development priority. The result is that there has never been sent an application for the funding of this project by the AS.

The way the women draw the organisational map shows that they comprehend and accept complicated hierarchal systems. They acceptingly place themselves at the bottom of the hierarchy, under the authority of the FMCs. The prevailing attitude is that men should have influence and power in decision-making processes and this requirement has been met by making an additional structural loop between the Amma Samoas and the CAMC. In this way male villagers still have the opportunity to control female activities through the FMC.

The situation becomes untenable when acknowledging that popular votes are not carried through at any ACAP level, except in the CAMCs where VDC chairpersons are de facto



members. The elections for the FMC, for example, are not formal. FMC board members are decided upon, through discussions, at open village meetings.

Above I have reconstructed how two higher caste ASs saw their place in the organisational structure. When I asked the LC ASs on the other hand, they had no idea about any organisational structures. Most of them thought that they had to go directly to the Lwang Unit Office to ask for help. They did not know that the CAMC had anything to do with the distribution of ACAP fund and they had not heard about the need for applications. They had no idea about the FMC or who were present members of the committee. It does not seem that ACAP, three years after implementation, has been able to correct the ACAP structure. The women experience a different praxis than the situation described in official reports.

#### 5.4.3 Education

When confronting the ACAP Unit Office with how women experienced the organisational map of ACAP they explain that applications often are formalised in the Forest Management Committee (FMC) before they are sent to the CAMC. The organisational structure of ACAP bases itself on written communication. All requests need to be sent in written form to the CAMC, both in order to apply for money for projects and to request for participation in ACAP training programs. Most of the ASs depend on getting help for writing applications and later to give economic reports on the use of money. The help comes most frequently from male authorities, like for example members of FMCs. In this way male authorities may get the final say in how applications should look and which applications should be sent. Some ASs, especially the LC ASs, have problems getting help for writing applications. The president of Tathi AS used this as an argument when defending why only Gurung women sat in the executive body of their AS. Other LC ASs I studied showed that they had never sent any applications to the CAMC; they did not have any contacts that could aid them in the applying process. Lack of education hinders the women in being forceful and in claiming independence.

#### 5.4.4 Attainable Influence From People in Influential Positions

In a hierarchal system you have to know the right people in order to get things done. Having no influential contacts reduces the opportunities of people or groups. I interviewed a young woman who had just moved to Lwang. She came from an ACAP area where there had been a strong AS. She had got a lot of training and education in management through her AS membership at her previous residency. When she moved to Lwang village on the other hand, she did not even consider joining the AS there because she was treated as an outsider whose ideas and qualifications were without interest. The hierarchal system not only demands you to know the right people, but you also need to be the right person in order to attain ties to the right persons. For example it is positive to be of the same caste, or have the same religion as the decision-makers when resources are distributed. Solidarity within castes is further discussed in chapter 5.4.5. Ties are based on solidarity within the hierarchal system. All socio-cultural factors are relevant to decide who has more solidarity with whom.

A kind of kinship not described above that is frequently used to accomplish goals, is the one based on political belongingness. Party affiliation is strong all over Nepal and alliances are commonly based on party belongingness even in organisations and situations that are supposed to be politically neutral. Political contacts can be helpful if you need to get things done. When applying for a job one may for instance be asked about political view. The answer given could decide success or failure. This was confirmed by my Nepalese acquaintances as well as through own observations. These features were of course most easily observed when problems arose due to different political belongings. The problems could result in that a village had little or no contact with ACAP, like for example Ghalel, or it could influence who sat in the different committees and also the AS executive boards, like observed in Koleli. In the case of Ghalel the village was dominantly communist. The ward representatives were all members of the Communist Party. The chairperson of the CAMC was on the other hand a member of the Democratic Party. This situation led to that even the AS in Ghalel had no contact with ACAP. The result was that the AS in Ghalel had been idle for the three past years.

#### 5.4.5 The Caste System

The hierarchal power structure of Mardi is, as shown above, more extensive than what the caste system represents. The caste system is nonetheless the most important contributor to the existing power structure in Mardi. Sources of limitations to organisational sustainability lie in

- Contact between caste groups
- Attitude between caste groups
- Solidarity within caste groups

The three variables are strongly interrelated.

##### **Contact Between Caste Groups**

The caste system sets limitations for cooperation between caste groups. The AS was primarily meant to include collaboration between all women in one ward. This implies that women from different castes should be members of the same AS. This rarely works well in reality. In some wards LCs are excluded, LCs may refuse to join, or as in the Lwang case, they split the ASs caste wise, each representing one or two castes. ACAP has not recognised more than one AS in Lwang. They have given responsibility to the Gurung AS to pass on relevant information to the other ASs, believing that the LC ASs are sub-groups of the Gurung AS.

The problems of collaboration between women from different castes within one AS are both practical and emotional and all caste groups verify the problems. The higher castes say that the problem is mostly practical and that it mainly lies in the different treatment requirements of lower castes. The LCs focus more on the humiliation they experience at gatherings, both because they are treated in a dishonourable way and because their voice is not heard at meetings. The LCs also feel they have problems of talking, or telling what they feel, in front of higher castes.

All castes in Lwang were happy with the solution of having separated ASs based on caste. They thought it was an optimal solution. One LC AS president in Lwang said that they had more decision making power than before the separation. Before, they were just less valued members of the Gurung AS and people without voice.

When I asked the ASs in the rest of the valley about what they thought about the Lwang AS model, almost all expressed appreciation of it. They said that they would prefer this model for their own AS, but that they were not able to implement it because of unequal caste distribution in the village. Either lower or higher castes were strongly underrepresented, making it impossible for them to form separate ASs. The population in Tathi ward were dominantly LCs and there existed only a few Gurung families. The AS president was Gurung and she portrayed the situation as described above. This AS was not in function due to that there were too few Gurung females left in the village to fill up the AS board positions. I asked her why she didn't let the LCs in the village take over the AS board posts. She explained that the LCs needed the help of the Gurungs in order to get things done in the AS. This means that she believes that the Gurungs have better opportunity than the LCs to communicate with the institutions the AS depend upon. She also implied that the lack of education and awareness of the LC women made them less able to manage AS activities. She also stated that the Gurungs in Tathi would be excluded from AS activities if the LCs were to form their own AS. The reason for this worry roots in that LCs cannot demand labour from the Gurungs, and the Gurungs can therefore not be included in the projects that the LCs initiate. The AS in Tathi depends fully on the labour of the LCs in order to set projects into life, and this labour force would not be available if the LC withdrew from the present AS. This shows that the Gurungs feel it is important to have influence and control over activities in their village. Furthermore, this shows that not much will be done in ones favour if one does not have influence, and higher castes have higher probability of attaining influence.

Unequal caste distribution, with a majority of higher castes, has other effects as well. In some cases LCs end up refusing to attend the AS meetings, like it happened in Rivan, or they are not invited to meetings, like in Lahchok. In Rivan AS the LCs were numerous but still in minority relative to Brahmins and Chettris. The LCs in this ward had been represented previously, but ever since the most outspoken and respected LC women (two or three women) stopped going to the AS meetings<sup>2</sup>, all LC women stopped attending. In Lahchok the LC women were only invited for singing and dancing programs and not to join AS meetings. The LC women recently stopped joining the AS singing and dancing programs as the PDDP started organising the LC women, making them considerably more independent of higher castes.

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<sup>2</sup> Reason said to be lack of time

Information within a caste is generally good or at least much better than between castes. The result of the poor communication flow between the different castes can clearly be seen where there is a mixture of castes in an AS. LC AS members get less information about meetings and programs than HC members, because the executive board members are higher caste. The existing communication flows become thereby mainly a problem of lower castes.

#### **Box 5.7 The Amma Samoa in Lahchok**

The 13 women that are represented in this AS formed the group on their own initiative. They got the idea of organising themselves from a neighbouring youth group. ACAP gave organisational guidance as they registered there. The AS is also registered at PDDP and at the DDC. They now have contact with ACAP only through the VDC (the VDC chairman is a de facto member of the CAMC). This AS is not ward based and lower castes are not invited to the AS meetings. The lower castes were previously included for both money collection and in AS projects, but they have now withdrawn and formed their own group in the under the PDDP. The president feels sorry for that the LCs have withdrawn from AS activities, due to that they are more able singers and dancers. She also believes that the LCs benefits in being attached to a higher caste group. A higher caste group has better access to money through collection from HC households. The president says that the lower caste groups have small funds because lower castes are drunkards and they spend all their savings.

Another example of poor information flow between castes is seen as most LCs thought that it was a requirement to be literate in order to join any programs arranged by ACAP. This erroneous information may be a contributing factor to that few LCs approached ACAP actively.

#### **Attitude Between Caste Groups**

Attitudes can take form of actions that are deeply humiliating. The presented example is from a family I stayed with in Mardi. The family, the enumerators and my colleagues shared some food from a single plate. A lower caste woman working for the family was sitting five meters away from where we were sitting. She was not offered food at first. In the middle of the meal the wife in the house told someone to bring food to the lower caste woman. The food was brought to the woman, but she was not allowed to touch the plate. The food was thrown in her lap. In another Gurung family I stayed with, this conduct was confirmed. In this we were encouraged to leave the plates to be cleaned by dogs and hens after the meal. The dogs would lick the plates, and the hens, which during the rest of the day spent their time walking in the buffalo dung, were allowed to step on the plates. In practise, LCs are more polluted than



animals (Dumont, 1980). The two observed cases gives an understanding of the humility experienced by lower castes when they interact with higher castes.

The general higher caste attitude in Mardi was that the lower castes were incapable of being constructive. "They only think one day ahead, they are drunkards and they can never save anything. Investing in lower castes is a waist of time and money" (Confidential, 2000: I). ACAP used also these arguments to explain why there is a lack of activities based on LC needs, even though such activities are strongly sought after by LCs themselves. They also said that it is too difficult to arrange programs for LCs because they cannot afford spending time at courses: "If a LC were to attend a course, the person would need to refrain from the income he/she otherwise would have earned. They cannot do this because they depend on a daily income, and we do not compensate for lost income" (Gurung, S., 2000: I). Another reason ACAP uses for not supporting the LCs is that the LCs are not able to exploit the resources that ACAP provide them. One example that was given by ACAP staff was meant to be illustrative. The story was about a LC that had got a calf provided. The payment was to be the first offspring of the calf. The LC failed to pay back because he was not able to take good enough care of the calf. It died before it was fertile. The prevailing attitudes and prejudices became valid explanations for the lack of inclusion to ACAP programs offered.

The negative attitudes of the HCs correlates with that it is not thought as appropriate that lower castes become better off than higher castes. By providing training programs especially for LCs, one could risk that they became better off or more knowledgeable than the HCs. In Lwang for example, ACAP offered an income generation sewing course. The Gurung AS had the responsibility to recommend women to attend the course, so they chose only Gurung women. The Gurungs did however not use their acquired sewing skills for income generation. The Gurungs have traditionally other income sources and income based on sewing activities is associated with a specific lower caste. Another example of poor inclusion of LCs to programs is the requirement set for all participants to own land in order to join agricultural training programs. LCs may not own their own land even though they depend on agricultural activities on share cropped land or as hired labour.

