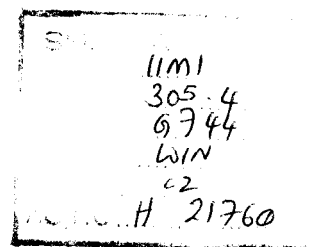
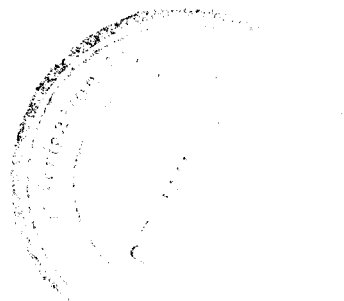


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Challenging the Conventional Development Approach; Challenging Conventional Gender Ideas?

Gender and Participation in Natural Resource Management: a case in Sri Lanka.



INTERNAL DOCUMENT

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August 1996

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1 Introduction

With the ongoing debates on participatory development, gender issues and sustainable use of natural resources, this report aims to synthesize the three into a discussion from a gender perspective. All three result from development experiences leading to both environmentally and socially unsustainable projects with often a top down approach.

The SCOR project in Sri Lanka is an example of an alternative development process directed towards a participatory holistic approach to land and water management in watersheds (Wijayratne, '95). A gender study was undertaken to contribute to its success. Looking at participatory management of natural resources from a gender perspective elucidates the complexities and possibilities of a participatory process through the recognition that natural resources are managed by both men and women.

The aim of the following discussion is to unravel the complexities and identify strategies to induce sustainable use of natural resources within a participatory process.

1.1 SCOR

Since 1993, the International Irrigation management Institute (IIMI) in cooperation with the Government of Sri Lanka and funded by USAID, started implementing the Shared Control of Natural Resources project (SCOR). The goal and purpose of the SCOR Project is defined as:

"to increase the sustainable productivity of the natural resource base in Sri Lanka in ways that will improve people's livelihoods beneficially and equitably now and in the future with due regard for the environment. To achieve this goal, the project seeks to increase the user's share of control of natural resources in selected watersheds through partnerships between the state and users that contribute to greater production while conserving the natural resources base. SCOR will promote integrated planning in the use of land and water resources". (SCOR Workplan '93-95)

An important concept of the project is that 'production' and 'protection' are considered as interrelated and interactive processes. This means that conservation practices do not necessarily impose limits on production. The project aims at building on the synergy between environmental sustainability and economic productivity.

The project approach is participatory in that the primary focus is on resource users and on the agencies of government with which they interact. The philosophy is that resource users are (or should be) ultimately responsible for and entitled to deciding on how to manage resources. The SCOR project sees the formation, expansion and strengthening of resource user groups as being of

vital importance to achieve the project objective. The user groups are also seen as a means of achieving sustainable resource use in the long term.

The SCOR Project is carried out in two pilot watersheds, i.e., Huruluwewa (Upper Yanoya) watershed in the North Central Province and Upper Nilwala watershed in the Southern Province, covering a total area about 30,000 ha. The implementation is programmed in two phases over six years. Phase I has been carried out from 1993 to the end of 1995 and the second phase will be from 1996 to 1999.

In terms of gender strategy, the participatory approach of the SCOR project does not explicitly differentiate on the basis of gender. Implicitly it is assumed that everyone who is interested, irrespective of gender, will and can participate in the resource user groups (RUGs). At the same time it is recognized that women are responsible for management of specific resources and the SCOR project has thus appointed a pilot area for involvement of women and youth. The objectives of the pilot project are: (1) development of home gardens and (2) involvement/active participation of women and youth. The pilot projects are to be replicated in other areas within the overall SCOR project, if the RUGs in this area are more effective with respect to natural resource management in comparison with other project areas.

A coordinator/catalyst for women and youth has been working in the pilot area in order to achieve an active participation of women and youth. The pilot area - Hinguruwewa, Ellawewa and 21st Colony - is in the tail end of Huruluwewa command area and is the study area this report is concerned with.

1.2 Objective of the study

SCOR is one of the few projects dealing with natural resource management in Sri Lanka where an attempt is made to address women. However in spite of SCOR's commitment to pay attention to women as a specific group of users, so far little explicit thought has been given to what women (as compared to men) need, and how to accommodate these needs in ways that are compatible with the broader project goals and objectives. This report is a result of a study set up to give more explicit thought on gender questions and strategies in the context of the SCOR project.

In the study the following research question is analyzed:

How has the SCOR project involved men and women in their activities in a selected study area?

On the basis of this analysis:

How are and can women be involved in a participatory project such as the SCOR project (e.g. to what extent do women need a different approach?)

The study does not attempt to give a detailed account of SCOR processes and impacts so far. It recognizes that, as yet, it is too early to properly evaluate the SCOR project or even its gender strategy. Instead, it draws together some systematic observations and interviews to provide a basis for continued discussion.

The purpose of the study is, on the one hand to initiate a discussion within SCOR on gender and participatory management of natural resources and on the other, to come up with implementable recommendations that would contribute to the overall success of the project. The driving force behind the study is the conviction that proper recognition and accommodation of gender questions and issues will enhance the effectiveness and equity of the SCOR approach.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Methods

The field work was conducted over a period of one month. Interviews were conducted with SCOR team members, officers from line agencies, female and male farmers (both SCOR group members and non members). First the respondents were selected based on behavior at group meetings. Later, the respondents were chosen randomly by walking around in the village, knocking on doors.

Two main collection techniques were used; (1) secondary sources, i.e. project documents, research reports on SCOR, articles and (2) interviews. Individual interviews, group interviews and informal interviews were carried out. The open-ended questions of the semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to voice their opinions and concerns. Annex II gives the list of questions asked. The main objective of the field work was to learn about people's lives and their perceptions of SCOR.

The group interviews involved questions formulated in advance, for which the respondents wrote down the answers. At some of the group interviews the respondents made an activity diagram for a year for respectively men and women. During individual interview respondents made diagrams of their daily routines (using the previous day). These diagrams were used to analyze the gender division of labor.

Of the 93 farmers interviewed, 40 were interviewed individually. The remaining 53 respondents participated in group interviews. Ten percent of the respondents were not involved in any SCOR activities.

The reason for choosing this combination of methods was to use the group discussion to get a quick impression of the area and to learn about the concerns and opinions of the community members. Their priorities and topics of importance guided the planning of individual interviews. The individual in depth interviews, focused on the individual to understand which themes and topics

they perceive as important. Key-informants provided information on factual matters about the community and gave their opinion on SCOR activities seen in a community context.

1.3.2 Profile of study sample

The sample consisted of 30% of the households of the study area (93 respondents; 47 women and 46 men). The average age of respondent was 38.71 yrs., 34.81 yrs. for the women and 43.66 yrs. for the men. Most of the respondents obtained a primary school education, few went to secondary school, mostly the younger generation.

Agriculture proved to be the main activity for 65 respondents with only one claiming wage labor as main activity. All respondents, except 4, in 21st Colony and Ellawewa (66) are landholder. All respondents from Hinguruwewa are squatters. Land holding also includes those farmers who have only half an acre of homestead land and those who sharecrop. Of the respondents, 44% have received some kind of charity, mainly Janasaviya, and 42% own livestock.

Seventy respondents have children, 33 men and 37 women, in average a couple has 3 children.

1.3.3 Practical problems

We met several practical problems; the time of year was very busy for the farmers due to land preparation. We met great difficulties to get in touch with farmers in the area: very few were home between 5.00 am and 11.00 pm.

The gender subject itself proved to be problematic. It was impossible to ask explicit questions about gender. We had to ask about the division of labor, attendance in organizations etc. to get a picture of the gender roles. When asking more direct questions, for example about why women in general had a lower attendance in outdoor activities, e.g. attendance in farmer organization than men, the answers were vague and often resulted in the interview going round in circles.

Another difficult aspect was the different understanding of gender between the team members at the field office and those who carried out this study. While conducting the study, the SCOR team members understanding of gender relations turned out be quite different from that of the researcher. The SCOR team emphasized the complementarity of women and men and perceived gender relations as harmonious family relations. The researcher's basic premise, in contrast, was that gender relations are unequal relations of power between men and women. While recognizing a degree of complementarity, the researcher also allows for the possibility of gender conflicts which may either be open or covert.

Finally, due to personal circumstances, the fieldwork was limited to one month and the total stay to three instead of six months.

1.4 Layout of the report

In chapter 2 an overview is given on gender and participatory development concepts and approaches. SCOR's objectives and strategies are discussed in chapter 3 where attention is given to the goals and the approach of SCOR from a gender perspective.

Chapter 4 deals with the practice of SCOR, with a strong emphasis on the organization of users groups. The practice of the SCOR field team is strongly influenced by their perceptions of gender relations and has implications for the involvement of women in the user's groups. The final chapter gives a discussion on how to incorporate gender issues in a participatory resource management project such as SCOR.

2 Gender and Participation

2.1 A Gender Sensitive Approach

A gender sensitive approach is an approach which properly acknowledges, addresses and accommodates differences between men and women based on gender. Gender refers to the social shaping of male and female identities and roles.

