

# FROM MPA TO NPA IN RURAL NEPAL

## The Story of the NEWAH Participatory Assessment

A Case Study prepared for IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre, Delft, Netherlands



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# CONTENTS

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<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1. NEWAH AND THE MPA .....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 GENDER AND POVERTY CONCERNS.....	6
1.2 NEWAH AND GAP .....	6
1.3 THE METHODOLOGY FOR PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT (MPA).....	8
1.4 NEWAH'S INTEREST IN MPA .....	8
1.5 TRAINING TO USE THE MPA .....	9
1.6 ANALYSING THE DATA .....	9
1.7 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS IN KATHMANDU.....	10
<b>2. FROM MPA TO NPA.....</b>	<b>13</b>
2.1 REVISING THE MPA.....	13
2.2 DEVELOPING THE NPA .....	14
2.3 DIFFERENCES WITH THE MPA .....	14
2.4 COMPONENTS OF THE NPA .....	15
2.5 FEATURES OF THE NPA.....	16
2.6 AN UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY .....	16
<b>3. USING THE NPA .....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 CONSULTANCY FOR A SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY .....	18
3.2 ASSESSING THE GAP APPROACH USING THE NPA .....	19
3.3 REACTIONS TO THE NPA .....	21
<b>4. FUTURE CHALLENGES .....</b>	<b>23</b>
4.1 NEWAH'S FUTURE PLANS .....	23
4.2 POSSIBILITIES WITHIN NEWAH .....	24
4.3 POSSIBILITIES OUTSIDE NEWAH.....	25
4.4 IS THE NPA WORTH IT?.....	25
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>27</b>
ANNEXURE 1: MAINSTREAMING A GAP APPROACH IN NEWAH .....	29
ANNEXURE 2: BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS .....	33
ANNEXURE 3: A SAMPLER FROM THE RAYALE STAKEHOLDER MEETING.....	38
ANNEXURE 4: NEWAH PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT: A BRIEF NOTE.....	39
ANNEXURE 5: EVALUATING THE GAP APPROACH WITH NPA.....	46

## ABBREVIATIONS

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ADB	Asian Development Bank
BOMP	Better Off and Medium Poor
CBWSSP	Community Based Water Supply and Sanitation Project
CHV	Community Health Worker
DFID	Department for International Development, Government of United Kingdom
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GAP	Gender and Poverty Approach
GIS	Geographical Information System
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
IRC	IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
MPA	Methodology for Participatory Assessment
MS	Microsoft
NEWAH	Nepal Water for Health
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	NEWAH Participatory Assessment
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PPTA	Project Preparation Technical Assistance
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
QIS	Qualitative Information System
QPA	Quantified Participatory Assessment
SEG	Socio Economic Group
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation
WSP	Water and Sanitation Programme
WUSC	Water User & Sanitation Committee

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## SUMMARY

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NEWAH (Nepal Water for Health) a national level NGO in Nepal, with over 10 years of experience implementing water and sanitation projects in rural Nepal, formulated a Gender and Poverty (GAP) approach to counter the endemic gender and social inequality that prevails in rural Nepal, and the resultant impact on the sustainability of projects. NEWAH established a Gender and Poverty (GAP) Unit in January 1999 and piloted the GAP approach in 5 villages spread over the 5 development regions of Nepal.

Given the participatory, gender and poverty-sensitive nature of the GAP approach, the GAP Unit chose the Methodology for Participatory Assessment (MPA) to evaluate the impact of its pilot GAP villages. While the methodology was a definite improvement over usual survey-based extractive techniques, the GAP Unit found it complicated to use in its use and analysis, time consuming, and not tailored to NEWAH's requirements.

Accordingly, the GAP Unit revised the MPA and created the NEWAH Participatory Assessment (NPA), not only to address the problems they faced with the MPA, but also to address socio-economic realities of rural Nepal, to improve the evaluation of health and sanitation issues, and to add more qualitative data by giving opportunity for community men and women to tell their stories through case studies and semi-structured interviews.

Following field-testing and the development of a bi-lingual Field Manual (in Nepali and English) and a computer database to store and analyse data, the GAP Unit used the NPA to assess the effectiveness of its GAP approach in a sample of 15 villages in rural Nepal. Besides this, an opportunity arose to use the NPA for a consultancy assignment for an Asian Development Bank-funded community-based water supply and sanitation project in Nepal. .

This case study documents NEWAH's experience with using the MPA, and the development of the NPA to assess the impact of its GAP approach in the field.

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## 1. NEWAH AND THE MPA

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### 1.1 GENDER AND POVERTY CONCERNS

While implementing water and sanitation projects in rural Nepal NEWAH (Nepal Water for Health), a national level NGO in Nepal,<sup>1</sup> had assumed that proposed development interventions will automatically benefit women and the poor and that community leaders reflect their needs. Over 10 years of experience during the 1990s, however, showed NEWAH that the richest so-called higher caste men dominate all aspects of these projects and that women, the poor, and socially excluded groups (such as *Dalits*) are not represented in key decision-making processes. The better off men are the first to come forward to liaise with project staff, to take the management and ownership of water supply systems. Such domination of water systems by male elites often leads to unequal access to safe drinking water between the better off and poorest socio-economic groups, and more crucially, to unsustainable projects.

Given the strong links between gender, caste, ethnicity and poverty in Nepal, demand for water supply services by the 'community' are too often demanded by the so-called higher caste and better off men of the community, with little or no prior consultation with women and poorer men, who are often from socially excluded *dalit* and ethnic groups.

### 1.2 NEWAH AND GAP

NEWAH realised that deliberate actions must be taken to enlarge people's choices, and provide opportunities to voice those choices. In January 1999, therefore, NEWAH, with one of its local

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<sup>1</sup> NEWAH is a non-government, non-political and non-profit making organisation working throughout rural Nepal to provide clean safe drinking water, hygiene education and sanitation. It aims to improve the living standard of the poor by providing community development initiatives.

partners, WaterAid, hired a gender consultant<sup>2</sup>, and set up a Gender and Poverty (GAP) Unit funded by another of NEWAH's partners, DFID. The GAP Unit then developed an operational definition of gender (see Box 1) and a GAP approach as a set of operational principles to address gender and poverty concerns systematically.

The GAP Unit comprises 6 operational teams of both technical and social staff (30 men and 6 women) trained to apply a GAP approach in communities, including gender awareness training to partners and communities, and to apply PRA methods in a gender-sensitive manner.

Beginning in 1999, the GAP Unit piloted a GAP approach in 5 projects in 5 development regions of Nepal (three Gravity-flow schemes and two *terai* tube well schemes), which were completed in 2002.

**BOX 1: NEWAH's definition of gender**

“Gender roles are socially determined. They influence the division of labour, which is valued differently based on who does the work. Different roles, work and the value placed on work create differential access to information, decision-making, services and benefits. The differential value placed on work and access, support existing power relations, which are unequal. Because men and women have different roles in society, women and men have different needs of both a practical and strategic nature. This is why NEWAH believes in mainstreaming a gender approach. Gender issues must be addressed. It is a cross-cutting issue and a major component for the sustainability of projects and for reduction of poverty of beneficiary communities.”



In 2002 the GAP approach was adopted in around 35% of NEWAH's programme villages, with the aim being 100% integration by 2005 (See NEWAH (2003a) and Annexure 1 for more on the GAP Approach, which is also being adopted throughout NEWAH's organisation).

<sup>2</sup> Michelle Moffatt, the Gender Consultant, was with NEWAH till July 2003.

### 1.3 THE METHODOLOGY FOR PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT (MPA)

In order to evaluate the impact of the GAP approach in the five pilot project communities, NEWAH chose not to use the less effective questionnaire survey method that reduce water users to passive respondents, and instead opted for a new participatory evaluation tool called the Methodology for Participatory Assessment (MPA) (Gross et al., 2001, Dayal et al., 1999).<sup>3</sup>

The MPA uses a set of sector-specific indicators to assess sustainability, demand, gender and poverty-sensitivity in water and sanitation. It collects village level information to evaluate the sustainability of the project and also the factors influencing sustainability. The two aggregate indicators for project sustainability are (A) effectively sustained services (from the project) and (B) effective use (of project provided facilities), while the three aggregate indicators hypothesised to influence project sustainability are (C) demand responsiveness (of the project); (D) gender and poverty sensitivity (of the project) and (E) participation with empowerment (of villagers in the project). These aggregate indicators have several sub-indicators, which, in turn, have individual questions. PRA-type participatory tools are used to bring out responses from the community to these questions, and answers are accorded ordinal scores corresponding to descriptive categories (categories describing the situation on the ground).

PRA methods can be effective for communities to analyse strengths and weaknesses and plan and monitor improvements, but are often unpopular with programme managers because they cannot easily aggregate or compare large amounts of data to assess effectiveness of programmes. The MPA, however, allows programme managers to analyse information statistically and present it graphically, to evaluate processes and results and thus monitor and improve existing services.

### 1.4 NEWAH'S INTEREST IN MPA

Given its GAP approach, NEWAH was interested in the participatory MPA methodology, with its focus on identifying the poor and better off in a community, and their differing capacities and willingness to pay for water and sanitation. NEWAH chose MPA to make future projects more demand-responsive, empowering, participatory and sustainable by enabling communities to:<sup>4</sup>

- Draw upon participatory approaches such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and Self-Esteem, Associative Strength, Resourcefulness, Action Planning and Responsibility (SARAR) tools and methods, since both have proven to be effective in involving communities, and since NEWAH staff have been trained in these methods and have also applied them.
- Investigate how equitably poor households and women participate in, and benefit from the services, as compared to better off households and men.
- Make visible the key factors for attaining success in community water & sanitation projects, while simultaneously allowing quantitative aggregation of village-level participatory monitoring data for use at programme and policy levels.
- Assess the sustainability of services and take action for improvement.

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<sup>3</sup> Developed by a multi-disciplinary team working on the Participatory Learning in Action (PLA) Initiative of the WSP, Washington and IRC, Delft. Wijk (2001) is a comprehensive description of the MPA methodology, Mukherjee and Wijk (2003) is the revised methodology, while James (2000 & 2001) describe the methods of ordinal scoring. Wijk and Postma (2003) and Wijk et al. (2002) describe applications.

<sup>4</sup> From NEWAH (2002) and Moffatt et al., (2002).

Learning how to apply the MPA in the field involved the following steps:

1. MPA training and field testing: to train GAP team members in the use of the methodology, which included clarifying the purpose of using each participatory tool and using these findings to generate scores using the descriptive ordinal scoring system, as well as field testing the team's capability of carrying out the assessment.
2. The MPA Data base training: to learn how to enter the scores into a computer database, analyse the scores and report the findings.
3. Stakeholders meeting: to present the findings to the key stakeholders, including representatives from the village, the implementing field staff and the funding agencies.

All the steps are detailed further below.

## **1.5 MPA TRAINING & FIELD TESTING**

Forty members of NEWAH's GAP teams from regions and head quarters were trained in the use of the MPA methodology by IRC in February 2002.<sup>5</sup> The training used a participatory and hands on approach giving participants a mix of lectures, group work and plenary discussions. Each tool in the methodology was reviewed and discussed in detail, making clarifications and taking on board comments. Participants also had hands-on practice on using the tools and reporting the data collected. At the end of the training each regional GAP team re-examined the entire manual and formulated questions and comments.

After this two-week training, NEWAH's GAP teams field-tested the MPA during February and March 2002 in Rayale and Bihabar, two rural communities in Nepal's Central Region, both with eight-year old gravity flow systems. The training and field-testing were useful learning experiences for both NEWAH and IRC, in terms of difficulties in understanding and implementing MPA tools and the time needed to carry out community assessments<sup>6</sup> (see more details in section 2.1).

## **1.6 MPA DATA BASE TRAINING**

Since IRC staff were unavailable for the much-needed MPA database training, NEWAH engaged another consultant who worked with the GAP Unit in March 2002 to analyse data from the two pilot assessments.<sup>7</sup> While GAP teams entered data into a specially created computer database, the external consultant analysed the data and presented the key findings (Figure 1 and Table 1). Although pleased that the results reflected reality, GAP teams felt a strong need to improve computer & analysis skills in order to carry out the MPA themselves (more details in section 2.1).

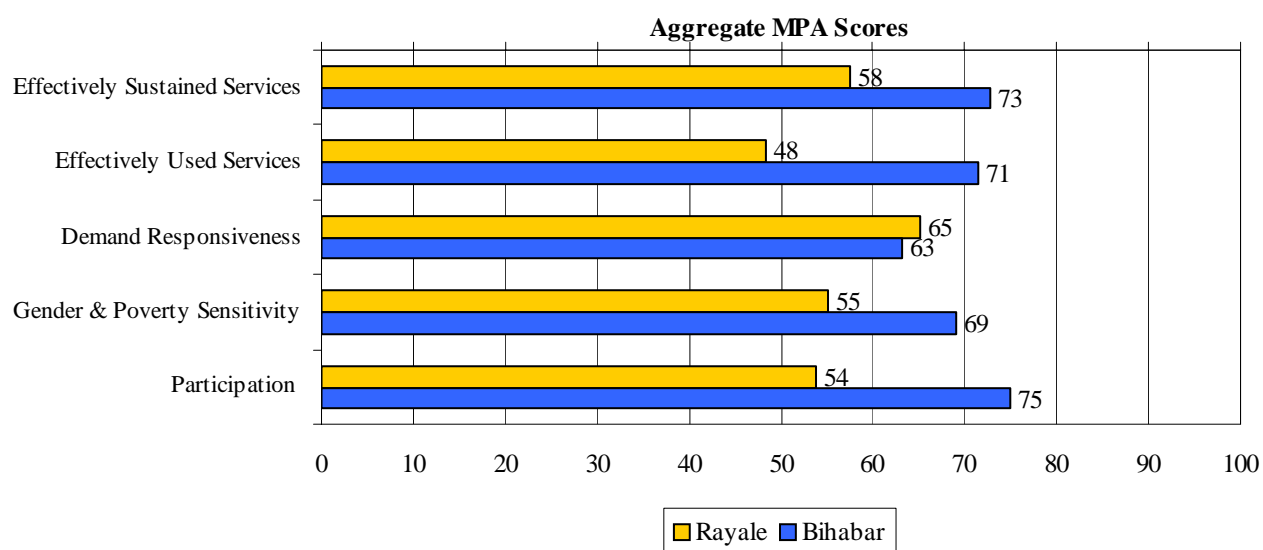
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<sup>5</sup> Leonie Postma of IRC carried out the MPA training.