The negative attitude between castes works both ways. LCs also have prejudice against the higher castes, which again results in a minimised contact between the castes. Here is an example, taken from Sri Lanka, about what effects may occur when there are negative

attitudes towards HCs among LCs. In Sri Lanka the economy has changed dramatically during the past 20 years, from being a closed to an open economy. Previously LCs depended on higher castes and opposite because LCs had a monopoly on different occupations. The dependency lead to that there was a need of contact. Today, with a more open economy and free education this dependency has ceased. Industries have removed the monopoly of the caste system. Being involved in the tailoring industry and pottery/art industry now gives high status because it has become an exporting industry that gives good profit. All castes have now equal job opportunities within these industries. The result of this however, explained by a Sri Lankan informant, is that LCs now avoid contact with higher castes. When there is no dependency, there is no wish for interaction.

The link between dependency and interaction between castes can be observed in Mardi too. I found the link between dependency and interaction when I studied which ASs in Lwang had contact with each other. The lower caste ASs did not have contact with each other at all, the reason being that there exists no dependency between the different lower caste ASs. Actually there exists strong resentment between the different lower caste groups. They are very conscious about their own relative status. The Nepali BK / Sarki AS had two caste groups represented, the Kami and Sarki caste. Even though these castes are both low and close in status, they felt it was necessary to have separate collections of cutlery. The Kami, being slightly higher in status, focused on the pollution factor to justify this.

The trend in Mardi is that lower castes are getting more independent from the higher castes and this trend is probably accelerating. This is mainly due to that LCs have good opportunities for work migration, so that they are becoming less reliant on income from HCs. Anyhow, LC women are still reliant on agricultural work from HCs. This is because LCs does not own sufficient land and because only men migrate. The HCs could tell me that agriculture has become less important in Mardi these days, compared to before the migration became common among the LCs. The HCs said that a big percentage of their land now lay fallow because they couldn't get labourers to work on their fields. There is a lack of male labour, both among the HCs and the LCs.

As the LCs are working themselves away from dependency, the caste groups will tend to isolate themselves. Working for caste integration, for example through ASs, may reduce a future isolation effect as the one observed in Sri Lanka.

Negative attitude between the castes is a reason for lesser enthusiasm for ASs and ACAP among lower castes. 50 % of LC men answered that the AS influenced their household in a positive way. 63 % LC women answered that the AS influenced their household in a positive way. 70 % of both HC men and women answered that the AS influenced their household in a positive way. This is a paradox when remembering that ASs build roads and taps which ought to influence all households. LCs express clearly that they feel excluded by ACAP and ASs. The data shows that there is discrimination discouraging lower castes. The exception is seen in table 4.11 which shows that LCs are percent vice targeted just as much as HCs. The kind of support that is equally distributed is the direct support from ACAP. LCs have otherwise a strong feeling of being treated in a discriminative way and this may lead to that they have prejudices against ACAP and ASs. It may lead to a feeling of being even more excluded than they actually are. The feeling is an important observation. An even stronger targeting of lower castes in relation to the targeting of higher castes may change the prejudice of the lower castes against higher castes. Targeting the LCs more than the HCs gives a signal to the society that it is a priority to empower the LCs. This signal would be in line with the maximalistic approach discussed in 2.1.

### **Solidarity Within Caste Groups**

Caste is frequently used to advocate solidarity within the organisational structures in Mardi. The consequences of this are huge for the LCs as the ACAP staff is dominantly Gurung and other political representatives almost always come from a higher caste.

I asked at the Lwang Unit Office why the office had so little contact with LCs. They answered that this is a result of what happened in the establishing phase of the office. When ACAP was established in Mardi it was important to quickly attain a respected status. In order for this to happen they needed approval from those widely regarded as respected people in Mardi. It was therefore natural to establish contacts to village authorities, being both male and higher castes. If the Lwang Unit Office were to mingle with lower castes, they would loose respect among the higher castes. (Gurung, P., 2000: I)

*"We cannot satisfy all the different castes, all castes have different objectives."*

ACAP staff

Persons in position may easily tend to make decisions undemocratically. Persons in position are receptive to favour those who are associates. Externally this may be perceived as corruption. In the Nepali context, using contacts may be perceived as a practical tool to making the system work more efficiently.

This is known as "source force" (Brown, 1996). By having a say in an AS, members can influence decisions that will lead to more benefits for their own household or associates. Examples of this were numerous and consistent. It was obvious that some households had better access to ACAP/AS benefits, both because they were more frequently part of programs offered, and because village development projects benefited some households more than others. For example roads and taps were

#### **Box 5.8 The Amma Samoa in Lumbre**

Lumbre village has a mixture of castes but the dominant group is the Gurung. The AS is not very active at the present moment, due to small funds. The LCs have a strong negative attitude against the HC decision makers including the HC women in the Lumbre AS. They feel neglected and not listened to. The president of the AS is an old Gurung lady. She feels too old to continue as a president and wants her daughter to take over her post. Her daughter has good education, but the president does not think she will win an AS election yet, as she is still young and not even married. The president therefore holds her post till her daughter has higher chances of winning an AS election.

built near high status houses. These facilities were often missing or rare in the proximity of lower caste houses. Higher castes do not like that lower castes are using the same taps as them (Dumont, 1980) and thereby the benefit of these facilities is equal to none for the lower castes. When looking at the Lwang Gurung AS map one can for example see that it is the same few households that are chosen to attend ACAP income generating programs like the tea growing training program, the orange tree training program and the sewing and cutting training program. A LC woman of the Lumbre AS emphasised this specifically in the AS group interview. She pointed at the map and showed where she lived. A HC house was situated below her house. The AS had agreed to build a road up to the HC house, but refused to extend the road up to her house, even though she had requested it. The same trend was confirmed in the interview with the Tathi AS president. Tathi was a ward dominated by LCs. The AS road projects undertaken in this ward mostly benefited the Gurungs, connecting the Gurung households with the main travelling route. The women who are more included benefit more materially, but also by gaining higher status than before. Since persons with an already high status attain the executive positions, there will be a magnifying effect of the hierarchy already existing in Mardi. In this way the AS does not necessarily contribute to empowerment of the women who need it the most. It is possible to describe this situation using welfare theories.

The sum of individual utilities add up to the utility of the collective:

$$\sum \text{Individual } (U) = \text{Collective } (U)$$

In the case of the ASs the utility of the individuals are used to materialise the differences already existing in the village. In this way a change in *Individual (U)* due to a village development project may lead to a decrease in *Collective (U)*. The hierarchy that exists in the valley becomes the resource of some women only.

## 5.5 Organisation, Leadership and Local Participation

Chapter 5.4 discusses the actual organisational location of the Amma Samoas in regard to ACAP. At the same time it shows which factors influence the authority of the ASs in the ACAP structure. Socio-cultural factors that influence the Amma Samoas, as organisations, internally are also highlighted.

Further organisational influence is experienced internally by the formal requirements ACAP set for the Amma Samoas. As the women in Lahchok said it: *"ACAP suggested us to register our AS at ACAP so we could apply for money. In order for our AS to be approved by ACAP we needed to have an executive board (president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, joint secretary (the step-in for the secretary)) and they suggested some activities, like making roads. They said nothing about elections."* Other ASs confirm this. The organisational requirements that ACAP set leads to that the ASs in the valley tend to be more or less identical in respect to the required or suggested features. The activities are for example much the same and regular elections are non-existing.

The ASs are small and informal units and this lifts expectations that they have high organisational dynamics. This is however not observed. Lack of organisational dynamics may lead to a reduction of the sustainability of the Amma Samoas.

There has been very little organisational development and adjustments during the ten years of existence of ASs. The organisational stagnation may partially originate in that the women are not confident to trust their abilities. The women are hindered in being organisationally creative due to the respect they have for the requirements and expectations set for them. They are also not taught to question established structures. This reduces ASs ability to remain efficient and it may very well result in demise. The seriousness of lack of organisational



development is mainly related to low organisational turnover specially illustrated by the Rivan AS, which shows the extreme case. The problem is also found to different extent in all the other ASs, as well as in other political and non-political institutions in Mardi (CAMC staff, 2000, I).

ACAP needs to take this seriously if they want the ASs to sustain. The reasons for the low turnover rate in the ASs are partially discussed in chapter 5.1 and 5.4. It concludes that solidarity between the women in the ASs based on gender, their membership of the AS, or based on sharing a common goal cannot be observed. Individual incitements were more important to explain behaviour than the solidarity among women as a group. The solidarity that existed in the ASs were based on factors like caste, political belongingness and other status contributors. Sons were favoured and not daughters-in-law, higher castes were favoured and not lower castes, and so on.

The stagnant and un-dynamic organisations observed in Mardi may be favourable anyway, at least in the short run, considering the present social system. A change of the AS boards may not be optimal. Not only is the authority of AS board members gained through time, but also the people elected for the AS boards ten years ago were actually the most suited for these positions. That is, they were the highest positioned women with the strongest striking power. This may be the reason for the lack of elections in the ASs.

Not only does the Amma Samoas experience the benefits of having stable leaderships, but they also benefit from having a great ability to enforce local participation. The whole population seems to accept that they have to contribute with free labour to Amma Samoa projects. This is a strength that cannot be undermined when evaluating the sustainability of the Amma Samoas, and village development in Mardi overall.

## **5.6 Financial Conditions**

The study of women's role gives an understanding of the economic constraints in the ASs. The financial status of women has visible consequences for the Amma Samoas. When asking about ASs economic activities, like borrowing, the women become withdrawn. The presidents wanted economic information to be held confidential. This observation gives important signals that the women want to understate their involvement with economy, the reasons for this being the prevailing norm that women should not be involved in economic activities.

The financial conditions of the Amma Samoas depend two factors. The first factor is ability to raise funds through collection of money in the village. The second factor is ability to attain support from ACAP and other donors in the area. Both factors are influenced by socio-cultural factors that are described in chapter 4.4.3 and discussed in chapter 5.4.

### **Ability to Rise Funds From Private Households**

Ability to rise funds depends on caste. The singing and dancing program, which is the most important income bringing activity for the ASs, is performed at parties, usually after dark. In this way the Brahmin women are disadvantaged because their restrictions of movement at night. Further, Brahmin women are more restricted than women from other castes when it comes to the collection of funds because of their strict norms on women and economic activity.

Ability to raise funds depends partly on ability of households to donate money. Therefore AS funds depend on total income of the households that the ASs collect from. Since the Gurungs have the highest average income of the castes in the valley, they also have opportunity to rise the largest Amma Samoa funds. Donations also correlate with migration since the ASs most often collect money at the parties for returned migrants. According to this, the donation from lower caste and Gurung households should correspond with each other since these groups have equally many migrants. The reason for that we see the opposite may be because LC households are not able to or have no tradition for donating money to the ASs. A larger proportion of the lower castes have negative attitudes towards the ASs and this may also influence their willingness to contribute.

### **Ability to Attain Support**

The donors in Mardi have set conditions in order for an AS to attain support. In addition, ability to attain support depends on size of funds, which again depend the factors discussed in the previous section. The ASs have also to communicate with the donors in written form. This is a serious disadvantage since few women are literate.

Some men in Lumbre reflected about what they thought was the weakness of the ASs. They believed that having no fixed income made the AS financially weak. "The size of the fund depends fully on the commitment of the president and the spirit of the group." The problem comes when the spirit in the group drops, and the men said that the spirit comes and goes easily. The men wished that the AS had more stable income, because the will to develop the village is always there, but the fund is rarely present. "The main constraint of the women is that they do not have education and that they are incapable of approaching institutions or banks in order to get financial aid" they said.