Gender analysis focuses on the relations between men and women, within the household and within society as a whole. Although gender is universally one of the key ways in which societies and cultures demarcate rights and responsibilities, the specific form gender relations take, varies widely across and within cultures and societies. Gender relations are dynamic and change over time. They are structured by development processes but themselves also structure the process. Consequently, any action undertaken not only has its repercussions on gender relations, the relations influence the action itself. Ecological degradation, for example, is one of many reasons households seek income sources outside agriculture. Mostly men migrate temporarily, or even permanently, leaving their wives to cope with the farming household. In addition to taking over activities from their husbands, these women have to manage the sustenance of the household by themselves: taking decisions on inputs and expenditures alone, interacting with line agencies, participating in decisionmaking bodies, etc. Simultaneously, gender relations influence the patterns of ecological change as they have a powerful influence on how environments are used and managed. (Jackson '95, Green & Baden '95)

Gender analysis in the context of agriculture and thus natural resource management, is aimed at understanding the gender based organization of productive and reproductive activities as well as the decision making surrounding these activities. The key questions to unravel the existing gender relations are: who is doing what, when and where; who has access and control over resources and who benefits from each enterprise. Central in this is how decisions are made and who has influence in the decisionmaking processes. The answers to these questions are derived at by disaggregating the information along gender lines.

Two basic assumptions underlie every gender analysis effort:

- 1) The success of every policy or intervention stands or falls with the willingness and ability of the direct users to spend time and resources;
- 2) Farming, almost everywhere in the world, is primarily a family affair. Interests within the family are shared, complementary and/or conflicting which implies that one needs to know more about a household than what one of its members perceives to be of importance, the household can thus not be fully represented by only one member. (Zwarteveen, '94)

Gender analysis helps to enhance the understanding of the agricultural process by recognizing that farmers are both men and women and that these men and women not only have similar but also different needs and subsequently different interests.

Over the last two decades there has been a shift in how gender relations have been perceived within development models. Five approaches can be distinguished:

1. *The welfare approach*: this approach finds its origins with the colonial authorities and involves roughly two parallel strategies; financial aid for economic growth and relief aid for socially vulnerable groups. Women along with the sick and disabled, are identified as a vulnerable group. The welfare approach is based on three assumptions: 1) women are seen as passive beneficiaries rather than participants in the development process; 2) motherhood is defined as the most important role for women in society; 3) women are seen as dependents of their husbands or male relatives. Women's participation in agricultural and non-agricultural labor, marketing as well as decisionmaking is discarded. With this approach, projects emphasize training for women on nutrition or family planning, identifying women's lack of knowledge to be the problem rather than their lack of resources.

2. *The equity approach*: Men and women are stimulated to participate equally in society and development processes, reducing inequality with men by direct state intervention. The purpose of this approach is to achieve equity for women in relation to men through improving their access to employment and the market place thereby implying that economic independence is synonymous with equity. Besides it being unpopular with government agencies perceiving it as threatening and stemming from a very Western point of view, it does not analyze the different interests women might have in comparison to men.

3. *The anti-poverty approach*: This approach is in essence a toned down version of the equity approach. Economic inequality between men and women is linked not to subordination but to poverty. Women are recognized as important actors in securing basic needs but primarily as producers and mothers in the context of self sufficiency. In practice, projects based on this approach emphasize income generation or increasing productivity in activities traditionally perceived as being the woman's domain, thus closely resembling the welfare approach. Women's participation in other activities and the particular constraints women experience in their engendered role are not taken into account.

4. *The efficiency approach*: The aim of this approach is to ensure that development is more efficient and effective through women's contribution. The emphasis is shifted away from women toward development, as such it is a popular approach within the context of structural adjustment policies. Increased economic participation of women is automatically linked with increased equity. Integration of women in the development process is perceived as essential in order to strengthen the national economy and increase the household income. In practice, this approach relies heavily on an elastic concept of women's time: utilizing women's capacity to compensate for declining social services by extending their working day. Furthermore, efficiency is limited to developing the productive activities without affecting the domestic domain which make them possible. Whether the increase of the household income will benefit all its members or if the costs to achieve this is evenly distributed is not its concern. Women might be essential to the success of the development effort, by this approach development does not necessarily improve conditions for women.

5. *The empowerment approach*: Central in this approach is that gender relations are a result of the historically based unequal balance of power between men and women. Changing the structural inequality between men and women is a requisite for development. This approach is developed by writers and women's organizations of the so-called Third World. In addition to acknowledging the structural inequality between men and women, it emphasizes that women experience inequality differently according to their class, ethnicity, colonial history and current position in the international economic order. This approach involves tackling issues outside as well as inside the domestic domain concerning wage disparities, property rights, access to formal economic and legal institutions, etc. The means to do so is through organizing women and awareness raising to challenge subordination and achieve greater self reliance. The potentially challenging nature of this approach makes it unpopular with national governments and bilateral aid agencies.

(Moser '89, Boesveld e.a.'86, Buvinic '89, Jayawardena '86, Schaap '92)

Unfortunately, development practice is not as clear cut as the description of the approaches would lead one to believe. Projects may be set up with definite objectives based on a certain perspective on development. This perspective in turn is translated to an approach which in the course of time is adapted to context specific conditions. The applicability of the approach is influenced by the involvement of the participants, the organizational structure and the socio-political forces on the development process. A converging of approaches may be the result.

The Grameen Krishi Foundation¹(GKF) in Bangladesh is an example of how empowerment objectives were incorporated in an anti-poverty approach². Consequently, GKF neither adheres to a strict anti-poverty or empowerment stance. Several factors led to this development: 1) women's articulation of their needs and interests; 2) the organization's intensive cooperation and genuine concern for women's lack of resources; 3) the cruciality of irrigated agriculture and access to technology for rural households but more so for women's livelihood strategies. GKF transformed their initial explicit focus for women in terms of income generation (employment and relief aid) to a focus on the disadvantaged position of rural women. As a result, women's lack of access to resources was identified and a strategy developed for women to appropriate irrigation technology to not only irrigate their own crops but control water distribution on a larger scale.

By creating a conducive environment, women gained access to resources through which they primarily improved their economic situation but indirectly challenge existing disparities in control over these resources. An empowerment approach would have what is now an indirect result as a primary objective.

¹ GKF is an institution created by the Grameen bank to manage and develop its irrigation activities. It works on the basis of organizing groups of men and women to undertake activities concerned with supplying irrigation water and technology, credits and inputs.

²The IIMI gender program conducted an action research in cooperation with GKF on women's access to resources necessary for irrigated agriculture of which the findings are reported in Jordans and Zwartveen, '96.

2.2. A Participatory Approach

Participation can be defined as:

...a process by which people, especially disadvantaged people, influence decisions that affect them. (World Bank '92)

SCOR has a participatory approach because it is felt that increasing the user's share of control over natural resources and their active participation in making management decisions, is a vital requisite to improve sustainable management of these resources (Wijayaratna,'95).

The participatory approach is now well established as a possible and perhaps more sustainable alternative to the more top down development approaches. On the one hand, it is in response to the failure of numerous expensive large scale, top down projects. Part of the cause of this failure is related to the lack of influence and involvement of direct beneficiaries in project decisionmaking. On the other, it serves as a tool to implement a process of decentralization and privatization encouraged by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Nunnenkamp '95, Moore '95).

Within the participation practice, Mayoux('95) identifies two groups advocating the same approach but with different objectives:

1. Those who argue that participation will lead to an increase of efficiency and decrease in costs for development. Involving local groups will:

- ensure more accurate and representative information;
- lead to better use of resources;
- lead to lower costs of maintenance of projects;
- lead to better coverage of target populations;
- increase sustainability due to greater commitment to and identification with the project.

2. Those who have empowerment as their objective. Participation is an integral and inseparable aspect of development leading to a wider process of social transformation and potential challenge to existing power structures.

For the SCOR project, the participatory approach is essential for sustainable development practice. In the course of time, however, it is expected to lead to an institution through which eventually questions of empowerment can be tackled. The concepts of efficiency and empowerment are not mutually exclusive as greater efficiency can as much be an objective for the empowered participants.

Widespread experience among NGO's, other aid agencies and IIMI itself, have led to a critical review of the participatory approach.(PLA notes 24,'95, Gosselink & Strosser,'95) Gradually it is realized that the participatory approach is a far more complicated developmental tool than foreseen. Experiences have learnt that 1) the process is extremely time consuming, 2) its success

relies on the political will to design supportive measures by government authorities and 3) local groups are not by nature more democratic than other decision making bodies, in addition to 4) the inherent political sensitivity of external aid. (Nunnenkamp '95, Siddhart '95, Goetz '95, Moore, '95) One of the most difficult questions the participatory approach needs to tackle is that of power, conflict and power redistribution on both the local and the national level.

The participatory mode does not only require political will but also a tremendous personal effort and dedication from the people implementing it. Practitioners work in a very insecure and dependent set up in which they need to be open minded, flexible, creative and innovative. This demands patience, confidence in the approach and its participants, a strong sense of responsibility and very little self interest. Unfortunately, even though these dedicated people are there, the social context or the institutional environment they work in seldom reflects these social attributes. The results cannot be spectacular on the short term as its practice is embedded in continuous debate and negotiation. The question remains unanswered how the results are on the long run for lack of empirical data.

Mayoux ('95) identifies three inherent tensions to the participatory development approach which specifically concern the resource users:

- Participants are assumed to reach consensus about needs and aims. Needs differ according to gender, class, caste or ethnicity and some of these needs are directly linked to underlying inequalities between participants. Furthermore, different participants are likely to have different priorities to which aims are to be met first.
- The benefits are assumed to be self evident and outweigh any costs for participants. Actually, very little insight is developed in the costs for local level participants in terms of time, resources and learning the necessary organizational skills. Costs are often greater for the more disadvantaged.
- Participation is argued to implement the will of the people. Given the previous two points on consensus and costs, in addition to the unequal relation between development agencies and clients, it remains very unclear whose will is actually implemented. And, whether clients want to manage the resources.

As our primary focus is on gender, the above points will be discussed according to the gender constraints and possibilities of participatory development.