<sup>6</sup> These experiences are captured in Moffatt et al. (2002).

<sup>7</sup> The external consultant, AJ James, had done the statistical analysis of the MPA in the initial PLA initiative and also created the templates for the MPA computer database using MS ACCESS.

Figure 1: Aggregate Findings of the Assessment using the MPA



Source: Moffatt, Paudyal and James (2002)

Table 1: Main assessment issues and findings of the Assessment in Rayale and Bihar using the MPA

INDICATOR	ASSESSMENT FINDINGS
<b>Effective Financing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No regular maintenance fees paid by all users</li> <li>The bulk of the operation &amp; maintenance fund loaned among the richer/higher caste men</li> <li>Financial records not transparent</li> </ul>
<b>Effectively Used Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 50% better off and medium poor households have proper access</li> <li>Poorest households at the tail of the system do not have proper access and only have water for as little as one hour a day - not sufficient for their domestic needs</li> <li>Richer households with illegal connections have regular water supply, used for all purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Demand Responsiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Male community leaders in one village dominated decisions over financing, level of service delivery and composition of management committee.</li> <li>Elite men in key positions in management committee who decided location of facilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Gender and Poverty Sensitivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The few paid jobs available at the start of project went to better off men.</li> </ul>
<b>Participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No system to monitor household contributions during service establishment.</li> <li>Neither the committee nor individual users had control over design and construction quality; it was all done by the outside agency.</li> <li>Community committee meetings held only occasionally &amp; decision-making not effective.</li> <li>Committees have established rules but these are not recognised or followed.</li> </ul>

Source: Abstracted from Moffatt, Paudyal and James (2002).

## 1.7 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS IN KATHMANDU

For the MPA carried out in Bihar and Riyale, two separate stakeholder meetings were organised in December 2002 but not using the MPA format for stakeholder meetings. Since the original MPA format was not found suitable to initiate detailed project-specific corrective action,

a new format for stakeholder meetings was devised.<sup>8</sup> GAP team members prepared the presentation of main results, the issues to be discussed and the manner in which the meeting itself had to be facilitated. The evaluation of the performance of GAP teams brought out several practical lessons for future stakeholder meetings (see Table 2).

Table 2: Evaluation comments from the Bihar Stakeholder Meeting, 9 December 2002

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### ***Preparation for a Stakeholder Meeting***

- Discuss all material well beforehand, so that the entire team knows the issues to be discussed.
- Brief key people before the meeting—so that they are not given ‘surprises’ during the meeting
- Go over each item on the agenda in detail – work out timing, and divide responsibilities (conducting group discussions, chairing sessions, taking notes, writing reports, etc.)
- Do not change agreed text on the computer, unless you discuss it with the people who wrote it.
- Arrive early, and check out the facilities (e.g., chairs, mikes, displays, screens and plug points)
- Be alert throughout the exercise—relax only AFTER the meeting!

### ***During a Stakeholder Meeting***

1. Do not distract attention while someone is speaking
2. Keep displays till the end of the stakeholder meeting
3. Clap for everyone – or none, not for some – if you clap only for some, it looks as if the other people’s comments were not important.
4. Task someone with taking notes for the meeting – and to write the final report. But the entire team should also note down (1) good points (2) things to be improved
5. Keep realistic starting times – especially if participants from the village have to be on time
6. Keep to time for all items on the agenda – make up for lost time by reducing time for lunch, for e.g.
7. Listen to every speaker – if you move around or have private discussions, it looks as if you are ignoring the speaker
8. Do not ask participants for specific details on funding or activities in public, unless discussed earlier.

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Discussions between the different stakeholders was facilitated till a consensus was reached and the decision taken was noted down on flip charts, and the resulting action plan was agreed upon by all stakeholders (a sample outcome from one of the stakeholder meetings is in Annexure 3).

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<sup>8</sup> The meetings were organised and coordinated by AJ James and Michelle Moffatt. The briefing note prepared for one of the stakeholder meetings is in Annexure 2.

### **THE GAP EFFECT: Empowerment of a Female Maintenance Caretaker**

Uma Bhujel is a female maintenance caretaker in the Phaperthum GAP project in Syangja district of the Western Region. Her selection as one of three maintenance caretakers by the Project Management Committee surprised the community people who doubted whether she would be able to carry out her duties. In the beginning she was unsure of herself and felt that the maintenance caretaker training content was hard because it was technical in nature. However, she worked hard with the NEWAH technician and was able to learn her job.

She has been an inspiration to other women, and now the community people say women can do anything if opportunities are provided for them. Uma Bhujel feels her main achievement has been to demonstrate women's ability to take on a maintenance caretaker job, which has been traditionally a technical role for men. The community now trusts her capabilities and is happy with her performance. Previously, she earned Rs. 40-50 per day working as a daily wage labourer on farms. Now she earns Rs. 200 per day as a maintenance caretaker, which is the same salary rate as the male maintenance caretaker. She was pleased that she was not discriminated against based on gender and has spent the Rs. 2400 she has earned so far on her personal needs.

Although she is not the regular maintenance caretaker and helps as and when needed, her position as a paid maintenance caretaker has given her more confidence. Her family and community are encouraging and say she is doing an incredible job. She now believes women can perform the different roles that men perform. She feels that the Gender Awareness training she received was very useful in a community context, since it led to new perceptions and positive changes in people's attitude and behaviour, especially the men. Male members in her family are now happy to help with domestic chores such as cleaning the yard and toilet and fetching water.



## 2. FROM MPA TO NPA

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### 2.1 REVISING THE MPA

After the MPA training, the field-testing and the MPA database training, the staff of the GAP Unit of NEWAH felt that, while the assessment reflected the situation in each project on the whole and can provide valuable information to plan corrective action through community analysis, the MPA needed to be revised to suit NEWAH's requirements and streamlined to be more cost effective for NEWAH staff and for community men and women. Specifically, the staff found that:

- While the MPA was a useful methodology to assess sustainability linked to demand, gender and poverty, the process was too time-consuming for them and for communities. Each assessment required around 5-6 days in the community with representatives from the management committee and men and women from each socio-economic group.
- The amount of time required of the community to participate in the MPA unfairly penalises the poor since they have to give up daily labour wages or working in their own fields in order to participate in assessment exercises. It was also difficult to facilitate participation by community members for such a long duration, due to the same reason.
- Assessments created high expectations (especially in one village where there was conflict and need for extensive rehabilitation of the water system and community management support).
- Strong facilitation, computer & analysis skills, besides gender awareness training are needed.

## 2.2 DEVELOPING THE NPA

Instead of looking for another methodology, organising training and pre-testing, the GAP Unit preferred to revise the MPA itself. This revision resulted in a new methodology, specially suited to the water and sanitation sector in Nepal, called the NEWAH Participatory Assessment (NPA).<sup>9</sup> The development of the NPA consisted of three basic steps.

- **Writing the Field Manual:** After a thorough discussion of the field level problems encountered when using the MPA, and NEWAH's specific information needs, each step of the methodology was revised and detailed in the Field Manual, and translated into Nepali.
- **Pre-testing the Methodology:** Following the specification of the methodology, the GAP teams conducted a pre-test in Chainpur village in the Chitwan district, made further refinements and incorporated these changes into the Field Manual.
- **Developing the Database:** The work on the MS ACCESS database was done in two stages.

Stage 1: After the initial work to develop the database for the MPA evaluation of Rayale and Bihabar, the team felt a need for detailed MS ACCESS training in order to develop in-house capacity to handle the database. A customised MS Access database training was organised for GAP Unit members from headquarters and for 2 members in each of the 5 regions.<sup>10</sup>

Stage 2: Following the specification of the Field Manual in November 2002, the GAP teams revised the MS ACCESS Formats in December 2002, so that the computer data entry sheets were similar to the paper assessment sheets, in order to minimise data entry errors.

## 2.3 DIFFERENCES WITH THE MPA

The NPA uses a combination of PRA techniques, household questionnaires and case studies to collect community-level information, and is tailored to Nepal-specific issues in rural water supply and sanitation projects. The main differences with the MPA are the following:<sup>11</sup>

- **Adapted to the Nepal context:** The ordinal scoring system and the household questionnaire have been modified and field-tested to capture contextual differences between gravity flow (in the hills) and tube well systems (in the terai), and the manual is bi-lingual.
- **Addresses gender, caste, ethnicity and poverty issues relating to water and sanitation:** In addition to gender and poverty issues, the NPA has further refined its focus to also pick up important and related differences between caste and ethnic groups in Nepali communities.

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<sup>9</sup> NEWAH asked AJ James to help with the revision since he had already revised and field-tested his own version of the MPA in India, called Quantified Participatory Assessment (QPA). The basic modification in the QPA is the flexibility in choosing issues, indicators and tools. An overview is James (2003a), and applications are James et al. (2002), James (2002, 2003b, 2003c, 2003d), James and Snehalata (2002a & 2002b) and James & Kaushik (2002a).

<sup>10</sup> AJ James and Patrick Moriarty of IRC outlined the contents of a customised database-training course tailored to the specific requirements of the assessment. The training was done in Kathmandu using a local computer institute.

<sup>11</sup> Adapted from 'NEWAH Participatory Assessment: A Brief Note, December 2002', reproduced in Annexure 4.

- **Greater attention to health, hygiene and sanitation issues:** The NPA developed tools to elicit information on current health, hygiene and sanitation issues and practice by gender, caste, ethnicity and socio-economic groupings.
- **Fewer participatory tools:** Time-consuming participatory tools were replaced by focus group discussions (FGDs) wherever possible, except in the case of sensitive issues like personal hygiene habits (pocket voting). A new tool, the Hundred Rupee Tool, was developed and adapted to the local context to assess the gender division of household tasks.
- **Peer-group scoring:** Wherever self-scoring was time consuming and confusing to respondents, these were replaced by peer-group scoring where each assessment team presented their scoring of the existing situation, along with reasons for their scores, to other members of the assessment teams in order to validate their scores.
- **Benchmarking of ordinal scores:** In order to facilitate the interpretation of scores, the option defining the mid-range score of 50 was 'benchmarked'. This meant that scores of 50 and above were 'satisfactory' and a score of 100 was 'Ideal', while scores below 50 indicated problems to be tackled by the project.
- **Case Studies:** Semi-structured interviews with community men, women, boys and girls from different socio-economic groups were tape recorded and transcribed to allow opportunity for these people to tell their stories. This method significantly enhances the qualitative data needed.

## 2.4 COMPONENTS OF THE NPA

The NPA asks a fixed set of questions in its household survey, it also generates community-wide responses through focus group discussions (FGDs) on a range of important socio-economic issues, using a descriptive ordinal scoring system (like the MPA and QPA) that translates qualitative experiences (elicited during FGDs, using participatory tools), into numbers. The NPA has the following components, which address a variety of issues:

- Community meetings: to assess general information about the village, including
  - Access to social and economic infrastructure, information on past projects
  - Major caste groups, religions and languages spoken
  - Number of households (by socio-economic group, caste and ethnicity) not served by and requiring access to, water supply and sanitation, with reasons for current lack of access.
- Well-being ranking and social mapping: to identify households by socio-economic, caste and ethnic groups, and to represent this information on village social maps
- Water system mapping: to mark all existing water points and sources (traditional and improved), and components of water systems (if any).
- Water point surveys: to assess status of existing water points, including number of users (by caste and socio-economic group), adequacy, reliability, timeliness of repair, water quality, leakage, environmental sanitation (around the water point), effectiveness of maintenance

training, default rates in user monthly charges (and reasons for non-payment), and social barriers to access; along with specific reasons, in each case.

- Focus group discussions by gender and class (and also with school children and out of school children): to assess differences in current health, hygiene and sanitation issues and practices, voice and choice in technology design, location, contribution to initial construction costs, gender division of labour within households, and participation by poorest men and women in community decision-making.
- Case studies: to pick up positive and negative experiences of project implementation.

## 2.5 FEATURES OF THE NPA

The NPA is a participatory methodology to assess community level issues relevant to rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) projects in Nepal. It is designed to be a flexible methodology, like the QPA in India, and assessment issues, indicators and tools can be adapted to suit the requirements of particular RWSS projects. Its basic features are the following:

- **Flexibility:** It can be modified to suit particular situations, including socio-economic and institutional issues of gender, poverty, caste, ethnicity and participation. It can be used for planning, monitoring and assessment of RWSS projects, and can also be used to assess baseline situations even in communities that do not have a RWSS project.
- **Standard PRA tools:** The NPA uses standard PRA tools such as transect walks, focus group discussions, pocket voting, well-being ranking, social mapping, etc., and also has a household questionnaire, which can be used to assess time savings, water collection details, household income and expenditure, etc.
- **Descriptive ordinal scoring:** A distinctive feature is the use of a descriptive ordinal system, which is a reliable method<sup>12</sup> to translate qualitative community responses into numbers, which can be used for statistical analysis.
- **Qualitative and quantitative information:** In addition to ordinal scores, the NPA also captures qualitative information, both to explain these scores, and to probe issues in further detail (e.g., in case studies).
- **Information sharing with the community:** The information collected is shared with the community and also filed in community folders for future use by field teams.
- **Database of information:** Information is also stored for data analysis in an MS Access database.

## 2.6 AN UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY

With the methodology refined after field-testing, Field Manual and Database ready and the teams trained in their use, the NPA methodology was ready to evaluate NEWAH's GAP approach, but

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<sup>12</sup> 'Reliability' is the ability to elicit the same response in repeated focus group discussions. Results from some ordinal scoring systems (e.g., those without descriptive categories) tend to be different when repeated over time, or with a different group of respondents.

an unexpected opportunity arose to use the methodology in a consultancy assignment for a large community based water supply and sanitation project in Nepal (see section 3.1. for more details).