## 6 Conclusion and Recommendation

The establishment of the Amma Samoas in Mardi valley has to some extent been useful for reaching ACAP goals. In concern of empowerment women with active roles in the groups have set an example for the rest of the female population. Attitudes towards women's involvement in village development activities and in decision-making processes have changed considerably since the formation of the first Amma Samoas in 1990. The efforts to promote development in the valley have provided construction of roads, sanitation and health improvements, water supply, forest plantations, improved agricultural practices, soil conservation, income generating activities and higher literacy rate.

Yet, there is room for improvements. I cannot, for example, conclude that the Amma Samoas fully realise development goals set by their sponsors and that they are sustainable organisations. The performances with regard to four of the six sustainability variables elaborated by the OECD (1988) are not acceptable when applied to the Amma Samoas.

The sustainability variable "Policy measures and priorities of the recipient" comes out negatively due to the failure to synchronise ACAP and AS intentions. The main reasons for this failure are lack of communication about ACAP and AS intentions between the two institutions, in addition to the lack of training and education of the local population to understand ACAP intentions.

One can argue that ACAP and Amma Samoa goals do correlate when it comes to both village development and empowerment of women. The women themselves indicate that they share village development as a goal in the same way as ACAP, and in the process of village development one can argue that the women are empowered. Their motives for setting the goals are however different from those of ACAP. The intention of having village development as a goal is that the women seek higher personal status. This underlying motive allows discrimination within a group of women so that they, as a group, are not empowered. The Amma Samoas take differences between status groups for granted and they give no attention to the edification of women as a group. In this way the gap between empowered and discouraged women widens. ACAP does not encourage a different approach, resulting in that

they magnify status quo condition when they add resources to the system. The female groups especially excluded from empowerment are lower caste women and daughters-in-law.

ACAP has not successfully implemented a democratic design to the ACAP structure in Mardi. This statement is based on the sub-committees are not democratically elected and that male dominated sub-committees may direct the Amma Samoas in decision-making processes. ACAP has a complete lack of policy to promote democratic values among the local population. This is also shown by their lack of incentives to include lower caste women in the context of Amma Samoas. The organisational features of both the ACAP structure as a whole, and the Amma Samoas internally, have clearer features of the traditional hierarchal and patriarchal power structures than of democratic values. Efforts should be made to promote democratic values in the local society through education and discussions with the local population.

The two sustainability variables “Environmental and ecological factors” and “Technological factors” are the only two variables that meet the requirements for sustainability. Environmental and ecological factors are considered as ACAP only allows projects that are environmentally responsible. This is because environmental sustainability is a key word in the mission of ACAP. Technological factors are satisfactorily implemented by that the technologies used are easy to maintain.

The most prominent reasons for the lack of sustainability of the Amma Samoas based in socio-cultural factors. The culture forwards a hierarchic and patriarchal system having limiting effects on the Amma Samoa as an organisation and on the sustainability of it. The system allows discrimination both between male dominated organisations and the Amma Samoas, and within a group of women. The hierarchic structure results in less sustainable Amma Samoas because it nurtures conflicts, un-optimal executive bodies, un-appropriate actions and it even leads to the disintegration of the organisations. The factors contributing to hierarchy are position within family, gender, level of education, age, family reputation, family history, attainable influence from people in influential positions, economic factors like land ownership, income and remittances and last but not least: caste.



The socio-cultural factors influence strongly two other sustainability variables namely organisation, leadership and local participation as well as financial conditions. The negative influence on these is due to the previously mentioned hierarchic and patriarchal system that exists in Mardi.

It seems like a vicious cycle is inherent in the society: the lower status an individual has, the less access it has in the process of empowerment. As a result the hierarchic system is kept intact. Alleviation of poverty, without breaking this cycle, is in this way made ineffective. Education combined with an effort to change attitudes among the local population is probably necessary in order to break the vicious cycle. Additionally ACAP should send clear signals that it is their priority to improve the situation among lower castes and among the lowest status women groups.

ACAP has an official intention to support higher and lower castes evenly. ACAP is however, in the practical way, not focused on equal distribution between the different strata. Lower caste Amma Samoas are poorly followed up and other Amma Samoas are virtually fully controlled by higher castes, making the real benefits for lower castes less than for higher castes. Positive discrimination of support to lower castes in order to alleviate lower castes from poverty would be one way to balance this situation. It is probably wrong to conclude that the two groups gain the same degree of empowerment since lower castes need a higher input than the higher castes in order to get the same impact.

Reaching development objectives through wide-ranging development projects, like the strategy that ACAP is devoted to, does not come without problems. Local communities might not be prepared to change socio-cultural practices even though it is required for the success of the project. It is important that ACAP includes the local population in the process of formulating goals and structure of the organisation. The reason for this is that participation in these processes is essential to create a feeling of joint ownership. ACAP should act as a facilitator in the process.

The ultimate aim of ACAP is to withdraw from the ACA, leaving behind a network of sustainable institutions. ACAP has chosen social mobilisation as a method of empowerment in order to reach this goal. ACAP has, however, not directed enough attention towards the fact that this approach may never be successful if it is not combined with thorough training and

well organisation of the target group. It is the duty of ACAP to educate and make the local population aware of the ideas of democracy and empowerment of women and lower castes. The local population should be included in a discussion about the concepts and their consequences. It is important that the population get the impression that these are the values of ACAP, but that they have a right to make their own decisions. This would hopefully lead to a negotiation process.

It is especially important to include in the discussion processes the social groups that fall outside the decision-making processes today. It is important that they are enabled to influence the development processes and to take control over their own lives and situation.

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## Appendix 1      Demography of Nepal

**Population:** 24,7million (July 2000 est.)  
**Population Density:** 178 persons per km<sup>2</sup>  
**Religions:** Hindu 90 %, Buddhist 5 %, Muslim 3 %, other 2 % (1981)  
**Population growth rate:** 2.3 % (2000 est.)  
**Life expectancy at birth:**  
*total population:* 57.8 years  
*male:* 58.3 years  
*female:* 57.4 years (2000 est.)  
**Age structure:**  
*0-14 years:* 41 %  
*15-64 years:* 56 %  
*65 years and over:* 3 % (2000 est.)  
**Infant mortality rate:** 75.9 deaths/1,000 live births (2000 est.)  
**Sex ratio (male(s)/female):**  
*at birth:* 1.05  
*under 15 years:* 1.07  
*15-64 years:* 1.05  
*65 years and over:* 0.99  
*total population:* 1.05 (2000 est.)  
 (Source: CIA, 2001)

## Appendix 2      Demographic features of Mardi<sup>1</sup>

**Population:** 16,900 (3265 households) (Source: ACAP, 1999)  
**Distribution of population:**  
**Table A1      Demography of Mardi (source: KMTNC AR, 1997)**

VDC	Number of households	Male population	Female population
Dhampus	547	1318	1435
Ghachok	449	1122	1200
Lahchouk	646	1450	1738
Lwang	973	2308	2450
Machhapuchre	378	862	1019
Rivan	340	760	859
Sardi Khola	651	1544	1669

**Population growth rate:** 1,34 % (Source: ACAP, 1999)  
**Age structure Mardi Valley:** (own est., 2000)  
*0-14 years:* 36 %  
*15-64 years:* 55 %  
*65 years and over:* 9 %  
**Sex ratio (male(s)/female) Mardi Valley:** (own est., 2000)  
*at birth (first year):* 1.20  
*under 15 years:* 1.09  
*15-64 years:* 1.23  
*65 years and over:* 0.88  
*total population:* 1,16  
 Relative indicators of development in Kaski District, 1997: (Source: NRA, 1999)  
**Gender imbalance ratio in literacy status** = 50,1 =B (B = Best category among districts)  
**Infant mortality rate** = 68 (B)

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 6 for explanation of the different Indexes

Human Development, Kaski District, 1996: (Source: NRA, 1999)

**Life expectancy** = 60 years

**Adult literacy** = 53,66

**Mean year of schooling** = 3,4 years (Females = 2,799. Males = 4,277)

**Per capita PPP Income US \$** = 2,127

**HDI** = 0,45

Gender-sensitive Development for Kaski District, 1996: (Source: NRA, 1999)

**Proportion of earned income**, 1996: (Females = 0,424. Males = 1,661)

**Gender Sensitive Development Index (GDI)**, 1996 = 0,4 unit?

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) for Kaski District, 1996: (Source: NRA, 1999)

**Female's share in parliament (% seats)**, 1991 = 2,7

**Female's % share in profession job** 1991 = 18,5

**Female's % share in administrative work** 1991 = 5,77

**Female's % share in income** 1996 = 21,49

**GEM** = 0,178

## Appendix 3      Nepalese Economy

**GDP: purchasing power parity** - \$27.4 billion (1999 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:** 3.4 % (1999 est.)

**GDP - per capita:** purchasing power parity - \$1,100 (1999 est.)

**GDP - composition by sector:**

*agriculture:* 41 %

*industry:* 22 %

*services:* 37 % (1998)

**Population below poverty line:** 42 % (1995-96 est.)

**Gini-Coefficient (household income)** = 0,57 (Source: UNDP, 1998)

**Gini-Coefficient (per capita income)** = 0,34 (Source: UNDP, 1998)

**Labour force - by occupation:** agriculture 81 %, services 16 %, industry 3 %

**Budget:**

*revenues:* \$536 million

*expenditures:* \$818 million (FY96/97 est.)

**Exports:** \$485 million (f.o.b., 1998), but does not include unrecorded border trade with India Prospects for foreign trade or investment will remain poor, because of the small size of the economy, its technological backwardness, its remoteness, its landlocked geographic location, and its susceptibility to natural disaster.

**Exports - commodities:** carpets, clothing, leather goods, jute goods, and grain.

**Exports – main partners:** India 33 %, US 26 %, Germany 25 % (FY97/98)

**Imports:** \$1.2 billion (f.o.b., 1998)

**Imports - partners:** India 31 %, China/Hong Kong 16 %, Singapore 14 % (FY97/98)

**Economic aid - recipient:** \$411 million (FY97/98)

**Foreign direct investment inflows** = 12\$ m (1997)

**Total net financial inflows** = 439,6 \$ m (1998)

**Debt - external:** 2747 \$ m (57 % of GDP) (1998)

**Debt service as % of exports** = 7

(Source: CIA, 2001 ; UNCTAD, 2001)

## Appendix 4      Nepalese Castes and Ethnic Groups

### **Brahmins and Chhettris**

Two large groups distributed in scattered patterns all over the country, which are considered the two highest castes in Nepal. Brahmins are believed to have migrated from India while Chhettris are from the present day Khasa people from Khasi. These people follow Hinduism as their main religion and socially they have many sects. They are divided into two major streams, the Purba and Umai. The Kumain people are of the origin of Kumo, Northern India, Uttar Pradesh. Their social practices depend upon Hindu religious epics. They speak Nepali, the national language of Nepal and use a script with basis in Sanskrit.

### **Occupational castes**

Certain ethnic groups in Nepal are categorised according to their occupation. They are Kamis (smiths), Damais (tailors), Dhibis (washerman) Sarkis (cobblers), Gaines (professional singers) and Khumbharas (porters). Hinduism is their major religion and Nepali their major language. Many have their own local festivals and practices.

