IDENTIFYING GENDER ISSUES USING THE BENEFICIARY ASSESSMENT APPROACH: A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

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March 31, 2003

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INTRODUCTION

There is consensus among development practitioners that effective development cannot take place without ensuring that women are active participants and full beneficiaries of development interventions. According to the document " Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work (January 2002), there is strong empirical evidence that "..gender-based division of labor and the inequalities to which it gives rise tend to slow development, economic growth, and poverty reduction. They also contribute to poverty and reduce well-being." The report goes on to say that the findings make it clear that gender issues are an important dimension of the fight against poverty.

The Bank's gender policy is to support governments in identifying key gender issues for poverty reduction and in taking action to address these issues. Gender is, therefore, now considered a key-crosscutting theme of significant relevance in all sectors of the Bank's operations. According to the previously mentioned document, the crosscutting approach to gender and development is the first step for countries and the Bank to identify key gender issues from a development perspective.

The challenge, to date, has been on how best to effectively understand and address the situation of women in the context of planned or ongoing development interventions in a sustained and systematic manner. This is an issue that is faced by Bank project managers seeking to address gender issues as an integral part of the project implementation process.

It is growing increasingly clear that targeted project beneficiaries are the ones that are most knowledgeable about their problems and solutions to their problems. It is, therefore, imperative to give them a voice in the development of projects being implemented on their behalf. This consultation becomes even more critical when addressing gender issues. Women in developing countries often face socio-cultural constraints that can impede their right to be heard as well as their participation in development projects intended for their benefit.

The Bank undertakes social analysis in connection with its lending program to determine the suitability of programs proposed for bank financing. Social analysis enables the Bank to assess whether a proposed program or operation is likely to meet its social development objectives and recommends measures to meet these objectives. The beneficiary assessment approach (BA), is a social analysis tool that can be used to consult with targeted women beneficiaries in order to identify their needs and priorities in a systematic and sustainable manner throughout the project cycle.

Experience has shown that in cases where gender issues are specifically targeted in undertaking social analysis, considerable contributions can be made in improving the equity and sustainability of project activities. This document is intended to be used as a hands-on guide for Bank project managers seeking to address gender considerations

in the design and implementation of their projects. The Guide consists of an explanation of the BA approach; some background information on its use in Bank projects; and examples of BAs that have provided useful gender-related information. In addition, the guide provides all the necessary reference materials for utilizing the approach.

1. The Role of BA as a Social Development Tool Addressing Gender Issues

1.1 The Relevance of BA to Addressing Gender Related Bank Policy And Operational Directives

BA is a social analysis tool that is used to ensure that the priorities and feedback of targeted beneficiaries is identified and integrated in the project design, monitoring and evaluation stage of projects. The approach represents the consultation aspect of social analysis. The BA approach has been particularly effective in providing relevant and in-depth information when specifically directed to the collection of gender sensitive information as evidenced in a number of projects in the area of education, health, and Social Funds. The approach has a number of characteristics that contribute to its effectiveness in identifying gender issues, which include the following:

- use of open-ended conversational interviews with individuals at locations convenient to them facilitating discussion of sensitive socio-cultural issues;

- use of local research teams that are familiar with the language and culture of the communities targeted who are generally aware of social constraints faced by women;

- gender balance in research teams that facilitate filed interviews with women beneficiaries;

- the use of participant observation methodology which enables researchers to make observations on gender related socio-cultural norms pertaining to the targeted beneficiaries that otherwise may not be articulated.

1.2 The Bank's Policy and Operational Directives Related to Gender

The beneficiary assessment approach has the potential to be an effective tool for project managers who are attempting to comply with the gender aspect of some of the Bank's operational policies and directives, which are described below.

<u>The Bank's Operational Policy on Gender (4.20)</u>

This policy states that the Bank aims to reduce gender disparities and enhance women's participation in the economic development of their countries by integrating gender considerations in its country assistance program. According to the previously mentioned publication, "Integrating Gender into the World Bank's Work," (January 2002), the Bank assists member countries to:

- design gender sensitive policies and programs to ensure that overall development efforts are directed to attain impacts that are equitably beneficial to men and women;

- review and modify legal and regulatory frameworks to improve women's access to assets and services;

- strengthen the database for, and train country officials in gender analysis, particularly in countries with inadequate gender-disaggregated data;

- obtain financing if necessary, to meet resource demands of program changes;

Bank lending supports the expansion of women's access to services and assets. BA has the potential to assist Bank project managers and government agencies in the design of gender-sensitive programs and policies. The approach involves capacity building of local NGOs and government agencies in the usage of the methodology. Given the fact that the approach has been useful in addressing gender issues in a number of sectors, project managers may find it beneficial in assisting governments to undertake activities mentioned above.

Operational Manual Statement, Project Appraisal, OMS 2.20

This directive states that sociological aspects of projects comprise the explicit consideration of the social organization, tradition, and values bearing on the feasibility, implementation, and operation of projects, and the pursuit of objectives such as poverty alleviation. These aspects are particularly important for projects designed to assist specific beneficiaries and/or projects whose success depends on participation by the beneficiaries (e.g. rural development, urban, education, population, and health projects).

Appraisal of the sociological aspects should focus on the extent to which projects adequately take into account four main factors: a) the social and demographic characteristics of local beneficiaries; b) the social organization of productive activities of the population in the project area; c) the cultural acceptability of the project and its compatibility with the behavior and perceived needs of the intended beneficiaries; and d) the social strategy for project implementation needed to sustain beneficiary participation.

This directive points out that women can be a particularly important group of project participants and beneficiaries. It states that appraisal should, therefore, examine whether project design takes into account adequately: a) the circumstances that impede or encourage the participation of women; b) the contribution that women could make to achieving the project objectives; c) the changes which the project will introduce that might be disadvantageous to women; and d) whether the implications for women are included in the provisions for monitoring the impact of the project.

Projects involving involuntary population re-settlement or affecting tribal groups also require the addressing of sensitive social and cultural issues. Women often comprise a significant number of the beneficiaries targeted under such initiatives and it is, therefore, important to include their views and priorities in the project design process.