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### **The GAP Effect: Treasuring the Experience**

Ajaya Devi Chaudhary is educated and comes from a better off household, but before the NEWAH GAP project, she never had the opportunity to participate in community meetings and other community development activities. She has been working as the WUSC treasurer for 3 years in the Dhodhana GAP project and feels lucky that she got this opportunity.

She decided to run as the treasurer out of her own interest and because she was encouraged by all the men and women in the community. Before becoming the treasurer she felt very uncomfortable to participate in community meetings with men, but now she feels differently. She says, “Now I am very happy because I am a woman and I am able to play a leadership role as men do. I have been participating in the decision making process and I can give my opinion confidently in community meetings.”

The project has changed the community for the better. Before the project, men never felt the need for women’s participation in community meetings, and only men were called and participated. Now most of the men in the community, irrespective of caste/ethnic group and class, are more gender aware and encourage their wives or female members of their family to participate in community meetings. The poorest households have been able to receive free latrines and financial support to construct the water points. They now feel that this has been the biggest achievement of their community.



### **3. USING THE NPA**

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#### **3.1 CONSULTANCY FOR A SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY**

During December 2002, NEWAH was asked to send a proposal to ARD International, USA, to use the NPA for the Socioeconomic Study (SES) in 5 villages in the 5 development regions of Nepal for the Project Preparation Technical Assessment (PPTA) of a proposed Community-Based Water Supply and Sanitation Project (CBWSSP) in Nepal, funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The proposal contained a Brief Note on the NPA (see Annexure 4) and NEWAH suggested to ARD that while NEWAH GAP teams would carry out the assessment, and external consultant would provide analytical support. Successful negotiations resulted in the first consultancy assignment being awarded to NEWAH, in January 2003 to use the NPA outside NEWAH.

In addition to the NPA, ARD wanted NEWAH to carry out a household income and expenditure survey (HIES) to evaluate, among others, household income from different sources, expenditure on various items, loss of income and time due to water borne diseases and willingness to pay for improved water and sanitation services. The fieldwork was carried out in February and March 2003 and a 6-volume final report submitted in April 2003 (NEWAH,

2003).<sup>13</sup> The Socio-economic survey was well appreciated by ARD and ADB, and served to introduce the NPA to the water sector in Nepal, and to popularise NEWAH's GAP approach.

NPA findings were subsequently incorporated into the design of an ADB loan project to the Government of Nepal worth US\$30 million, for rural water supply and sanitation. This included many features of NEWAH's GAP approach such as

- Fifty percent paid unskilled labour contributions to the poorest households;
- 50/50 gender balance & proportional representation of castes and ethnic groups in Water User Committees
- Trained women and men in paid technical jobs;
- Inclusion of men and 'out-of-school' children in health, hygiene and sanitation education;
- Subsidised sanitation units for the poorest households who are below the poverty line and
- Subsidies to poor and remote communities.

### **3.2 ASSESSING THE GAP APPROACH USING THE NPA**

Next the GAP team carried out a comparative post-project evaluation of 15 projects, i.e., 1 GAP pilot project and 2 non-GAP projects in each of the five regions of Nepal. Although 15 communities (5 GAP and 10 non-GAP) were originally targeted by the survey it was only possible for NEWAH staff to carry out a partial survey in one of the GAP pilot projects, Lekthala village in Baitadi district, in the Far West region of Nepal, due to the conflict situation in the country.<sup>14</sup>

#### **Objectives**

- Assess whether the GAP approach benefits women, poorest and marginalized people.
- Provide a basis for mainstreaming the GAP approach into all of NEWAH's projects.
- Highlight lessons learnt and inform future GAP interventions.
- Illustrate the strong links between gender, caste, ethnicity and poverty.
- Provide a basis to advocate in the water sector at district, national and international levels.

#### **Methods and Sampling**

In each village, besides community meetings, social mapping and well-being ranking, detailed Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were held with households from three different socio-economic groups, better off, medium and poor, and with school children, school teachers and out-of-school children. The Water Point Survey of the NPA surveyed a maximum of 5 households around each water point, using a questionnaire to collect information on water collection quantities and time, and on water, food and latrine hygiene and use.

#### **Findings**

In general, GAP projects allowed different socio-economic groups more voice and choice in technical and design issues of water supply, and in management. In particular, there are two areas where GAP projects show better implementation results.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Since the reports are the property of ARD and ADB, the detailed findings cannot be specified further here.

<sup>14</sup> This section is based on the Report of this assessment (James, et al., 2003)

<sup>15</sup> See Annexure 5 for detailed findings of the evaluation.

◦ **Voice and choice in project management**

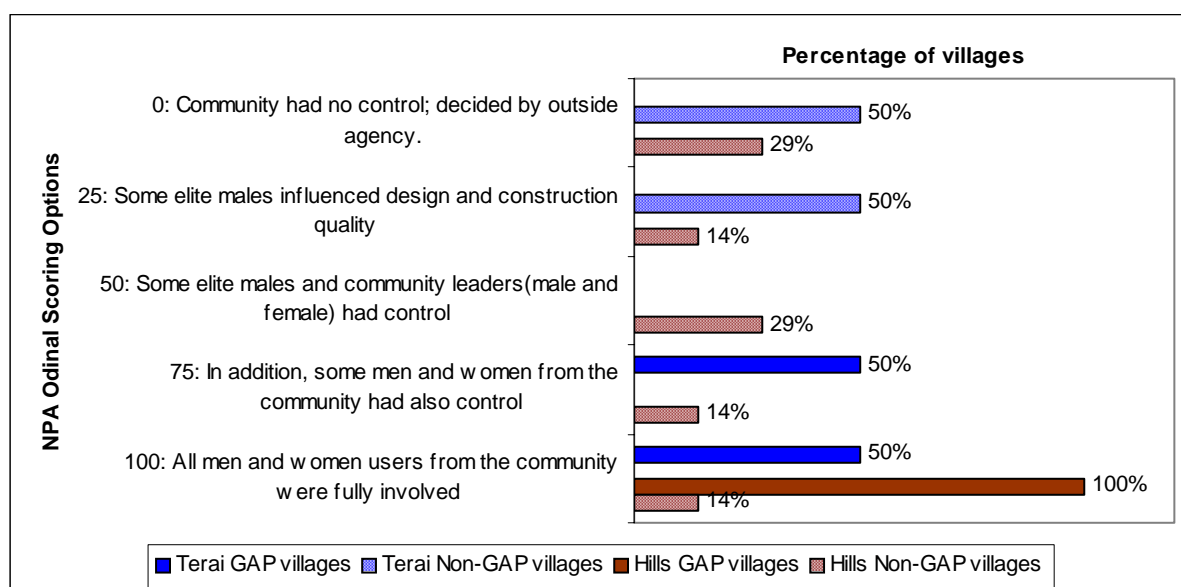
Since all socio-economic groups had a better voice and choice in electing or selecting their Project Management Committee in GAP projects, performance has been better (see Table 3).

Table 3: Key areas where GAP projects are performing better than Non-GAP projects

- Performance of PMCs, though hill GAP PMCs are better than those in *terai* GAP projects.
- Number of women in the PMC in general and in key management positions within the PMC
- Influence on quality of construction
- Maintenance of water points
- Timeliness of repairs
- Payment and collection, in general, with 2 GAP projects having a graded rate payment system
- Stronger action on defaulters
- Division of paid and unpaid labour between men and women from all socio-economic groups.

An example of the NPA descriptive ordinal scoring results is in Figure 2, which gives the percentage of villages giving different ordinal scores for the indicator ‘who was involved in design and construction quality of the water supply system’. A larger percentage of GAP villages in both hills and *terai* regions report greater involvement by community men and women.

Figure 2: Community involvement in design and construction quality of the water supply system



◦ **Impact on Women**

A marked difference between GAP and non-GAP projects is the impact on the status of women. Both the Gender Awareness Training and the focus of the GAP teams appear to have influenced the women in these villages, giving them greater confidence and ability through training and experience in responsible positions. Especially encouraging are the findings on the level of participation by women in community meetings, as reported by them, which show that there may be relatively fewer social barriers to women participating in future community project

meetings, especially if gender-sensitive processes are applied by projects that encourage and enable them to participate (see Table 4).

Table 4: Key findings on the Gender Division of Labour

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- **Women spend less time collecting water** in GAP projects than the women in non-GAP projects, largely because the other members in the household contribute more time and effort to this shared household task.
  - **Women acknowledge that men are sharing more of these household tasks**, but the increase in men's share is larger in GAP villages.
  - **Greater participation by poorest and BOMP women in GAP villages now**, despite greater share in non-GAP villages prior to the project – signifying that GAP activities have had an impact.
  - **Men in hills GAP villages acknowledge more participation by poorest and BOMP women in meetings** than these women acknowledge themselves, while BOMP women in *terai* GAP villages give themselves more than 50% share in attending meetings.
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### 3.3 REACTIONS TO THE NPA

#### GAP teams

The 5 regional GAP teams reviewed the NPA methodology used in the assessment and felt that the content of the NPA Manual was good, the structure and sequence of events was correct and that the guidelines and methods for the use of each tool was good. They also felt that the tools were appropriate for use in the community, that they elicited a real and clear picture of the situation in the community and the project.

However, the review of the NPA with the regional NEWAH teams and their project partners in the field also suggested several changes to improve the methodology for future use, including a provision for follow-up with regular project activity, standard indicators for the wealth ranking exercise, further simplification of some components, making assessment periods flexible according to the number of water points to be covered, and doing the assessment in winter when communities and project staff have fewer competing demands on their time (see Table 5).

Table 5: Refinements to the NPA suggested by the GAP Team

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- **Need follow-up with regular project activity** – at least a visit by project staff – since it raises expectations within the community, and it is better to start addressing the problems identified by the community as soon as possible, to avoid disappointment and loss of credibility of the exercise.
  - **Have standard indicators for the wealth ranking exercise**, instead of leaving it entirely to the community as done currently, since results cannot be compared subsequently.
  - **Simplify the household water collection survey** further, since respondents had difficulties in quantifying and remembering amounts collected (especially in another season, e.g., summer)
  - **Reduce time spent on community data inventory**, for instance by using existing information from an up-to-date regional database, and focus during the NPA only on the unserved population.
  - **Improve the methods used for the health and hygiene survey** to get reliable results
  - **Spend more time in the field** if needed: 4 days if less than 10 water points, and more otherwise.
  - **Do the NPA during winter** given access problems during the rains, and since the community is relatively free during winter, and results can be used for annual project planning and budgeting.
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The GAP teams also learnt many useful lessons that will stand them in good stead in the future:

- **Satisfaction** that they could master a rather complicated participatory methodology well enough to modify it for their own use.
- **Confidence** that their facilitation, computer and analysis skills could be improved sufficiently to be able to use the methodology effectively.
- **Realisation** that their vast experience of field reality, so often ignored in planning and management decisions, could be put to use in adapting new assessment methods.
- **Assurance** that they could present their findings to an audience including representatives from senior management and funding institutions.
- **A sense of achievement** in successfully undertaking a consultancy assignment using their newfound skills.

### Community Experiences

Overall the community men and women found NPA very interesting and a powerful methodology, where everybody has an opportunity to voice their opinions. In particular, they appreciated the fact that the NPA encourages particularly women, poor and *Dalits* to participate equally in the assessment of their water and sanitation systems, unlike standard assessments. They found the water point survey useful as an opportunity to visit all the water points in their village, while they enjoyed the participatory Hundred Rupee tool and Pocket Voting tool.

However, they found it difficult to recall or calculate water use consumption (especially its breakdown into specific uses like drinking, bathing and cleaning). Community men and women also felt that doing the NPA during winter would give them more time for participation.

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#### **THE GAP EFFECT: Engendering the Men, Empowering the Poor**

Phaperthum, a GAP project in Nepal's western region, has felt the effects of NEWAH's GAP approach..

Dev Kumari who serves as a vice-chairperson on the WUSC, believes the GAP project approach is successful because it includes and benefits both men and women from all socio-economic groups, particularly the poorer households. She feels that the Gender Awareness training that was provided to her and other users was beneficial. A positive change can be observed in the community, with men becoming more involved in cleaning around the house and the latrines, which traditionally has been a role for women.

Man Bahadur Bhujel, a community worker found that the Gender Awareness training successfully challenged the traditional belief that only women cook and clean. After the training there has been a positive change in attitude, and now, men are also helping in the kitchen gardens and help the women cook the meal after returning from the field – both of which would have been unheard of just a few years ago in Phaperthum.



## 4. FUTURE CHALLENGES

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### 4.1 NEWAH'S FUTURE PLANS

The NPA-based evaluation helped NEWAH to assess whether the GAP approach is instrumental in benefiting women, poorest and marginalized people. The assessment highlighted a number of lessons learned and issues which will guide future GAP interventions, including:<sup>16</sup>

- Further development of the NPA
- Incorporating disaggregation of data according to socio-economic groups, caste and ethnicity in all relevant NEWAH documents (such as project surveys, feasibility surveys, and evaluation forms)
- Further strengthen skills capacity of staff and project partners to integrate issues of gender, caste, ethnicity, equity and poverty issues at all stages of the project cycle.
- Promoting the GAP approach in the water and sanitation sector nationally and internationally

NEWAH plans to continue to mainstream the GAP approach in all its projects, programmes and partner organisations based on the outputs set forth in NEWAH's Log Frame (2000 – 2005), which include the following:

- Targeting marginalized communities: 50% of projects implemented will serve the poor, including marginalized ethnic communities and *Dalits*

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<sup>16</sup> Based on the report of the evaluation of GAP and non-GAP projects of NEWAH (James et al., 2003).

- Recruiting staff: 50% of all new staff will be recruited from disadvantaged caste and ethnic groups
- Increasing percentage of female staff to 25% and female board members to 40%

While these are definitely challenges, there are other possibilities also for NEWAH both within and outside their own organisation.

## 4.2 POSSIBILITIES WITHIN NEWAH

### ▪ Mainstream NPA into Regular Monitoring & Evaluation

As part of regular project Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), the NPA can be done periodically during the implementation of all village projects, with timely reports giving senior project management early warning about problem areas, and also highlighting good performance for further action. ‘Static’ data, i.e., which do not change with every round of data entry, needs to be collected only once during the project cycle and only ‘dynamic’ data, i.e., that which change over time needs be collected afresh, thus saving a considerable amount of time during subsequent NPA evaluations. Thus, findings of an initial NPA can be integrated into the planning and implementation stages of projects and entered into the NPA database to facilitate continuous project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) (see Table 6).