2.3 Gender and Participation

Looking at participatory development from a gender perspective reveals some of its complexities for two reasons. Firstly, participatory development implies participation of all the stakeholders while certain stakeholders do not have the access or resources to become involved. This is often the case for women. Secondly, the issues related to gender inequality illuminate the complexity of the participatory development practice itself. To give an example, an irrigation rehabilitation project in Nepal denied women from participating in project formulation and planning due to gender conceptions and assumptions because:

- the staff considered irrigation a male activity. The list of beneficiaries consisted only of male names while 30% of the households was female headed;
- according to male farmers, irrigation is a technical affair about which women do not have any knowledge. Furthermore, their place is in the house and not in public meetings;
- the women farmers did not push involvement as they felt uneasy in meetings where male local leaders and male outsiders (engineers, etc.) dominate. They thought their opinions would not be listened to or taken serious, in addition to the general norm that it is inappropriate for women to speak in public. (Bruins & Heymans, '93)

In this respect it is useful to make a distinction between the organizational process of the approach and the decisionmaking process. Beneficiaries are identified according to their assumed relation to certain activities and according to their attributed responsibilities in the community. For example, men are organized around irrigation activities while women are encouraged to participate in homestead gardening. Thereby disregarding the female farmers (as wives or heads of households) who irrigate alongside their husbands and/or irrigate their own crop. In relation to this, women who try to participate are often confronted with particular obstacles. An important first step is therefore to identify who the actual stakeholders are, how they are organized and what their stakes are.

2.3.1 Possibility to participate

Participation requires skills, time and resources. The barriers to women's participation are substantial in this respect. Women often enjoy less education than men, are less mobile for cultural but also practical reasons (child care), have less defined free time due to their domestic responsibilities in addition to their productive activities. Time to participate is structured by economic factors as well as gender. Households struggling to make a living need all their effort and time to sustain their members. Furthermore, membership criteria are prevalingly linked to resource ownership such land or water titles, excluding the poor and/or married women.

2.3.2 Differential benefits of participation

Rural development practice has been characterized by one (amongst others) particular assumption. Farming households are perceived as a homogeneous unit with the farmer being male and this same male is also perceived as the household head. The male household head takes decisions and does so for the entire household and for the benefit of all its members. Numerous case studies throughout the world have shown that this scenario is only exceptionally true. (Dey, Carney, Schrijvers, Hart; amongst others) There are not only gender differences in the household but age differences and relational differences (in-laws). The household is far from being harmonious or homogeneous.

Within any development approach these different interests need to be incorporated. Women have shared, interrelated but also conflicting needs in relation to their husbands, fathers or sons. The differences reflect the gendered labor division but also the existing gender inequalities. In the absence of a simple set of shared concerns, to identify common needs will not be a straight forward exercise.

Related to needs identification is the idea that the actors involved are free to actually identify their needs. The degree to which women can do so is determined by underlying gender inequalities. Often projects limit the choices for women to a narrow range of gendered sub-activities, such as training in domestic activities or family planning, while women might have broader and/or more acute interests. (Fierlbeck '95, Jonasdottir '95, Mayoux '95) Within the context of agriculture women might be more interested in access to technology generally associated with men such as pumps or division structures, they might want better access to services from irrigation agencies or be more involved in water management decisions. In Cambodia, for example, women would rather learn how to run pumps and how to maintain them than have yet another training on nutrition or vegetable gardens. (Ahlers,'95) In Ecuador, meetings with the water users and irrigation services were held in the weekends because the men were earning incomes elsewhere during the week. Their wives and mothers would be irrigating the fields and running the farm without any formal access to the irrigation services. (Ahlers and Smits,'91)

After having identified needs, priorities for tackling them are set. Defining priorities occurs within a context of social and economic differences. Local organizations, in comparison with other institutions, are not by nature more democratic, being just as influenced by political alliances and economically affluent participants. Certain participants might challenge the interest of the dominant group as women might challenge the interests of men. Examples in this respect could be titling in names of women, redistribution of responsibilities and decisionmaking power. To further complicate the issue, differences between women (class, ethnicity, marital status) exist. Consequently, consensus at the local level is far from self evident with women's restricted bargaining power often failing to ensure that their priorities are taken up similar to others with less social and economic leverage within the community.

If women do not succeed in operationalizing their priorities at the level of the organization, the discussion is shifted to the confines of the household by, for example, contending the partner's investment of time in the organization or refusing to co-operate in the participatory process. The public and fairly open negotiation has become private and thereby far less transparent.

2.3.3 Costs of participating

The benefits of participatory development can be manifold for farmers, implementing agencies and the state in terms of cost reduction or empowerment. Often neglected, however, are the costs involved for male and female farmers and how these as well as the benefits are distributed among the different actors.

Meaningful participation requires quite an investment from the participants: skills have to be learned; time is taken away from productive activities which have to be otherwise organized; and specifically for women: traveling might involve contesting moral codes and thereby jeopardizing their social status. Moreover, if their needs are not well represented, not taken serious or prioritized participation might not be desirable at all. The costs will outweigh the benefits. If women's participation is limited to gendered sub-activities instead of being involved in decisions on a higher level or concerning activities with a greater benefit, they risk spending time and resources without their priorities being met. For those women who cannot afford to enter into activities which costs risk to outweigh possible benefits, whether these are in terms of material or social gain, participation will not be an option.

2.3.4 The process of participation

The participatory approach is a valuable alternative to the more top down development strategies. By encouraging stakeholders to be more involved in decision making processes, the approach would be more sustainable but is at the same time, far more complex. In addition to the management of resources, it entails structural issues such as democracy and social justice as the participatory approach is essentially a process of negotiation.

From this perspective it becomes clear that increasing the influence of stakeholders will only be sustainable if their voice is accompanied with the means to implement their ideas. For the participatory approach to be effective it requires the political will to redistribute the control over resources, not only from the national to local level but also within the community itself.

In the case of gender relations, the relationship between women's time and resource input and the benefits they enjoy is generally mediated by power relations within the community and the household. This cannot simply be overcome by ensuring numerical presence of women in the process but requires political will to allow women to participate fully and equally as men, making gender equity an explicit concern. Failing to address gender inequality in terms of rights, division of labor, sexual and domestic violence seriously limits the degree to which women can

contribute and gain from participation. Consequently, if women do not gain from participation the goal of sustainable development is seriously jeopardized.

3 Policy: The SCOR project

This chapter discusses the main objectives of the SCOR project and those specifically related to gender. This section is based on interviews with staff members at HQ and in the field office. The study has been focusing on resource user groups (hereafter RUGs) and hence, the discussion is centered around the gender aspects of the participatory action research mode. To conclude, an attempt is made to discuss the objectives and implementation from a gender perspective and the possible implications for gender relations in the SCOR project area.

3.1 Objective and Approach of SCOR

The main objective of the SCOR project is to intensify sustainable productivity of land and water resources that will equitably improve the livelihood of people now and in the future while conserving the physical, biological and social environments through novel watershed management models and shared control by local user groups and the government involving formal agreements and joint management. (Technical proposal, Nov, '95)
SCOR aims to achieve this through participatory action research focusing on the watershed as the basic planning, coordinating and implementation unit. This strategy evolved through the perception that increasing the users control over natural resources through group action and their active participation in making management decisions will yield high rates of return and lead to effective "user and market oriented conservation". (ibid: p.2)

SCOR adheres to a multi- disciplinary approach of integrated watershed management, linking the upstream with the downstream. As it is a fairly new approach, it is perceived by the project team "as a learning process without a blueprint", or action research. Through action research, SCOR is trying to achieve a dynamic interaction of research, planning and implementation.

The approach is to increase the shared control of the natural resource of the watershed by the users and to support them as they attempt to intensify, expand or move into new economic activities. To achieve economies of scale, and to use group solidarity to promote responsible behavior, the Project is based upon group action as a primary vehicle for project implementation. (Wijayratna, March '95)

The project approach is participatory in that the primary focus is on resource users and on the agencies of government with which they interact. The user groups and organizations are not a goal in itself, the philosophy is that resource users are (should be) ultimately responsible for and entitled to deciding on how to manage resources. Forming, expanding and strengthening user groups is perceived to be essential to achieve the project objective and sustainable resource use in the long term. The idea is for farmers to discover that their position is better when they cooperate. By forming user groups, the resource users together establish contact with authorities

or approach the banks. By promoting certain techniques in these groups and distributing certain benefits SCOR hopes to induce a change in land use patterns.

SCOR works as a facilitator between the stakeholders and line agencies to lead to constructive cooperation. SCOR assumes that a "sense of ownership" is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one for motivating users to undertake sustainable practices. By linking users with institutions such as markets, credit and information or extension and providing individual or groups of users with appropriate legal rights and operating at policy levels, SCOR aims at realizing a context conducive for users to undertake sustainable practices.

To achieve a conducive participatory process, SCOR utilizes a team of catalysts. The catalysts act as agents who meet with farming households to create awareness of the importance of proposed changes as well as to guide the implementation of site specific projects. All the project activities at field level are coordinated by the catalyst. A locally recruited team of IIMI professionals is stationed within the watershed to provide technical assistance and facilitate implementation. For a full overview of the organizational structure, please refer to annex...

3.2 Gender

Special efforts will be made to increase opportunities for women and youth to raise household income and diversify rural economics since decisions about natural resource use involve more than household heads. Research will be undertaken on effects for families and households of expanded economic opportunities. (Draft project paper, July '92, p.15)

3.2.1 Strategy

The participatory approach of the SCOR project does not explicitly differentiate on the basis of gender. Implicitly it is assumed that everyone who is interested, irrespective of gender, will and can participate in the RUGs.