### **Gurungs**

They are famous for their innocence, simple mindedness, and bravery while serving in military forces. They are ethnically related to Magars, Thakalis and Kiratis in eastern Nepal. The Gurung people love music. Middle in height and stout in build, the main habitats of the Gurungs are the districts of Kaski, Lamjung, Gorkha, Syangja, Manang and Tanahu in the Gandaki Zone while they are also scattered in Okhaldhunga, Sankhuwasabha and Taplejung in East Nepal. Animal husbandry is their main occupation. They speak languages related to the Mon-Khmer and Tibeto-Burman lineages. The Gurung history is ancient. *Glide* is an address befitting high ruling class. Gurungs are predominantly Bompas (animistic) or Buddhist. Their institutions of Lhosar, Rodi Ghar and Rodi dance have high esteem in the Nepalese culture. They both practice cremation and burial of their dead. Gurungs call themselves Tamu. Their languages have no script.

### **Magars**

Large numbers of Magars live in Palpa, Tanahu, Myagdi, Pyuthan, and Rolpa. They are also found in Arghakhanchi, Syangja, Parbat, Baglung, Dolpa, Surkhet, Sindhuli and Udaypur. Research scholars opine that the Sen kings and Thakuris of the Magrant districts are also Magars. These facts make the Magars as one of the most pervasive ethnic groups of Nepal. Their language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family, and they have their own unique dress codes and culture, which are doomed to extinction. Their religion is Buddhism and their language, Magar Kura, depicts their affinity to the Tibeto-Burmese tongue and culture. Farming, military service, weaving, hunting, and fishing are their major occupations. The Magar priest is called Bhusal. According to the census of 1991, the present Magar population stands at 7.2 % of the national total.

### **Newars**

The name of the country Nepal itself derives from the Newars. Newars are the indigenous peoples of the Kathmandu Valley. They are also found in the neighboring hill settlements as well as in the towns and cities of the Terai plains. Originally Buddhists, Newars have increasingly become syncretic, and nowadays some Newars practice both Buddhism as well as Hinduism. They are prominent in business, agriculture and craftsmanship. Their population exceeds 1.3 million. Newars have their own language, called Nepal Bhasa, which belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family. The Newar language has incorporated the rich corpus of Newar literature from historical times. Newars are considered a highly developed nation state of many communities. They have a hierarchical clan system patterned after their respective occupations. The written history of the Newars is 2,500 years old during which they developed their impeccable culture and arts into a great civilization. Newars maintained their unique kingdom even during the various reigns of the Gopala, Kirant, Licchavi and Malla dynasties. The Shaha finally amalgamated the Newar nation state in their unification drives.

### **Tamangs**

In Tibetan language Tamang means horse traders. Tamangs are mainly found in the districts of Rasuwa, Sindhupalchok, Kavrepalanchok, Makwanpur, Nuwakot, Dhading, Ramechhap, Dolkha and Sindhuli. The census of 1991 places their population at 4.9 % of the national total. The Tamang language, culture and traditions are rich. They were-already described as a powerful nation in historic inscriptions going as far back as the 3rd century, attesting to their ancient civilization. They are Buddhists, and their script originates from-Tibetan. Their language belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family. The archives of Tamang religious scriptures are rich, varied and vast. Their intellectual hierarchy had categorizations of royal priests, raconteur of history and other scholastic divisions of labor. They celebrate with equal fervor such diverse religious occasions as-Lhosar, *Maghe Sankranti*, *Baisakh Purnima* and *Shrawan Purnima*. They are fond of buckwheat delicacies. Their dance culture is equally rich and varied. There are many Tamang sub clans.

(Source: NCDN, 2002 ; TIN, 2001)



# Appendix 5      Nepalese History and Politics

Nepal is the only official Hindu state in the world. The Hindu religion has throughout the Nepali history influenced the administration system. The governance can be characterized by having been over-centralised and non-participatory (NHDR, 1998). For most of its known history, hereditary kings ruled Nepal, but from the middle of the 19th century the Rana family controlled the country through a system of hereditary prime ministers (USDS, 1995). In 1951 the Ranas were overthrown, and the monarchy was restored under King Tribhuvan (Gayley, 2002). Four years later his son, King Mahendra (ruled until 1972), succeeded him (Encyclopaedia, 2001). In 1959 Mahendra established a parliamentary constitution. The following year, however, King Mahendra dissolved parliament because of inefficiency and corruption in the government, claiming that Nepal was not ready for Western-style democracy. In the process he detained many political leaders (Encyclopaedia, 2001). He launched in 1962 a system of Panchayat. The Panchayat had decision power and comprised the influential and respected people of a village, usually elderly villagers, local priests and teachers. The problem of the Panchayat was that they represented only the upper strata of the population. King Mahendra created three hierarchical Panchayat levels: local, district and zonal level (Sharma, 1994). Political parties were banned, and a council of appointed ministers advised the king (UNDP, 1998). King Mahendra carried out a land reform that distributed large holdings to landless families, and he instituted a law removing the legal sanctions for caste discrimination. The period between 1962 and 1990 is called the Panchat era (Brown, 1996).

During 1990, growing public unrest brought the underlying political tension to the surface. This forced King Birendra to establish a representative government (Brown, 1996). There were negotiations between Government and the newly legalised opposition parties. A draft constitution was broadcasted in November 1990, which allowed direct elections to a bicameral parliament. The first poll under the new system was held in May 1991 (Encyclopaedia, 2001).

Table A2      Political parties and seats in Parliament (Source: Election Commission / Nepal News)

Pratinidhi Sabha: 3 and 17 may 1999 (65.8 %)		%	Number of seats = 205
Nepalese Congress Party (social-democratic)	NCP	36.3	110
Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninists (communist)	UML	30.7	68
Rashtriya Prahatantra Party (National Democratic Party, conservative)	RPP	10.2	11
Communist Party of Nepal-Marxist-Leninists (communist)	CPN-ML	6.4	-
Rashtriya Prahatantra Party-Chand (National-Democratic Party-Chand)	RPP-Chand	3.4	-
Nepal Sadbhavana Party (Nepalese Goodwill Party, regional conservative)	NSP	3.2	5
Rashtriya Jana Morcha (National People's Front)	RJM	1.4	5
Sanyunkta Janamorcha Nepal (United People's Front Party)	SJN	0.8	1
Nepal Mazdoor Kisan Party (Nepalese Workers' and Farmers' Party, communist)	NMKP	0.6	1
Not available (EC, 2001)			4

## Appendix 6 Explanation of Indexes

### Human Development Index

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index of three variables: life expectancy, education and income. All three have equal weight. The maximal HDI score is 1 and the poorest score is 0. The status of the world's countries are found relative to each other by ranking them using this index.

### Gender-Related Development Index

The gender-related development index measures achievements in the same dimensions and variables as the HDI does, but takes account of inequality in achievement between women and men. The greater the gender disparity in basic human development, the lower a country's GDI compared with its HDI. The GDI is simply the HDI discounted, or adjusted downwards, for gender inequality. (Source: UNDP, 2000)

### Gender Empowerment Measure

The gender empowerment measure (GEM) indicates whether women are able to actively participate in economic and political life. It focuses on participation, measuring gender inequality in key areas of economic and political participation and decision-making. It thus differs from the GDI, an indicator of gender inequality in basic capabilities. (Source: UNDP, 2000)

## Appendix 7 Amma Samoa President Interview Guide

1. For how long have you been president of the Amma Samoa?
2. Who encouraged you to become president?
3. Why did you want to become president?
4. Are you or have you been a member of another committee?  
If yes, what committee and what position.
5. How was women's activities and influence before the Amma Samoa was formed?
6. When was the Amma Samoa formed?
7. Why was the Amma Samoa formed?
8. Who took the initiative to form the Amma Samoa?
9. What is the main role of the Amma Samoa?
10. Throughout the history of the committee, which rules/regulations/ policies has the Amma Samoa formed?
11. Have you formed incentives/sanctions to promote enforcement?
12. What activities do you have/ have you had in the Amma Samoa?
13. How is the Amma Samoa funded?
14. How is the money kept?
15. Who decides how to use money?
16. How do you approach institutions for getting finance for your projects?
17. What are the funds used for?
18. Do you give loans? If yes, for what purposes and under what conditions?
19. How often are elections? If no elections, has there been any change in executive board?  
If elections, how are the elections?
20. How often does the Amma Samoa have executive board meetings and general meetings?
21. How many generally attend meetings?
22. Are there any people that generally do not attend the Amma Samoa meetings?  
If yes, why?
23. How many households are members of this Amma Samoa?
24. What are the characteristics of the structure of the Amma Samoa?
25. How are the decisions made in the Amma Samoa?
26. What are the most important qualities a good leader should have?
27. Which are the most important cooperating institutions for the Amma Samoa?
28. Do you have cooperation with other Amma Samoas?
29. How does the Amma Samoa depend on support from ACAP?
30. How does the Amma Samoa depend on support from the VDC?
31. What attitudes do the institutions have towards you?



## Questionnaire for Household Survey

Kaski District, Mardi Watershed, Pokhara Valley, Nepal

The information collected will be used for research purposes. It will be treated as confidential and will not be used by tax authorities or other assistance

Name of VDC

Village

Ward Number

Household Number

Name of Household head

Enumerator's Name:

Date of First Interview:

Date of Second Interview:

Data Checked by	When	Status		Comments
		OK	Return	

Data Punched	When	Who	Comments
Pages			
Pages			
Pages			
Pages			
Pages			

# Farm household survey: Household characteristics

No. of Household members \_\_\_\_\_ Cast group \_\_\_\_\_

Members living in the household during the last year \_\_\_\_\_

Ser. No	Name	Rel. to head	Sex	Age	Education	Occupation	Months of presence
1		Head					
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							

Rel. To head: 1=Wife, 2=Child, 3=Grand child, 4= Brother, 5= Sister, 6=Hired labour 7= Daughter in law, 8=of Sex: 1=Female, 0=Male. Ages: years, Education: # of years, I=Illiterate, L=Literate.

Occupation: 0=Student, 1=Agriculture, 2=Private service, 3=Public Service, 4=Business, 5= Tourism, 6=Industry, 8=Without any occupation, 9=Other, Specify.

Did any member of the family live outside home during the last year for more than a month?  
If Yes,

Yes

No

Ser. No	Name	Rel. to Head	Age	Marital Status	Education	Destination	Period (Interval)	Purpose	Migration Remittances during the last year		If no remittances, Give reason	Remittances used for
									Assets	Cash		
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												

Have any member of the family who migrated few years back come back?

Yes

No

If yes, state reason \_\_\_\_\_

What are the negative effects when a person migrates/moves from the family? \_\_\_\_\_

How do the workload in household change when the person moved out? \_\_\_\_\_

Who gets higher work load? \_\_\_\_\_

Who gets small workload? \_\_\_\_\_

If childrens get higher workload, does this affect \_\_\_\_\_

Yes

No

attendance to school?

time spend on home work?

drop out of school completely


Did the consumption of food per person change when the person moved out?

Improved

Stayed constant

Declines

# Household Survey: Conservation Practices

the soil fertility status on your farm in general?

Decreasing  Increasing

Constant  Don't know

Reason if Decreasing

Reason if Increasing

any soil degradation problem on your farm?

Yes

No

Rank indicators as follows:

Degradation Indicators	Very severe	Severe	Less severe	Not a problem
Rill erosion				
Gully formation/expansion				
Shallow stony plot				
Siltation on down slope				
Lack of vegetation				
Tree roots exposure				
seeds washed away				
land slides				
Hailstorms				
irrigation failure				
Others, specify				

carry out soil conservation activities?