Table 6: Examples of integration of NPA components into regular project M&E

<i>Planning Stage</i>	◦ Community data inventory
	◦ Well-being ranking
	◦ Social mapping
<i>Implementation stage</i>	◦ Training Assessment - number of people trained by gender, socio-economic group and caste/ethnic group
	◦ History of participation in Service Establishment

In subsequent NPAs, the social map and well-being data collected previously can be used to verify any changes with the community during an evaluation and any major changes can be noted on the original. This will save at least one day’s time when doing an NPA evaluation in future.

### ▪ Develop The NPA Database

If the NPA has to be mainstreamed within NEWAH’s M&E System, systematic efforts need to be put into creating a database for NEWAH’s GAP operations, capable of repeated data entry, replication and regular transfer of information from regions to centre using CDs and storage (with appropriate password protection) on the NEWAH website.<sup>17</sup>

### ▪ Integrate Databases in NEWAH’S M&E System

There are two possible stages of integration:

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<sup>17</sup> This will require bringing in professional computer database specialists to complement NEWAH’s in-house capacity. Promising possibilities that can be explored are the use of free open-source code software (as opposed to priced proprietary software like MS ACCESS or SQL Server) and the more stable LINUX operating systems (instead of Microsoft operating systems like Windows 1998 or XP).

Stage 1: Integrate all possible qualitative information generated using people's perceptions (the NPA), case studies and special studies, using, say, the Qualitative Information System (QIS).<sup>18</sup>

Stage 2: Integrate the NPA (or QIS) with NEWAH's current M&E System: Currently NEWAH collects regular MIS information from its project villages and has also created databases for special studies (e.g., *Utthan* or Looking Back Study (LBS) and the Health and Hygiene Surveys). The NPA database or the QIS can be integrated with these existing financial, technical and MIS databases within NEWAH's current M&E System, as suggested for instance by the System for Integrated Monitoring Assessment and Learning (SIMAL).<sup>19</sup> This integration will, however, require a comprehensive overview of the entire M&E system, and will take time and resources.

The advantages, nonetheless, can be substantial, and include:<sup>20</sup>

- Vastly improved 'visibility' of the impact of project investments and approaches
- A single platform to assess financial, physical, economic, social and institutional aspects of project planning and implementation, and
- Incorporation of stakeholder perceptions directly into adaptive management

#### **4.3 POSSIBILITIES OUTSIDE NEWAH**

Three products can be marketed within the water and sanitation sector in Nepal and beyond.

- The Gender and Poverty (GAP) approach
- The NEWAH Participatory Assessment (NPA) and
- A Comprehensive M&E System

All three products can be made available as interactive bi-lingual CDs along with Operation Manuals, to other NGOs and to government and donor agencies working in the water and sanitation sector in Nepal, for the following:

- To use the NPA for one-time assessments
- To set up the NPA and the Comprehensive M&E System for repeated monitoring
- To train others to use the GAP approach, the NPA and the Comprehensive M&E System.

The possibilities are definitely there for NEWAH, although it will require dedicated effort to convert possibilities into reality. Beyond dedication, it will require conviction based on the benefits of the NPA given its costs, and the advantages of exploiting its potential.

#### **4.4 IS THE NPA WORTH IT?**

The real worth of the NPA to NEWAH is its ability to capture effectively the difficult-to-measure benefits of a gender and poverty approach. Since it mattered to NEWAH whether

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<sup>18</sup> See James, Postma and Otte (2003).

<sup>19</sup> Developed for the World Bank's Rajasthan District Poverty Initiatives Project in India (James & Kaushik, 2000b).

<sup>20</sup> For more details on these advantages, see James, Postma and Otte (2003).

women, the poor and the other marginalized are able to participate more effectively in development projects, 'feel' more empowered, and have a voice in decisions that concern them, they chose to define, plan and implement the GAP approach. But to go beyond the pilots, it was vital that progress be checked against objectives, that mistakes be corrected, and lessons learnt.

The NPA has given NEWAH a customised assessment methodology to capture the nuances of their GAP approach, through the eyes of their stakeholders. The NPA today is as important to the GAP Unit as a way to see how their strategies have fared on the ground, as technical surveys are to NEWAH engineers to look back at the performance of their water systems. In fact, GAP-trained NEWAH engineers now appreciate the benefit of the NPA, as access to both social and technical information reveals interdependencies and enhances integrated planning.

Given the twists and turns that invariably accompany the creation of any new methodology (see Box 2), the NPA has been relatively expensive to create. But this experience may yet pay dividends not only by making the GAP approach more effective, but also in terms of marketing their newly-developed expertise within the water and sanitation sector, especially in rural Nepal.

**Box 2: Time line of developing the NPA**

Jan 1999	Pilot GAP projects started
Feb 2002	MPA training
Mar 2002	MPA in Rayale and Bihabar
Mar 2002	Database training & data analysis
July 2002	Customised database training
Aug-Oct 2002	Revising the MPA formats & Field Manual Identifying NEWAH's information needs
Nov 2002	Developing and pre-testing the NPA
Dec 2002	Developing the NPA database
Mar 2003	Fieldwork for the consultancy study
April 2003	Analysing results and reporting
Jul – Aug 2003	Assessment of GAP and non GAP projects
Sep 2003	Analysing results and reporting

To other NGOs struggling to find a way to address effectively the many 'soft' issues that make projects sustainable, and community men and women empowered and engendered, the lesson from NEWAH's experience with the NPA can be summed up in just three words: 'It is possible'. With dedication and hard work, they have taken a useful methodology, improved it and made it more suitable for their own purposes. While they are sure that this investment will help to make their Gender and Poverty Approach more effective on the ground, they are also happy to share the lessons they learnt, and now their expertise, with other NGOs wishing to take the same road.

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**THE GAP EFFECT: Transforming Tola Budha**

Tola Budha is from a poor household in Simratipokhari who benefited from the 50 % wage labour subsidy of the GAP approach. She actively participated in the construction of the water supply project with the pipe and cement transportation work, pipeline digging and collecting other local construction materials. With her wages she was able to buy and raise goats. She is very happy for the wage subsidy payment since without it, she would have had to contribute her own time and labour. As a project community worker she received health and hygiene training, kitchen gardening training and gender awareness training, all of which have given her more self-confidence to speak up in groups and she is now able to voice her views and opinions. This has led to changes in her family and neighbours and the men now share the domestic work with the women. NEWAH's GAP project has virtually transformed her life.

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## ANNEXURE 1

### MAINSTREAMING A GENDER AND POVERTY (GAP) APPROACH IN NEWAH<sup>21</sup>

#### A1.1 Moving Towards a GAP Approach

An intense process to mainstream a Gender and Poverty approach had begun with a discussion in late 1998 involving senior management staff about gender and poverty. A common understanding was subsequently built around gender inequality as a major constraint to poverty reduction, and identified as a priority concern in NEWAH's Logical Framework. In response, NEWAH recognised tackling social exclusion and promoting gender equality as crosscutting themes to be mainstreamed across NEWAH. Further analysis was continued in a 'Gender Awareness for Poverty Reduction' workshop for senior and middle management staff in early 1999, which proved to be a catalyst for substantial change within NEWAH.<sup>22</sup>

#### A1.2 Phasing In The GAP Approach

After training a first batch of GAP teams in 1999, NEWAH trained a second batch in 2002 as gender awareness trainers, as part of phasing the GAP approach into NEWAH (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of Operationalisation of GAP Approach in NEWAH

1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Perspective-building workshop for senior managers, regional coordinators and some field level staff to understand the rationale of gender and poverty mainstreaming in the context of NEWAH and to articulate a collective vision for gender equality and sustainable development</li><li>• GAP Unit established to ensure that gender, caste and poverty are integral to NEWAH strategies</li><li>• Identified GAP team members (both women and men), who had the potential to become in-house gender resource persons and to facilitate GAP sensitive programmes</li><li>• A series of mini-workshops and reflection sessions to formulate clear and measurable goals and expected outcomes to gender/caste equality and poverty sensitivity</li><li>• Structured training for all GAP teams to equip them with basic concepts and tools for gender analysis and gendered project planning (teams also delivered gender awareness training to other regional staff)</li></ul>
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of all NEWAH policies, formats and procedure manuals to ensure that gender/caste biases in language and procedure are removed and gender/caste and poverty issues were highlighted</li><li>• Perspective-building workshops for selected partners and for community people to understand NEWAH mandate and goals and the rationale of mainstreaming a GAP approach in NEWAH</li><li>• Implementation of 5 GAP pilot projects - comprising hill (gravity flow) and <i>terai</i> (tube well) areas</li></ul>
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Implementation of GAP pilot projects continued</li><li>• Developed gender and poverty sensitive community self monitoring tools by GAP teams</li><li>• Phase-in key GAP interventions in all NEWAH projects, e.g., well-being ranking to identify the actual poor, free latrines to the poorest, gender balanced WUCs &amp; female and male health motivators.</li></ul>
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A series of GAP teams workshops on MPA, Methodology for Participatory Assessment (later developed as NPA, NEWAH Participatory Assessment) to develop toolkits and checklists for gender and poverty sensitive community management monitoring and evaluation and for impact assessment</li><li>• Phase II GAP team formed and trained in the regions to phase-in GAP interventions by 2004</li></ul>
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provided consultancy services to the HMG/ADB Nepal Community Based Water Supply and Sanitation PPTA for a Socio-economic Survey using NPA methodology</li><li>• 5 GAP pilots and 10 non-GAP projects assessments using NPA methodology</li></ul>

<sup>21</sup> Abstracted from NEWAH (2003a).

<sup>22</sup> See also section 2.1.

Each regional office now has two GAP teams (12 staff) able to implement three GAP projects in each region, building NEWAH's in-house capacity to comprehensively implement, monitor and evaluate gender and poverty-sensitive projects. Without this in-house gender training capacity at all levels, NEWAH will not be able to gender awareness train the 50-60 new communities and local partners it works with each year. In 2002 the GAP approach was integrated in around 35% of NEWAH's programme, with the aim of achieving 100% integration by 2005.

A large number of experienced staff were involved building a GAP approach and many internal debates, workshops, trainings and research were organised to increase understanding of gender, caste and poverty in relation to community managed water supply and sanitation. NEWAH staff, particularly GAP team members, played a key role in mainstreaming a GAP approach within NEWAH by ensuring that gender, caste and poverty issues were highlighted in the planning, project design and implementation of GAP pilot projects, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The senior management team helped to facilitate the process by ensuring adequate resource allocation to allow staff to attend and participate in gender training, by supporting the GAP teams in gender mainstreaming, and by committing themselves to increasing gender and caste equality and poverty sensitivity within the organisation. This has reinforced the notion within NEWAH that gender and poverty is everyone's responsibility.

### **A1.3 Programme Level Change IN NEWAH**

As part of mainstreaming gender into the organisation, NEWAH began to review personnel policies, working principles and NEWAH's strategic plan from a gender perspective. For example, the outcomes of the personnel policy review included increasing paid maternity leave, provision of child-care allowance, introduction of one week's paternity leave, funeral rights leave and targets for recruiting more women into the institution. It should be noted that benefits of the review accrued to both men and women, which was important in reinforcing messages that 'gender' was not about improving working terms and conditions for women only, men were targeted too as part of a family-friendly personnel policy.

As a result of NEWAH's personnel policy changes implemented from 2000, the number of women staff in NEWAH in 2000-2003 increased from 13% to 23%. There are now a total of 47 women out of a total of 206. With new recruitment, 17% of senior level staff is now women with other women staff working at the mid and lower levels of NEWAH. In its strategic plan NEWAH has committed itself to increasing the number of women to 25% by 2005. However, there are constraints to this increase of women in the rural drinking water sector in Nepal, since there is only a very small pool of technically trained women in the sector. Women are not encouraged by parents to enter into technical fields and marriage frequently prevents mobility of women, which is often required in the sector. Most women are therefore employed in the socially acceptable health and sanitation components of projects. NEWAH is considering increasing the number of on-the-job training technical posts to enable more women to train into technical positions in the future (Moffatt and Pandey, 2003).

There are still areas where NEWAH feels it needs to improve at the institutional level. NEWAH's Executive Board comprises 14% women and this needs to increase. Similarly, it has not been able to attract people on the Board who represent caste and ethnic diversity or the poor. While NEWAH recognises it is equally important to demonstrate that its governance not only supports but also demonstrates what it believes, this has been a challenge in practice and takes time to achieve. In a recent review of its strategic plan NEWAH has committed itself to increasing the number of women as board members to 40% by 2005. Most decisions have been

carried out at the senior management level, upon the recommendation of the GAP teams, for operationalising the Gender and Poverty approach. Despite gender-awareness training it was disappointing (but not entirely unexpected) to observe at the early stages that some staff, both men and more surprisingly women, were insensitive about women's issues. This led to challenges at different times in the process to obtain the support and commitment from staff members in taking gender and pro-poor actions. In order to increase its number of women staff, especially at senior management level, then NEWAH's Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy will consider allowing women as well as men to first develop their gender awareness, skills and competency before they take senior decision making responsibilities in the future (Moffatt and Pandey, 2003).

#### **A1.4 Changes In Project Implementation**

NEWAH's Gender and Poverty strategy aims to ensure that benefits obtained through improved water supply and hygiene practice are sustainable and reach to women and the poorest, thereby improving their status, confidence, involvement in decision making processes and access to economic resources. Since NEWAH's primary focus is on water supply, sanitation and health education, NEWAH felt it could only be sensitive to the issue of poverty and could not implement any programmes aimed directly at poverty alleviation since that was beyond its mandate. However, by being sensitive to poverty, NEWAH can do a number of things that, in the long run, can help to alleviate poverty.