The BA approach is overall particularly relevant to the implementation of OMS 2.20. The methodology is used to better understand the socio-cultural context in which projects are to be implemented. BA is also used to better understand the priorities of a targeted population in relation to a planned or ongoing project. This information often provides useful input to the project design, monitoring, and evaluation process.

2. A Description of the BA Approach

2.1 The Approach and its Objectives

Beneficiary Assessment (BA) is a qualitative social analysis tool used to ***improve the impact*** of development operations by gaining the views of intended beneficiaries regarding a planned or ongoing intervention. The approach involves consultation with targeted beneficiaries to facilitate customization of projects so that they better reflect the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries. This facilitates a sense of project ownership and provides the basis for stakeholder involvement at the project design, implementation, and evaluation stages, which in turn contributes to project sustainability.

The objective of BA is to assess the value of an activity as perceived by project beneficiaries and to integrate findings into project activities. It is designed specifically to undertake systematic listening of the poor and other stakeholders by giving voice to their priorities and concerns, which are not always aligned with projects targeting their communities This method of ***systematic consultation*** is used by project management as a design, monitoring, and evaluation tool.

The BA approach is not intended to ***supplant quantitative surveys*** and other traditional methods for data gathering. It seeks to complement these methods by providing reliable, qualitative, in-depth information on the ***sociocultural conditions and perceptions*** of the project's target group. This information is intended to be immediate use to managers and policymakers responsible for improving people's lives. BA facilitates the development of initiatives that are ***demand-driven*** and enhances their ***sustainability.*** The approach is useful in:

- identifying and designing development activities;
- signaling constraints to participation faced by the target group;
- obtaining feedback on reactions of the target group to the interventions implemented;
- uncovering new information that would otherwise not come to light

2.2 Methodology

The BA approach relies primarily on four data collection techniques:

- ✓ **Conversational Interviews**
- ✓ **Focus group discussions**
- ✓ **Direct Observation**
- ✓ **Participant Observation**

- ***Conversational Interviews***

These interviews, which are in-depth in nature, are the foundation of the beneficiary assessment approach. In well-guided, naturalistic interviewing, people reveal their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs about a particular issue. The conversational interview is structured around a number of themes or topics directly related to planned or ongoing interventions targeting the community. The interviews can be conducted one-to-one or in groups. Individual interview allows for free expression of issues that may be suppressed or distorted in the presence of peers. This is a particularly important concern in interviewing women and the poor. **(For more information, see "Beneficiary Assessment: An Approach Described, SDP Number 10, Lawrence Salmen, 2002).**

<u>Key Characteristics of Conversational Interviewing:</u>

- establishing a good rapport between interviewer and respondent; this requires the trust and respect of the beneficiary;
- generally, interviews do not exceed 45 minutes, even though it may require more than one visit to complete all interviews;
- to the extent possible, note taking, should be done at a minimum, while conducting interviews; interviewers are encouraged to write up their notes after each interview.

- ***Focus Group Discussions***

This technique is used to interview target communities in groups. Such interviews are useful in interviewing persons from the same neighborhoods, or those involved in making the same livelihoods. Usage of focus groups facilitates data

collection of a larger sample group at one time, although precise attribution of findings and individuals is inherently difficult. To be effective, the focus group participants should be between 6 and 12 in number.

- ***Direct Observation***

Direct Observation is the simplest of techniques. It involves counting, noting behavior traits and patterns, and other notable facets of a particular developmental situation. The potential for quantifying observed phenomena is major and immediate.

- ***Participant Observation***

The participation observation method involves ***protracted residence of a researcher*** in a community of beneficiaries. During this time, a sufficient amount of rapport is established with key members of the community of interest. The researcher becomes involved in their day-to-day activities with the objective of gaining a comprehensive understanding of the living conditions of the targeted beneficiaries. The researcher resides with the beneficiaries over a period of several days to several weeks.

Case studies of 5-10 households are used in collecting information. These households are visited a number of times during the researcher's stay in the community. Emphasis is made on how topics identified in the interview guide are affected by the socio-cultural and political context in which the project beneficiaries live and work.

2.3 BA Usage in the Project Cycle with A Focus on Gender

The beneficiary assessment approach can be used in the design, monitoring , and evaluation phase of project implementation. It is not an approach confined to any one stage in the project cycle. Ideally, it is used periodically as an iterative management tool throughout the project cycle in order to elicit feedback from targeted beneficiaries in relation to a planned, ongoing, or completed intervention.

To date, gender has not been systematically addressed in undertaking social development/social analysis activities. Experience in the implementation of beneficiary assessment indicates that it is possible to gather relevant gender-specific information that can make a significant contribution to the project design phase when effort is made to do so.

The checklist below provides a sample framework for analyzing gender issues (Gender Analysis in Development Planning: A Case Book, Rao, Anderson, and Overholt, 1991) during project identification and design phases. It provides guidance on the kind of information required to assess how well project plans address:

- women's needs;
- promoting women's active participation in implementation;
- how women are likely to be positively and negatively affected by the project

Women's Dimension in Project Identification

Assessing Women's' Needs

- Identification of needs and opportunities for increasing women's:

    - productivity
    - access and control of resources
    - access and control of benefits
    -

- Assessing how these needs and opportunities relate to other general and sectoral development needs and opportunities.

- Have women been directly consulted in identifying such needs and opportunities?

Defining General Project Objectives

- Are project objectives explicitly related to women's needs?

- Do these objectives adequately reflect women's needs?

- Have women participated in setting those objectives?

- Have there been any earlier efforts?

- How has the present proposal built on earlier efforts?

Identifying Possible Negative Effects

- Will the project affect access to and control of resources and benefits?

- Women's access to and control of resources and benefits?

- Might it affect the situation of women in some other way?

- What will be the effects on women in the short and long run?

Use of the beneficiary assessment methodology enables project managers to address these questions in designing and implementing projects which strive for gender equity.

As mentioned before, the approach is not limited to one stage of the project cycle, such as the design phase. BA is also used as a monitoring and evaluation tool.

The following are examples of BAs which have provided some useful insights into gender issues in several projects at various stages of the project cycle (more information is provided on these BAs in section 4):

Design Phase – In the case of the India 5th PHN Project; Matrouh Resource Management Project; and the Ethiopia Health and Population project, the BA was taken as part of project preparation activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation – The Zambia Social Recovery Project and the India - National Sericulture Project (NSP) are examples of projects that have used the beneficiary assessment approach as an iterative monitoring and evaluation tool.