Yes

No

How conservation technologies used and expenditure:

Type of activity	Total labour needed in days	Own labour	Hired labour	Other form of expenditure ((total value in Rs)	Land conserved used for (crop)
side treatment in farm land (retaining wall, check dam, dry stone)					
planting of seed on land slide area					
of Bamboo/Napier Grass					
control					
stream construction in stream side					
terracing/Maintaining terraces					
(specify)					

Reason

use chemical fertilizer on your farm land?

Yes

No

Reason

ever had training on soil conservation uses and practices?

Yes

No

When \_\_\_\_\_ by whom \_\_\_\_\_

Why?

Did not have time

There was no opportunity for training

Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

ing

	Size (ropani)		Sources of change						
	Current year	Last year	purchase	sharecropping	Rent out	Rent in	Sale	Inheritance	Gift
land									
land									
ive land									
d									

Farm Household Survey: Watershed Management

Please, give your opinion for the following statements on the watershed management

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Soils are exhausted due to shortening of fallow periods					
Top soils are removed by erosion					
Rotational cropping decrease soil fertility					
Mixed cropping and legumes destroy soil fertility					
Terraces helps to avoid soil degradation					

How is the trend of crop yieldover the last 5 years?  
Decreasing  Increasing  Constant

Why?

If decreasing, what do you do to cope with decreasing crop yields?

What is your attitude towards conservation technologies that affect the levels of soil erosion?

Attitude	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I would pay more for any inovation that could reduce soil damage even if it does not increase my income					
I would contribute more labor for any inovation that could reduce soil damage even if it does not increase my income					
I would not adopt any innovation that could cause soil damage even if it could increase my income					



Farm household survey: Household consumption expenditures

Commodity	Quantity		Per
	Own prod.	Bought	
Rice			
Paddy			
Wheat			
Maize			
Millet			
Potato			
Beans			
Soyabean			
Cauliflower			
Cabbage			
Onion			
Tomato			
Meat			
Fish			
Egg			
Milk			
Ghee			
Milk products			
Curd			
Salt			
Massala			
Tea			
Banana			
Sugar			
Others			

Household consumption expenditures: Non-food items

Commodity	Total Cost per year
Medicine	
Clothing	
Footwear	
Education	
Statinary	
Cigarette/Tobacco	
Fuel	
Fests and Festivals	
Soap	
Cosmotics	
Others	



Farm household survey: Crop Selling activities- 2055 B.S

Did you sell any crop in the last year? Yes  No

If yes, fill the following table

Type of crop	Total quantity produced (Kg)	Amount consumed (kg)	Amount sold quantity (Kg)	Total income from sale	Purpose of sale
Paddy					
Rice					
Maize					
Wheat					
Millet					
Potato					
Pulses					
Ginger					
Spices					
Soyabeans					
Fruits					
Parel					
Dhuto					
Nal					
Mustard					
Vegetables					
Other, specify					

Farm household survey: Crop Selling activities- 2056 B.S

Type of crop	Total quantity produced (Kg)	Amount consumed (kg)	Amount sold quantity (Kg)	total income from sale	purpose of sale
Paddy					
Rice					
Maize					
Wheat					
Millet					
Potato					
Pulses					
Soyabeans					
Ginger					
Spices					
Fruits					
Parel					
Dhuto					
Nal					
Mustard					
Vegetables					
Other crop, specify					

# **Farm Household Survey: Credit**

Have you obtained credit for investments or other purposes?

Yes

No

If yes, give details for the 5 last years:

Source	Who took?	Year obtained	Purpose	Amount	Repayment conditions				Collateral Requirements	What was the credit actually used for?
					Frequency	Duration	Interest	Completed		

Source: 1=Governmental bank, 2=Village money lender, 3=Relatives, 4=Mother group, 5= SFDP, 6=others, specify

Duration: length of loan period

Frequency: Number of times repayment has to be made during the loan period

Completed: 1=Yes, No=0

Who took? 1=Wife, 2=Child, 3=Grand child, 4= Brother, 5= Sister, 6= Daughter in law, 8=others

If you want, are you able to obtain credit for

Source	Purpose				Max amount	Interest rate	Duration	Collateral requirement
	Investment	Consumption	Family events	Migration				
Government bank								
Village money lender								
Relatives								
Mother group								
SFDP								

Farm Household Survey: Credit

If you don't take credits, state the reasons:

- a) I have enough cash from other sources of income
- b) I am afraid of risk and repayment problems
- c) Interest rate is too high
- d) I can't provide collateral
- e) There is no credit available
- f) There is no credit available for the purpose I need


Are you satisfied with the credits you obtained?      Yes ☐      No ☐

If no, fill the following table

source	reason for dissatisfaction			
	Not enough amount	collateral requirement is too high	interest rate is too high	Others

Household survey: Other sources of income (2055 B.S)

source	Quantity	Price/wage	Total Income
Hiring out oxen			
Hire out labour			
Employment			
Labour: assistance received			
Rent out land			
Pension			
Total Remittance Income			
Senior citizen allowances			
Widows allowances			
Disability allowances			
Government Transfers			
Gifts			
Interest from loans			

Sources of Income with input costs 2055 B.S

Source	Input costs	Quantity	Price	Total Income
Sale of handicraft				
Sale of beverages				
Other services				
Other business				

What durable commodities and implements does the household have?

Household Assests	Number	Current value
Property elsewhere, specify		
Vehicle,specify		
Radio/Casset player		
Wrestwatch		
biogas plant		
jwellery		
Furnitures		
Utensils		
others, specify		

Over the last 8-10 years,have the living condition of the household:

Improved  
been stable  
Worsened


If changed, what are the reasons for the change?


Household survey: Other sources of income-2056 B.S

source	Quantity	Price/wage	Total Income
Hiring out oxen			
Hire out labour			
Employment			
Labour: assistance received			
Rent out land			
Pension			
Total Remittance Income			
Senior citizen allowances			
Widows allowances			
Disability allowances			
Government Transfers			
Gifts			
Interest from loans			

Sources of Income with input costs 2056 B.S

Source	Input costs	Quantity	Price	Total Income
Sale of handicraft				
Sale of beverages				
Other services				
Other business				

How many years have you spent in farming? \_\_\_\_\_

Fill land information for each plot

	Plot 1	Plot 2	Plot 3	Plot 4	Plot 5	Plot 6	Plot 7
Distance from home							
Size							
Soil type							
Rent In							
Rent out							
Rent amount							
Share cropping/Adhiya							



# Farm Household Survey: Crop Production

Household Number \_\_\_\_\_ Plot number \_\_\_\_\_

How is the soil fertility status on this plot?

Increasing  Increasing  Constant  Don't know

and type: Irrigated Khet \_\_\_\_\_ Unirrigated Khet \_\_\_\_\_ Bari \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Annual crop rotation \_\_\_\_\_

Month	Input Activity	Quantity		Yield of the crop(Write it at the end of the crop rotation month)
		Own resource	Purchased	
Balsakh				
Jestha				
Asar				
Srawan				
Bhadra				
Ashoj				
Kartik				
Mangsir				
Paush				
Magh				
Faigun				
chaitra				

**Farm household survey: Forest related Issues**

Do you own forest land?                      Yes                         No

**Expenditure on tree planting (2055 B.S)**

Type of tree	Labour required in days		Number of seedlings	Other form of expenditure (Rs)
	Own labour	Hired labour		

**Expenditure on tree planting (2056 B.S)**

Type of tree	Labour required in days		Number of seedlings	Other form of expenditure(Rs)
	Own labour	Hired labour		

**Income from sale of forest products: (2055 B.S)**

Type of product	Quantity sold	Total income	Income used for
Fuelwood			
Timber			
Fodder			
Other,specify			

**Income from sale of forest products: (2056 B.S)**

Type of product	Quantity sold	Total income	Income used for
Fuelwood			
Timber			
Foder			
Other,specify			

Farm Household Survey: Institutions (Asked to the household head)

Is your household influenced by mother group activities? Yes ☐ No ☐  
If yes, how does mother group activities positively/negatively influence your household?

Are any females in your household represented in the local mothergroup?  
Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, who (relation to head)?

If yes, do you like or dislike her/their involvement in the mother group?  
Dislike ☐ Like ☐

Why (because of the activities or because of other reasons)?

How does ACAP contribute to womens development?

What ACAP activities have you been involved in, and how is the household benefitting from these?

Activity	+, 0, -, don't know		Reason

Are there any ACAP activities you would have liked to be involved in?  
Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, why didn't you participate?

Farm Household Survey: Institutions( Ask to a selected female)

What is your relation to head of household? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you represented in the local mother group? Yes ☐ No ☐

Is your household influenced by mother group activities? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, how does mother group activities positively/negatively influence your household?

Can you personally obtain loan if you want? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, state source and amount

Source	Max. amount you can obtain

If you have not obtained loan, state reason

Did you get any assistance from Amma Samoa during the last 5 years?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, for what reasons?

How important was the assistance to you? \_\_\_\_\_

Not important at all	Not Important	Neutral	Important	Very Important

How does ACAP contribute to womens development?

What ACAP activities have you been involved in, and how is the household benefitting from these?

Activity	+, 0, -, don't know	Reason

Are there any ACAP activities you would have liked to be involved in?



















Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, why didn't you participate?

## Appendix 9      The Amma Samoa Maps

The Amma Samoa maps are based on symbols and numbers. The symbols are explained below, and the numbers represent activities. The activities that have been conducted are also described. The texts, as well as the maps, are the results of the Amma Samoa group interviews.

### MAP SYMBOL EXPLANATION

Activity		Literacy Course	★
Tap		AS Member	☆
House		AS Executive Board Member	★
Forest		PDDP Member	☆
River		Orange Tree Training	★
Road		Tea Tree Training	★
Planned Road		Sewing and Cutting Training	★
VDC		Economic Project Contribution	○
ACAP		B	●
CCC		C	●
School		G	●
Recreation Centre		OC	⊗
Village House		MT	●
Resting Place		Child in CCC	△
Cutlery		Attend ACAP Meeting	↘
Dancing and Singing Program		Attend Gurung AS Meeting	↘
Cleaning Program		Attend VDC Meeting	↘
Loan		Temple	☼



## Lwang Gurung AS, ward 2 + 3

**Situation before the formation of AS:** There was already pot collection. Women already contributed to temple construction and to roads. There was no formal committee, only informal meetings.

**After the formation of AS:** 1991 (By the initiation of ACAP): Formal meetings. Many programs. It is easier to make decisions about village development. Social prestige increased.