NEWAH has developed a number of strategies to provide various subsidies to poor households based on the principle that no households in NEWAH's project areas should be deprived of its services because of the difficulty they have to fulfil NEWAH's requirements. An equally important principle guiding the formulation of these strategies is that NEWAH's requirements for community women and men to participate in its activities should not further deteriorate the economic condition of poor households nor should it widen the existing gap between the rich and poor. As such, a Gender and Poverty sensitive policy was formulated as follows:

- **Gender Awareness training to partners and community:** Holding regional gender awareness training and GAP approach orientation to both partners and communities, to promote gender-sensitive pro-poor policies including an awareness of gender prescribed roles and attitudes that have negative impacts on the family, community and development.
- **Confidence building of women and poor men to participate in projects:** Working to encourage women and poor men to attend meetings and to voice their opinions, to build confidence of women and poor men to train in technical jobs, to take key positions in community management committees, to achieve equal access to project information, training and paid job opportunities, and to negotiate with richer/elite groups of men and women.
- **Well-Being ranking of households to identify poor members:** Identifying the poorest households using criteria decided by villagers themselves in order to provide additional support such as paid unskilled labour, free latrines and differentiated financial contributions for O&M, in agreement with the community management committee.
- **Free latrines to the poorest households:** Because the poorest households cannot afford to purchase permanent latrines, and since temporary latrines have not been effective, free permanent latrines are constructed for over 90% of the poorest households, especially the disabled and the elderly.

- **Graded rate system of O&M payments according to socio-economic group:** Introducing a graded rate operation and maintenance (O&M) which allows for the poorer socio-economic groups to pay less than the better off groups, since flat rate water user fee for O&M often penalises the poor.
- **Consulting women also in design and planning:** Consulting women over location of tap stands and tube wells to meet their practical needs of privacy (when bathing) and convenience (while washing clothes) and revising design for tap stands to include a bathing area and to keep the number of faucets flexible.
- **Health and sanitation education to men as well as women:** Training men also as community health volunteers since they are better able to persuade other men on the benefits of a latrine as, in their role as fathers, they can assist their children in changed hygiene practices, and as men are prime in decisions on whether or not to purchase a latrine.
- **Health and sanitation education to ‘in-school’ and ‘out-of-school’ boys and girls:** Expanding the Child-to-Child approach to ‘out-of-school’ children, since they are not covered under school hygiene and health awareness programmes.
- **Gender balanced community project management committees (PMCs):** Being proactive in persuading communities of the benefit of a 50/50 gender balance in community management committees, to help ensure that women participate with men in decision making over water resources and to minimise management committees being dominated and controlled by male elites.
- **50% unskilled labour contribution to the poorest households:** Implementing 50% payment of the standard daily labour rate for the poorest men and women who contributed unskilled labour, since poor men and women who are often ‘volunteered’ by elites to contribute unpaid and unskilled labour in WATSAN projects are being penalised as poor families are unable to work in their fields or as paid farm labourers during this period resulting in a loss of income.
- **Priority for paid project jobs and training to women and poor men:** Encouraging women to train along with men for paid jobs such as system maintenance caretakers, paid sanitation masons and paid porters, along with men.
- **Kitchen garden technical training:** Introducing kitchen garden technical training and a small vegetable seed subsidy to all households in response to demand from communities, particularly women.

## ANNEXURE 2

### BRIEFING NOTE FOR THE STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS<sup>23</sup>

#### **LINKING DEMAND, GENDER AND POVERTY FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

A Briefing Note on the Field Test of the MPA in Rayale in February – March 2002

NEWAH  
Kathmandu

**8 December 2002**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This note describes the Methodology for Participatory Assessment (MPA) developed by the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP), Washington, USA and the International Centre for Water and Sanitation (IRC), Delft, the Netherlands. The MPA uses a set of sector-specific indicators to assess sustainability, demand responsiveness, gender and poverty sensitivity and participation in water and sanitation projects.

Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH) began mainstreaming the Gender and Poverty (GAP) Approach in January 1999 and successfully piloted a GAP approach in 5 communities in 5 regions in Nepal.

This note highlights NEWAH's initial experience, findings and lessons learnt from field-testing the MPA in the community of Rayale in the Central Development Region of Nepal.

NEWAH plans to systematically and thoroughly monitor and evaluate the 5 GAP pilot projects, as well as other non-GAP projects in 2003, using a similar methodology.

### **2. FIELD TESTING THE MPA**

In early 2002, NEWAH chose to train the GAP Unit of NEWAH in the use of the MPA to monitor and evaluate projects in order to enable its communities to:

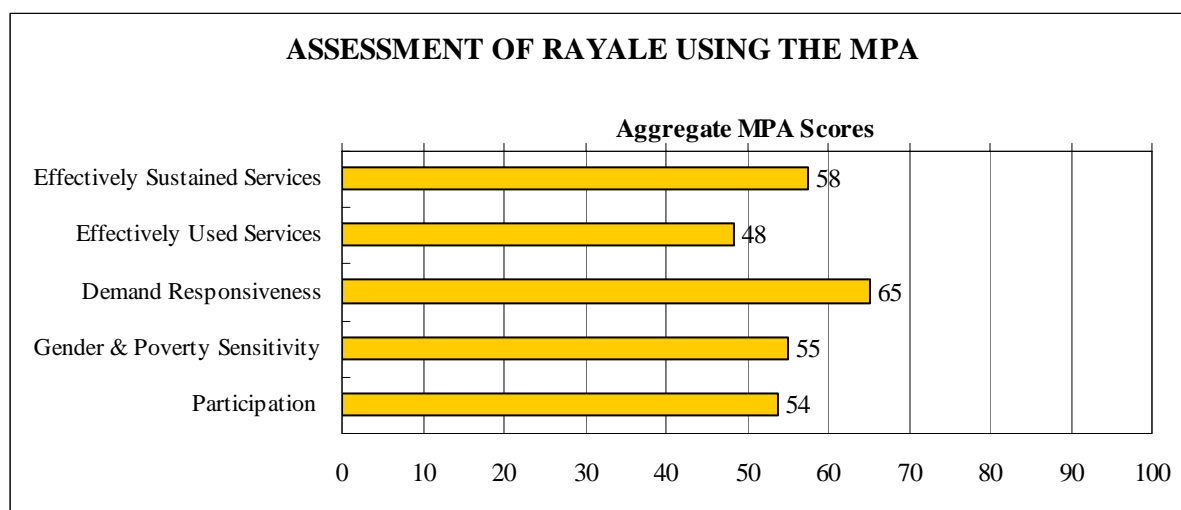
- Assess the sustainability of services and take actions for improvement
- Demonstrate how poor households and women participate in and benefit from the services as compared to the better off and poor.
- Make visible the key factors for attaining success in community water and sanitation projects.

After two weeks training in the use of the MPA, this methodology was tested in two rural communities, Rayale and Bihabar in Nepal. Both were eight year-old gravity flow systems.

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<sup>23</sup> Prepared for the Stakeholder Meetings organised by the GAP Unit of NEWAH on 9 and 10 December in Kathmandu, Nepal.

### 3. INITIAL RESULTS FROM THE MPA FIELD TEST IN RAYALE



The performance of Rayale was generally poor, with special problems being the following:

- No community voice in decisions on water supply system; done by outside agency.
- Poor water flow because of the small diameter of GI pipe, leading to illegal pipe connections by the richer/higher caste households and severely reduced access to drinking water by the poorer/lower caste households at the tail end of the system.
- Domination by male community leaders in allocation of paid jobs, financing, extent of service delivery, location of facilities, and composition of project management committee (PMC), resulting in conflict and non-payment of user charges.
- Lack of transparency of financial records.

### 4. LESSONS LEARNT

The field test revealed that the MPA was a very useful methodology for assessing sustainability linked to demand, gender and poverty. However, the feedback from the staff found the Process too time consuming for them and for poor people of the community, since each assessment required around 5-6 days. Also, staff trained in gender and poverty issues, with strong facilitation and analytical skills are also needed to ensure that the MPA is conducted properly, while database skills are also required. And finally, health and sanitation issues are not addressed in the MPA.

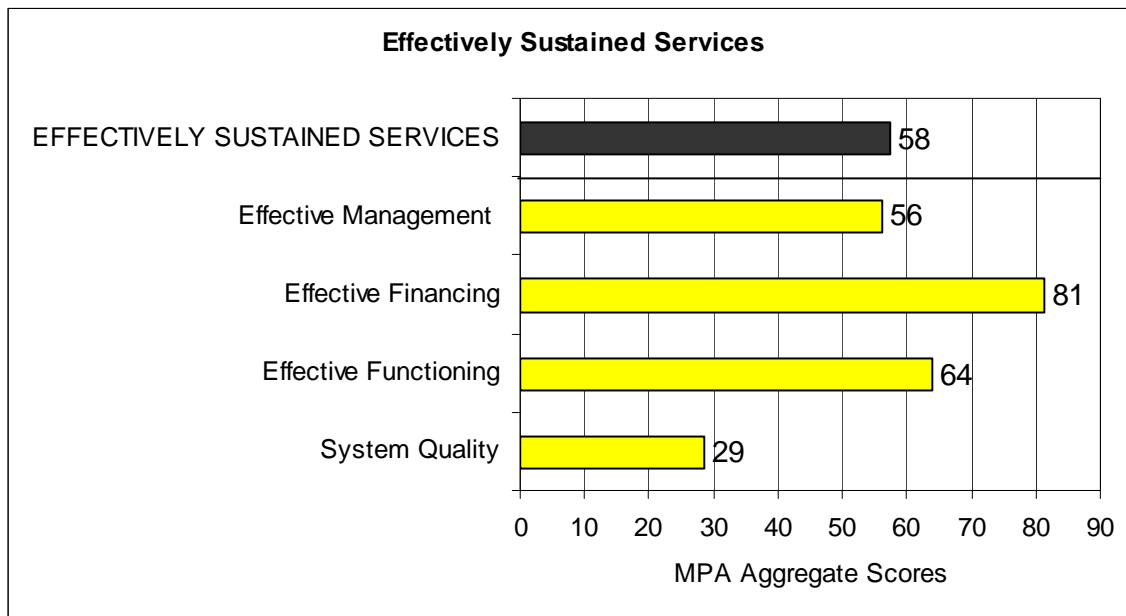
### 5. FOLLOW UP

NEWAH has revised and condensed the MPA to fit the Nepal context and to monitor the impact of the GAP approach; it has also been translated into Nepali. The health, hygiene and sanitation component has also been expanded. The revised methodology will be used to evaluate NEWAH's GAP pilot projects and some non-GAP projects in 2003.

## 6. RESULTS IN DETAIL

### A. Effectively Sustained Services

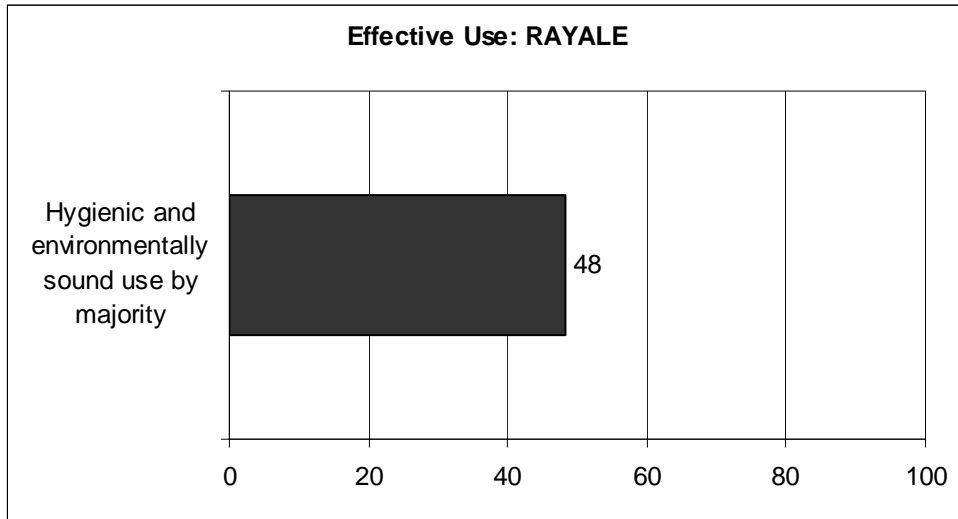
MPA indicators for effectively sustained services include system quality, effective functioning, effective financing and effective management, all of which are assessed by using participatory tools with better off, medium poor and poorest community men and women



- The system had technical problems and flaws in design from the very beginning. The diameter of GI pipe (galvanised iron pipe) was too small to allow sufficient flow for the water needs of the community, which led to illegal pipe connections by the richer/higher caste households residing at the head of the water system. This severely affected access to drinking water by the poorer/lower caste households at the tail end of the system.
- Since the poorest and medium poor groups did not have equal access to and control over services, there was conflict in the village, due to which all households stopped paying monthly user fees.
- The bulk of the operation and maintenance fund has been loaned among richer/upper caste men
- Financial records are not transparent

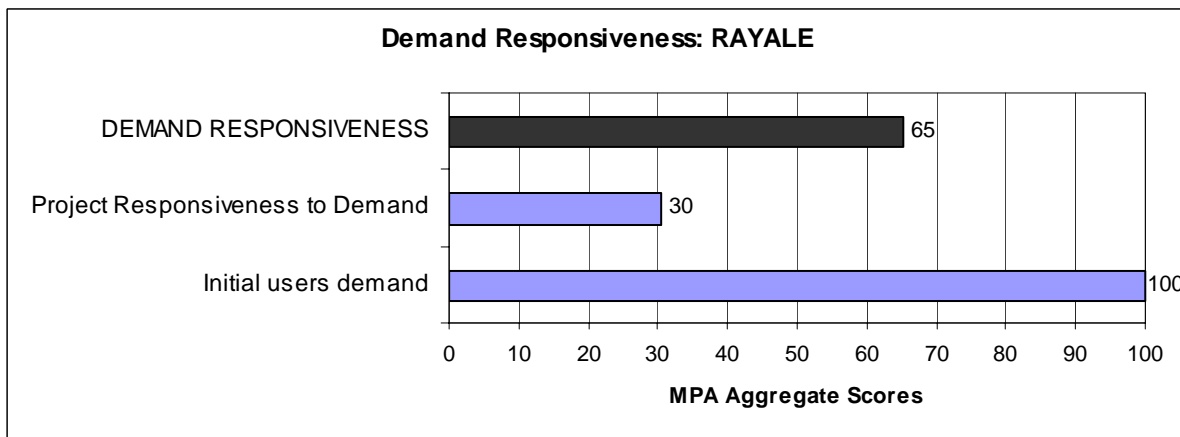
### B. Effectively used services

This assesses the percentage of households by socio-economic groups, which have proper access to drinking water throughout the year.