The project leader stressed that a special gender strategy is not needed as the SCOR project works at the farm level and not at the household level. According to him it would be best if gender issues could be integrated into the project during the course of time. The following statement illustrates the opinion about gender in SCOR:

As the project involves all areas of a watershed, integrating upstream and downstream; it is necessary to mobilize all people, including school children and women to include all stakeholders. But gender is a subsidiary issue. The primary issue is changing land and water use. If gender is important we will involve women, e.g. in home gardens.

Women's involvement in natural resource management is recognized for certain gender normative activities: in these cases women are considered important in order to achieve change.

Women are involved in food and in the home. Thus it is better to approach women with respect to homesteads.

Home gardens is the main focus because it is a resource close to home; closest to the family and a female responsible resource.

Home gardens is a specific activity set up for women by the project which does not exclude them from other SCOR groups or activities.

The absence of a clearly articulated strategy on gender, allows project staff to interpret and develop gendered interventions on the basis of their individual and diverse preconceived ideas about gender roles and responsibilities:

In the traditional society the man is recognized as the head of the household and there was harmony.

or

Women do not have access to resources. Once we approach them by providing them with resources you can increase their income.

or

In some villages there are women who work throughout the day, throughout the month. And still by the end of the year they are still at the same level. They are not organizing their activities the correct way: we have to educate the women first.

or

To reach women it is important to have women catalysts or coordinators and it is important to select the time when you come very carefully. We have to analyze these things carefully, a different strategy is needed for different cases.

The project team members are all of the opinion that women and men have the same interest, namely raising the household income. But to do so they require a different approach:

Women and men have special needs and different capacities. Men talk about economy, women talk about drinking water, down to earth things. We need both in development; we need both aspects integrated.

Men need fertilizer; women carry the household burden: they have different demands."

Several project team members mention that to reach women it is necessary to have female members in the project team with the idea that female stakeholders might be more comfortable with female project staff.

3.2.2 The Coordinator for Women and Youth organizations

The idea of recruiting a coordinator responsible for women and youth organizations came after the project had started. This person would be responsible for conducting special training for

women, youth and children and find out where, in the project, women could be involved. She would also be working with the catalysts, developing activities for women and youth.

During Phase I of the project, the present Coordinator for Women and Youth Organizations worked as a senior catalyst in Tract 6 to stimulate the involvement of women and youth. Tract 6 was chosen as a female Farmer Organization (FO) president resided in the area which the team thought would facilitate the catalyst's work. In order to identify the relevant subjects and interest concerning women and youth in addition to developing a methodology, two catalysts were to take over the work in the pilot area allowing the coordinator to function at a higher planning level in Phase II. Unfortunately, little has come of coordinating: when undertaking this study the coordinator was still working as a senior catalyst in the pilot area.

The coordinator is of the opinion that the main constraint for women is their lack of knowledge or awareness of what is important to sustain a family and the environment. (Tennakoon, '96 &?) At the moment she is extending activities such as time management, kitchen improvements, homestead development and income generating activities to other project areas. Her task to find out what women would be interested in and their constraints in achieving this has not been pursued.

She has, however, through group interviews identified what women perceive to be their major constraints:

- water scarcity
- low level of education;
- lack of interpersonal relationships;
- poverty;
- indebtedness;
- weak officer/institutional relationships.

In other words, they claim that the lack of resources such as water, education, social support; capital and institutional influence are their major constraints.

3.3 Conclusions

Without an explicit discussion on gender or an attempt to define a gender strategy, project implementation will vary with each team member, leading to a range of strategies and activities which might or might not be suitable for both male or female farmers involved, or lead to an income increase for the household.

There seems to be agreement among the project team members that approaching women demands female team members. Based on a conviction that there is a common understanding between women, female team members would be more successful in convincing women to join the resource user groups. Notwithstanding the fact that women are faced with similar constraints resulting from gender inequity, their needs and interests are not self evidently the same. To come

to an understanding of the different interests and needs of women, insight into gender relations and gender sensitivity are necessary. These do not have to be monopolized by women only, a gender sensitive man could be far more effective than a gender blind woman. Perhaps certain issues such as sexual and domestic violence are more easily discussed among women, however, improving the situation would require the involvement of men as well.

At the moment there is one person explicitly working on both women and youth. How feasible is it to have the responsibility for women and youth (a very broad and unclear mandate) placed on one single person, given the scale and scope of the project?

There are such a vast number of issues at stake in a project like SCOR such as:

1. who really are the current stakeholders for each resource, how is resource use gender differentiated in practice (in comparison with preconceived ideas)?
2. stakeholders are not a homogeneous group, nor are communities, nor are households. What are common interests, priorities and constraints and which are gender differentiated?
3. how can women be involved in participatory projects given the experience that this is often very complicated? Do women want to be involved and does it require different styles of organization?
4. SCOR as an intervenor induces change in its project areas which will have effect on gender roles and responsibilities. As these roles and responsibilities are dynamic of their own, research into how they change and what it means for the relevant stakeholders would be of high interest.

These issues are related to the sustainability and equity of the project and documenting them could help in strengthening the participatory mode. Formulation of clear policy on gender on which staff can fall back on and use as guidelines in their work could help tremendously in approaching the right stakeholders, identifying appropriate activities and sustainable organizations.

4 SCOR: Activities and Experience

After having discussed the ideas behind the project in chapter 4, this chapter looks into the practice. The central questions to be answered are how men and women are involved in project activities and the experiences and perceptions of field staff and farmers concerning the effectiveness and possibilities of gender sensitive participatory action research.

To accommodate a discussion on gender and participation this chapter is structured along the lines of section 2.3. To introduce the context, a short overview of activities is given after which the perceptions of staff and men and women farmers illustrate how resource users can participate in the project: how are resource users mobilized, who joins the groups and the possible constraints. This is followed by the identification of costs and benefits of participating for different resource users. To conclude, several ideas are presented on how the process might improve.

This chapter is based on short interviews held in the pilot area and is thus a first impression of the complexity of the SCOR project. As such it could serve as a useful tool to identify which bottlenecks are inherent to the participatory mode and where possible openings are for redefining strategies.

5.1 SCOR Activities

SCOR's database in 1995 shows 99 effectively functioning groups engaged in production and protection in a whole range of activities.

Table 1. SCOR Group Activities

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	# of Groups	# of members
Homestead Development	26	355
Homestead conservation farming	9	108
Animal Husbandry	20	214
Bio Farming	1	5
Chena stabilization	8	92
Homestead and cultivation under agro-wells	8	87
Bamboo trees planting	3	62
cashew cultivation	2	22
Fruit cultivation	4	39
Women's income generation activity	12	129
Milk production	2	17
Nurseries	3	20
Rice processing	1	5
TOTAL	99	1155

source: Somaratne, 1995:22

Table 1 show the different activities the groups are involved in and how many groups with the number of members are involved in each activity.

An assessment made in September 1995 however, discovered that 58 groups had ceased to exist for the following reasons:

1. dissatisfaction with achievements by groups (23);
2. short term objectives were realized (25);
3. adverse water conditions
4. adverse impact on ecosystem
5. members leave groups.

Of the remaining groups, only 23 meet the SCOR criteria to be considered as functional groups. (Somaratne, 1995)¹

Due to all the data being revised when this study took place, no gender disaggregated data for the groups in our study area were available except for 21st Colony. There are 13 SCOR groups in 21st Colony. Table 2 gives the gender disaggregated data for these 13 groups.

Table 2 Membership of SCOR groups in 21st Colony

Activity	Female members		Male members		Leadership (mixed groups)
	#	%	#	%	
Homestead development	4	50	4	50	Male
Homestead development	9	80	1	20	Female
Homestead development	10	100	--	--	
Goat rearing	1	25	3	75	Female
Goat rearing	13	100	--	--	
Banana cultivation	1	14	6	86	Female
Cattle	--	--	7	100	
Poultry	3	37	5	63	Male
Tree distribution	2	17	10	83	Male
Gotukola (Green leaves)	5	100	--	--	
Agro-wells	3	33	6	67	Male
Paddy milling	7	100	--	--	
Curd production	4	100	--	--	
	62	60	42	40	3 4

Source: Volunteer catalysts in 21st Colony

There is a higher percentage of male leaders in comparison to the ratio of male/female members and of the 7 mixed groups, 3 are led by women. Another remarkable point is that there are 5 women's groups and only 1 men's group.

¹ For an overview of issues concerning the resource users groups, see Somaratna '95.

Women in 21st Colony are quite active and provide a higher percentage of female leaders in comparison to the other SCOR sites. Huruluwewa was the only area found to have a female Farmer Organization (FO) leader, in a study of six areas (IIMI, June 1992: Annex III:4). The Irrigation Engineer in Galenbindunuwewa says that he finds women in this area very strong and means that it is due to them being settlers and thus used to fight.

The former FO leader in 21st Colony says:

In the past, women were involved in household chores. This situation has changed considerably over time and today more and more women are involved in some form of economic activity including heavy work. Even school teachers in the district are now engaged in farming activities.

Interviewed female leaders explained their leadership with that they had either few or grown-up children and therefore had time to take part in the activities:

Since I have few children, it is easy for me to take part in these group activities. My children are big and they don't pose problems. I can actively take part in the group's activities. Because of that, the others unanimously selected me to be the group leader.

In total about 15% of the adult inhabitants in the area are involved in SCOR activities², not taking into account that many of the group members belong to more than one group.