2.4 Duration and Cost of BAs

Time and Cost

Beneficiary Assessments ***cost very little as a percentage of project costs***. Except for a few assessments, the majority of them cost less than $100,000 and amounted to under .05% of the total project cost. These figures do not include the costs associated with Bank staff time and travel, which average $20,000 per BA.

2.5 BA Use in the Bank

Project Level

BAs have been carried out increasingly during both the ***preparation and implementation phase*** of the project cycle and are normally implemented by ***host-country nationals*** who are not employed by the government agency implementing the project.

According to the study, ***"Towards a Listening Bank,"SDP Number 23, Lawrence Salmen, 1998,*** BAs have been conducted in all sectors and regions of the Bank over the last 19 years. Systematic listening has been most prevalent in the health, infrastructure, education, social protection, and agriculture sectors. Given the slight disparity in BA usage between the various lending sectors, it can be inferred that the approach can be used in most sectors.

Regional Considerations

The preponderance of BA activity, in the past, has been in the Africa region. The next largest concentration of BAs is in Latin America and the Caribbean. The location of more than half of BA activity in the Africa region is due to several factors: management, resources, and technical expertise:

(i) **Management –** There were several managers in the Africa region who took the initiative to use the BA approach in several countries and sectors, based on positive experiences with the approach in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, a key director also created a departmental mandate to have systematic listening or ***Systematic Client Consultation (SCC) in all lending*** activities. The beneficiary assessment approach was the main methodology used in SCC.

(ii) **Resources** - When the director mentioned above moved to the Vice-President's office, he established ***The Systematic Client Consultation Fund (SCC).*** The majority of BA work done to date has been supported by special funds. These funds include The Japanese Project Preparation Funds and Trust Funds. A significant number of funds were also set up in the Bank to promote this kind of inquiry such as the Bank-wide Fund for Innovative Approaches to Human and Social Development.

(iii) **Technical Expertise –** There were several social scientists with particular expertise in the design and monitoring of BA work in the Africa Technical Department in the 1990s.

Policy Implications of BA

Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs)

There have been some cases where BAs have had policy implications for the projects undertaken as evidenced by the box below. Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPAs), which use BA techniques, have the same objectives as BA in that they attempt to present the perspective of the poor and associated key actors to the attention of government decision makers. The key difference between PPA and BA is that the former seeks to bring information ***to the attention of policy makers*** and the latter brings information to the ***attention of project managers***.

The conversational interviewing technique is the principal approach used in PPAs. To date, over 40 PPAs have been conducted in as many borrower countries in various regions. They vary in terms of depth and scale of coverage. The scope of issues addressed by PPAs are popular perceptions of problems; incentives and the regulatory framework; public expenditure and institutions; and formal and informal safety nets (for more information, see Participatory Poverty Assessments, Lawrence Salmen, SDP Number 11,1995).

3. Implementation of the BA Approach

3.1 Design of the BA - The Terms of Reference

3.2 Defining the Scope of the Assessment

This section of the TOR provides the overview of the BA to be undertaken. It will require stating the context of the assessment in terms of the problem the BA is attempting to address. It is then necessary to list the primary and secondary objectives of the BA. This section also needs to identify the entities and implementing the BA such as the government agency for which the BA will be undertaken as well as the NGOs involved in the study.

3.3 Specifying the Techniques

In preparing the Terms of Reference, it will be necessary to specify the techniques to be used (e.g. conversational interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation). It is also possible to include other participatory approaches such as Rapid Rural Appraisal, which utilizes techniques such as wealth ranking and mapping.

3.4 Identifying the Sampling Criteria

In identifying the target population, the degree of coverage must be adequately large enough to serve as a sufficient base for management decision-making. Since the approach utilizes qualitative methodologies that facilitate an in-depth understanding of client needs, a significant amount of information can be generated from a relatively small number of beneficiaries. Large sample sizes used in statistical sampling are not necessary for this approach.

3.5 Defining the Time Frame for Implementation

The average time in which to implement a beneficiary assessment is approximately four months from the time interviewers are identified to the time the BA is implemented and the final report is prepared.

3.6 Cost Considerations

The cost of undertaking a BA varies with the size and range of activities undertaken. Most BAs cost between $40,000 to $60,000, excluding the cost of a Bank BA expert which is approximately $20,000. Even in cases when the BA was done in the most costly and time-consuming fashion, as a continuous monitoring and evaluation tool, the cost of the BA was still less than one percent of the total project cost.

3.2 Implementation of the BA

The beneficiary assessment approach is not rigid in its implementation. The time frame for field research may vary. It is also possible that only one of the three key techniques (conversational interviews, focus group interviews, and participant observation) may be used. There are, however, some general guidelines to follow in implementing beneficiary assessments. The general procedure for implementing assessments is as follows:

(i) The project manager discusses the BA context, interview guide, and general implementation with a beneficiary assessment expert.

(ii) The project manager discusses the BA with the host country personnel (government agencies implementing the project) to explain the justification for the BA and to enlist their support.

(iii) A BA expert from the Bank goes to the borrowing country to get familiarized with the project environment and identify the institutions and individuals who will implement the BA.

(iv) The BA expert designs the assessment, identifying the sample size, specific methodologies, duration of the assessment and cost.

(v) The expert trains the NGOs/individuals who will undertake the assessment, and guides them in undertaking field interviews.

(vi) A field visit is made by the BA expert roughly one third of the way through the fieldwork to ensure that the assessment is proceeding as planned.

(vii) An evaluation of the assessment is then done to determine if the assessment has succeeded in accurately recording and describing the needs and priorities of the target community relative to a planned intervention. This information should be presented in a manner that can be efficiently used by project management in either designing, modifying, or evaluating the project to reflect this new information.