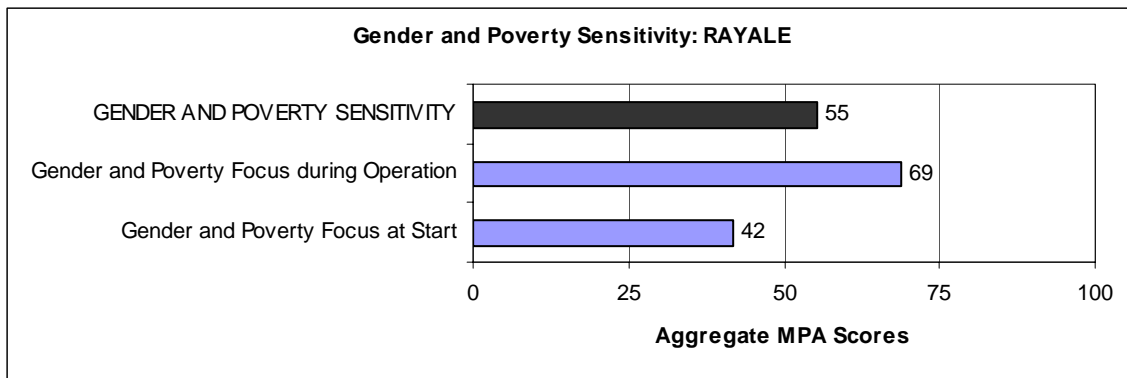
- Up to 50% of better off and medium poor households have proper access
- The poorest households at the tail end of the system do not have proper access; they have water for as little as one hour a day – which is not sufficient for their domestic needs.
- The richer households with illegal connections have a regular supply of water, which allows them to use water for all purposes.

**C. Demand Responsiveness**



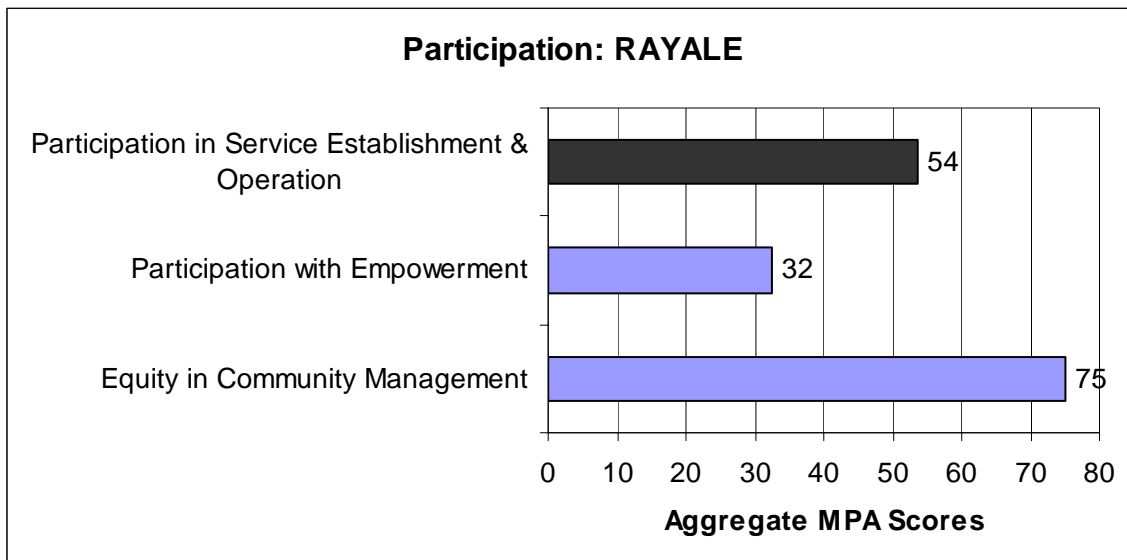
- Male community leaders dominated decisions on financing, extent of service delivery, and composition of project management committee (PMC).
- Key positions in the PMC are occupied by richer/upper caste men, who also decided the location of facilities.

### E. Gender and Poverty Sensitivity



- At the start of the project, only a few paid jobs were given, which went to better off men.

### E. Participation



- There was no system of monitoring of household contributions, labour and materials during service establishment
- Neither the community or individual users had control over design and construction quality; it was all done by an outside agency.
- Community meetings were held only once or occasionally, but decision-making has not been effective.
- Committees have rules established, but these are not recognised or followed.

### ANNEXURE 3

#### A SAMPLER FROM THE RAYALE STAKEHOLDER MEETING

*The Stakeholder meeting was held in Hotel Orchid in Kathmandu on 9 December 2002*

ISSUE	CONSENSUS ON ISSUE?			SUGGESTED ACTION				
	USERS	FUND BOARD	RED CROSS	What is to be done	How is it to be done?	By when?	Who will inform?	Inform by when?
<b>Improved sanitation:</b> Users want permanent latrines. Need health, hygiene and sanitation education (for different groups, incl. children)	YES	YES	YES	Permanent latrines	NEWAH and Red Cross to meet and organise additional funds	15 Dec 02	NEWAH	5 Jan 03
				Health, hygiene & sanitation education (for different groups)	<b>Once funds have been agreed,</b> NEWAH to meet internally and allocate additional staff and other resources to carry out improvements (e.g., liase with CRO to allocate additional staff, work out timing of deployment, etc.)	31 Mar 03	NEWAH	5 Apr 03
				Find funds, staff & other resources to provide hardware and software for improved sanitation	Plan and implement sanitation improvements	31May 04	NEWAH	5 Jan 04
Lots of illegal connections	YES	YES	YES	Increase diameter of pipe, for better pressure and water flow	Red Cross to liase with Fund Board to explore possibilities for additional funding	15 Dec 02	Fund Board	20 Dec 03
				Remove all illegal connections	Fund Board to decide on additional funding	31 Mar 03	Fund Board	10 Apr 03
					<b>Provided additional funds are available,</b> Fund Board and partner to meet users to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify illegal connections</li> <li>Undertake to improve system by specified date</li> <li>Get agreement that illegal connections will be removed as soon as system is improved</li> </ul>	20 Apr 03	Fund Board	15 Apr 03
					Carry out improvements to system	30 Apr 03	PMC	15 Apr 03
					Remove illegal connections	1 June 03	PMC	31 May 03

## ANNEXURE 4

### NEWAH PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT (NPA)

#### A Brief Note<sup>24</sup>

#### 1. THE NPA

The NPA is a participatory methodology to assess community level issues relevant to rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) projects. Its basic features are the following:

- **Flexibility:** It can be modified to suit particular situations, including socio-economic and institutional issues of gender, poverty, caste, ethnicity and participation. It can be used for planning, monitoring and assessment of RWSS projects, and can also be used to assess baseline situations even in communities that do not have a RWSS project.
- **Standard PRA tools:** The NPA uses standard PRA tools such as transect walks, focus group discussions, pocket voting, well-being ranking, social mapping, etc., and also has a household questionnaire, which can be used to assess time savings, water collection details, household income and expenditure, etc.
- **Descriptive ordinal scoring:** A distinctive feature is the use of a descriptive ordinal system, which is a reliable method<sup>25</sup> to translate qualitative community responses into numbers, which can be used for statistical analysis.
- **Qualitative and quantitative information:** In addition to ordinal scores, the NPA also captures qualitative information, both to explain these scores, and to probe issues in further detail (e.g., in case studies).
- **Information sharing with the community:** The information collected is shared with the community and also filed in community folders for future use by project implementing field teams.
- **Database of information:** The NPA also stores information in an MS Access database, from where it can be used for analysis, reporting and presentations.
- **Combination with MIS and GIS:** It can also be added to standard MIS and GIS packages to present socio-economic and institutional information together with technical and financial information.

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<sup>24</sup> Prepared by AJ James and Michelle Moffatt to send along with the proposal to ARD International to use the NPA and do a Socio-Economic Survey for the Project Preparation Technical Assistance for the Community Based Water Supply and Sanitation Project in Nepal, financed by the Asian Development Bank.

<sup>25</sup> 'Reliability' is the ability to elicit the same response in repeated focus group discussions. Results from some ordinal scoring systems (e.g., those without descriptive categories) tend to be different when repeated over time, or with a different group of respondents.

The NPA can also be used as a monitoring tool. If repeated periodically, the ordinal scores of the NPA can provide a quick snapshot view of (say, annual) project progress, in addition to the usual baseline and end line evaluation of project impact.

## 2. HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM THE MPA?

The NPA is based on the Methodology for Participatory Assessment (MPA), pioneered by the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) and the International Centre for Water and Sanitation (IRC), Netherlands. The main differences are the following:

- **Adapted to the Nepal context:** Apart from being in English and Nepali, the ordinal scoring system and the household questionnaire have been modified (and field tested) to capture the important contextual differences between gravity flow systems (in the hills) and the tube well systems (in the *terai*).
- **Addresses gender, caste, ethnicity and poverty issues relating to water and sanitation:** In addition to gender and poverty issues, the NPA has further refined its focus to also pick up important and related differences between caste and ethnic groups in Nepali communities.
- **Greater attention to health, hygiene and sanitation issues:** The NPA has developed tools to elicit information on current health, hygiene and sanitation issues and practice by gender, caste, ethnicity and socio-economic groupings.

## 3. COMPONENTS OF THE NPA AND ISSUES ADDRESSED

The NPA has the following components, which address a variety of issues:

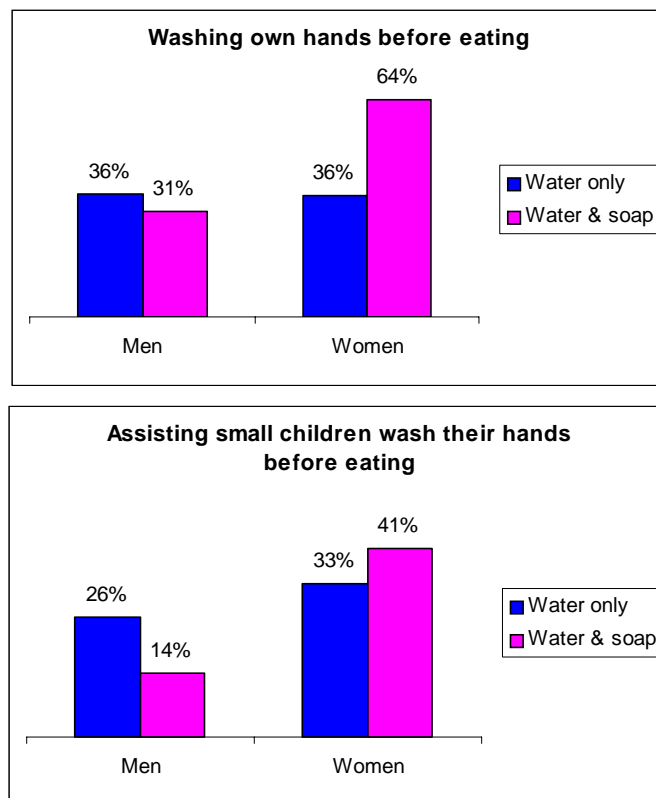
- **Community meetings:** to assess general information about the village, including
  - Access to social and economic infrastructure, information on past projects
  - Major caste groups, religions and languages spoken
  - Number of households (by socio-economic group, caste and ethnicity) not served by, and requiring access to, water supply and sanitation systems, along with reasons for current lack of access.
- **Well-being ranking and social mapping:** to identify households by socio-economic, caste and ethnic groups, and to represent this information on village social maps
- **Water system mapping:** to mark all existing water points and sources (traditional and improved), and components of water systems (if any).
- **Water point surveys:** to assess status of existing water points, including number of users (by caste and socio-economic group), adequacy, reliability, timeliness of repair, water quality, leakage, environmental sanitation (around the water point), effectiveness of maintenance training, default rates in user monthly charges (and reasons for non-payment), and social barriers to access; along with specific reasons, in each case.
- **Focus group discussions by gender and class (and also with school children and out of school children):** to assess differences in current health, hygiene and sanitation issues and

practices, performance of past project (e.g., participation in decision making, voice and choice in technology design, location, contribution to initial construction costs, financing for O&M etc.), gender division of labour within households, and participation by poorest men and women in community decision-making.

- **Case studies:** to pick up positive and negative impacts experiences with past projects and other community initiatives.

#### 4. EXAMPLES OF RESULTS FROM THE NPA<sup>26</sup>

##### 4.1. Current health and hygiene practices (hand washing at crucial times)



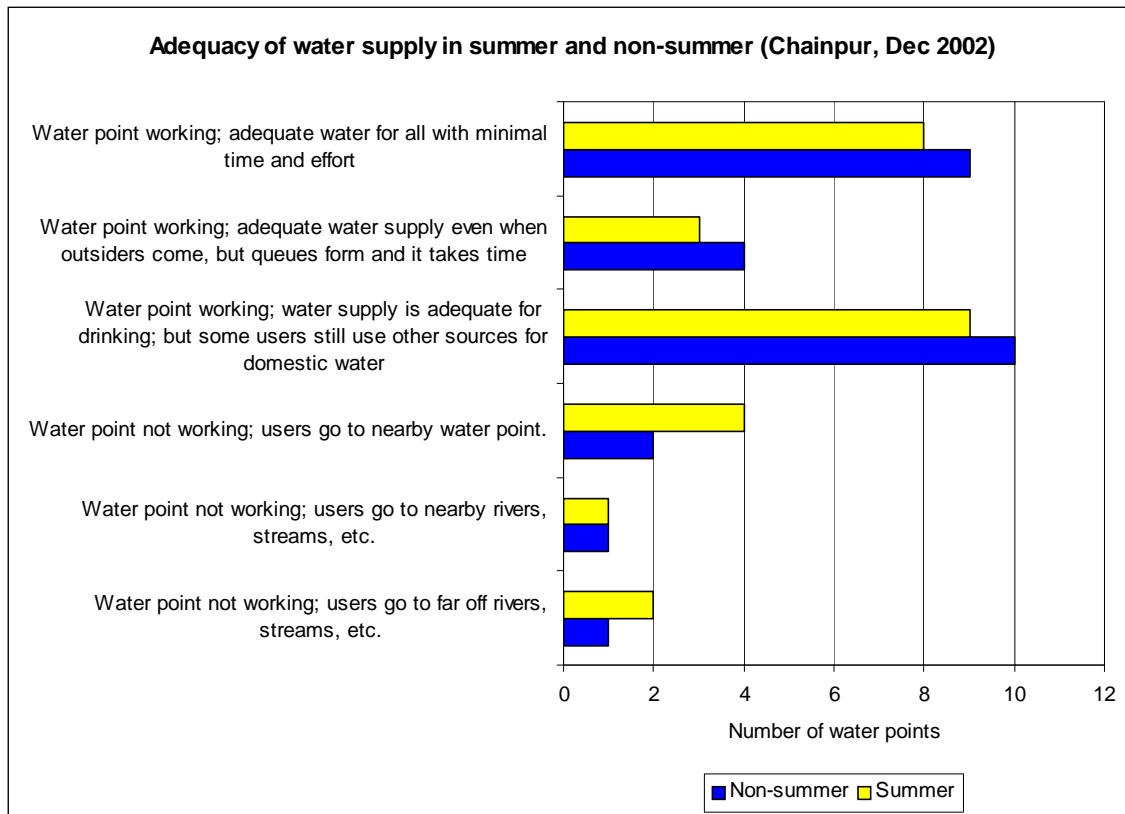
*Note:* The percentage of voters does not total 100% either because (1) all present did not vote or (2) not all households have small children.