4.2 Possibilities to participate

Catalysts were recruited from the community as facilitators for group formation. At the time of the study 14 catalysts worked in Huruluwewa, of whom three are women. All have previous experience with organizing farmers; they have been trained in participatory methodology and how to approach farmers. In addition to this, all catalysts live in the Huruluwewa area and hence know the area and the way of living well. The catalysts work within the framework of natural resource management but are free to organize the resource users in the way they find most suitable. Resource users are contacted both individually and collectively. The planning unit in Colombo deliberately let the catalysts work in their own way without any strict guidelines to allow for maximum flexibility and creativity.

The catalysts go from place to place to talk to people, educate them and organize them. They discuss their common problem of water scarcity and encourage them to take collective action to resolve this problem in spite of the political differences. Various strategies to motivate people to

² There are 104 group members. 168 households in 21st Colony with approximately 4 adults in each household. If we imply that all group members are adults it means that around 15% of the adult inhabitants attend in some kind of SCOR activity.

attend SCOR groups are used, e.g. providing free plants to people who join the group; buying the seeds they need; organizing loans; setting up plant nurseries for future access to plants.

Concerning gender, the catalysts group people or arrange groups according to the activity and not on the basis of gender. They admit they use a different strategy for women and for men, but they could not specify how their approach to women differed to that to men.

Nevertheless, a specific activity focused on women was developed: improvements of home gardens. To implement this component a coordinator for women and youth organizations was recruited. The coordinator has in phase I been working as a catalysts in the pilot area for involvement of women and youth. The plan is that in phase II she will start working as a coordinator in all 11 SCOR sites in the Huruluwewa area.

The coordinator explained that her strategy was to go from "almost house to house and tell people how to make the best use of their home gardens.". She went into a village in order to understand the problems, irrespective of gender and irrespective of whether they were young or old.

The coordinator managed to form several groups especially for women.

In order to enable these women to earn an additional income, programs were initiated for livestock development in the area by introducing new varieties of livestock and by helping the people to grow grass in such a manner as to increase its nutritional value to enhance milk production. The project also helped them to methodically plan their activities and to better organize their time. (Tennekoon, 1995:2).

The implementation of the gender component is based on the day today practical knowledge of the involved team members and their SCOR mandate. A gender analysis of women's needs, ideas or wishes was perceived unnecessary.

4.3 SCOR group membership

The SCOR group members are meant to be resource users. As it is now, the organizing of groups is based on the principle of whoever wants to attend can do so. Women interviewed who were not part of any activities, said that they could not attend due to small children, sick children, work in the house etc. In other words, time is scarce and needs to be carefully invested.

I didn't get involved because all the work has to be done on your own. As I couldn't attend society meetings daily I stopped going for them. (21st colony, age 47)

Because my son was not well and also because I was expecting my second child I couldn't get involved with IIMI activities. (21st colony, age 26)

As I don't have time I don't want to join the groups. We were informed that the IIMI project will operate in this area only for two years and that they will move to another area after that. We were therefore reluctant to join the groups. (Ellawewa, age 30)

It is argued by many that women do not need to be involved to have influence: their husbands will put forward their wishes and ideas at group meetings. However, several of the women participating in this study had no idea of which societies or groups their husbands belonged to. They had no knowledge about the outside activities of their spouses.

The woman leader of the 21st Colony Farmer's Organization explained that there are men who *...do not like their wives to join these groups because of their conventional ideas. Often, we find that women who join these organizations are more successful than the men.*

When asking male only groups, they had difficulties in explaining why there were no women in the group. Somehow the group members could see that women could contribute, but added that women were too busy with housework, or they just came and had a look and women knew about the decisions taken anyway. When asking women-only groups, the women said that many men worked as wage laborers and did not have the time to join the activities. After asking why they had chosen to join women-only groups, they all said it was accidentally and not by choice.

A problem that both male and female farmers mention is that usually the most affluent people are able to participate in the organizations and groups.

It is always the same people who get involved in the activities of these organizations. Consequently, those who are less affluent and those who are engaged in labor work never get an opportunity of joining the organizations.

SCOR, as any participatory approach, is confronted with the difficulty of reaching the poorest of the poor, who are engaged in labor work and are trying to survive the day. The affluent people have a surplus, both economically, physically and in time.

An additional obstacle to participate is provided by local politics, an aspect that several respondents mentioned:

Today most farmer organizations are politically motivated and are only interested in helping their political supporters. Officials of the farmer organizations change relative to changes in the political arena. (I.O).

We don't get involved in the group activities as we belong to a different political party and therefore not invited to attend these group meetings. (farmer)

SCOR team members support the view that politics provide a major obstacle. The coordinator for women and youth remarks that political interference is one of the main reasons that groups fall apart. After the elections the newly appointed leaders disregard all the work undertaken by their predecessors, leading to continuous disagreement. Holding meetings has become near to impossible. (Tennakoon, '96: 3) Somaratne ('95:11,29) poses that political rivalry, misappropriation of funds and lack of transparency in financial matters have led to dysfunctional organizations and poor participation.

With Sri Lanka being a highly politicized country and party politics strongly determining leadership and possibilities for participation, as well as support for leaders and their decisions, the participatory approach needs a strong commitment and clarity on these issues to enable all resource users to benefit. The lack of guidance for catalysts in their mobilization tactics allows personal and party political preferences to prevail. The catalysts are part of the local society and as such feel the pressure from party political forces. Clear guidelines on mobilization can perhaps support them in confronting these forces.

4.4 Benefits and costs

Ideally, the group activities are defined by the group members. In practice, SCOR has some clear ideas about what the groups should be involved in: sustainable land use in terms of grazing land, contour bunding, homestead development, etc.

Nearly all interviewed group members explain that they joined a group to have better access to labor (atam - labor sharing), to be able to obtain loans and to receive plants distributed via SCOR. Some of the respondents also said that they now have somebody to talk with about their problems; that they have made new friends and that they can organize help easier. Although group members were very positive, we found that many of the groups only existed at certain times, for example when plants were distributed or for one particular season.

The reason for members to join groups consistent in the whole of Huruluwewa watershed was access to credit for agriculture, animal husbandry and planting materials. Members admit that material incentives for participation and implementation of innovations are crucial for willingness to participate. (Somaratne,1995:85)

Besides the different interests and aims between SCOR and resource users, differences between the resource users have proven to be of importance.

The poor do not have the time, nor the economic surplus to invest in these kind of activities when direct benefits are not obvious. Repeatedly we were told:

The project is good but it only benefits the affluent people. The poor people don't really benefit from it.(farmer)

People find it difficult to attend meetings regularly. They have to concentrate on earning a living. "(FO president)

As the FO leader in 21st Colony said:

Our organizations have long term objectives and therefore we cannot reap the benefits overnight and due to this reason, people who are engaged in labor work hesitate to join these organizations.

A rapid gender analysis showed that both men and women work in the field together, with only land preparation and building bunds being exclusive male responsibilities. In addition to attending fieldwork, women are responsible for work in the house and children.³

Both men and women said that they had to work together in order to survive. As one man said:
Our wives work on equal footing neck to neck with us, in paddy cultivation and chena. Even if a group consists of only males, there is no activity that can be done without the help of women.

Catalysts back this up:

If we want anything done, we go to the woman of the household, because then something happens.

Unfortunately many women confess to time or economic constraints for them to participate. They lack the resources and social support to be able to invest in conservation practices or change their land use patterns. Furthermore, they identify their low level of education as a constraining factor. The ability to read and write might encourage their participation in organizations and willingness to take up leadership roles.

4.5 Conclusions

SCOR's success with the participatory approach depends on their ability of involving all the stake holders and integrating their needs in ongoing activities. When this study was undertaken, those farmers with similar needs as formulated by SCOR were active in group activities. Other actors chose to obtain the immediate benefits (plants) and not get involved in more activities. The interests and aims of SCOR and resource users may not converge on the short term. The costs for participating appear too high when the benefits are not immediately self evident for the group members.

Sustainability of groups seems to be jeopardized for the following three reasons:

1. Participants are interested in short term material benefits. Due to the political interference and the lack of confidence in benefits in the long term for all stakeholders, participants choose for quick benefits. The poor do not see how the SCOR activities will benefit them, women hesitate to invest their precious time in activities which do not deal directly with their needs.
2. Activities are strongly initiated by SCOR. Sustainable watershed management does not seem to be an incentive to farmers in the way SCOR defines it. SCOR encourages farmers through the distribution of coconut plants, tree crops, seeds and other input arrangements. Water resources management team meetings were held on SCOR initiation with SCOR playing a

³ In an IIMI study of June 1992 women's work burden is observed as 5.6 hr. a day on agricultural labor and 5.4 hr. per day on non agricultural activities.(IIMI, June 1992:Annex III:2).

leading role in Bethma land allocation. The performance of organizations and user groups is largely dependent on the commitment of SCOR staff and the mobilization by catalysts.

3. Lack of guidelines for catalysts and staff. Without guidelines on how to mobilize stakeholders (for example on the basis of a gender analysis) or how to deal with political interference leads to each catalyst and staff member to use his or her own common sense. As a result, the procedure differs among mobilizers and social and political pressure on catalysts could lead to the exclusion or to pampering of certain stakeholders. Furthermore, certain stakeholders do not have the political or economic position to assert their needs.

If stakeholders express that material incentives for participation and implementation for innovations is essential, one can question how sustainable this participatory approach is. According to Somaratne ('95:91), the members of all the organizations have little confidence in the sustainability of the organization after the withdrawal of the catalyst.

A thorough needs identification of all stakeholders: women, men, poor, rich could perhaps enhance the sustainability of the groups. If women identify their major constraint to be water scarcity (Tennekoon,96:2; Somaratne,'95:44; Konradsen⁴), a focus on other activities besides home gardening for women could increase their interest to participate.