3.2.1 Developing the Interview Guide

The interview guide has a key role in implementing a BA. It is the main tool used to elicit feedback from the targeted communities interviewed. The beneficiary assessment approach rarely uses questionnaires or survey forms. Conversational interviews are created around themes of importance to managers. These themes are identified in the interview guide. The interview themes are based on areas of interest and operational relevance to project. The beneficiary assessment

consultant should develop the interview guide in consultation with the Task Team Leader. (See Annex III for more details)

3.2.2 Identifying Local Consultants/NGOs (See Beneficiary Assessment: An Approach Described, Lawrence Salmen, SDV Number 10, 2002)

Personality Traits

In identifying local consultants, it will be important to look for a number of character traits. A person likely to conduct a good beneficiary assessment must be sensitive, respectful, unobtrusive and engaging in their conduct. The BA researcher will have the responsibility of conducting conversational interviews with an unknown person often of modest means. The interviewer must be a good listener and elicit honest responses that can be put to practical use. It will be necessary for the interviewer to keep note taking to a minimum, as more detailed writing should generally be done after the interview. Specific desirable character traits are as follows:

- good communications skills;
- have some experience dealing with and demonstrated empathy for the poor
- good writing skills;
- good recall ability;

Since BAs often are useful in identifying gender-related issues, undertaking the BA will require interviewing both men and women. It will be very important to recruit male and female researchers and attaining gender balance on the research teams.

Academic Background

Experience has shown that communications skills are more important than a particular academic discipline. The researchers conducting interviews should ideally have some college education, but high school diploma can also be acceptable if they have the significant writing and communications skills. The person in charge of the BA, however, should be someone with an advanced university education.

3.2.3 Orientation for Assessors

To conduct interviews with beneficiaries for optimal results, the selected assessors will need specific orientation and guidance. The orientation should provide clear guidelines as to the goals of the interviews and the role of the

assessor. The orientation should strengthen the skills of the BA researchers in the following areas:

- writing descriptively
- keeping an organized record of field notes
- separate trivia from useful detail
- avoid influencing/interpreting the responses of interviewees

3.2.4 Testing the Interview Guide

It is recommended that the person in charge of the BA undertake a field test of the Interview Guide over a period of a few days in collaboration with the BA consultant. This pre-test would take place prior to the commencement of full-scale field research. It would require identifying a small sample frame and using the Interview Guide to conduct interviews. Based on the results of the interviews, it will be possible to assess if any modification needs to be made to the Interview Guide. The pre-test will also provide an opportunity to identify and address weaknesses in data collection on the part of the interviewers.

3.2.5 Monitoring the BA

Monitoring is a critical part of the BA process because it ensures that the approach stays true to its objectives. It provides a means of determining whether or not BA interviewers are effectively gathering information. The objective is to make sure they are not biased in the recording of interviews and that the information gathered is relevant to project management needs.

Approximately one third of the way through field work, an interim review must be undertaken. The BA consultant should participate in this interim review. The BA team should prepare a progress report for this review presenting initial findings, suggested revisions to the interview guide, and other recommendations for BA improvement. The interim review allows for changes in the BA to be made while there is still sufficient time remaining for the improvements to affect the bulk of the assessments. It is also recommended that monitoring take place at the end of the BA when data is being tabulated and the final report is prepared. The objective is to ensure that recorded information is properly categorized and analyzed.

3.2.6 Preparation of the Final Report

The final reports should be utilization focused and not academic. It should be prepared by the Team Leader with input from the Bank BA consultant. When an interviewer is writing his report, he needs to have his audience, project management, clearly in mind. The project manager will be the person who will use evaluation results for project design, implementation, and/or evaluation. To this end, the report should focus on issues of relevance and importance to project

objectives. The comprehensive report should not be longer than 25-40 pages. Other points need to be kept in mind are as follows:

- each major issue/finding needs to be identified and discussed. Interviewers need to be focused. They must sift through cumbersome amounts of data and select only relevant information;

- responses should be categorized according to thematic areas of the interview guide and presented as percentages;

- the findings from focus group discussions will have to be summarized by groups and regions where they took place;

The final report should include the following sections:

- an executive summary;

- an introduction that explains the project context and the BA's objectives in supporting the project;

- the findings of the BA;

- any other relevant information;

- conclusions and recommendations

3.3 Documentation of Impact

One important aspect of beneficiary assessment implementation is the documentation of how beneficiary assessment findings have affected project activities. This should be done at the end of the BA. The Task Manager should take responsibility for documenting any follow-up actions that are taken as a result of the BA findings. This report as well as the final beneficiary assessment report should be kept in the project file.

The availability of the BA report and its associated impact will provide a source of useful information that can be referred to in designing follow-up projects and in replicating the process in different areas of the country. A new project manager taking over a project will, therefore, have up-to-date information on the BA and will be more likely to continue to follow the approach. One challenge faced in BA implementation is the lack of continuity due to changes in project management. New project managers at the Bank may not be aware of the value of integrating participatory approaches such as BA in project design and implementation.

4. Sectoral Overview of the Contribution of BA to Identifying Gender Issues.

4.1 Agriculture

This section provides a review of gender-related findings in BAs implemented in the area of agriculture extension. Given the fact that women comprise a significant number of farmers in developing countries, it is imperative to understand the sociocultural constraints they face as farmers. Implementing effective interventions in this sector requires an understanding of these constraints and an ability to take these issues into consideration in the design and implementation of projects. Such action ensures the full participation of all targeted beneficiaries.

Beneficiary Assessment and Gender Issues in Agricultural Extension
Agricultural extension is a system designed to improve the productivity of farmers through access to information on cultivation techniques. In many developing countries, given the large number of farmers targeted for extension, and the limited number of extension agents, intermediaries are often used to disseminate information. The Training and Visitation (T&V) system of extension uses intermediaries called contact groups, which are comprised of farmers who are required to disseminate the information they have received to others in their communities.

The publication " The Voice of the Farmer In Agricultural Extension" (Agriculture Knowledge and Information Systems Discussion Paper, Lawrence Salmen,1999) provides a review of ten completed BAs of agricultural extension programs in Africa. The ten assessments were carried out in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia.

The assessments reflect the first effort of the extension agencies to elicit feedback on the services they provide from the targeted beneficiaries. All programs were national in scope. The average sample of farmers interviewed in each assessment was approximately 1,200. Women comprised an average of 39% for each sample. Contact farmers comprised 44% of all farmers sampled. The cost of the BAs ranged from USD $20,000 to $80,000.