These figures reveal that (1) a larger proportion of women than men wash hands with soap; and (2) a smaller proportion of men, compared to women, help small children in the family wash hands.

**Implication for project design:** Gender sensitive hygiene education, including (i) hygiene education targeted more at men (preferably by using male community health workers), to enable men also to change personal hygiene practices; and (ii) gender awareness training to promote greater gender balance in household tasks (e.g., fathers assisting small children to wash hands at crucial times). Increased adoption of improved hygiene practices contributes to reduced risk or occurrence of faecal-oral route diseases in children (e.g., diarrhoea).

<sup>26</sup> These are taken from the NPA field test carried out in Chainpur village of the Chitwan district of Nepal.

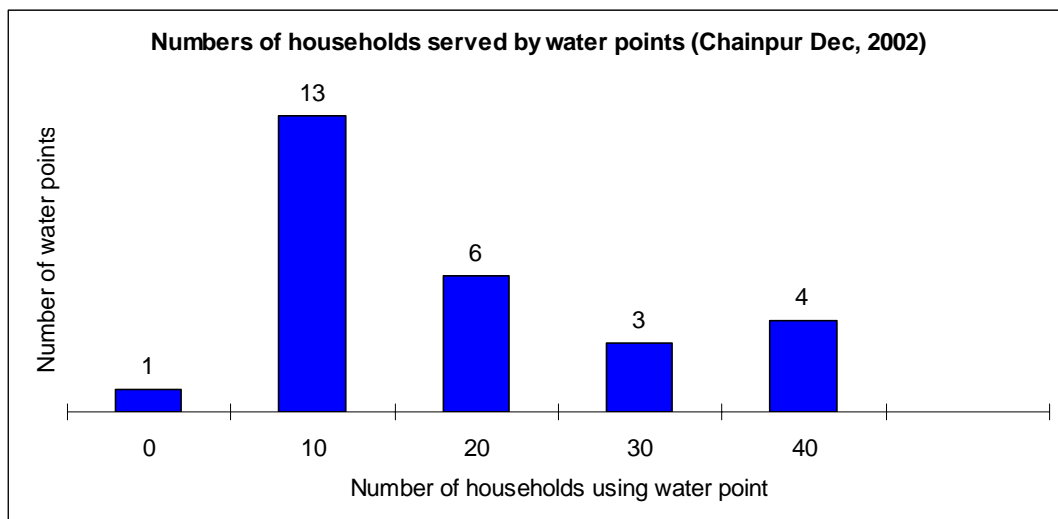
## 4.2 Adequacy of water supply from existing water points



The data show that availability of water decreases in summer, with fewer water points providing 'adequate' water, according to user perceptions. Also, a larger number of water points do not work in summer, forcing users to go to other sources (traditional or improved, far or near).

**Implication for project design:** The availability of water even from improved water sources can vary across time, especially during summer months, and requires constant monitoring. But instead of calculating per capita water availability (e.g., litres per capita per day), a simple user survey can reveal most of the information required.

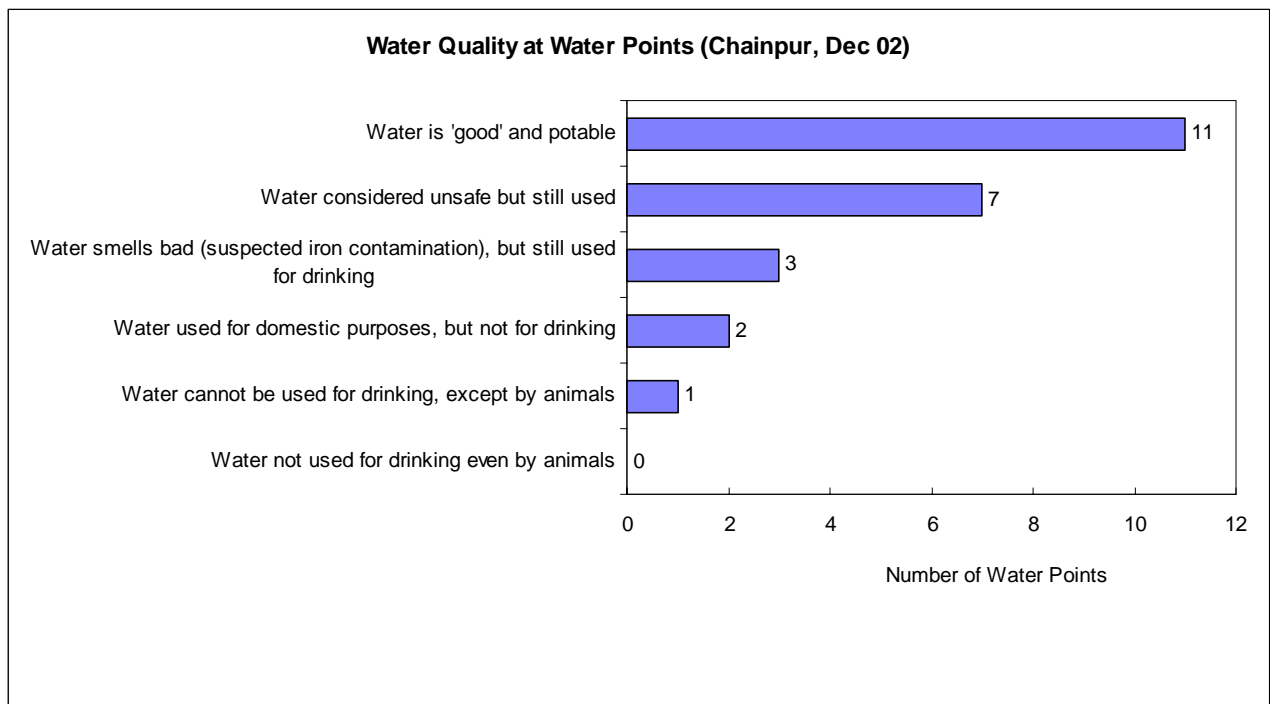
## 4.3 Average number of households using water points



The data show that, currently, there are less than 40 households per water point currently in Chainpur village. In particular,

- (1) Half the water points (13 out of 27) are used by around 10 households;
- (2) Most water points (19 out of 27) have 20 or less user households, and
- (3) Only 7 are used by more than 30 households

#### 4.4 Quality of water from water points

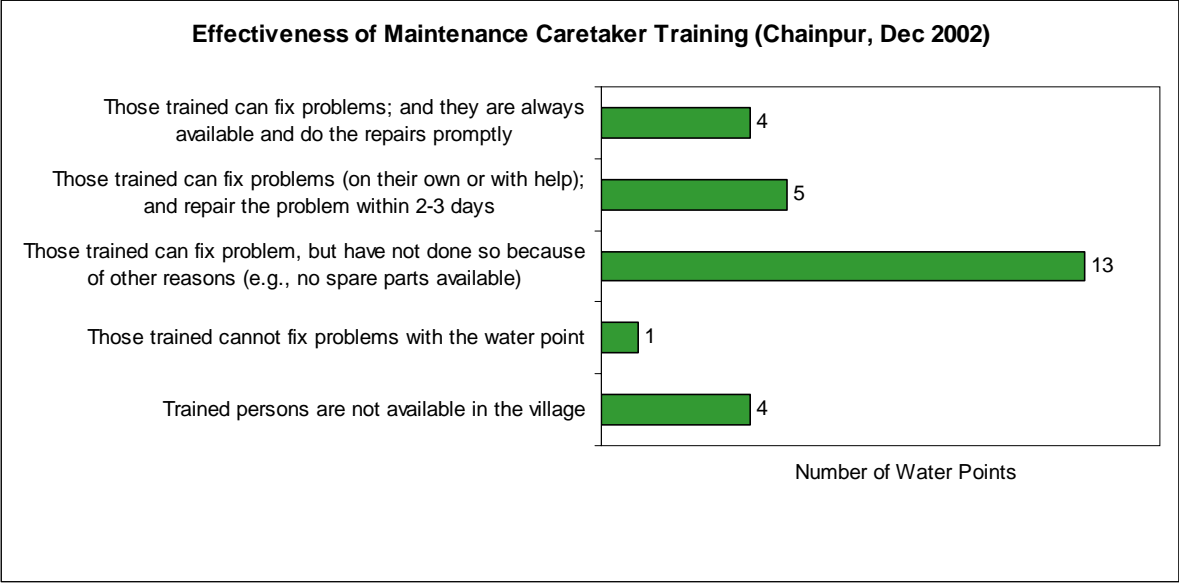


This chart shows that users considered the water from nearly half the water points (11 out of 24) to be 'safe' and 'potable'. A few others (7) are considered unsafe, but are still used for drinking. Only a minority smell bad (3), or are considered unfit for human consumption (3).

**Implication for project design:** User surveys can monitor physical parameters of water quality (e.g., turbidity, suspended matter, colour, bad taste, etc.), but cannot be relied on to rule out contamination by faecal coliform and arsenic. Thus, even when users feel their water is 'good and potable', they may still be exposed to major contamination. Water quality testing must be mandatory for all water points, irrespective of user perception.

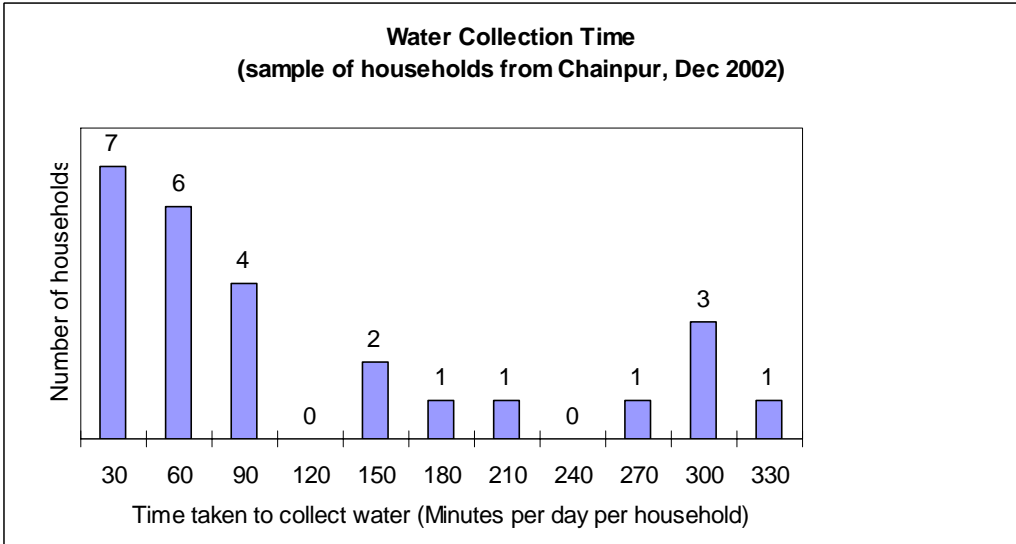
#### 4.5 Effectiveness of Maintenance Caretaker Training

The chart shows that there is a wide variety in the effectiveness of maintenance caretaker training, even though all maintenance caretakers were exposed to the same training exercises. In particular, a majority of caretakers (22 out of 27) can fix problems, but most have not been able to do so because spare parts are not available (for India Mark II and Mark III hand pumps). Only in a few cases are caretakers unable to fix the problem (the supporting qualitative information is that this caretaker is old and has forgotten what he was taught in the training) or have left the village (4 cases).



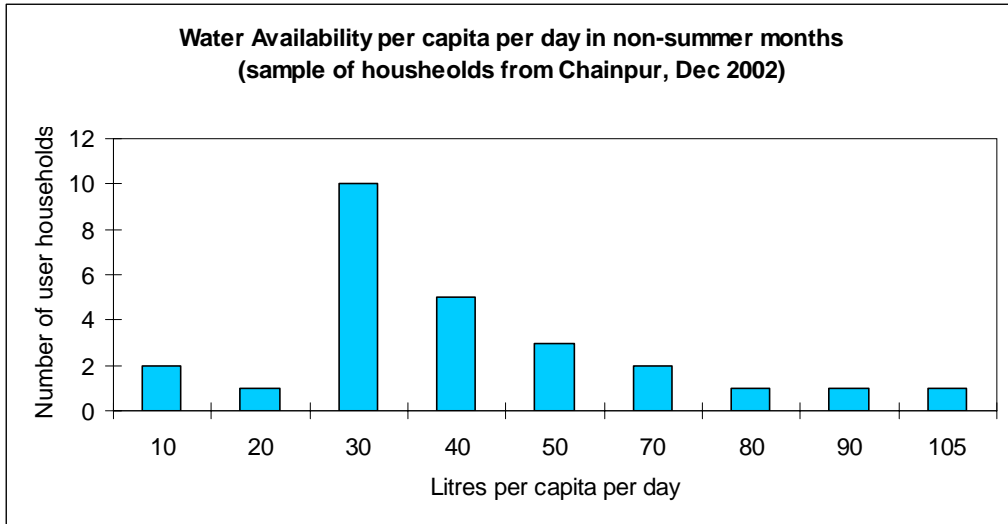
**4.5 Water Collection Time**

The household questionnaire can be used to collect information on total water collection time per household per day. For a sample of households, the results are given in the table below. The data show that a majority of households (17 out of 26) spend 90 minutes or less per day (including time spent by men, women, boys and girls). A minority of households (9 out of 27) spend between 150 and 330 minutes per day (2.5– 5.5 hours).