As some of the SCOR team members suggest, it might be necessary to consider a different approach for women to overcome the little time they have. This does not mean that encouraging women to become involved is more difficult. It implies that organizing women, needs to be well thought through. If it is in their interest to participate they will find ways of either taking their children along or reorganizing their activities.

⁴ In a research on health ... 42 % of the women cited lack of water for agriculture as their major problem and 20 % of the women as their second biggest constraint. Malaria and poverty were next in importance. For the men, 58% perceived water as the major constraint with malaria and poverty following. (Konradsen, forthcoming)

5 Conclusions and recommendations

SCOR is a participatory process - which implies that activities and strategies are constantly adapted and modified. In addition, the participatory approach of the SCOR project is new and difficult, it is a much less secure and safe mode of operation than many of its staff are acquainted with. A lot depends on personal attitudes and personal initiatives, and there are few rules to fall back on. For the users it is also a new and somewhat unusual way of dealing with outsiders; many of them have experienced that outsiders fully determine what happens or they have learnt to use outsiders for their personal benefits, whereas the SCOR approach expects active participation and initiative.

In terms of a gender strategy, the SCOR project pays attention to women by explicitly involving them in home garden development and income generating activities. With respect to participation of women in other activities, it is assumed that whoever is interested, irrespective of gender, will and can participate.

In this respect, SCOR adheres to the anti-poverty approach where women's participation is defined by the existing gender ideology. By emphasizing training for women on for example kitchen improvements and time management, women's lack of knowledge is identified to be the problem rather than their lack of resources. The drawbacks of this approach is that women's work, knowledge and influence in other activities are not recognized nor are the constraints they face in optimizing their use of resources.

Four main assumptions concerning gender within SCOR's approach can be distilled:

- 1) *Participation in activities is directed towards the heads of households and improving the household income.*

These heads of households are defined as being male and as representative for the household. This leads to several problems: first, needs and interests within the households vary among the household members with respect to gender, age and relationship/affiliation; second, many decisions are taken not only by the male representative but either with his wife and/or parents or without his influence at all; third, in many households, certain members migrate either temporarily or permanently to seek income elsewhere: the head of the household could be anybody and be changing over time. Fourth, the household income is a very harmonious concept but can unfortunately not be taken for granted. The fact that household members have one thing in common, that is raising the income of the household does not mean they are interested in doing it the same way or for the same reasons.

- 2) *SCOR works at the farm level, not at the household level, implying that the gender division of labor is not of particular relevance.*

However, the gender division of labor and responsibilities does not confine itself to the household level but is present at the farm level and beyond that, in society as a whole. In assessing current resource use practices, attention should be paid both to the visible outcomes as to past process which have lead to these outcomes.

3) *Women are special resource users and important in some cases but not all.*

A gender analysis of the division of labor would clarify that women are not just special resource users, they are resource users just like other family members are. Both project team members and farmers stress that women cultivate and work like men, which raises the question why they are not involved in all the activities on equal footing with men. An essential point in this respect is the influence gender relations have on the use of natural resources. Female resource users may face specific constraints in optimizing their use of resource due to their limited access to services, decision making bodies, education.

4) *Resource user's groups are open for anyone to attend.*

This assumption overlooks two points. First, there might be many barriers for women to participate as discussed in Chapter 2 and 4: time constraints, lack of skills, lack of choice, lack of decision making influence.

Secondly, the question arises whether women resource users needs and interests are reflected in the group activities. If women are not formally involved, this does not necessarily mean they are not interested. Women might decide that if their interest and priority are not taken serious, they prefer investing their energy and time in more productive activities.

Needs and constraints differ according to gender and these matters are linked to underlying inequalities between stakeholders. An analysis of needs and constraints for respectively women and men would be a first step in identifying the relevant issues. Such analysis might contribute to participants being interested beyond the short term material gains.

The institutional arrangements within which resource users interests and rights come together need to identify which arrangements best enable different social groups (including women) to press their interests, thus assisting informed decisions about which local groups to work with or to build upon.

Recommendations

Based on the data collected we have following recommendations:

* Carry out a gender analysis including:

a) analysis of who the current stakeholders are for each resource.

b) analysis of the needs and constraints for respectively women and men.

c) assessment the legal and regulatory mechanisms governing tenure arrangements, giving specific attention to intra-household arrangements which determine the respective access to and control over resources by its female and

male members. Alternative land tenure arrangements which would enable formal joint land ownership of husband and wife could be examined.

This gender analysis could serve as a useful tool for the catalysts and SCOR team members, providing them with what the different interests and possibilities of the stakeholders entail.

- * On the basis of the gender analysis a plan can be formulated for how women can be involved in SCOR activities and if there are some local activities/initiatives that SCOR could support. The gender analysis can also point to groups that needs special attention, e.g. poor women, female headed households etc..
- * Carrying out a plan for involvement of women in SCOR activities requires not only the involvement of a coordinator, but of the whole project team. A gender training course for the whole SCOR team, could enhance a gender sensitive approach for SCOR in general.
- * Guidelines based on gender awareness and the socio-political context for the catalysts and team members would provide them with something to fall back on and lend support if they are pressurized. Furthermore, it would encourage consistency within the mobilization activities.
- * Carry out workshops for women making them aware of their possibilities within the SCOR project.
- * Promote a greater transparency in SCOR and SCOR activities for the farmers to understand the project and the action of the team members to result in a higher attendance and confidence in the organizations.

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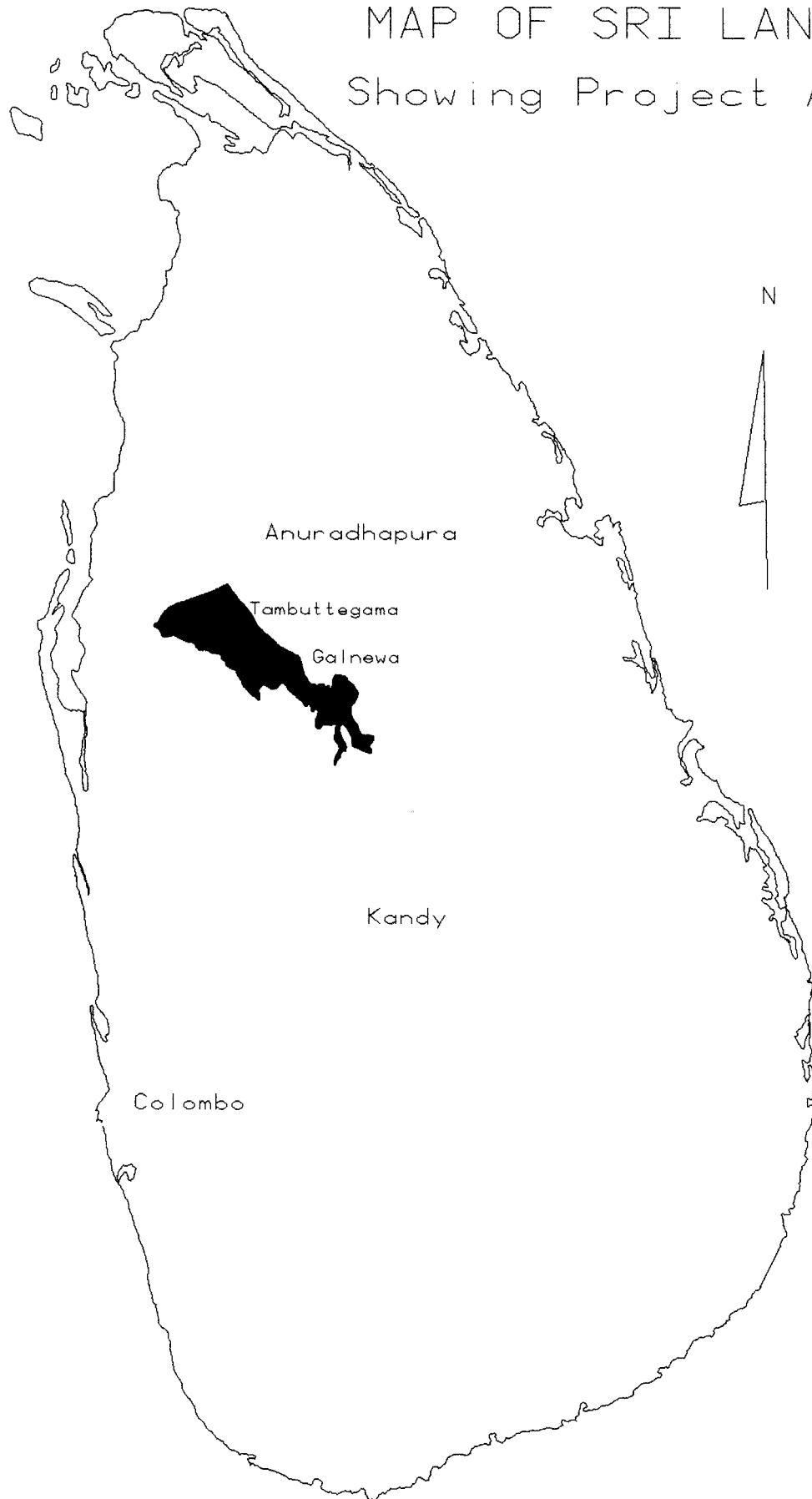
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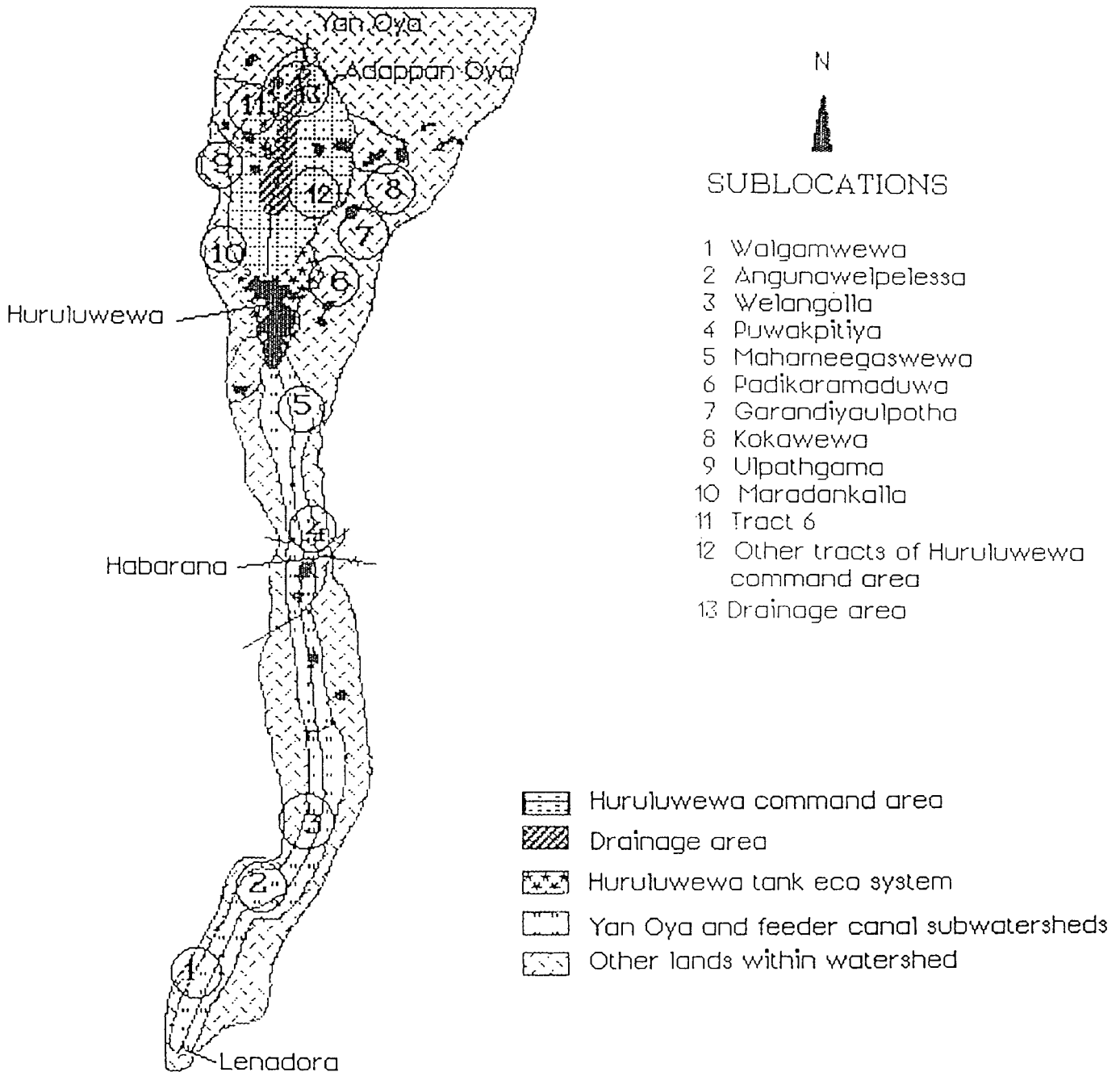
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MAP OF SRI LANKA