Findings

The findings of the BA reflected that the Training and Visitation System has not been effective in addressing gender considerations. According to the publication mentioned above, "The greatest unmet challenge facing agricultural extension is the inclusion of women."

Except for Mali, the nine remaining BAs reported serious inequity concerning female farmers. In many cases, women were marginalized by the extension service. This is evidenced by the fact that women were generally not invited to be part of

contact groups who are the primary recipients of extension services. Messages delivered by the extension agent went almost entirely to the members of contact groups who were generally men.

- ✓ **In Senegal, half of the contact groups interviewed said that the extension agent is the most important source of information on agriculture. Women are the major agricultural producers yet they are the least informed about the advances in agricultural production. Only one fifth of women farmers knew of the existence of contact groups and women comprised only 14% of the contact groups. In addition, only ten percent of women mentioned extension agents as a source of information on agriculture. Most of the women (85%) interviewed said they had not received any messages from the extension service.**

- ✓ **In Guinea, even in instances where women comprised a significant number (37%) of those contacted directly by extension agents, considerably fewer of them registered increases in production relative to men**.

- ✓ **In areas of Guinea where farmers are not members of contact groups but are covered by extension services, fewer women registered increases in production.**

- ✓ **In Cote d'Ivoire, the women complained that the extension service did not care about them even though they demonstrated a willingness to form contact groups**.

- ✓ **In Ghana few women were represented in the contact groups and the extension information had few topics relating to women. The training topics in most cases have focused on production issues rather than on post-production where women are most involved**

- ✓ **In some cases, the problem seemed to one of communication. In Ghana, the BA uncovered that male extension workers found it difficult to interact with female farmers. In Zambia, women farmers said that "they didn't feel male extension workers communicated effectively with them**."

- ✓ **In Mali, farmers suggested that women's groups were most likely to be the most effective partners in terms of diffusing extension messages.**

- ✓ **In Cameroon and Cote d'Ivoire, the BA indicated that the extension agencies seemed to have made little progress in increasing the productivity of women farmers**.

4.1.1 Case Study: India - National Sericulture Project

Context

The National Sericulture Project (NSP) of India had the objective of increasing silk production by increasing productivity, product quality, and strengthening support services. After China, India is the world's second largest silk producer. The sericulture sector is a rural household based private sector activity supporting about five million full time jobs, which are predominantly held by women.

The BA approach was selected as a monitoring and evaluation tool for the project. The rationale was that the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, children, and disadvantaged groups that support this sector need to be better understood in order to ensure that they receive the intended benefits of the project. It was believed that the nature of the approach lends itself to qualitative inquiry on sensitive socio-cultural issues relating to the target group working in this sector.

Objectives of the BA

The BA had two primary objectives: (1) to generate both quantitative and qualitative data, paying particular attention to the needs and priorities of the beneficiary population; and (2) to function as an independent feedback mechanism continuously supplying information (in the form of periodic reports) to the managers of the department of Sericulture (DOS) implementing the NSP. It was anticipated that the information obtained through the reports would assist management in monitoring and evaluating project performance. It was also expected to assist management in making periodic adjustments to project design and implementation as needed.

Key Themes of Inquiry

The BA focuses on a number of key themes of inquiry related to the economic activities of the targeted communities in the area of sericulture. The role of NGOs/cooperatives and the role of women were identified as two key areas of relevance to the chawkie rearing, reeling, and weaving sectors:

In regards to women, the following topics were to be addressed through the BA:

- Access to Income and Credit
- Decision Making
- Female Headed Households

Implementation of the BA

The BA was carried out in the five principal states covered by the NSP: Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Jammu, and Kashmir under the general supervision of the Central Silk Board. The institutions implementing the BA were the Institute for Social and Economic Change in Bangalore; the Center for Studies in Social Sciences (CSSS) in Calcutta; and Economic Development Associates (EDA) in New Delhi. This BA was the largest funded under a Bank supported project at a cost of 1.2 million dollars (still less than one percent of total project cost). The high cost is due to the fact that it was used continuously as a monitoring and evaluation tool by five research institutions in five states throughout the life of the project.

Key Findings

Training

- The DOS in Karnatka was providing sericulture training for women at residential schools. However, only 300 women per year were attending these schools. The BA uncovered a great demand for training by village women. However, they could not participate in training for one month because of their heavy burden of household duties. They also could not travel the distance to training centers (due to sociocultural constraints related to women traveling alone).

- Women in the villages wanted training for one month as opposed to ten days. They also wanted more customized training as local conditions relating to sericulture varied in different parts of the state.

BA Impact: The DOS provided training in the villages closer to women's homes. The training which was in silk worm rearing, was also more customized to the needs of the women. The number of women trained increased from 300 per year to 3,000.

Credit for Women

- The DOS was implementing a credit component that targeted women farmers. This was a difficult component to implement because ultimately it was the banks that loaned money and they had very strict criteria for approving loans. The BA disclosed that women were systematically discriminated against in credit disbursement because of their lack of collateral.

- The BA also revealed how important informal credit was for farmers. Whereas formal credit was available at 12%, informal credit cost 36% or more.

  BA Impact: The Women in Development officers in DOS in all states involved in the NSP, jointly appealed to the central government for assistance in waiving collateral requirements for poor women. In response, the Reserve Bank of India

issued a circular in 1991-1992, exempting women beneficiaries from having to provide collateral for loans of up to Rs 20,000.

Extension Services

- The BA uncovered that women sericulturists were not able to access extension services adequately from the all-male extension officers. Due to cultural constraints, the officers would speak only to the man of the household. If he were not there, they would leave even though women were doing almost all the silkworm rearing. The BA informed the DOS of the urgent need to recruit female extension workers.

BA Impact: Approximately 300 female para-extension workers were hired under the project.

4.2 Education Sector

Beneficiary Assessment and Gender Issues in the Education Sector

The provision of effective basic education services in a sector that is socially, politically, and culturally sensitive requires the full support of all stakeholders. The latter includes government officials, education professionals, parents, and students. Incorporating a formal consultation process that targets beneficiary populations in the design of basic education projects has proven effective in better understanding the demand for education, particularly education of girls. It has also been useful in addressing some of the constraints that keep parents from sending their children to school. The following are some gender-specific findings and related impact resulting from beneficiary assessment approaches used in selected Bank projects.