**4.6 Water collected per household per day**

The household survey asked respondents to list the number of trips made per day, and amount collected, by all family members. Since users bathe and wash clothes and vessels at the water point, the total amount brought home is only used for drinking, cooking, and washing the house. The data show that this sample of households used, on average, 39 litres per capita per day (children below 15 years were counted as 0.5 adult units).



## 5. OUTPUT

While the NPA provides all the qualitative information that can be gathered using a standard PRA exercise, it provides additional information on the size of the problem and a baseline that can be used for future project design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

## ANNEXURE 5

### EVALUATING THE GAP APPROACH WITH NPA<sup>27</sup>

#### A5.1 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE GAP VERSUS NON-GAP ASSESSMENT

**Access to Water And Sanitation Services:** Although there are no striking differences between GAP and non-GAP projects, a few key points are the following:

- User payments are more regular in GAP projects, especially in the hills.
- Water points in GAP projects appear to be better maintained and hence more reliable: repairs seem to be more methodical, leakages are fewer and the surroundings of water points are cleaner than in non-GAP projects – perhaps reflecting the work of a stronger PMC.
- Women in GAP projects spend less time collecting water than the women in non-GAP projects, largely because the other members in the household contribute more time and effort to this shared household task.
- More water is used by GAP households for kitchen gardens

**Participation in Decision Making:** In general, GAP projects seem to be performing better than non-GAP projects in terms of allowing people some voice and choice in technical and design issues of water supply (e.g., location of water points), though some issues are decided by technical parameters (e.g., design and location of other components of piped water schemes).

There also seems to be a marked change between the inception of the projects – when, presumably, the GAP approach was in its infancy – and later performance, when people have been involved much more in the operation and maintenance of these schemes. In particular, all socio-economic groups seem to have had a say in electing or selecting their Project Management Committee in GAP projects, which in turn represents their interests better in subsequent decisions. Another marked difference between GAP and non-GAP projects is the impact on the status of women.

Both the Gender Awareness Training and the focus of the GAP teams appear to have influenced the women in these villages, giving them greater confidence and ability through training and experience in responsible positions.

But as far as the poor are concerned, GAP projects may only have an edge over non-GAP villages, since there are several non-GAP villages where the poor state that they can also speak up and influence decisions if they want to.

**Effectiveness of Project Interventions:** There are no major differences between GAP and non-GAP projects in terms of the technical aspects of the water supply system. The review of financial management also showed up systemic and generic problems in both GAP and non-GAP projects. But GAP projects are slightly better in terms of quantity of water in the source,

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<sup>27</sup> These sections draw heavily on the evaluation report (James et al., 2003).

nature of contamination, quality of design, quality of materials and workmanship, and condition of drainage.

**Health and Hygiene Practices:** There are no major differences between GAP and non-GAP villages on health and hygiene behaviour, although differences exist as a result of terrain (i.e., *terai* versus the hills). However, there does seem to be a marked difference between GAP and non-GAP villages in the *terai*, in the focus area of water hygiene practices.

The results of pocket voting show some contrary trends, with more untrained men reporting hygienic practices than trained men, etc., and there are no discernable differences between the situation in GAP and non-GAP villages. But the team observed that the results of the hand washing pocket voting were different from their own observations on hygiene practice in that village. On asking, villagers acknowledged that they had voted on the basis of their knowledge of what they should be doing, rather than on actual practice, since they were embarrassed to admit their poor hygienic practices. While this admittedly reduces the potential of drawing meaningful conclusions from the data collected using pocket voting, the exercise nevertheless has an important lesson of re-confirming results from participatory exercises with the focus group. Methodologically, it suggests that some more effort needs to be put into refining the assessment techniques and tools used in this particular case.

**Gender Division of Labour:** A major finding from the use of the Hundred Rupee Tool on the gender division of labour (specially developed for the NPA) is that women continue to carry the burden of household tasks in these villages and, consequently, have less free time for rest and leisure. So long as this is the case, projects cannot afford to assume that women have time to attend meetings and participate in other project activities. But especially encouraging are the findings on the level of participation by women in community meetings, as reported by them, which show that there may be relatively fewer social barriers to women participating in future community project meetings, especially if gender-sensitive processes are applied by projects that encourage and enable them to participate.

## **A5.2. EVALUATING THE GENDER AND POVERTY (GAP) APPROACH**

The findings from the assessment reveal the following about NEWAH's GAP Approach.

- Increased access to water supply and sanitation by the poor and other socially excluded groups: While social discrimination was not a major issue in the surveyed villages, GAP or non-GAP, specific efforts made to include the poor under the GAP approach include
  - The survey of unserved households, and an enquiry into the reasons for the exclusion from the design of the existing system.
  - Flexible policy for number of households per water points to ensure that the more distant households, who are often poor and/or socially excluded, are not prohibited from access to water.
  - The graded rate system for payments by the poor.
  - The focus on kitchen gardens, as a combination of water supply and livelihood supporting activities.
  - Conscious efforts to include all socio-economic groups in selecting and running the project management committee (PMC).
  - Involvement in decision-making over water point locations.
  - Access to health, hygiene and sanitation education to 'out-of-school' boys and girls.
  - Latrine subsidies to special categories of the poor, including old and disabled men and women.
- Sustainable O&M payment system with the graded rate system combining with a more effective PMC to yield a better collection rate in GAP projects. However, full sustainability can only be achieved when collections are on the basis of replacement costs.
- Greater inclusion of often excluded groups in making decisions throughout the service planning and implementation process of projects: The assessment reinforced the fact that women, as the main users of water at household and community level, are more knowledgeable and perceptive than men concerning the water system. This warrants a greater involvement of women at all stages of the project, but especially during the initial design and implementation stage, to ensure a more sustainable system that meets women's needs. In comparison with the non-GAP villages, women and the poor in the GAP villages were allowed some voice and choice in the design and location of the water points and were involved more in the O&M of the schemes.
- Poor women trained as paid system maintenance caretakers and sanitation masons: This has helped these women, both economically and in terms of their self-confidence within and outside their households. In some cases, though, the women did not have the opportunity to apply their training after the project was completed.

- Gender balanced PMC: In comparison with non-GAP villages, the GAP villages had a larger number of women in the PMC, and in key management positions, not only at the end of the project, but also till the evaluation.
- Increased participation of women and poor men and women in community meetings: The rise in participation has not only been the result of an increasing self-confidence of those women picked out and sent for training, or to those given positions and responsibilities in running the water supply scheme or health promotion activities, but also in the operational space given to women through the gender and poverty approach.
- Increase in participation of women and poor men in the project decision making processes: Gender and poverty sensitive facilitation has resulted in a larger proportion of women on the PMCs of GAP projects, and the transformation of the lives of many women, both within and outside their households. GAP villages had a stronger representation on the PMC from different socio-economic and gender groups, both in terms of who voted for the PMC, and also in who were elected as members.
- Change in gender roles (e.g., men helping with domestic chores, women attending meetings, etc.) More men in GAP villages help out with common household chores, allowing women not only to save some time and effort in household activities, but also to increase their participation in community decision making activities. Although the share of household tasks has increased for men in the GAP villages, boys on the other hand continue to have the least share of household tasks among family members reflecting the societal practice of discrimination against girls. The socialisation process of gender roles starts from a young age. Promoting gender equity between girls and boys should perhaps be further stressed in future gender awareness training especially at the community level.
- Increased equity in household decision making, with an increased gender balance in the household reflected in the increasing control that women in GAP villages reported over the use of their own income, whereas more women in non-GAP villages reported being powerless to stop their men folk from spending their money.

### A5.3 KEY LESSONS FOR NEPAL'S WATER AND SANITATION SECTOR

Key lessons that can be distilled from the experience of assessing the Gender and Poverty approach of NEWAH that could guide future policy not only within NEWAH but also within the water and sanitation sector in Nepal, include the following:

#### Programme Level

- **Disaggregation of data by Socio-Economic Group (SEG):** Data needs to be disaggregated not only by gender, but also by SEG in order to assess whether women and the poor are benefiting from a more gender and poverty sensitive approach with equal opportunities to paid jobs, skilled training and decision making positions. Household beneficiaries should also be disaggregated by SEG and caste/ethnicity. In the surveyed villages a large proportion of the beneficiaries belonged to medium and better off households, with low representation from the *dalit* caste and ethnic groups. Disaggregating data by SEG and caste/ethnicity can help to identify to what extent the poor and socially excluded groups are being reached and can guide future policy and planning.

- **Better information dissemination needed:** In one village, the community thought the government had built their water supply system when in fact it had been built by NEWAH. This is a specific example of a much more general problem that requires a conscious effort to raise awareness and disseminate information to all men and women in villages (e.g., about successes in other villages, common problems, etc.), notably for health, hygiene and other activities aimed to develop community participation and unity. Lack of access to information and transparency, especially in decision-making and financial management can make projects unsustainable.
- **More support needed to male Community Health Workers (CHVs):** They face problems in trying to gather other men (given their time constraints) and to overcome the resistance they face from these other men in the community. Male CHVs can be extremely effective in fostering change with men where female CHVs cannot make any headway. Increased *tole* health education sessions could be held during the 2-year post-project phase to target more users and increase the impact of the training. There is still a lack of adequate funding for health and hygiene promotion in the sector. If changes in hygiene behaviour can be sustained then investing more money may be justifiable.
- **Innovative approaches are needed for health and hygiene promotion:** The GAP activities that have been successful include:
  - Targeting ‘out-of-school’ children for health and hygiene education,
  - Using children as change agents in the promotion of good hygiene behaviour,
  - Training male community health workers– traditionally seen as a woman’s role,
  - Providing refresher health education to ensure sustained hygiene practice
  - Providing bathing units to ensure privacy and promote good hygiene behaviour
- **Special support needed to improve latrine coverage:** Subsidies for the poor increase access to services and improve hygiene practice. The GAP approach was effective in increasing latrine uptake for the poor especially in the *terai*. However, the cost and materials required for making the superstructure need to be taken into account since some of the poorest still could not construct latrines even under the current subsidy scheme. Construction support to female-headed households, aged and to the physically handicapped is vital and should also be considered.
- **Language:** In many of the surveyed communities Nepali was not the mother tongue. Understanding and speaking Nepali can be difficult for women in the *terai* and far west communities. Having staff that speak the local language and using tailor-made IEC materials are crucial to ensuring the communities’ understanding of training and other project related activities, particularly health and hygiene education.
- **Financial transparency:** The majority of GAP and non-GAP projects lack financial transparency in terms of not keeping updated records or holding general assemblies to inform the beneficiaries of the financial status of their O&M fund. The assessment suggests that more financial training is required during the implementation phase to address this critical gap.
- **Linkages:** The assessment showed that the surveyed communities have different development priorities. Once the WATSAN projects are completed the enthusiasm and participation of the community may decline. Linking with other relevant organisations to

address those priorities can help to maintain the active involvement of communities and further build their capacity to initiate, plan and manage their own development activities.

- **Sustainability:** This assessment only reflects the status of the water supply schemes immediately after the projects have been completed. Although the water points in the GAP villages were better maintained and more reliable, it is not possible to judge what their condition will be like years from now. Post-project visits could be extended over a longer period to assess the sustainability of the GAP approach in terms of the effectiveness of the water and sanitation schemes and participation of women and the poor.

### **Institutional Level:**

- **Longer term planning needed to change gender roles:** The traditionally unequal male-female power relations in rural areas perpetuates several iniquitous social practices including
  - The higher social value placed on sons versus daughters
  - The pressure brought on women to bear sons
  - The social ostracism of widows
  - Isolation of menstruating women
  - Definition of 'male' activities (e.g., technical jobs) that female cannot do
  - General exclusion in community-decision making on appointments in the PMC, paid project jobs and other economically beneficial activity

These not only reduce their self-confidence but also reduce their income-earning potential and helps keep them in poverty. While the GAP approach has demonstrated that these can be successfully tackled, long term planning and support is needed to affect changes in social behaviour at all levels, including within NEWAH, that is a pre-requisite for improvements in domestic gender relations, enhanced social status within the community, greater self-confidence and improved household income.

- **Longer term planning needed to promote caste/ethnicity equity and poverty issues:** Addressing caste/ethnicity issues is a sensitive topic in a society that continues to uphold and practice discrimination based on caste and ethnicity. It requires not only changing entrenched social, religious and cultural beliefs and values but also addressing unequal power relations. Social discrimination was not a major issue in the surveyed GAP and non-GAP communities, but it does exist in many other communities. Longer-term intervention is needed to change behaviour at organizational, community, household and individual level which requires an understanding of the causes behind social inequity. Time and support should be allocated to build the capacity of staff to integrate these issues at all stages of the project cycle.
- **Organizational commitment:** Having a gender policy is an important first step to mainstreaming a gender sensitive approach to programming. However, commitment at organizational level in terms of allocating adequate financial and institutional support is also an important factor. Much of what has been achieved within NEWAH and its GAP project communities would not have been possible without the support of the senior management members. At the same time, the impetus of change should not remain solely with management. They can provide leadership and guidance but addressing gender and caste/ethnicity equity and poverty issues should be the responsibility of all staff.

- **Gender and poverty sensitive indicators:** Mechanisms need to be in place to measure the progress and degree that gender mainstreaming and caste/ethnicity equity and poverty sensitive approach has been achieved at organizational level. While the NPA performs this at project level, NEWAH's Annual Performance Review or an external gender and poverty audit could be considered as suitable entry points for developing indicators to assess changes over time in staff awareness, attitude and behaviour towards gender and caste/ethnicity equity and poverty issues.