Showing Project Area



Huruluwewa Watershed



Description of the study area.

History and general information

The study area is in the command area of Huruluwewa tank. Huruluwewa watershed is located in the low-country dry zone agro-ecological region of the North Central Province of Sri Lanka. It is located in the district of Anuradhapura. In this area, the average annual rainfall is about 50-75 inches which has a bimodal distribution. 85% of the rain comes from November to January. May-August is the driest period. Average temperature is about 28 degree celcius. The population density for the district of Anuradhapura was 100 (per sq km) at mid-1990 compared to that the population density for Sri Lanka was 264 (per sq km) at the same time (Department of Census and Statistics, represented in Regional Survey of the World, 1994:920).

The study area consists of 21st Colony, Hinguruwewa and Ellawewa which are located on the left bank of the command area in Huruluwewa watershed, see annex I.

When the first settlers came in the 1950s to settle down most of the area was scrub jungle land. All three villages are settler villages. 21st Colony is the oldest settler area and the villagers live mainly of their paddy fields. In Hinguruwewa, which lies next to 21st Colony, 2nd generation squatters (people that have encroached the land) have settled, many who are the children of 21st Colony inhabitants. They do not have access to irrigated land (paddy fields) but farm the highland. Ellawewa is like 21st Colony, where the inhabitants live of irrigated land. All farmers in the area do chena cultivation ('slash and burn').

Facts about the three villages¹

21st Colony consists of 168 households. Hinguruwewa has 93 households and Ellawewa 63. All three villages have easy access to the bigger town Galenbindunuwewa; where there are market facilities.

In the area of Galenbindunuwewa 7,408 families received food rations out of 43,234 corresponding to approximately 16% of the total population in Galenbindunuwewa (where the three villages are included). Janasaviya² support was given to about 50 families in 21 st Colony (equal to approximately 30% of the households). This was given to people who did not have land to cultivate as well as to others perceived to be below the poverty line. In comparison with the figures for

¹ All information are from Grama Sevaka in 21st Colony and in Hinguruwewa/Ellawewa (a Grama Seveka is a village officer recruited by the governmental administration. The Grama Seveka is the lowest level in the administration).

² A project for providing cash assistance by the previous regime, to enable poor people to initiate self employment).

Hinguruwewa and Ellawewa are not available, these villages seem to have an even higher number of poor families than 21st Colony.

Organizations and groups

In all three villages at least one of the following organizations exist:

- **Farmer organizations (FOs)**

Activities: The FO buys paddy seed, insecticides and fertilizers for the farmers who in turn purchase these from the FO. The FO give instructions and guidance when necessary.

The members of the FO can choose to buy equipment collectively, for example in 21st Colony they bought a trailer to transport their produce. In Ellawewa there are two FOs of which one has a female leader. Also the FO in 21st Colony has a female leader

- **Funeral assistance society**

Activities: The society donates 2000,- rs. to the family in addition to other necessities (for example meals) All members are present at a funeral. The members pay a small amount every month (approximately 2 rs.). The society give alms to the priest to bestow merit on those who have died and those who are living.

- **Youth organization** (one for both Ellawewa and Hinguruwewa and one for 21st Colony)

Activities: Organizing camps, voluntary work, cultural shows and religious activities.

- **Rural development organization**

Activities: Construction of roads and wells and different religious and cultural activities.

- **Women's organization**

Activities: Committees to help the poor, self-help committees and service committees.

All households generally hold a membership for the Funeral Society and the FO.

With the commencement of the Janasaviya scheme small groups were formed. Although they no longer receive Janasaviya support, these groups are still actively involved in farming activities and agrowell building in addition to the SCOR groups.

General agriculture and wateravailability

In this part of the country water is very valuable; receiving rain is like coming across a treasure. The major problem that the villagers are faced with is the lack of sufficient water. During the dry season the tanks and water channels all dry up. Some have constructed wells but there is a limit to the number of wells in one area.

The area receives water from the Huruluwewa tank (when there is water). Huruluwewa is a one season tank, which means that farmers can cultivate only during Maha (wet season). In Yala (dry season) they have to live off their Maha harvest or by generating income through other means. The wateravailability structures their life. As mentioned the villages are located on the left bank of the command area which is higher than the right, resulting water being less accessible. The distance from the source of water to the fields is about nine miles. In Hinguruwewa where they do not have any irrigated land they do rainfed cultivate or use agrowells. The last two years the farmers have