- Mali-Education Sector Consolidation Project - The BA was undertaken to provide insight into the low demand for primary education in rural areas of Mali. The study focused on the expectation of parents regarding primary education and whether these expectations were met. It also focused on the constraints that were keeping families from sending their children to school.

  The sampling for the BA consisted of twelve villages in four different regions. The methodology used was conversational interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. The assessment was implemented by the National Institute of Pedagogy in the Ministry of Education. It took about two months at a cost of US$30,000 (excluding Banks staff time).

Findings

The key findings of the BA revealed that education had fallen short of parents' expectations, and that the cost of sending children to school outweighed the benefits.

Interviews on gender-specific issues disclosed the following:

- ✓ **The major concern for parents in regards to sending their daughter to school (those who had reached the age of 14) was that keeping them in school after this age would endanger their prospects for marriage. This was because they may become "too old" or become pregnant. In order to avoid conflict with school authorities, parents preferred to keep their daughters at school altogether then remove them at marriage age.**

BA Impact: There was a change in government after the BA was completed and a long delay before the report was submitted to the Bank. The next task manager handling the project did not follow-up on the recommendations of the BA. USAID, which was one of nine donors participating in the project, took up most of the recommendations made in the BA. Some of the actions taken to address gender-specific issues were as follows:

- ✓ Issues relating to distance and the cost of schools were addressed in project design as recommended by the BA.
- ✓ There was increased focus on the provision of gender sensitive school materials.
- ✓ A Women in Development (WID) consultant was recruited.
- ✓ More female teachers were to be recruited and more training was to be provided for them

- Baluchistan - Basic Education Project **-** The BA was undertaken to better understand the reasons for low enrollment of girls at the primary level. The findings revealed that parents were reluctant to send their daughters to classes taught by men from other parts of the country.

  As a direct result of the BA study findings and recommendations, **local female teachers were trained and communities became responsible for hiring the teachers.** Previously, the government had used teaching positions as rewards for political support. Subsequently, the enrollment of girls in schools in that state increased over **200%** within the first two years of project implementation.

4.2.1 Case Study: Turkey - Basic Education Project

Bank staff and the government of Turkey wanted to better understand the reasons why children, particularly girls, were not attending primary and middle schools in the southeastern provinces and low-income areas of the two major cities of

Ankara and Istanbul. The assessment had the objective of identifying constraints to school attendance and to make recommendations as to how government policy could increase the rates of attendance of target groups, particularly girls, in specific areas.

Methodology

The methodology used was one-to-one conversational interviews and participant observation involving on-site residence in areas of major interest. Interviewing was done with members of 513 households in cities and villages of seven provinces. The provinces represented regions where school attendance was particularly low, particularly high, and where the two major cities are located. Another 135 interviews were conducted with community religious leaders, womens' groups and coffee shop patrons.

Participant observation was carried out over a period of one month in two villages in provinces where school attendance was very low (Van and Agri) and in the slums (Gecekondu) Of Ankara and Istanbul. The participant observers lived with families who had school-age daughters who did not attend the basic education schools to better understand factors influencing this non-attendance. The assessment took roughly four months to complete.

Findings

- ✓ The most pervasive finding of this assessment was that participation by parents in the school system was a major contributing factor to school attendance of children. In areas of the country where parents did not participate at all in any school-related activities, primarily the southeast, school attendance among girls was often lower than 20%. In western Tekirdag, where there was constant interaction between parents and teachers in the form of bazaars and meetings to discuss school-related issues, festivals, etc., attendance in basic education was 100%.

- ✓ Parent felt that beyond the acquisition of literacy, a girl's place was in the home. The only exception would be the introduction of skills training into the curriculum that would result in immediate or short-term benefits to the family**.**

- ✓ In the southeastern provinces, the official statistics for school attendance among girls was grossly inflated. It became clear that the official figure for the number of girls in school is twice the actual number**.**

BA Impact:

(i) Incentives were given to schools in the form of fuel and TVs equivalent to $100 per student per year in order to increase girl's enrollment.

(ii) There was construction, extension, and rehabilitation of facilities, especially those having impact on girl's attendance such as lavatories and female teacher housing.

(iii) Introduction of flexible school schedules allowing siblings to accompany student and the provision of double shifts that make it easier for parents to forgo the assistance of their daughters in the home.

4.3 Health Sector

The planning and delivery of effective health services in developing countries initially requires a good understanding of the behaviors, motivations, and attitudes of the targeted communities. The delivery of maternal health and family planning services, in particular, warrants preliminary research that addresses the cultural environment in which the health program is to operate. Women in developing countries face numerous socio-cultural constraints that may prevent them from making full use of health and family planning services made available to them. Given that fact that different cultures have different values and the highly personal nature of the reproductive function, it becomes increasingly important to understand such factors prior to project preparation.

The following are examples of findings from beneficiary assessments undertaken for health and family planning projects:

- India 5th PHN Project – The project had the objective of improving maternal and child health service delivery and family planning services to low-income families in Bombay and Madras. As part of project preparation, it was decided that there was a need to assess the needs and preferences of intended beneficiaries in order to better meet project objectives.

  The BA was implemented by the Tata Institute of Social Science in Bombay and the Center for Research on New International Economic Order in Madras at a total local cost of approximately, USD $15,800, not including the cost of the Bank consultant.

  Findings

  ✓ **The clinic sites originally identified were inconvenient for the target group of women.**

- ✓ **The clinic hours were not convenient for most women.**
- ✓ **Family planning was not a priority for poor women.**
- ✓ **A social marketing program for family planning was going to be implemented based on the assumption that TV was the best medium for reaching the poor. The BA findings indicated that radio would be a better medium.**

BA Impact- (i) There were changes made in the hours of operation for the clinics in order to improve women's access to the health clinics; and (ii) many of the findings such as the fact that family planning was not a priority for poor women, and the fact that the location of health centers was not convenient to the poor were incorporated into the 8th Population and Health Project in Calcutta.