### Activities

**1. Child Care Centre, 1995:** 25 children. Fee for rich: 75 Rs per month and 100 Rs in peak season. Fee for poor: 37.5 Rs per month and 75 Rs in peak season. ACAP expenditure: Salary for teachers (2800Rs per month) and puna (250 Rs per month). Advantages: Mothers save time, Free to work, Children get security, Brings income to Gurung AS. **2. Road, 1995.** **3. Resting Place, 1997.** ACAP expenditure: 15 packs of cement. AS expenditure: 30 days of free labour. Advantages: Travellers benefit, Shade, Refreshing, Convenient to put down heavy luggage. **4. Road, 1200 meters, 1992:** 25 days of free labour per household. AS expenditure: 8000 Rs. ACAP expenditure: 27,000 Rs. Expenses for 100 m of the road borne by 8 AS members alone. **5. Temple, 1986.** **6. Recreation Centre, 1986.** **7. Temple, 1987:** AS expenditure: (8 mothers were especially involved in making the temple), 60 days of free labour, 4500 Rs. (100 Rs per member). Advantage: Chance to worship God, Find inner peace in mind and heart, Increase religious feeling, People are cleaning themselves by the tap by the temple. Water is secure for drinking. **8. Cleaning Program, two times per month except peak season:** In every cluster there is an AS. From every household there comes one person. **9a. Cutlery collection, 1989.** ACAP expenditure: 6500 Rs. AS expenditure: 10,000 Rs: 7 big pots, 24 small plates, 42 big plates, 5 spoons, 2 big spoons, 26 glasses, 12 jugs, 2 paraffin lamps. **9b. Pot collection, 1998.** ACAP expenditure: 10,000 Rs. AS expenditure: 37,000 Rs: 9 tables, 36 chairs, 3 pot supporters, 1 fry pot, 3 drums, 1 wrangle. Advantages: Easy when there are celebrations (marriage, bratabanda, urgum), Financial income, Social Prestige, Private Prestige. **10. Fund collection:** Dancing/singing program (for example at marriage sermons, urgum, bratabanda) Membership fees, 10 Rs per year. Interest rate income. Lending pots/utensils. Sale of forest products (grass and timber). **11. Loan/Credit:** Max 5000 Rs. Min 500 Rs. Interest rate members: 24% per year, non members: 36% per year. **12. Forest, 1994-95:** AS expenditure: 20 days of free labour. 150 Rs per month for forest guard. ACAP expenditure: seedlings. Advantages: Timber, wood and grass easily available, Future income from sales of forest products, Better environment, Beautiful village, Investment for next generation, Control landslide, Controlling running water. **13. Road, 300 m, 1993:** ACAP expenditure: 3600 Rs. AS expenditure: 21,500 Rs. Advantage: Easy to walk, Clean village, No attack by disease, Village prestige increased, AS social prestige increased. **Tea Training program, 1997-98.** **Orange Training program, 1998.** Sewing (1 Gurung participant) and Cutting (3 Gurung participants) Training program, 1993. **Literacy Program, 1998:** Provided by ACAP. 25 persons involved. 10 belonged to occupational castes. **Meetings Gurung AS members are involved in:** Ward meetings. Gurung AS meetings. FMC meetings once a month in VDC office. **Future planning:** Funeral place. Forest conservation. Road making. Bringing electricity. Bringing telephone. Build an AS house. Bring safe motherhood training. Bring a health assistant.

### Attitudes

**Fathers group attitude towards the AS:** Positive attitude, Cooperative, They contribute free labour and participate in programs, They provide advice. **ACAPs attitude towards the AS:** They are positive and helpful, The more active the AS is the more help you get from ACAP, Financial help, They give advice to us, They make training programs and seminars for us, They give leadership training. **VDCs attitude towards the AS:** We get no financial support from them they only give advice. **YG attitude towards the AS:** They also participate in AS programs and contribute with free labour, they give advice, They don't give financial support. **OC attitude towards the AS:** They come to our meetings when they are invited, They come for free labour, They come for the plantation program, They are weak in dancing and singing program. **Husband's attitude towards the AS:** Some like their wives to go and some do not. But women are very strong, they will go anyway. These days most men like the AS. Husbands take part in program. They are thinking positively.

## Lwang Pariar AS, ward 2 + 3

### Activities

**1.Dancing**, financial collection. Dancing programs in Gurung and in Nepali/BK homes, Marriage, Brothabanda, Returning army people (only from Pariar households) Festivals like Tihar and Dausi **2.Pot**, 1995: 2 big cooking pots, 20 plates, 21 glasses, 3 big spoons, 2 jugs, 2 flat pots, 1 drum, 1 bell, Total cost: 11.000 Rs. **3.Cleaning Program**, first day of every month. Advantage: Less disease. Higher village prestige. Higher AS prestige. **4.Road**, 1995. ACAP expenditure: 2200 Rs. VDC expenditure: 0 Gurung AS expenditure: 0. Pariar AS expenditure: days of labour, 12800 Rs. Road advantages: Easy to walk, Increased AS prestige, Clean village, Avoid accidents, Children are secure. **5.Forest**, 400 plants, 1992. AS expenditure: 3 days of labour. Advantages: Access to grass and firewood, Better environment. Less landslides, Better availability to drinking water, Participation of AS in environmental conservation. Disadvantages: The land was previously grassland for livestock, now it is restricted area. **6.Forest**, 20 plants, 2000. Pariar AS expenditures: 1 person 1 day. Gurung AS expenditure: 20 plants. **Child Care Center**, for children less than 5 years old. CCC advantages: Mothers get time to work. Children get security. Children get food in time. Children get time to sleep. CCC disadvantages: Difficult to pay fee, if fee was less, all children would attend. 10 months \* 37.5 Rs per month. 2 months \* 75 Rs per month (peak season, two meals included). **Meetings that Pariar AS members attend**: Cause for Pariar households not attending Pariar AS meetings: House is too far. No interest. They attend cleaning program and come for free labour.

## Lumbre AS

**Importance of AS**: Main goal: village development. Social development, Cultural fests and festivals, Increased religious awareness. **Negative**: AS needs more financial support, The lower casts come for free labour, but doesn't get much benefit from work, Time loss. **Positive**: Can get aid in tough times, School brings security to children, Satisfaction, Prestige, Awareness.

### Activities

Formation 1990. **Activities last year**: Picnic for whole village with presentation of AS financial report, 4 times singing and dancing program, Maintaining water tap, Clean road every week, one comes from each household, Help households where there has been death, birth or wedding, **1. Pot collection**, 1993. Total cost 20.000: 3 big pots, 1 small pot, 30 plates, 1 big spoon, 1 spoon, 2 small spoons, 1 carrier, 2 pot holders, 2 drums, 1 mantel, 1 foot wrangle. **2.Dam**, 1992, 1993, 1997: AS expenditure: 1400 Rs + free labour + 10.000 Rs. **3.School**, 1984: AS expenditure: 22 days of free labour 25.000 Rs. Advantages: Education, Social status. **4.Road**, AS expenditure: 25 days of free labour, 50.000 Rs. Advantages: Increased social prestige. **5.Tap**, AS expenditure: 3 days of free labour, 1400 Rs. Personal expenditure: cement. Advantages: Solve water problem, they can wash clothes near the house, they do not need to go far to catch water, they save the time, it increases the AS social prestige. **6.Tap**, ACAP. **7.Resting place**, 1994. AS expenditure: 5 days of free labour, 8.000 Rs. **8. Road**, AS did not extend this road even though it was high demand for it by the occupational cast. **9. Temple**, 1993. AS expenditure: 10 days of free labour + 18.000 Rs. ACAP expenditure: net. **Meetings that board members are involved in**: Monthly meeting with ACAP and all ASs. AS is not invited to VDC meetings, but they would like to get invitation **Wishes for future**: Electricity, Motorway, Make AS house, River Control, Preventing landslides, More cooperation with (support from) VDC.

### Attitudes

**Male attitude towards AS**: They give enough help, They helped with dam making, They play music at the dancing programs, They do heavy work when constructing road, All are positive, they give advice and help. **Relationship to ACAP**: ACAP helped more before, but now not so active, ACAP has positive attitude towards AS, AS president visits ACAP 2 times per year (on women's day and ACAPs anniversary) ACAP gives financial support and programs: Award: 600 Rs, Cutting training Literacy program, 400 m of net for dam, 3000 Rs for dam.

### Rivan AS, ward 6

**Benefits of AS:** Village infrastructure has improved, social unity has improved, conflict management has improved the situation in the village, more training opportunities, women empowerment, self satisfaction, increased social status compared to other places where there are no Amma Samoas.

### Activities

**1.Road, 1992.** **2.Road maintainance, 1994–95.** AS expenditure: 17 days free labour + 18.000 Rs. VDC expenditure: 12.000 Rs. ACAP expenditure: 12.000 Rs. Advantage: easy to walk, good walking conditions, clean, less leaches, saves time, less accidents. **3.Village house, 1999-2000.** Total cost: 113.000 Rs. Free labour 12 days. AS expenditure: 6000 Rs.. Youth Group expenditure: 26.000 Rs. ACAP expenditure: 15.000 Rs. and equipment. Japan Foundation expenditure: 10.000 Rs. Benefits: Guest house, can keep common equipment, meeting place, do not need to have meetings outside when it rains, increased status of the village and increased self satisfaction, can get income from it by renting it out. **4.Community plantation.** ACAP expenditure: 1900 seedlings + 3000. Village expenditure: 12 days of free labour + 9000 Rs. Benefits: Less landslide, more fodder and timber, more income, more greenery, more shade, better scenery, better environment. Demerits: increased monkey population and damage of crops, more shade on crops, more insects and pests. **4.Cutlery, 1991, 2000.** 3 big pots, 2 big spoons, 1 small pot, 1 cattle, 3 glasses, 24 dinner plates, 36 smaller plates. Value 3800 Rs. Benefits: wedding, confirmation for Brahmin boys, easy, higher status, saves time because no need for making plates of plant material. **5.Sanitation:** Once a month, one person per household, can give fine if no contribution. Benefits: Easy to walk, decrease of diseases, better health among children, increased status of mothers, self satisfaction, perception about sanitation has changed positively. **School.** AS expenditure: 18 days free labour + formation of school plantation. **Literacy program, 1993 + 2000.** 30 persons. Benefits: learnt to read and write, can write letters to migrants, satisfaction. **ACAP programs:** Forestry, Plant nursery, Community forestry guiding, Sanitation, Improved stove, **Conservation training, 1 Brahmin. Tour, 2 Brahmins. Meetings that AS members are involved in:** President goes to ACAP once a year and to VDC 6 times a year. Treasurer goes to ACAP once a year. **Future plans:** Temple construction, maintainance of roads, forestry plantation, income generating activities, increase cutlery collection, water pipes.

### Attitudes

**Husbands attitude:** Positive and supportive. **Father Group attitude:** Contribute with free labour, economic support, increased social unity, increased group feeling and "we"-feeling. **Youth Group attitude:** Economic support, they give advise and they coordinate, positive attitude. **ACAP attitude:** Positive, helpful, economic support, programs. **VDC attitude:** Advice, contributed with study tour, invited to tea party and gave introduction for new commers, 5 year and 2 year planning, economic support program.

### Lahchok AS, ward 3

### Activities

**1.Reconstruction of Kami house after fire, 1999.** AS expenditure: 480 Rs. **2.Tap.** ACAP expenditure: 2 technicians, 3 sacks of cement. **3.Road, 700m, 1999.** AS in ward no. 3 expenditure: 15.000 Rs. AS in ward no. 2 expenditure: 6000 Rs. **4.Temple, 1999.** ACAP expenditure: 6000 Rs, 6 sacks of cement, iron equipment. AS expenditure: 390 days of labour, 10 pathi sand\*13 members, 5 pathi pebbles\*13 members. PDDP expenditure: 2000 Rs.



## Koleli AS, ward 4

**Change from before and after AS started:** Road constructions have made life convenient, Awareness, Clean drinking water, Increased vegetable production, Literacy program. **Benefits of AS projects:** Got a lot of knowledge, Decrease of deceases, Conserved forest, Awareness of importance of toilet making, Grass production makes it easier to keep livestock, Landslides reduced, Increased social status, Proudness increased, Development of women's power **Disadvantages of projects:** Less firewood.