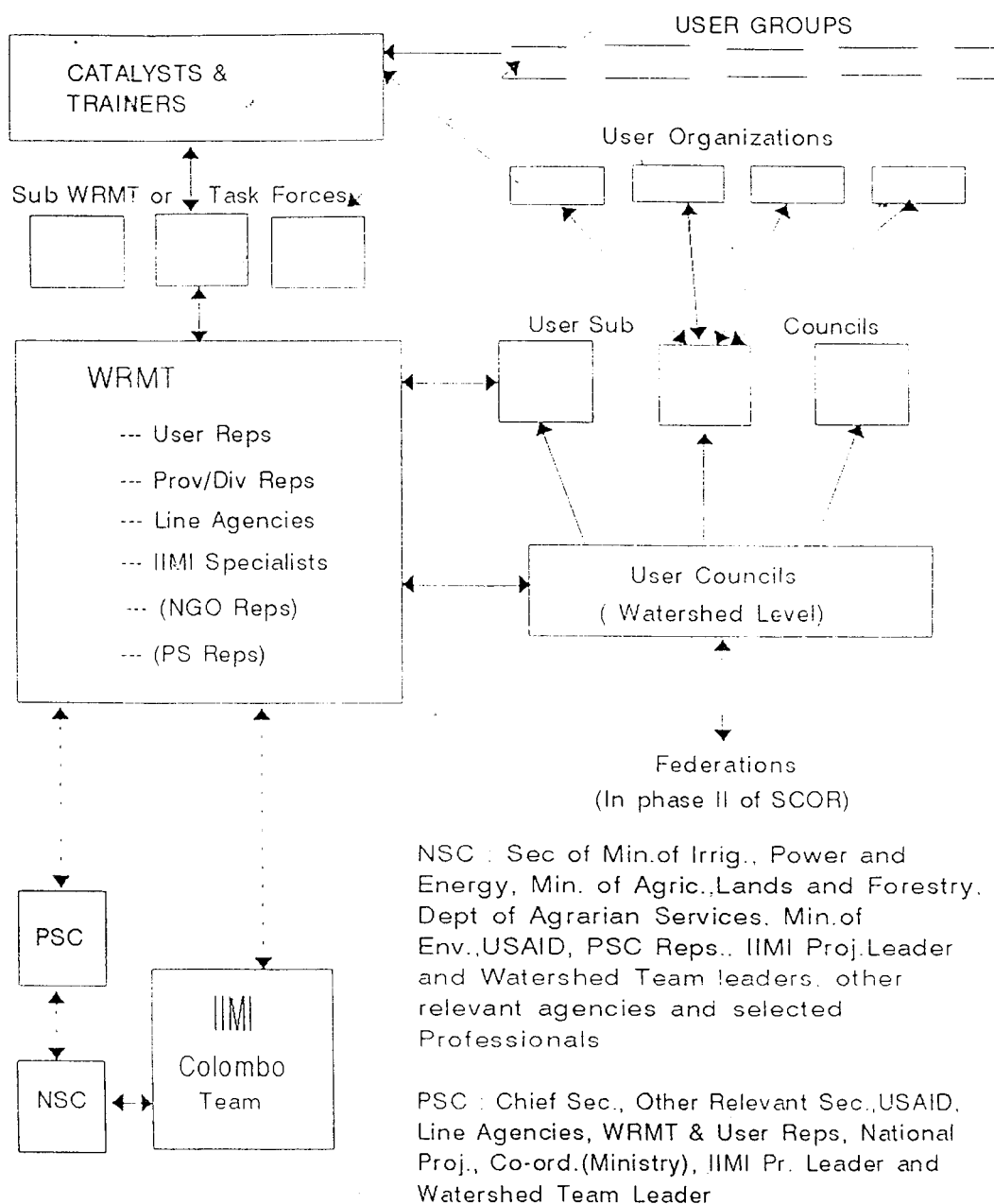
been able to cultivating two consecutive seasons due to higher rainfall, good planning by the Irrigation Department³ (ID) and cooperation between the ID and SCOR.

Farmers in 21st Colony and Ellawewa have three pockets of work: chena, paddy and homestead cultivation. Most farmers grow coconuts, breadfruit, jack, lime and vegetables in their home gardens. In chena ('slash and burn') cultivation most farmers grow corn, kurakkan and chillies.

In Hinguruwewa they also do chena and homestead cultivation, but they do not cultivate paddy and thus have to buy their rice. In farming communities this is felt as humiliating. Some inhabitants from Hinguruwewa are tenant farmers at paddy fields in 21st Colony.

³ ID decides when the water from tank are going to be let out on the fields, thus deciding when the farmers ought to start cultivating.

SCOR Project Participatory Organizational Structure



Legend

WRMT - Watershed Resources Management Team

PSC - Provincial Steering Committee

NSC - National Steering Committee

PROV - Provincial

Div - Divisional

REPS - Representation

PS - Private Sector

Resource Persons

Interviews were held with the following resource persons .

Huruluwewa team:

Mr. R.M.Karunaratne - Acting Team Leader

Mr. Neela Adikaramge - Enterprise/Marketing Development Specialist

Mrs. Maheshi Tennakoon - Women and Youth organizer

Mr. G. Karunaratne - Watershed Management Coordinator - Lower Watershed

Dr. Lionel Weerakoon - Consultant - Conservation farming and Agro-forestry

Mr. P.G.Somarathne - Sociologist, Researcher on Contract

Catalysts working in Huruluwewa:

Group discussions with the 14 catalysts working in Huruluwewa.

Individual interviews with:

Ms. K.Chithrawatti (Catalyst in 21st Colony, Hinguruwewa and Ellawewa)

Ms. P.H.P.Hettiaratchchi (Catalyst)

Mr. P. Dayarathna (Catalyst)

Team members in Colombo:

Dr. C. M. Wijayaratna (Project leader)

Dr. G.P. Batuwitige (Monitoring and Evaluation)

Dr. K. Jayawardena (Research officer)

Mr. D.W.PRajasekera (Human Resources Development)

Others:

Head of the Irrigation Department in Galenbindunuwewa (Mr. Hemakomare)

Divisional Secretary in Galenbindunuwewa (Mr. K. Karunatetileke)

Leader of the Irrigation Management Department in Galenbindunuwewa

Grama Seveka in 21st Colony and in Hinguruwewa/Ellawewa

Farmer organisation leader in 21st Colony.

Leaders of the big community organizations in the study area.

The volunteer catalyst in 21st Colony, Hinguruwewa and Ellawewa.

Farmers in 21st Colony, Hinguruwewa and Ellawewa

Fieldworksheet for fieldwork in Huruluwewa about female involvement in UGs.

Interview with a UG member

Plotno:

Names of all household members:

No.	Name	Age	Gender
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			

Interviewee: male or female adult in the household.

Married - yes/no?

Education for all householdmembers:

Size of land (acres), 1. highland/homegarden, 2. irrigated land:

Landuse 1,2:

Responsibilities in the household:

1a. Description of your tasks during the different seasons.

1b. Fill in the daily routines for you.

About (attending) group(s):

2. Which group(s) do you attend? Why did you choose to join this (these) group(s), rather than others? How did you know about the group? What did you expect when you first joined?
3. Do other members of your household also attend groups? Why (not)? Which ones? Why same/different? If the same group: Why are you both attending the same group - why is that necessary? If different: Would it not also be interesting for your husband/wife to attend this group? Are you aware of what your spouse is doing in his/her group? Would you be interested in joining his/her group also? Why (not)?
4. Do you know of people who are not joining a group? Why do you think they will not join?
5. How long have you been a member now? Do you intend to continue participating in the group? Why (not)? What do you expect from your participation?
6. Is the group you are attending a mixed/men only/women only group? Why is that so? If mixed group: do you think men and women participate the same way? Are there differences btw. men and women? (etc..) and why?
7. Do you think that men and women should both participate in the groups and its activities? Why (not)?

Objectives; perception of activities:

8. What is the objectives (goal) of the group, according to you?
9. What is the objectives (goal) of the project? Why are the project people doing this work?

About the functioning of the group:

10. -
11. What happens during a group meeting? Who speaks, who decides, etc. How did you elected the president of the group? (probe)
12. Which activities is the group involved in? Which of these do you consider most important?
13. Did you ever speak up, complain, discuss, bring something up, at the group meeting? Why (not)?
14. What is your opinion about the functioning of the group and its activities?
15. Do you have any suggestions to improve the functioning of the groups, or for new activities?

16. Are you thinking of joining another group? Which and why?

17a. How often do you see the catalyst?

17b. Could the catalyst have done anything different in order to get more members to attend the UG?

About costs and benefits of participation:

18. How often do you meet in the group(s)? A. more than once a week, B. once a week, C. once every second week, E. once a month, F. Depending on the season (Yala, Maha).

Group(no.)	Letterindicator

19. How much time do you spend (per day, per week, per month) on group-related activities? Do you think that is a lot? Why?

20. What have you gained so far from being a member of the group? Explain.

21. What else do you expect from the group?

22. Do you ever not attend a meeting/not participate in activities? Why?

23. Have your life changed in the last year? (Elaboration of question: How were yesterday compared to the same day last year - any differences?) Why?

Household income:

Indicators:

24. Are you from this area (originally)?

25. Have you ever received Janasavia?

26. Livestock - no of heads? (goats, sheeps, cows)

27. Can I also talk to your wife/husband?

Observe the rest:

Housing standard:

A. Bricks with tiled roof

B. Plastered mudd with tiled roof

C. Cadjans (Wattle and doub, (flette)de) coconutleaves) with tiled roof

questions for group discussions:

UG meetings

Write down:

1. Name
2. age
3. Are you married - yes/no?
4. Do you have children? How many and age?
5. Are you from this area (originally) yes/no?
6. Education?
7. Size of land (acres) - 1. highland/homestead, 2. irrigated land.
8. Ande (share cropping)/Veeporunduwa(I give you 1 acre and you have to give me a fixed amount of bushes; no matter if the harvest fails).
9. Kind of house: bricks, Plastered mud, cadjans (coconutleaves)
10. Latrine
11. Water supply
12. Livestock - no of heads? (sheeps, goats, cows)
13. Did you ever received food stamps - yes/no?
14. Did you ever received Janasaviya - yes/no?
15. Did you ever get charity allowance - yes/no?

About group history, and functioning:

Individual:

16. How did you come to know about this group? Who told you?
17. Why did you decide to join the group?

Group:

18. For how long have the group functioned? For how long have you been a member now?
19. What is the objectives (goals) of the group?
20. List the group activities?
21. How often does the group meet - by season?
22. What can be done to improve the functioning of the group?

The objectives of the project:

23. Please explain in your own words, what the SCOR project is doing in this area?

The catalyst:

24. How often do you see the catalyst?

25. What is the catalyst doing?

About problems and solutions:

26. Has the group come across any problems so far? Describe the problems. How have these been solved?

27. What have been the group's main achievements so far? What do you think is the most important?

28. What have you gained being members of this group? (Elaboration: What is the benefits you have got from being members of this group?)

29. What can the catalyst do to further help you as a member of the group?

30. Do you know of people who have not joined a group? And their reasons? What is your opinion about that they do not join any group?

About gender composition:

In case of mixed groups:

31. Do you think it is good for men and women to be together in groups like this? Why (not)?

32. Do men and women behave differently - in group meetings,
in activities?

In case of single gender groups:

31. Why are there only men/women in this group?

32. Would you like your husband/wife to become a member of the group? Why (not)?