- Niger- Health Project

  The BA was undertaken in three areas of Niger in order to assess how the Ministry of Health could improve its effectiveness in these areas. The BA uncovered that women who were interviewed failed to go to health centers in a large part because they did not want to be attended to by male nurses**.**

4.3.1 Case Study - Ethiopia – Health and Population Project

Context:

A beneficiary assessment was undertaken in Ethiopia as part of the first Population Health and Nutrition Project (PHN). It had the objective of furnishing significant information about the perceptions and behavior of the major rural ethnic groups of Shewa and Arssi regions, which comprised the intended beneficiary population of the project.

A combination of conversational interviews and participant observation methods was used. Interviewing was done with a representative sample drawn from ten villages in each of the four ethnic populations. The average village had about 50 households: five households were interviewed from each village, doubling the number for the Oromo tribe, which comprised the largest group. The assessment took place over a three-month period at a local cost of $14,000 (excluding the cost of the Bank BA consultant).

Findings:

- ✓ Rural Women of Shoa and Arssi generally do not use modern health services at or near the time of childbirth. Of the sample of 236 women, the percentage

of women who went to a health facility for pre-natal, delivery, and post-natal services was six, four, and twelve percent, respectively.

- ✓ Over half of the Amhara women do not breastfeed their babies during the first few days after delivery thus depriving them of the vitamin rich, antibiotic laden colostrum. This is in striking contrast to all other ethnic groups where 94 to 100 percent of mothers do breastfeed immediately after birth.

- ✓ Contraception is largely unknown (78% of men and women) and undesired by the majority of mothers (59%) and half the fathers. Women did express a desire for spacing between children of over a year more than the actual space of 29.9 months.

- ✓ The age of first marriage and divorce vary considerably among the five groups. The extremes are among the Amhara and Kambata-Hadiya women who first marry at 14.8 and 18.3 years of whom 53.4 and 8.3 percent are divorced respectively. The high divorce rate among Amhara women may well have implications for family planning as women guard their childbearing value from one marriage to the next.

4.4 Social Funds

Social Funds provide support for small-scale projects which help the poor. They are designed to respond to the needs and priorities of targeted communities. In order for such programs to be sustainable they must be demand driven and, thereby, promote a sense of project ownership among the targeted communities.

Given the critical role of the targeted communities who are intended to benefit from the Social Fund, it is incumbent upon project managers of the Fund to fully understand the priorities and motivations of their target communities. This enables them to design more customized project components and to identify bottlenecks to implementation that can quickly be addressed. Examples of the contribution of BA to the identification of gender issues in Social Funds are illustrated below:

Zambia - Social Recovery Project

The SRP finances community initiatives primarily related to rehabilitation of social sector infrastructure. The highest number of projects were in the education sector followed by health, with most projects having a water and sanitation component. The SRP had put an emphasis on community development and alignment of the project towards community development by building capacity at the local, regional, district and community levels. Communities submit proposals for projects to the SRP. They had responsibility for implementing the projects once they receive funding. Four beneficiary assessments were taken annually (except for the last BA) over the life of the project. Gender-specific findings were as follows:

- ✓ **There were very few female members project executive committees.**

- ✓ **The low level of participation of women at the meetings**

- ✓ **Women contribute most of the manual labor towards projects, yet they rarely demand remuneration.**

- ✓ **Women face the risk of being marginalized in projects relating to water usage.**

BA Impact: One key gender-specific action taken as a result of the BA was the fact that all project committees were requested to include at least two women. One of each of the two signatories for each committee approving the disbursement of funds had to be a woman.

Central African Republic (CAR) Social Dimensions of Adjustment Project

The goal of the BA was to assist policymakers to understand the socio-cultural problems and concerns of the populations and to integrate these concerns in their development strategies. It was directed at bringing awareness of cultures and people's into national planning and sectoral work. Some of the gender related findings were as follows:

- ✓ **The low attendance of girls in school was due to perceived sexual involvement with their teachers and other students.**

- ✓ **Girls were not motivated in school, not having any role models to encourage them.**

- ✓ **Parents were not supportive of sending their daughters to school, as there was little importance attached to girl's education. There was a perception that educated girls are more independent and get divorced more often.**

4.5 Environment

The World Bank's Operational Directive 4.01 on Environmental Assessments (EAs) calls for involvement of affected groups and NGOs fully into account in project design and implementation and in the preparation of EAs. As key users of natural resources such as water and wood, women are key stakeholders of projects that focus on environmental preservation or re-settlement in relation to planned interventions.

In many cases, there are important social issues affecting women's activities in the environment sector that must be addressed in implementing such projects. The case study below describes a beneficiary assessment focusing on the needs and priorities of women targeted for the credit component of a natural resource management project in Egypt.

Egypt - Matrouh Resource Management Project

The project had the objective of integrating Bedouin women, known to face particularly strong socio-cultural constraints, in all aspects of its implementation. The limited mobility of women; their inability to attend meetings where men are present; and their inability to participate in educational and training programs that include men were, however, considered major obstacles to their full participation in project activities.

Project management, therefore, decided that it was necessary to have a particularly flexible and gender-sensitive approach in designing project components. The BA was undertaken to better understand the needs and priorities of the women in the targeted areas, in relation to planned project activities.

The emphasis of the BA was on access to credit and income generation needs as it was viewed as a key program area of interest to Bedouin women. Providing them with access to credit was believed to provide a means of promoting environmentally sustainable activities that would reduce their workload and provide a source of income. Seven groups of women and three groups of men living in four of the project areas were interviewed.

Findings:

- ✓ In all four of the project areas, women rated fetching water as one of the most difficult tasks they face. They would walk long distances sometimes 2-3 times a day.

- ✓ The women also listed collecting shrubs, baking, and washing clothes as other difficult and time consuming tasks. In more affluent communities, where women had kerosene stoves, baking was not viewed as an arduous task.

- ✓ In all four-project areas, women stressed the importance of literacy. They were interested in basic education and were willing to contribute a reasonable fee for this service.

- ✓ Interviews with men's groups reflected support for their wives' access to basic education, provided the classes were nearby and taught by female instructors.

- ✓ All women interviewed, expressed interest in participating in the pilot credit program. They did not object to a mandatory savings program, and expressed a willingness to form into groups to apply for loans.

- ✓ The majority of women were interested in purchasing sewing machines to decrease household expenditure for clothes and to make products to market to their communities.