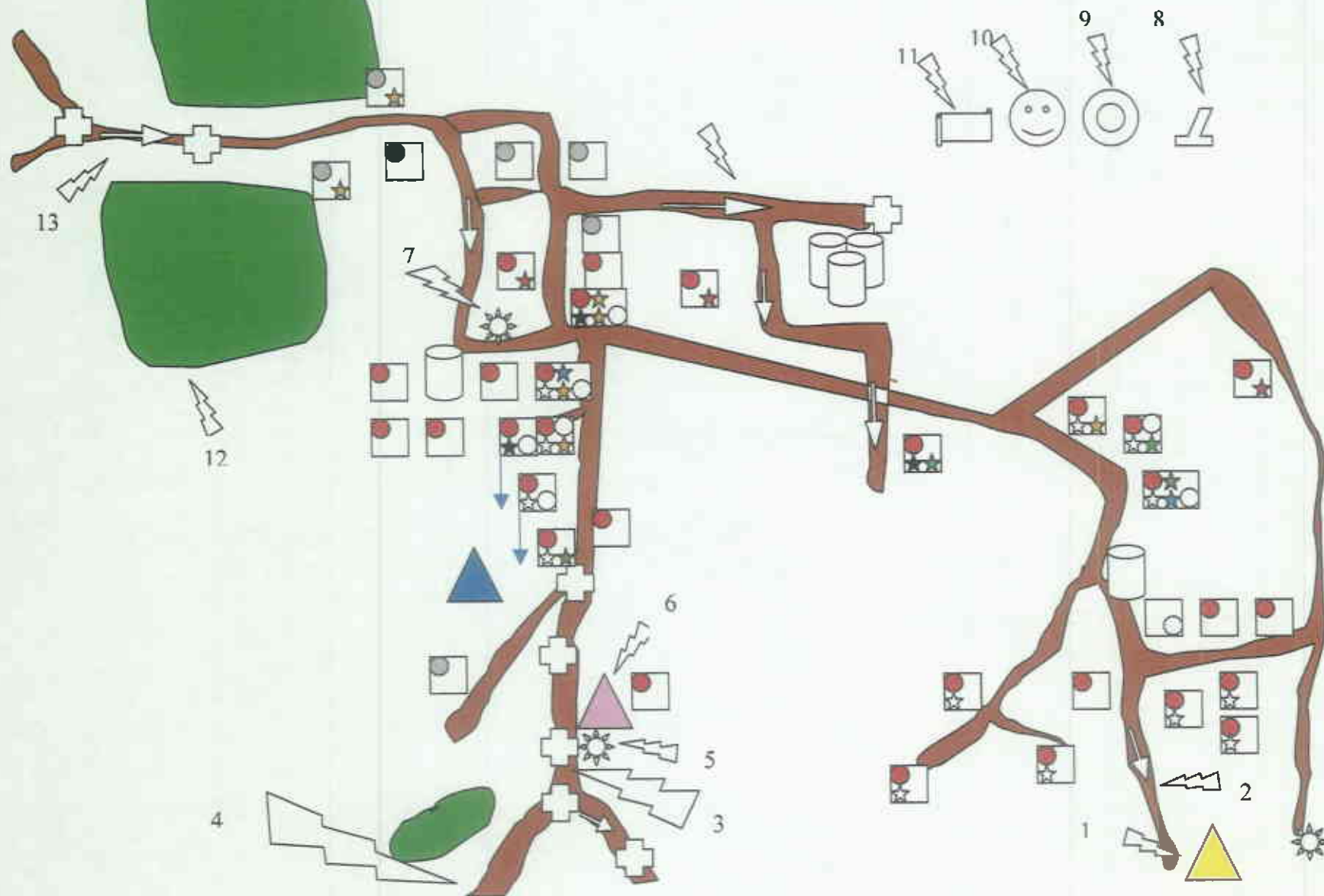
## Activities

**1.Pot**, 1991. AS expenditure: 70.000 Rs. 4 big pots, 2 big spoons, 2 small spoons, 50 plates, 50 glasses, 2 buckets, 4 jugs, 2 rice containers. **2.Tap**, ACAP expenditure: pipe, cement, other materials, main technicians. AS expenditure: 20 days. **3.School**, AS expenditure: 25 days of free labour. **4.Tap**, Maintenance by AS. **5.Road**, 1992-93. ACAP expenditure: 20.000 Rs. AS expenditure: 44.000 Rs + 5 days free labour. **6.Trees**, All homes plant trees to support livestock, the result is more milk from the buffaloes, saves time. **7.Road**, 1997-98. Total cost: 34.000 Rs + 3 days of free labour. ACAP expenditure: 6530 Rs. **8.Road**, 1998-99. Cost 83.000 Rs + 7 days of free labour. ACAP expenditure: 15.000 Rs. **9.Loan**, Minimum 50 Rs. Maximum 3500 Rs. Reasons for attending loan: Medical treatment, Consumption, Pay school fees, To pay seeds/seedlings, For ceremonies. **Literacy program**, 1993: ACAP provided, 15 women, 6 months. **Literacy program, advanced**, 1998: ACAP provided, 25 women, 4 months. In the course they got knowledge about improved stoves, toilets, broom grass, nutrition, childcare, plantation. **AS meetings:** From once a month to three times a month. **Fund collection:** Money collection at religious ceremonies: Marriage, births (minimum 50 Rs, maximum 1000 Rs). Dancing and singing programs (one person from the hh has to come to program) Compulsory annual fee: Government personnel: 200 Rs per year, Pension receivers: 200 Rs per year, Rich people: 100 Rs per year, Middle-income hh: 50 Rs per year, Occupational cast: 50 Rs per year. **Planned projects:** Roads and Village Tourist Development. AS will impose entrance fee for tourists and researchers that come in future. Proposed budget 1.000.000 Rs, hope to get 40.000 Rs from ACAP. Proposed road a: 115m, 17.000 Rs. Proposed road b: 210 m, 20.000 Rs. Proposed road c: 210 m, 20.000 Rs. Proposed road d: 500m, 40.000 Rs. AS building.

## Attitudes

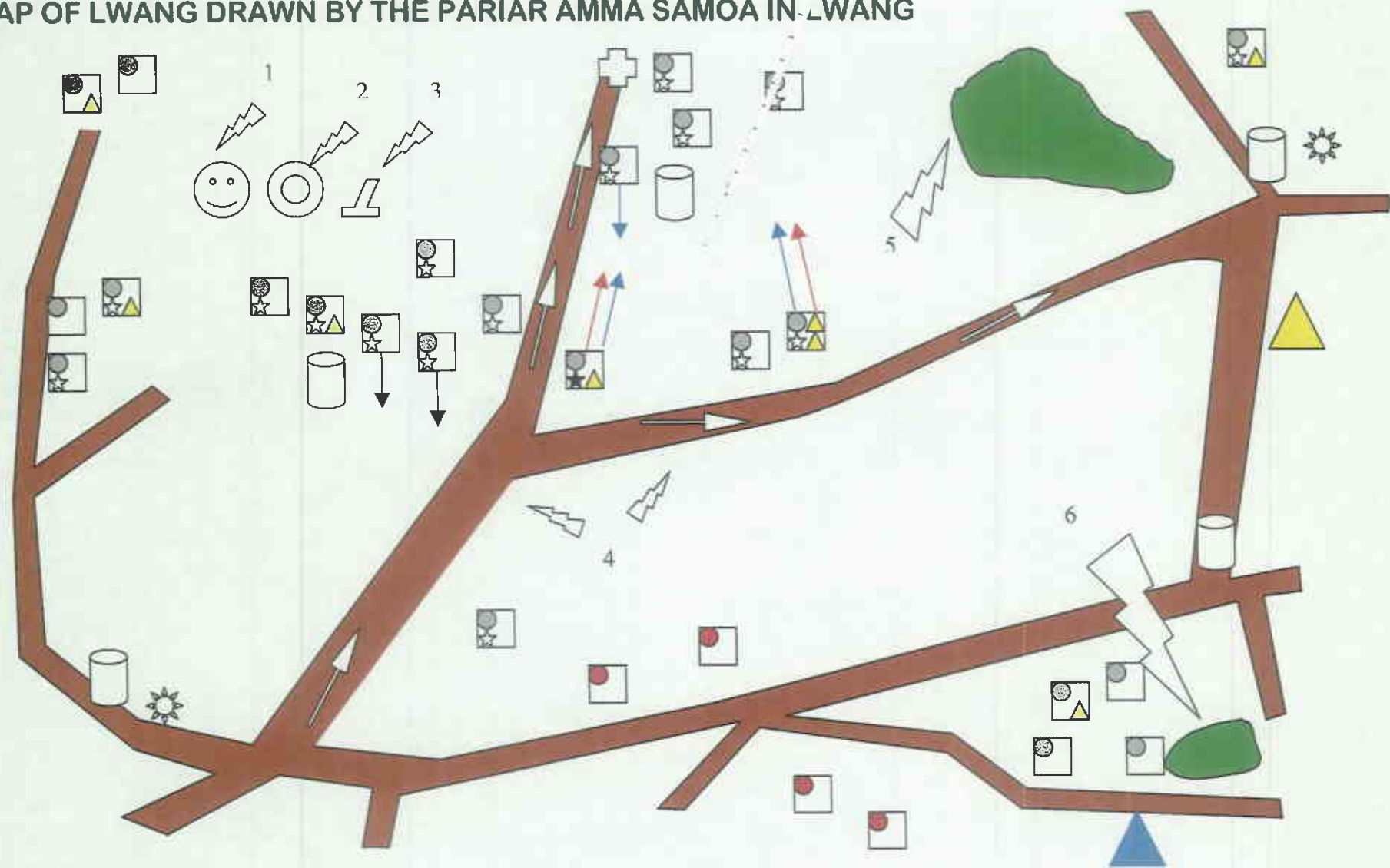
**FG attitudes towards AS:** Farmer's Group consists of the five teachers. Positive attitude, Commitment to help AS program, FG wants to help AS financially, FG is invited to AS meetings. **Men's attitudes towards AS:** Positive attitude, men are active in AS program, Men encourage women, They give advice for future planning, They actively take part in the singing and dancing programs, Women's status has increased among men as well, They give financial aid and contribute free labour. **VDC attitudes towards AS:** The chairman and vice-chairman of the VDC are not interested, Not invited for meetings, No financial aid to this ward, The elected representatives are not involved in AS activities. **Ward attitudes towards AS:** The ward representatives are very involved in the AS decision-making process, The AS president is in the ward committee. **ACAP attitudes towards AS:** Positive attitude, They give financial help, They invite AS for ACAP meetings. AS president goes to ACAP two times a year (women's day and ACAP anniversary), ACAP gives trainings: Leadership development training, two Brahmins attended, Safe motherhood training, one Brahmin attended, Improved stove training, one Gurung attended and one Brahmin attended, Manure preparation training, one Gurung attended, one Brahmin attended.