- ✓ Given a choice, all women interviewed, with the exception of a few, preferred to take loans from the local credit cooperative as opposed to the local bank, which was being considered by the project. The reason was because they were more familiar with the cooperative.

- ✓ The men interviewed also preferred that their wives took loans from the local credit cooperative because they did not approve of interest rates charged by the bank.

5. Conclusion

Experience has shown that unless specific steps are taken to ensure the full participation of women in development interventions, they are often excluded. A proactive approach is, therefore, needed to ensure that men and women are equally benefiting from interventions implemented on their behalf. This requires that gender issues are identified and addressed in an ongoing manner in the project design, monitoring, and evaluation process.

The beneficiary assessment approach is a social analysis tool that is particularly well suited to identifying and addressing gender issues in development projects in a useful and systematic manner. To this end, this Guide is intended to assist project managers in using the approach to effectively address gender issues throughout their project implementation cycle.

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ANNEX I

DESIGN OF THE BENEFICIARY ASSESSMENT

The Terms of Reference for implementing a beneficiary assessment provides a framework for implementing the assessment. It must be shared with local partners and provides guidance in preparing the Terms of Reference for the beneficiary assessment consultant. The Terms of Reference for the BA should include the following activities:

- Provision of a brief note on background and justification.
- Explanation of the specific purposes and objectives.
- Description of the specific techniques to be used.
- Listing of research issues and themes to be addressed.
- Identifying the sample size.
- Defining the time frame for implementation (generally between four weeks and six months).
- Establishing a budget for the BA.

ANNEX II

EXAMPLE OF A TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A BENEFICIARY ASSESSMENT CONSULTANT

The consultant will design and supervise the implementation of the beneficiary assessment for the project. He/she will ensure that key gender issues related to the project are addressed in the beneficiary assessment through the interview guide. The consultant will have responsibility for the identification and recruitment of local partners as well as their training. The consultant will undertake the following specific activities:

(i) review the project document to understand the context for the BA (2 days);

(ii) travel to the borrowing country project site to become familiarized with the project environment and identify institutions and individuals who will implement the BA with attention to gender balance on the field research teams (2 weeks);

(iii) design the BA (3 days);

(iv) prepare the interview guide, in consultation with the Task Team Leader, in order to identify the key themes and lines of interviewing with the targeted communities (1 day);

(v) provide training to local researchers (5 days);

(vi) ensure that field interviewers are undertaking assessments in a gender sensitive manner that is likely to elicit honest responses from targeted groups;

(vii) assist the staff and interviewers to pilot the interview guide and implement any changes needed during the pre-test (5 days);

(viii) monitor the progress of the assessment through contact with the director of the field research;

(ix) undertake a second field visit one third of the way through the assessment to ensure the assessment is proceeding as planned; also provide some guidance in tabulation and report writing (2 weeks);

(x) review and edit the final report (2 weeks);

(xi) submit the final report to the project manager for review and dissemination to the local project management;

ANNEX III

EXAMPLES OF AN INTERVIEW GUIDE

(See Beneficiary Assessment : An Approach Described, SDP Number 10)

Education

a. expectation from education?

b. schooling for girls a priority?

c. girls needed for chores at home?

d. distance of school from home- is it a problem?

e. role of religion (obstacles to children's attendance?)

f. quality of education received- degree of learning and utility of what is learned

g. physical aspects of the schools- are they in good condition?

Health and Population

a. health problems affecting the family?

b. perception of health services provided by government, NGOs, and traditional healers?

c. degree and reason for attendance at health center?

d. problems of village agricultural production, water, education?

e. family size?

g use of family planning methods?

ANNEX IV

NOTE ON THE CONVERSATIONAL INTERVIEW METHOD

The conversational interviews refers to a simple and natural approach to engaging targeted beneficiaries in discussions in such a way that they are at ease and can respond to subject areas in an open and in-depth manner. Experience has shown that asking direct questions on specific subjects can sometimes put the interviewee on the defensive or can result in responses that the interviewee feels will please the interviewer. Use of the indirect interview method elicits more valid expressions of opinion, or fact. In addition, use of conversational interviews can also provide additional information of relevance to project implementation that is outside of the specified interview topics.

Examples of Conversational Interview Techniques

Education Sector

- "Some people say schools are good only for literacy, others say they are needed to get a good job. What do you believe?

- "Imagine you were in charge of this school, what would you do to improve it?"

- "I noticed a school in your neighborhood and a number of school-age children playing in the street during school hours. How can schooling be improved to keep kids in school?"

- "It seems that educating girls can sometimes help them to get jobs, but they are also sometimes needed at home. What do you think?"

Health Sector

- "There is talk of a health clinic being constructed for this area. What would you charge patients if you were managing the clinic?"

- "What would be the most convenient time for you and other women in your area to use the clinic?"

- "What kinds of clinic services do you think are most needed by those in your village?"

ANNEX V

ORIENTATION FOR FIELD RESEARCHERS

(See Implementing Beneficiary Assessment in Education: A Guide for Practitioners, SDP Number 25)

The training/orientation of local researchers should take approximately five days. Training takes the form of orientation rather than intensive training. The beneficiary assessment approach is considered a simple approach that is relatively easy to implement. The following five-day training program is recommended.

Day 1

- Introduction to the project and its objectives.
- Introduction of the BA approach and distribution of course materials.
- Demonstration of BA as a management tool to be used in all phases of the project cycle (design, implementation, and evaluation) through presentation and discussion of case studies.
- Familiarization with the reading materials provided.

Day 2

- Discussion of the BA techniques of conversational interviews, focus groups, and participant observation.
- Review of the Interview Guide.
- Tips on report writing.
- Simulation of individual interviews and focus group discussions using the interview guide.
- Note taking based on simulation exercises.
- Review of note-taking.

Day 3-4

The team will draft an interview guide. One or more neighborhoods will be selected to apply the draft interview guide. Field exercises will be undertaken after pre-testing of the interview guide.

The majority of team members will be asked to conduct conversational interviews with at least five persons selected at random as representatives of the diverse elements of the community. The remaining team members will conduct either focus groups or participant observation.

Day 5

- Morning: Team members will review notes and relate experiences to the entire group.

- Afternoon: There will be feedback from the BA trainer/consultant, who will provide suggestions for improvement of techniques applied as needed.