MAP OF LWANG DRAWN BY THE GURUNG AMMA SAMOA IN LWANG

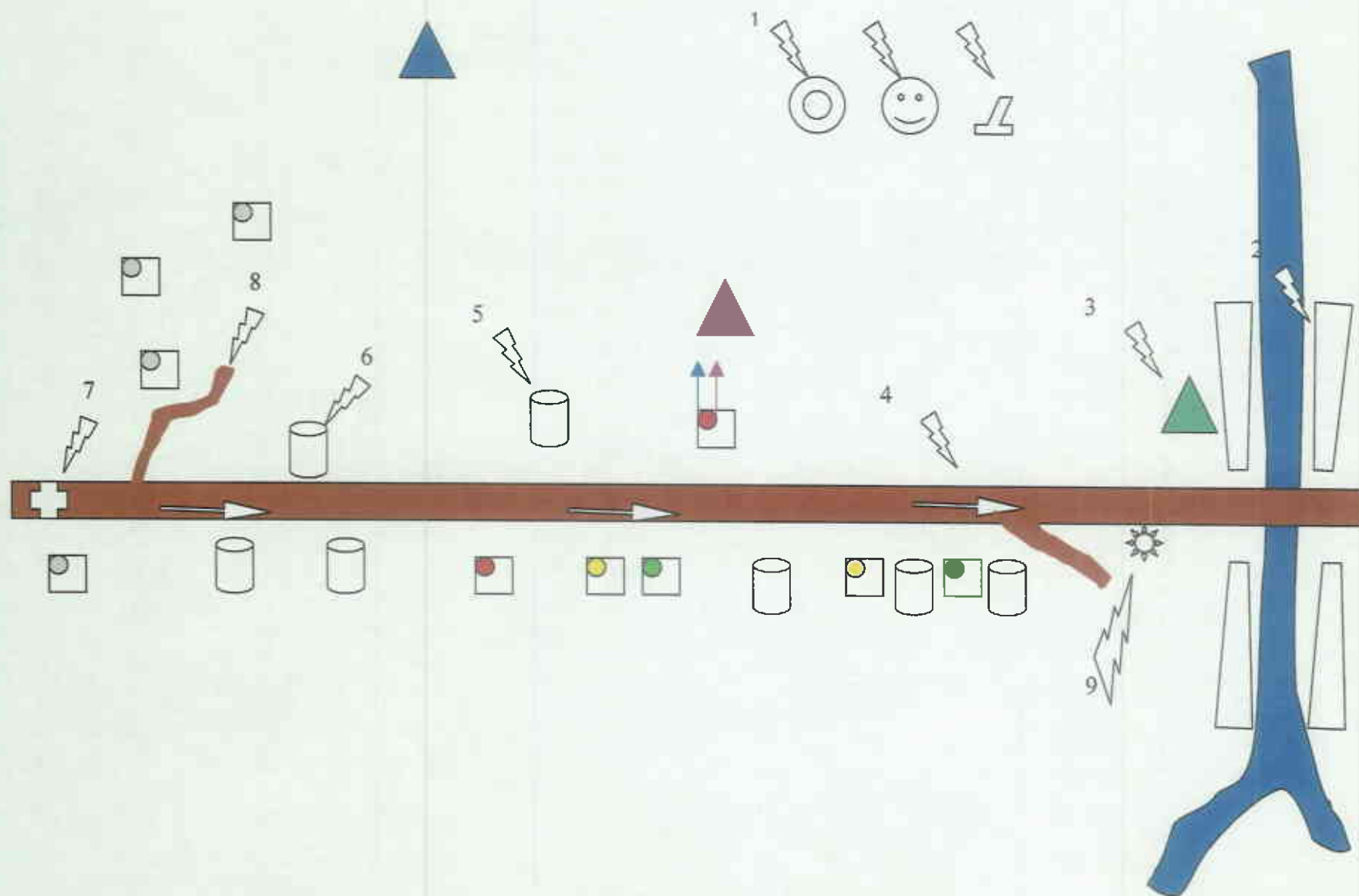




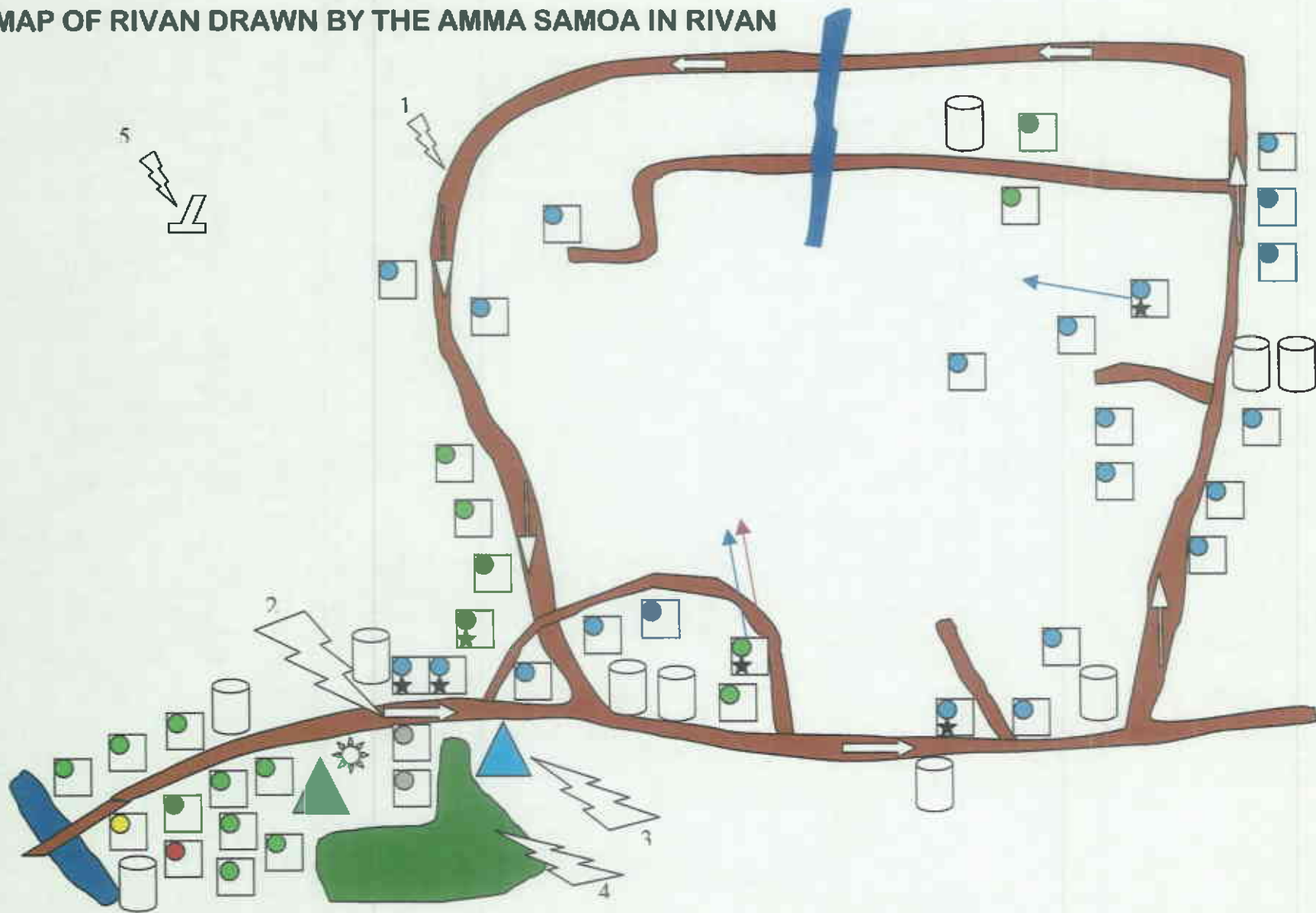
MAP OF LWANG DRAWN BY THE PARIAR AMMA SAMOA IN LWANG



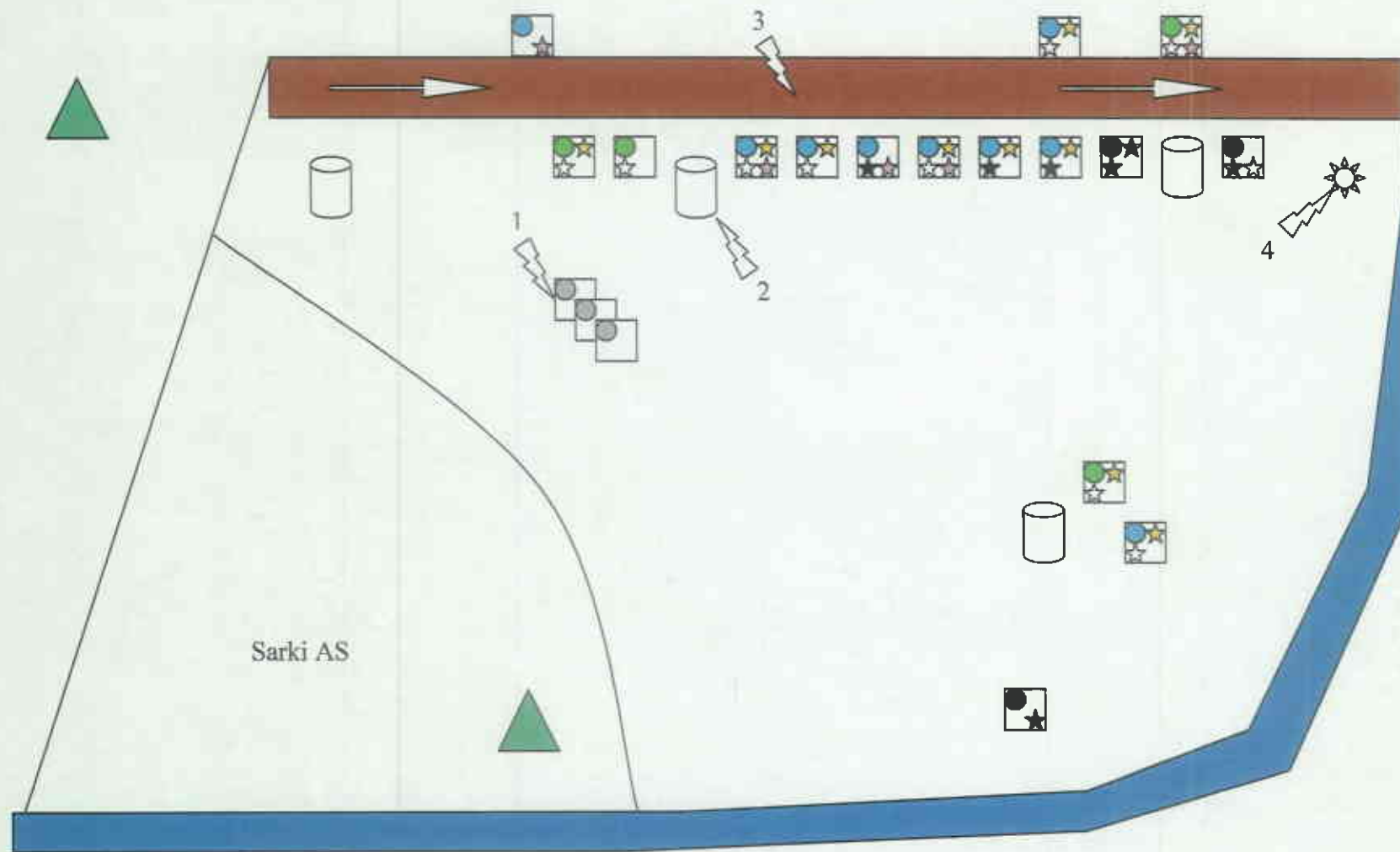
# MAP OF LUMBRE DRAWN BY THE AMMA SAMOA IN LUMBRE



MAP OF RIVAN DRAWN BY THE AMMA SAMOA IN RIVAN



MAP OF LAHCHOK DRAWN BY THE HIGHER CASTE AMMA SAMOA IN LAHCHOK



# MAP OF KOLELI DRAWN BY THE KOLELI AMMA SAMOA

